

FOR TEN LONG YEARS A SISTER

MISS KATE MURPHY LEAVES THE HOUSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Who Spends Ten Years of Her Life in the Cloisters and Becomes Disgusted—An Interesting History.

I, Kate Murphy, was born in county Armagh, Ireland. I left my native country at the age of 15, and came to the United States to visit my two sisters, who were cloistered nuns, in the Order of the Good Shepherd, at Cincinnati, Ohio, where they had been for 11 years previous.

Owing to the persuasions and influence brought to bear upon me, a mere child, by the mother superior, now dead, I entered the order in 1881. The superior impressed upon my mind the fact that as I was not of age and under the control of my sisters I had to be subject to them. I had an exalted idea of convent life, and consented to take habit under the vow of obedience.

All the money and clothes I possessed were taken from me in exchange for the black garb of an outdoor sister. It was late in the fall season and cold. My clothing was not sufficient to protect me; I took a severe cold which resulted in erysipelas, setting in my face and eyes, and I was confined to my bed for four weeks. The treatment that I received at the hands of the sisters during this time was inhuman in the extreme. I was totally blind, and when suffering excessively was shut up in a cell by myself. There I was left day after day almost entirely unattended.

My food, which consisted exclusively of bread and milk, was placed on a stand through a slide in the wall; the same dishes being used the entire time without being washed, the food being placed upon them through the opening. I have lain many long, weary hours longing for a drink of water, but no one came to give it to me. In my dark hours of wretchedness, bitterly did I regret that I ever saw the inside of a convent.

The sister infirmarian, instead of painting my face with iodine four times a day as ordered, performed this office once a day, standing at arm's length from me. I was told that I was a creature to be dreaded, as erysipelas was contagious. This is a good specimen of the kindness of the sisters towards one another. My own sisters were seldom permitted to visit me from the fact that long years of convent life had not yet hardened their hearts to all true sisterly feeling. One of them is now at Cincinnati, Ohio, and the other at Washington, D. C.

Before I had well recovered from this illness and was still weak, I was commanded to go out collecting money for the institution. Remember I was very young and a stranger in a strange place and worse, a devout Catholic who thought it part and parcel of my obligation to mortify the flesh that my soul might not perish; thus I bore my experience of sickness and harshness uncomplainingly.

I remained in that place, as collecting sister, for three years and was noted for being a good collector. I was then transferred to the house at Indianapolis, Ind., where I remained for two years more, performing the same daily task of collecting in rain or shine, sickness or health. One evening, at "general chapter," the superior notified us that some of us had to come to Detroit to collect for the foundation of the house at that place, and I was sent here for that purpose.

Upon my first coming here she gave me full charge of the collecting, and my first step was to beg stone for the foundation of the house to the left of the community, or ward-mansion as they called it. I visited all the stone-quarries from here to Toledo, and received an abundance of stone from the Kelly Island quarries, and visited them again one year later and received similar donations to erect another building. Then I solicited all the lumber and plumbing, not costing the institution one cent. I had sufficient for all the buildings. All this is shown in a book at the house, with the names of the subscribers and the amount subscribed.

The next step was to collect money for the purpose of paying off the debt on the ward mansion, which I succeeded in doing by taking up annual subscriptions from gentlemen in business, for five years. During that period of time I collected \$17,000 in cash, besides thousands of dollars worth of produce and manufactures. I cannot tell how or why I was so kindly received by those gentlemen I solicited from; they were, with a few exceptions, all Protestants, which perhaps accounts for it.

At that time I allude to, our "superior" was Mother Francis Patrick, or "Mother Pat," as I have often heard her called by one of the priests at Trinity church. She had her favorites among the sisters, and these she conferred honors upon, such as the privilege of washing her feet, combing her hair, attending her at her bath, dressing her or attending her in a way that no woman of the world, with any modesty, would tolerate for an instant.

She was fond of luxurious living, and gratified her tastes to the utmost at the expense of my labor and privation, and of the other "sisters," and the

generosity of goodhearted Protestants. I know now that I did wrong in taking the money of those generous people, but thought I was doing a Godly act at the time. The money would have been better expended in some other cause, as it was never deserved at the house of the Good Shepherd. After the "mother" had been made "provincial" at St. Louis, where she is at present, she paid the Detroit house unexpected visits on one or two occasions, when one of the "out-door sisters" had to hasten to procure some beer for her use.

She was a domineering character, harsh and rigid in the execution of duties from the "sisters," (such as were not favored as before-mentioned) never missing an opportunity to wound them, humbling them incessantly in the presence of "seculars"—compelling them to kneel while speaking to her—kiss the floor, and in passing anything to her to kiss her hand. Even the "assistant" had to observe this command. No one dared address her without falling upon her knees. She made a rule that every morning before going out to collect we were obliged to come to her to receive her blessing; even the "sisters" in the house had to observe this command.

There she would sit in an easy arm-chair, her feet resting upon a padded foot-stool, the very embodiment of laziness, and pronounce the blessing in Latin over us.

I had by this time lost some of my "good Catholic" ideas, and her gross violations of her vows and obligations disgusted me. To do the woman justice, however, I will here state that she is but a fair sample of the many "superiors" and women of her position that I came in contact with while I was under vows.

Armed with her blessing we would start out on our daily trip, she caring little, meanwhile, whether we went to perdition or not, so long as we brought money back with us.

This "superior" remained with us for a year and a half, at the end of which time she returned to St. Louis.

She was succeeded by Mother Incarnation, from St. Paul. In justice to this "superior" I wish to state, as all those who came in contact with her will verify, that she was goodness personified; she was kind, gentle and charitable; in fact, she was the idol of the entire community—penitents included. She was so beloved by all that the "provincial" becoming acquainted with the fact, instantly sent her back to St. Paul, after a stay of only 11 months.

Her treatment of the penitents had been in so marked a contrast to that of previous "superiors," and so humane was her conduct towards both "penitents" and "sisters," that one of the "out-door sisters," Mary Joseph, whose name in the world was Miss Lynch, became so attached to the "mother" that she fell ill and died of consumption superinduced by grief and the change in treatment.

After her departure came Mother Stanislaus, and once more our troubles began; she was a second edition of "Mother Pat," and, as the Irishman said "an improvement for the worse." The community in the Detroit house is composed of about twenty "sisters." Mother Stanislaus had about four favorites or "pets," as we called them, and the remaining sixteen got even with her by abusing each other on many an occasion. Silence is strictly observed in the cloister; "sisters" in passing one another never speak—merely incline the head. No conversations are permitted to be held, but in the corridors many a good Christian battle is waged amongst them.

One would suppose, when paying a visit to the institution, that the "sisters" lived in perfect harmony, and that peace reigns supreme, but how different is the actual state of affairs!

The "superior" delights in tormenting those under her charge, and they in turn are intolerably disagreeable to each other. Mother Stanislaus followed the example of Mother Patrick, but being the more keen-witted, amused herself always at the expense of some defenseless "sister." The "mother" was always sarcastic and insulting; she was promoted to her present position upon coming to Detroit from St. Paul, where she was class mistress, having charge of the "penitents" or girls placed in the house. She was even more insolent and domineering than Mother Patrick. Her delight was to place the "sisters" in penance for the most trivial or no offense at all, because she was angry; yet she demanded that the whole community should bow before and respect her. She had often preached at the "chapter" that we should obey her as God. Some weak-minded subjects believe this.

In this "superior" we found the most hard-hearted and selfish of human beings. Every one in the house was compelled to be subject to her treatment and submissive to the penances imposed. These consisted of eating off the bare floor, kneeling with a stick in the mouth during the meal hour in the refectory or dining-room, in the presence of the other "sisters," or made to gather the crumbs let fall by the others and afterwards eat them, and on their knees beg pardon of each sister in turn.

A moment's tardiness in appearing in the morning was punished by compelling the offender to bring her pillow into the refectory and lie upon the floor

in protracted sleep, whilst the others ate—all this is "penance."

The "superior" is the one who discovered the penances, she who must be looked upon as a saint and holding the position of God Himself amongst her inferiors.

How has she observed her vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity? Poverty? Her underclothing of the finest linen, her hose, opera-length, \$1.50 per pair, shoes that were ordered from Fyfe at \$7.00 per pair, etc. She was always supplied with the best of everything. The poverty displayed in her bedroom was in the form of an expensive center carpet, rugs, easy chairs, foot-stool, etc., a well equipped bed, and bath-rooms attached to the bed-room. The best of all obtainable luxuries in the way of edibles for her table, and in an apartment adjoining her office, a cupboard supplied with the choicest wines and liquors to be had.

The "sisters" who left the order described it completely. Catholics would not believe all this, and many Protestants were unwilling to do so, but this is the simplest, plainest truth told in the simplest way.

The "sisters" Immaculate Heart" and "Mary Xavier," and others who left, were pronounced "insane."

"They did not know what they were talking about," Bishop Foley said the fault was with the individual, not with the institution.

Bishop Foley would not speak against the institution, of course—why should he? The "house" is a fine place for him, wherein finest cigars, wines and liquors are at his disposal at all times. This statement, of course, is also false from a Roman standpoint, but we who have been upon the inside know it to be God's own truth.

Bishop Foley will tell the inquirer that the "superior" and "sisters" all ate at one table. It seems a presumption on my part to deny the statement and brand it as an unqualified falsehood. Yet, presumptions or not, such is the case. The table of the "superior" and the assistants was separate and distinct from that of the "sisters." Upon the first was served the most fragrant of coffee, rich cream, chicken, choicest cuts of porterhouse steak, hot cakes, the finest of dairy butter, eggs, etc. I often served the table myself.

The "sisters" were compelled to partake, standing, of dry bread, thin coffee and skim milk that had been solicited. By the way, they kept a cow for supplying the "superior's" table with dairy delicacies and for the use of the priests. Some mornings the "sisters" were glad to get oleomargarine; upon others spoiled and frequently putrid meat made up into hash. I never noticed any changes in the diet after the exposures had been made by the "sisters."

On Mother Stanislaus going to St. Louis for her "retreat"—a time of meditation, silence and prayer and examination of conscience, lasting for nine days, she sent word to me to send by express two cases of claret. This wine I purchased from O'Brien & Co., and forwarded to her to the house at St. Louis.

Even when home at Detroit she always had what drinks she wanted; occasionally I would bring her home a quart bottle of Holland gin for a change. When the "sisters" spoke of her breaking the rules by drinking in the chapel of the convent, which she did, she avoided censure in this regard by stepping into an adjoining room to partake of her drinks, then she would return. This seemed quite a little trouble to Mother Stanislaus, as she was accustomed to having a "sister" bring it into the chapel to her previously.

Before coming to Detroit she had been troubled with her throat. Whilst here she always had the best treatment, no matter where the money was solicited to defray such expenses; such as coupe hire from Case's livery, between the house and the doctor's. Previous to her coming to Detroit I had purchased a carriage from Mr. Newcomb for \$150, but this was a slow mode of travel and did not suit Mother Stanislaus.

During all the time that she was living in such luxury and taking such assiduous care of herself, I knew "sisters" in the house who were lying in sickness and suffering in their cells or at the infirmary, devoid of not only the necessities of existence, but even the medicines proscribed for them.

The "mother" was waited upon, hand and foot, until the last thing at night. Most of her luxuries, such as wine, whisky, beer and mineral water, were supplied through my solicitation from various merchants in this city. Of these, it is unnecessary to state, not a drop found its way down the throat of a "sister" unless a bosom favorite of the "mother," either in sickness or in health.

A friend of mine sent me a five-gallon keg of wine from across the river for the "sisters," but they never received any of it, nor did I dare acquaint them with the fact of it having been sent, or the donor with its being misapplied, so great was my dread of the humiliating penance that I knew would follow such a confession on my part.

The choicest viands, the best brands of wines, and the most expensive brands of cigars were kept apart for the use of Bishop Foley and the various priests who called at frequent intervals and

ran the institution to suit themselves while present.

It was a part of my duty to wait upon the priests when at supper in the "bishop's parlor." Frequently some of the more privileged "sisters" would accompany the priests or bishops upon their visits, and take their share of the good things, although they were as fully aware as I, myself, that it was against the rule for a "sister" to eat anything outside of her refectory. Frequently Mother Stanislaus ate there herself, when she would order me to lock the door of the room so that she would not be seen by any passing "sister," lest the latter should report her to the "provincial."

Mother Stanislaus was naturally a healthy, robust woman, a large eater and an indulgent drinker; yet for days at a time she would remain in her bed, with or without the company of a "sister," and put the following notice upon her door to prevent intrusion upon her privacy: "Do not disturb our mother." She was very seldom in attendance at the exercises of the community. If most of the "sisters" followed suit whenever they had an opportunity, they cannot be so much blamed when their "superior" sets them such an example.

On June 16, 1891, I called upon Bishop Foley to be dispensed from my vow of obedience. He said: "For God's sake say nothing about the house." I made no reply to this. He begged me to give my article, which I had made up to my mind to give to a daily paper of this city, to the Michigan Catholic if I was firm in my resolution to make the matter public, evidently fearing to arouse a suspicion in the public mind that there was more in what had been said than was admitted by him at the time of the exposure by the two "ex-sisters" who had previously exposed the institution. I refused his offer, however, and gave my article to the paper to which I had first intended giving it.

The fact that I had been absolved from my vow was proof that I had been a member of the order, nor could the bishop consistently say at any time later that I had not been a member. I was careful to take this precaution, as ten years' hard and bitter experience had taught me that the word of a priest was but a slim reed for any one—more especially a weak woman, to lean upon.

Ten years of contact with the duplicity and deceit of a convent had taught me that a priest, bishop and "mother superior" can do no wrong, and that no lie is sinful if uttered in defense of the Catholic church.

I knew what falsehoods had been uttered against all other "sisters" and priests who have left the church, and, profiting by their bitter experiences, I prepared myself to meet all their subsequent attacks. I left the house, after giving ten years of my young life, as I at first believed, to the service of God, to find at the last that the grapes had turned to ashes in my mouth and that the so-called servants and mediators of the Most High were, with a few, if any, exceptions, hypocrites and blasphemers.

When I contrast the feelings of divine hope that animated me, with the bitter repugnance and aversion that seized possession of me as soon as I learned the tricks, artifices and irreligion of the "sacred" order, my heart turned almost to stone and I felt how far God was away from me. Many nights have I laid and wept upon my pallet tears of agony and wretchedness at the hollow and mockery of a godless community with which I had bound myself to move until the grave should close in over my wretched body. In my breaking heart there still lingered a hope that somewhere in God's great universe there was a pure heart and honest purpose with whom I might kneel in prayer and speak to my Maker from the fullness of my pent up soul, and not through the diseased and corrupt medium of a foresworn priesthood.

Those alone who have passed through the miserable, grovelling hours of abasement and mental degradation that the pure-minded neophyte, in her graduation through this academy of falsehood and disillusion to apostasy, can alone sympathize with my sufferings during those long years of trial and agony.

When I, who had brought in the many gifts and donations which the kindness of God-fearing people had bestowed upon me for that church which they believe so charitable and pure. I, a "good sister," a devoted worker for God, a "favored" one of the "holy virgin," worn in health and good looks through my weary trappings to enrich the institution, left, I had not a second garment to my body nor a cent in my pocket. I left the bishop's presence habited in my "sister's" garb. He knew full well that I had no home or place where I could go, nor any place where I could rest my weary head, nor any friend in this broad land to whom I could turn for aid, save to my God, and He, my religion told me, I had offended when I cancelled my vows of obedience.

This bishop, who is quoted for his benevolence and charity, permitted me to go forth into a world where I was a comparative stranger, without offering me a cent or the means to procure a meal or a place to lay my head for a single night.

I must admit that I expected just such treatment, for by this time I had learned from observation and experience how

the Catholic church treats its children when they are no longer money-worms.

Let it be known here, also, that the church of Rome will never receive within its bosom those who cannot, either by labor, by begging, or by contributions increase the wealth of the institution. I have found that the few dependents who find a home under Rome's hospitable roof are either supported in order that a paying private asylum or hospital may be run under the guise and exemptions of charitable institutions, or else paraded, like freaks in a museum, as evidences of Rome's bounty.

As the doors of the House of the Good Shepherd closed behind me for the last time, penniless, homeless though I was, and in a garb that I had learned to loathe, and despite as the cloak of hypocrisy, impurity, uncleanness and petty hatred, my heart throbbled with a new-born pleasure; my blood pulsated with a new-found hope—the pleasure of God's own freedom and the hope of God's own pardon for that cowardly fear which had kept me so many years the slave of a godless community—for the waste of ten years of God's precious life.

Those Protestants who read this may smile at the cowardice of a woman who could not summon courage enough to do right. To such I would reply by asking them to place themselves in my position; a lone girl, sworn and pledged by impious and tricky vows, which to the novice are made to appear as God's own commands, to perfect obedience to all commands of her superiors. No fault is punished so severely in the Catholic church as disobedience, therefore, as the novice hopes for heaven and absolution, she must place herself, body and soul, in the hands of the priests. How they degrade the one and use the other for their own vile pleasures, all those who have been their victims know only too well.

There is no greater crime in the eyes of the church than for its dupes to renounce their vows. This is a fact which is impressed upon the novice in every conceivable manner. Isolated from all outside influences, compelled to submit to all the indignities and degrading offices which their "superior" and the priests thrust upon them in order to secure the safety of their souls, one year's residence in the Catholic cloisters breaks the spirit and crows into submission the most courageous.

By the time that the mind has arrived at the fact that priests are not God, nor "mother superiors" the mouthpieces of Christ—the Catholic church a sham, and its institutions an immense fraud, the neophyte is usually crushed in body and broken in mind—too enfeebled morally, mentally and physically to raise a hand or protest against the oppressor. The knowledge, too, that outside the walls of the convent the nun will meet with nothing but scorn and derision from her own religionists in place of help and sympathy—the fact that Protestants are too "vile" to be tolerated and entirely outside the pale of God's church, makes it almost impossible that she can turn to them for help.

Like the drowning man who clutches at straws to save himself, the poor nun clings to the priests, knowing that they will, as a matter of self-interest, protect her against everything except themselves. There are hundreds of poor wretches who, like myself, know the corruption that exists in the convents and "houses of refuge," but fear to trust themselves upon the waters of the wide world without friends or money.

Leaving the House of the Good Shepherd, I also left the Roman Catholic church forever. Thanks to the assistance of Protestants, who in the goodness of their hearts helped me to gain a course of instruction at the Detroit University, I was enabled to become proficient in the business of typewriter, which I now follow and derive my support from.

It may be asked why I waited a year from the time of my leaving the "house" before making my present statement to the public. In reply I would state that had I done so when I first left the house or until I had obtained some means of permanent self-support, I should have arrayed every Catholic in the country against me, while the teachings I had received as a "sister" led me to fear that Protestants would spurn me as some hated reptile. Thank God, I have learned to know Protestants as they are in truth, and not as the Catholic church paints them. On the other hand, my knowledge of priests and the priesthood is such that no paper circulating in a family dare publish one-hundredth part of the infamies and immoralities that are practiced under the roof of the priest who is supposed to be the protector of chastity and pure womanhood.

Priests are men—frequently of the most vicious class, and but few, I believe, observe the vow of chastity. The priest lives in luxury and elegance, drinks the finest wines and liquors, and smokes the best brands of cigars. Whatever self-denial they may inflict upon themselves before their ordination, it does not enter into their priestly lives with them, for there it is one round of self-indulgence, and the gratification of every whim or caprice that may seize them. I have known a priest in Bishop Foley's diocese on many oc-

casions to say mass before he was entirely sober, after a previous night's debauch, and upon one occasion, at least, after the commission of a horrible offense. I can also give the name and residence of this priest. If I reserve those for a later time it is merely to await the development of other points connected with the matter at issue.

Many times I have been grossly and wantonly insulted by priests whose language and beastly manners were too disgusting to bear repetition. Mine was not an isolated case. There are thousands of women in the cloisters of the Roman church who could relate similar revolting experiences if they dared to do so, but their mouths, like mine for ten years past, are sealed through a deadly fear of vengeance, both here at the hands of a relentless priesthood, and hereafter in purgatory. (Concluded next week.)

CAMPBELL ON SCHOOL NEWS.

Most of the Trouble With the Present System is caused by the Catholics.

"Our Public Schools and their Perils" was the subject of the Rev. J. L. Campbell's sermon at the Lexington avenue Baptist church, 11th street and Lexington avenue, New York, last Sunday night.

"The lack of proper school accommodations in our city," he said, "is one of the greatest perils which besets the advance of education among our children. They are crowded out in hundreds, especially in the down town districts, and I claim that it is an outrage that in a city as rich as New York even one child should be obliged to go without education."

"Another peril that menaces the public school institution is the influence of the Roman Catholic church. The Catholic hierarchy is the deadly foe of the public schools and will ever remain so. At their plenary council in 1884, war was declared on the public school system by the Catholics, who ordered that at once parochial schools should be erected in every parish of the church. What a comment on their religion that it cannot stand contact with another than its own in the matter of education."

"If you divide the school fund to favor the Roman Catholics, to enable them to teach their faith and educate their children in their parochial schools, you will soon have to share with each denomination separately. The principle is entirely anti-American. The Roman Catholic religion is and always has been the foe of education. This is proved by the poor progress made in educating the people of the Catholic countries such as Italy, Spain and Mexico. The great proportion of the people in these countries are very illiterate."

In conclusion, Dr. Campbell said there was too much hostility to the reading of the Bible in the public school. He advocated its reading before the afternoon exercises as well as in the morning, and urged that more time and care be expended in elucidating the passages and chapters that are read.—Patriotic American.

Roman Catholic Obedience.

The Roman Catholic priest at Ellsworth, Maine, was invited to make the address at the graduation exercises of the Ellsworth High school, recently. It was a scholarly production, and did credit to that gentleman who delivered it, and yet the question has been asked, we are informed, in the town and elsewhere, why a Roman Catholic priest should have been honored in the election for such service, when it is remembered that Priest Butler was invited by Protestant ministers of Ellsworth to join a ministers' club, hoping that thereby the good of the community might be subserved. No sooner did the bishop of the diocese learn of this fact, than he at once forbade Father Butler to associate with the club, and ordered him to resign immediately, which he did. If the authorities of the church thus insult Protestants, why should honors be given the priests who represent the church? A little wholesome "snubbing" like they have had in Chelsea of late, does them good, and will ultimately bring them to their senses, and convince them that they own only part of the earth.—Woman's Voice.

Immigration continues to hold its own, and more, the arrivals during June having been 73,120, against 68,317 in the same month last year, and 353,961 for the first half of 1892, as against 326,307 for the first half of 1891. There has been a falling off in the arrivals from every country in the United Kingdom, the whole number of Irish immigrants during the first six months of the present year being only 34,554. Germany has sent a few thousand more this year than in the same period of last year, and the Scandinavians have also been somewhat more numerous, but most of the increase in the grand total is due to the less desirable races, the Polish contingent having grown from 16,422 to 18,267, the Austrian from 17,844 to 20,127, and the Russians from 26,467 to 37,549. The statistics seem to present only one thing to be grateful for, and that is the falling off in the arrivals from Italy. The immigration evil grows more and more threatening, yet congress seems utterly indifferent to it.