





ed in a robbers' cave. They were received there with rough but kind hospitality by the wife of the captain of the band. Perhaps it was her sorrow that made her kind: for it is often so with women. Her sorrow was a great one. She had a fair child, the life of her soul, the one gentle, spotless thing amid all the lawlessness and savage life around. Alas! it was too fair to look at, for it was white with leprosy. But she loved it the more, and pressed it the more fondly to her bosom, as women are wont to do. It was more than ever her life and light now, because of its misfortune. Mary and Jesus, the robber's wife and the leprous child, together in the cave at nightfall! How fitting a place for the Redeemer! How sweet a type of the Church which He has founded! Mary asked for water that she might wash Our Blessed Lord, and the robber's wife brought it to her and Jesus was washed therein. Kindness when it opens the heart opens the eyes of the mind likewise. The robber's wife perceived something remarkable about her guests. Whether it was that there was a light around the head of Jesus, or that the Holy Spirit spoke in the tones of Mary, or that the mere vicinity of so much holiness strangely affected her, we know not; but in much love, and with some sort of Faith, the mother's heart divined—earth knows that maternal divination well. She took away the water Mary had used in washing Jesus, and washed her little leprous Dimas in it, and straightway his flesh became rosy and beautiful as mother's eye could long to see it. Long years passed. The child outgrew its mother's arms. It did feats of boyish daring on the sands of the wilderness. At last Dimas was old enough to join the band; and, though it seems he had to the last somewhat of his mother's heart about him, he led a life of violence and crime, and at length Jerusalem saw him brought within her gates a captive. When he hung upon the cross—burning with fever, parched with agony—he was bad enough to speak words of scorn to the harmless Sufferer by his side. The Sufferer was silent, and Dimas looked at Him. He saw something Heavenly, something unlike a criminal about Him, such perhaps, as his mother had seen in the cave three-and-thirty years ago. It was the Child in the water of whose bath his leprosy had been healed. Poor Dimas! thou hast a worse leprosy now that will need blood instead of water. Faith was swift in its work. Perhaps his heart was like his mother's, and faith a half natural growth in it. He takes in the scene of the Crucifixion, the taunt, the outrages, the blasphemies, the silence, the prayer for their pardon, the wistful look cast upon himself by the dying Jesus. It is enough. Then and there he must profess his Faith, for the mother's prayers are rising from beneath and the sinner is being enveloped in a very cloud of mercy. «Lord! remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.» See! how quickly he had outrun even some of the Apostles. He was fastened to the Cross to die, and he knew it was no earthly kingdom in which he could be remembered. «This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.» Paradise for thy cave's hospitality, poor young robber. And Jesus died! and the spear opened His Heart, and the red stream sprang like a fresh fountain over the limbs of the dying robber; and, though his mother from the cave was not there, his new Mother was beneath the Cross, and she sent him after her First-Born into Paradise, the first of that countless family of sons who through that dear Blood should enter into glory.»

**A Blind Philosopher.**—A blind man was sitting in company with some visitors, when one of the company suddenly left the room. «What white teeth that lady has!» said the blind man. «Why,» said a friend in a great surprise, «how can you tell?» «Because,» answered the blind man, «for the last hour she has done nothing but laugh.»

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