

Napoleon has expressed the common-sense of mankind on this point, and his views have a value all their own, for though he was not a theologian, yet he knew from unparalleled experience what kind of forces influence men and really produce a lasting effect upon them. In the solitude of his imprisonment at St. Helena this mighty conqueror is reported to have spoken thus:— 'I have been accustomed to put before me the examples of Alexander and Caesar, with the hope of rivalling their exploits, and living in the minds of men for ever. Yet after all, in what sense does Caesar, in what sense does Alexander live? Who knows or cares anything about them? At best, nothing but their names are known: for who among the multitude of men, who hear or utter their names, really knows anything about their lives or their deeds, or attaches to those names any definite idea? Nay, even their names do but fit up and down the world like ghosts, mentioned only on particular occasions, or from accidental associations. Their chief home is in the schoolroom; they have a foremost place in boys' grammars and exercise books; they are splendid examples for themes; they form writing-copies. So low is heroic Alexander fallen, so low is imperial Caesar.

But, on the contrary, there is just One Name in the whole world that lives; it is the Name of One Who passed His years in obscurity, and Who died a malefactor's death. Eighteen hundred years have gone since that time, but still it has its hold upon the human mind. It has possessed the world, and it maintains possession. Amid the most varied nations, under the most diversified circumstances, in the most cultivated, in the rudest races and intellects, in all classes of society, the Owner of that great Name reigns. High and low, rich and poor, acknowledge Him. Millions of souls are conversing with Him, are venturing on His word, are looking for His Presence. Palaces, sumptuous, innumerable, are raised to His honor; His image, as in the hour of His deepest humiliation, is triumphantly displayed in the proud city, in the open country, in the corners of streets, on the tops of mountains. It sanctifies the ancestral hall, the closet, and the bedchamber; it is the subject for the exercise of the highest genius in the imitative arts. It is worn next the heart in life; it is held before the failing eyes in death. Here, then, is One Who is not a mere name, Who is not a mere fiction, Who is a reality. He is dead and gone, but still He lives—lives as a living, energetic thought of successive generations, as the awful motive-power of a thousand great events. He has done without effort what others with life-long struggles have not done. Can He be less than divine?

I think I understand something of human nature; and I tell you, all these were men, and I am a man; none else is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man. When I saw men and spoke to them, I lighted up the flame of self-devotion in their hearts. Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man towards the Unseen, that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years, Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy: He asks for that which a philosopher may often seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother. He asks for the human heart: He will have it entirely to Himself. He demands it unconditionally; and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! This phenomenon is unaccountable: it is altogether beyond the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame: time can neither exhaust its strength nor put a limit to its range. This it is which strikes me most; I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the Divinity of Jesus Christ.'

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The Storyteller

AT THE DAWN OF THE YEAR

The chill November winds were moaning sadly through the tall trees, which in their summer glory were the pride of Granville avenue; but now, shorn of their leafy wealth, their long, naked branches waving and tossing in the wind, they looked like gaunt spectres; or, as Agnes Graham thought, as she hurried home from her school, 'like forsaken souls throwing out their long arms in supplicating agony.'

The day had been a trying one to the ardent young teacher who, only two months ago, had left the loving home circle to become one of the bread-winners and battle with the world, armed only with a pure brave heart, an undaunted courage, and, as Ralph the tease had added, 'woman's weapon, well sharpened, though also well sheated.'

Millbank was a thriving town with some pretensions to beauty, if not of art, at least of nature. The business street boasted of five stores, two nominally 'dry goods,' but virtually retailers of all kinds of goods, from dry to wet, with all the intermediate stages. Then there was the 'drug store,' redolent of subtle medicines, perfumes, and toilet soap, the rendezvous of Millbank's fair daughters on pleasant afternoons. Next came the post office, not yet the imposing brick building, voted, vetoed, planned, and talked about for so long by the more enlightened Millbankers, but a store, hard to classify, since it had gone through so many phases of life. In its earliest infancy it had been a millinery establishment, kept by two sisters on the high road to old maidenhood; but it did not thrive on a diet of ribbons and straw, even though strengthened by an occasional feast of artificial flowers, whose brilliant reds, pinks, and greens faded before their time. Afterwards the faded glory of the impossible roses and poppies was replaced by an array of gingerbread figures, labelled—or libelled—elephants, cats, dogs, and most wonderfully humped camels and dromedaries, while on the shelves little glass jars of striped peppermint sticks and bulls' eyes took the place of bolts of ribbon, while now in its old age it is an emporium for almost anything available, and the two elderly spinsters deal out alternately letters and laces, papers and peanuts, postals and pins. And last, though not least in importance, comes the butcher's shop, or, as the upper strata of Millbank society term it, 'the meat market.' The proprietor, Hiram Hodges, might easily be mistaken for one of his own choice 'critters' were it only by his bellow, while his son Daniel, a foreshortened edition of his father, is a veritable fatted calf. In the house, which is over the shop, there are three or four embryo butchers, worthy sons of their father. We said before that the day had been a trying one for Agnes. The Catholics in Millbank were decidedly in the minority, and only under protest had a Catholic teacher been engaged, mainly through the untiring efforts of Father Byrne, who came from Taunton once in three weeks to minister to the spiritual needs of his little flock.

When Agnes reached the end of the avenue, she pushed open the gate leading to one of the smaller houses. A gust of wind and whirl of dead leaves rushed in as she opened the outer door, eliciting an impatient exclamation from an elderly lady who was crossing the hall, and causing her to draw more closely round her thin shoulders the soft woollen shawl.

Mrs. Harrington, the possessor of the impatient voice, had in some unaccountable impulse taken the young teacher to board with her; for, though not wealthy, she did not lack means, and had taken herself to task daily for yielding to such an impulse.

When Father Byrne heard of it he drew his breath sharply and murmured softly to himself:

'The finger of God is here; this may be the means of—'

The ominous sentence was finished by three wise shakes of the head.

At the tea table that evening Mrs. Harrington noticed the tired look on the young girl's face, and in

"Pattillo"

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