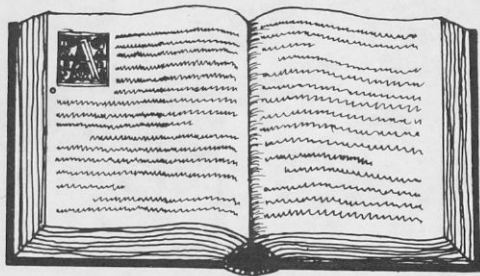


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-Life is a divine romance

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A TRAPPIST

exclaims:

**LIFE
IS A
DIVINE
ROMANCE!**



A pamphlet for women

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TO
SISTER MARY CLARE
MY SISTER-PAL
AND
MY PARTNER
IN THE
SERVICE OF LOVE
WITH THE PRAYER
THAT WE MAY MAKE OUR LIVES
WHAT HE PLANNED THEM—
DIVINE ROMANCES

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FOREWORD

"Live and learn" was a common expression in my day. It has its meaning even today, but for the most of us, it is necessary to turn the expression around and read, "Learn and live."

This was forcibly brought home to me some time ago when an eighteen-year-old stood before me and with eyes that were wide and brilliant passionately said, "I want love! I want life!" There was rebellion in the cry, there was intensity of soul. The lips had uttered the words, but the cry had come from the heart. As I looked into those eyes that were wide and earnest, eyes that were determined, defiant, almost despairing, eyes that were pleading and hungry, eyes that were bewildering and yet bewildered, I realized that I was looking into the soul of every girl who has lived, is living, or shall live. "I want love! I want life!" is the universal cry of every daughter of Eve.

As the tears trembled in the almost defiant eyes before me, I resolved to tell every Catholic girl living, that she has love and she has life, but she seldom knows it!

I am going to press into these few pages the truths I told my eighteen-year-old in the hope that every girl from eight to eighteen to eighty will come to the realization that she has love and she has life but she is blindfolded. I have one truth that I want to teach you all; it is this . . . LIFE IS A DIVINE ROMANCE!

Learn that TRUTH and then LIVE! That is the sum and substance of these pages. Learn that you are dictating a life's story that should be a Divine Romance; then live it.

Our Lady's Day
Saturday, February 17, 1940
Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani
Trappist P. O., Kentucky

LIFE IS NOT A 'MESS'!

DON'T BE LIKE NONA

"Oh! Life is just a 'mess'!" How often have you heard that cry! How often have you yourself given vent to it! With measureless disgust it surges to the lips and is out before we know it. But it is a lie! Life is not a "mess." Life cannot be a "mess." But we can make an awful "mess" of life if we are not thinkers. The trend of the times is away from anything like real thinking. The pace of the moderns is such that the mind is always engaged but never really occupied. That is why you so often hear the lie, "Oh! Life is just a 'mess'!"

We may be guilty of the same lie; or worse still, we may make a real "mess" of life if we are as shallow as was Nona.

Nona is a modern girl, one of Hutchinson's creations. She lives as many modern girls live and thinks as most modern girls think . . . hurriedly and on the surface. There comes a time in Nona's existence when she is pretty well disgusted with life. To her it seems "just a 'mess.'" At the very time when everything seems wrong, Nona hears a new word, she hears the word "flotsam," and it haunts her. She doesn't know what it exactly means, but somehow or other, it intrigues her. No matter what she thinks of, no matter what she does, she is ever hearing the tiny echo "flotsam." In exasperation, more than anything else, she seizes a dictionary, determined to find out what this haunting word means. She finds her word and she reads its meaning . . . "wreckage found floating on the sea; drifting persons or things; driftwood."

Nona looked at that meaning very long. Then she took her pen, scratched out "flotsam" and in its place wrote "NONA." . . . She felt that she was "driftwood on the Sea of Life; something cast upon the waters of the world; a sport for the ebb and the flood of the tide; something to be carried along by whatever current happened to catch it."

What a concept of life! What a concept of self! Clearly, Nona did not know what she was, nor why she was, nor where she was going. It is quite understandable that such a person should say, "Oh! Life is just a 'mess'!" for she doesn't know what life is.

But the pity of it is that there are too many Nonas. There is much flotsam and jetsam on the Sea of Life. Thousands, just drifting. They know not why and they know not whither. And all because they have never learned the truth that sounds stranger than fiction, and yet, is absolute fact; the truth that Life is a Divine Romance.

Nona is a character in a book. She is not living, but she is very true to life. You, my good Catholic reader, you are living, and to prevent you from being like Nona, to prevent you from ever crossing out "flotsam" and writing in your own name, to prevent you from ever saying that "Life is just a 'mess'!" I tell you the thrilling truth that life is a Divine Romance, that you are the beloved heroine, and your life's story, if you live rightly, will end with the last line of every romance: "And they lived happily ever afterwards." That "they" means YOU and your Divine Lover; that "ever" means ETERNITY!

LIFE IS A LOVER'S GIFT

IT BEGINS A DIVINE ROMANCE

No doubt you are already saying to yourself that I shall have to do a lot of proving before you will ever accept the proposition that Life is a Romance. In the face of the awful facts of continual worry and fret caused by the complications of our modern civilization, in the face of all the headaches and heartaches that come with the years, in the face of the fierce facts of suffering, sorrow, sickness and death, life looks like anything but a romance.

I know that. I know all that, and yet I accept the burden; and, if you will think along with me, the "lot of proving" will be done. So, let's start.

Did you ever make a snow-man? Wasn't it a thrill to roll ball after ball of fluffy whiteness, shave off so much here, stick this much on there; then get his eyes and make his mouth! Wasn't it a big thrill to stand back at last and survey your creation... a glorious snow-man with a big, broad and glistening grin!

Now let's suppose. Suppose you could have put life into him. Suppose you could make that icy mass a living man. Suppose you could give him eyes to see, and a mind to know, and a heart to love. Suppose you could breathe a soul into that body of snow. Suppose you did it. What would the snowman think of you, his creator? Would he not think that you were a giver of wondrous gifts? Before he was a frozen mass, now he has movement; before he was a shape without feeling, knowledge, love or life, now he has a soul. Now he can see, now he can feel, now he can live, now he can love! Before he was next to nothing, now he is an intelligent snow-man.

Go further. Suppose you created a whole world just for him. Made a snow-man's sun, that would not melt him; made a breeze that would not freeze him; a soil that would grow snow-man grain for a snow-man's granary. Suppose you made snow-man trees that would bear snow-man's fruit; rivers and seas that would run with snow-man fish and a forest in which were snow-man bird and beast. Suppose you studded the heaven's with snow-man's stars and a snow-man's moon, threw up mountains and leveled off plains, and all for your snow-man. What would he say of you, his life-giver and his life-preserver?

Finally, suppose that it took action on your part to keep your snow-man and his snow-man world in existence. Suppose that they were so dependent on you that, if you forgot them for the fraction of a second, they would fall back into their original next-to-nothingness. Suppose that the snow-man's life was

like an organ-note; so long as you held your finger on the key, it would go on; if you lifted your hand, it ended. Suppose now that you kept your finger on the key; suppose that you kept him ever in your mind; suppose that year in and year out you were active to keep his world going just for him. Would he not say that his creator was in love with him? That she was always thinking of him, always working for him, always providing just for him? Love, you know, gives, and you gave him life, gave him a special world, and you keep on giving just that he might live.

But perhaps you never made a snow-man. Then you most certainly had a doll, one you caressed and cared for, one you talked to and tucked into bed. Suppose, then, that you could have changed that baby-doll into a baby-daughter. Suppose you could have put flesh and blood and bone, muscle and tendon and tissue onto that little form. Suppose you could have put a heart into that tiny figure, a heart that would palpitate and send rich, red, warm blood circulating through a wondrous series of veins and arteries, carrying health to every last extremity of its little baby-body. Suppose you could have put within the baby breast, two marvelous organs for breathing, organs that by a mysterious selective process would take in air, separate its elements, keep the necessary oxygen and expel the noxious carbon. Suppose you could give your doll a subtle chemistry whereby she could take in bread and meat and vegetable and convert these lifeless things into her own living flesh and blood. Suppose you could give your little doll a nervous system, so delicately attuned that never a "line" is "out of order" or "busy" or "doesn't answer," but with infallible certainty each tiny afferent nerve carries its message in and each tiny efferent nerve carries its message out. Oh! suppose you could breathe a soul into your baby-doll, a soul that would shine out through eyes that were once glass, a soul that would know and

remember and love, a soul that would never die, a soul that was a spirit immortal! What would your animated baby-doll say of life? Would she call it a "mess" or an untellable wonder? Would she not say that you were in love with her? For love, you know, gives!

Now stop supposing and face facts! What were you a hundred years ago?... Nothing. Men lived and laughed then; little girls played with dolls and made snow-men; the world went on, and you were not even thought of. Not thought of by parents, by grandparents or by great-grandparents. But now you are. Now you breathe, you live, you walk, you think, you act. Who made you? Who put oxygen into the air that you might breathe? action into your heart that blood might circulate? power into your being that food might be changed into flesh? Who gave you hands to clasp loved ones? ears to snatch melody from the sky? eyes to drink in the wonder of Nature's prodigality with beauty? Who gave you nostrils to rob from the rose its scent? Who gave you a system of sensory nerves so complicated as to baffle the mind, so delicately attuned as to cause reverent awe? Who holds you in the hollow of His hand to keep you from falling back into the absolute nothingness from which He called you? Who but God! God! God!

Yes, stop supposing and face undeniable facts. One hundred years ago you were nothing. The world went on and you were not even thought of. Not thought of by manbut you were thought of by God. He the omnipotent, infinite, omniscient God had tiny you in mind. Before Time was and before the world began, almighty God *loved* you. He sent sun and moon and stars winging through space; *because He loved you*, He threw up majestic mountains and hollowed out the hills; *because He loved you*, He set the ceaseless sea in motion and gave to Mother Earth, growth. *Because He loved you*, bird and beast, flower and tree and shrub were

set breathing. *Because He loved you*, He set the galleons of God drifting through the skies, dropping gentle rain in summer, and in the winter, crystals of wondrous snow. This whole glorious world of ours was called forth from nothing *because God was in love with —YOU!*

Yes, it is true! Absolutely true! You can't get blood from a stone, nor from a rose a radiant woman — and so with life. Life comes but from the Living, and mind from Intelligence alone. "He who is" was the cause of your becoming. "I who am" said, "Let you be." It was God who gave you life, and God it is who keeps you living. He is in every breath you breathe, in every blink of your eye, in every beat of your heart. Your life IS like an organ-note, and God is at the console.... Now, love gives, you know, and love keeps on giving, and you are living because God is Love! Life is a gift from your Lover! Life is not a "mess"; it is *love!*

**LOVE IS NOT BLIND...NOT EVEN
BLINDFOLDED
BUT LOVED ONES OFTEN ARE!**

The world, the very wise world, laughs at love; and I suppose the sophisticated world will smile at our first conclusion and say, "If life is love, then love is certainly blind." But let me say that the wise world is not so wise, and the sophisticated world, not knowing. Love is NOT blind, nor is the Lover; but the loved ones often are. They "can't see the trees for the forest," nor the Lover for the Lover's gifts.

Love is prodigal, but love is also purposeful. Infinite Intelligence did not say "Let there be light" because He was in a sportive mood. Omnipotent fingers did not fashion a form of clay and then breathe into it His own image because He was at play. Jupiter and Saturn and Uranus were not set on the wing because God liked light and motion. No! God works purposefully. He IS Intelligence. He has a

purpose for a Betelgeuse and a bee, for a moon and a sub-electron. God has an eternal purpose for you. He has not set you drifting. He has made you, "directed"... directed back to Him. Love, you know, is possessive, it wants "to have and to hold," and God is very much in love with you. He made you, and He made you for Himself. Having made you in Time, He wants you for Eternity, and for Eternity He will have you, if in Time you are a real creature!

Keys are made to open locks, watches to tell the time, silver bells are made for ringing, and rose-buds to burst into bloom. Dawn must grow into daylight and sunset bring on the night. A bee must produce its honey, and the moon control the sea. It is God's way. Every creature has its purpose, every creation its appropriate end; and you... must go to God. He is your beginning, and He is your end; for He made you to know Him and to love Him in Time and — for Eternity.

Your mind must go to truth and your heart to all that is beautiful; and just as dolls do not satisfy your later years, neither will the trinkets of time, nor the baubles of the earth adequately satisfy your soul. Yet, your hunger must be sated and your burning thirst slaked, else, God be not God, but a jester, one who has played a cruel joke upon mankind! Pharaoh, you remember, commanded the Jews to make bricks and then denied them the straw wherewith to make them. Seeing their discomfiture, he laughed at his own clever cruelty. God would be Pharaoh, and worse than Pharaoh, if that questing soul of yours were ever to be searching for the good, the true and the beautiful and yet never to know and love Him who is Goodness, who is Beauty and who is Truth!

No; Love is not blind, not even blindfolded, but the loved ones often are. Life has no "mystery," nor existence a "riddle." Both are simple. They have but one end, one aim, one object. Life is love! It was given you out of love, by Love and for Love. It began

because He loved you, it continues because He still loves you, and it is to end in His eternal love, if you love Him. You are the blinded one! So, remove the blindfold and see! See that Life is a Divine Romance!

REMOVE THE BLINDFOLD AND SEE!

Two men were standing on the southern rim of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. They were both looking down the distant depths, past fantastically shaped rocks, some that looked like Turkish mosques with domes and minarets, others like battlemented castles of medieval times with towers and turrets uncountable. Down, down they looked past rocks that were red and brown and purple, past rocks that were yellow and green and gold, down, down to the strip of solid silver that was the Colorado River rushing onward to the sea. It was a breath-taking sight, for Nature, with her hammer of wind and her chisel of rain, has sculptured strange shapes from rocks that are as colored as the rainbow.

At long last the silence caused by such grandeur was broken, but only by what was little more than a whisper. "Doesn't it all make you feel small?" said one.

Before answering the other looked east and west, then down and down. Then he answered. With almost a shout he said, "Small? Small? I should say NOT! It makes me feel big, tremendously big." Then in a more subdued tone he added, "I was just thinking that my God has been working for ages with His wind and His rain, His river and His rocks, just so that this day I might see His glory and His grandeur written in this wonderland of stone." There is a contrast for you. One was breathless, felt small. The other was articulate, felt big. One saw rocks, a river, a spectacle. The other saw — God. One, you see, had a vision, the other had only — sight.

To you, I say, "Remove the blindfold and see! See God all around you. That is the reason of the world, that you might see God!"

How often have you thrilled as you listened to "Trees"? For once music is wedded to a poem's soul and sense. Ah, it can hardly be called a poem; call it rather a poet's prayer. You and I look at a forest and see — growth. Kilmer, the prayerful poet, saw — God! Listen to his lines:

"A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray."

Then his humble and admiring close:

"Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree."

Yes, indeed. That is a poet's prayer of praise. That is using creatures as God meant them to be used. That is using creation to see the Creator. That is removing the blindfold and seeing. Creatures, you see, are like so many letters, that is all; just letters of the alphabet. Put them together and they spell for you; they spell — God!

Joseph Mary Plunkett was another of those who has removed the blindfold. Just look at what he saw:

"I see His Blood upon the rose,
And in the stars the glory of His eyes.
His Body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

"I see His Face in every flower;
Thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His Voice. — And carven by His
Power,
Rocks are His written words.

"All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong Heart stirs the ever-beating
Sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every
thorn,
His Cross... is every tree."

Oh, see as these men saw. See God, your Lover, in the wide world around you. "God is the Obvious Invisible." Be not like the un-seeing world! Remove your blindfold and see! In a sunrise and a sunset, the world sees a

beautiful sky; you see... your beautiful God. In the ocean the world sees a measureless waste of waters; you see... the Immensity of your loving God. In mountains, the world sees mighty hills with a possibility of gold; you see... the Eternity of your Changeless God. In Night, the world sees peace and a starlit sky; you see... the Holiness of God in the hush of the heavens and His Infinity in the countless stars. In a snowflake, the world sees frozen rain; you see... the Power of your God who smashed it off on His anvil of ether, see... the Perfection of your God in each tiny perfect crystal. In a raindrop, the world sees moisture; you see... the Omnipotence of you Lover, for the tiny drop is teeming with life! Yes, your God is the "Obvious Invisible"; so, open your eyes and see. See, not as the world has taught you to see, but see as God wants you to see. See Him!

God is so practical! You can't love what you don't know, and God wants you to love Him, so He becomes the "Obvious Invisible." Microscope, telescope and naked eye reveal but One, the Loving One—God! He has placed Himself all around you, in earth and sea and sky, in fern and flower and fruit. No matter where you look or at what you look, if you have clear vision, you'll see—God! And oh! He is so beautiful, so good, so mighty, so lovable that you can't help doing just what He wants you to do, you can't help praising, reverencing and serving Him and thus saving your soul. You simply can't help falling in love with Him in Time and, if you do, He'll love you for all Eternity. That is the practical purpose of creatures: to show you the Creator. That is the purpose of life: *to love!*

**"THERE IS NOTHING TO LIVE FOR" —
IS A LIE!**

**THERE'S A WHOLE ETERNITY OF LOVE
TO WIN!**

Despite the fact that all that we have said is patent to any one who really thinks, there

have been those who have said: "There is nothing to live for."

Some few years ago, I clipped a small square from a newspaper. It is a tiny thing, but what a tragedy it tells! It is an Associated Press report and reads: "Bodies of Mrs. Wilcox, thirty-four, and her twenty-one months old baby, were found washed up on the shore of Lake Ontario today. A note left by the woman reads: 'I am taking baby with me. Gossip in this town has killed me, and there is nothing for Caroline Mae to live for.'"

Oh, what a tragedy! Think of it — a woman of thirty-four, a wife and mother, and yet she had never learned what life was for. And poor little Caroline Mae, because her mother thought there was nothing to live for, was deprived, at twenty-one months, of the possibility of living a Divine Romance!

Had you met Mrs. Wilcox just before the fatal plunge, what would you have said to her? Would you not have cried, "No! No! Don't do it! Life is not a 'mess.' Life is love. Caroline Mae has much to live for. She has an Eternity of love to live for! God loves her. God wants her. God has planned for her a Royal Romance. According to His plan, her life is a love-story. He made her out of love, He sustains her out of love. This whole world of ours, He made just that she might know Him, love Him and serve Him. She is to live according to His plan, and, if she does, she will have love everlasting. That is God's plan for your baby-girl. Don't you see that she has much to live for? Don't you see that she has love to live for... a whole eternity of love to win?"

Would you not have taken the baby from her arms and said, "Oh, my dear Mrs. Wilcox, this baby is not yours; it is God's! Look! Just look at this marvel of Omnipotence. Look at baby hands and baby feet, look at darling baby head. See the eyes, the ears and the mouth, see the precious baby nose. Oh, Mrs. Wilcox, only God could create such a beautiful thing! Feel baby's pulse. That means that

within baby's breast a baby heart is beating and sending blood from tip of toe to crown of head. Only God could set that heart beating. Do look at these pink and shell-like ears, they can hear. These baby eyes can see, her tongue can taste and her baby hands feel. Oh, only God could give such power to weakness! And, Mrs. Wilcox, the day will come when she shall know and love you, not as she does now, by instinct, but with intelligence; for Caroline Mae has a soul, an immortal, spiritual soul. This soul, Mrs. Wilcox, makes her like God. He is spirit, so is Caroline Mae's soul. He is eternal, her soul is immortal; He is a Trinity in Unity, she has three faculties in one soul; He is infinite, the desires of her soul are almost the same; He is Past and Present and Future, she can remember the past, know the present, and plan for the future; God is Truth, that is all that her mind wants; God is Beauty, that is her soul's one wish; God is Love, her soul must have Him! Oh, Caroline Mae is your baby, it is true, but it is much more true that she is God's child. She may have your face and your features, your eyes and your identical nose, but her soul, her immortal, spiritual soul is stamped deep and indelibly with the very image of God. She belongs to God, to you she was only lent. She belongs to God alone! He made her, and He made her for Himself!"

It is too late to talk to Caroline Mae or her mother, but it is not too late to talk to yourself. Everything that you have said about that baby-girl is true about yourself. God "has loved you with an everlasting love," and because of it you will live everlastingly and have love everlastingly, if you live according to His plan. No! Life is not a 'mess'! Love is not blind. There is much, very much, there is an eternity of love to live for. Indeed, Life is a Divine Romance ... BUT—it can be ruined!

THE ROMANCE CAN BE RUINED

God made us for Himself, it is true, but it is also true that He made us free. He gave us a plan of life, really a plot for a Divine

Romance, but He does not force us to follow it. If we do follow, we shall produce a real romance; but with the same materials, the same characters, in the same settings, we can produce a tragedy if we listen to the worldly world, the pagan world, the villainous world, which is a cheat and a liar.

Lady Macbeth, as you remember, had tremendous will power. Had she employed it on its proper object, she would have been the heroine of a saintly saga. She could have taken her husband to the heights, just as she drove him to the depths, but Lady Macbeth listened to a cheat and a liar. She listened to the voice of the world. It whispered, "Get power" ... and murder followed.

But why go to Shakespeare and to fiction? Look at history and at Sacred Scripture and see there the contrast between one who listened to the lying whispers of the world, and one who listened only to her soul. With all reverence look at the sharp contrast presented by Cleopatra of Egypt and Mary, the Maid of Nazareth.

Cleopatra listened to a world that said, "Be great," and she devoted all her beauty, all her time and all her talents to one only end ... to enslaving men of power that she might use them as stepping-stones to a throne. She is reputed to have been beautiful. I suppose she was. I know that she was clever, and I also know that she concentrated all her energies to the one purpose. Cleopatra arrived. She became Queen of Egypt.

But look at Nazareth's Maid. She listened only to her soul. It, too, had whispers for her. It said, "You were made by God and for God. Be holy." And Mary consecrated all her time and all her talents to the praise, the reverence and the service of her Maker. The Immaculate Maid of Nazareth "knew not man," but she won—God!

Now, Anthony may have gone to Cleopatra because of the beauty of her body; I know God came to Mary because of the beauty of her soul. Cleopatra became queen, queen of a

tiny kingdom that is no longer heard of; Mary became Mother of God, then Mother of men, and finally Queen of Heaven, a kingdom of which there shall be no end. To end her life, Cleopatra took asps to her breasts and most likely damned her soul; when Mary died, she was taken body and soul into everlasting happiness. Isn't the world a liar? Would you call Cleopatra a success or a colossal failure? Would you name her life's story a romance or a hideous tragedy? Would you say that she had had real life, real love, or only counterfeits? As for Mary Immaculate . . . why, all generations have, all generations do, and all generations will, "call her blessed."

The world has many whispers and the world has countless conquests, but for all that, the world is still a cheat and a liar. It talks of wealth and pleasure and popularity, it whispers of fame and beauty and power. It tells you of 'good times,' of ease and comfort and security; it talks of freedom from work and worry; it slyly whispers how to avoid the natural consequences to natural acts, how to frustrate the designs of the God of Nature; it tells you the awful lie that "you can eat your cake and have it, too." The world is ever whispering half-truths and untruths and all to get you to ruin your romance, to get you to lose your immortal soul.

Oh! Be wary! Be wise! Who are the truly wise of the world? Not the wealthy or the healthy or the mighty, but the *holy*! Who are the foolish? Those who listen to the lying whispers of the world, who so love pleasure that it means more to them than purity; who so love favor in the eyes of men that for it they forfeit the grace of God; who think more of beautifying their body than of adorning their soul; who would prefer to be popular rather than virtuous; who would rather have money than goodness; who seek the heady, intoxicating joys of the flesh, rather than walk the ways of God. These are the fools of the world!

Tell me . . . where are the beautiful women

of twenty years ago? They were the "talk of the town." They had men worshipping at their feet. But beauty fades, and men have very short memories. Where are the wealthy women of just a few years back? Depression struck like a thunderbolt, and there followed in its wake, smashed homes and suicides; for women had set their hearts on money. Where are the great queens of only a century ago? Mouldering in their graves, and the thrones from which they dominated have fallen or been usurped.

When the longing for power comes, think of Elizabeth of England and then of Elizabeth of Hungary. Contrast the "good queen Bess" and God's lovable saint. For a few short years they had their grandeur and their glory; glory and grandeur to which you may not even aspire. Then they had to leave it all and face their Maker, who asked, not, "Did you gain power and glory and grandeur?" but, "How did you use the world of creatures that I gave you? Did you live according to My plan, or did you listen to the lying world? Have you written a Romance or have you ruined one?"

When the world whispers of money (and it will!), think of Dives; then remember Lazarus. One had money and all that it can buy, the other was poor, pitifully poor; the one ended in hell, the beggar-man won heaven. When the world whispers of riches (and it will!), think of Dives; then remember Lazarus-Gospel; then remember John the Evangelist. One kept his riches and lost an apostleship with Jesus Christ, the other left all and became the "beloved disciple." When the world whispers of pleasure (and it always will!), think of Herod; then remember John the Baptist. One had all this world can give, he reveled in luxury, the other dwelt in the desert and knew nothing of the joys of sense. Christ wouldn't even speak to the one; of the other, He said, "greater had not been born of woman." When the world whispers of beauty (and oh, it will!), think of Cleopatra; then remember Mary Immaculate. The one won men,

the other won God. When the world whispers of fame, popularity and the favor of the powerful (and it most certainly will!), think of Herodias and her daughter Salome; they were the "first ladies of the land" as long as Herod ruled; then remember Mary Magdalene—even Scribes and Pharisees sneered at her, but Jesus, the God-Man, *loved* His repentant saint!

BY LISTENING TO LYING WHISPERS

Do be wise! Know well that the lying whispers of the world are only meant to ruin your Romance. One of the most dangerous and most horrible lies that it tells is: "Just this once! Let's—just this once."

Twenty-odd years ago on the concrete highway that stretches like a ribbon of cement tying Albany to New York there was a smash-up. Early one gray November morning, an auto, in which a young man of twenty was driving a girl of eighteen, crashed into a fence, hurling the girl through the wind-shield and on to her death.

She had been a good girl. She had been a very beautiful girl. Carried home, she was laid out in white, and it was enough to wring the heart of the sternest to look down upon the frozen beauty of the face forever stilled in death. The undertakers had restored most of the broken beauty, and it did not seem fair that one so young and so beautiful should be dead.

As so often happens, the driver of the machine was not seriously hurt. The night before the burial, he came to the wake and looked down on the dead beauty of the one he had loved. Suddenly he shook all over, gasped, gave a scream of horror and then ran from the room. A doctor who happened to be present followed him out and, grasping him rather roughly, wheeled him around saying: "Control yourself, man ..." but there he stopped and looked more closely into the eyes of the boy, who was crying, "She's lost! She's lost!" No wonder he stopped, for he was looking into the eyes of a man who had lost his

mind, a man who could only weirdly whisper, and kept on weirdly whispering, "I drove her to death. I hurled her into hell." Today, that man is still in the insane asylum, and today you can hear him whisper, "I drove her to death. I hurled her into hell."

The story is that, on that night, they had both listened to the lying whisper, "Let's— just this once," and they had sinned. They sinned that night, and death took her in her sin!

Oh, the mockery of that wake! No wonder the boy went mad. To look down on beauty in white and to know that her soul was likely in hell! Oh! the irony of it all! She died in front of a house in which there were more than fifty priests, but death came before any one of them absolved her! That was twenty years ago and, undoubtedly, if she didn't repent in the last moments, for all these twenty years she has burned in hell, and for all the twenty years to come she shall burn there, a thing of hate to the eyes of the loving God who made her out of love and for love; and all because she listened to lying whispers. The worst of all the lying whispers, the one that says, "Let's — just this once."

How many have listened to that other lying whisper: "Everybody does it." Oh, that whisper has filled the world with broken hearts, broken homes, ruined lives. "Everybody does it" has wielded the two-edged sword of Herod in the slaughter of the innocents, and many a woman is now like Rachel, "weeping for her children who *should* be and are *not*." "Everybody does it" has caused many a girl to sacrifice that which is priceless. "Everybody does it" has robbed the modern world of love, loyalty, honesty, innocence, modesty and decency. And it's a lie! Everybody does NOT do it. In fact, nobody does it, nobody who realizes what life is and what she herself is, nobody who realizes that God is her Lover and that life is a Divine Romance!

When you hear that whisper again, "Everybody does it," think of Reno, think of the very

well filled state and private insane asylums, think of the countless nervous wrecks that pay good money to psycho-analysts and nerve-specialists, all because they listened to the lie "Everybody does it." Yes, everybody DOES it — everybody who is stupid enough to think that Nature can be frustrated and that the God of Nature can be mocked. Oh, be wise! Know that "Everybody does it" is a devil's lie!

But perhaps the worst of all the whispers is, "Be modern." Yes, "Be modern! Don't be so medieval!" "Be broad-minded! Don't be a narrow-minded Puritan!" "Oh! Be human!" It runs the whole gamut, but the dominant note is "Be modern." What it really is saying is, "Be stupid! ... Sin!" Will you tell me what is modern about sin? It started with Adam and Eve in the Garden. Why, it started even before that! It started with Lucifer at Creation's dawn. The angels sinned, just once, and became devils. Our first parents sinned, just once, and the story of mankind is that of "Paradise Lost." That's how modern sin is!

And what is broad-minded about it? All selfishness is narrow, and every sin is selfish! Will you tell me just what is human about it? Man was made a rational animal, the king of the visible creation; sin is subjection to the lower part of human nature, it is subjection to creatures! Oh, it is all a lie! A devilish lie! "Be modern" — as if the Ten Commandments of God could ever grow old! As if the eternal God with His promise of Eternity could ever become ancient! As if love, real love, was something antique!

Child of God, learn that the world is a dangerous world, a dirty world, a deadly world. You know that you can't handle pitch and be clean, don't you? Then why READ what you do? The daily paper in all its pages, the modern magazines, the day's "best seller." Aren't they all pitch? Isn't the tale of murder divorce, debauchery, of lust and "free-love" unclean? You can't handle pitch and be clean; then why LOOK at what you do? The movies,

the shows, the pornographic literature, the parading of the flesh? You can't handle pitch and be clean; then why TALK as you do? Smutty stories and suggestive jokes may be clever, they most certainly are not clean! You can't handle pitch and be clean; then why DRINK as you do? God made wine to exhilarate, not to inebriate! You can't handle pitch and be clean; then why SEEK what you do? Money for money's sake, fame, favor, popularity, pleasure, just for themselves! You are abusing God's creatures! You are listening to the world's lying whispers! You are handling pitch! You are ruining your Romance by SIN!

BY TURNING YOUR BACK ON YOUR LOVER

Now understand me. Money and food and drink, parties and dances and pleasures, health and happiness, popularity, beauty, fame, power—all, all of these things are *good*. They came from God, and He can give only good things. But He gave them for *use*; we often take them for abuse!

Health is a blessing; but I can make it a curse. If a glowing health makes me proud and boastful, if a sturdy frame makes me a "bully," if a sound body takes me from the service of God, then I have made a curse of a blessing. And you . . . if you make bodily beauty an end instead of a means, if you allow a graceful figure and a good complexion to lead you to vanity, conceit, sin, then you have made of a blessing a curse. So also with pleasure and popularity, they are *good*. God gave me life and laughter and friends, but He gave them for *use*, not abuse. If a dance and a drink means more to you than decency, if you compromise your Catholic principles and allow unlawful familiarities for the sake of someone's company, if place in a certain social set means more to you than the externals of your religion, then you are abusing what was meant for use, you are turning your back on your Lover.

Yes, it is a deliberate turning your back on God! And, oh, the trifles that cause some girls to take that foolish turn! For silk stockings, a fur coat, and temporal security, some have sacrificed goodness! For the friendship of a man "who owned a car," some have surrendered virtue! For a passing, selfish thrill, some have forfeited what can not be bought, nor ever restored!

Why turn your back on your Lover? Why ruin your Romance? Why be selfish? Why sin? It has never paid! The wages of sin have ever been and ever will be — *death!* The wages of unrepented mortal sin is death eternal!

Turning one's back on one's lover has ever meant a bleeding heart and ever will. In the case of the abuse of creatures, in the case of sin, it means a bleeding heart for you, for "the worm of conscience never dies"; but it means more, it means a bleeding of the Sacred Heart! It means a broken Heart to God! That's how deeply He loves you!

Pray often, as Louise Imogen Guiney does in her poem, "Deo Optimo Maximo":

"All else for use; One only for desire.
Thanksgiving for the **good**, but thirst for Thee.
Up from the **best**, of which no man need tire,
Impel Thou me!"

Use creatures, don't abuse them! Don't turn your back on your God! Don't sin!

BUT THE ROMANCE CAN BE RIGHTED AGAIN

YOU CAN "MAKE UP" WITH GOD

Sin is an infinite thing, for it is an insult to an infinite God. Sin is an infinite thing, and it merits an infinite punishment. Sin is an infinite thing, and it puts between the Lover and the beloved a distance that is infinite. But your Romance and my Romance do not end because we have sinned. In strict justice, they should; but God is Mercy. Paradise was lost; but ours is the Romance of "Paradise Regained." Love found a way. Love always finds a way. Love found a way to span the

infinite abyss, a way to unite the hearts that were infinitely separated, a way to satisfy for the insult that was infinite. Eden was polluted, but red streams of Blood Divine ran down Calvary's mound, and our Romance was righted. Paradise was regained!

Oh! What a lavish Lover our God is! You and I have forfeited all right to consideration. You and I had been as blind as Mrs. Wilcox. You and I had drowned our soul in sin, and as far as our Royal Romance was concerned, we were as dead as was Caroline Mae the day they found her body on the shore of Ontario's lake. We had listened to the lying whispers of the world. It said, "Let's — just this once," and we sinned. It said, "Everybody does it," and we sinned again. It said, "Oh, be modern! Be human!" and we sinned and sinned and sinned. Time after time we have turned our back on our Lover. Time after time we have set the Sacred Heart bleeding. Time after time we have broken the very Heart of God, and what does He do? Determined to have us despite the world, the flesh and the devil, determined to have us despite our stupid blindness and our disgusting selfishness, determined to have us despite our infinite sin, He finds a way, He finds a sacred way, He makes a Sacrament!

This time love IS blind, and so is the Lover — blind to all our stupidities, our insults, our infinite sins, blind to all that is past, if we but say and mean, "I'm sorry, I won't do it again." We had wrecked a Romance; He would have us right it, and the righting of it is simple. Only God, only an infinite God, could make it so simple!

What a lavish Lover God is! Though His Heart is broken and bleeding, He is "The Hound of Heaven," and, though we "flee Him down the nights and down the days," though we "flee Him down the arches of the years," though we "hide from Him," He'll "follow after, ever after." Though we leave the fold, He is the Good Shepherd. We may wander far, He'll leave the ninety-nine to find us!

He is the Father of the Prodigal, and though we leave home, live riotously, squander a patrimony, He'll run out to meet us if we but start to come back. He'll run out and kiss us, though we be dirty, soul-sick, sin-sick, if we are but ashamed!

But why use figures? Why talk? Just say, "He is God!" That tells the whole story; for only an infinite and an infinitely loving God could invent the tribunal of Confession, making the feet of His anointed priests a trysting place for parted lovers, the rendezvous for Omnipotence and the sin-sick soul, the secret meeting-place of God and His wayward child.

Oh, how easy it is to "make up" with God! How easy it is to right a ruined Romance! How easy it is to heal broken hearts, both His and ours! How easy it is to stop bleeding hearts, both His and ours! How easy it is to set failing hearts beating together again, just His and ours!

What a forgiving and forgetting Lover is God! You and I tore off our engagement ring and threw it in His face every time that we abused creatures. Every time that passion or pleasure or pride, every time that anger, envy, gluttony or sloth was wilfully courted, every time that our sinful self sought its sinful self, just so often did we tear off our engagement ring and throw it into the face of our loving God. And yet, if we but turn back now, no matter how long we have been away, if we turn back now and say, "I'm sorry," and really mean it, if we say, "I won't do it again," He'll smile, brush away our tears and put the ring back on again. Isn't life a Royal Romance?

Oh, what a lover is our loving God! For our denials worse than Peter's, He has the same loving look to recall us to our senses; for our betrayals worse than Judas's, He has a cheek that will not spurn a kiss, and a tongue that will say "Friend"; for all our scandals, worse than Magdalen's, He has the same loving words of forgiveness; for our cruel crucifixions, much worse than that of the Jews, He prays His father for pardon!

Just look at how thoughtful is our Lover. Had we to kneel before His very face, what a trial and a torture would be confession! Then fear and awe and shame would rob us of speech. Had we to kneel to an angel, how dread and difficult confession would be! What does Michael or Gabriel or Raphael know of the weakness of the flesh? What do cherubim and seraphim know of passion or the enchanting whispers of the world? What do angels or archangels know of the hungers of the human heart? But to none of these do we have to kneel. Our Lover makes it easy for us. He has us kneel to a man, one like ourselves, one of flesh and blood, one who lives in a world that whispers, one who has a human heart that ever wants to be wayward, one who has passions and impulses and concupiscence, one just like ourselves! How easy God has made it for us! He has us kneel to one, like ourselves, who can really understand, and one, unlike ourselves, who can really pardon. He has us kneel to an anointed and a consecrated man, a man set apart, a man who has been trained as only the Church can train a man, a man in whom the Church has placed the experience of twenty centuries of dealing with human souls, a man, like and yet unlike ourselves, for he is sealed with the deep seal of Christ; and therefore, is a man who can love without loving, a man with discretion, a man with a mind strange to curiosity, vanity or fear, with a heart that is like an immense well, into which all our sins can be dropped; but a well so deep that no sound ever comes back from the depths to any ear that might be bent to listen. This is the man whom God has made His plenipotentiary, who can give us back our engagement ring and reconcile us to an outraged God.

Not only does our Lover forgive and forget, but He even provides for the future. Knowing us better than we know ourselves, He gives us something to strengthen our weakness, something to cure our blindness, something to sharpen our hearing and to clarify our judgments. He knows that the world is

going to whisper again and that we may listen. He knows that there is a possibility that we may put on the blindfold again, that we may once again look at creatures and see only creatures. He knows that we may be fools enough again to tear off the engagement ring, so He gives us — grace!

Oh, what a Lover is God! At a time when justice would demand punishment, expulsion and complete abandonment, He not only forgives, but He also gives. He not only forgets the past, but He looks forward into the future. He not only takes care of sin but even provides for our sinfulness. Truly the Sacrament of Penance is a miracle of mercy. It makes life livable, it makes life lovable again, for it makes it possible for you and for me to get to God.

How fittingly, then, has Father LeBuffe, S.J., put it when he says:

“God is Love and I’m a lover

Who would fain be deep in love.

“God is Love and I’m a lover,

Life is Love’s brief Tournament.”

What would you think of the “woman taken in adultery,” if she had gone back to her adultery the minute God had saved her from a stoning? What would you think of the “paralytic who was let down through the roof” if, as soon as Christ had set his feet dancing, he hurried out to his selfsame sins? What would you have thought of Magdalene if, after the public forgiveness in Simon’s house, she had gone out and become again the public sinner? What would you have thought of the lepers whom Jesus cured if, the moment they were made clean, they went back to their old haunts that reeked with lepers and leprosy? What would you think of the dumb whose tongues He loosed if, the moment they could talk, they fell to cursing, swearing, blaspheming, to back-biting, slanders and lies, to talking scandals and smut? What, then, can you think of yourself if, after confession, you again turn your back on your Lover; if, after “making

up," you again tear off the ring from your finger; if, after absolution, you again ruin your Romance? What can you honestly think of yourself if, after confession, you again walk into the *occasions* of sin?

**"YES, FATHER, BUT...LISTEN...
THERE IS SUFFERING...AND...DEATH"**

I can well imagine that by this time you are puzzled by the absolute logic of the theme that Life is a Divine Romance. You can't get away from the truth of it; for a Romance is a love-story, about lovers, who, after a complication, find themselves in one another's arms to "live happily ever after." That is the universally accepted definition of a Romance. Then, when you look at what you are and why you are, where you came from and where you are going, you find that love, love, love is the story of your existence, you see the complication, you see also the happy ending. You can't escape the truth that Life is a Divine Romance, and yet, you are saying, "Yes, Father, but listen ..."

"Yes, Father ... it's all true ... but listen ... there's an awful lot of pain and sorrow in life. Some one has well said, 'We begin it with a cry and end it with a sigh,' and oh! Father, the measureless mountain of woe between the two! Think of the veritable sea of tears that falls between our first baby cry and our last sigh of life. You see, Father, what you say about life is true in the abstract, but we must face facts! In the ideal order all that you say is true, but in the very real, workaday world, in everyday life and everyday living there is so much headache and so much heartache, that life doesn't seem very much like a Romance. In fact, I think most of us would call it more tragic than romantic."

I'm glad you said that. I'm very glad; for now we can look at facts. There is suffering in the world ... much! There is sorrow in the world ... very much! Life IS replete with headache and heartache, and I'm not denying

one single tear-drop in that veritable ocean that falls, and yet I'm still maintaining that Life is a Romance, and a Divine Romance.

SUFFERING IS NOT AN EVIL

Is suffering an evil?

If it is, God is an evil God! Look what He did to His Mother . . . seven swords pierced her heart! She brought forth her Baby-God in the bleakness, loneliness, coldness of a cattle cave. She saw Him die a criminal's death on a cross. Hardly had He been born when she had to fly with Him into exile. At twelve, she lost Him. At thirty, He left her. At thirty-three, He was dead. If suffering be evil, God is an evil God.

Is suffering an evil?

If it is, then God is a very evil God. Look what He did to His Son. The Lord of glory was born between an ox and an ass. The King of kings was shunted into a pagan exile by a petty tyrant, called Herod. The Son of God had to become the Village Carpenter. The Teacher of all teachers was questioned by Scribe and Pharisee. The Ruler of the Temple was condemned by the Sanhedrin. The First of many brethren was sold by Judas, denied by Peter, and deserted by the Twelve. The Lord of life was put to death, and that, after a scourging, a crowning and the way of the cross!

Is suffering an evil?

If it is, then, indeed, God is a god of evil. Look at how He treats His faithful ones. John the Baptist was murdered; Peter, His "Rock," was crucified. Paul, His "vessel of election," was beheaded, and John, His "beloved," cast into a caldron of boiling oil. His virgins He gives to beasts, His confessors as light for Nero's garden, His stalwart ones as sport for the arena.

No! Something is wrong. Suffering cannot be an evil, for all of God's loved ones have suffered, and suffered terribly. Why, God Himself suffered as no one before Him or after

Him ever suffered. Suffering must be a good!

And the same with sorrow. Jesus was the "Man of Sorrows," Mary the "Mother of Sorrows," and every true follower of Christ and friend of God has known sorrow, and deep sorrow. You'll know it, too, much of it, both mentally and physically, before death comes; but that doesn't mean that life is not a Romance. I didn't say life was a "bed of roses," I said life is a "love-story;" and because it is a love-story, it deals with the heart, and hence, there will be heartache. Yes, you'll know suffering and sorrow, but you should never grow sad, you should never know despondency and, of course, never despair, for *God* loves you, and Life IS a Divine Romance.

Tell me, did you ever see tapestry-weavers at work? Well, they always work from behind. They are eternally drawing threads, some red, some white, some black. Oh, at times it looks "just a mess," a maze of varied colors, a "crazy-quilt"; but the weavers go on, endlessly drawing the threads. There are times when it looks like nothing but a mass of loose ends, a mere multiplicity of meaningless, worthless, wasted threads; yet the weavers go on, drawing the threads. Finally the last thread is drawn. Then the tapestry is turned, and the weavers see a work of art, a tapestry with a beautiful design.

Our life is like that; just like that. There are times when we can't understand why suffering, sorrow, failure, even disgrace, comes our way. There are times when life seems a "mess," a multiplicity of trials and troubles. We can't understand why God should take our loved ones, why He should strike the good with infirmities and the faithful with poverty. There is very much in life that we cannot fully understand, but we do know that God is Love and that life is a Divine Romance. Hence, we can say with Father Tabb:

"My life is but a weaving

Between my God and me.

I may but draw the colors,

He worketh skillfully.

"Full oft He chooses sorrow
And I, in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper
And I, the under side."

My good girl, we'll turn our weaving one of these days and, if we have been drawing the threads that God gives us, we'll see... Heaven!

Remember that! For poverty, pain, privation may come; suffering and sorrow will come; the cross may cut deep into your shoulders and the crown pierce deep into your brain... but go on! go on, just drawing the threads, patiently, prayerfully, lovingly, for "He does see the upper and we the under side." We'll turn our tapestry at life's happiest moment — Death!

LIFE'S HAPPIEST MOMENT — DEATH!

There are very many people who fear Death. Some have a positive horror of it; but that is only because they have never understood life. Many there are who fear it, because, they say, "it is a leap in the dark" and they add that no one likes the dark. But every Catholic knows that Death is but a waking to the light. Some there are who dread it because they say it is a walking into the unknown; you and I know that it is a meeting with the All-knowing. There are those who fear Death because they know it is a time for judgment, a time for the settling of the question of sin and service. But you and I, who are trying to live according to God's plan, who are earnestly trying to dictate to God's Recording Angel a life's story that will be a Divine Romance, you and I cannot fear Death this way, for we have already "made up," we have had our rendezvous with our Lover in His secret trysting-place of the confessional. We have settled the question of sin and we are trying to serve.

No, Death can cause us fear from none of the above accounts. The only fear that we can feel is the holy fear of the angels, who blissfully tremble in the presence of the all-pure God. This ecstatic fear we can know, for to

us, Death is but a revelation of the Divinity and every such revelation causes a blessed, fearful expectancy. We are going to see God "face to face." Hence Death causes us a holy expectancy, a sort of nervous excitement that makes our hearts beat faster and our breath grow shorter, for we are about to greet ... our *Lover!*

Oh, Death is a happy thought. Of all life's happiest moments, it is by far the happiest. It means that we are going home! Did you ever see a girl who had been away for a long time come home? home to her father and her mother? home to her brothers and sisters? Why, it is one of life's greatest joys merely to witness such a reunion. Think, then, what it will mean to be the principal actor in such a return ... that's Death! You and I have been away for a long, long time. Our exile began at birth, it ends at Death. We go home, really home and to all that it means: to God, our Father; to Mary, our Mother; to Jesus, our Brother; to our family, the saints and the angels. Oh, isn't Death beautiful? It ends our exile, it brings us home, it unites us to our parents and our family!

Some say that Death takes all from you; but these some are of the worldly world, and these some are wrong. Death does not take, death gives! Death gives you everything for which you have been longing. Why, ever since reason's dim dawn you have been asking, "What?" and "Why?" and, were you to live till the crack of doom, you'd still be asking, "What?" and "Why?" Your mind wants truth, it hungers after knowledge, it craves to know. We have peered through telescopes and brought down the sun and the moon and the stars; we have placed them on our scientific scale and have weighed them, for we must know. We have studied the valleys of the moon and patiently watched the planets as they whirled their way through a midnight sky, for we must know. We have squinted through microscopes and micrometer microscopes to see and to measure the almost un-

seeable and the almost unmeasurable, because we must know. We have taken pictures of sporulation and fission ... in brief, we have scanned the skies, dug to the earth's deepest stratum, plunged into the very bowels of the sea, for we must know. And yet whole new vistas of the knowable are but opened up with each new discovery. So, if we knew all the knowable of earth, we would still be asking, "What?" and "Why?" for our minds must know—God! He is All-Truth. He is All-Knowledge. He is All the knowable. Death gives us God and puts an end to our searchings. At Death "what" and "why" and "wherefore" drop from our vocabulary, the question-mark goes from our punctuation and there is left to us only the exclamation point. Isn't Death beautiful?

So, too, with Beauty. Oh! how we love and seek for Beauty! Its every form from a shy anemone to a mighty moonlit ocean enchants us. Nature, animate and inanimate, is replete with Beauty and, could we drink it all in, could we catch and hold the wonder of an eastern sky at dawning or the glory of a western sky at sundown, could we catch and hold the breathless vision of pearly mountain peaks glistening 'neath a wintry moon or the beauty of the ocean's breast as she breathes under a starlit sky, could we beggar the very world of its beauty, we'd still thirst for more, for we must have God! He is All-Beauty. Death gives us God and our thirst for Beauty is slaked.

Need I talk of love? Have you ever realized how hungry you are for love? Oh! how the human heart craves affection! From babyhood to old age we want to love and to be loved, and the years, no matter what they give, seem but to whet the appetite for more love. We have had parent-love, then brother and sister love, later came the age of sweethearts and finally that fully possessing love of husband and wife, and yet, we are always hungry, hungry for more. God alone can satisfy that hunger. God alone can quiet the human heart.

Death gives us God, and the human heart's hunger is appeased, for He is All-Love. Isn't Death beautiful?

You have seen a compass-needle, haven't you? You've seen it unvaryingly point to the North, no matter what the shifts of the ship or the compass-box. Our souls are just like that. Our souls are just like that needle and God is our North. Oh, there have been times when we have been truant, we have shifted and shunted about, but unvaryingly our souls swung back to God; for He made them so! They can't help it; it is their nature. They were made for God alone. Death ends all wavering. Death ends all wandering. Death ends all searching and seeking. Death is finding God! Isn't it beautiful?

Do you know what Death is? I'll tell you. It is the full-flowering of our immortal souls. You have seen rosebuds, haven't you? Beautiful little things, but oh! so tightly packed, so solidly folded, so cramped. Then they unfold, they open out into the full flower and become free and graceful and beautiful. Our souls are like those little rosebuds. We are tightly cramped, terribly, terribly cramped. Then comes Death and we unfold, we open out into the full flower of our spiritual immortality. Isn't Death beautiful?

Now, do you see how stupid, foolish and ignorant the world is? It doesn't know anything about Life, it knows still less about Death. It calls Death the ending of Life; we know it is but the beginning of real life and real living. It says Death is a parting from loved ones; we know it is but the union with our greatest Lover. It speaks of "closing the eyes in Death"; we know we are but opening our eyes to real vision, the "face-to-face" vision of God. It calls Death "eternal night"; we know it to be but the dawn of the never-ending day. It says Death is a last farewell, a long good-bye, a leaving of everything; we know it is a welcome home, a greeting of our loved ones, the acquiring of all that we have longed for. Death to us is Beauty itself.

33 The world in its learned ignorance depicts Death by a skull and crossbones — hideous, repulsive, hateful. We know it to be a lying representation. If we must have a symbol for Death, then let us be true to its actuality, let us be true to its Author; for it is the beginning of Life. Then let us represent it with a skull, if you will, but put on that skull flesh! the beautiful flesh and face of the most beautiful of all men, make Death the face of Jesus Christ, and then, in place of the empty skull and the glaring sockets, we see Death as it actually is, with the eyes of God and the smile of God, the sweetest smile human face ever smiled, for it is the smile of welcome from a Lover who has longed all a lifetime to see His beloved. The Angel of Death is Jesus Christ. He summons us with a whispered "Come, my love, it is time to come home." That is Death ... *Life's happiest moment.*

TWO ARE PROPOSING TO YOU ...

ASKING "WILL YOU BE MINE?"

I have just told you of Christ's call at Death, I want you now to consider His proposal in Life.

Perhaps it might startle you to learn that Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, the Creator and the Redeemer of the world, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, should propose to tiny you, a creature, and such a creature! But it is true, just as true as that you are now reading these lines. Do you wonder, then, that I call Life a Divine Romance? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is *pleading* with YOU: "My child, give Me thy heart." It is a Lover's proposal! The "most beautiful of the sons of men," the strongest of all strong men, the purest of all pure hearts, the noblest of all noble wills, the Superman of all humanity, God's masterpiece of all creation, asks YOU: "Will you be Mine?"

I know that this is all going to sound strange to you, but that is only because you have been listening with the ears of the body to the noise of the world and have not caught

the whispers of your soul. That is because you have been listening to false flatterers and not to your true Lover. Now I am going to talk to you. You tell me that you love beauty, truth, goodness, that you admire strength of body and strength of soul; you tell me that you want "your man" to be just that... "yours" and "a man." You tell me that you want virility, real vigor, force of mind, strength of will and power of soul. What you are saying is that you want a conqueror and yet a gentle man. I understand. Your heart of hearts wants perfection, mental, moral and physical flawlessness, and your heart of hearts has it, if it will only look and listen. Jesus Christ is a MAN, and Jesus Christ is YOURS!

What does Bethlehem mean? A tiny Baby, beautiful, but cold and lonely. Where is the woman's heart that does not warm to that? A God you might adore and reverence, but a Baby, you must love; and God knew it. That is why God became a Baby. It is Jesus Christ's first way of saying, "My child, give Me thy heart."

Hurry over thirty-three years now and see the Baby who has grown to magnificent manhood. For the past three years He has been "going about doing good," but it has been not to call forth your wonder; it has been to win your love. Today is Good Friday, and He has been scourged and mocked and crowned and now they are nailing Him to a cross. Why? Why was Jesus Christ? Ah, there is only one answer, and in that one answer, there is only one word, and it is—*love!* From Bethlehem to Golgotha, from His conception to His crucifixion, Jesus Christ was pleading with YOU, "My child, give Me thy heart."

Nineteen hundred years have passed, and He is still pleading. From out the swaddling clothes of Bread, from out the prison-cell of the Tabernacle, from behind brazen doors, the great God is asking YOU, "Will you be Mine?"

It is all true, isn't it? It is a proposal, and a Lover's proposal; and you never heard it so clearly before. But is it any wonder? You

can't hear whispers when people are shouting, you can't hear Christ amid the clamor of the devil's world.

There is another who seeks your soul. Seeks it with the intensity almost equal to that of Christ. He wants your heart almost as avidly as does God, and he pleads for it with vehemence. There is another at your side who is asking, "Will you be mine?" His words are winning, he promises much, he flatters shamelessly. But he is not your lover despite his words of love, he is not enamored of your heart despite his protests and his pleas. His whispered words that thrill you are trickery; his pretty speeches, lies; his proposal, *seduction!* Satan hates you, and yet he whispers, "Will you be mine?"

You start again and say, "I never thought of Satan as proposing to me before." And I answer, "Is it any wonder? Clever deceit deceives the cleverest."

Did you ever read or see or hear of "Cyrano de Bergerac"? If you are acquainted with him, then you know something of the devil's tactics. Cyrano was madly in love with the beautiful Roxane, but Cyrano had a tremendous nose which threw his face out of all proportion. Cyrano was ugly, and hence, did not appeal to the eye of the beautiful maid. Christian, the handsome soldier, was her choice. But Christian could not speak. Whenever he came into the presence of the beautiful Roxane, he was tongue-tied. The ever versatile Cyrano found a way to right matters. He could talk, and oh, so beautifully! So one night he got Christian to climb up upon the balcony outside Roxane's room, while he himself hid under it. When Roxane looked out she heard speeches such as no other beloved ever heard, and they seemed to be coming from the mouth of the handsome Christian. It was Cyrano who was doing the talking and he was putting all the fervor of his poet's soul, all the rich warmth of his loving heart, all the frenzy of his fertile imagination on the tongue of the handsome Christian. Roxane was won

that night, she was won to the body of Christian — by the soul of Cyrano!

Now, that is how the devil works. He never appears himself. He is too ugly. He knows that your girlish sensibilities would be shocked if he were to appear before you and openly entice you to sin. But he further knows just what will please your eye, what will tickle your ear and delight your fancy; he well knows just what will win your heart. So he hides behind all that is pleasing, all that delights, all that allures ... not to win your heart in love, but to damn your soul in hate! He uses handsome boys, winsome girls, heroic-looking men and regal women; he uses all the charm of speech, the magic of music, the delight of the dance, the flattery of dress and the exhilaration of drink. He uses anything and everything delightful to win you to destruction. And he makes it all sound like a proposal of love!

Contrast the two seekers of your soul: Christ and Lucifer. Satan doesn't love you. He hates you with all the hate of hell. He hated you the moment your mother conceived you, and he has hated you every moment since. On the day that you were baptized and marked indelibly as Christ's his hatred flared up anew. From the day you knelt in all your girlish innocence and made your first confession, he has worked with all the energy of the damned to get you away from your only true Lover, Jesus. With every worthy reception of the Sacraments, Satan's hate has grown, until now it is a veritable fury. He will never rest now until you are either shackled to him by mortal sin or safe in the arms of your Lover in heaven!

Do listen, and listen closely, to the two proposals, and hear what they are really saying. One is, "I love you"; the other, "I hate you." Beware of Satan and his wiles. Pleasure is the trap that catches most, and he disguises it in many, many ways. Perhaps the most dangerous for you will be "Style," "keeping up to the times," and "being really modern."

Look beneath the surface! If you look closely and listen attentively, you will recognize the hater of your soul. Know that impurity is impurity, no matter what the price of the gown, the glitter of the jewels, the beauty of the form and the face, no matter what the cleverness of the tongue the impure one may have. And this the "talkie" tries to disguise! Drunkenness is sin, no matter how witty the drunkard may be. And this again the movies try to masquerade! Indecency is degrading and disgusting, no matter who the indecent one is. And this the press seems to forget! "The pen IS mightier than the sword" where the slaughter of souls is concerned. So watch your reading! The "smartest" magazine and the "best-seller" are usually the smuttiest; and, remember, smut is smut, no matter what the "smart" wrappings!

"Being 'smart,' " "keeping up to the times," "being modern" and "in style" not infrequently mean being pagan, uncatholic, unchristian, unchristlike. The latest style in dress and dancing not seldom means immodesty and suggestiveness. "Keeping up to the times" very often means keeping behind in your religion. And "being smart" almost always means being sinful! You are surrounded by dangers, for it is Satan's world. His disguises are countless. He has been known to appear as an angel from heaven only to lure souls to hell. So be wary! Be wise! Listen to your real Lover!

Christ has proposed to you! He has pleaded, "My child, give Me thy heart!" "Will you be Mine?" Now you tell me that you want beauty of body and of soul, you want nobility of mind and character, you want heroicity of heart. You tell me that you want a conqueror who is a gentleman. I tell you that Jesus Christ, the Conqueror of Satan, of hell and of death — the Gentle Jesus — the "Lamb of God" — the God-Man is awaiting your reply!

YOU CAN GIVE ONE OF THREE ANSWERS

DOROTHY'S... HELEN'S... GERTRUDE'S

You must have read the story of Solomon and the wrangling women. You remember how the two women and the little baby were brought before the wisest of men. Both the women claimed to be the mother of the child, so Solomon knew that one of them was a liar. But which one? That was the question! Baby tongue couldn't tell, for baby could not talk. Baby face didn't tell, for there was no striking resemblance to either one of the women. Was the wisest of men lost? No! Not for a moment. He got a sword. He knew the mother's heart, so he said, "Not to you, nor to you; but let it be divided . . . That is my judgment. What do you think of it?"

Then up spoke the false mother, "That is a fair judgment. Not to me, nor to her; but let it be divided."

Solomon looked at the other woman and saw only tears. She spoke, but it was little more than a moan. She said, "Do not kill the child" . . . and Solomon settled the case.

Now, note what the true mother said. She did not say, "Do not divide the baby." She only moaned, "Do not *kill* the child." You can't divide without killing. She knew it, and so did Solomon. She made his judgment easy.

The devil will often make the same proposal about your heart. "Compromise," he will whisper, "not to me, nor to God; but let it be divided." You are liable to think, "A fair suggestion! So much to God, so much to self. Let it be divided." But I plead with you — "Do not *kill* your heart." You can't divide without killing! You received your heart whole and entire from God. Give it back to Him whole and entire! "Divide et impera" was the conquering cry of the Romans, "Divide and Conquer." It is often the same for Satan. Compromise! Divide! and if you do, he will have conquered! No, I beg of you, do not kill your heart, and that is

exactly what you will do if you are not like Gertrude.

Let me tell you about Gertrude. One day three girls walked into a doctor's office. They were modern girls, in love with life. They had "looks," personality and "pep." Friends they could count by the scores, both male and female, and to these three the future was mighty promising. But of late all three had noticed a little "let-down" in their energy. They didn't feel so "peppy" as usual, and they didn't "pick-up" so fast after a dance or a game. So they had all decided to see a doctor.

They saw him. After he had examined all three thoroughly, he called them to his office. He took off his glasses, placed them on the desk before him, tilted back in his swivel chair, then turned to the three anxious faces before him and smiled. "Girls," he said, "I am going to tell you the truth, then I am going to give you an infallible prescription. The truth may not sound pleasant, but it should not be terrifying, especially when I can give a prescription that is infallible. The truth is this: each of you has a tiny spot on your lungs. It is nothing now, but it will grow. We call it tuberculosis; I suppose you know it as 'T. B.' Now don't get excited about it. We all have the germs in us. I have them as well as you, but my resistance is such that they can make no headway. You three have allowed your vitality to become lowered lately and the germs have started to feed upon your lungs. That is the truth." He paused and three frightened girls looked at one another.

"Now here is some more truth," continued the doctor; "these germs will continue to feed upon your lungs unless you build up your resistance. They will eat their way right through your lungs and you will go into a rapid decline if ... if, I say ... and here is the prescription ... if you don't give up dancing, smoking, late hours and go off to Arizona."

The doctor picked up his glasses and rose. "There, girls, you have the truth, the whole

truth, and nothing but the truth. Follow that prescription and I infallibly promise you happiness, health and, naturally speaking, a long life. Neglect it, and I'm telling you now that sickness and death will come."

The three girls thanked him in their frightened voices and then walked out. Now watch them closely. They come out, get into their car and, before there is a step on the starter, a flick of a match is heard.

"Why, Dot! What are you doing?" says Gertrude.

"I'm lighting a cigarette," says Dorothy; "and if you want to know, I'm going to the dance tonight, and I'm not going to Arizona! He told us that we only had a tiny spot and that it was nothing now. I'm going to take a chance that it won't get any worse. Arizona! Huh! That dead place! No smokes. No dances. No dates. No night-life! Oh, no! not for me, girls! I love life!" ... That was Dorothy Do-nothing.

Seeing Gertrude's horrified face Helen says, "Well, I don't know. Dot is certainly right about Arizona, it would be a mighty dead place. But I think we ought to do something. I'll give up cigarettes, that is, I'll cut down on them. And I'll go to a dance only once a month. And I'll stay here. That ought to help. He said it was only a tiny spot." That was Helen Half-way. She ended by asking, "How about you, Gert?"

"Well, girls, he told us the truth and he promised us health and happiness and a long life if we followed his prescription. Here go my last cigarettes," and out the window of the car flew an unfinished pack of "Luckies." "I'm calling Jim today and telling him 'good-bye' for a while. No dance tonight. If he's willing to wait, I'll be back. And, Dot, you can stop right here; I'm making my reservations for Arizona right now!" That was Gertrude Give-all.

If you are interested I can tell you that six months from the day, down in her Arizona cottage, she received a black-edged envelope

telling her that Dot had been "laid away the past week." In two year's time she was back at Helen's bedside, only to hear her gasp, "You were wise. The 'Doc' was right. I'm going now, Good-Bye, Gert." And the following week, Gertrude laid flowers on the twin graves of her chums.

Now, all three said that they loved life. Dot swore she loved it; Helen insisted again and again that she loved it; but only one proved that she really loved it. Love means sacrifice. Love means suffering. Love means success. Gertrude sacrificed. She suffered. She succeeded. Only Gertrude loved life!

"A story," you say.

And I say, "Yes, a story. But one that is true to life. Call it rather a parable and apply it the way it is meant to be applied."

Don't we all say that we love God? Don't we all say that we want to save our souls? Don't we all admit that Satan is our enemy and God our Lover? Don't we all know the truth? Yes ... but how do we act?

We have a soul to save. But that soul is tainted. Tiny germs are in it when we are born. We call them the effects of Original Sin. They are known also as the concupiscences. They are actually sin-germs. We all have them, and they must be kept in check. If we allow our resistance to be lowered, they will feed on the soul, then the sickness of sin will follow and, finally, eternal death. Yes, we know the truth and we know the infallible prescription. It was given us by the Divine Physician. "Give up all persons, places and things that may lead you into sin. Avoid all the occasions of sin and go into God's Sanatorium — His blessed Sacraments." Oh, the prescription is clear and definite. What do we do about it? What have we done to date?

The Dorothy Do-nothings trifle with temptation. They go with the boys and the girls who have led them into sin in the past and who will again lead them into sin. They listen to the lying whispers of the world and believe them! They never go to the Sacraments. They die eternally!

The Helen Half-ways say, "I'll avoid all mortal sin, but venial sin is only a tiny thing. It does not absolutely destroy the soul." They go to Communion very, very seldom. They walk around the quicksands of mortal sin, and one day they sink!

The Gertrude Give-alls say, "Thank you, God, for telling me the truth." Out the window go all companionships that are dangerous. Away goes all reading matter that is salacious. Venial sin is shunned as a serpent. They hurry to purchase their tickets to God's Heart by a good confession and by loving and frequent Communion. Only Gertrude Give-alls really love their God. Only Gertrude Give-alls want to save their souls!

What class have you been in to date? What class are you going to be in from this date? My good girl, you can't play with fire and not be burnt! You can't live in our modern, pagan world and not sin; you can't live in our sophisticated Twentieth Century and be clean unless you stay close to the cleanest of all clean men, close, very close to your Lover, Jesus Christ; and the closest you can get to Him is in Holy Communion.

The Gertie Give-alls are *daily* communicants. They really love God. Are you going to be like Gertrude? Your Lover is waiting for the answer to His proposal. He says, "Give Me your heart." ... Will it be none, or half ... or all?

**YOUR LOVER PROVES HIS LOVE
HE GIVES...HE SUFFERS...
HE SACRIFICES**

Dare you be any but Gertrude and still claim that you love?

Love, I know, is a very difficult subject to write about or talk about. Love laughs at definition. It is so big, so universal, so absolutely all-embracing that it refuses to be caught and captured within the words of a definition, and yet everyone knows what it is. Difficult though it be, I'm going to attempt it, for I have found Love's language.

Yes, love has a language all its own, a language that has no printed lexicon, yet a language that everybody understands. Love is the only universal language. Strange as it may seem, Love's best speech is silence. A silver-haired mother and her boy, now become a man, speak little but love much; sweethearts who were always chattering say next to nothing as they love one another as middle-aged husband and wife, and yet their silences are more eloquent and their love more true. In love, actions speak much more loudly than words, for doing and giving are much more eloquent than saying. The greatest love that was ever on this earth was expressed by deeds, not words. Christ, who loved the Father with a love that shook this whole firmament, never once said, "I love Him"; He did tell us, "I DO," He did say, "I DO always the things that please Him," and that doing was proof positive of love! Yes, Love's language is all its own; deeds and gifts are its nouns and verbs and the manner of doing and giving, its modifiers. So, to love, you don't need words, you must simply do and give. To love supremely, you must give all!

I want you now to listen to God tell His love to you. I want you to look at His gifts and His deeds. God gave you life. From out of nothingness He called you and gave you body and soul. That body He had fashioned with fingers omnipotent on the model drawn by the Trinity. That soul is a breath of Himself! God gives you living. Earth and air and water, the sunshine and the dew. God gives you a father and a mother, God gives you family and friends. God gives you joy and laughter; God gives you life and love.

And yet what are these? Twenty centuries since Christ, forty or fifty centuries before Him . . . why, all the unknown centuries since Adam have not told us just how great are these gifts. Man has no balance on which to weigh them, no price-tag which he can attach. Undoubtedly, they are priceless, and yet I ask, what are they? What are all these great gifts

in comparison to the Gift of gifts—God Himself?

You and I were under obligation to love God. But what could we do? One can't fall madly in love with a Spirit. One can't lose her heart to Omniscience. Neither Infinity nor Immensity, neither Immutability nor Omnipotence ever set a pulse pounding, nor caused the light of love to flash into an eye. No, we are creatures of flesh, we are creatures of sense, we can love only what we know, and we may know immediately only what we can see and feel and taste and touch. We can't go mad about a concept. We can't lose our hearts to an idea. And God knew it! God knew that our obligation would never be fulfilled, our lives ruined and our hearts robbed, unless He became tangible.

Yes, God knew that we must love someone or some thing, and, lest we lose our hearts to creatures instead of to the Creator, lest we fall in love with God's beauties and not with God, lest we hug semblances instead of substance . . . God became flesh! He had given us snap-shots of Himself in the beauty of the world around us, but these were blurred; He had given us images of Himself in the men and women of the world, but these were very imperfect; so He would give more, He would give all, He would give Himself.

Out from the high halls of heaven He leaped. In one mad Lover's plunge, He dived deep into the dark womb of a little Jewish girl, hidden away in the despised town, of a despised province, a very much despised people. Nine months later, in the hills outside Bethlehem, the God-man was born! Oh, He well knew that we could not love Omniscience, Infinity or Immensity; He knew that we would never fall in love with Omnipotence, Divinity or Infinite Intelligence. He also knew that we could not help loving a Babe! That is why Omniscience looks out from Baby eyes, Infinity becomes a single Baby-Boy, Immensity bounds itself by ten Baby-fingers and ten Baby-toes. That is why Omnipotence becomes helpless,

Divinity hides itself in tangible humanity and Infinite Intelligence prattles meaningless Baby-talk. That is why the Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth and all things, becomes Mary's Son. . . . Just that you might love Him! Actions do speak louder than words, and God is talking to you.

Look at your Baby-God in the arms of His mother. Look deep into His beautiful Baby-eyes. These eyes saw before Time began or Space was; these eyes saw the void whence was called this magnificent world of ours; these eyes saw all men and all possible men before Adam ever became, for these are the all-seeing eyes of an all-seeing God, and yet they are set in the face of a new-born Babe . . . all for you! Look at the pudgy Baby-arms, helpless, little, clutching things, yet these are the arms that uphold the world, these are the fingers that tossed off the stars, traced the courses for the planets and set the sun and the moon in their places. These are the all-powerful fingers of the all-powerful God, and yet they are pretty, little Baby-fingers stretched out to twine in your hair and to touch the rose in your cheek. These are the omnipotent arms of the omnipotent God, and yet they are stretched out, trying to encircle your neck. God, the all-pure God, wants to be lifted in your arms and hugged to your heart. That is the only reason He became a Baby!

Think, now, of what it meant to God to become a Baby. It meant that He must make a personal acquaintance with poverty, loneliness, lovelessness and pain. In heaven He was surrounded by light, adoration and love. Angels and Archangels, Thrones and Dominations, Principalities and Powers and all the other choirs sang in ceaseless adoration: "Holy! Holy! Holy!" In heaven there was no heartache nor heartbreak—yet, for you and for me, He cramped Infinity first in the dark womb of a little girl, then in the tiny body of a Baby, that He might dwell on that speck of the earth we call Palestine. For you and for

me, Eternal Happiness became the Man of Sorrows. That Omnipotence might know weakness, Infinite Love know loneliness and lovelessness, that Everlasting Joy might feel pain, a tiny Baby rested on a few wisps of straw in the manger of cattle in a deserted stable and was breathed upon by an ox and an ass.

If sacrifice be the most eloquent language of love, then God is madly in love with you! Yes, look at your Baby Jesus in the arms of His mother and listen to His love. Can you keep from loving a Baby? a lonely Baby? a lovely Baby? a shivering, helpless, little Mite, who is your God?

But He has not done enough. Not enough to sacrifice and suffer, not enough to degrade Himself, not enough to become human — He would do more, He would do much more.

Sacrifice is the most eloquent language of love, and life is the supreme sacrifice. All history tells us this, and the language of every land is filled with the praise of those who have given their all. During the World War we had only gold for the stars of those who died. Our most precious metal would pay tribute to those who made the most precious sacrifice. Today in the National Cemetery at Arlington, a mausoleum of purest marble is seen; at its gate a grateful nation ever marches her staunchest soldiery. It is a solemn act of appreciation to the army of the UNKNOWN who died that we might live in peace. It is only proper; for Christ Himself has said, "Greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friends." Love is proved by deeds, not by words, and it is sacrifice that shows the heart.

Realizing this, look now at your dead Jesus in the arms of His mother. Look long at pierced hands and pierced feet; look long at spear-dug side and broken Heart; look very long at the thorn-crowned head and at the body that was flayed alive. Look intently at the broken, bruised, purpled face of your God, who is dead, and listen to Love speak!

Why this outrage? Because of you and of

me! We had sinned, sinned mortally, and that meant that we were held by Satan. He had not kidnaped us, for we had walked into his trap. But he held us, and the ransom price was the price of blood. You and I had sold ourselves to sin and the only money that could buy us back was "blood-money." You and I had committed crime, had been caught "red-handed" in our guilt, and the sentence had come sharp and sure: "They shall die the death." It was a just sentence, and from it there was no appeal. We had committed a capital crime, we should pay for it by capital punishment. We couldn't satisfy for the crime, for it was infinite; but we would have to give our all. Then into the court of God's justice came a Man, a Man who loved us. He spoke to the Judge. He would not only "go bail"; He would serve our sentence, even though it be the sentence of death. More! Yet more! From out His infinite source He would completely satisfy our debt. He, the only One in the world with the price, would pay it, and pay it willingly. He would make the supreme sacrifice, because He was in love!

We can not fully understand that, can we? But we do know that actions speak louder than words, that gifts are the language of love, and that sacrifice is its most eloquent declaration. We do know that it is a torture to be electrocuted, and yet it takes but a few seconds. We do know that the lethal-chamber with its gas is merciful, yet terrible. We do know that the gallows can be speedy and that the guillotine was quick and sure. We also know that the Crucifixion took three long hours, and that it was the climax to a night in a dungeon where He was spit upon and mocked, to a morning of mock-trials, a fierce scourging, a cruel crowning and a staggering, stumbling, falling way of the cross. And we do know that it was all for us!

Yes, ours the head that should be thorn-pierced and blood-drenched; ours the hands that should be dug through; ours the side that should be gaping, and ours the heart that

should be spear-stabbed. We are the ones that should be limp and lifeless, for we are the ones who sinned. We are the ones who should have felt the scourge and been spit upon; we the ones who should have borne the weight of the cross; but Love gives! Love suffers! Love sacrifices! and God loves us! "Greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friends." But what shall we say of Christ? We were His *enemies!*

Oh, look at your dead Jesus in the arms of His mother and let His silence speak His love!

Nor is Love done yet! He knew we couldn't love the all-pure Spirit, so He mingled it with clay, and thus became the huggable little Babe of Bethlehem. He knew that we had lost the key to heaven, so He made a new one out of Calvary's cross. But He must do even more.

He knew that the sight of Him in the arms of His mother as a Babe and as a broken body should win our love and hold it eternally. But He also knew that twenty centuries is an awfully long time, and that men and women are short of memory. He knew that we could not fall in love with a mere historical fact. He knew that centuries would change Calvary and Bethlehem, and that myth and legend might obscure truth. He knew that the Crib and the Cross would be to you and to me, beautiful, powerful, alluring, and yet they might be distant and dim. So, with the ingenuity of the fierce Lover, He found a way to leap the barriers of Time and Space. Love always finds a way, and our "Tremendous Lover" found a perfect way, even though it called for a perpetual miracle!

Twenty centuries ago Mary said, "Fiat," and God became flesh. Today a priest says, "This is My Body," and the same "Tremendous Lover" takes the same leap, but this time He plunges more deeply. Before it was into the dark womb of an Immaculate Virgin, and Sinlessness was with the sinless; today He plunges into a wafer of wheat held in the hands of a priest who was born in sin and who has most likely sinned since his birth.

Twenty centuries is a mighty long time, but the Mass is a daily occurrence!

The Crib and the Cross were in Palestine, and yet they are at our very doors. Twenty long centuries ago He was born of Mary, and yet He lives. The Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of Calvary are not mere historical fact. He is an ever present Reality! Our loving Jesus is not distant; if anything, He is too near!

Look at your loving God in the hands of the priest, and let His love speak to you. To create you was love beyond telling; for from nothing He gave you life and living. To redeem you was love beyond conception; for He, the deathless One, had to die that you might live. But what shall one say of the Eucharist?

To support and sustain you, to comfort and console, to light your way and be your food, to be your captive Christ, bound in the bonds of bread and locked behind a brazen door . . . oh! Infinite Lover! Great God, how could You do it? You hid Divinity in Humanity at Bethlehem; and on Calvary's blood-drenched top You hid it even more deeply in the flayed flesh of the World's Criminal! These degradations man has never appreciated, and yet You now hide Humanity and Divinity in a wafer of wheat, even though you know that this annihilation will be neglected! Oh! Great God, actions DO speak louder than words! I know YOU love us!

Look at Him! Look at Him in Mary's arms and in priests' palms, and know that Bethlehem and Calvary are not distant. Know that Jesus is at your side! Look at Him. No! No! Don't look at Him! Don't talk to Him! Actions do speak much LOUDER than words! Deeds and gifts are Love's language! Receive Him! Receive Him often! That will be proving your love. That will be daring to be different!

YOU, THE BELOVED, MUST PROVE YOURS BY DARING TO BE DIFFERENT

That is the motto to take. That is the motto to live. For that is the one way you have of proving your love. But let me tell you that you will never really dare, let alone live the dare, unless you are a "wise woman." Follow the "star" of the sanctuary lamp. It will lead you to Jesus! Follow it frequently. If you are really wise, follow it daily! Frequent Communion will be daring to be different, and it will help you to live up to your dare.

You've got to live up to that dare if you are to be a lover. If you would have your life be what it is meant to be, a Divine Romance, you've got to dare to be different and live your dare. You've got to be different from all the world around you. It is pagan; you are Christ's. It is fleshly; you are spiritual. It lives only for Time, you, only for Eternity. It is a cheat and a liar; you the Beloved of Truth.

You've got to be mighty different from all the world around you. It is sin-filled and sinning; you must be sinless. It is money-mad and pleasure-mad and ego-centric; you can be only theo-centric. It is most self-conscious and self-seeking; you can be only God-conscious and God-seeking. It is a God-oblivious, topsy-turvy world, every day going farther and farther from the God who made it; you must be orderly, you must know, love and serve the God who made you, you must so live that you actually grasp God.

Dare to be different from the girls and the women of the world—the females of fashion and the slaves of style, the individuals who never think, but only "feel" and "sense," women who do nothing from principle, but are guided and governed by whim, fancy and inclination. These, at best, can be called creatures, they most certainly are not characters. You get sound principles; live up to them, and the living will chisel out that rarity of modern civilization ... a woman with real character! You've got to be different; you've

got to think! Emotion alone will never get you to God, and to God you've got to get!

Dare to be different from the modern miss who is totally absorbed with a man and a meal. Give her a place to dine and dance, give her the latest fashion and fiction, and she is in her heaven. Oh, do be different from these modern females, who spend hours and even days in the care of the body: the hands, the hair and the face, but of the soul? . . . once a year suffices; once a month, overgenerous; once a week, unthinkable! Be much different from these style-straightened, body-worshipping, paganized women around you! To keep the graceful form of youth, these will fast as no Trappist fasts, and they will call it a "health diet"; but the Lenten fast and the days of abstinence? . . . "Don't be so medieval! The Church will have to become more modern!"

What a crime it all is! If the Church asked them to suffer for their sins the way they suffer for their body, they'd apostatize. Look at the hours of agony they undergo in the hands of a hairdresser, and under the "drier," just to get the hair's proper tint and to give it a "permanent wave." But for the proper tint to the soul, purity; for its "permanent wave," sanctifying grace . . . ten minutes at the feet of a priest is altogether too much!

But don't think that I am against all cosmetics; I'm not. They help, and many need help! But what I want you to remember is that there is a "cleansing cream" for the soul. It is called Confession . . . use it! Remember that there is a powder that is just suited to your soul's complexion; it is self-denial . . . use that! There is a Rouge that will heighten your soul's color and make it really beautiful. Its rich redness comes from the Blood of Christ. You get it in Communion . . . use that Rouge DAILY! Those are the cosmetics to employ. That is the "compact" to have ever on hand. That will be being different from the present-day females, for that will be thinking how you can please the eye of God with the "make-up" on the soul, rather than thinking

of how to please the eye of man with the "make-up" on the face.

WOMEN WHO ARE DIFFERENT WANTED!

Do be different, for the world. God's wayward world, needs women who are different. The world today needs women with character, not females of fashion. Ibsen has said, "Women will solve the problems of mankind." But he quickly added: "But only in so far as they become real mothers." I go further. I say, "Women will SAVE the world . . . but . . . only in so far as they become really Catholic women; women who love Christ and live His Creed." Women for whom actions speak louder than words. Women who have heard Christ say, "If you love Me, keep My commandments," and are proving their love by keeping them.

That is the kind of women the world needs — women who know their dignity and their duty and live up to them, women who are conscious of the fact that with God they are co-creators; women who realize that they are God's specially selected instruments to produce future inhabitants of heaven; women who so thrill to this dignity that they establish a real "double-standard" of morality — one so high for themselves that were even a Galahad to come along, he would find that, despite his angelic purity, he had to climb yet higher to meet the demands of the modern Catholic woman of character.

Yes, that is the type of women the world needs today — women who look to marriage not for security but for sanctity; women who know that wedlock is not for mutual gratification, but for mutual sanctification; women who know that marriage is God's great Sacrament and a stepping-stone to heaven!

What the modern world is crying for is women with minds and hearts and wills. Women who see truth and evaluate it properly. Women who know that grace is far more precious than gold; that Time's one worthwhile consideration is Eternity, and that the

body is to be subservient to the soul; women who know that real happiness is found only in real holiness; that life is not for gratification but for sanctification, that this earth of ours is not a playground but a battleground.

The world wants women who will love, and love deeply. Women who will so love that they are ready and willing to suffer and sacrifice. Women who will bravely look into the very shadow of death, that an infant may see the light of day; women who gladly give up youth's graceful figure that another soul may have a fleshy form; women who willingly sacrifice self that others may live. The world is crying for self-forgetting, God-absorbed women, women who are so taken up with God's little ones that they never think of self. What the world is calling for is women who will become real Catholic *mothers* to lead little ones to God.

Yes, and that is the type of women that men want too — women who are different. Men want women who are passionate and possessive; real women, who want "to have and to hold"; determined women, who are going "to have and to hold" their lofty dignity as God's co-workers and man's helpmates; their lofty standard of morality despite depression; their exalted office of co-redeemers of a lost mankind; women who are going "to have and to hold" their proper place, and that is one of leadership, leading straying man back to a waiting God!

"Cherchez la femme" was written for crime, but it is equally true about sanctity. We would never have had an Augustine had there been no Monica; never a Bernard but for his mother, Alice; and I am quite sure that John, the Beloved, would never have stood 'neath the cross of Christ had Mary Immaculate not been there. Why, we would never have had Jesus Himself but for the whispered "Fiat" of Nazareth's pure Maid! Men are calling for such women today. They are seeking a way out . . . a way out from the paganistic, money-seeking, flesh-saturated, God-defying, sin-be-

sotted world; and the leaders must be women who are different!

Know well that men are always babies! They want to be "mothered," and that "mothering" can only be done by women with hearts that love, wills that desire, and minds that know—God! Men will be saved only by passionate and possessive women, women who "want their man," but who first and foremost want—their God-Man!

Why, even God wants women who are different! Nineteen hundred years ago, as He lived His physical life, His bravest followers were women who were different; today, as He lives His mystical life, He needs the same kind of brave followers, women who are very different! Christ wants women like His mother, women who are ready to suffer and thus become co-redeemers of mankind; women like the Samaritan woman, who stood by Jacob's well and asked for the life-giving waters, then turned and preached Him to men as the Messias. Jesus wants women of strong faith, like unto the one who strove "to touch but the hem of His garment," so that He can cure them and prove to a doubting world that He is the Divine Physician. But more, God needs women like Magdalene, who, "because she loved much," had much forgiven her; women, who because they have sinned much, will love all the more ardently Him who shows them such depths of mercy!

Today God needs many women. He needs "Marthas" who will minister unto Him. He needs "Mary's" who will sit at His feet. He needs brave women like Veronica, who will sweep through the scoffing crowds and wipe His sacred face with their veils, because the world has spit upon it. He needs many women like those of Jerusalem, who will weep for Him, for He is being crucified. But above all, He needs faith-filled and faithful women, like unto the "holy women"; women who will stand 'neath His cross, take down His body, prepare it for the burial and then on Easter morn, hurry to the tomb at first light with

spices. Such women He needs and such women He will reward just as He did those of nineteen hundred years ago; for to these He will appear ... glorious and triumphant!

God, the world and men are crying for women who will dare to be different and who will live their dare — women whose actions speak louder than their words; women who have heard, "If you love Me," and are proving their love; women who keep the Ten Commandments and the Six Precepts; women who frequent the Two Sacraments and the One Sacrifice; women who know the Corporal Works of Mercy and perform them; women who are cognizant of the Spiritual Works of Mercy and do them; women who are always doing much for their neighbor because they know that, "whatsoever you do to the least of these, My little ones, you do unto Me"; women whose lives are summed up in the one word "LOVE." They love their God with their whole heart, their whole will, their whole mind and with all their strength; and they love their neighbor as themselves for the love of God!

Such women are living according to God's plan. Such women are making of their lives a Divine Romance. Will you be one of them?

**DO IT — AND I PROMISE YOU HEAVEN
DO IT — AND HEAVEN BEGINS ON
EARTH!**

Yes, do it, and I promise you — Heaven.

"But," you say, "why talk of Heaven when I am on earth? Why talk of the 'after-life' when I am taken up entirely with the present life? You said that Life was a Divine Romance; I thought you meant this life."

Life IS a Divine Romance. But note that I do not say "This life," nor do I say "After-life," I simply say "Life;" for there is no real division in a unit. You can't have a man without a soul and a body; you can't have a tree without a trunk and branches; you can't have a drama without a last act; nor can you

have life, real life, without eternity. What you call "after-life" is not something new and distinct from Life; it is merely Life's "last chapter." What you call death is not the end of Life; it is but its turning-point, its peripeteia, its denouement. What you call Judgment is merely Life's "last line."

Did you ever read of a romance that ended in death? Never! and you never shall. And so with our Divine Romance; it does not end at death, it flows on! It must flow on, for Life is a unit, a continual flow. It begins at birth, turns sharply at death, but flows on forever! That is the unit that constitutes the Divine Romance. Hence I must talk of Heaven if you want Life's "last chapter." I MUST talk of Heaven, for that is the home of the Deathless Lovers—*you and God!*

But, what can I say of Heaven? Paul was there, and he came back speechless. All he dared say was, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." Robert Kane, the Jesuit, who went blind, was a man of exceptionally fertile imagination and of exquisite expression. He wrote of Heaven, but all that he could say, despite his very real genius, was, "Dream on! Dream on!" Take the happiest moment of your life, infinitely enhance it, infinitely prolong it, then dream on! dream on! It is not Heaven, but it is like it, so dream on! So what can poor little I say? ... Only this: Heaven is permanence. Heaven is possession. Heaven is peace! Here, we want to have and to hold, to grasp firmly and to call our own, our very own. Analyze the human heart, and at the very bottom we find the passion to possess permanently; that is the soul's deepest desire. We want to have and to hold! To have and to hold looks, position, learning, friends, fame. So to have and to hold that we can call them our own, our very own, whether it be money, knowledge, a home or a man. That is our heart of hearts. And that is why life's saddest pain is that we cannot

have and hold permanently. Few indeed are the things that we can have and hold at all; pleasure is fleeting, money unstable, friends untrue, fame and fortune fickle. But, even if we could have and hold them all, the final clause would always read, "Till death do us part." Why, that most intimate of all possessions, the possession of another self in marriage, we know cannot be permanent, so we end the contract with the words: "To have and to hold, *till death do us part.*" In other words, this side of the grave our deepest desire cannot be satisfied. But on the other side . . . all is permanence!

PERMANENCE! Oh! what a ring to that word! Happiness is permanent. Peace is permanent. Love is permanent. PERMANENCE! Knowledge is permanent. Life is permanent. Yes, what a ring to that word! It is a stranger to this land of exile, this land of shifting shadows, this time of perpetual flux. PERMANENCE! No change, no instability, continuous, everlasting, eternal permanence! Strangers from a strange land; but from our land, our Homeland!

Here, we look into the eyes of a baby, and the innocence shining there shakes our very soul so that we grasp baby's head in our two hard hands and desperately say to uncomprehending ears, "Oh! if you could only stay as you are!" We see youth, standing tiptoe looking out at Life, fresh, unspoiled, intense and vibrant youth. And we sigh, "Oh! if you could only stay as you are!" We look at mellow old age, the restless ambitioning of earlier years gone, a blessed, golden maturity reached, and an atmosphere of serenity surrounding their days, and again we say, "Oh! if you could only stay as you are!" But we know that our wishes are futile, our sighs and prayers vain, for here there is no permanence. Golden days have their evenings and ecstatic nights their dawns. We have all had our moments, but that was all they are, just moments; we could not have and hold. This side of the grave there is no permanence!

Ah, but think of Heaven! No pain, no worry, no fears, no fret. No partings, no heartache, no sorrow, no death. No falsity, no fickleness, no failures, no sin. And that forever! No wonder Paul was speechless. No wonder Father Kane said, "Dream on! Dream on!" Real life, real living, real love, and—God! Yes, think of Heaven . . . purity, peace, beauty, truth; virtue, blessedness, joy, and God! And all that forever! Yes, dream on! Dream on! Dream on of Heaven!

You crave love, you crave purity, you crave peace; that means you crave Heaven. You seek beauty, you seek truth; that means you seek Heaven. You want happiness, you want joy; that means you want Heaven. You want to have and you want to hold; that only means that you want Heaven.

Oh, what can we say of Heaven? By a series of negatives we describe that which is most positive. Our words are weak and wanting, our imaginations, sterile. Some have tried by sight and sound to tell you of Heaven, and they are partly right. You shall have heavenly harmony and visions and vistas that satisfy, but you must go higher. The real satisfaction comes from the soul.

The life you crave and the love you want is the life and the love of the soul; the satisfaction that you are looking for is the satisfaction of the mind and the heart and the will; and in Heaven you'll find it.

How little absolute truth we have in life this side of the grave! Sift our sciences. Place theory and hypothesis and conjecture to one side, sift down our elaborate systems to their few fundamental and absolutely true principles, and what a thimbleful of absolute truth we have! Take the arts, count the canons that are universally accepted and the norms that cannot be changed because they are true, and you will find that units, not tens, are needed for the counting. Why, one little atom of absolute truth thrills our souls. But in Heaven we shall have absolutely all of absolute truth. In Heaven we shall have absolutely

all of absolute love. For that is the land of no fickleness nor faithlessness, that is the land of absolute love. Mother will never leave us there, nor will father grow old; sisters and brothers will stay with us and friendship never grow cold. Heart and mind and will are satisfied, the soul is at perfect peace. That is Heaven, and yet we must go higher.

Heaven is God! When we know God, we have Heaven. Our Lord said: "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." To know God! What a thought! To know a thing is to have and to hold it. Your own name, you know and, naturally speaking, no one can take that knowledge from you. You have it, and you hold it; it is part of you. You will have it, and you will hold it as long as life. When you know God the same way, you have Heaven. When He who is all Life and all Love has absorbed you ... then you are in Heaven! Absorbed in God, by God, and with God ... that's real life, that's real living, for that's real love; and that is Heaven. And it begins on earth!

AND IT BEGINS ON EARTH!

Yes, Heaven begins on earth, you **MUST** begin your Heaven on earth, else *you'll never begin it at all!* You must become God-conscious, God-absorbed, God-saturated this side of the grave, if you are going to grasp God on the other side! Heaven is only the smashing climax to your Divine Romance; it is only Life's "last chapter," and to it your living must lead. Yes, your Heaven actually begins on earth when you steep yourself in Grace. For Grace is to God and glory what the first gray light of the East is to the Dawn. It leads to God! And in Grace you can be literally steeped, if you but desire it. That is how much of a Lover God is — you have but to desire it!

One thing, and one thing alone, is necessary, absolutely necessary, to us. It is not heat, nor light, nor air, though without these we natural-

ly die; but they are not absolutely necessary to us. The one thing that you and I need, absolutely need, is — Grace; for without that we *die* eternally. You don't need money, you don't need looks, you don't need men. Neither food nor water nor air do you need; why, there is nothing in this wide world that you absolutely need to get to God but Grace! And again I say, in Grace you can be steeped if you but desire it!

On St. Helena's rock, Napoleon was asked to name the happiest day of his life. The "little corporal" looked out across the waters and there flashed before him days of triumph such as, perhaps, no one else in the history of men has had. He heard the volley of cheers that greeted his very appearance. He looked into the eyes of full-hearted fidelity as he scanned his Old Guard. He recalled the untellable thrill of battle's triumph; then he looked away. Success, loyalty, love, intoxicating triumph had been his, yet he put them all aside and, turning to his questioners, finally said, "The happiest day of my whole life was my First Communion Day."

Napoleon was right. The happiest day of his life and of every life is the *holiest* day, the day on which we came closest to God; for that day is the most heavenly day that we can have this side of heaven! Oh, see how easy God has made it for us to begin heaven on earth. We can get close to Him, very close! We can receive Him!

Grace! Grace! Grace! That is all that we need to begin Heaven on earth; and Grace is ours for the asking. We can get Grace through prayer and the Mass; and a child can pray and assist at Mass. But the surest of all sure ways to get the one thing necessary, is the Sacraments. They are the very channels of Divine Grace, they are God's greatest gift to man.

Oh! the folly of the shallow-minded who look upon religion as they do upon their evening-gown; something to be put on for state occasions and then packed away until the next

formal affair. Religion is not an accessory to life! Religion is life! Religion is binding ourselves to God, and to bind ourselves to God is the only reason we have life! That is why the life of all living is the living of religion! When one has become God-conscious, God-directed, God-absorbed, then religion ceases to be the negative affair many make it. Real religion is much more than avoiding sin; it does not entirely consist in the non-violation of the Ten Commandments. Real religion is a mighty active thing, it is ever and always doing the greater, the better, the nobler thing, and doing them all for God! Real religion is grasping God, and the firmest, the surest, the most intimate grasp we can get on God, this side of Heaven, is in Holy Communion. That is the Sacrament that makes Heaven on earth! If you want to begin your Heaven now ...

GIVE HIM YOUR HEART

Jesus Christ begged for your heart, didn't He? He made a proposal to you when He said, "My child, give Me thy heart." I beg of you NOW ... give Him your HEART! Give God all of your heart, and the best way to give it to Him is by frequent, even daily, Communion. Give God your heart and see what happens! He'll give it back to you, but He'll give it back ... *changed!* Mightily changed! He'll give it back to you full of Faith and Hope and Love, full of fire and real Charity. Give it, and He'll give it back so strong that "Hell shall not prevail against it"; so pure that angels will hover over it; so loving that the Holy Ghost will temple therein; so like unto His very own that God the Father may say, "This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." Give it to Him, and He'll give it back fibered to unconquerable resistance, impervious to world, to flesh, and to devil, invulnerable to self, to Satan and to sin! Give it, and He'll give it back locked to all save Virtue, Goodness, Grace and God! Give, and your Heaven has begun on earth!

Give God your heart, for it NEEDS to be changed! It needs to be mightily changed, for it is anemic. Yes, no matter what your blood-count, I tell you that you are anemic, and very anemic. For the living of the Divine Romance, for daring to be different, for satisfying the need of God and man and the world, for being a Gertie Give-all instead of a Nona, you need hemoglobin, the Divine Hemoglobin. You need rich, red, warm, pure, noble, brave, Divine Blood! Injections will not help YOU. What you need is a Blood transfusion, and that can be effected only at the altar-rail. His Chalice is overflowing, all you need do is lift it to your lips! Do it! Do it daily, and your Heaven has begun on earth!

Don't think that I am rhapsodizing. I am telling you absolute truth. Try it and see! Become a woman who is God-conscious, God-fearing and God-loving, and you'll have a peace that this world cannot give nor take; you'll have a happiness that will last; you'll have a mind that is quiet, a heart that is happy, a soul that is at peace, and that peace will be the beginning of the permanent peace that makes Heaven, Heaven. The Eucharist means Grace, Grace brings you to God, and God is Heaven!

* * *

You told me that you wanted LIFE, that you wanted LOVE! I believe you. In fact, I know that you are but speaking the longing of your soul; so, I say — TAKE IT! Take LOVE and take LIFE! Take God! !

Yes, TAKE GOD! He is Love, and He is Life. Grasp Him NOW! Hug Him to your heart, and the last line of your Divine Romance is already written. It is not, however, the commonplace "And they lived happily ever after," though it means the same. The last line of your Romance will be, "Come, you blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

If that is not the smashing climax to a very real Romance, then words have lost their

meaning; life is not life, love is not love, and God is not God! But God is God and Love and Life, and that is why

LIFE IS A DIVINE ROMANCE!



EPILOGUE

I pray that we may meet, dear reader, you and I. I pray that we may meet where there is no parting; where we shall have Life and Love and God. I pray that we may meet in the Heart of Him who said, "My child, give Me thy heart." I pray that we may meet in Heaven because we have made our lives as beautiful as He planned them from the beginning, because we have made them a DIVINE ROMANCE!

Will you pray, too? We can do it. We can do it easily. He has made it not only possible, He has made it most easy. Holy Communion will do it!

Let us both live in such a way that the last line of our Life's Story will be identical with Death's invitation. Let us both live in such a way that the Angel of Death, Jesus Christ, will say, "Come, My Beloved," and into the arms of God we shall go FOREVER!



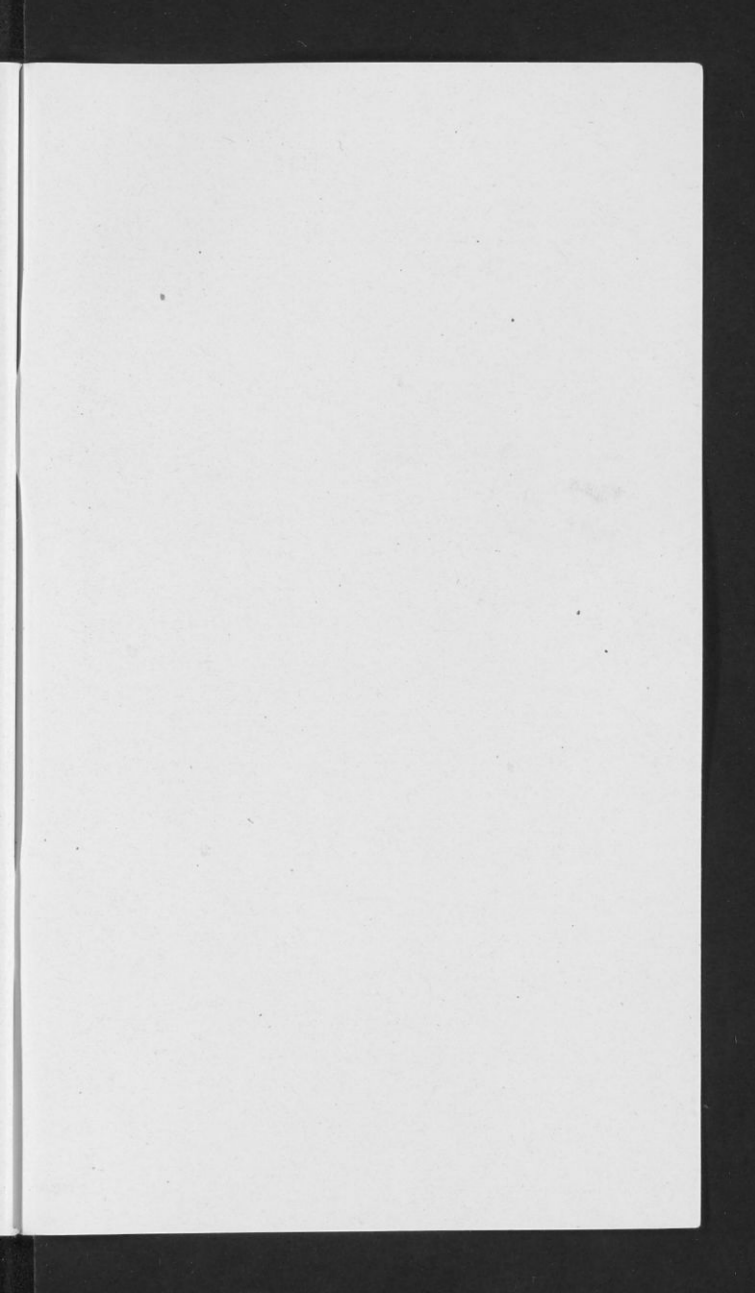
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The following table shows the number of acres of land surveyed and the amount of money expended thereon during the year ending 31st March 1900.

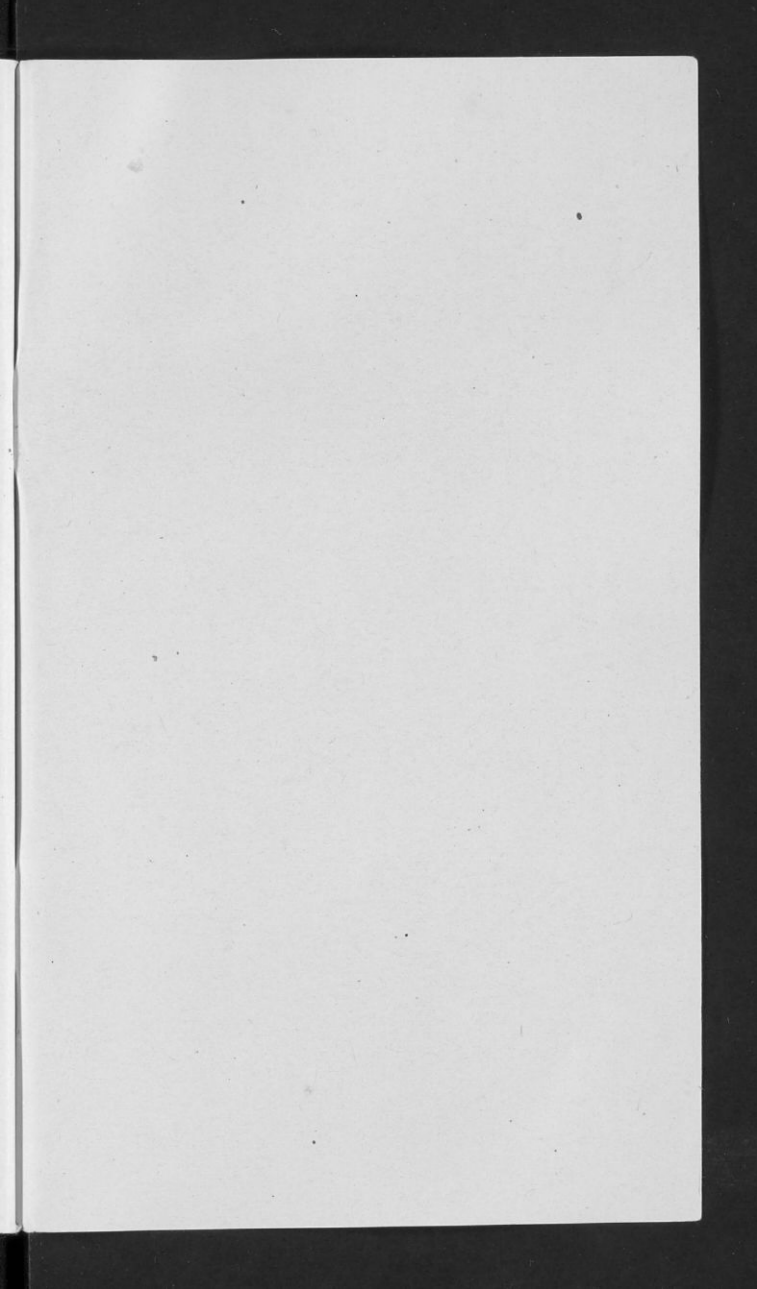
Year	Number of acres surveyed	Amount of money expended
1899	1,234,567	\$1,234,567
1900	1,234,567	\$1,234,567

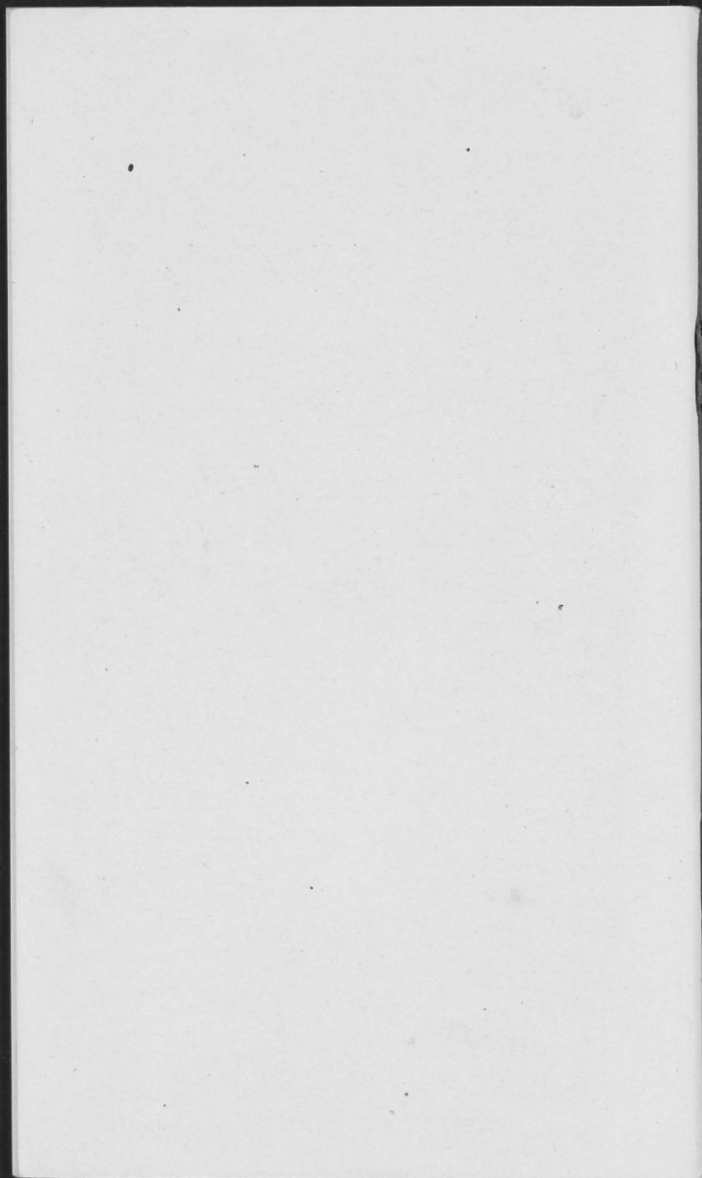
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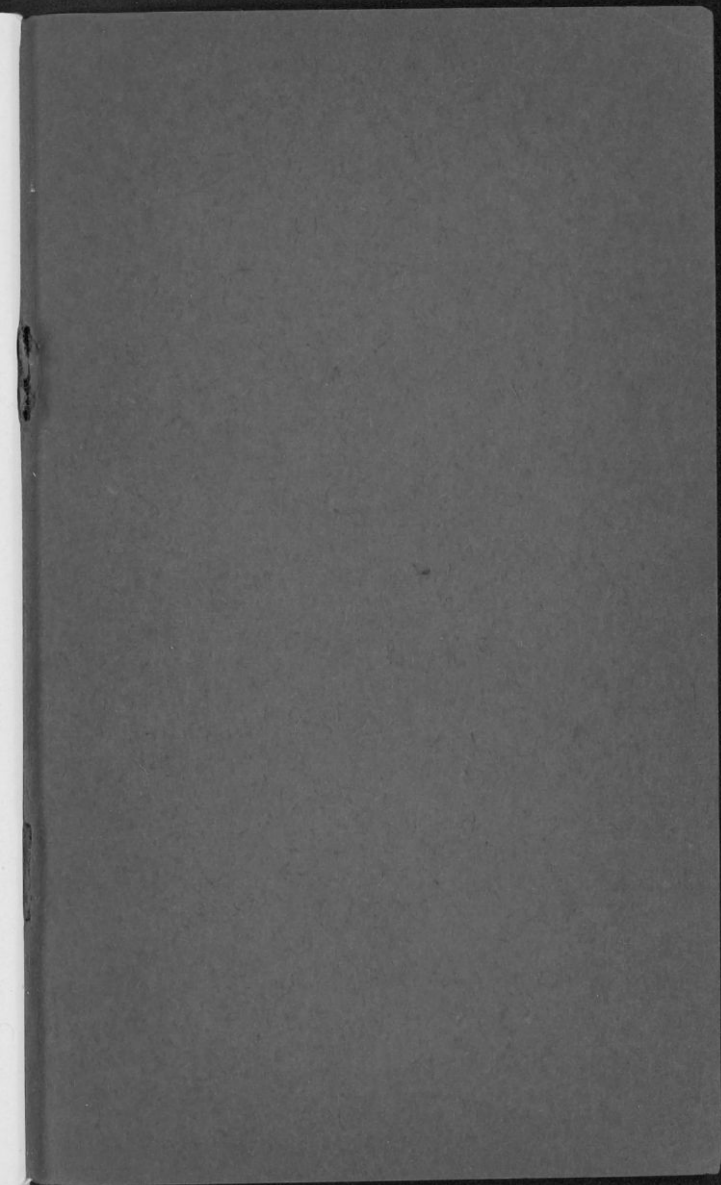
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