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**GOD SAVE MY DAUGHTER**

by HELEN JACKSON

Tune - Juanita

Off in a miners' city

Sat a mother as she may,

Bowed down in sadness

Near the close of day.

Years have passed in longing,

That her loved one might come home,

But all hope has vanished,

Daughter's face had not shown.

CHORUS

Father, wilt thou save her

From the convent's awful doom,

Ere my heart is broken,

Save my daughter, my own.

Deep was the mystery,

Why poor Helen went away,

Trusting Rome's agents

One eventful day.

How the black-robed sisters

Spoke of life beneath the veil.

Yes! must be her answer,

Their will must prevail.

Barred doors and windows,

With a high wall all around;

These are the barriers

Veiling gloom all profound.

In a dark cell tortured,

With her hands and feet both bound,

Praying St. Anthony to save her,

That for Mother she may be found.

How well I remember

When mother to me hath said:

Helen! Helen! you'll be sorry

For leaving your mother's bed.

Since then many tears have fallen,

As I wished for her bread,

But now hope has vanished,

For Mother, she is dead.

God save my daughter

From the nuns and priests of Rome,

Before they will lie on others

And ruin many a home.

Let us, by our ballots,

Drive this monster from our shore,

In this land of Freedom,

**SAVE US EVER-MORE.**



"WHEN THE CONVENT WALLS  
COME DOWN."

—  
BY FORD HENDRICKSON  
—

TUNE—*When the Pearly Gates Unfold.*

O how hard it is to suffer;  
'Neath the sun and moon and stars  
While the world rolls ever onward  
And I gaze through convent bars.  
How I miss my dear old mother,  
When the sisters at me frown;  
But this all will soon be over  
When the convent walls come down.

CHORUS:

Convent life will soon be over,  
And the sisters' piercing frown  
Will no longer scare and haunt us,  
When the convent walls come down.

O how well the Priest deceived me,  
When he led me to this life;  
Telling how I would be holy,  
In a place that knew no strife.  
Brightest scenes of life he painted,  
And how well it all did sound;  
But we'll have another picture,  
When the convent walls come down.

Shoulders sore and both feet bleeding  
From the tread on broken glass;  
Hark! the convent bells are tolling,  
And the black rob'd sisters pass.  
Nearly starved now and deserted,  
With my hands and feet all bound;  
But we soon will leave the dungeons  
When the convent walls come down.

Darkest night spreads all around us  
In these dismal cells of fear;  
But we hear the distant rumble,  
Of a conflict drawing near.  
Truth peals forth from the lips undaunted;  
Congress Halls have caught the sound,  
Telling how it will be settl'd  
When the convent walls come down.

WHEN WILL THE POPE COME?

—  
BY REV. GRIMES.  
—

TUNE—*America*

They say the Pope will come  
To make our land his home  
But when that day?  
When cats quit catching mice  
And a Chinaman won't eat rice  
And chickens have no lice,  
Then he will come.

When bristles grow on geese  
When rocks all turn to grease  
Then he will come.  
When a Ford will make no noise  
And the Irish raise no boys,  
Our battleships, all are toys,  
Then he will come.

When car wheels are made of glass  
And cows quit eating grass,  
Then he will come.  
When dogs no more will bark  
And sing just like the lark  
And Baboons play the harp,  
The Pope will come.

When mules all cease to kick  
And sheep the salt won't lick,  
Then he will come.  
When bull frogs cease to leap  
And owls at night will sleep  
And snails no longer creep,  
Then he will come.

When donkeys cease to bray  
And cat fish live on hay,  
Then he will come.  
When cash won't tempt a Jew  
And cows no cud will chew  
And wood-peckers heads turn blue,  
The Pope will come.

When snakes upright will walk  
And women cease to talk,  
Then he will come.  
When the Negroes all turn white  
And the sun will give no light,  
When bull dogs will not fight,  
Then he will come.

When all men cease to think  
And polecats do not stink,  
The Pope will come.  
When we no more mine lead  
And Protestants all are dead  
And the seas with their blood are red,  
The Pope will come.





Helen Jackson, Author,  
*"Convent Cruelties, or My Life in a Convent"*

# Convent Cruelties

OR

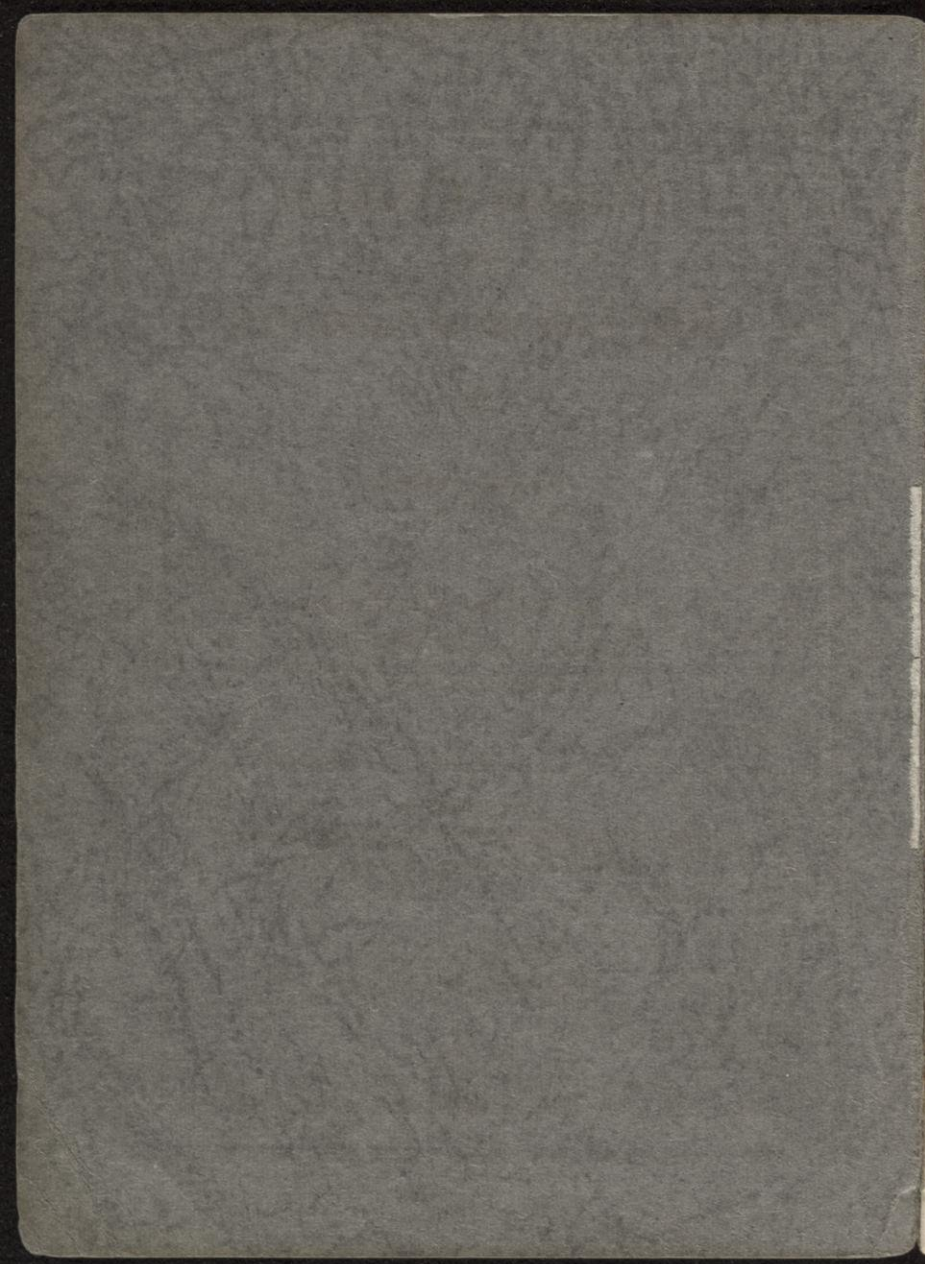
## My Life in the Convent

BY

Helen Jackson

## Awful Revelations

(A True Story)





Convent Cruelties  
OR  
My Life in a Convent

BY

Helen Jackson

A providential delivery from  
Rome's Convent Slave Pens  
A sensational experience

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## Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to my faithful husband, John Jackson, who has for these many years, while endeavoring to present the truth regarding the Monastic system against great opposition and persecution, faithfully stood by me through thick and thin on every battlefield when my life was endangered from the howling mobs of the hierarchy and for the Freedom of all those who are yet in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity in Jesus' Name!

HELEN JACKSON.



**Mrs. Jackson in her American clothes.**



## PREFACE

---

In presenting this book to the civilized world I think it proper to state that its preparation is only a brief sketch of the life of Helen Jackson, and in view of the times and environments in which she lived, she is one of the most remarkable women of any age. She lived in the convents at a time when civilization was rapidly ascending the highest standards conceivable.

The matter as embodied in this book portrays the truly existing conditions of holy convents. Some questions that are agitating the whole religious world are here brought to light again. I say again, because some countries (even Catholic countries) have solved the problem temporarily, but, our nation, in nearly all the states, is paying for the maintenance of these institutions with Protestants' money.

I will not take up your time with historical facts but only state her experience, thus: How she entered the Felician Convent, Canfield and St. Aubin Sts., Detroit, Michigan, and later, was trapped into other convents; the good things she expected to find there—loving arms like mother's to embrace her when weary, or tender care like mother's with kind words to reprove her. All these maternal blessings were only a faint memory, and instead, found what she calls "Convent Cruelties," from which phrase we derive the fore-title of this book. We earnestly pray that this book will extract, from all who read it, an unbiased opinion regarding these institutions that will lead you to agitate suppression of Good Shepherd Convents, whether you,

dear reader, are a Catholic or a Protestant. After reading this book will you be ready to stand out in the open and declare that right and justice must prevail, or will you continue to tolerate these uncivilized tactics until one of your own family becomes a victim? Remember, that only one word to the wise is sufficient, so do your duty and profit by the experience of others and thus begin at once to give assistance for destroying the seed of iniquity which is taking root in private institutions. Some nations have suppressed "Our Lady of Charity," "Good Shepherd" and other convents within their borders. Let us not stop with merely suppression or reconstruction of the organization, but let us publish throughout the whole world the exact conditions as told by the inmates and secure for the inmates their God-given rights to live and enjoy freedom as guaranteed by the American Constitution.

It must be remembered that the story of Helen Jackson here given, is written from a Roman Catholic standpoint. The material is fit for any child or lady to read because the repulsive material is excluded.

**AUTHOR.**

## CHAPTER I.

### MY EARLY LIFE,

I was born at Shamokin, Pennsylvania, in the beautiful hard coal region. My father was a coal miner, and when I was one year and eight months old he was killed at the Luke Fiddler Mines, near Shamokin, Pa. I was the youngest of seven sisters; the oldest being only ten years old. My father's name was Michael Baranowski and my mother's maiden name was Eva Burke. About a year after my father's death, my mother married Stanley Riggle, who proved to be a very good step-father, and who also was a coal miner.

Many happy days were spent in the mountains and under my mother's care. Sometimes we would gather



*Visions of happy days gathering huckleberries.*

honeysuckles and spend our time where nature's beautiful scenes were most fascinating. Oftentimes we ventured into the wilderness about fifteen miles from



home, in groups of two or more, to gather wild elderberries and huckleberries. We would get so tired and fatigued and hardly able to get back, without taking the miners' train home, with our day's pickings. The stories about snakes and other creatures of the wilds, were not enough of a scare to discourage our going to the wilderness and resist the temptations that nature offered.

At home we had a big two-story house with seven rooms and attic. The house was built at the front end of one lot, and the land sloped down into a creek at the back. We had four lots, which were overshadowed with nice fruit and shade trees. One cow, some chickens and ducks comprised our list of live-stock. We also had a big barn and many pleasant days were spent in the hay-loft. In the winter we would coast down the mountain side for miles. On one occasion when a coasting party had a spill at the rounding of a jog in the road, we piled up in a heap and all received serious injuries, but no one would tell what had happened through fear that the sport would be prohibited. Those days have truly some happy recollections and are some of the days to which we go back when we speak of our childhood days.

In addition to the family mentioned, I had three half-sisters and two half-brothers, one half-sister died when about three months old, and later, I shall tell in due place, how other relatives have died. You will note from my story that all of these were younger than I and so I often cared for and caressed these babies like a mother. My favorite was a baby brother named Raymond. Many events have passed of which I shall not mention in this edition.

I had now reached the age of thirteen and had a strong desire to become a nun. One day while visit-

ing my cousin Kate, I expressed a desire to be a nun and she, as a Roman Catholic, advised me what to do. So I went to the Priest and kissed his knees and feet and begged him to take me to the convent where I could become a Felician nun. Father Maklenkowsky listened very attentively with his hand on my forehead and finally said: "Yes, my dear Angel, you ought to be a nun, and I shall do all in my power to assist you in securing your vocation."

Sometime later a Mother Superior came to Shamokin and I was notified to call for an interview. On my visit to the Mother Superior I met Rose K—— and May Z—— while waiting in the room to talk with the Superior. While waiting here I became a little nervous regarding the proper conduct to meet Mother Superior. In the course of our waiting, I learned from the other girls what to do when the Superior came out, and this helped to quiet my nerves. At the sight of the Mother Superior I knelt on the floor, bowed and kissed her feet, and said: "Dear Reverend Mother Superior, will you please take me to the convent where I can live a Holy, religious life and become a nun? I want to be a nun, educated and become a teacher in a Parochial school." In response to my plea she said I could go to be a nun, but I had to have enough extra money to bring me back home if I should prove to have no calling, and also clothes enough to do me for three years. At this juncture I was more puzzled than ever because my mother had no knowledge of my arranging to become a nun, and I had to tell her in order to obtain her consent, clothes and other necessities, preparatory to my leaving.

Upon informing my mother about my undertaking she replied in the negative and said: "Helen! Helen! You, the youngest of all my girls, (the children of the



first husband and father, being understood) to think that you want to leave me will almost break my heart. What do you mean?" "Now Ma-me (pronounced as spelt) you know that this is a good place where I am going. I am going to be good and holy and nothing bad can happen to me. Why are you crying? Ma-me, please Ma-me, tell me, do you not want me to be a nun and lead a holy life and why not?" "Helen dear, I do not want to stop you from going to be a nun and go to hell for your lost soul but you will understand some day and think of what your Ma-me said." "But Ma-me!" I intercepted, again expressing the same contentions that I was going to be holy and lead a religious life. "You know Ma-me that the Sisters are very kind to me, they seem so good, tender, pious and true, and sometimes they even pat me on the cheek and say: 'What a pious, sweet little face, and Oh, how Jesus would like you to be His spouse and to give your heart to God.' " Truly their pathos had a hypnotizing influence over me and it seemed impossible to resist it, so I began to prepare for my departure and vocation when I finally gained my mother's consent with much reluctance.

I began to prepare for my first holy communion by going for catechism instructions every day for two weeks and the last few days we attended twice daily. Taking up my studies for my first communion and the instructions I received at my first confession, had a great tendency to increase my anxiety to become a nun. This convent life I thought would save me from hearing these embarrassing questions that were asked of me at my first confession, and furthermore, I pictured that life there would be like living in Heaven.

During my period of instructions for my first confession, I worked for a family named Morris, helping in housework until one Sunday when I returned home



and told Ma-me what had happened that morning. Early that morning we arose and had our breakfast as usual, but after breakfast Mrs. Morris invited me to join them in their prayer service. This, I refused, because I feared that such an act would displease my mother, and so I remained in the kitchen doing my work. In a few moments they began to pray and again I thought it wrong, as a Roman Catholic, to even listen to Protestant prayers, so now I was washing dishes and also rattling them so as not to hear their prayer. This soon proved so annoying to the family that they asked me to please stop washing until they were through with the prayer service. Again they invited me into the room and assured me that I would not have to take part in their prayer but only sit while they prayed. I finally consented to go in and sit down. While they were praying I knelt down and had my face covered with my hands and occasionally I would peep through my hands through mere curiosity, and part of the prayer I heard was as follows: "Dear Jesus, bring back my son, George, like you did the Prodigal and tell him that we forgive him all if he will only come home to his broken-hearted mother." They also prayed for me. (To the Lord's greater honor and glory, I must state right here, that Jesus answered that prayer; Praise the Lord.) All of this I related to my mother and concluded with the following: "Honest Ma-me, they did not use any beads or prayer book either." Right here my mother reproved me for my conduct and said that I could not go to work for those Protestant things any more, and also that I committed a sin, and so I had to look for another place to work.

My parents were poor and this was one reason why it was such a big problem for them to raise enough money to send me to the convent and buy my

clothes. In due time my mother had my railroad ticket bought; enough clothes made to do me for three years, and fifteen dollars to pay for my return ticket, which I would need if the sisters decided I had not the ability to be a Felician nun. All prepared and my heart set on being a nun, I finally received word when the train would leave. The Mother Superior and two nuns were waiting for me, and so I took my little grip and walked to the depot as proudly as any one could, and we all met there. All of my relatives that could possibly get to see me off at the depot were there, including my Uncle Frank, stepfather, two brothers and my mother, weeping and saying: "Helen! Helen! you will be sorry for leaving your poor old mother." So they all kissed me and bid me "Good-bye," and as the train pulled out of the depot we all waved a good-bye. I cannot describe the feeling that came over me when the scene of home and mother faded out of sight, and everything seemed only like a vision. Just think of parting with the best friend on earth—Mother, and the only vivid picture I have of her is with these words: "Helen! Helen! You will be sorry for leaving your poor old mother."

## CHAPTER II.

### A STRANGER IN A LARGE CITY

A Felician Mother Superior, two other girls, (also aspirants for the same Sisterhood) and I traveled on the train until we came to Pittsburg, Pa. Here we alighted from the train; and, in custody of the Mother Superior, were driven in a hack (which passed over a long bridge over the Allegheny river) to the Felician Sisters' home and remained there for the night. The next day we were put on a train for Detroit, Michigan, arriving again at night, and at the depot we were met by two Felician Sisters; in their company, we continued our travel in the city in a hack until we reached our final destination—the Felician Convent.

Throughout this entire trip I was very careful and anxious to observe every rule and command through fear that a mistake might disqualify me. I asked a girl named Rose, what to do when we got there and she said: "Do whatever I do."

Upon entering the Convent I noticed kerosene lamps burning low and Sisters going in and out of many places, and some of these places were long hallways and I felt a spookey feeling overtaking me. In a little while we were met by a sister who was introduced to us as the Assistant Mother Superior. Here, I felt nervous until Rose took the lead and approached the Mother Assistant in the customary manner, and I in turn, followed suit; knelt down and kissed her feet. While kissing her feet I despaired and thought—"My God, if it is always kissing feet I never will be a nun," and thought of what my mother said to me at the depot: "Helen! Helen! You will be sorry for leaving your



poor old mother." We were given a cup of coffee and some dry bread for our lunch, and then led to the infirmary—a room with four beds and only a little larger than our bedrooms at home.

My first night was almost a sleepless one and I was afraid and fearful. I do not know why this feeling was upon me, but it was different than anything I have ever experienced. I awoke early the next morning but I dared not get up, because we were told not to get up until the bell rang. The bell rang about 5 A. M., and I arose, dressed myself and went to Mass. After Mass I ate my breakfast and next, I was taken to the internate. Here, to my surprise, three girls from my home town greeted me and we shook hands. I did not know that these girls were here and so this meeting was a delightful one.

At the first recreation I sat up close to the Sisters playing with their beads and cords just like I was in the habit of doing when at home, but the next recreation when I tried the same habit, the Sister pushed me away and said: "Do not sit so close to me, and do learn to have more respect for spouses of Jesus Christ." A strange feeling came over me then and I thought, my, how strange! You let me do that when at home. The next morning I went to school and was given a Polish book and told that I would have to learn to read and write Polish. I tried to learn for a while but it seemed like an impossibility. My parents seldom spoke the language and I could not speak it at all. The letters in this language have many dots and tails and so I, beginning with the first reader, began dotting and tailing other letters in the book because I did not understand their philosophy. The teacher having charge of my reading lesson, examined my book quite thoroughly and while she was doing this, I snickered because I

did not think seriously of my scribbling. The teacher did not say anything to me about the book, but apparently she reported me to higher authority, because when I was entering the school room, (singing and feeling very happy) the Sister called me to her side and wanted to know who marked up the book. I said: "I did, Sister," and she wanted to know why I did this and I replied: "I don't know why, but I guess it was because I wanted to." She smiled when questioning me but after my last reply she changed her countenance to an ugly one and commanded me to "Kneel down, you impudent thing, and kneel there until I tell you to get up." This occurred at the 10 A. M. exercise and I continued kneeling until about 4 P. M.

Word was received that the Priest came to hear confessions and I was glad because I felt that it would help to get me off my knees. When confessing, I told the Priest that I was discontented and he told me that God wanted me there and that is why I was there. He told me what a terrible thing it was to think that a lost vocation is a lost soul. I also told of my trouble for marking my book and he instructed me to ask the Sister's forgiveness. This, I did, and she said that if I could read my lesson without a mistake I could go back to my seat. I had memorized my lesson and could repeat it without a mistake. I was called on to read my lesson and this I did without a hitch, but was very nervous and I did not read it very loudly.

I was thinking deeply of the times at home when the nuns treated me very kindly and showed great love for me, but oh, how different they are acting toward me now, and I am sure that if my mother knew of my treatment and feeling she would never have stood for it. I began to grow more discontented daily.



On another occasion I had charge of sweeping the halls, and after finishing my work, and while closing the shutters, I saw the Parochial school children passing by the convent about 8 A. M.; some of the children in the street waved at me and I waved back. Suddenly I heard a voice say: "Come here, Helen!" I obeyed the command immediately and went to the Sister who was standing in the far corner of the room from where she evidently had been watching me. She led me to the school room and then told all the girls that I had waved my hand at the children out in the world. To cause further humiliation, she made me kneel on the floor from about 8:15 A. M., until 4 P. M.

A few days later I was given a dipper and told to go out into the garden and spread fertilizer over the ground. The fertilizer was kept in a barrel and was in a terrible condition, literally overrun with maggots. This was a very unpleasant task and it made me shudder, but a Sister standing near by had apparently noticed my condition, because she said: "If you are not careful, I will make you stoop down and pick them out with your fingers." This Sister apparently reported me to higher authorities because I shuddered at this work, for I was punished with another unpleasant task. In an almost dark cellar with no lights and only one window and this in the far, opposite end, another girl and I were compelled to sort many tons of rotten potatoes. Sometimes my finger would go into a rotten potato almost alive with maggots and oh, how I cried when the maggots would wiggle out of my hand. No one excepting God, knows how I shuddered and grieved.

The other girl tried to console me, saying: "If you can go through all of this, why you will make a good Nun and it will serve to glorify God through your calling." I resented her consoling remarks and said: "If



I must always do this kind of labor and endure all in the name of Religion, I do not want to be a Nun."

Easter came late that year and about then I was thinking a lot about my home, and so I asked the Sister about writing home to my mother. The Sister said that it was customary for all the children to write home at Pentecost and that I would have to wait until then, too. They seemed to know how long to keep you waiting to pass these homesickness attacks, but it was not so with me, and I grew more and more homesick. A week before Pentecost the Sister called all the children into a room and announced that all should write a letter home in the Polish language, and each one must ask her people to send money because it was needed for a special occasion on Pentecost. As I have stated in a previous chapter, I did not understand the Polish language, and so it worried me when the Sister ordered the letters written in Polish. I approached the Sister on this subject and was trying to explain, when she said: "Never mind, I know all about it, and I have already arranged for a girl to compose your letter and all you will have to do will be to copy it."

A letter was handed to me and as I was copying and guiding the place with my finger, somebody said something to me and I lost my place. When I resumed writing, I went back to the line and words I thought looked like the ones I had already copied in my letter and finally finished. The letters were always all collected unsealed and read by the Sisters before they would permit any mail to leave the institution. The Sister after reading my letter had sent for me and asked why I did that. I did not know what she meant by her remarks, but she continued and said: "Helen! You had skipped a few lines in your letter and I believe you did it on purpose and for that you shall never write home

again." I did not believe the Sister meant to carry out her threat and thought it was only a little scolding.

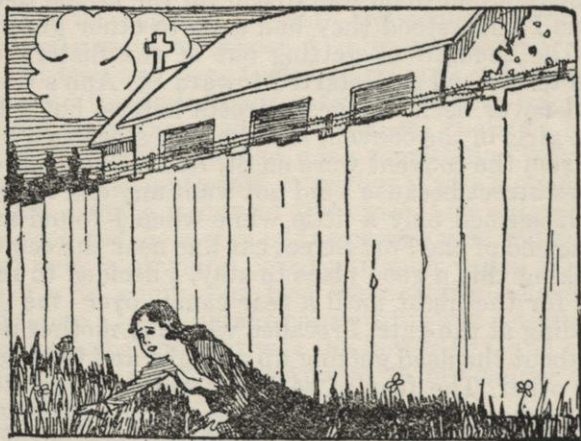
Time rolled on and on and the days seemed to grow longer and I too more homesick, but there were no letters for me, and when other girls would be reading their letters I would be crying and thinking of my dear mother and home. I had often been crying and one day Sister sent for me and asked why I was crying. I told her that I was lonesome for my mother and then she said: "Why, you cannot go home, you belong to us." I could not believe this because I remembered that when leaving home my mother was told I had to have enough money to bring me back home if I proved that I had no ability, and also that they would not accept me unless my mother complied with this demand.

A few nights later, she sent for me again and talked for two hours about an English Convent because I had said that I could never learn the Polish language. I finally consented to try the English Convent for two weeks. The Sister promised to come after me if I did not like it in two weeks, and I was there for two months, but no one came after me or even to see me.

I had talked with the House of Good Shepherd—Mother Superior—about going back home but she said that it was impossible for her to do anything for me until the Felician Sisters that put me there came after me. She told me that she would write the Felician Sisters to come after me. This conversation was in June and I waited patiently until August. In the meantime another girl and I had planned to run away from this convent and go back to the Felician Sisters. I believed that they would send me back home if they only knew it was my wish because they had my money for that purpose, and I thought that the Good Shepherd Sisters wanted me to work for them.



We agreed to run away Saturday night as soon as the recreation bell would ring, and planned to hide behind two barrels in the yard. At the sound of the bell we started for the barrels and I hid, but Grace backed out. I pleaded with her and said: "Please, Grace, do not back out now!" But she said that she had run away once before and remembered what they had done and feared worse punishment if she were caught the second time. She said she would tell that I was behind the barrel and had planned to run away. Oh, how I pleaded—"Please Grace, if you want to back out, all right, but please, do not tell on me." In a few moments Grace went back to the cottage and I felt the incentive to act quickly, and so I sought another hiding place. I crawled



*Escaping from Fort St. Convent, Detroit Mich.*

into the Sisters' yard while they were sitting and recreating at the other end of the yard, and continued



crawling along the fence until I came to a hole under the fence. With a little effort I managed to draw myself through this hole.

It was my luck that I got through and out of the yard because just at that time a Sister came into the yard searching for me. There was nothing else but the fence between the Sister and me, and it was the providence of God that led me to the hole under the fence. I watched the Sister through the cracks in the fence and all I could hear was—"Helen! Helen!" My hair seemed to stand up on my head and cold chills were running through me. Across the street from the convent people were sitting on the lawn and enjoying their freedom, but I was scared because I felt that all the Sisters had to do was to call for the people to catch me, as I understood they had done to other girls.

The thought of getting out of the Sisters' sight came to me and so I started toward St. Ann's Church. I had never been on these streets before, but I heard some girls in the convent say that the steeples we could see from the convent were on St. Ann's Church. I chose a dark street because I did not want any one to see me, and it seemed only a little while when I found myself at the end of the Fort Street car line near the cemetery. Thinking this a good place to stay, I decided to remain here for the night until a fear came over me while standing at the gate. I recalled what my mother used to tell about the dead getting up at night and talking with each other. The fear of seeing a white object moving started me on my way again, like a ship without a sail.

After walking a little while, to my surprise, I found myself at the convent wall on Fort street. Here I meditated for a short while and so finally I decided to stay in the convent yard for the night. Of course this being a holy place I felt that no evil could befall

me, and further, I thought that when the curfew signal would be given I would be out of reach of the town police. I made up my mind to stay near the hole all night so that if I saw anything moving towards me I could easily crawl out again. After all the lights were turned out, and the last one I noticed was in the Mother Superior's office, I decided to carry out some of our original plans. I made a sign of the cross and went to the cottage for a dress that I had brought down the previous Monday morning and hid in the foundation behind a few loose bricks. I changed my dress and then started for a hat. I knew the hats were kept in a bathtub in a room adjoining the room called the "School Room." It might be well to state right here that when visitors were going through the institution their attention would be called to the bath and school rooms, but no one ever went to school. I know of one door they could not lock and that they had a piano stool against it, I pushed the door in and a fear came over me when I thought what they had told me about the attic being haunted by a girl that had done something. We were always afraid to go to this room, but it was a good hiding place. I made a sign of the cross, and entered the school-room; made a sign of the cross again and finally started over a straight board partition which seemed impossible to climb, but God wonderfully helped me over. I found a lot of hats in the bathtub and selecting in the dark what I thought was the better hat, and again climbing the partition, I returned to my hiding place in the yard at the hole under the fence.

The bell rang at five in the morning and I crawled out through the hole, brushed my dress and this time started toward the part of the city where I could see the bright lights when in the convent. Upon reaching the main square I saw cars going in all directions and



I seemed very much confused. This was my first experience in a busy thoroughfare and I was very timid about asking any questions. I started down a street I hoped would lead me to the Felician Convent. I was very anxious to get there on time for early mass because it would be a mortal sin to miss mass on Sunday.

Although very anxious, yet I did not want any one to think that I was running away, so I tried to walk slowly. While walking along and looking at cottages, wondering whether some one would help, if I ran in and told them my story; I dared not appeal to any one through fear that they might be Roman Catholics and refuse to help me.

After walking a long while I began to grow tired in my search for the Felician Convent and so I stopped a little newsboy and asked him if he could direct me to the Felician Convent at St. Aubin and Canfield Sts. The boy told me that he knew where the convent was, but that I was out of my way about a mile. The boy was going that way and so I walked with him until we came to St. Aubin. Here he left me and told me to go straight ahead until I came to the convent. I thanked the boy very kindly and continued on my journey until I reached the convent. In a little while I reached the place and entered just in time for mass. I remained in my seat after mass until all the seculars left the chapel. Then a Sister came to me and told me to leave because she wanted to lock the gate. I told her that I wanted to see the Mother Superior. The Sister, pretending not to know me, asked my name and reported me to her Superiors. She returned and said that the Mother Superior was not there, but the Mother Assistant was at home and would be glad to see me. Sr. Gabriella, Sr. Columbia, and Sr. Gelanta came in to see me. Sr. Gelanta, my former mistress, said: "Why Hel-



en! How did you get here?" and I replied: You know that you promised to come after me in two weeks if I didn't like it and you never came, so I ran away." Sr. Gelanta then said: "Why Helen, don't you know that you ran away from the House of God, and committed a mortal sin? You will have to go back and ask forgiveness." Here I became greatly excited and said: "No, Sister, I do not think it was a sin because I did not like it there." They talked to me so long and explained that they would not keep any one, and never wanted any one there against their will, that I finally agreed to go back and ask their pardon for running away, providing they would promise not to keep me there. This promise they made and again repeated that they would not have any one there against their will. A feeling came over me that they were telling the truth and with renewed confidence, I again believed them. After dinner three Sisters took me in a closed hack back to the Good Shepherd Convent, Fort Street, West, Corner of 18th Street, Detroit, Michigan,

## CHAPTER III.

### A CONVENT KIDNAPPING AND INTERCEPTING MOTHER'S MAIL

When we reached the Good Shepherd Convent, a Superior Mother, S-a-i-n-t Stanislas, met us at the door and said: "Why, my dear child! Oh, I worried about you so much that I did not sleep all night! Where were you?" I told her that I stayed all night in the convent yard. I knelt down on the floor, kissed it and asked the Mother Superior to forgive me for running away, and continued talking, saying that I would not go inside. Then the Mother Superior said: "Why, we do not want you in here; we would not take any one against their will. God would not be pleased with any one serving Him against their will," I began to feel that maybe they were sincere and only wanted to talk with me and give me kindly advice. They wanted me in the Bishop's parlor so they could talk to me without any one on the outside seeing us. (This happened in broad day-light one Sunday afternoon.) I recalled hearing girls screaming when I was in the preserve class. I had talked with some of the older preserve girls about the screaming and they told me that some girl was being brought into the big class against her will. The Sister became so provoked because I refused to go into the Bishop's parlor that she commanded me to go in, but I started out towards the street instead, and a Felician Nun pursued me. The Good Shepherd Nuns were not allowed to go over the door sill without permission. The Felician Nuns overtook and held me so securely that every thought of a possible chance to get away had vanished. She told me that if the police would

see me they would put me in jail. The Sister again asserted that they would not force any one into the institution against their will and continued telling me that



the police would arrest me and put me in jail because I had no place to go. I finally said I would go in to talk with them but they must promise to leave the door open. This they promised, but as I was going to the Bishop's parlor I looked back and saw they were shutting the door. I ran toward the door and hung on the Sister's arm while she was holding the door knob. I said: "Sister, please don't shut the door, you promised to keep the door open; then why are you doing this? Oh, please Sister, keep the door open!" A terrible feeling came



over me now and I screamed loudly. Another Sister came to help the Felician Sister (This second Sister was a Portes Nun from the Good Shepherd Convent, who are permitted to leave the institution to do the work of begging, etc.) to bring me into the Bishop's parlor. I succeeded in getting a hold on the door knob and oh, how I begged, and fought against being taken into the parlor when they began to jerk me, pinch and punch my arm, and oh, how I screamed, "My God, help me! I know that if my poor mother could only hear or see me she would never stand for it." I lost my hold on the door but caught hold on the grating and screamed. "If the A. P. A's could only hear me. Oh, Mame, Mame! How I wish you were here to see what they are doing to me. Oh God, help me! Holy Mary, Mother of God, help me! Oh, my Mame, Mame, please come." I shall never forget this scene, yet it is impossible to describe the grief and suffering that I had endured and I fully feel the strains of it even now, and the tears flow at the thought of that scene.

My hold on the grating seemed so firm that I thought it would last forever. I thought of how they lied to me about not keeping any one in the convent against their will, and yet they would not let me go, but were pinching, punching, and nearly pulling me to pieces in their efforts to force me into the convent. Only the Lord knows what they did to me while I struggled to keep from being forced into the institution. A faint and weak feeling came over me while I thought that no one would come to my rescue and the battle was lost when I fainted.

When I came to, I was lying on the refectory floor, and a nun named Mary Delrose was bathing my swollen face with a cloth and saying: "Don't cry my little girl, I'll be your Mother!" I was feeling very ill and when

I regained my speech I frequently repeated: "I shall never forgive them! I shall never forgive them!" I thought of how the nuns lied to me when only a short time before they told me that I would not have to go into the convent, but now they had me in the big class where the windows were barred.

No one knows of my agony while writing or lecturing on this part of my life. I am crying now and must stop until I will again feel able. My inspiration to finish my story is not through a course of anxiety for redress for my suffering, but only my christian love, fellowship, sympathy and willingness that prompts me to help others who might be enduring even a worse experience than mine. How many girls are struggling in those convents today, do you know? Is your daughter one of these victims, or perhaps some friend's missing girl? If so, I advise you to do your



*Forced to iron at a tender age.*



duty according to the fundamental principles upon which this great republic was founded—**Liberty to All Forever!** Someone's missing girl might be behind those Convent bars right now.

I was taken upstairs where the girls were and had to sit alone the rest of that day, crying most of the time, and entertaining very bitter feelings toward the Nuns, but powerless to do anything and had to make the best of it.

The next morning I went to mass, and after mass Mother S-a-i-n-t Florence met me at the Chapel and said: "Come here, my little damsel, here is your board," and I was put to work. I had to stand on a soap box to reach my work on the ironing board. I folded towels until Friday of that week, and then I was put on ironing white aprons. My task was fourteen aprons in the morning and twenty-two in the afternoon. The aprons were starched, wrung through a wringer and ironed dry. This way of ironing clothes until dry is very difficult.

We had old-fashioned flat-irons, these were heated the old-fashioned way on a hard-coal stove. Sometimes we had considerable trouble in keeping the irons hot. One day a girl was so provoked because she could not find a hot iron that she said: "I wish the devil would give me a hot iron." And shortly afterward she found a hot iron but would not use it because she thought it was of the devil. The other girls would not use it either, but I did, and it proved to be a God-sent blessing, because it served to help me finish my task on time and did not hurt me.

The girl that had charge of me called my attention to the strict rules about not ever talking of home with the girls. We were forbidden to tell our names, our parents' names, where we were from, or ask any



questions of each other of when we were in the world. My name was changed to Lena. Another rule was that every girl's name had to be changed.

I have never been able to understand why they changed our names unless it would be that if someone inquired for Bridget Sullivan and her name had been changed to Mary Delrose, they could say Bridget Sullivan was not there. If this is their purpose, parents and friends would easily lose trace of their loved ones.

One fact to me was that I could not communicate with my loved ones after they had said: "You shall never write home again." Another strict rule was to keep your silence and never make any noise. An infraction of this rule, meant one bad mark, and four bad marks meant, turn your dress. I was very lonesome for my people and much of the time I would be crying, and no one knows how hard it was for me to keep my silence. One day when it was my turn to clean the ironing room, I accidentally dropped the broom while sweeping the floor. The Mother (that is what we had to call the nuns, yet they were not our mothers) called me thus: "Come here, you little scamp; I'll 'tend to you." She told me to go upstairs and all the way up the stairs she would push and pound me on the back. When we reached the top of the stairs, she said she would tell my mistress, (Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene) on me. My mistress commanded me to turn my dress. I turned the front of the dress to the back, and when she returned she said: "Didn't I tell you to turn your dress?" and I replied, "I did, Mother!" She did not offer any explanation, but just reached for the buttons, pulled the dress open and pulled off nearly all of the buttons; turned my dress inside out and made me wear it. I understood the nun exactly as I did, and

not as she did. This was one way of treating me for homesickness because I cried most of the time.

At this place I heard we could write home once a month and oh, how this encouraged me, when I almost cried with joy. I took every precaution not to reveal to the Mothers what the Felician Sisters had said to me about never writing home again (for scribbling in a reader.) The next letter-writing time, I asked the Mother for an envelope and paper and it was



given to me. I wrote my letter the best I could, telling my own poor mother that I was in the Good Shepherd Convent. I wrote letters home every month for a long time, but I never received any answers. One day I went to Mother Eugene and said: "Mother, may I talk with you?" and she said: "Yes, my dear Lena," and I replied: "Thank you, Mother," and continued saying:

"Mother, I believe that my letters never leave the convent because if they did, I am sure my poor mother would answer." "Why Lena, your people don't care for you and that is why they don't write, but the next letter you write, I will let you put the stamp on it, to show you that we do send your letters." I put the stamp on the next letter, but the situation remained unchanged. Can you imagine how I felt when other girls would receive letters, but there never was anything for me only tears, not even a consoling word from the nuns when they knew I was lonesome. Every day I would pray to St. Anthony to hear from home if it were only one word from my people about my poor mother, whether she were dead or alive. I did not believe a human being lived in this world that was mean enough to intercept my poor mother's mail with Uncle Sam's postage stamp affixed thereto.



## CHAPTER IV.

### NEW GIRLS TRY TO ESCAPE FROM PENITENT CLASS.

One night at the recreation a basket of very fine grapes were laying on Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene's throne in a very conspicuous and accessible place. I was very fond of grapes and those seemed exceptionally tempting. I went to Mother and said: "Please Mother, may I have just one of those nice grapes off your throne?" and she replied: "Lena, those grapes belong to the new girl, but when she comes in you ask her for one." I watched for the girl's coming out of the Chapel, but I could not see her, so I reported to Mother that I could not find her. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene immediately sent for the nun, Mary Corneil, who had charge of this girl, to explain her whereabouts. The nun said that at four P. M. the girl was not feeling well and was permitted to go to bed.

Later in the night while we were retiring and I was saying my night prayers, we were suddenly attracted by loud screaming in the direction of the laundry. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene was in a great state of excitement and exclaimed: "Hurry girls, bring the lantern!" And Mary Corneil quickly brought the lantern. The Mother replied again and said: "I hope that we can get her in before the public hears the screaming, it will bring disgrace to the convent." My thoughts were: "Oh God, I hope the police do get the girl and the public finds out what happens within and maybe it will bring some reforms." Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene hurried to bring the girl into the convent but they failed, and when the police arrived the girl was still screaming and

pleading: "Oh, my leg, my leg, please don't take me back in there; I don't belong in there. I am a Protestant." The police would not allow the Sisters to take the girl and they hurried her away to the hospital. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene returned to the class and said "I did not want her back in here because she disgraced us, and so I had the police take her to the hospital."

Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene told us later that after a thorough investigation they had learned that the girl did not go to bed when she feigned sickness, but instead hid behind a lot of scrubbing buckets under a table in the laundry and when everything appeared to be quiet, she took a rope and fastened one end to the faucet and attempted to slide down the rope over the engine house, but the rope broke and she fell and broke her leg. I never heard or saw any more of this girl again.

One time while visiting a sick girl in the Infirmary, I heard an awful screaming up above. Some one was pulling a girl down the stairs and I heard her say, "I don't belong in here, I am a Protestant; this is a Catholic institution, I will not stay here." As the door opened I saw a girl struggling with the Convent police, (girls—the Sisters have trained to do some of the beating and commit other cruelties), she was pinching and pounding them as they were pulling her. In a few weeks this girl (Convent name given, "Borgia") became very sick and one night I was awakened and heard Borgia moaning as if in great pain. It was against the rules to go to each other's beds and so I dared not investigate, but awoke Mary Delphine who had charge of the dormitory, and told her of the new girl moaning and she said: "Lie down, go to sleep and mind your own business." Borgia continued to grow worse and in a few days was taken to the Infirmary with a very sore

breast. A doctor was called and after a very close examination, advised the Sisters that an operation was necessary. Doctor operated on Borgia's right breast and he found a broken safety pin. The operation was performed in the Infirmary. The Sister extracted a confession from Borgia and told us how the safety pin got in her breast and how she expected to be taken to a hospital for the operation and never return. Only God knows how other girls have made vain attempts for their liberty.



## CHAPTER V.

### LOCKED UP FOR THREE WEEKS.

Once a month we were given a clean dress and that we wore every day excepting Sundays. It never made any difference how much we perspired while working in the laundry we had only one dress and no change. I wore the same Sunday dress for four years, until it was too short for me. The seams of our clean monthly dresses were full of nits and hatched faster than we could kill them off. The first body louse I found looked to me like a dead bedbug had come to life again. I talked with one of the girls about the bedbugs and she replied: "After you are here a while you will get better acquainted with these bedbugs and call them by their proper name—'body lice.' "

It seemed to me that the girls who had people come to visit them were favored by the Sisters and were never treated cruelly. I often wished and prayed that some one would come to see me, and sometimes I would have visions of going to the parlor and tried to imagine that I could hear voices saying: "Lena! you are wanted in the parlor." My heart felt like leaping but instantly sadness overtook me again.

Upon retiring one night I found a nice woolen waist and skirt laying on my bed. It was different than the blue calico dresses I had been wearing and I admired it immensely. The two piece feature appealed to me very strongly and also the lining, but that made it a very warm garment. I wore that dress in the laundry for a few days, but suffered with the intense heat and finally realized that it was impossible to continue working in the laundry with this warm dress. I appealed to my second mistress for a cooler dress and stated my reas-

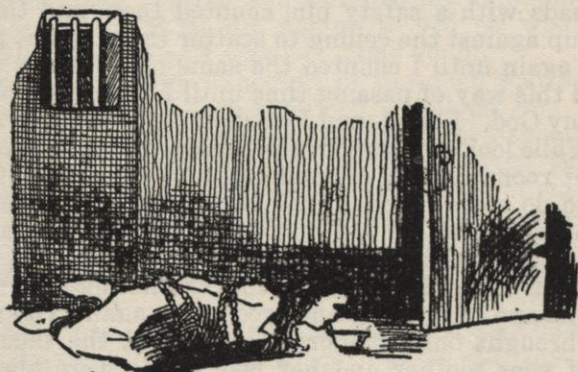
ons very distinctly, and when I was refused a cooler dress, I told the mistress I would not do any more work in the hot laundry unless I had a cool dress, and I sat down and waited. In the meantime the first mistress came to me and wanted to know why I was idle, and I told her that I wanted a cool dress so I could work and that I wanted to work. After the first and second mistress consulted about my situation, the first mistress returned and said "Lena, I will give you fifteen minutes to go to work." I considered her remarks for a few moments, but I could not decide on going to work in the hot laundry wearing that warm lined, woollen dress when I thought of how I had suffered the previous days and considered life not worth living under such cruel hot conditions.

At 8 A. M. the mistress came to me and said: "Lena, you go upstairs." I did not know what her intentions were so I obeyed. While going up the steps she said, "I will fix you. You played your tune and now I will play mine." And when we reached the second dormitory, she continued: "Lena, I am going to put you in the little room and keep you there until you rot." I then realized where I was going and according to what I heard of the little room and the picture that confronted me of girls that I had seen who had been in there and came out looking nearly like skeletons, prompted me to yield and I began to plead for mercy. "Mother, please if you will forgive me this time I will do anything you ask me," but it all seemed in vain when she said, "It is too late now." I then began to scream and said: "Mother, if you put me in there I will scream, break the windows and call for help." At that she pushed me in and when I said I would call for help, she then called for a girl named Josephine to help her. After fighting like a wild cat, the two overpowered me



and big Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene knelt on my back while the girl tied my hands and feet and they left me there to rot, as she expressed herself.

While the Mother was leaving I cried and said: "Please give me something to do," and then the door was locked. At four P. M. the door was opened only wide enough to slip in a bowl of tea and two slices of dry bread. My hands were tied back of me and it was impossible for me to get the bowl to my mouth with my hands. I was very thirsty and so I did the next best thing. I licked up my tea with my tongue like a dog.



Licking Tea like a dog - - In America

For the first time in my life I felt myself on the same level with a dog, with tears streaming down my cheeks and thinking, oh if Mame could see me now, would she stand for this? Can you imagine an American girl doing anything like that in the United States? Oh, shame on every American that will permit this incident to pass without being righted,



I was more despondent in my bound condition than ever before in my life. At five P. M. a girl came in with boards, hammer and nails and nailed the window closed, all except about one inch at the top. I was also given an old mattress to lie on. My hands and feet were untied and I was left in that room. Never will I forget how lonesome my life was in there. Oh, how I longed to see a face. I would peep through the key-hole in the hope of seeing the face of a girl. I did not know how to pass the time away. Sometimes I would crawl on my hands and knees and one day I found a lot of round colored beads scattered in the cracks of the floor. I picked up the beads with a safety pin, counted them and threw them up against the ceiling to scatter them again; pick beads again until I counted the same number and continued this way of passing time until I grew tired of it. "Oh, my God," I cried, and I thought I was going crazy.

While looking through the presses that were kept in that room I found a small ball of twine and got an idea to do some crocheting. I tried to make a crochet needle from a safety pin and broke a tooth in the attempt. I now took a plain pin and crocheted with the head of it. I kept busy for a while crocheting different patterns and unraveling and crocheting again. The new ideas brought only temporary relief, but the thought also of poor mother and her last words were always before me: "Helen! Helen! you will be sorry for this some day, but it will be too late."

One night while lying on my mattress I heard a noise and jumped to my feet. While I listened very attentively my hair began to stand on ends when I heard a rubbing and rapping on one of the doors and I could hear a voice saying: "I will get you; I am the devil; I am coming. I will take you to hell." There I became horribly frightened and kneeling at the door that led to

the dormitory, I screamed and pleaded for mercy. "Oh, my God, Help me! Help me!" and continued—"Girls! Girls! Ask Mother to open the door and let me out!" Some of the girls came and talked with me through the key hole and said: "Lena, bless yourself." I did and was doing it all the time. Oh, how I tried to hide and get away from the noise by squeezing into the corner. I begged the girls to intercede for me. I called on my poor mother and all the saints in heaven to help me. The girls went to Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene's cell and rapped and rapped at the door and for a long time could not get any reply. Finally when the noise stopped the girls got a hearing and came to me and said, the Mother told us if we did not go to bed we would be punished too and so I was left alone again.

Sometime later I thought of the devil scaring me and the remark—"I am the devil, I will get you, etc." If she ever told the truth she told it then, I thought if any one ever fitted that act any better than Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene it could be only the devil himself. I was led to believe that Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene was playing the part of the devil because when the devil was scaring us we never could find Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene.

All I have mentioned was only a trifle compared with my mental suffering when thinking of my poor mother and six sisters who thought a great deal of me. I was the youngest of that crowd and oh, the picture I had of home when I could see mother rocking in her chair and hear her sweet, precious voice saying: "Helen, oh Helen, bring your mother a pail of water," and many other fond recollections of my home. But now I also wished that Mame only knew how I wanted to die, rather than live in such a place. I often wondered if the people knew that this was going on. I often asked and



wished for something to do, but Mother Eugene knew that my general disposition was to keep busy and of course, her brutal inclination prompted her to take advantage of every opportunity to punish me, and so kept me idle.

I was in this room over three weeks when Mother S-a-i-n-t Blondine came into the room to examine dresses that were kept in one of the presses. I knelt at her feet and begged her to please intercede for me, and ask Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene to forgive me. Sister Blondine left me and returned in a little while and said: "Mother promised to be lenient, but you will have to go through the black procession." I thanked Mother Blondine for her kindness and intercession and awaited the procession.

All arrangements were made and the procession started that evening about 8 P. M. from my prison room in the midst of six girls carrying candles, burning and trimmed in black, and another girl leading, holding a cross. We marched to Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene's throne. I then knelt down, kissed the floor, extended my hands, made an act of contrition and asked the Mother Sa-i-n-t Eugene to forgive me. She said: "I have a good mind to make you go back for three weeks more, and now you will have to wear the lazy sign for one month." I wore the lazy sign for one week and then went to Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene and asked her to forgive me and she did. A lazy sign is made of heavy cardboard and the word "Lazy" is printed on it. Wearing this sign was very humiliating to me. No one will wonder why so many nerve wrecked girls come from these institutions if they ever get a true conception of prevailing conditions.



## CHAPTER VI.

### STRAPPED AFTER A COLD WATER DUCKING

For a long time I prayed to St. Anthony for a letter from home, but no letter came. One day Father Grant preached an eloquent sermon on the life of St. Anthony and how he could restore lost things in a hurry. That sermon filled me with a new inspiration to continue to trust St. Anthony with my request of hearing from home. I made many Novenas, prayed thirteen "Glory be to the Father;" thirteen times "St. Anthony for the love of the Infant Jesus, obtain for me my request," and every other form of prayer I ever knew, but no letters ever came.

Roman Catholics are told that St. Anthony was so holy that the Infant Jesus appeared to him on his arm for thirteen seconds, but I am glad to say that I found a Jesus who has been with me ever since I was converted.

I was very much discouraged when I decided to pray for the grace of a happy death. To gain this blessing it was necessary to live a very good life, never break any rules, keep your silence, think evil of no one, hate no one, etc., and take holy communion on the first Friday of any nine consecutive months. I was an ardent seeker of the nine first Friday blessings because I was discouraged, and wished for a happy death. I tried again and again only to be provoked by the nuns to entertain new feelings of hatred. I was a sincere believer in my religion and would never take holy communion if I hated a single soul.

At my last Friday's confession I had asked my confessor if I could go to holy communion again on Sun-

day, and he said, "Yes, you may, if you keep your silence." Taking holy communion so often was considered a great privilege; it signified that the person was obedient and very worthy. On Saturday morning I was far ahead on my task and had planned to make a mortification for the souls in purgatory in appreciation of that great privilege. I asked Mother S-a-i-n-t Michael, mistress of the laundry, if I could do as I pleased when I finished my task, and she said: "Yes, do anything but jump the fence." We were taught a mortification had greater merit when done secretly, and so I decided to sort the dirty, blood-stained, iodoformed hospital clothes for the souls in purgatory without making my purpose known.

I had finished my task and was on my way to sort the clothes, when Edna met me and said: "Lena, you are to go over and work on the necker." I replied, "I won't do it," without explaining my plans for mortification on account of losing the greater merit. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene had often said that if any girl ever refused to do something by saying, "I won't do it," she would be severely punished.

Saturday night on going to supper, Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene met me at the refectory door and said: "Lena, I want you in the second dormitory after supper." I did not ask any questions because I dared not and went on to supper crying. At the supper table I noticed little Nellie and Alice across the table from me crying too. I could not understand Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene because my conduct was perfect for that week; I had no bad marks and kept my silence every day. I ate no supper but kept guessing at what Mother was going to do and thought if I could only get out before supper is over.

After supper I went to the second dormitory and here met Alice. I said to her, what is Mother S-a-i-n-t



Eugene going to do with us in here, and she said, I do not know but I hope it is not a cold water bath! I asked, "What does Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene do when she gives those baths?" and she replied, "You will find out when you get it." At this moment little Nellie came in crying and said: "What is Mother doing this for, I did nothing bad today?" We could hear Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene coming and instantly we stopped our talking and disbanded because if we were caught she would have punished us more severely.

Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene came to me and said: "Lena, you are first; you will be the hardest to manage." This was my first cold water bath and so I begged Mother to forgive me, but she walked away and returned in a few moments with a nightgown and said: "Go into the toilet, take off all of your clothes, put this on and return to me." While I was changing my clothes I could hear the bath tub filling up with water, and the mystery of why I often heard girls screaming in this room began to clear up.

I returned to Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene with only my nightgown on and upon the sight of the cold water in the bath tub, I knelt down and pleaded with Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene, "Please Mother, please, don't put me in that cold water," but my pleading was in vain. She told the four girls she had trained for this work, Mary Corneil, Celestine, Mary Benedict and Edna, to take hold and throw me in the water.

Two girls got hold of my feet and two of my hands, while I struggled, and put me in the water. Oh my, what a shock, what a terrible feeling to be thrown into cold water on a cold day in December. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene said the main thing is to get her head in the water and she got hold of my hair on my head and held my head in the water and let my head come up only long



enough to get a breath and would put me in again. While my head was out I could only say: "Mother, please--" down again, and I could hear her say: "Drown the wretch, drown the wretch!" I was growing weaker



*Cold Water Ducking.*

and was unable to say--"Mother, please," but only "Moth--" and I was in again, and they continued this ducking until I was unable to lift my head out of the water any more and all I could hear was: "Drown the wretch!" and I was so weak that I thought I was drowning. They lifted me up again and Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene said: "Let her go now, I guess she has enough."

I tried to get out but could not and the girls had to help me up. I tried to stand up but my head was too heavy for me and kept going to the floor and water running out from my ears, nose and mouth.

The girls let go of me and I fell on the floor. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene came over, kicked me and said: "Get up you wretch; that is not all, you will get more." I do not know how I got up against the press, but I was there with my head and hands hanging down freely, and three girls were whipping me with sewing machine straps on



Whipped on wet night-gown into insensibility

my wet nightgown. My how this whipping did sting but I laid there helpless and soon knew no more until I came to, when I was lying on my bed. I did not hear the other girls get punished, but during the night Alice came to my bed and whispered, "Lena, look at my legs, they are black and blue," and I said: "Alice, I do not know what is the matter with me but my whole right side is sore. You better go to your bed before they see you or we might get a worse punishment in the morning." In the morning I discovered my whole right side was black and

blue stripes. They usually punish the girls on Saturday night so if you are sore you will have until Monday to get well. On Monday morning I had blood circles under my eyes from crying since Saturday. We were forbidden speaking to any one. While working at the ironing board on Monday morning Mother S-a-i-n-t Michael came to me and said: "Lena, what is the matter with your eyes," and I told her all. She left me and consulted with my mistress, Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene, and sent Edna back to me with the message that I was punished for saying "I won't do it" (when Edna told me about working on the necker) without explaining my plans for mortification, etc.

I wonder how many mothers would punish their children with cold water duckings and whippings on wet nightgowns until black and blue and into insensibility? How many girls would stay at home from 6:30 P. M. to 7:30 P. M. if they knew such a punishment were their doom at 7:30 P. M. and there were no bars on the windows and doors. I often felt like taking my life, but today I thank God for His helping me and can see how God took care of me.

The colored slaves before the Civil war cannot be compared with the Convent slaves, because the colored people were sold as slaves, but we are free people. The colored folk had their good times and dances in the evening but we were subject to very strict regulations and cruel punishment. The principles that Abraham Lincoln brought out so splendidly are again being trampled on by selfish organizations for the bloody dollars.



## CHAPTER VII,

### CHASING THE "OLD HARRY" WITH HOLY WATER

Inmates were subject to very rigid discipline and for the slightest infraction of some very insignificant rules, we received very cruel and ridiculous punishments. We were forbidden to put even a stitch in our clothes without permission.

One time when the weather was cold, I went to Mother S-a-i-n-t Blondine and explained why I would like warmer underwear and she said: "Shame on you! You immodest girl to think you would lift your lower limb so high as to need an undergarment. Shame! Kiss the floor, forget these things and be more modest."

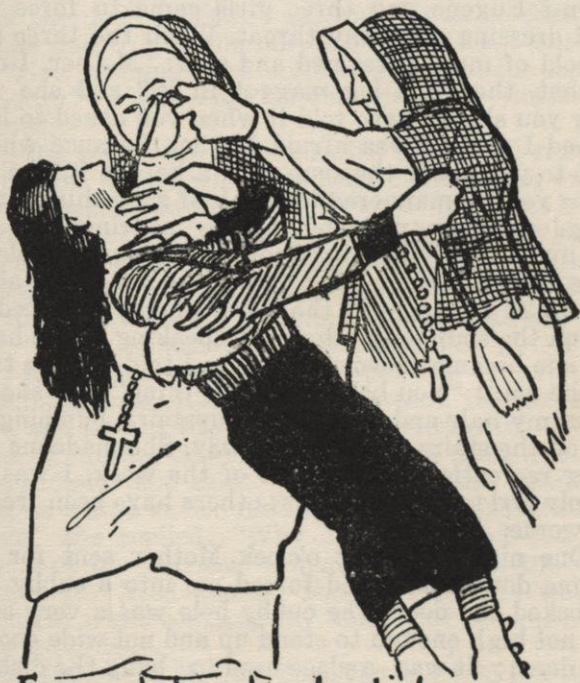
Sometimes when humming, and especially during silence time, the Sisters would ask: "Who is humming?" and if no one answered, the whole class would be put in silence during recreation. A usual punishment for humming was wearing a black band over your mouth. The girls never knew when the Sisters would rebuke them even during the recreation. One time I was humming and Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene said: "Lena, come here." I came, but evidently not fast enough to please her, because she took me by my hair, pulled me across the room, put the black band on me and made me work the rest of the week (about three days) with my back close to a hot stove. This occurred in the summer time. I suffered terribly from the intense heat and my back was covered with prickly heat. The black band worn by the ironing girls was not put over the mouth but over the cheeks as for the tooth ache because the girls tested their flatirons with saliva and their mouths had to be uncovered. Visitors went

through on this occasion and I heard them ask Mother S-a-i-n-t Gerald, the dentist, "Why such a young girl in this class?" and Mother replied: "She ran away from the preservative class and we had to put her in here." One of the visitors asked me if I had the toothache; Mother winked at me and replied for me, saying: "Yes, you have the tooth ache, haven't you, Lena?" and I said "Yes."

Once I had a piece of mirror that belonged to a girl called Isidor. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene saw it and wanted me to give it up, but I refused and said it was not mine. She caught me by the throat and forced me to give it up. We were not allowed to look at ourselves because it was vanity. We often used a black cloth under a glass for a mirror. We never used any tooth paste for cleaning our teeth. I often took small pieces of brick, pounded to a dust and cleaned my teeth. When washing dishes I often stole Sapolio and used it on my teeth. Can you imagine a clean dress once a month, clean aprons twice a month and Sapolio for your teeth whenever you could steal it while washing dishes?

At one of my confessions I told Father that I stole a pineapple from the laundry, peeled it with my teeth and ate it. Father asked me if I wasted any. I told him no, and he said all right if you did not waste it and were very hungry it was not a sin. Since then while in the convent under those circumstances I stole everything I put my hand to. One of the few things I liked at the convent was bread dressing. I was very fond of it and always ready to eat more. I would eat the other girls' portions whenever I could get it. One day I went to dinner and we had nice looking bread dressing. While eating I saw a big fat maggot baked brown on the top of my dressing. I covered the maggot with some bread dressing and the next time Mother came

along, I held my hand up, (this was a sign that you wanted to leave something) Mother stopped and said: "What is the matter, Lena, you always ask for more?" and I said "I cannot eat it, Mother may I leave it please?" and she replied it would stay there until I



Forced to drink dirty-soup

did eat it. Everything was taken away but the dressing remained for three days. You might say: "Did you



abstain from eating for three days?" No, I did not. The girls sympathized with me and brought dry bread to me in their petticoat pockets. Many girls were often kept from suffering for the want of food through this way of smuggling dry bread. On the third day Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene and three girls came to force that bread dressing down my throat. When the three girls got hold of me, I screamed and said: "Mother, I can't eat that, there's a big maggot in it," and she said, "Why you should have told it when you asked to leave it," and I said "I was afraid Mother, because when I spoke to you about the soup with a hair in it, you said 'It was very ill mannered to speak of such things while eating,' and you punished me by pouring the soup down my throat to impress upon me proper table etiquette. I did not know what you would have done about speaking of a maggot at the table, when you forced me to drink the soup with a hair for speaking of the hair." Here she became provoked because I told her the truth and she said: "You bold impudent thing" and she got hold of my hair and dragged me upstairs, bumping my head on the stairs all along the way. She made me iron during recreation for the rest of the week. I was not the only girl treated like this; others have been treated even worse.

One night at eight o'clock Mother sent for me, took me down stairs and forced me into a cubby hole and locked the door. The cubby hole was a very small room not high enough to stand up and not wide enough to sit down; it was a place used to hang the dishpan and towels and its odor was awful. Can you imagine the frightened state of my mind when in this dark room, hearing awful noises, rapping and a voice saying: "I will get you! I will take you to hell," etc? I saw eyes of fire when I opened my eyes. I had my head in

my lap and kept my eyes shut nearly all of the time. Oh, dear friends, that was an awful four hours of my life-time that I shall never forget. If I ever thought of my poor mother it was there and it was only the Almighty power of God that kept me from going into hysterics. About 12 o'clock at midnight the Sister opened the door to let me out, but I was so cramped that she had to pull me out, and when I got out she said: "Now will you ever laugh or giggle in the dormitory again?" I was only fifteen years old when this happened.

In the winter we suffered with the cold. I remember of many times when we had to break the ice in the wash-basins before we could wash. One time a girl named Alice came from the church feeling very sick with chills. She sat near a radiator shivering. When I saw the girl's condition, I went to her and said: "I will turn the steam on for you and maybe you will feel better." I was so anxious to help the sick girl that I forgot to ask for permission to open the valve. While the radiator was filling up with steam, the air valve sizzled and let out the air. The noise attracted the attention of Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene and she came over to the radiator and said: "Who turned that valve?" I, sitting on a step at her feet, looked up and said: "I did Mother," she replied: "Why did you?" and now she got hold of my hair and dragged me across the floor bouncing my head against the floor as she walked. That night while combing my hair I got several handfuls of loose hair.

• I went to see Mother Superior and told her about Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene whipping me, ducking me in cold water, pulling my hair etc., and I pleaded pitifully. She said: "My dear, look at this picture through this magnifying glass while I tell you the story." "There



once lived a very wicked man who was on the road to ruin and apprehended by the devil with tempting bribes, he finally said to the devil, 'If you can paint me a picture of Jesus Christ with all the wounds and nail prints of His life-time, I will sign a contract in my own blood to forfeit my soul to you when I die.' The devil painted the picture and showed it to the wicked man; the wicked man repented, made a sign of the cross and said: 'Devil, if the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, suffered like that for humanity, I am willing to amend my ways and suffer my share for Him.' "

At the close of the story I agreed with Mother Superior that it was a terrible picture. She finally said: "Can you not suffer a little for Him?" and I replied, "Yes, but I hate Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene and would like to go home." She said: "Why, you have no home," and I said "Why Mother, I remember my poor mother and sisters, how can you say that?" Mother Superior replied again and said, "Why, I know you have no home because the Felician Nuns gave you to us." I cried, but she continued telling me that I must offer it up and suffer for the Lord. I do not believe God wants any one to suffer as we did in the convent. I was kept there against my will and how about others today?

Upon one occasion when I asked my mistress to go home, she said: "What! You go home! Why you are possessed by the devil. You ought to take a drink of Holy water." I did, but when I thought of how many girls dipped their fingers and who had charge of the Holy water fount, I got sick. I thought of Grandma Dooley's dirty ways and how the body lice would crawl all over her. It was a very common occurrence for Grandma Dooley to take lice-off her clothes while we girls were looking on and she would kill some of the big ones. I told Mother that I took a drink of Holy water and got very sick, and she said, "Why that is only the 'Old Harry' kicking because he has to get out."



## CHAPTER VIII.

### TAKING AN OATH NOT TO REVEAL THE CRUELITIES

One Monday afternoon I heard that the Felician Sisters were in the parlor and I became very anxious to learn something about their visit. I asked Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene if the Felician Sisters asked for me and why I did not get to see them and she replied: "I do not know why, but they did not know you. I left the Nun and felt very strange until Sunday after benediction when Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene took me by the hand (first kindness shown) very gently and said: "Lena, I have some news for you—" I interposed immediately and said: "Oh, is it from home, hurry and tell me, is my poor mother dead or alive?" Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene replied: "The news is from home that your mother is dead." "Oh, St. Anthony," I screamed, "I did not want such news" and I fainted.

When I came to, a girl called Stella was by my side and said: "Poor Lena, don't cry, I will be a mother to you" and I replied: "No, never. No one can take the place of my poor mother." That evening they made me take part in a drill for they thought it would help me to forget my sorrow. Can you imagine the sad night I spent and oh, how I cried and prayed. Some of the girls came to my bed and laid their hands on my head with a touch that seemed to express their sympathy and consolation, which they dared not show with words without breaking the rule of silence.

In the morning I had blood circles under my eyes from crying and was feeling badly. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene came to me and said: "Lena, you write a letter

to one of your sisters and find out how your mother died." I was given paper and a girl called Assumptia wrote my letter because I had forgot what little I had learned when at home. My letter was addressed to my sister Kate in care of St. Stanislas Church because her husband was a barber and I thought that everybody would know her through his business. You might ask: "How did you know to whom to write?" Every night when I knelt at my window and prayed I would mention every one of my people on my beads so I would not forget them. My letter was given to the Sisters as usual, but I did not expect an answer any more than I got to my other letters that I had written for four and a half years, but providentially it was sent. To my surprise Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene called me one day and gave me a letter and I said: "Is that for me?" I could not say any more without showing my joy for fear that she would not let me write again if I showed my anxiety.

I read my letter and learned that my poor mother was burned to death. I looked up at Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene ready to let out a cry, when she said: "Now Lena, if you cry I will not forward your letters." I did my best to suppress my feelings.

Every night I cried and thought of my sisters and dead mother. I often thought of what my mother said when I left home for the convent: "Helen! Helen! You will be sorry but it will be too late." I loved my sister's letter and at night I kept it under my pillow and frequently I would kiss under the stamp because I knew my sister's lips had touched that spot.

The next letter I sent was an answer to my sister's second letter. My sister wanted to know if I ever thought that I would like to see them all again. I tried to answer this letter in a way that it would not show

up as if I were anxious to leave the place, yet I wanted to convey my true feeling. I stated: "Yes, I would like to see them all again, but the Nuns were so good to me that I hated to leave them." What a lie that they were



*Kissing under stamp,  
because my sisters lips had touched it.*

good to me; why if I had wings I would have flown home.

One day in December about 8:30 A. M. Edna came to the laundry and told me that Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene wanted to see me. On my way to Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene's office I was followed by Mother S-a-i-n-t Martha, who also was going to see Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene, and of course I had to wait until she got through because Mothers were given the preference. While the two Mothers were consulting, a girl named Maud whispered to me that she overheard their conversation and that Mother St. Martha was trying to detain me because I was her best ironer and she could not get along without me. In a little while I saw Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene and she told me to go to confession



in the morning with the consecrates because I was going home the next morning, but I must not tell a soul. This was a hard condition for a woman to meet and then too, I was anxious to tell my friends.

Coming from collation that afternoon I walked with Celsus and being unable to suppress the joy any longer I said: "Celsus, if I tell you something will you tell any one?" and she said, "No, I won't." I said: "Cross your heart and say, God may strike me dead if I tell a soul." When Celsus complied, I took her by the hand and said I am going home in the morning and oh, what a relief.

Why did I tell Celsus? I knew Celsus in the Felician Convent and one day she told me that the Felician Sisters asked her if she wanted to see Helen, and so they brought her to the Good Shepherd Convent. Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene called me to the infirmary to see Celsus. While talking to Celsus Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene passed me and whispered: "Lena, she is here to stay," and Mother left the room. Celsus then said, "Helen, the Sisters are waiting for me and might get angry if I keep them waiting too long and so I must be going." I then told her what Mother had whispered to me and then Celsus said: "Oh, no! I did not come here to stay, so 'Goodbye!' Helen," and she ran up the stairs, tried the door but it was locked. She pounded on the door and called "Sister! Sister!! Please let me out," but all was in vain and she was a prisoner.

In the evening I was told to go to the infirmary for the night and at 7:30 P. M. I was in bed. A little later I heard an awful screaming upstairs and when the door opened I saw Mother S-a-i-n-t Patrick helping Yenisei down the stairs. Her night-gown was wet and up over her knees, her legs were red as red flannel.

They had given her a cold water bath when she was screaming. In the laundry Yenisei often complained of sore feet, but the Sisters thought she was putting it on, and tried the cold water cure for her inflammatory rheumatism. She stayed in the infirmary that night, and suffered terribly.

In the morning I was dressed and taken to the kitchen for my breakfast and for the first time in the convent I had real coffee and fried bologna with egg over it. After breakfast Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene came to me and said: "Lena, Mother Superior can not give you her blessing but sent me." I knelt at Mother S-a-i-n-t Eugene's feet and she put her hand on my head, and with the thumb of her other hand made a sign of the cross on my forehead and said: "Lena, I want you to promise me with your uplifted hand before God, that you won't tell a thing that went on in here." I raised my hand and swore before God that I would not tell a thing. I would have lied until black and blue in the face or do anything else to get out. Why, the idea of such an oath; if all things are good in the Good Shepherd Convent, then why not tell it.

Before I started on my journey I was finally advised not to talk to a single person until I reached home; even then I doubted that I was going home.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FOUR MONTHS AT HOME.

On my way home I stopped to change trains at Rochester, N. Y. Here I met a lady who wore a black bonnet with white strings, and she inquired where I was going and advised me that I would make better train connections if I left on the morning train. She advised me against taking the next train because of waiting from 2 A. M. to 7 A. M. for a train at Sunbury, which place was considered a wicked city.

The lady offered to take me to the Y.W.C.A. for the night and also have my ticket time extended. I thanked her and inquired if there were any men at the Y. W. C. A. and the lady responded, "No, they are women only." I agreed to go, but upon entering I recognized instantly that it was a Protestant institution because I did not see any holy pictures on the walls and I became alarmed. The lady asked me how much money I had and I told her one dollar and twenty-five cents (although I had \$1.50) because I thought they might charge me more for the bed or take it away from me. All night I watched and listened because I thought the Protestants would kill me if they ever found out that I was a Catholic.

The lady charged me twenty-five cents for the bed. I had a nice little girl companion for the night. We talked until my partner went to sleep, but I could not sleep because of the fear of the Protestants and the thought of the joy when reaching home. In the morning I arose and continued my journey homeward.

As the train kept drawing nearer and nearer, my joy continued to grow bigger and I felt like leaping when the conductor called "Shamokin." The train was



coming to a stop with a lot of jerking and some of the people could not hold their places. One man at the other end of the car nearly fell out and I laughed for the first time since I left the convent. The train was brought to a stop and I alighted. In another moment I heard some one say: "There she is, there she is!" That is all I can recall between our meeting at the depot and when I came to at my brother-in-law's barber shop. My sisters seemed very much changed in five years and especially the oldest one. I could not believe it was our Mary.

When they got me to the barber shop, some one gave me a drink of soda, which revived me; while holding my sister's hand I said: "Am I home, Kate? I can't believe it." "Why Helen, what made your lips so blue?" and I replied I had no water since I left the convent. I was so glad to be home, but oh, how I cried when my sister said: "Helen, why didn't you write to your poor mother or sisters?" I replied that I wrote home nearly every month for four and one-half years and never got an answer. The girls said: "Helen, we never got any letters until about six months ago and we arranged immediately to see you." At that time my sister Kate noticed a louse on my head and said: "Helen, you have lice on your head," and I replied, "Yes, I know that." She then said I will comb your head because I don't want the children to get them. While combing she said the nits were like beads in my hair. I told her I knew I had them but just to tell me all about mother, and then she began to tell me of our dear mother.

Mother was making a pot roast and when the meat caught fire, she picked the pan up with her apron and as she went to throw it out her clothes caught fire and almost instantly she was a mass of flames. I asked how

long did mother live after that and my sister replied: "From 2 o'clock that afternoon until the next night, at mid-night she died. Oh, Helen, how I wish you would have been here and heard how mother asked for you. 'I see all but one, I see all but one'; we did not think she meant you because Annie was not here. We sent one telegram to Annie but she did not come and so we sent her a second one and finally she came." My sister Kate told me that she and Annie went into mother's room together and upon entering the room Annie cried out and said: "Is it me Mame dear?" But mother shook her head and said: "I see all but one, I see all but one." Here my step-father came to the conclusion that it must be me because he said: "My God it is Helen she wants to see and I must find her." My step-father ran to the Sisters and begged them to tell him where I was and told that mother was dying. Here I said: "Don't tell me any more," and I became hysterical.

In a little while I came to again and asked my sisters to tell me more about mother, but they protested because it would make me feel badly. After considerable begging they finally resumed telling me more about mother when I said: "Why didn't you compel the Sisters to tell you where I was?" My sisters said they tried hard to get me home because my mother's plea was a pitiful and pathetic one, and that not one person left her side without some stir when they expressed themselves.

The Felician Sisters told my step-father and sisters that I was in a convent where no one could come out again and also that we gave up our father, mother, sisters, brothers and all of the world, and never wanted to hear from them again. (What a lie.) My step-father told the Felician Sisters that they could have all he owned if they would only let Helen come home long



enough to see mother before she died and satisfy her plea, but all efforts were in vain.

My step-father got back and found a Roman Catholic priest trying to force the Holy Eucharist broken into small pieces into my dying mother's mouth when she was spitting up chunks of burnt flesh. As that old priest was forcing her to swallow the Holy Eucharist it would come up and the priest kept saying, while stamping his feet, "Will you take it, will you take it?" That was the way the priest tormented my dying mother.

Can you imagine such a sad picture while at the same time in a convent at Detroit, Michigan, a precious daughter was praying on her beads naming all her people, and to St. Anthony, "Oh, please St. Anthony, let me hear from home if it be only one word that my mother is dead or alive?" That very night of my mother's death I prayed the same prayer, because I had prayed it every night, and had a feeling that I would never see dear Mame again. Just think that only eighteen hours would have brought me to my dying mother's side for the last time in my life and these holy (?) liars of the Roman Catholic church are guilty of depriving me of this privilege. I do not know why they kept me from my dear mother unless that I was a good, young and able worker.

The thought of enduring all of this in the name of religion—oh, how can I forgive them? But Jesus suffered more than that and He was the Son of God, and I was only a mere woman. When I die I want to be in heaven with Jesus and so I forgive them, but the Lord has called me to the rescue of the other victims and that is why I am telling the story of my life.

While at home my sister helped me with some clothes because when the Good Shepherd Sisters sent me from Detroit they fitted me up with a forty-two



shirtwaist, when eighteen was my size; a coat with leg-of-mutton sleeves, a big hat (weighing 4 1-2 lbs.) covered with "Alice Blue" velvet and trimmed with four wings, a green and black wing on one side and a red and black on the other, and the other clothes had the same appearance, not at all admirable but only ridiculous, yet I was very proud of them. In addition to the obsolete clothing, I carried a little old-fashioned doctor's grip with some sandwiches in it, and they gave me a dollar and one-half in money. I learned when I was home that my sisters had sent me two dollars and evidently the Good Shepherd Nuns kept the fifty cents.

After being home for four months I told my sister that I would have to get work and she suggested that I could work at some store. I said: "Kate, I can not work in a store, I never went to school at the convent" and she said: "Why Helen, you do not mean to tell me that the letters you sent home were not of your writing" and I replied, "Yes, Kate, another girl wrote those letters for me." We now agreed that the place for me was in a laundry at a job where muscle was the deciding factor. I did not know how to make a cup of coffee because I never was near a kitchen. All of this was a puzzle to my sisters.

I felt that it was useless for me to seek a position in Shamokin to which I was adapted and I could not stand it to remain idle any longer so, remembering the girls in the convent speaking that girls could get work with good pay in Cincinnati, I made up my mind to go to Cincinnati, Ohio, and board at the Sacred Heart Convent until I secured a position in the city and arrange later for my board elsewhere. I dared not reveal my plans to my sisters because I was afraid they would not let me go and so I arranged with a cousin to follow me in a few weeks and meet me there.

## CHAPTER X.

### TRAPPED BY FATHER CLARK

On the train to Cincinnati while saying my Rosary a priest sat down beside me and said: "I see you are a Catholic?" and I answered "Yes, Father, I am a Catholic" and he said: "I am Father Clark from Columbus, Ohio." He continued talking and said: "Where are you going?" Of course I believed that I had to always tell the truth to a Roman Catholic priest, and so I answered telling him the truth. He said: "You are quite young to be alone and I know of some Sisters who will take you in and get you a nice place to work." I did not tell Father Clark that I had ever been in a convent and I felt timid about asking many questions. We finally arrived at Cincinnati and Father Clark took me to that place.

When in the convent I saw that it was a Good Shepherd institution and so I tried the door knob with my hand while my back was against it and found it locked, but I did not feel alarmed because I thought the gate was open and I could get out the next morning to look for work. That night one of the Mothers came to my bed, took me by the hand and said: "Dear, they want you to stay here, but don't you do it." A strange feeling came over me now but I decided to await developments, because I felt it was useless to remonstrate.

In the morning they took me through the laundry and explained many things to me, which they thought would be of interest to me, but they did not know what I already knew of a Good Shepherd Convent laundry, and I did not want them to know either. While going through I forgot my resolve when I saw Blanche, a girl I knew at the Detroit convent, and said, "Why, Blanche



are you here?" I looked up at the nun to see if she had noticed me greet Blanche and the nun replied: "Do you know that girl?" and I said "Yes." Now I recognized another girl I knew at Detroit and then they apparently became suspicious because they asked this question: "Do you know Mother S-a-i-n-t Stanislas?" and I replied: "Yes, I know Mother S-a-i-n-t Stanislas." The nuns later telephoned to her and she instructed the Cincinnati nuns to bring me to Carthage, Ohio, because she wanted to see me.

In a little while they were taking me to Carthage, Ohio, while I protested, but they said that Mother S-a-i-n-t Stanislas only wanted to see me, and soon I was in the convent at Carthage, Ohio, against my will. I often went to the Sisters and asked them to let me out, but all was in vain.

One morning I was sent for and told to change my clothes because I was going away. I wanted to know where I was going before I would change dresses, but they did not tell me. I said I would not leave until I knew where I was going. I had said something on the previous day to one of the girls about walking down the road if they did not let me go home. I suppose the girl told on me and they were preparing to get me into more secure bondage.

My name in this convent was Stanislas and my mistress's name was Mother S-a-i-n-t Albert. I was told that if I did not dress in a hurry I would get a cold water bath. Mother S-a-i-n-t Teresa called to Mother S-a-i-n-t Albert and wanted to know if I was ready because Father Moore would not wait any longer and just then I heard some one drive out of the barn. Then she told me that I was too late and I am glad of it because no one knows where those bachelors might have taken me.

One morning while in the dormitory a little girl

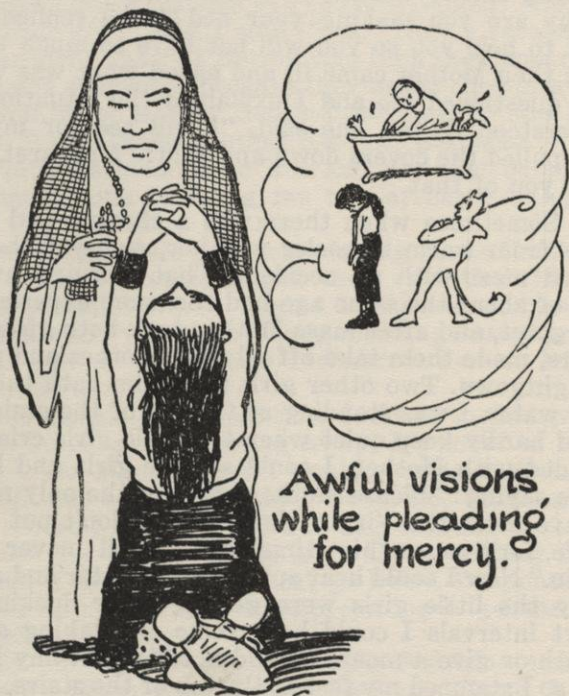


about eight years old, named Margaret Mary, while making up her bed and as I had charge of her, I said: "Why are you making your bed?" she replied, "Oh, just to help you so you will not have so much to do." Just then Mother came in and asked what was wrong, she questioned me and I explained the situation as I understood it, but she said, "I will see for myself." She pulled the covers down and said: "Margaret, I will cure you of that."

Sometimes when there was a change, and especially from warm to cooler weather, some of the girls would meet with an accident. That morning another girl of about the same age had the same experience as Margaret, and after mass Mother took both girls down stairs, made them take off all their clothes and put on a nightgown. Two other girls filled the bath tub with cold water. I was standing at the top of the stairs and could hardly keep quiet when the little girls cried and pleaded with Mother. I could see the girls and hear a voice saying: "Please Mother, you are the only mother I have after the Virgin Mary, please don't put me in there, forgive me this time and I will never do it again." Now I could hear splashing of water and apparently the little girls were getting their ducking. At short intervals I could hear some one taking a deep breath or give a moan. I could not stand it any longer and so I stamped my feet at the top of the stairs. Mother heard it and said you keep still or you will get it too.

These convent Mothers always have some trained (safety) girls that do this cruel punishing for them. In a little while these girls came upstairs and I noticed Margaret Mary was shivering from the cold. I told her to sit by the heater but Mother hallooed over: "Keep away from the heater or I will give you another bath."

That same day those girls had to crochet six fasteners.



Margaret Mary never knew her mother and when some girls went to the parlor to visit with their mothers, she would say: "Stanislas, don't you think I had a mother," and I replied, "Of course you had a mother." "Well then why don't she come to see me?" I said, "I don't know dear." Just think dear friends, that child

belongs to some mother, and maybe the mother don't know any more about Margaret than she knows of her mother. There may be many cases like that one if we could only get the particulars.

One night I was told to get dressed because they were going to take me to Newport, Kentucky. I thought while going over to Newport I might get a chance to run away and so I went without uttering a word of protest. In the company of two nuns I was taken to a street car. While riding the car I sat between the nuns and on the opposite side of the car sat a man with a light overcoat. Oh, how I wished I could tell the man that I was the nuns' prisoner against my will and then too, I thought maybe the man is a detective and he would not help me. Just then one of the nuns saw me looking and she nudged me to keep my eyes down. Tears were running down my cheeks but I did not wipe them because I feared that the nun would scold me. If you ever see a girl crying in the company of a nun, ask her what is wrong; because if the man on the Cincinnati car would have asked me what was wrong, I would have told him.



## CHAPTER XI.

### FIFTH CONVENT, BUT THE SYSTEM IS THE SAME.

We arrived late that night at the Good Shepherd Convent, Newport, Kentucky, and I felt the usual resentful feeling overtaking me. Everything appeared the same excepting the spacious and beautiful grounds. As usual my name was changed and now I was called Euphrasia.

While here I was permitted to write home to my people, but all of my letters were subject to their approval and if rejected we had to rewrite them. In a short time I learned to compose letters that met with their approval, but they never expressed my true feeling and so I was not much better off than at Detroit, Michigan. We could always state that we were very happy, whether we were or not, or say that the nuns were perfect angels, even though we knew that some were anything but that. We could write home for money to buy flowers for Fathers' or Mother Sisters' feast days, or for any purpose to help the convent. All statements along the line of praising the sisters, or building up their institutions were approved. Often times we were told what to write.

My sisters wrote to me and often asked if I ever thought of coming home, but I dared not write my true expressions. Often times after reading my sisters' letters about coming home, I went to the Mother and said "Mother, please may I go home?" and the answer was a beating. I carried many black eyes for asking to go home.

While here I was very lonesome and often times

wished I were dead. One time, the first summer here, I was very sick with the walking typhoid fever, but never received a drop of medicine or the attention of a doctor until the last week when I was nearly well again. All of my hair came out and I was bald headed. Some time later new hair grew and when it was long enough to reach my eyes it bothered me considerably. I wrote to my sisters explaining my situation and asked them to send me some side combs so I could keep the hair out of my eyes. My sister, Annie, sent me fifty cents for side combs and I got Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy to buy them. My new hair grew in nice natural curls, we supposed the curls came from the effects of the fever. One Sunday afternoon a girl called Bernice took one of the side combs and tried to come out one of the curls because she thought they were artificial. We did not see Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy in the room, but suddenly she appeared; grabbed the combs and broke them. I had the combs from Saturday night until Sunday afternoon, not even a whole day. My sister's money paid for the combs, but Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy broke them.

On my first Ash Wednesday at Newport, Kentucky, I went to the refectory for breakfast. On the table I saw only black coffee and dry bread. I drank one cup of black coffee and ate three pieces of dry bread. After breakfast Mother S-a-i-n-t Leo came to me and said: "Euphrasia, are you going to fast?" And I replied: "What do you mean, Mother, I had dry bread?" I did not understand their rule about fasting, but a girl named Veronica had told Mother that I had three pieces of bread; while their rule allowed only one. I did not understand Mother, but I guessed she wanted to find out if I would lie about the three pieces of bread; before she left she said: "I will put you down



to fast." Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy came a little later and said: "Did you fast, Euphrasia?" and of course I knew now what they meant and so I said, "No Mother," then she said: "Don't you dare go to dinner or supper today." I answered, saying "All right Mother!" She thought I had been very saucy and so she got hold of my ear and pulled it.

While in this place I learned to play checkers, sixty-six, pedro, seven-up and euchre. On one occasion Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy and I played checkers and while I was winning Mother began to cheat by dropping extra men from the palm of her hand; while moving or figuring on moves with her hand over the board. I stood for it until she began winning the games and finally called her trick when she dropped a man, and said: "Why Mother, you dropped a man on the board; that is cheating." She replied instantly, saying, "Do you mean to tell me that a spouse of Jesus Christ would cheat?" She then slapped my mouth and continued so until my lips were swollen. In that condition I was forced to play while she continued to cheat and had her way, until she got tired of the game. Can you imagine how I felt toward her at that time? Oh, Lord, forgive me for even thinking of my feelings on that occasion. I was considered a good checker player and that is why they liked to play with me. Mother often said that some day she would have me play with Father Licke. I will tell you in due place of my game with Father Licke.

Shortly before Christmas a little Protestant girl named Anselm came to the convent. On Christmas morning while we were going down the refectory, Anselm took a banana from Celestine's plate; she did not know that she had one on her plate. After prayer was said and we all were seated, Mary Dolars came to Anselm, held her head and smashed the banana all over



her face. Oh my! I thought that was terrible, but it was kindness compared with what followed. After breakfast they took her down stairs, heated a poker red hot and burnt her fingers across the top of her hand. She was not allowed to put or tie anything on her hand. She came up to the class-room wringing her hands with pain. In a little while Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy came to her and said: "If you don't take care, I



*Burning hands with red hot poker.*

will take you down again." Her fingers were festered for several weeks and an awful sight to see. Her wounds finally healed, but she had scars when I left the convent. This girl never went to the parlor. Just think if you or I did anything like that, what would the authorities do to us? But in the name of religion

this is done by disappointed old maids in the civilized land of the free. If they had children of their own, would they have done that? That is where I think the church is wrong because if the nuns would be allowed to marry and bring up their children, I am sure they would not have been so cruel. Oh dear, how I wish to see that girl now. It would make me so happy to know that she is out of that place.

One time a Priest came to show us a lot of pictures he had taken over in the old country and so they sent us out into the yard. While out in the yard, I went to the laundry door and looked in to see if I could figure out some way of escaping because we knew that many girls ran out through this door. The next morning I was told that Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy wanted to see me. I hurried over thinking that maybe she had word for me from home, but to my surprise, Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy said: "Euphrasia, what were you doing at the laundry door yesterday?" While saying that, she took hold of my ears and scraped the backs with her fingernails without giving me a chance to explain.

I wish you could have seen my ears, they were festered so badly that the corrupt matter ran down my neck. Duplessis saw it and asked me how it happened. I told her that Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy did it with her fingernails. My ears were so sore that I could not lay on them at night, but had to lay on the flat of my back for several weeks.

There was one girl in that Convent that I liked very much, her name was Sylvian. The Sisters soon found that out and we were forbidden to speak to each other and also forbidden to associate together. One Christmas morning the Sister pronounced—"God be Blest;" that meant we were allowed to talk to all the girls (excepting those forbidden) and all the girls were

wishing each other a "Merry Christmas." A Protestant girl named Leona came to me and said: "I wish you a 'Merry Christmas' and so does someone else." I saw that Leona had talked with Sylvian a few moments before, so I surmised that the "someone else" was Sylvian and so I said: "Tell her I wish her the same." Somebody overheard our conversation and told Mother. After breakfast Mother sent for me and I went to the inside room and there stood Leona with Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy. Mother asked me if I dared send a Merry Christmas to Sylvian and I said: "Yes Mother, I did, because Leona told me that Sylvian sent me a Merry Christmas." Leona denied it and said: "I did not say it," and I spoke again saying: "Leona, you did too, tell me." Now Mother interrupted by getting a hold of my hair and banged my head up against the press incessantly for about a minute, while I continued saying: "You did Leona. Now please tell the truth." Mother stopped banging my head and I concluded talking to Leona with—"You just wait until the judgment day and you will be found out, because what I said was the truth." Now Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy began slapping Leona and pushed me out of the room and that was my Merry Christmas.

One time when I was serving mashed potatoes for dinner, all the girls were asking for more. I went to the Nun dishing the potatoes, and told her to put away an extra big portion for the servers because they were good. Just then she pulled up a dirty looking object out of the potato pot and said: "What is that?" We examined it and found it to be a dirty dish rag. I said "No potatoes for the servers today" and the remainder was served to the girls. We thought later that the potatoes were so good because of the seasoning from the greasy dish rag.



One little Protestant girl named Remy and another girl named Aneshia were talking about outside affairs and Mother heard of it. Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy demanded of Remy to tell what they were talking about, but she refused. Remy had nice long hair and Mother cut off one side of it and then sent for Aneshia and cut her hair, but the girls would not divulge their conversation.

We all felt badly for the girls but could not help them. Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy sent for Remy again, but we did not know her plans and all wondered what was next. The girls' waists were kept in that room and I had charge of them. So for an excuse I went into the room pretending to be looking over the waists when I saw Remy kneeling on the floor with her clothing down to the waist line and Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy was whipping her with a strap. I ran between them and Mother struck me with the strap over my eyes and gave me a black eye, but she kept on until a nun named Anthony went to her and said: "Mother, you are forgetting yourself," but she still kept on for a while and finally stopped when tired out. She took the scissors again and cut off the rest of her hair. The Nuns have no long hair themselves and so it seems as if they do not want the girls to have it either.

Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy knew that Remy thought a lot of her hair because the girls often made curls of her hair and sometimes we made as many as sixteen curls when Mother was not around, but of course some softy would always squeal. The next morning her chemise was stuck to her back and Christine and I rubbed vaseline to loosen her chemise. All this was done in a hurry through fear that Mother would catch us and probably give all of us the same punishment.

One time a certain Mr. Roth took his shirt work

away, and to be kept busy we were given crocheting instead. That change seemed like a very hard problem because we were not used to hand work. Each girl had a task imposed on her according to their speed. Some girls crocheted three circular shawls while others had to make four.

While crocheting baby bonnets, the amount generally varied according to the style, but we always had a task set to the speed of our experts. I would crochet from three to six bonnets a day and fast workers have been known to crochet as many as twelve. You can be sure that we had to work hard to get our task out daily. Some nights I got my start by the light of the moon kneeling by my window.

One time I was told to make three baby bonnets and that those would finish the order. I knew very well that I would get another style after those and so I decided to take my time and do a perfect job. Most of the times we did not consider perfection, but only production, and of course we cheated stitches wherever we could. Sometimes we would say: "I hope that we will never have to buy any of these bonnets made in the Convents," because we knew they were imperfect and about one-fifth cheated.

I finished my three caps and remarked to some of the girls that those caps were perfect. I knew that we were not allowed to take pride in our work boasting but I could not restrain the pleasure for I considered it a great accomplishment. Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy probably got a hint of my boasting and ordered all the caps brought forward. When I brought my caps to her, she said: "Those caps are no good; they won't fit a doll." I said: "Mother, I made them exactly like the pattern." Then she said: "You proud thing, rip every stitch and make them over." I ripped every stitch and



stayed until late that night to finish the bonnets. Where is the mother that would act like that toward her child because she did well and was proud of it, but the nuns said, "It is vanity to be proud."

One time I asked for an interview and she took me out to a room with our surplus stock, called the work-house and said: "All right Euphrasia." I knelt down, kissed the floor and said: "Mother, please let me out. I want to go home to my sisters?" She did not answer my question but said: "What? I thought you came here to ask forgiveness?"

"No Mother, I did not do anything wrong." At that moment she struck me in the eye and I could not see for a minute. I said: "There is something wrong with my eye." She struck a match and after examining, replied quickly: "You are going to have a black eye. In the morning you come to our cell and I will let you know how it looks, and if bad, I will put you in the infirmary until you get over it. You may tell the girls that you are sick." In the morning I was cross and did not go to Mother's cell, but she watched for me when I left the dormitory and said: "You tell the girls that you dodged and bumped your eye on the big basket when I struck at you." That was called a holy lie at the convent. When visitors are going through some girls with black eyes have their faces tied up as for a tooth ache.

One day two girls came from Carthage, Ohio; one girl named Cecilia was formerly an inmate of a Detroit, Michigan convent, and the other named Modestus was formerly an inmate in a Cleveland, Ohio convent. Modestus was a fast crocheter and had to make four circular shawls while I made only three. One day Mother came in and said: "Bring up your work because the firm 'phoned and said they want that order." That



was only a trick of Mother's to find out how many had their task finished ahead and then she would raise it accordingly. I had one extra shawl made but I did not bring it up because I had it in my stocking, and so she did not see it. Sometimes they would go through our boxes and take up our extra shawls that we had ahead for the next day. All the girls had their task finished but Modestus. Mother came to me and said: "The firm wants the work so you better go and help that lazy thing out." We were always willing to help the oppressed and considered that a great privilege, but the Sister said this would encourage the girls to become lazy. I took a special liking to that girl, but I concealed my feelings.. I went with my stool (that was all I had to sit on for two years because I once rocked in my chair) over to help Modestus with her task. She said there is no use helping me because I am not able to get my task out any more for I am sick. Other girls had been helping her for some time, but it was done secretly to keep her from staying up at night. I said: "How many shawls have you made now?" and she replied: "Two, this is my third." I said: "I have one in my stocking and I will give it to you." By that time I had my yarn tied to her shawl and was ready to take up her work when I touched her hand and said: "Modestus, your hands are burning hot with fever, what is the matter?" She replied: "Oh I never was well since they did one thing to me in Cleveland, Ohio." I asked her what they did to her and she replied: "I am afraid to tell." My curiosity was aroused to know what they did, and so I tried all plausible means of persuasion. I told her that I thought it would make her feel better if she told some one, and after considerable begging, she finally agreed to tell me if I would cross my heart

and say I would not tell. I complied with her wish and Modestus started to tell me her story, although the beginning she was a little timid, but soon we became very intimate. Modestus said that while at a Good Shepherd convent in Cleveland, she tried to run away but was caught in the act and brought back to the convent. They took Modestus to a bath-room and were going to give her a cold water ducking, but when they got there Mother said: "Never mind filling a tub, (but looking at a tub where they soaked sanitary clothes of about one hundred and eighty girls) that will do," and they put her in the dirty filthy water. Here I interrupted her and said: "My God! Modestus, they did not put you in that dirty water, did they?" and she replied: "Yes, they did." "But surely they did not put your head under, did they?" She replied again, "Yes, they did." "But you did not swallow any of the filthy water, I hope?" Modestus said: "Yes, I could not help it and every time I think of it while at the table I cannot eat."

I told Modestus I could hardly believe they would do that. Modestus now began to cry and said they sent her out there so that if she died no one would know her. She complained of her stomach and said: "Oh, my stomach."

A few days later she was taken to the infirmary in a very sick condition. One day while she was sick in bed I was sent to the infirmary with a checker board to play checkers with Father Licke (pronounced "Like") I was glad to go because I got to see Modestus, but when I got there Father Licke said: "So you are the girl that can play checkers?" I replied: "Yes, Father." We set up our men and played a tie game. While setting up the men for the next game I looked at Modestus and saw a change in her face Her mouth

was going from ear to ear and looked as if suffering with intense pain. I felt broken-hearted and lost all interest in the checker games and Father beat me every game. He said: "You are not playing as good



Playing checkers at the bedside of a dying girl.

as you did the first game?" and I replied: "Father, I do not know what is wrong with me but I can not get interested in checkers tonight." He arose, said "Good-bye" to Modestus and left the room.

I can see Modestus' look yet when I stooped to kiss her and said: "Don't blame me Modestus." She said: "I don't, but Father could have talked to me instead of playing checkers." I kissed her again and felt her tears with my face while she said: "I hope they tell my people where I am" and reminded me of my promise not to tell. Just think, a dying girl crying for her people.



The next day we were told that Modestus was dying and we were permitted to go up and see her, but only six could go at a time. While looking at Modestus I could not think of anything else but what she told me was done to her in Cleveland and that she was sent there to die alone and away from her people. While she lay there suffering, it was the most pitiful scene I had ever witnessed. Just think, dear friends, this girl was some mother's child, and yet only strangers were at her side. Oh, what would you do if your loved one was sick and dying away from home, longing to see you? Would you broaden the dividing line or grant their request? Yet this girl laid here looking as if she would like to see some one for the last time. Do you ever wonder why so many of our girls are missing? I say "Our Girls," because they are American girls; and if they are not American girls then it is un-American to treat them like that. Why tolerate such slavery and devilish practices in this country.

Poor Modestus died that day, but no one went to her funeral. During her sickness I never saw a doctor attending to her. Modestus told me her age, yet I can not recall it, but she was about eighteen years old when she died.

I was up in the dormitory when a young, strong, Protestant girl named Constance, came in from Wheeling, West Virginia. She did not know the rules and had told me some of her family affairs when I stopped her to explain the rule. She told me her name, where she lived and also that the Sisters of Providence told her they were sending her to a boarding school when she left them and so she felt badly and cried all day. I had charge of this girl during her stay at the convent.

One Sunday morning Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy

told me to take Constance upstairs and dress her. I dressed the girl as ordered, but I had to pin her shoes together because she had no buttons on them. While pinning her shoes she said: "I wonder if my father knows I am here?" But I did not pay any attention to her remark and took her to Mother. I went downstairs and a little later Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy met me and said: "Euphrasia, we just got her away in time." I said: "Why, Mother, where did you send her?" and Mother replied: "We sent her to Carthage, Ohio, because her father found out that she was here and he was coming after her that afternoon to take her away, but we don't want him to know where she is," Dear reader, do you see their trick that they could truthfully and boldly say Constance was not there when her father called and maybe she is in their clutches even now.

After being there for three years I was going to make a final plea to get out. That night a girl called Barbara was talking to Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy in the hallway. I knew that she was seeking her liberty, because only a few minutes before, she had remarked: "My, but Mother is in good humor tonight, I think I will ask to go out." A short time later, while in the yard we heard a scream in the hallway and after investigating we learned that Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy pushed Barbara down the stairs and her lips were swollen.

I changed my mind about asking to go home. I thought of the privilege that the nuns were having and so I decided I would try to be a Consecrate just to get outside of the wall.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WEARING THE GARB—BEING A NUN

Trying to be contented a while longer, I finally went to the Mother Superior and asked to be a nun. She apparently was pleased, because she said: "Yes, you have a wonderful influence over the girls and it will be a blessing to you too, because God wants you to be a spouse of Jesus Christ. I tried to be very good from that time on. A girl named Vivian heard that I was going to take the habit and she advised me not to take it, but I said I must do it to save my soul. I no longer dared to tell any one that I was discontented because I was aspiring to be a nun. You may often see a smile on the nun's face, but half of the times it is put on just as perfectly as any actor plays his happy act.

The evening of the twenty-second day of July is set aside for putting on the Convent garb of a Consecrate in honor of Saint Mary Magdalene. During the act of consecration Mother Superior begins with asking: "Do you feel fully called upon to be a Consecrate, and feel capable and willing to assume the responsibilities as your duties of obligation?" I replied, "I do, Mother!" She spoke again, saying: "I will now cut your hair short and this you will have to do every three months to remind you of your obligation." Next, you kneel at Mother's feet and are given the garb, skull cap, bonnet, office book and Mother Superior's blessing. You are also instructed to meditate on your calling.

I remember when I received the habit that a fierce storm raged and a terrific crash of lightning struck a big tree at the end of the yard. Mother Su-



perior said that the devil was mad because some one was taking the garb, and they all looked at me. They knew that I did not want to stay there, but they said that those who struggled against it are the ones that make the best nuns. I cannot see what they meant, because most people that are kept in a place against their will finally become very mean and they expected to make good use of me because of my influence over the girls. Just let someone put you in a place you hate and you will soon find out how mean you can be. They apparently missed their guess on me, because my story proves it.

Before going for my second years' blessings, I went to Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy and asked if I could go out, and she replied: "What! Go out, why you will go to the devil if you get out." That meant that we would go to hell as we understand it. I saw that there was no other way out than to play hypocrite and so I told Mother I would try it for another year. That is just what she wanted to hear and so she was pleased again.

The second year of a Consecrate is called the "I. H. S." year. For this ceremony we go to the altar and receive a belt called the "Yoke of Jesus." White Cords, Black Beads, I. H. S. and a new name. A Priest called Father Licke changed my name. He gave me a lighted candle and said: "This is a new light, and henceforth as a spouse of Jesus Christ, thou shalt be called 'Rose Virginia' of the seven Dolars." I then was married to Jesus. I wore my habit a year without washing. It formerly was worn by a Consecrate who died.

The next year was called the "Free Year" for the Consecrates. That was a time we gave special consideration to praying over our vocation. I knew that I had no calling. Once during my third year

I went to the mistress and asked her if I could go out, but she refused to talk to me. The next night I went to Mary Anthony and said: "Will you please write a letter for me if I get the paper?" and she said she would. I returned with the paper and said: "Anthony, it is hard to write when you cannot state what you would like to," and I began to cry. She said: "I will write everything you say, but you know Mother will not send your letter if you do that," and I replied "Yes, I know that."

We continued talking and writing and I finally said: "I want to ask you a question; will you be honest and answer only the truth?" She replied: "I do not know if I can," but I interposed and said: "I know you can." She finally said: "Yes, I will." I said: "Anthony, you were here nearly eighteen years?" ("Yes," she interposed) "and I want you to tell me the truth just as if Jesus Christ asked you. If you had it to do over again and were as young as I, would you stay and take the black veil?" She answered: "No, I would not take it, but there is only one way to get out, and I am afraid to tell you how." I said to myself—"Run away," and from that day on I watched my chance and tried to make my escape.

I was afraid and often thought that if I was sure to get away I would have gone, but I lacked the courage. One day I saw a girl who tried to run away during a procession; she was pursued, knocked down, beaten and brought back in a terrible condition; they also cut her hair. In a few months I saw that girl die. They said she died of consumption. Those kind of events had a great tendency to keep our courage down.

There was a girl named Leo, at noon she was down to dinner and during recreation I saw her go through the class room. In a little while we heard screaming



and heard Leo saying: "Don't take me in there" (meaning to the infirmary.) I know she did not want to be brought to the infirmary because she often said so. apparently she feared the room.

After a little while the screaming stopped. The Sisters came down and told us to pray for Leo because she took a hemorrhage and choked to death. I often wondered how she could be screaming and choking at the same time, but I left that to God because He knows many other things that we will never know.

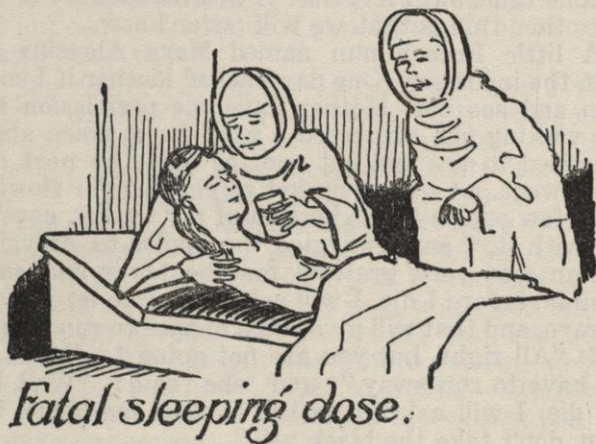
A little French nun named Mary Aloysius lay sick in the infirmary. One day I asked Mother if I could go up and see her. Mother gave me permission and while visiting she expressed a wish for a green apple. I promised to try and get one for her. The next day when I went out with a bucket to get dirt for flowers, I put a few apples in the bottom of my bucket, covered them with dirt and smuggled the apples to Aloysius. The nun was very grateful for the favor and said: "Virginia, before I die, I will ask Mother to let you fix my grave, and that will give you a chance to run away." I said: "All right, but you are not going to die, and I don't have to run away," and she said: "Well, if I don't die, I will ask my father to take me home, but —You, don't take the black veil."

I was afraid to say anything to her because we never knew who we could trust and I thought that probably she was put up to try me.

One day she asked if I could sleep in the infirmary (because she did not like the other nun) and Mother said: "Yes, Mary Burkmann is not feeling well and so a change might do her good." Of course she had sympathy for Burkmann because she was one of her pets. I changed beds and slept in the infirmary for a few nights. One night when Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy



came in, the sick girl said: "Mother, I wish I could sleep." Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy, while going out of the room, said: "I will give you something that will make you sleep." In a little while she returned with an old-fashioned pop bottle filled with liquid that looked like water. She poured some into a glass and said: "I better make sure," and poured in some more. I looked



*Fatal sleeping dose.*

at her and a strange feeling came over me when the girl drank the contents of the glass.

Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy left the room saying: "I bet she will sleep now." A girl named Madaline came into the room after Mother left. In a few minutes Aloysius said: "I must go on the commode." Just as I went to help her she looked up at me and said with a gasp—"My God, I am dying." I became frightened and said: "Oh, no! You are not dying." Madaline help me quickly. My God, call Mother! By that time we had Aloysius on

her pallet. Madaline opened the door and called for Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy, but she seemed in no hurry to get there. I kept saying: "Aloysius, say 'My Jesus, Mercy, My Jesus, Mercy!' 'Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, help her.' " I was not only trying to help her, but I was going through a struggle with a thought I had of the medicine Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy gave her. I could not safely think or entertain any apparent ideas because it would become a matter of confession and I would have to tell Father at my next confession.

Instead of Mother coming to the dying girl, she ran for Father Licke and both came together. Aloysius was looking steadily in the same direction and Father said: "She is unconscious." I was kneeling at one side of her. Father Licke said to Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy. "Who is that kneeling at her side, is she her sister?" Mother replied: "Yes, but only in Christ."

Oh how I fought the thought of the medicine scene; if I could only have told it to some one, but I did not for fear that they might do something to me. Father prayed for her and said to me: "Do you think she would know you if you called to her?" I called in her ear but she did not answer or show any more signs of life again and was dead.

In about fifteen minutes after Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy gave her the medicine, some mother's child was lying dead on a Convent pallet. Where were her friends or family? What a sad picture to see a girl dying on a convent pallet with her brown eyes firmly fixed on something above, on One Who is all Love!

I was shaking from head to foot when Mother told me to sleep in Celestine's bed. I did not want to go to bed but insisted on staying up because I could not believe that Aloysius was dead. They pushed me

out of the infirmary and I went to the dormitory, but I could not sleep. My bed shook so steadily that Duplessis came over to me and said, "What is the matter with you?" I replied: "Oh, I will die if I don't soon get over this." And she said: "You better come into the little room with me." I did and she had to hold me down with her leg while I laid on her bed and shook. She did not know why I was so nervous and it was not safe for me to tell what I thought and so I leave that with you and God.

Mary Aloysius was buried at the vault; that is where the Consecrates were buried. The Good Shepherd Mothers were buried in the vault and I never saw a burial of the girls. Mary Aloysius died in July so you see I had no grave to fix until the next Spring.

I began to plan from then on to have a lot of extra shirts ahead so that I could tend to fixing that grave in the Spring; and I succeeded in getting about eighty shirts ahead. I started to fix the grave on the first of May and on the third day of May a girl came to our group that we did not like because she seemed so pious and we were afraid that she would tell everything to the Mother. We called her "Pious Ann."

One night while at recreation we talked of some girls that ran away and just as the bell rang we were going up the walk, and I said: "I think it takes a lot of nerve to run away. I wish I had some nerve."

I do not know why I had the courage to speak so boldly, because I was afraid of Vivian. She caught me by the hand and said: "I always thought you were discontented." I said: "Can I trust you?" She replied (squeezing my hand) "To the end of the world. Meet me in the yard."



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE ESCAPE

The next morning Vivian and I met in the yard as agreed, and with great care continued to carry out our plans. We walked to the girls' toilet and before entering, tried the five doors to ascertain whether anyone else was there because we did not want our conversation revealed and it was against the rule for more than one girl to be in those rooms at one time. We talked with the partition between us and one particular subject discussed was to get my holy things together, because I had a crucifix blessed for the grace of a happy death; a Rosary that laid in the soup bowl (?) out of which Jesus and Mary ate; and other holy things. Vivian said never mind your holy things, you just leave your holiness behind and let's go at the first opportunity. Our plan further, was for us not to talk to each other and to pretend that we did not like each other. We never dared show our true love for one another because that would be sufficient cause to separate us, and so I told some of the girls that I just hated Vivian. The next day we spoke only a few words, and expressed some thoughts with signs. I had made a pair of shoe laces from some black calico for my slippers and when in the group, I got Vivian's attention; I put my foot forward and looked at it with a thought in my mind that my feet were ready, and she answered with a nod of her head. We learned later that we understood each other's signs.

' On the following Sunday evening a lady elocutionist came to recite for the girls and that was a chance for us to get together. Vivian and I were to take part in the singing, but we talked of getting away whenever

possible. I knew that Vivian intended to search her trunk for money and so I asked her if she found any, and she replied: "Yes, I found a dime," and I said "Good, that makes thirty cents!" Ten cents of that I had hidden between my holy pictures for four years, and the other dime I begged from a girl who got her's when she went to the parlor a few months after I received my dime. Our final plans were that Vivian would ask permission to gather May apple blossoms for the Blessed Virgin's altar and we would meet at the vault if she was given the permission. Vivian was a child of Mary and considered a very pious girl, but she was not what they thought she was, because her piety was only a camouflage to make her escape.

At a quarter to three, while going to collation, I looked down where Vivian was sitting and she made a sign for me to come. I met Vivian and said: "How is it?" She answered, "All right, I can go." I said: "Will we go to collation?" and she said: "No, but don't get excited!" I said, "All right, I won't, but we have no time to spare." I went out and got my spade and bucket, and asked Mary Loretta for her shawl because it was a chilly day, and Vivian too, got her big shawl. I whispered, "Vivian, why don't you take that watch you use to time your work by; you know we can pawn it and realize some money from it?" She said: "Oh, no, if we do that, they may suspect something and disrupt all all of our plans."

Just as we started out Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy stopped us and said: "Children go and see if you can find Mother St. William and tell her that I want to see her." My how I wished she had not asked us, but we showed no displeasure to obey, or anxiety to get away. I went to the refectory looking for Mother St. William, but I did not try to find her because I was too anxious



to get away and struggling against everything else, we returned to Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy and reported that we could not find Mother St. William. She answered: "You may go, children, but be very careful and don't stay long."

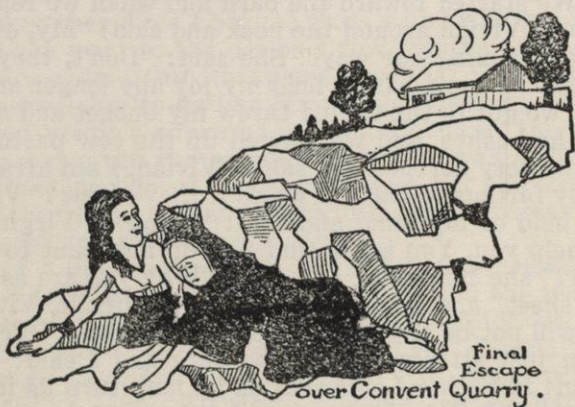
We started toward the barn and when we reached it I took Vivian around the neck and said: "My, everything is coming our way." She said: "Don't, they will see you!" I could hardly hold my joy any longer and so when we got to the vault I threw my bucket and spade into the bushes, and we started up the cow pasture. I became very nervous and said: "Vivian, I am afraid to go any farther. What will we do if they see us?" Vivian took hold of my hand and said: "Come on Virginia, I will help you. You know that you do not want to stay there?" she continued, and said: "Why you are as pale as a sheet" and I said: "How about yourself, Vivian? You will not be any paler when you are dead." Perspiration just streamed down my face and I said: "Oh, Vivian! If Father Licke sees us he may turn us into a dog or cat." But she continued to encourage me and while pulling me by the hand said: "Come on Virginia, don't give up at such a vital moment or our efforts will be in vain." Can you imagine how my heart beat? Why I thought I was going to choke. What a struggle that a lost vocation is a lost soul and that no matter how good you are when you have failed to persevere after being called to be a nun, you shall never go to heaven. Don't you see how this thought alone is enough to keep many women from running away?

I continued to grow weaker and then, too, we were at the quarry, a place that could be seen very distinctly from the convent; I said: "How will we get down over the quarry without them seeing us?" I threw my bon-



net ahead of me and we crawled on our hands and knees.

When we got over the quarry I saw a man coming toward us. I said: "Vivian, there comes a man, maybe they saw us and sent Andrew or Henry out to bring us



back, but don't get excited if it is either, and let's say that we only took a walk in search of more beautiful posies." When the man got near, we recognized him to be a stranger. He was unfolding a drinking cup and instantly we discovered a spring of water from which he was about to take a drink. We asked him if we could use his cup to get a drink, and he replied: "With the greatest of pleasure, Sister." We drank of the Robinson Spring and thanked the man for his kindness. All this time a feeling of suspicion was over me, maybe they knew and were after us. O, what a feeling, only God understood.

Vivian wanted to go to Cincinnati, but I said, why

the farmers will help better than the city people, but she still wanted to go because she was only eighteen years old and I was twenty-four, she said. She was anxious to get over into Ohio because the minor age limit was only eighteen, while in Kentucky it was twenty-one.

After a lengthy discussion and telling how many girls were brought back from Cincinnati who tried to get away on the street cars from Newport, Kentucky, and that policemen would bring them back, I also told that it seemed as if they would telephone to some one, who would watch for the girls and bring them back, because very few girls ever made their getaway on the cars, and thus finally persuaded Vivian to take the country route.

We started up the Alexander pike and Vivian apparently satisfied, said: "We could hide in the woods for a while until everything quiets down." While going up the country road we did not want to run through fear that some one was following us, and I said: "Vivian, if some one stops us, what will we do for a story?" She replied: "I cannot think of a thing." I said: "Now listen! Whatever you tell I will swear to it, and you do the same for me." Just then Vivian looked back and saw a white horse and covered top wagon and said: "My God, they are after us." I said: "Don't run." But before I was through saying that, Vivian ran down into the ditch and begged me to come down too while she lay there on her stomach; she continued pleading for me to come down. I do not know why, but I could not move and then became hysterical and said: "No Vivian, I am afraid of snakes down there. Get up and let's fight to the finish. They never will take me back alive. I will kill them. I will pull the eyes out of their heads."

With uplifted hands, closed so tightly that my

finger-nails were cutting the palm of my hands, I fairly danced on the road and my mind was burdened with the thought of what to do when they get near us. Just then Vivian said: "Look there is a house across the road, let's go in; if they did not see us they will go by."

We went to the house and Vivian rapped at the door and said: "Lady, can we have a drink?" She answered "Yes," gave us a glass, directed us and we went to the pump. Vivian turned the crank and I held the glass while we were watching for the horse and wagon. In a little while we returned to the house and thanked the woman for the favor. She said: "You did not drink," and Vivian said: "Oh, yes, we did!" "Why the glass is not wet." In that terribly excited state we continued to evade the horse and wagon, and in spite of the unconscious lie told of drinking without getting the glass wet, Vivian said: "Can we sit down please, Sister is tired?" the woman answered: "Yes, come in!" We entered the house but I could not speak for my chin was shivering, my teeth were chattering, and perspiration was running down my face; yet I felt cold while a big fire was burning in the stove. The woman placed two chairs near the door and asked us to sit down, and said: "You must have been running?" Vivian answered saying: "No! we did not run, we only were walking fast."

While sitting there, can you imagine what I was going through when my hair felt as if it were standing up straight on my head, and as I thought that I heard the wagon stop and could see how Andrew would lay his hands on my left shoulder, if he came through the door near which we were seated? Oh, my! But that was a terrible feeling to hear the wagon go by and then hear it stop. Vivian shook her head and nudged me as if to say: "No, the wagon did not stop." I could feel



myself getting colder and weaker, and then Vivian said; "We will have to hurry, Sister. We have a few more places to visit." We left the house and started for the pike together, but when I got there I said: "Vivian, I cannot go any farther." My knees quivered and I was trembling like a leaf. She took me around my waist and said: "Don't give up, Virginia." But I continued to grow weaker. She saw that I was growing pale, but she stood by me with consoling words as we continued our journey until we could see a house. Vivian saw a house and said: "Look! there is a house and it looks as if it might be empty; I hope that you can hold out until we get there." I said: "All right, we will go, but you are as white as a sheet," and she replied: "How about yourself? You are the same."

Feeling somewhat encouraged at the thought of finding shelter in an empty house, we planned accordingly and I said: "In the morning you can go out and beg something to eat and I will take my turn the next day." We were now at the back end of the house. I saw a curtain in the door window and said: "Some one must be living in there." Vivian rapped at the door and while we were awaiting a response, I discovered a lot of bottles hanging on the grape vines and said: "They are Catholics; look at the holy water in the bottles." I supposed they were there to keep the lightning from striking. The door opened and a lady said: "How do you do?" Vivian replied: "Can we please have a drink?" She said: "If you will be satisfied with what I have at home, alright, but if you want a cool drink, there is a nice spring at the foot of the hill." "Oh thank you lady, we will be satisfied with what you have at home." So she brought a dipper of water and we drank and enjoyed it immensely. Now Vivian talked again saying: "Lady, Sister is so tired, would you mind if we

sat down for a little while?" She replied: "Why no, come right in." My what a difference in this woman and the first one.

The lady placed another chair near the door and we sat down meditating on what to do next. The lady sat up on one corner of the table and I could not keep my eyes off her because there seemed to be something so good and fascinating about her. I nudged Vivian and whispered to her that I could not go any farther. She understood what I meant and said: "Lady, do you know anything about the convent on the highlands?" She answered "Only what I heard." Vivian interposed: "Are you a Catholic?" "No! I am a Baptist," replied the lady. "Then we are going to tell you that we ran away from there." The lady interposed: "I thought so; I thought so, the very moment I opened the door and I am going to do all in my power to protect you!"

Her remarks put new life into my heart and I could not check my feeling any longer. I grabbed the lady and fairly danced with her until I felt as if I were fainting. Then I sat down and all I could hear was: "We must get rid of her clothes because they can trace us by them." Poor Vivian's only thought was to get rid of my garb and she seemed to know that it would bother us if I had to wear it. She often repeated—"The main thing is her garb." I did not realize what was going on, but I was still a Roman Catholic and meant to be as long as I lived. I was struggling with the thought that, "A lost vocation is a lost soul." They were putting the lady's dress on me when I came to, and said, taking a long breath, "My, how light I feel." I felt as if a load had been lifted off my shoulders; yes, a load of superstitious teaching. The last thing taken off was the skull cap. While taking it off the lady said: "Lord's sake child! What did they do to your head?" and then I re-



lated my experience of three weeks before I ran away when Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy sent for me and said: "Sometimes God requires us to compel his spouses to keep their rule," which was cutting off the hair every three months. "She jerked my bonnet and skull cap from my head without taking time to remove the pins or untying the strings. She then took a large pair of trimming scissors, cut my hair and handled me very roughly, and after each shear, Mother S-a-i-n-t Dorothy hit my head with the scissors. My head was bruised, cut, scabbed and terribly disfigured from that maternal discipline of a free will servant, or an example of a disappointed old maid's love for a Sister in Christ in the convent. I do not know which it was, but nevertheless she is the product of a Good Shepherd Convent, and at this writing still lives."

At the close of this narrative the lady patted my head and sympathized with me while I cried. The lady who befriended me was Mrs. Sarah Graeff of Cold Springs, Kentucky. She was truly a good Samaritan and jovial Kentuckian and was like a regular mother to me. She said: "Now girls, my husband was baptized and brought up a Roman Catholic." Mrs. Graeff watched us; a veil of despair again crept over our faces, and as I looked at Vivian, while thinking: "My God, are we not through yet, and what will Mr. Graeff say?" after a moment's silence, she said: "Never mind girls, don't worry about Mr. Graeff not welcoming you, because I have an Aunt Lizzie living six miles farther up the country who is a Protestant, and I know she will be only too glad to take you in and help you, and then too, Mr. Graeff is a Baptist now." "Oh good! I am happy again!" was my answer and we felt much easier.

"I will give you your supper when Mr. Graeff gets



home. Now tell me girls, what would you like for supper?" We were not used to being asked, so before due consideration, I interposed: "Ham and eggs! Lady I have had none for six years," and that ham in her pantry was almost irresistible and made me smack my lips, and Mrs. Graeff replied, "You shall have it."

"Mr. Graeff is coming; go and hide in the parlor." We hid and when Mr. Graeff came in, he said: "Hello Sally," and then he kissed her. Mrs. Graeff said; "Frank, I heard again that some girls ran away from the Convent on the Highlands." He said: "Is that so, Sally?" "I heard that they are hiding in the woods in Cold Springs." He again said: "Is that so, Sally?" I gave Vivian a nudge and said: "My I wish he would say something else." Vivian said: "Keep still!" Mrs. Graeff said: "Now Frank, (a brief pause) suppose those girls came to my door in the morning after you have gone to work and asked to be taken in; what should I do?" "Sally! Take the girls in and shoot the —." At this juncture the joy was too great and we rushed to the kitchen door. There Mr. Graeff stood in amazement as Mrs. Graeff said: "It's all right girls! Come on out." Silence prevailed for a few moments, then Mr. Graeff said: "Well Sally, that was a good one on me." He looked as if his eyes would pop out of his head, and we all were united in one great gathering that I never shall forget. This seemed like my first taste of real happiness, even my visions of poor mother in her rocking chair were gone beyond the clouds into the land where sorrow will never be known. The joy is indescribable.

Some time later we had ham and eggs for our supper, and oh! how good it did taste. Why I never in all my life had eaten anything that satisfied me more than that first supper at Mrs. Graeff's. After supper

we talked of the time we left the convent, which was (collation) at a quarter to three. Mrs. Graeff said it was a quarter to four when we came to her home. The distance from the Convent highlands to Mrs. Graeff's home is about six miles. We did not want to run, but I believe we just flew, for we covered the distance in an hour. We also related some of our convent experiences and went to bed very late. I suppose about twelve o'clock.

We did not sleep that night because we thought that the noise of every vehicle was that of a convent wagon, and imagined that it stopped in front of our house, and we nervously awaited their coming in after us. We would say: "Listen! That wagon stopped; why someone is on the porch." I said: "Vivian, if they try to get into the house why I will run into Graeffs' bed between Mr. and Mrs. Graeff" and Vivian said: "I will do the same." Oh what a terrible night! Only God knew our real feeling.

We talked with the bed covers over our heads, so Mr. and Mrs. Graeff could not hear us. We were planning on what to do the next day. We had thirty cents in money between us. I said: "If my sisters do not write for me, I will have to go to the city for work," and then Vivian replied: "Well! If they do not write to you we will do our best to get along."

I knew that my sisters would be disappointed in me, because they told everybody that I was going to take the black veil. It is considered a privilege and a great blessing in a Catholic family to have some one become a priest or a nun, and when you leave a convent you disgrace the whole family and bring everlasting shame. Some girls are ashamed to come home with short hair. So you see many girls would leave the convent if it were not for the humiliation. Some fam-



ilies would rather that the girls never return home if they fail to persevere in their calling to the convent on account of the embarrassment it might bring through criticism from the church circles.

The next morning we had oatmeal without bugs and many other good things. After breakfast we sat around the stove because it was very chilly. While looking through the window I saw a man and girl coming down the pike, and when they got to Mrs. Graeff's lane they turned in. I did not look again because I was too frightened, but thought they were Martha Spaulding and a detective and said: "My God! They are after us with a detective." Mrs. Graeff said: "Hurry girls, run upstairs." We tried to hurry, but we could not manipulate the old-fashioned latch and Mrs. Graeff had to work it for us. We got upstairs but in our excitement we failed to notice that there was no floor in the attic, and Vivian who was leading the way, put her foot through the plaster. There we stood holding on to the rafters trembling from head to foot, and looking through the hole. We saw the three chairs near the stove and the plaster on the floor. My thought was, "Now the detective will surely know that we are up here." I said: "Now you did it," and Vivian answered that she knew, but could not help it. A few moments later Mrs. Graeff opened the door and said: "Come down girls, it is no one but my brother-in-law and a niece." So we went down, but I became very nervous and sick and had to lie down. Mrs. Graeff quickly gave me a hot drink and a little later I felt better again, but no one will ever know my true experience of terror and fright especially on this occasion.

In the evening Mr. Graeff came home with a bundle of ladies' wearing apparel on his wheel, and the next night he brought home some more. All those things



were given by the people of the First Baptist church, Newport, Kentucky; but everything was done very quietly so that they would not get us back to the convent.

Vivian wrote a letter for me to my sisters. On Friday Mrs. Graeff was going with Vivian to see her off safely to Cincinnati, Ohio. Friday morning Vivian was dressed in the best we had, and I gave her my twenty cents which, added to her lot, made thirty cents. Mrs. Graeff gave her some money too, but I do not know how much. I picked some violets and gave them to Vivian, saying: "You won't forget me, will you dear?" then I kissed her, and she left for Cincinnati, Ohio, with Mrs. Graeff, in answer to an advertisement for work.

I was left alone with all the doors locked, and yet I was afraid; why I believe I would have fainted if anyone had come to the house. About five o'clock that evening Mrs. Graeff returned home, but I was unable to find peace because I continued to worry now about my sisters not writing.

Next Sunday Mrs. Graeff went to Sunday School and learned that a farmer of Cold Spring, Kentucky, wanted berry pickers. Arrangements were made for me to pick berries and I accepted the position. I earned five cents for every four quarts I picked, and my usual speed enabled me to earn a good little sum. It all seemed like heaven to me because I was free and the burden of a task had rolled away; and the sight of an ugly Mother Superior or unattractive prison walls had vanished. I soon learned to like the country people very much and just hated to part with them because they were so kind to me.

One night I was told to come down to Mrs. Graeff's for a letter she had for me from Vivian. I gave Mrs. Graeff permission to open my mail and so she had read

the letter and conveyed a message to me accordingly. I was told that Vivian was coming out to see me on Tuesday, and if I still had no word to come home, that she would take me along to Cincinnati, Ohio. It was impossible for me to get off to see Mrs. Graeff before



**Mrs. Jackson in Convent Garb**

Tuesday night on account of the large amount of berries that were ripening on the bushes, and my employer



was anxious to get them to the market, and so I stayed all day to help them out. While I was being paid for my work, yet I felt that it would be ungrateful to lay off during the busy time, because they were so kind to me.

When I got to Mrs. Graeff's on Tuesday evening I surely expected to meet Vivian, my dearest friend and rescuer, but instead (Mrs. Graeff said): "A woman had called from the convent, who said: 'Lady, where is that girl you took in with a nun's garb? You know that it belongs to the convent and must be returned there because it is holy and blest. We know that you took the girl in.'" Mrs. Graeff replied: "Yes, we took the nun and another girl in, but they are not here now. The girl that wore the holy nun's garb is picking berries six miles up in the country." The woman spoke again, saying: "Lady, can you tell me exactly where she is?" "No!" replied Mrs. Graeff, because it was my wish for her not to tell. The woman remonstrated indignantly and concluded: "Well, we will find out where she is and get her." But they never got me, and now they sometimes even claim that I never was in their convent. What would you call a woman that wears a garb like the one I wore?

Now tell me, dear reader, why did they not ask for Vivian? I never heard from Vivian again and I never shall give up telling my story as long as I live and can wiggle my tongue until I have every convent wall down; every bar off the windows and doors; and Vivian and all other girls are on the streets enjoying their freedom according to the established American policy of Liberty.

I have enjoyed my freedom since I escaped from the Good Shepherd Convent at Newport, Kentucky, but



still I am heavy hearted for the other innocent girls; and to think that maybe Vivian wants to come out right now and yet her voice can not be heard, and she is being deprived of an honest conviction. I do not know where Vivian is today, but I would be willing to have my body riddled with bullets rather than to see or know that she is still a reluctant prisoner, because she did so much for me. I have faced many hardships to find Vivian; I announce her name from every pulpit and platform, but she may be in a dungeon and can not hear my plea. Who knows? If she were out in the world I am sure that she would have written me because she knew my sister's address, and before we parted, we promised to help and stand by each other until death parts us.

Vivian helped me out of the convent and I have helped many other girls since then,—and with God's help, I shall continue in the work; not contented with having the prison walls beautified, or disappointed old maids reformed, or punishments modified; but until every man, woman and child get their rightful liberty, and every religious prison and superstitious doctrine is eliminated from God's universe.

AMEN.

# APPENDIX

## INDORSEMENTS.

### Testimonial.

Roman Catholic sweat shops, convent prisons and secret intrigue are daily being brought to our attention. Light on inner deviltry and cruelty in secret chambers of Catholic institutions is frequently revealed. The good old United States is becoming alarmed over these secret hidden facts; never was such public interest taken in this timely question, as at the thrilling present time.

Anti-Roman Catholic Societies are federating and the universal public pulse is stirred as never before. The time is fast approaching when sleeping Protestants will be thoroughly awakened. The life of Helen Jackson within Roman Catholic sweat shops and convent walls is vividly portrayed in the within written account of her life in these secret dens and makes hierarchal rule. Having known her and her christian character for a number of years, I can vouch for the truthfulness of her statements and allegations in regard to Roman Catholic cruelty, and tortures, while incarcerated within their prison walls.

Helen Jackson has a marvelous memory of scenes and describes them with clearness and rapid touch of finish. There is no theme which could more affect the destiny of the future. Possessing a pleasing personality, she has the facts and knows how to present them, and whoever promotes her lectures or the sale of her books, is promoting the cause of liberty and humanity.

(Signed) George Laubach, A. B.

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2288 Auburn Ave.

Toledo, Ohio, Oct. 30, 1919.

This is to certify that I have been personally acquainted with Mrs. Helen Jackson of Toledo, Ohio, for eight years and I have heard her lecture and I believe the statements made in her book to be true, and I am positive her book will be the means of disclosing to the American people a condition existing in this country that is antagonistic to the laws of our land of freedom.

(Signed) Rev. J. W. Headley,

Sunday School Secretary of the Ohio Conference of the  
Free Methodist Church.

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I am personally acquainted with Mrs. Helen Jackson, author of this book and her husband, John Jackson, and had the privilege of witnessing their conversion and of receiving them into the Free Methodist Church in Toledo, Ohio.

I regard her book as a valuable contribution to the literature of this age. I have read the manuscript and have been profited by its perusal.

This book should immediately find a place in every Protestant home, as it portrays in truthful statements conditions that should not exist in any enlightened country.

(Signed) Rev. J. A. Hopkins

No. 3524 Bluff St.,

Toledo, Ohio.

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## AFFIDAVITS

COUNTY OF WAYNE }  
STATE OF MICHIGAN } ss.

Emma Bols being duly sworn deposes and says that on or about the 10th day of July 1908 her sister, Mrs. Lizzie Louzon had an officer to take her to Police Headquarters and on the same day deponent was removed from said police headquarters to the House of Good Shepherd in the City of Detroit where she was detained and imprisoned against her will and against the will of her father and later of her sisters from the said 10th day of July, 1908, until the 25th day of February, 1916.

That when deponent was taken to said House of Good Shepherd she was 17 years of age and when she was released therefrom she was within three months of being 25 years of age.

That for the first six years more or less that deponent was thus imprisoned and detained in said House of Good Shepherd, she was compelled to labor incessantly at laundry work, being put in what is called the Penitent Class which operates the steam laundry plant, and that for the remainder of the time that deponent was detained and imprisoned she was assigned to the Magdalen Class where she was compelled to do embroidery and fancy work.

That just prior to the time of being transferred to the Magdalen Class deponent told the officers of the said House of Good Shepherd that she desired to be released therefrom as she previously had many times requested, but the said officers of said House of Good

Shepherd refused to release deponent and transferred her as above stated to the Magdalen Class. But from that time on deponent began to fail in health and two weeks before deponent was released she only weighed 86 pounds, and was unable to work, yet in this weakened condition she had to rise at 4:30 in the morning and in the winter at a quarter to five, but at the beginning of said two weeks prior to her release they permitted deponent to remain in bed until 5:30 when suddenly she was attacked with a severe pain in the back that prevented her from walking across her room, at the end of which two weeks deponent was permitted to leave said institution.

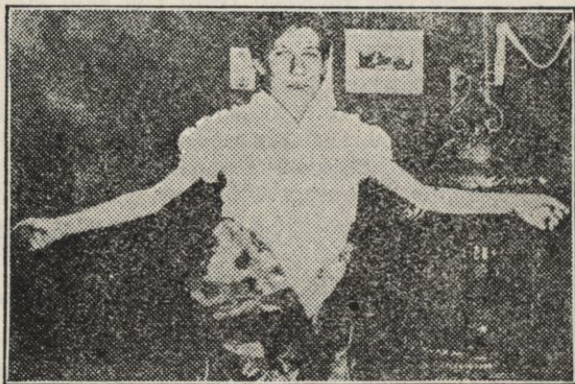
That although deponent requested many times to be released from said institution, the Sisters always told her that her sisters would not give her a home or take care of her in the weakened condition she was in, while on the other hand the said officials told deponent's sisters, as she is informed and believes, that deponent did not want to go home and that she liked the said House of Good Shepherd and wanted to remain there, and when any of her sisters or relatives came to visit deponent, she was not allowed to tell them the truth of her desires to leave the place.

Deponent also says that she has heard the statements made by Mrs. Helen Jackson regarding the House of Good Shepherd in her lectures on the lecture platform and especially about Mother St. Eugene giving cold water baths to the girls and whipping the girls when dressed only in their night gowns.

That when Probate Judge Hulbert was made Judge of the Juvenile Court, he made a visit to the said House of Good Shepherd one afternoon. On that

occasion the girls were all required to put on their Sunday dresses and were all assembled in the yard of the said House of Good Shepherd where Judge Hulbert made a speech in which he said: "I will do my best to send all the girls I can to the House of Good Shepherd."

When I was first taken to this institution I was not a Roman Catholic but they compelled me to go to Mass and to all the various Roman Catholic devotions. The Mother Superior would come over and speak to us non-Catholics and tell us that the Roman Catholic was the only religion and we had to go



**Victim Weighing Only 86 Pounds When Released  
Through Efforts and Lectures of  
Mrs. Helen Jackson**

through all the ceremonies, so we were persuaded to become Catholic.

I secured my release from the said House of Good



Shepherd because of a lecture delivered by Mrs. Helen Jackson, who lectured at Rev. Stock's German Lutheran Church in the City of Detroit, and which lecture was attended by my sisters, and when they heard of the methods employed to keep girls in the said House of Good Shepherd they took steps to secure my release.

The said House of Good Shepherd is paid three (\$3.00) Dollars per week as deponent is informed and believes for the care and maintenance of girls committed there by the Juvenile Court, but these girls are put in classes and required to work the same as other girls.

Deponent further says that it has now been three years since she was released from the said House of Good Shepherd; that while she only weighed 86 pounds at that time she now weighs 145 pounds, is married, is the mother of one child and is healthy and happy, but deponent is convinced that if she had remained in said House of Good Shepherd much longer she would not have been alive at this time.

And further deponent saith not.

(Signed) MRS. EMMA A. BOLS,

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 23rd day of July, A. D. 1919.

(Signed) FRANCIS H. WARREN,  
Notary Public, Wayne County, Mich.

My Commission expires Feb. 6, 1920.

(SEAL)

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The State of Kentucky, Campbell County, ss:

I, Sarah Graeff, being first duly sworn, say, that I am acquainted with Mrs. Helen Jackson, of Toledo, Ohio, and have known her about thirteen years. I became acquainted with Mrs. Jackson at Cold Springs,

Kentucky, on the 7th day of May, 1906, at about 4 o'clock p. m. At that time she and a girl companion came to my home and they both stated that they were very tired and asked the privilege of sitting down and resting awhile. Mrs. Jackson wore the garb of a nun and both she and her companion seemed to be in a state of great excitement.

Mrs. Jackson said to me, "Are you a Protestant?" and I replied that I was. She then said: "We are going to tell you that we ran away from the convent of the Good Shepherd on the Highlands at Newport, Kentucky; will you protect us?" I replied, "I will do all in my power." Since the only clothing Mrs. Jackson had was her nun's garb, the people of the First Baptist Church provided her with clothing, and her garb was burned.

Mrs. Jackson worked in the vicinity of Cold Springs, Ky., until October of the same year, and during that time frequently visited me at my home. When she first came to my home her hair had the appearance of being chopped off in an irregular manner, causing her to look peculiar, and I combed her hair nearly every day in an effort to make her look presentable.

(Signed) SARAH A. GRAEFF.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence this 23rd day of July, 1919.

(Signed) EVA G. DOWNING,  
Notary Public.

My commission expires March 8, 1920.

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(Seal.)

Kalamazoo, Mich., April 15, 1919.

This is to certify that I, Mrs. Mary Leyden, residing at 902 Gull Street, Kalamazoo, Mich., was an inmate of the House of Good Shepherd in the City of Detroit, County of Wayne, State of Michigan, and was confined in the said institution for eight years and seven months under the name of Evangelista (class name), my maiden name being at that time Mary Frances Egan, and that I knew Helen Jackson was an inmate at the same time, and that I verify every statement Helen Jackson has made from the platform regarding the cruelties imposed on the inmates, such as giving cold water baths and whipping with sewing machine straps on wet night gown.

I, Evangelista, entered the institution at 12 years of age and left at the age of 20 years. I never received any education while in the said convent. I am still a Roman Catholic.

(Signed) MRS. MARY LEYDEN.

The State of Michigan, Kalamazoo County, ss:

On the 3rd day of September, 1919, personally appeared before me, Mrs. Mary Leyden, who being first duly sworn, says that she signed the above statement, and that the facts above stated are true.

(Signed) GEORGE B. REGEN.

Notary Public, Kalamazoo County.

My Commission expires April 10, 1923.

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(Seal.)



# FOUR FINGERS BURNED---

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