

I need not tell you the impression that dream had on me. I was not in the least superstitious, nor, as a usual thing, bothered by the foolish vagaries of my sleep; but I was haunted day and night by the vivid picture that was revealed to me as I knelt with outstretched arms in that dark cave and cried to the Saviour for light. I did not dare to tell that dream to any one. It seemed too sacred to gossip about. I would not tell my minister, and I could not write it to my husband. One day I was shopping, and passed the door of a Catholic church. It was in the heart of the busy city—the only Catholic church of prominence in the district. It is now torn down, but even when I pass the site I bow my head. I glanced at the open doorway, and with a guilty feeling I entered. It was a vast aisle of gloom. The Gothic arches lost themselves in vagueness; the altar looked far, far away, and the church seemed deserted save for a few bowed forms that did not pay the slightest attention to anything around them. I advanced half way up the aisle and stood doubting and trembling. I had never been in such a place before. I was drawn onwards by an invisible force. I saw a crimson star flickering, trembling in space. I followed it and stood beneath it. I found it was a richly-decorated lamp suspended from the roof. I looked around, half frightened at my temerity. I was standing before a long, low railing that extended across the church. Suddenly a figure robed in black, with a peculiar square cap, came from a door within the railed space. He raised his cap as he knelt before what I now know was the altar. I stood terrified lest he should recognise me as an intruder and order me out of the place. I felt I deserved it, but he arose and, coming to the railing, courteously asked me in a low voice if he could serve me in any way. I think my embarrassment told him I was an outsider, for when I answered hesitatingly he asked me if I would not come to the house. I dared not refuse, but followed him, bewildered, and only recovered breath when I was ushered into a neatly-furnished little parlor, where I was courteously motioned to a chair. The priest had asked no questions, and now looked at me benevolently, waiting for me to speak. I hardly know how it happened, but I raised my eyes and saw on the wall a picture of the Saviour with one hand on His breast, the other extended, and my dream rose up before me, and I cried out to the priest, pointing to the picture: "Oh, sir, what does that mean?" In a few words he explained the meaning of the Sacred Heart, and I told him my dream. And then my heart was unlocked, and I told him all my doubts, all about my desire to explain away my husband's faith, and, in fact, made an entire confession of everything that was on my heart and mind, ending with my unaccountable impulse to enter the church door as I passed that day. He listened patiently and gravely, and then smilingly said:

"I knew you were not a Catholic when first I saw you, my child, and I cannot but believe that God has special designs for you. We won't discuss that to-day, but, since you are so anxious to convert your husband, I will give you a book to read—a book that will tell you everything that Catholics believe, and, in fact, their whole religion. It won't take you long to read it, and if you desire any explanations I am nearly always at home in the afternoons, and I place myself at your service."

"Saying this, he rose and took a small paper-back book from a bookcase and handed it to me. It was a "Little Catechism." I thanked him as I rose to depart. I gave him my address, and left his house with such a feeling of peace and serenity in my heart that I felt like singing aloud for joy. I had no wish to become a Catholic; I was only delighted to think I had actually spoken to a minister of my husband's religion, and he did not denounce my desire to convert him.

"When I went home I took the first opportunity to read the little book. I was amazed at its simplicity and reasonableness, and then at its tone of conviction, at its clear decision, at its self-evident statements—facts that only needed thought and unprejudiced judgment to affirm their certainty. I finished the little book at one sitting. Again I read it, and it was not

long before I had to yield to its truth. The days passed on; my husband's letters came regularly. Everything went on as usual, but within my soul it was as if a new world had burst upon my vision. When my husband returned for a two weeks' rest he noticed a change, an unaccountable something, but I was determined to hold my peace until I could tell him all.

"Six months passed away. My husband had gone again, and in the meantime I had visited my friend, the good priest, and was being instructed in the good faith. I will not tire you, Father Alexander, by going into further details, but the next time my husband came home I asked him to take a walk one evening. We went, to his amazement, to the rectory, where my good father and instructor was waiting, and while my husband stood dumb in surprise he announced that I was to be baptised conditionally next day; that I was to make my First Holy Communion the following Sunday. And then I said to my husband:

"Will you not come with me?"

"He was overcome, but before we left the house he had promised. He kept his promise. We received Holy Communion together, and until his death he never failed in the practise of his religion. He died like a saint, after a long, weary illness. A nun, the teacher of my children, knelt at his bedside saying the prayers for his departing soul, and when he passed away she closed his eyes and said to us as we wept there:

"Do not sorrow. He is with God and the saints."

"That was many years ago, Father, but my faith has never faltered; my dream has been realised. I found the light through the love of the Sacred Heart."—

Extension.

HER SECOND THOUGHTS

Veronica's life was a hard and trying one. There were times when her trials were almost more than she could bear. For herself she did not mind very much, for she was young and had never been accustomed to ease and luxury, but the privations endured by her delicate mother caused her intense pain. Yet, do what she would, she found it impossible to make things more comfortable for her.

Veronica worked as a typist in a city office, but her salary was small, barely enough to feed and clothe one person, wholly inadequate for the support of two. In times gone by Mrs. Loraine had been a dressmaker's assistant, and her earnings, joined to those of her daughter, had helped them to live respectably. But all at once the poor woman fell into a low state of health, and work became for her an impossibility. Very sadly Veronica took her to a dispensary doctor.

"It's a breakdown," he said, after a careful examination of his patient. "Mrs. Loraine has had too many hours in hot rooms. She requires rest and fresh air; with these she will, I trust, soon be well again."

"I'll do what I can," Veronica answered sadly; and full of forebodings, she led her mother back to their dingy lodgings.

"Something must be done! But what?" Veronica thought one evening, as, having slipped into the free library on her way home from the office, she turned over the leaves of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Morning Post*. "If only, only I could get something better to do! Someone might require a private secretary and pay more—Poor mother! if only I had a little more money I might—Ah!" Her eyes fell on the fashionable announcements in the *Post*, and she smiled sadly. "Nothing in this column to interest me. The upper ten—but stay! This—yes, surely—the Hon. Mrs. Dalrymple is—I know she is—a cousin. She was a Loraine. I've often heard my dear father speak of her. When he offended my great-uncle by following the profession that suited him best—that of an actor—most of the big fortune that ought to have been his, and always was intended for him, was left to her. And she, being an heiress, married well—the Honorable Conrad Dalrymple. Poor father died almost a pauper; she lives—a widow—and immensely rich. So her doings, goings, and comings, are duly chronicled in the *Morning Post*."

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