

PROTESTANT SISTER

WORKERS WHOSE WHOLE LIFE IS A LENTEN SEASON OF SERVICE.

THEIR LIVES AND WORKS.

THE COMMUNITY OF ST. MARY REPRESENTATIVE OF THESE ORDERS.

INCREASING RAPIDLY IN SIZE.

Efforts Are Made to Restrict Its Members to Those Best Prepared for the Work.

Lent is the season when the Christian world gives itself up with more or less fervor to its spiritual devotions, and asks itself, "What is my duty toward my neighbor?"

There is a class of workers in the world whose whole life is a Lenten season in its best sense, in that it is entirely given up to spiritual devotions and doing its duty toward its neighbor. The parish, hospital and school work done by the Protestant sisterhoods is but little known, although they are most devoted and efficient laborers wherever they are to be found.

There are several sisterhoods in New York, varying according to the purpose

They are found in hospitals and mission fields in different places where the church has work for them to do. St. John's Free Hospital for Children, at 407 West Thirty-fourth street, in New York, is the property of the sisterhood, and they have recently increased its usefulness by purchasing thirty acres of land at the Rocks, above France street, where they will have a summer home. The property is controlled by the sisterhood, though always, as in other things, under the direction of Bishop Potter. The sisters take the entire charge of the sick in the hospital, assisted by women of the church, who appreciate the opportunity offered to give their services to the work.

Other institutions in the city owned by or in charge of the sisters are the House of Mercy, at Inwood, the first work undertaken by the sisters; St. Mary's school, in Forty-sixth street; the Laura Franklin hospital, One Hundred and Eleventh street; the Trinity hospital, on Varick street, and the Trinity Mission house, on Fulton street. Out of the city the sisters are in charge of a school at Kenosha, Wis.; a mission house connected with the cathedral in Chicago, a young ladies' school and orphanage in Memphis, and a mission house in Swann, Tenn. It was in Memphis, 1878, that the community lost four sisters, who were bravely battling with yellow fever and finally sacrificed their lives in the work.

The Community of St. Mary is the largest Protestant sisterhood in America. It has now nearly 100 members. There are many novitiates this year, and it is increasing rapidly in size. It is said that religious orders are anxious to add to their numbers. Every effort is made in the Community of St. Mary to restrict its members to those who are absolutely fitted for the service. The vow of poverty is taken literally. The sisters are supported by the community. There are no property regulations. The property of the sisters is sometimes given to the community.



TROUSER SKIRT COSTUME, IN STITCHED BLUE SERGE, BY CREED.

for which they were founded. The first American sisterhood was founded in New York some thirty years ago. This is the Community of St. Mary, which had its origin in the Church of the Holy Communion, Sixth avenue and Twentieth street, which is well known as a pioneer in important movements in the Episcopal church. Mother Harriet Cannon, the present mother superior of the order, was its founder. She was one of a little band of five women who, in 1863, expressed their desire to the bishop of the diocese to devote their lives to religious work.

They were first given the charge of the House of Mercy in New York, where girls from the street were taken to be reformed. The bishop and several prominent churchmen, in the meantime, considered the advisability of establishing a sisterhood in the church. The report was favorable, and in 1865 the sisters openly professed, according to a form of service prepared by the bishop for the occasion.

The committee considering the formation of the order had recommended that the sisters choose a name for themselves, draw up a code of rules for their organization, and that a chaplain be appointed for the order. It also recommended that the work of the sisters include "all the corporal and spiritual works of mercy which a woman may perform, and that she be devoted to the sick and needy, and to the work of educating the young." All this and more was incorporated in the charter of the sisterhood. The first chapter of the organization was the Rev. Dr. Dix, now the rector of Trinity church.

The vows of the sisters are not taken lightly. They are, and, as in monastic orders, are the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which are literally fulfilled. The order is governed by a chapter composed of seven professed sisters, who meet annually. At these meetings new members are admitted, if, having served a two and a half years' novitiate, they receive a two-thirds vote of the chapter. They are then professed by the bishop, take the ring with which they are consecrated to their life work, and assume the full habit of the order. The ring, which is of plain gold, is worn upon the fourth finger of the right hand.

The habit is of black merino, plain and straight, the fulcrum of the skirt formed by the box plait, which is fastened by the shoulders in the back and front. The habit is secured at the waist by a girdle of black cord. There are long, wide sleeves, falling over the close-fitting ones underneath. The plain linen collar, which is round in the back, forms a deep square in front. The full, white linen of the head dress is gathered closely around the face, and the wings of the cap turn back over it. The beautiful annunciation lily, the emblem of the order, is a ring upon a black cross, which is worn around the neck upon a black cord.

The habit of the novice is similar, only modified somewhat in detail. It is assumed after the first six months of the novitiate has been served.

The mother house of the order is at Peekskill, where the novitiates are received and prepared for their life in the community. A large plot of ground is owned at Peekskill. Upon it stand the Convent of the Incarnation and Convent of the Holy Child. St. Gabriel's school, the convent, which occupies a building formerly occupied by the school, and a chapel, built in 1882. The sisters are not engaged in work solely in institutions belonging to the order.

sometimes left to needy friends outside. Many sisters enter who have no property of any kind.

The community is pre-eminently a working order, and there is not time for extraordinary acts of devotion. A general idea of the work is best conveyed in the report of the sisters for the year past.

The chief work of the Mission house during the past year has been investigating the needs of new families; visiting and relieving the sick and poor, meeting nine guilds weekly; supervising the training girls, cooking school, and kitchen garden; gathering persons together for Sunday and Friday evening; preparing candidates for confirmation and baptism; instructing children in the church catechism (on an

average 200 are taught prayers, which they are to use daily, and looking after people, both in the guilds and in their own homes, as to their spiritual duties.

Three classes are taught in the Sunday school, and the German chapel is cared for.

The aims of the church are distributed from the Mission house, and bring many visitors with requests of all kinds, as for example: For pensions, groceries, coal shoes, old clothes, situations for work, homes for orphaned and deserted children, doctors' visits, medicine, money to cross the ferry, food, furniture, "a couple of pennies to pay the rent," money to keep up insurance, tickets to anywhere, assistance to find runaway husbands, recommendations to boarding places, and to secure free board, lodging, &c., &c., &c.

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in age from small girls to the mothers of families, and there are guilds for the boys as well. The household service training school at the mission is composed of eight little maidens, who begin their training when they are nine years of age, and are kept, if possible, until they are sixteen. All this, with the care of the seaside Summer home, is the work of the three sisters at the mission house.

There are Sisters of St. John Baptist, Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Sisters of the Holy Communion, Sisters of St. John, in Brooklyn, and others. The community of St. Mary is the largest order, and its work may be considered representative.

It has been asked if the sisters are allowed recreation in their busy lives. They find it usually in their work, and in the amusements they prepare for the children and older persons who come under their care.

"I once knew a sister who enjoyed a rare dissipation," says a clergyman. "She took a sail up the river as far as Newburg, and back, and she was perfectly delighted." The Sisters of St. Mary are allowed to visit their friends for a month each year if they like. They can always go to them in sickness.

\$5,000 IN FOUR DAYS.

Mrs. Bygrave Received It Last Week for a Bicycle Skirt.

The palm for a rapid and skillful business transaction must unquestionably be awarded to the young and pretty British matron, Mrs. Bygrave. Mrs. Bygrave landed in America on Friday, the last day of January, with a bicycle skirt of her own invention for sale. Within two hours of her arrival, she had sold her skirt to a lady from New York, and she was perfectly delighted. The Sisters of St. Mary are allowed to visit their friends for a month each year if they like. They can always go to them in sickness.

Not satisfied with the offer he made her, this self-confident, energetic young man went forth in search of greater financial inducements to part with her cycling skirt. The first establishment she visited offered her a sales price of \$1,000. Mrs. Bygrave had other ambitions and walked away in her patent skirt to a well-known firm on Twenty-third street. There she was offered \$5,000 for her skirt. She did not see the White House, that was not her business in Washington, she said.

On Tuesday she visited the patent office in New York to make sure that there would be no delay in granting the patent, visited the firm with whom she was negotiating, received a check for \$500 so soon as the patent should be received, and on Wednesday morning sailed on the Majestic for her native shore, the very neat \$5,000 transaction having been accomplished in less than four days.

Her cycling skirt is the most novel invention in the matter of wheeling skirts that has yet come before the wheeling public. By a system of wheels worked through openings near the waist line it can be made to fill three different varieties of long-felt warts in the bicycle woman.

First of all, it is a trim, circular walking skirt, close fitting over the hips and measuring about three yards at the hem. To adapt this skirt to the "drop frame" bicycle, an opening at the front breadth is pulled up by means of a shirring string run down the front seam between the lining and a narrow casing. This string is drawn through an opening at the waist, where it is fastened by means of a clasp under a neat pocket flap. The shirring reaches a shoulder above the knees, leaving the skirt neat and smart, and fitting about the hips and actually forming two loose bags in which the knees

rest and down without the slightest dragging or pulling at the waist line, which is the sad and daily experience of the woman wearing the ordinary skirts.

The thing's possibility of the unique garment is developed by working the cords that run up the back seam and find an outlet under a tailor-made flap just over the hip. The pulling of these two side cords converts the skirt into a pair of neat and graceful bloomers that will permit the fair rider, in case of an emergency, to mount a "diamond frame" bicycle with all the grace and agility of a masculine wheelman.

By the use of four square leads in the hem of the skirt the instant the strings are unclipped and the skirt stands erect the bloomers again become a walking skirt. There is no pulling of the garment.

Another replied: "He saved others, himself he cannot save, and another said: 'He trusts in God, God deliver him now if he wants him.'"

Another, more bold still, shouted to the sufferer: "If thou be the son of God come down from the cross." At this point one of the group, a young girl, who had followed the story with interest, and growing indignation, interrupted the reading and spoke out impulsively:

"Why didn't He come down?" There was no answer. There could be none. I presume all of us have asked the same question many and many a time. Why didn't He come down and confound His foes then and there? Why didn't He come down and end at once all controversy as to His divine authority and power? It would, indeed, have been a startling display of power, but not half so divine as the patience with which He endured until "it was finished." Why didn't He come down? Christ never comes down from the cross, either in His own person or in the person of His disciples. They are all made to bear until it is finished. Have we not ourselves been where it seemed as if our last desire had been refused? The cup we prayed might pass has been pressed to our lips. The heavens have seemed brass above and the earth a desert beneath. We have gone into a night that had no stars, and waited for a morning that brought no sun. In such an hour the heart has cried, "though the lips moved not," "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." At such an hour it is an unspeakable relief to remember that He whom God most surely loved, went down into the same depths and uttered the same cry.

This has been the experience of them all from the beginning until now. Again and again there has been no lightning of the lot, no lifting of the load, no turning away of the blow. The blow comes, and comes hard, too. And we are inclined to exclaim, "What profit is there if we pray unto Him?" "Made perfect through suffering" is not true alone of the Captain of our Salvation, it is true of His followers as well.

OUR SUNDAY SERMON. A STABLE FAITH A SURE SUPPORT.

REV. RICHARD CORDBLY, LAWRENCE, KAN.

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"Hold fast the profession of your faith." The profession of our faith is the faith we have professed. We have professed faith in God. God is the foundation of all things. Real faith in God supercedes everything else. If we really trust in God our trust will not abandon him when he is in trouble, nor doubt him because something has happened which you do not quite understand. You do not feel uneasy about the sun because it goes behind a cloud, or sinks below the horizon at night.

Friendship was made for the dark world, and it is not worth much if it fall when adversity comes or doubt overshadows a man. It is at such times we prize a true friend who stands by us when affairs grow awry. Faith has its special value when we cannot see. You do not count him a wise man who should abandon his spar because the waters were so wild and he was so afraid. This is not the time when he should cling to his spar. You would not count him a wise man who should wear his life preserver as he was parading the deck on a fine afternoon, and then should leave it below when the ship foundered and he must take to the water. Yet this is just the way a great many Christians regard their faith. They make much of it when everything is prosperous, and then lose their hold upon it when disaster overtakes them.

If you believe God only when He is prospering you, your faith has very little virtue and very little value. It does not mean much to trust when you can see, if you look back at the moment sight fails. What is the use of an anchor if the cable breaks when the strain comes? An anchor is intended to hold the ship. It is not expected that it will prevent the storm, or level the waves, but it is expected that it will hold the ship in place. It is not a charm to still the seas, but a cable to hold the ship. A life-preserver is not intended to keep a man out of the water, but to help him keep afloat when he is in the water. The purpose of faith is not to enable a man to escape trials, but to enable him to bear them.

A family group were reading the Scriptures in course at their morning worship. They came one morning to the account of the crucifixion, and they read, the story seemed wonderfully real and vivid. They read how Jesus went in silence from Pilate's hall to Calvary, bearing His cross till He could bear it no longer, and then another must bear it for Him. They read how the soldiers took Him and nailed Him to the cross, cast lots for His clothes; how the multitude gathered about and mocked Him. One said: "Let the King of Israel come down from the cross and we will believe Him; thou that dost destroy the temple and in three days build it again, save thyself."

Another replied: "He saved others, himself he cannot save, and another said: 'He trusts in God, God deliver him now if he wants him.'"

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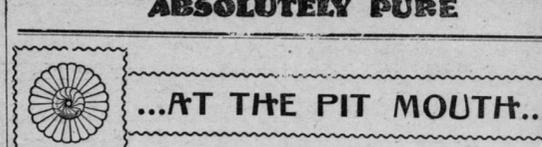
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His people bear about in their own bodies the dying of the Lord. How the noblest men have buffeted the tide and been submerged at the last. How the gentlest spirits have felt the grinding of a hard life and never known a respite. How the most beautiful characters have shone out of the darkest experience. How the lowliest have borne the heaviest and not at eventide.

Some English poet, burdened with this thought, has voiced what we all have felt, in a verse which I found floating somewhere a few years since:

Is it true, O Christ, in heaven That the purest suffer most, And most hopelessly are lost? Is the mark of rank in nature Made the sign of greatness? Does the anguish of the singer Make the sweetness of the strain? But in all this our elder has been before us. "We pass through no darker rooms than He went through before." Our faith should be for the time that tests it. However wild the storm, we trust the God who rules the storm. No matter how long and dark the night, we trust the God of the morning. As we stand in the middle of the night, it may not add a single star to the sky, or throw a single ray of light on our path, but we endure

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...AT THE PIT MOUTH...

St. Paul's. "No, no; I wuv a fool to hope or think of a thing. There be another man the loveliest, a younger man, a better man nor me. It will be Will Benson. Dnunot answer, lass, I know it. Well, forgi' me what a' said. Good-bye, Jessie, and God bless thee, lass! God bless thee!"

"Thus Steve Armstrong, as he turned away from the cottage where Jessie Mac Davitt lived; that cottage with the gay flowers around its porch that made the one bright patch of brightness in this dismal, dust-begrimed country-side, blackened everywhere by coal, saddened by the lives of men whose destiny had cast to delude and burrow beneath the fair earth that other men might grow rich."

But somehow, today Steve Armstrong could see no brightness in anything. He had been a fool, and no mistake, this great, stalwart, broad-shouldered miner! He was well past forty; his hair becoming gray, and speckled on top—quite old to her.

He had been a bachelor all these years. He might have known it was sheer madness now to lavish all the wealth of his great, manly heart on pretty, winsome Jessie. She did not want an old dog like him.

At first she seemed to hear his tale with gentle tenderness and pity. Bad, indeed, must be the woman whose heart remains untouched by the love of a true and honest man. Then a word or two she dropped almost unconsciously had revealed the truth. Of course Will Benson was the man. He had been a blind fool not to have seen it long ago. Will was twenty years younger than himself. On Sundays Will was quite a masher (the Americanism had grown into common use even here). Will was just the lad to please the girl's fancy.

It was Saturday night. Bar and parlor of the Miners' Arms was crowded with men. Here the hard-earned money of the day was being spent. A man had gone to wife and weans at home, money which might have been as a tower of strength in fighting the battles that labor and poverty always have to fight.

Will Benson was there, in the midst of a noisy throng, reeking of beer, spirits and rank tobacco. He had had a great deal too much drink already, and he was feeling queer. Suddenly someone laid a hand upon his arm. He turned tipsily and encountered the serious, steadfast gaze of Steve Armstrong, who was not drunk and had only just entered the public house.

"Dnunot tak' ony moor," the latter whispered, gently but firmly. "Ye're to be these to interfere, maister preacher?"

"No one. I ask thee not to, for the sake of a girl who loves thee." "Dinna shoo tell thee to coom pryin' after me!"

"Tha knowest better no that. I ask thee for her sake, and fur tha own good."

"Baird I've heard yow' stuff fro' t' blue ribbon bon fowk afore now." "A be none of them. I hold that a chap as canna tak' a glass or two an' be the better for it, is no worth the bein' called a man. I believe in total abstinence na moor nor I do in drink."

"What's that t' devil beest jawin' to me about?" the young man said fiercely. "I ask thee not t' spend all t' need here. Think o' her w'ost o' be tha wife. These chaps do thee no good, they'll mak' the poor young man an' when 'tis all gone, they'll only laugh at thee."

"Shew me t' mon as'll laugh at me! Ye doo it t' thyself as well as doo it. Come outside, then, and we'll see who's t' best mon."

"I wanna fight w' thee—and certainly no moor. Armstrong answered slowly and with dignity, but not the retraction of a coward. His well-meant remonstrances had proved worse than useless, and from that time those two men felt each other to be rivals.

Horror and consternation are spreading far and wide through the grimy Lancashire town. A terrible explosion has just been heard. They know only too well what that means, and the poor women, both young and old, are rushing wild and terror-stricken to the pit's mouth.

Down in the "workings" the excitement is at its height. Men are running to the bottom of the shaft, running for their lives, for the noxious after-damp is choking them and they know only too well that many of them are destined never to see the light of day again. The cage is going up and down again as quickly as may be, but it will only hold a limited number. They must patiently wait their turn, and that turn may mean life or death.

"There be room for one moor," the miners shout. "Come along, Steve Armstrong, it be the turn."

"No," he answers. "I be old a' alone. Here's a young fellow as a gotten a mither; let us go instead o' my time."

It was Bill Benson who stood by his side. "You, Armstrong! You mak' room for me," he exclaimed.

"What dost thou say, a' doo? A' fight fair—when a' want to fight."

"You do this for ma sake?" "Not for thine, moor; for her! Go!"

The words were said—there was not time for more—but they had a rough, heroic dignity about them. Benson stepped into the cage without another word, the signal was given and they went up toward the light and air above.

From those about the pit's mouth a ringing cheer arose, as the cage rose to the surface. They knew that so many, at least, of their mates were safe, and some of the women went away with hearts full of joy and triumph. The crowd went quickly round that Steve Armstrong had sent up Will Benson instead of himself. Pretty Jessie MacDavitt was there.

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SHOT WILL BE FATAL.

Mitchell Business Man Attempts Suicide—Affairs in a Tangle.

MITCHELL, S. D., March 14.—W. H. Knowles, the prominent merchant who attempted suicide this morning by shooting himself through the head, is stable and recovering rapidly. It was thought at first that two shots were fired, but doctors decided that one forty-four caliber ball passed clear through the head. He left the hospital as a reason for his rash act that he was afraid of losing his reason, and saying he preferred death to insanity. It was learned later that his financial affairs were in very strained circumstances, and his fine grocery store is now in charge of the sheriff. He has not regained consciousness, and can live but a few hours.

Lem Mallory, the credit man of a Sioux City wholesale house, said there was no excuse as far as financial matters were concerned. "I have sold him goods for fourteen years. He was perfectly honest, and would not have been crowded."

No other hotel in the Northwest provides so many modern accommodations as the table and supper-table, or American plan—choice evening dinners, fine cafe, and service as Hotel Metropolitan.