

Kept hidden away (it was seldom used, the washing being enough, without that added on), spread it on the table and laid the clean knives, forks, and spoons, as they had been taught to do.

When the father came in to dinner, the children called their mother, and both she and her husband looked with amazement at the table.

'Good gracious!' exclaimed Mrs. O'Hara, 'what have you been doing?'

The children laughed.

'We must have dinner now, while it is hot,' said Kitty.

She then helped them to soup (such a luxury had been unknown to Pat since his marriage).

Then came the wonderful dish of 'colcannon.' The parents were delighted, and confessed that they had not got such a dinner for a long time.

'I never thought you could make such soup without meat,' said the mother.

'What lovely bright spoons,' said the father, as he held up one.

'I shined it!' proudly answered Johnnie.

When the father was going out, Mollie caught him at the door, and taking his hand, said:

'You must be home at seven this evening, father; we are having cakes for tea and they must be eaten hot.'

'I don't know,' said he; 'I may meet some one to help me.'

'Promise for this time,' pleaded the child; 'we want you.'

'Very well, Mollie,' said he, 'I'll try.'

The children had a busy evening. Johnnie was put to clean the windows, and the girls washed and polished all the utensils, till everything shone. They then washed the tiled floor. They had some cold potato-tops left from dinner, so they made potato cakes.

When seven o'clock came, the father returned, much to the surprise of his wife.

'You see, Mollie,' he said, 'these cakes must be eaten hot.'

Everyone seemed pleased with the day's work, and the mother said she would have let them try before, if she had known they could do so well.

'You thought we could do nothing, mother,' said Kitty, 'and we mean to keep the house like this always.'

From that day there was a change in the cottage.

The mother took a lesson from the children, and gave them a little spare room to which they carried their books and playthings, which before had been thrown in various places. Mrs. O'Hara found time now to keep herself tidy. The husband came home early and was delighted to find a bright hearth and a cheerful family waiting to greet him. He seemed interested in his children, and was much amused to hear Kitty instructing her mother as to the quantity of ingredients to be used in various dishes. Moreover, he took the pledge, and brought home all his wages, so that better food could be procured, which gave the children an opportunity of displaying their knowledge, and the mother soon became a thrifty housekeeper. They had family prayers at night now, as Pat was home early; therefore they could retire at a reasonable hour and rise in the morning in time to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in turn each day.

Let us take a look three months later at the cottage. The sun's dazzling rays are shining on the bright window-panes. Mrs. O'Hara has a spotless white apron on, and her hair is braided back from a smiling happy face. She and her husband are sitting in the porch, each holding a hand of baby, as he tries to walk.

'You look something like your old self, Nellie,' remarked the husband.

'What an idle good-for-nothing girl I was, Pat, when you married me,' she replied, 'but experience has taught me a useful lesson, and I thank God that the children will be able to do something for themselves in after life.'

'Never mind, little woman,' said he, 'I am proud of my house now; it is fit for any one to enter.'

'Why! here are the Sisters coming to visit us.'

The good nuns praised the children for their industry, and Mrs. O'Hara thanked Sister Patrick for the suggestion she had made some time ago, of finding 'a way out of the difficulty.' Moreover, at Sister Patrick's further suggestion, the family always assemble together at night, father and mother and children, to recite the 'family Rosary,' and somehow it seems to have brought a wonderful blessing on Pat O'Hara's home—'Messenger of the Sacred Heart.'

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A Convert's Story

'Get thee to the woods!'
'But, doctor,' I protested, 'I cannot leave my affairs at this critical—'

It was no use. The grim old practitioner was obdurate. So within a week I found myself camping in the very heart of the Maine forests.

The guide and I were rendered more or less uneasy by a prowling panther, whose thrilling cries could be heard at midnight as the wily beast crept cautiously about the settlement. Resolving to be rid of the deadly menace, I armed myself with a Winchester and started for the spring which I thought the panther would visit about daybreak. Climbing into a tall tree which commanded a view of the spring, some thirty yards away, I patiently awaited results.

As I thus sat guarding the watering place a missionary priest, who had probably spent the night in the woods, came suddenly into the clearing. Having tied his pony to a tree near where grass was plentiful, the man of God unfastened the saddle-bags and began preparation for Mass.

Having been taught in childhood that the Mass was a superstitious rite invented by a Catholic priesthood to lure the hard-earned dollars from the ignorant members of that Church, I determined to watch the new arrival very closely, and see if he really believed in what he termed the Holy Sacrifice of the New Law.

Without the least knowledge of my presence in the vicinity, the priest erected a rude altar upon a rock in the centre of the clearing, then, donning the required vestments, began the prayers with the same reverence I have often noticed in crowded cathedrals. The sincerity and devotion displayed by that humble missionary came as a distinct shock to me, and I sat wholly absorbed in the impressive scene.

Just as the priest had blessed the bread and wine, and washed his hands in preparation for what my extensive reading taught me was the most solemn part of the Mass, I noticed the dark, graceful figure of the panther invisibly creeping upon the celebrant. In a moment my rifle was at my shoulder, ready for instant action. As I was about to take aim, however, the priest made a profound genuflection and elevated the Host. What it was that terrified the panther I am unable to say, but nevertheless the beast, suddenly paused, trembled violently, stepped backward about ten paces, turned and fled.

In a few moments the service was ended, and I, stepping down from my hiding place, congratulated the clergyman on his fervent celebration of the Mass and upon his seemingly miraculous escape. Then I invited him to take breakfast at the camp. The meal finished, we retraced our steps to the spring, and while seated upon the rock which had previously served as an altar the priest, at my request, carefully explained to me the doctrines of the Catholic Church. My reading along theological lines had been quite extensive, so that at the end of a three-hour conference I humbly craved baptism at the hands of the forest missionary. Thus in the depths of the Maine woods I, a poor, unworthy sinner, was received into the Church of my fathers by the humble missionary who had taught me less by word than by example.—'Standard and Times.'

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