

ness—his grief was pitiable in the extreme; aye, all the more pitiable for being undemonstrative and silent. He would gaze for hours in rapt ecstasy, as it were, on the fair face of the dead girl, while the tears coursed down his cheeks in streams that would seem inexhaustible. And at times he murmured broken words of endearment to the ears that heard them not; for doubtless they were listening to the music of the celestial choirs.

The whole scene reminded me strongly of Dickens' description of the death of little Nell, and her grandfather's inconsolable grief for her loss—a scene said by some to be the most touching and pathetic thing in literature. The school-children, her playmates, had placed a chaplet of lilies on her head and a bouquet in the dead hands, which were joined as in prayer. A crucifix rested on her breast. With her closed eyes and lips parted in the smile they wore when they pressed a last kiss on her father's hand, and the snowy whiteness of the radiantly beautiful face, she seemed to me like a tired angel that had fallen into a gentle slumber, or, to use Dickens' language describing the appearance of poor little dead Nell: 'She seemed like a creature fresh from the hand of God and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death.'

It happened that I was changed from Killanure parish some few months after little Lucy's death, but during that time I frequently visited Matthias Power's cottage, and tried by every means to console and cheer him in his loneliness, but I could see that, although grateful for my visits, he would not be consoled. His was a sorrow whose roots were entwined around his heart, and could not be plucked out without the heart's coming with them.

'Welcome be the will of God,' he said. 'Aye, welcome a thousand times! And God forgive me if I'm not as resigned as I ought to be under my heavy trials! But, your reverence, I'll have a lonely road to travel till I join them—a lonely, dreary road. And I think it will be a short one, too, for I feel that my heart is broken.'

These were the words he used on the occasion of my farewell visit to him the day before I left the parish. He looked broken-hearted, in truth, and, verily, years older than he did a few months ago.

It was fully seven years before I saw Matthias Power again. I returned to my old home on a visit to a very particular friend, then the curate of the mountain parish. In the long interval I must confess that, although the episode I have narrated often recurred to my memory, I had, in the distraction of other interests and the formation of new friendships, more or less forgotten the old pensioner carrying his load of sorrow along his lonely road. I had witnessed so many scenes of suffering and sorrow since then that the accident of little Lucy's untimely death began to fade from my recollection. No sooner, however, had I looked out from the window of the old familiar parlor of the curate's mountain cottage than the name of Matthias Power came at once to my lips, for his house was the first object I saw.

Eagerly I inquired about the old pensioner, and how he had fared during all the long years since little Lucy left him to plod his lonely way alone. His history was soon told, and it filled me with sadness. He still lived in the cottage, cared for and tended by the faithful old woman who shared his joys and sorrows and witnessed the wreck of all his hopes. Alas, he needed pitying care and sympathy now, for he was a child again. His mind had given way under the weight of his sorrows, and he was a poor, childish imbecile.

I learned from my friend, Father Cummins, that the old man, after Lucy's death, pined away sensibly and moped about in an aimless fashion, seldom speaking to any one. He spent a good portion of each day in the graveyard where his loved ones were buried, and where he erected a beautiful marble monument over their grave. The impress of his knees on the green mound was plainly visible; for the daily visit was made with religious regularity in all weathers. By degrees this settled melancholy and constant communing with the dead undermined his mental powers, and he became childish, alternating his time between the churchyard and the mountain chapel, where he attended daily Mass and prayed for hours every day, doubtless for his loved and lost ones.

Next day I met him coming out of the church, and it was with difficulty I recognised him as the Matthias Power of seven years ago. He was sadly changed; thin, haggard, ghastly in appearance, careless in dress and weak and shambling in gait. He was bent and broken, and his hair was snow-white—in fine, the merest shadow of his former self. I accosted him by name, asking him if he did not remember me. He shook his head in reply, peering at me the while as if trying to catch some vague, fleeting associations of the past.

'Don't you remember Father O'Carroll,' I said, 'who attended little Lucy long ago?'

'Oh, little Lucy,' he answered, 'little Lucy, is it? She's up there'—pointing heavenward—'waiting for me, with Kate and little Matt; and I'm soon going to them, aye, soon, please God!'

His face wore a mild, calm, untroubled expression, as he said these words; and his sunken eyes brightened as he shuffled off homeward, muttering to himself, or perhaps communing with the spirit world. Evidently he was nearing the end of his lonely road.

'The last leaf,' I soliloquised. 'Verily the last leaf!'

'What is that?' said my companion, who evidently had not read Oliver Wendell Holmes' beautiful poem, 'The Last Leaf.'

'Listen to this,' I answered, 'and say if it does not describe him:

'But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets,
Sad and wan;
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone!"

'The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has pressed—
In their bloom;
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.'

—'Ave Maria.'

The Catholic World

ENGLAND.—A Sermon in Irish.

The Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, has consented to preach the sermon in Irish at the special Irish service which is to be held in Westminster Cathedral on the Sunday after St. Patrick's Day. The arrangements are being carried out by a committee of the Gaelic League in London, on which are representatives of the United Irish League and other Irish organisations.

The Education Act.

In their resolutions regarding the Education Acts, the Bishops of England and Wales state that, having given their general approval to the Education Act of 1902 in the expectation that that Act would be honestly and honorably carried into execution, they would reconsider their attitude towards the Act unless the local authorities modified their hostile and vexatious attitude and it were proved possible to administer the Act without prejudice to the rights of Catholics. Another resolution urged that managers of Catholic schools should insist that not less than sixty minutes a day should be assigned to religious instruction, in order to ensure the reasonable facilities to which they were entitled for that purpose, and that all Catholic schools should be closed all day on holydays and other religious festival days.

A Memorial.

A meeting of the Irish priests attached to the dioceses of Westminster and Southwark was held recently to take steps for the erection of a suitable memorial from amongst themselves to the late Dean Dooley. There was a large and representative attendance and it was decided that those present should undertake the erection of a monument over the grave of the deceased. The necessary amount to cover the cost was contributed on the spot and orders were given to have the work put in hands at once. This it should be mentioned is entirely apart from the memorial which Dean Dooley's late parishioners at Commercial road have decided to erect to him, which will take the shape of a stained glass window in the church. Similar memorials are also being organised by the parishioners of Wapping and Canning Town, where Dean Dooley formerly ministered.

A Double Anniversary.

A double anniversary in connection with St. Cuthbert's Catholic church, Wigton, Cumberland, was recognised in an interesting way. The parish priest, the Very Rev. Dr. Bourke, was ordained forty years ago, and has just completed a twenty years' residence in Wigton. A number of distinguished guests, clerical and lay, honored him with their presence, and their hearty congratulations upon this double event in his life. Amongst the guests were the Bishop of Bruges, with his