

us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things—that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.'

Even this authoritative letter did not bring peace. Beaten on the main point, the Jewish Christians of the strict school turned to details. As they could not prevent the preaching of the Gospel to the pagans, or their reception into the Church, they sought to place them on a lower level within the Church. The Jews were especially scrupulous in the matter by sitting at the same table with the uncircumcised. And here the difficulty became all the more acute, for the principal religious act of the Christian community was precisely the repast eaten in common in connection with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Matters came to a head when St. Peter came to Antioch. At first he mixed freely with the pagan converts and took part in the same repasts, but the arrival of certain Jewish brethren, sent to Antioch from Jerusalem by St. James, caused him to change this friendly attitude. He withdrew from the society of the pagan converts, and his example led others to do the same: even Barnabas separated from the dear companion of his apostolic labors. But St. Paul stood firm, and pointed out to St. Peter, whom He recognised as Head of the Church, the inconsistency of his conduct. He did so 'to his face,' that is to say, as a loyal, open friend might speak to a friend.

We do not know what was the immediate and local issue of this conflict of opinions. It is certain, however, that St. Paul's ideas on the point prevailed. And that, of course, was inevitable: for Jewish converts within a short space of time became everywhere, save in Palestine, the minority.

The Storyteller

MOONDYNE

(BY JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.)

(Continued.)

BOOK THIRD.—ALICE WALMSLEY.

I.

MISERERE!

O, Spirits of Unrest and Pain, that grieve for the sorrow dealt out to weak humanity, sweep from my heart the dull veil of individuality, and let my being vibrate with the profound pulsation of those who mourn in the depths. Spirits of Sorrow and Sympathy, twin sisters of the twilight, touch the trembling chords that sound the sympathy of wrong, and desolation, and despair.

Almighty God, in Thy wisdom, and surely also in Thy love, Thou layest Thine awful finger on a poor human soul, and it is withered in Thy sight even to agony and death. Thy ways, far-seeing, our eyes may not discover. In those supreme moments of trial, when that which we see is black as night, teach us to trust in Thy guidance, give us light to deny the fearful temptation of Chance, and faith to believe that all who labor and are heavy laden may bring their heavy burden trustingly to Thee!

With a prayer, we enter the cell of Alice Walmsley—a cell where no prayer had been uttered, woful to say, for the first five years of her life therein. We look upon the calm white face and the downcast eyes, that during the hopeless period had never been raised to Heaven—except once, and then only in defiance and imprecation.

God's hand had caught her up from the happy plain, to fling her into the darkest furrows of affliction;

and from these depths the stricken soul had upbraided the judge and rebelled against the sentence.

Alice Walmsley had been born with a heart all kindness and sympathy. From her very infancy she had loved intensely and kindly, the unselfish, and the beautiful. She had lived through her girlhood as happy, healthy, and pure as the primroses beneath her mother's hedgerows. She had approached womanhood as a silver stream ripples to the sea, yearning for its greatness and its troubles and its joys—hurrying from the calm delights of the meadow banks to the mighty main of strength, and saltness, and sweetness.

The moment of communion was reached at last, when her girlish life plunged with delicious expectation into the deep—and in one hideous instant she knew that for ever she had parted from the pure and beautiful, and was buried in an ocean of corruption and disappointment, rolled over by waves of unimaginable and inevitable suffering and wrong.

From the first deep plunge, stifled, agonised, appalled, she rose to the surface, only to behold the land receding from her view—the sweet fields of her innocent and joyous girlhood fading in the distance.

She raised her eyes, and saw the heaven calm and beautiful above her, sprinkled with gem-like stars—and she cried, she screamed to God for help in her helplessness. The answer did not come—the lips of God were dumb—it seemed as if He did not heed nor see the ruin of one puny human life. The sky was as beautiful and serene as before, and the stars were as bright.

Then, from the crest of the wave, as she felt herself slipping back into the dreadful depths again, and for ever, she raised her face to heaven, and shrieked reproach and disbelief and execration!

On the very day of her marriage, before the solemn words of the ceremony had left her memory, she had looked for one dread moment beneath the mask of him who had won her love and trust—some old letters of her husband relating to Will Sheridan had fallen into her hands—and she shrank within herself, affrighted at the knowledge of deceit and habitual falsehood that the glimpse had brought her. It was her first grief and secret, and she hid it in her soul for months before she dared look upon it again.

But a single grief, even though a heavy one, could not crush the light out of so joyous and faithful a heart. She still possessed the woman's angelic gifts of hope and faith. She had, too, the woman's blessed quality of mercy. She forgave—trusting that her forgiveness would bring a change. She prayed, and waited, and hoped—in secret confidence with her own heart. Another influence would be added to hers ere long. When she gave his child into his arms, and joined its supplication to hers, she believed, nay, she knew, that her happiness would be returned to her.

But before that day came, she was left alone. Her husband, from the hour she had given herself into his power, had followed one careless, selfish, and cynical course. She would not, could not believe that this was his natural life, but only a temporary mood.

When first he spoke of going to sea again, on a long voyage, she was pleased, and thought gladly of the change for her, who had never seen the great world. When he coldly said that she was to remain, she became alarmed,—she could not be left alone,—she implored, she prayed to go with him.

Then came the sneer, the brutal refusal, the master's command, the indelible insult of expressed weariness and dislike. She held her peace.

When the day came, he would have left her for years of absence, without a kiss: but the poor soul, hungering and waiting for a loving word or look, unable to believe her great affection powerless to win a return, could not bear this blighting memory. She clung to him, sobbing her full heart on his breast; she kissed him and prayed for him, with her hands on his shoulders, and her streaming eyes on his; she blamed herself, and told him she would be happy till he returned,—the thought of her coming joy would bless her life, and bless and preserve him on the sea. With such words, she let him go.

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