

'And your father?' she gasped, when she had found her voice. 'What will he say or do?'

'Let him say or do as he likes. He has only himself to thank for it all. He can pay a man to work the farm, and he will get along all right. I sometimes think he would get along all right if he was the last man in the world. Even if he never takes me back I don't care. I can make a home for you beyond.'

Lizzie, who would much prefer going to America than remaining behind, sought with many tears to dissuade him from his purpose, but in vain; his determination was as complete as it was sudden.

'I have my plans formed already,' he explained. 'I won't stay in the city—I'd smother in a city before a month. I'll go West, as we are so often advised, and get work upon a farm, what I'm used to. I won't say a word to my father until I'm walking out of the door. It's no use, nothing would soften him. But you might run across to him now and then when I'm gone, Lizzie. There's many a little thing I used to do for him that he can't very well do for himself, and I wouldn't like to think that he was in any way neglected. I believe he'll miss me, for all his brag and bluster, and maybe I wouldn't be three months gone until he sends for me. He has his faults, but who hasn't?'

Ere another week Matt left for America.

He announced his intention to his father at the last moment, and suddenly bursting into tears as he wrung his hand, he hurried from the house ere the old man had time to recover from his amazement.

The first time Lizzie appeared to minister to the latter's comfort she was received with a torrent of abuse and a point-blank refusal of admittance. But she came again and again, ran over the fields at dawn of day to milk the cows, placing the milk outside the door, and returning in the evening to perform the same and other services until at length she gained admittance to the house, and what a transformation she made in the house, rubbing, scrubbing, brushing, and polishing until every nook shone with cleanliness and brightness. She grew thinner and paler, partly because of her anxiety on Matt's account and partly because of the additional work of attending in both houses; but it was a labor of love and she never flinched, bearing meekly with the old man's complaints and fault-finding, and at last he veered round to Matt's opinion that after all 'it was a poor house that had no woman in it.'

Meanwhile cheering news came from Matt. He was working upon a farm far out West. The work was very hard, but the wages were good, and he expected to be home at the end of two years if his father did not relent before that. The latter showed some signs of relenting, influenced no doubt by consideration of the expense of keeping a hired man, but the old spirit of obstinacy triumphed. It was too hard to surrender his colors. He would let him see his folly out.

Winter and spring passed, summer came round again, and still Matt was on the farm out West. He wrote as cheerfully as ever. Although he thought they should scarcely recognise him when he returned, the blazing sun had scorched and turned him as black as a nigger, and he had lost many pounds in weight, for he had to do the work of three men.

All at once his father made up his mind that it was time for him to come home and do the work of three men on his own farm, where in his opinion the hired laborer was far from doing the work of one. He instructed Lizzie to write for him, and Lizzie, needless to say, made no delay.

On the Sunday after the letter was posted, when she had got through with her work at home, she hurried over to her prospective father-in-law's to tidy up the house for the evening. She had counted the days and the hours required for transmission of the letter to Matt and the hours and days which must elapse before he reached home. Joy was singing in her heart. How radiantly the sun shone, how blithely the birds carolled; what a happy world it was after all; how sweet, how beautiful was life. She busied herself about the kitchen, with difficulty repressing the little snatches of song which rose to her lips, for the old man was reading a religious book by the window.

'God save all here!' Father O'Connell said, his tall form shadowing the doorway as he entered, stooping beneath the low lintel.

After the first greetings, which lacked the usual cheery ring, he placed his breviary on the table, and, declining a seat, passed back and forth for a while, rubbing his hands slowly one over the other.

'So you've taken my advice at last and written for Matt? Ah, yes, when late, too late,' he murmured, in a tone of soliloquy. 'And how often it is thus. The message of peace, forgiveness, or love, the kindly word or act—too late. Ah, me! Shall we ever realise in time the sad significance of these two words?'

'I'm afraid he won't be with you as soon as you expected,' he added, bracing himself for an effort. 'Not so soon. No, I'm afraid not. Matt has met with an accident.'

Both remained perfectly silent, their eyes riveted upon the priest's grave face.

He drew a letter from his pocket and slowly unfolded it, smoothing out the creases with unnecessary care.

'It is my way,' he said, clearing his throat, 'always to deliver bad news with as little delay as possible. I think that even the worst news is less painful than the suspense which precedes it. I shall now read for you this letter, which I received this morning, only asking you to remember that nothing, except sin, can happen to us save by God's consent.'

He read the letter from Matt's late employer, a brief, commonplace account of a commonplace accident, such as may happen every week in every year. One evening at the close of his work Matt went—as he had often gone before—with some companions to bathe in a lake close by the farm on which he worked. He was seized with cramp and carried beyond his depth; all the efforts of his companions failed to save him, and the waters closed over him and stilled forever his noble heart. That was all.

The old man sat motionless in his chair, a grey pallor creeping slowly over his face, the lower jaw protruding slightly, a dazed look in his eyes. The girl made her way to the door, partly supporting herself by the wall as she went, until she reached the bench outside.

'Not the tears—
The ling'ring, lasting misery of years
Could match that moment's anguish.'

She heard in a vague way the priest's words of consolation addressed to the afflicted father, while, with a sense of doom, the chill of death seeming to creep around her heart, she thought how strange it was, how awful and how strange, that of all the millions of people in America that fatal accident should have befallen Matt alone—her Matt.

At length Father O'Connell came out.

'This is sad, my child,' he said, compassionately, 'very sad, and very hard to bear. But, dark though the picture is, it has a bright side. Matt was so good, his life was so pure and blameless—just the kind of young man so dear to God's heart—we have every reason to hope that all is well with him. And life is so short, so quickly do we glide into eternity, that, after all, it is but a little time until, I hope, we shall all meet him again. Ever remember, even in the darkest hour, that although God's ways are not ours, His way is always best.—'Weekly Freeman.'

The Catholic World

AFRICA—The Congo Calumnies

The Bishop of Salford (Dr. Casartelli), speaking at the quarterly meeting of the Manchester and Salford Zelator Branch of St. Joseph's Foreign Missionary Society, in St. John's Hall, Salford, referred (says the 'Manchester Guardian') to 'the campaign of prejudice and calumny fostered in the press and on the platform against the work of the Belgians on the Congo.' The most important event in the history of the Society was the new field of labor in the Belgian Congo territory. This work had been undertaken not altogether because the Society was growing and required some new field of missionary enterprise, but in order that by having missionaries of their own, bred and trained in England, working in the Belgian Congo, they might do something to stem that which he had no hesitation in calling a campaign of conspiracy, prejudice, and calumny against the work of the Belgians on the Congo. That calumny had been considerably discredited of late by English writers. The work of the Mill Hill College missionaries on the Congo would still further discredit what he considered a deliberate attempt to injure the colonial work of a friendly country, and at the same time to prejudice the Catholic missionaries of Belgian nationality who had been laboring with conspicuous success in that large portion of Central Africa.

CANADA—The Archdiocese of Montreal

Pope Pius X., acknowledging the growing importance of the Archdiocese of Montreal, has granted a request of Archbishop Bruchési to have an auxiliary Bishop. He has nominated Monsignor Zotique Racicot, now-Vicar-General of Montreal, to the office.