

Rev. M. J. Gignoux

THE MORNING STAR

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"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THEM THAT BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

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THOMAS MOORE.

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Shine soft, ye trembling tears of light,
That strew the morning skies,
Hushed in the silent dews of night
The harp of Erin lies.

What though her thousand years have past
Of poets, saints, and kings—
Her echoes only hear the last
That swept those golden strings.

Fling o'er his mound, ye star-lit bowers,
The balmy wreaths ye wear,
Whose breath has lent your earth-born flowers
Heaven's own ambrosial air.

Breathe bird of night thy softest tone,
By shadowy grove and rill;
Thy song will soothe us while we own
That his was sweeter still.

Stay pitying time thy foot for him,
Who gave thee sweeter wings,
Nor let thy envious shadow dim
The light his glory flings.

If in his cheek unholly blood
Burned for one youthful hour,
'Twas but the flushing of the bud
That blooms a milk-white flower.

Take him, kind mother, to thy breast,
Who loved thy smiles so well,
And spread thy mantle o'er his rest
Of rose and asphodel.

The bark has sailed the midnight sea,
The sea without a shore,
That waved its parting sigh to thee—
"A health to thee, Tom Moore."

And thine, long lingering on the strand,
Its brightened streamers furled,
Was tossed by age with trembling hand,
To seek a silent world.

Not silent! no, the radiant stars
Still lingering as they shine,
Unheard through earth's imprisoned bars,
Have voices sweet as thine.

Wake then, in happier realms above,
The songs of by-gone years,
Till angels learn these airs of love
That ravished mortal ears!

TRUE TO THE END.

CHAPTER VII.

Frank's passionate grief at the news of the birth and death of his little girl, and the serious illness of his wife, completely broke him down. He came into the presence of the magistrate before whom the preliminary examination was to take place, pale, haggard, and aged, as if ten years had passed over his head.

Mr. John Dunne proved that he had given the notes to the accused, with directions to pay them into the bank of Messrs. —, to the account of Lord Fitzallen. He stated the amount and numbers of the notes. The accused told him next morning the notes had been lost. He spoke well of the accused as an inferior clerk in the house for some years, but regretted that he had been raised to such a confidential position. It had been done on account of the strong regard entertained for him by his nephew and junior partner, Mr. Richard Dunne; thought all those kinds of advancement by preference were mistakes, and was sorry he had been a party to it. Had observed several acts of negligence on the accused's part, but when pressed by cross-examination, fully admitted there had been no former suspicion of the accused's honesty.

The second witness was Michael O'Brien, master of the parish of St. Edmund's schools. He stated that on Tuesday, November 6th, Father O'Donnell, the parish priest, called on him and asked him to go to the bank and change a bank-note for £20, giving as a reason that he was so much occupied he could not go himself, and that he wanted the money. Witness accordingly presented it at the bank, when it was stopped, and he had been given into custody, and was not released till after a police-officer had gone to Father O'Donnell and heard the truth of his statement confirmed. Had no idea where Father O'Donnell had the note from.

Father O'Donnell was next examined. Had given the note, No—, to the last witness. Could not state whom he had received it from. It was not from the accused. The latter had nothing to do with it, and had no knowledge of the transaction whatever. It was given to him as restitution money. He could say no more on the subject.

A locksmith was next brought forward, who stated that he had examined the table and drawer in which the notes were said to be locked up. That no injury had been done to the lock, and it was impossible it could have been opened by any violence. The lock was a peculiar one, and it would be most difficult to get a key to open it. To make a new key, it would be necessary to take off the lock and keep it for some days.

Mr. John Dunne was re-called, and stated that no other key but that in the prisoner's

possession was, to his knowledge, in existence; the lock could not have been taken off without his (Mr. Dunne's) knowledge and consent; it had not been done for years past.

The next witness was Inspector Parker, who stated that having received orders to search the accused's house he had done so on that very morning accompanied by two other police-officers and Mr. Richard Dunne; that in examining the back drawing-room he had observed a writing-table very similar to that at the banking-house, with several drawers in it; one only was locked; he had procured instruments and broken open the drawer; and after a long patient search amid a mass of papers, old letters, etc., he had discovered five of the missing notes (there were seven in all missing,) carefully wrapped up, and stowed away in a small packet hidden among a variety of others.

The solicitor for the prosecution next addressed the court in a few telling words, pointing out that the accused did not deny having received the notes, but said that he had placed them in his private drawer; that they had disappeared from thence without the slightest injury to the lock; evidence had been given that it was impossible violence could have been used; he who locked up the drawer alone could unlock it; accused further stated that the key had remained in his possession. It was certain, then, the notes could not have been taken out of the drawer by a thief; then in the course of the following day one of the notes was found in possession of the accused's brother-in-law. He was aware that this gentleman was a priest, and his reticence in giving evidence was to be understood and respected; nevertheless, the fact of the note being in his possession was, he submitted, a most suspicious one, and a strong proof of the prisoner's guilt; but hardly any further evidence was wanted when the fact transpired that nearly all the remaining notes had been found in the accused's possession—in his own house. He wound up by submitting that the case had been fairly proved, and the accused should be committed to take his trial.

The solicitor for the defense declared that a base conspiracy of some sort was on foot to condemn an innocent man, and that he doubted not a short time would enable him to unravel it. He should, however, reserve his defense until the trial.

The magistrate said but a few words, expressing his keen regret at seeing a man of Frank Murphy's standing in so painful a position; he had no other course open to him than to send the case for trial.

Bail was then offered, but the magistrate said for so serious a charge he would not be justified in accepting it.

Frank was therefore to remain in custody until the next sessions, which would commence in about a fortnight's time. His last hope of being allowed to rejoin his suffering wife was dispelled, and, almost broken-hearted, he re-entered his prison-cell.

CHAPTER VIII.

The examination had been held on a Saturday, and Willie, after having tried his best to console and comfort Frank, went to visit his sister, who was hanging between life and death; and Margaret, who was now watching beside her, feared that if life were spared, reason would give way, so sore had been the blow to one in her weak state; and the poor little children, with pale wan faces and terrified eyes, crept down from the nursery at the sound of their uncle's voice, not knowing or understanding what had happened, and nestled round him, and wanted to know when papa was coming back, and when mamma would be better. He comforted them as best he could, and took the elder ones to the room where the babe that had been born and died yesterday was lying in her little coffin, loving hands laid white flowers round her, and a crown of *immortelles* on her breast. The children were awed, but not frightened, and they never afterward forgot their first lesson about death—the baby, waxen face, with a smile upon its lips, the sweet flowers fading round her, who had gone to gather flowers in the gardens of Paradise.

Then he talked to them about death, and sorrow, and suffering. How death had come after sin, and how it had since been robbed of its sting; and he spoke to them about the Cross—how blessed it was to bear it after Jesus, how it was just now heavily laid upon their dear father and mother, so that its shadow had darkened their young lives; how they were to pray that the heavy cross might turn into a bright and glorious crown in heaven, might make their dear parents saints, very dear in the eyes of God. And the little ones were sent away comforted and happy, to whisper their simple prayers that God would take care of dear father and mother, and make them very holy. Willie watched them as they crept one by one up-stairs, holding their breath lest they should make a noise outside mamma's sick-room, on their way to the nursery. When they were lost to sight, he turned back into the drawing-room to get his hat; as he crossed the room, his foot caught in something; on looking down he discovered it was a glove,

and on picking it up recognized it as one of a pair worn by Richard Dunne. It was a peculiar glove, of a deep buff color, with a quaint embroidery running round the wrist—a sort of thing that insensibly attracts one's eye at the moment, even when the mind is full of grave matters, and which flashes across one's memory as something we have seen before, when we meet with it. Willie paused. Who can unravel the chain of association that one passing thought will awaken in an instant? He had never thought once of the by-gone threats once uttered by Richard. He had attached little weight to them at the time, and looked on them more as a burst of passionate excitement than seriously meant. Why did they flash across his memory now? Why did they come in connection with the question put to him that very day by Frank's solicitor? "Do you know of any secret enemy, of any one who has a grudge against Frank, or who wants to revenge a real or fancied injury?"

Willie stood quite still for several minutes, lost in thought, then he folded up the glove, placed it in his pocket, and left the house. He turned the matter over in his mind as he walked home, and came to the conclusion that it would be his duty to lay what he knew before Mr. Fox, the solicitor, in confidence.

He shrank from acknowledging even to himself that Richard Dunne was capable of such a crime, and dismissed that idea with a shudder; but, aware as he was that Richard's private life in many particulars would not bear to be brought to the light of day, he thought it was possible some evil companion might know of his early disappointment, and have desired to avenge him. "At all events," concluded Willie, "the safest way is to tell what I know. Mr. Fox said if he had only the faintest clue, something that could give him an idea which way to turn; but at present it is simply a maze from beginning to end, and this may lead to something; I shall go to Fox on Monday about it."

An hour later, and Father O'Donnell took his place in the confessional. The church was crowded, for the following day would be the first Sunday in the month, and penitent after penitent entered the confessional and knelt beside the priest. Some had long tales of guilt and misery; grace had touched their hearts, and brought them at last to the tribunal of mercy. Others were making a feeble resistance to the manifold temptations of their lot; were not patient under the heavy load of poverty, hardship, and care, and came to be strengthened and encouraged. And others came, those wonderful beings who may be found again and again among the poor of Catholic countries, who shrink from the shadow of a sin; who, though unknown, despised, poor, and neglected, are exceedingly great in the eyes of God and His Angels. Many of these he was guiding in the path of perfection, and they were his joy and consolation amidst his weary toil. The night drew on, and the numbers began to thin. Presently, from a dark corner of the church, where he had been sitting for some time, hidden in the shadow himself, but watching the scene, came the figure of a man wrapped in a large cloak, with the velvet collar buttoned so as to hide the lower part of his face. The poor people among whom he knelt could not help noticing that the quality and the richness of the cloth and the velvet were of a superior kind to that ordinarily worn by the frequenters of that confessional, and with the instinctive humility of the poor they drew back, and let him pass in before his turn. Simple old Bridget O'Connor, who was telling her beads, thought perchance it might be a poor gentleman that had been long absent from the sacraments, and began to offer up her aves for him. O, Bridget, pray on, pray with all your heart, for at this moment, though you know it not, a mighty battle is going on between the powers of good and evil!

"Yes, father, you know me," was breathed into Father O'Donnell's ear, by a voice he too well recognized. "I come now to fulfill the promise I made you long years ago, a promise I have never forgotten or lost sight of for an hour. Mine was to be no ordinary revenge; it was to be deep, and real, and certain. I could afford to wait and bide my time, and, lo, the hour is come. It was I who took the notes from the private drawer. I, unknown to my uncle, procured a second key when last in London, for I had taken a fac-simile of the lock in wax with me. It was I who sent that note to you two nights ago, by the hands of one who would sell her soul to serve me. It was I who put the other five notes into the table in Frank's drawing-room; and the last and seventh note is now in my possession. The train is well-laid, Father O'Donnell, and Frank's doom is sealed. No earthly being suspects me; no mortal can suspect me but yourself, and, therefore, I come hither this night to seal your lips."

He paused at length, and his eyes, glowing with satisfied rage, tried to peer into the priest's face, but it was hidden from him. There had not been a gesture or a movement while he spoke, and the

voice which answered him was calm and and gentle as ever.

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear ye Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."

"I fear neither God nor man," was the bitter answer. "I believe neither in your heaven nor your hell. If there be a God, He has been against me all my life, and I hate Him."

"And yet," said the priest, "it was to your keeping that you wanted me to confide Ellen's happiness."

"Yes; and if you had given her to me I should have been a different creature. I worshipped her, and I would have done as she wished; I would have believed in her God. But when she was taken from me, the sun went out of my life; nothing but darkness and gloom was left; and I vowed that day I left you I would live only for revenge, and I have kept my vow. Slowly have I matured my plan, and now it is ripe; now the fruit is ready to my taste. "It will only be gall and bitterness to you," answered Father O'Donnell.

"So you think. You have never known its delight," retorted Dunne. "However, now I have accomplished my purpose, I bid you farewell."

But the priest detained him, and spoke to him in moving words, imploring him to desist from his purpose for his own sake. "If you believe I am influenced by fear of personal suffering," said he, "go to some other priest; his lips will be equally sealed with mine, and you cannot suspect him of having a hidden motive."

"I shall do no such thing," returned Richard Dunne. "What do I want with priests?—hang! I would never have bent my knee to you, save to carry out my purpose. The only disappointment I have is that I cannot make you suffer more. You seem to take it quietly enough. I thought I should make you quiver under it, as I have made that wretched Frank. Are you dead to all human feeling, or are you trying to prevent my triumph?"

"No," said Father O'Donnell; "I feel it, and shall feel it as keenly as you can desire. Your plan has been well laid, and you have judged rightly in supposing that you have struck me a heavy blow. My poor Ellen and Frank! Would to God I could suffer for them; that you could wreak your full vengeance on me instead of them! But, Richard, I would endure that suffering for them and through them thrice over if I could save your soul. Take pity, not on us, but on yourself. Our sufferings will be brief. Life is at best but a shadow, and the day will speedily come when we shall bless the hard that bowed us to the earth, and thus won for us the crown for them that 'have gone through great tribulation.' As briefly as our pain will pass, so will your poor satisfaction, your sorry triumph. And what will follow?"

"O, hell-fire, of course," said Richard, with a low chuckle. "Never mind, I'll risk it. Look to yourself, sir, and don't trouble about me." And so saying, he left the confessional.

By this time the good people outside had got very impatient. Some had dozed and woke up again; others had nudged their neighbors, and wondered and murmured. They were simple folk, who could not easily have imagined the battle for life or death going on close beside them. And so in life we brush by those whose souls are rocked in the wildest storms of passion, whose lives are overshadowed by some mighty sorrow; and we, with our petty griefs, the little difficulties of our smooth lives, are eager and impatient for sympathy and help, unheeding if we thrust others away into a darkness and a despair of which we can form no conception. Only Bridget had perseveringly prayed on for the strange gentleman with his handsome cloak and his perfumes. Then the nearest penitent darted eagerly in, and demanded Father O'Donnell's full attention to some trifling misery or difficulty; but it was not withheld. The people did not know why, but never had he spoken to them with such devotion and such zeal for God's glory as on that night; never did they feel their souls so stirred up to love and serve their Lord, for he spoke of the Heart of Jesus, of that Heart so tortured, so rent with anguish for love of them; who for them had borne calumny, and ingratitude, and treachery, and all that was most bitter to his human nature.

Then, at length, it was over. The last person had quitted the church, the tired sacristan had gone to bed, the doors were locked and the lights put out—all but that one red lamp which was never extinguished in the sanctuary; that alone broke the gloom and cast its feeble ray on a figure prostrate on the altar step, enduring, like his Master, a long and lonely agony. There was no earthly voice to comfort him—no earthly friend who knew his sorrow. But to him, too, there came an angel, and more than an angel—the King of the heavenly host. From out of that humble tabernacle— from that poor altar with its shabby ornaments—the Heart that loves and pities as no other can, spoke to him, "strengthening him." Ah, then, welcome sorrow, even

though it crushes us to the earth! Welcome suffering, even though it nails us hand and foot to the Cross, because it brings us closer to that Heart of Love, and makes us understand it. None can enter into sorrow save those who have suffered, so let others tread the smooth paths of life, cheered by God's blessing; but let those whose steps have been set in a thorny road rejoice—those for whom poverty, and disappointment, and treachery have done their worst, for they will have a sympathy such as far outweighs the fair things which have fallen to the lot of others.

The morning came, and Father O'Donnell said mass as usual. People thought he looked very pale, but more than ever as if he were an angel, lingering for a brief time longer on earth; and when he preached that day, and catechised the children, and went among the sick, there was no perceptible change, except that he seemed more full of tender sympathy for others, more forgetful of his own health and comfort.

(Concluded next week.)

THE MARONITES.—About fifty years after the birth of Mohammed, and before the reformed religion taught by him had made any progress beyond the immediate neighborhood of Medina and Mecca, or the confines of Arabia, one of those Christians who had retired into a cave in North Syria, in order to pursue his studies and meditations uninterrupted, made himself remarkable by the peculiar sanctity of his life, and the unusual depth of wisdom that fell from his lips. This man was called Hanna (the Arabic of John) Maroun. The cave where he dwelt was close to one of the chief sources of the Orontes, the 'Ain or spring mentioned in Numb. xxvii. 11.

About this time, the quarrels between Constantinople and Rome, for the spiritual jurisdiction of the Christians in Syria, broke forth, and emissaries from each were spread through the country, for the purpose of influencing the people.

Hanna Maroun was at once elected by the united voices of the mountaineers as their adviser and leader. He immediately declared himself for the Latins, acknowledged the Pope as his spiritual master, and put himself at the head of a large body of followers.

The tenets of the Maronites are simply those of Rome—their colleges and schools being presided over by teachers and priests sent from that city; they submitted more entirely to the Pope in 1180, giving up at that time the Monophysitism, which had till then tinged their tenets, and obtaining in return the immense concession of retaining many of their own peculiar customs.

They have a very large number of monks, who, of course, take vows of celibacy and poverty; but the parish priest are almost always married; the people communicate in both kinds, and their service is conducted in Syriac—a language till lately well understood by them, but now entirely disused, since only three villages are existing where Syriac is still spoken—the Gospels and other parts are read also in Arabic.

There are between ninety and one hundred convents, containing about one thousand five hundred monks and five or six hundred nuns. The number of the Maronite population is differently stated, but is most probably about two hundred and thirty-three thousand souls. There are large numbers of them at Aleppo, Tripoli, Beyrout, and Saida, but they may be said chiefly to inhabit the Lebanon, the Kesrouan district of which is almost entirely occupied by them. The principal number of their convents are placed there and about the cedars; and in the Kesrouan they have their great priests' college of Antourah.

Hanna Maroun died A. D. 701, and was buried at Hamah; his tomb becoming at once, and for a very long time after, a place of pilgrimage to both parties among the mountaineers. His remains were believed to perform miracles, and were visited by pilgrims from even Egypt and all parts of Turkey.

A convent was soon founded beside the tomb, the monks excavating cells in the living rock for themselves, and building up loop-holed walls overlooking the ravine below, as in the convents of Mar Antonin and Khanobin. To this convent the Pope sent a present of a fine library.

Between these Maronites and the Druses, a formidable Turkish tribe in the Lebanon, almost constant war exists, and the Maronites would have been crushed but for the protection of France.

Mr. C. C. Haley, bookseller, stationer, and newsdealer, Nos. 20 Commercial Place and 153 Poydras street, has placed on our table the *New York Citizen, Turf, Field and Farm, Irish American, Boston Pilot, Lacrosse Democrat, Scientific American, New York Ledger, Literary Album, Chimney Corner, New York Clipper, American Artisan, Emerald, New York Dispatch and the New York Weekly.*

Why are corn and potatoes like Indian idols? Because they have ears that cannot hear, and eyes that cannot see.