



THE  
YOUNG IRISH GIRL;

OR,

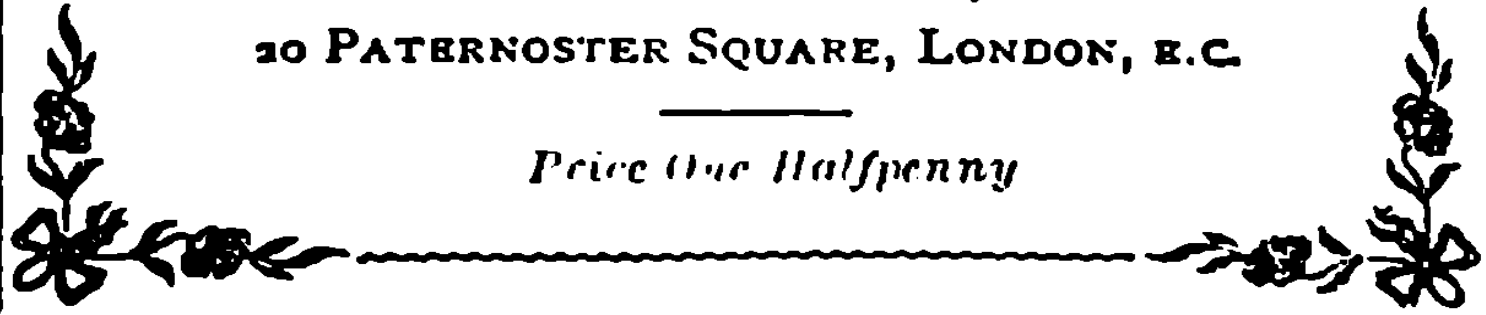
*STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN.*



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20 PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.

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*Price One Halfpenny*



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“MOTHER,” said a young girl as she lay on her death-bed, “it is a terrible thing to die.” “It is, indeed,” replied the mother. “I wish I could die for you; but you have seen the priest, my dear child, and confessed to him, so you need not be afraid.” “It is true,” answered the girl, “I have confessed all the sins I can remember, and the priest has given me absolution, but yet before long I shall be in purgatory, and you know, mother, you are

very poor." The unhappy mother felt the truth of these words. "Yes, Maria," she replied, "we are very poor, but I will work day and night to earn money to pay for masses for your soul. Do you suppose your poor mother could rest till you were released from suffering?" "I have been thinking," said the poor girl, "a great deal about my cousin Catherine. She was so happy before she died, though she had not confessed nor received absolution. She did not believe in purgatory, but thought she should go straight to heaven." "Catherine was a heretic, Maria," said the mother, "and out of the true church. It is better for you to be unhappy than to die in error, as she died." "I often think," continued Maria, "of her words, 'When I walk

through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.' What did she mean? I have no rod nor staff. I have no comfort. I can think of nothing but the flames." "Come, my child, illness has depressed your spirits; leave all this to the priest, try to rest, and think no more about Catherine." "Well, mother, I will try, but I cannot help thinking it would be much better not to go to purgatory at all, but to go straight to heaven when we die." "It is not for people like us to go straight to heaven, Maria, we must follow the way the priest marks out." "But, mother, it is a very hard way, and I am often afraid that those who once fall into the flames never come out again."

“If the priest knew what you are saying, child, it would indeed be difficult to pay for the masses he would require. Here is your brother Patrick, he will sit by you, and try to comfort you while I am away.” At this moment Patrick entered. He sat down by his sister, much grieved at her altered appearance; the doctor had given no hopes of her recovery, and he had come from a long distance to see her before her death. “Maria,” said he, when they were alone, “what were you saying about cousin Catherine?” “Oh, Patrick, I was saying how I wish I could be as happy as she was! She did not confess to the priest, nor receive absolution. She used to say that was not necessary; but she had no fear because—”. “Because she believed in the Lord Jesus Christ,”

interrupted Patrick, "and therefore had no reason to fear. The Lord Himself spoke to her heart, Maria. He comforted her with the assurance of His love and the pardon of her sins; what need could there be for a priest to assure her of it?" Maria looked at her brother with astonishment. "Why, Patrick," she exclaimed, "are you also a heretic?" "Do not trouble about that, Maria; I do not deny the truth, on the contrary, I have read the word of God for myself, and find it so full of love to poor sinners that it has become more precious to me than anything else." "Have you a Bible then?" asked Maria. "Where did you get it? Did you ask the priest? Does he know?" "No, I assure you I did not ask him, but I met a Scripture reader

(as I think they call him), who told me that in England people are allowed to read their Bibles. I said, 'I am the Queen's good and loyal subject, why should not I have a Bible also?' The good man gave me one, and I have read it, and found in it how sins can be forgiven. I have found forgiveness, and am happy." "Oh, Patrick, why did you not come and tell me this before? Do tell me what it says in the Bible about purgatory." "I have looked from beginning to end, and there is not a word about it; the priest knows that, and therefore he forbids you to read the Scriptures. I assure you, my dear sister, there is but one thing necessary for you to be as happy as Catherine." "What is it, Patrick? I would give all the world to know how my sins can be forgiven." "Here



it is," and drawing from his pocket the precious little volume that had been the means of bringing salvation to his own soul, the young Irishman read: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii. 5. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 5. "The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin."

1 John i. 7. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Peter ii. 24.

"These words are very beautiful," said Maria; "but how am I to know that all this is for me?" "'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Acts xvi. 31. You do not think I would deceive you, Maria?" "Oh, no, Patrick; you have always been a good, kind brother to me!" "Then will you not have confidence in the Lord, who died for you? Listen to His words, addressed to all who, like you, feel the burden of sin, and their need of forgiveness: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Matt. xi. 28. 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' John vi. 37. Do you

suppose, Maria, that Christ has suffered half the punishment due to sin, and that the sinner has to endure the rest? This is the teaching of the priests, but not of the Word of God. When the woman who was a sinner came to Jesus (Luke vii.), He, knowing her tears and penitence to be the result of faith in Him, comforted her with the sweet assurance, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' Again, when the Saviour pardoned the dying thief, He said to him, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' No doubt the priest would have thought purgatory good enough for a robber, but the Lord treated him as a friend. The blood of Christ is the sinner's plea; those who rest in that blood are for ever secure, for 'there is therefore now no condemnation

to them which are in Christ.' Rom. viii. They become children of God, and heirs of everlasting life. St. Paul speaks of the departed as 'absent from the body, and . . . present with the Lord.' 2 Cor. v. 8. He desires to depart, and to be with Christ. To all who believe in Jesus death loses its terrors. Oh, my dear sister, look to Jesus, the Lamb of God, and when you leave this world you will go to be with Him, and sin and sorrow and pain will never again disturb you. It is written, 'The Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'" Rev. vii. 17.

The young man ceased speaking. Solemn indeed, but unspeakably

blessed, were those moments in that chamber, where a short time before the poor victim of ignorance and superstition lay in the grasp of the enemy who was ready to claim her, and make her his prey for ever. Blessed be God, He who is the resurrection and the life, who has the keys of hell and of death, had by His Spirit moved upon the troubled waters that threatened to overwhelm the soul of the dying girl. The darkness had given way, and a ray of the true light from above enabled her to behold by faith the Lamb of God who died for her salvation. The anxious, despairing look had passed away, and one of trust and joy lighted up the wan and death-like features. "Oh, Patrick," she exclaimed, "I know it all now! Catherine might well be

happy. I am happy now; Jesus has forgiven my sins; He has paid all. Mother need not work to save my soul; I am saved." And in this blessed assurance, after lingering a few days, she departed to be for ever with the Lord, leaving another testimony to the power of the Word, and to God's sovereign grace.



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