Little Saint Elizabeth and Other Stories

By

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She had not been brought up in America at all. She had been born in France, in a beautiful château, and she had been born heiress to a great fortune, but, nevertheless, just now she felt as if she was very poor, indeed. And yet her home was in one of the most splendid houses in New York. She had a lovely suite of apartments of her own, though she was only eleven years old. She had had her own carriage and a saddle horse, a train of masters, and governesses, and servants, and was regarded by all the children of the neighborhood as a sort of grand and mysterious little princess, whose incomings and outgoings were to be watched with the greatest interest.

"There she is," they would cry, flying to their windows to look at her. "She is going out in her carriage." "She is dressed all in black velvet and splendid fur." "That is her own, own, carriage." "She has millions of money; and she can have anything she wants--Jane says so!" "She is very pretty, too; but she is so pale and has such big, sorrowful, black eyes. I should not be sorrowful if I were in her place; but Jane says the servants say she is always quiet and looks sad." "Her maid says she lived with her aunt, and her aunt made her too religious."

She rarely lifted her large dark eyes to look at them with any curiosity. She was not accustomed to the society of children. She had never had a child companion in her life, and these little Americans, who were so very

rosy and gay, and who went out to walk or drive with groups of brothers and sisters, and even ran in the street, laughing and playing and squabbling healthily--these children amazed her.

Poor little Saint Elizabeth! She had not lived a very natural or healthy life herself, and she knew absolutely nothing of real childish pleasures. You see, it had occurred in this way: When she was a baby of two years her young father and mother died, within a week of each other, of a terrible fever, and the only near relatives the little one had were her Aunt Clotilde and Uncle Bertrand. Her Aunt Clotilde lived in Normandy--her Uncle Bertrand in New York. As these two were her only guardians, and as Bertrand de Rochemont was a gay bachelor, fond of pleasure and knowing nothing of babies, it was natural that he should be very willing that his elder sister should undertake the rearing and education of the child.

"Only," he wrote to Mademoiselle de Rochemont, "don't end by training her for an abbess, my dear Clotilde."

There was a very great difference between these two people--the distance between the gray stone château in Normandy and the brown stone mansion in New York was not nearly so great as the distance and difference between the two lives. And yet it was said that in her first youth Mademoiselle de Rochemont had been as gay and fond of pleasure as either of her brothers. And then, when her life was at its brightest and gayest--when she was a beautiful and brilliant young woman--she had had a

great and bitter sorrow, which had changed her for ever. From that time she had never left the house in which she had been born, and had lived the life of a nun in everything but being enclosed in convent walls. At first she had had her parents to take care of, but when they died she had been left entirely alone in the great château, and devoted herself to prayer and works of charity among the villagers and country people.

"Ah! she is good--she is a saint Mademoiselle," the poor people always said when speaking of her; but they also always looked a little awe-stricken when she appeared, and never were sorry when she left them.

She was a tall woman, with a pale, rigid, handsome face, which never smiled. She did nothing but good deeds, but however grateful her pensioners might be, nobody would ever have dared to dream of loving her. She was just and cold and severe. She wore always a straight black serge gown, broad bands of white linen, and a rosary and crucifix at her waist. She read nothing but religious works and legends of the saints and martyrs, and adjoining her private apartments was a little stone chapel, where the servants said she used to kneel on the cold floor before the altar and pray for hours in the middle of the night.

The little curé of the village, who was plump and comfortable, and who had the kindest heart and the most cheerful soul in the world, used to remonstrate with her, always in a roundabout way, however, never quite as if he were referring directly to herself.

"One must not let one's self become the stone image of goodness," he said once. "Since one is really of flesh and blood, and lives among flesh and blood, that is not best. No, no; it is not best."

But Mademoiselle de Rochemont never seemed exactly of flesh and blood--she was more like a marble female saint who had descended from her pedestal to walk upon the earth.

And she did not change, even when the baby Elizabeth was brought to her. She attended strictly to the child's comfort and prayed many prayers for her innocent soul, but it can be scarcely said that her manner was any softer or that she smiled more. At first Elizabeth used to scream at the sight of the black, nun-like dress and the rigid, handsome face, but in course of time she became accustomed to them, and, through living in an atmosphere so silent and without brightness, a few months changed her from a laughing, romping baby into a pale, quiet child, who rarely made any childish noise at all.

In this quiet way she became fond of her aunt. She saw little of anyone but the servants, who were all trained to quietness also. As soon as she was old enough her aunt began her religious training. Before she could speak plainly she heard legends of saints and stories of martyrs. She was taken into the little chapel and taught to pray there. She believed in miracles, and would not have been surprised at any moment if she had met the Child Jesus or the Virgin in the beautiful rambling gardens which surrounded the château. She was a sensitive, imaginative child, and the

sacred romances she heard filled all her mind and made up her little life. She wished to be a saint herself, and spent hours in wandering in the terraced rose gardens wondering if such a thing was possible in modern days, and what she must do to obtain such holy victory. Her chief sorrow was that she knew herself to be delicate and very timid--so timid that she often suffered when people did not suspect it--and she was afraid that she was not brave enough to be a martyr. Once, poor little one! when she was alone in her room, she held her hand over a burning wax candle, but the pain was so terrible that she could not keep it there. Indeed, she fell back white and faint, and sank upon her chair, breathless and in tears, because she felt sure that she could not chant holy songs if she were being burned at the stake. She had been vowed to the Virgin in her babyhood, and was always dressed in white and blue, but her little dress was a small conventual robe, straight and narrow cut, of white woollen stuff, and banded plainly with blue at the waist. She did not look like other children, but she was very sweet and gentle, and her pure little pale face and large, dark eyes had a lovely dreamy look. When she was old enough to visit the poor with her Aunt Clotilde--and she was hardly seven years old when it was considered proper that she should begin--the villagers did not stand in awe of her. They began to adore her, almost to worship her, as if she had, indeed, been a sacred child. The little ones delighted to look at her, to draw near her sometimes and touch her soft white and blue robe. And, when they did so, she always returned their looks with such a tender, sympathetic smile, and spoke to them in so gentle a voice, that they were in ecstasies. They used to talk her over, tell stories about her when they were playing together

afterwards.

"The little Mademoiselle," they said, "she is a child saint. I have heard them say so. Sometimes there is a little light round her head. One day her little white robe will begin to shine too, and her long sleeves will be wings, and she will spread them and ascend through the blue sky to Paradise. You will see if it is not so."

So, in this secluded world in the gray old château, with no companion but her aunt, with no occupation but her studies and her charities, with no thoughts but those of saints and religious exercises, Elizabeth lived until she was eleven years old. Then a great grief befell her. One morning, Mademoiselle de Rochemont did not leave her room at the regular hour. As she never broke a rule she had made for herself and her household, this occasioned great wonder. Her old maid servant waited half an hour--went to her door, and took the liberty of listening to hear if she was up and moving about her room. There was no sound. Old Alice returned, looking quite agitated. "Would Mademoiselle Elizabeth mind entering to see if all was well? Mademoiselle her aunt might be in the chapel."

Elizabeth went. Her aunt was not in her room. Then she must be in the chapel. The child entered the sacred little place. The morning sun was streaming in through the stained-glass windows above the altar--a broad ray of mingled brilliant colors slanted to the stone floor and warmly touched a dark figure lying there. It was Aunt Clotilde, who had sunk

forward while kneeling at prayer and had died in the night.

That was what the doctors said when they were sent for. She had been dead some hours--she had died of disease of the heart, and apparently without any pain or knowledge of the change coming to her. Her face was serene and beautiful, and the rigid look had melted away. Someone said she looked like little Mademoiselle Elizabeth; and her old servant Alice wept very much, and said, "Yes--yes--it was so when she was young, before her unhappiness came. She had the same beautiful little face, but she was more gay, more of the world. Yes, they were much alike then."

Less than two months from that time Elizabeth was living in the home of her Uncle Bertrand, in New York. He had come to Normandy for her himself, and taken her back with him across the Atlantic. She was richer than ever now, as a great deal of her Aunt Clotilde's money had been left to her, and Uncle Bertrand was her guardian. He was a handsome, elegant, clever man, who, having lived long in America and being fond of American life, did not appear very much like a Frenchman--at least he did not appear so to Elizabeth, who had only seen the curé and the doctor of the village. Secretly he was very much embarrassed at the prospect of taking care of a little girl, but family pride, and the fact that such a very little girl, who was also such a very great heiress, must be taken care of sustained him. But when he first saw Elizabeth he could not restrain an exclamation of consternation.

[Illustration: It was Aunt Clotilde, who had sunk forward while kneeling

at prayer.]

She entered the room, when she was sent for, clad in a strange little nun-like robe of black serge, made as like her-dead aunt's as possible. At her small waist were the rosary and crucifix, and in her hand she held a missal she had forgotten in her agitation to lay down--

"But, my dear child," exclaimed Uncle Bertrand, staring at her aghast.

He managed to recover himself very quickly, and was, in his way, very kind to her; but the first thing he did was to send to Paris for a fashionable maid and fashionable mourning.

"Because, as you will see," he remarked to Alice, "we cannot travel as we are. It is a costume for a convent or the stage."

Before she took off her little conventual robe, Elizabeth went to the village to visit all her poor. The curé went with her and shed tears himself when the people wept and kissed her little hand. When the child returned, she went into the chapel and remained there for a long time.

She felt as if she was living in a dream when all the old life was left behind and she found herself in the big luxurious house in the gay New York street. Nothing that could be done for her comfort had been left undone. She had several beautiful rooms, a wonderful governess, different masters to teach her, her own retinue of servants as, indeed, has been

already said.

But, secretly, she felt bewildered and almost terrified, everything was so new, so strange, so noisy, and so brilliant. The dress she wore made her feel unlike herself; the books they gave her were full of pictures and stories of worldly things of which she knew nothing. Her carriage was brought to the door and she went out with her governess, driving round and round the park with scores of other people who looked at her curiously, she did not know why. The truth was that her refined little face was very beautiful indeed, and her soft dark eyes still wore the dreamy spiritual look which made her unlike the rest of the world.

"She looks like a little princess," she heard her uncle say one day. "She will be some day a beautiful, an enchanting woman--her mother was so when she died at twenty, but she had been brought up differently. This one is a little devotee. I am afraid of her. Her governess tells me she rises in the night to pray." He said it with light laughter to some of his gay friends by whom he had wished the child to be seen. He did not know that his gayety filled her with fear and pain. She had been taught to believe gayety worldly and sinful, and his whole life was filled with it. He had brilliant parties--he did not go to church--he had no pensioners--he seemed to think of nothing but pleasure. Poor little Saint Elizabeth prayed for his soul many an hour when he was asleep after a grand dinner or supper party.

He could not possibly have dreamed that there was no one of whom she stood in such dread; her timidity increased tenfold in his presence. When he sent for her and she went into the library to find him luxurious in his arm chair, a novel on his knee, a cigar in his white hand, a tolerant, half cynical smile on his handsome mouth, she could scarcely answer his questions, and could never find courage to tell what she so earnestly desired. She had found out early that Aunt Clotilde and the curé and the life they had led, had only aroused in his mind a half-pitying amusement. It seemed to her that he did not understand and had strange sacrilegious thoughts about them--he did not believe in miracles--he smiled when she spoke of saints. How could she tell him that she wished to spend all her money in building churches and giving alms to the poor? That was what she wished to tell him--that she wanted money to send back to the village, that she wanted to give it to the poor people she saw in the streets, to those who lived in the miserable places.

But when she found herself face to face with him and he said some witty thing to her and seemed to find her only amusing, all her courage failed her. Sometimes she thought she would throw herself upon her knees before him and beg him to send her back to Normandy--to let her live alone in the château as her Aunt Clotilde had done.

One morning she arose very early, and knelt a long time before the little altar she had made for herself in her dressing room. It was only a table with some black velvet thrown over it, a crucifix, a saintly image, and

some flowers standing upon it. She had put on, when she got up, the quaint black serge robe, because she felt more at home in it, and her heart was full of determination. The night before she had received a letter from the curé and it had contained sad news. A fever had broken out in her beloved village, the vines had done badly, there was sickness among the cattle, there was already beginning to be suffering, and if something were not done for the people they would not know how to face the winter. In the time of Mademoiselle de Rochemont they had always been made comfortable and happy at Christmas. What was to be done? The curé ventured to write to Mademoiselle Elizabeth.

[Illustration: The villagers did not stand in awe of her.]

The poor child had scarcely slept at all. Her dear village! Her dear people! The children would be hungry; the cows would die; there would be no fires to warm those who were old.

"I must go to uncle," she said, pale and trembling. "I must ask him to give me money. I am afraid, but it is right to mortify the spirit. The martyrs went to the stake. The holy Saint Elizabeth was ready to endure anything that she might do her duty and help the poor."

Because she had been called Elizabeth she had thought and read a great deal of the saint whose namesake she was--the saintly Elizabeth whose husband was so wicked and cruel, and who wished to prevent her from doing

good deeds. And oftenest of all she had read the legend which told that one day as Elizabeth went out with a basket of food to give to the poor and hungry, she had met her savage husband, who had demanded that she should tell him what she was carrying, and when she replied "Roses," and he tore the cover from the basket to see if she spoke the truth, a miracle had been performed, and the basket was filled with roses, so that she had been saved from her husband's cruelty, and also from telling an untruth. To little Elizabeth this legend had been beautiful and quite real--it proved that if one were doing good, the saints would take care of one. Since she had been in her new home, she had, half consciously, compared her Uncle Bertrand with the wicked Landgrave, though she was too gentle and just to think he was really cruel, as Saint Elizabeth's husband had been, only he did not care for the poor, and loved only the world--and surely that was wicked. She had been taught that to care for the world at all was a fatal sin.

She did not eat any breakfast. She thought she would fast until she had done what she intended to do. It had been her Aunt Clotilde's habit to fast very often.

She waited anxiously to hear that her Uncle Bertrand had left his room. He always rose late, and this morning he was later than usual as he had had a long gay dinner party the night before.

It was nearly twelve before she heard his door open. Then she went

quickly to the staircase. Her heart was beating so fast that she put her little hand to her side and waited a moment to regain her breath. She felt quite cold.

"Perhaps I must wait until he has eaten his breakfast," she said. "Perhaps I must not disturb him yet. It would, make him displeased. I will wait--yes, for a little while."

She did not return to her room, but waited upon the stairs. It seemed to be a long time. It appeared that a friend breakfasted with him. She heard a gentleman come in and recognized his voice, which she had heard before. She did not know what the gentleman's name was, but she had met him going
in and out with her uncle once or twice, and had thought he had a kind face and kind eyes. He had looked at her in an interested way when he spoke to her--even as if he were a little curious, and she had wondered why he did so.

When the door of the breakfast room opened and shut as the servants went in, she could hear the two laughing and talking. They seemed to be enjoying themselves very much. Once she heard an order given for the mail phaeton. They were evidently going out as soon as the meal was over.

At last the door opened and they were coming out. Elizabeth ran down the stairs and stood in a small reception room. Her heart began to beat faster than ever.

"The blessed martyrs were not afraid," she whispered to herself.

"Uncle Bertrand!" she said, as he approached, and she scarcely knew her own faint voice. "Uncle Bertrand--"

He turned, and seeing her, started, and exclaimed, rather impatiently--evidently he was at once amazed and displeased to see her. He was in a hurry to get out, and the sight of her odd little figure, standing in its straight black robe between the portières, the slender hands clasped on the breast, the small pale face and great dark eyes uplifted, was certainly a surprise to him.

"Elizabeth!" he said, "what do you wish? Why do you come downstairs? And that impossible dress! Why do you wear it again? It is not suitable."

"Uncle Bertrand," said the child, clasping her hands still more tightly, her eyes growing larger in her excitement and terror under his displeasure, "it is that I want money--a great deal. I beg your pardon if I derange you. It is for the poor. Moreover, the curé has written the people of the village are ill--the vineyards did not yield well. They must have money. I must send them some."

Uncle Bertrand shrugged his shoulders.

"That is the message of monsieur le curé, is it?" he said. "He wants

money! My dear Elizabeth, I must inquire further. You have a fortune, but I cannot permit you to throw it away. You are a child, and do not understand--"

"But," cried Elizabeth, trembling with agitation, "they are so poor when one does not help them: their vineyards are so little, and if the year is bad they must starve. Aunt Clotilde gave to them every year--even in the good years. She said they must be cared for like children."

"That was your Aunt Clotilde's charity," replied her uncle. "Sometimes she was not so wise as she was devout. I must know more of this. I have no time at present, I am going out of town. In a few days I will reflect upon it. Tell your maid to give that hideous garment away. Go out to drive--amuse yourself--you are too pale."

Elizabeth looked at his handsome, careless face in utter helplessness. This was a matter of life and death to her; to him it meant nothing.

"But it is winter," she panted, breathlessly; "there is snow. Soon it will be Christmas, and they will have nothing--no candles for the church, no little manger for the holy child, nothing for the poorest ones. And the children--"

"It shall be thought of later," said Uncle Bertrand. "I am too busy now. Be reasonable, my child, and run away. You detain me."

He left her with a slight impatient shrug of his shoulders and the slight amused smile on his lips. She heard him speak to his friend.

"She was brought up by one who had renounced the world," he said, "and she has already renounced it herself--pauvre petite enfant! At eleven years she wishes to devote her fortune to the poor and herself to the Church."

Elizabeth sank back into the shadow of the portières. Great burning tears filled her eyes and slipped down her cheeks, falling upon her breast.

"He does not care," she said; "he does not know. And I do no one good--no one." And she covered her face with her hands and stood sobbing all alone.

When she returned to her room she was so pale that her maid looked at her anxiously, and spoke of it afterwards to the other servants. They were all fond of Mademoiselle Elizabeth. She was always kind and gentle to everybody.

Nearly all the day she sat, poor little saint! by her window looking out at the passers-by in the snowy street. But she scarcely saw the people at all, her thoughts were far away, in the little village where she had always spent her Christmas before. Her Aunt Clotilde had allowed her at such times to do so much. There had not been a house she had not carried

some gift to; not a child who had been forgotten. And the church on Christmas morning had been so beautiful with flowers from the hot-houses of the château. It was for the church, indeed, that the conservatories were chiefly kept up. Mademoiselle de Rochemont would scarcely have permitted herself such luxuries.

But there would not be flowers this year, the château was closed; there were no longer gardeners at work, the church would be bare and cold, the people would have no gifts, there would be no pleasure in the little peasants' faces. Little Saint Elizabeth wrung her slight hands together in her lap.

"Oh," she cried, "what can I do? And then there is the poor here--so many. And I do nothing. The Saints will be angry; they will not intercede for me. I shall be lost!"

It was not alone the poor she had left in her village who were a grief to her. As she drove through the streets she saw now and then haggard faces; and when she had questioned a servant who had one day come to her to ask for charity for a poor child at the door, she had found that in parts of this great, bright city which she had not seen, there was said to be cruel want and suffering, as in all great cities.

"And it is so cold now," she thought, "with the snow on the ground."

The lamps in the street were just beginning to be lighted when her Uncle

Bertrand returned. It appeared that he had brought back with him the gentleman with the kind face. They were to dine together, and Uncle Bertrand desired that Mademoiselle Elizabeth should join them. Evidently the journey out of town had been delayed for a day at least. There came also another message: Monsieur de Rochemont wished Mademoiselle to send to him by her maid a certain box of antique ornaments which had been given to her by her Aunt Clotilde. Elizabeth had known less of the value of these jewels than of their beauty. She knew they were beautiful, and that they had belonged to her Aunt Clotilde in the gay days of her triumphs as a beauty and a brilliant and adored young woman, but it seemed that they were also very curious, and Monsieur de Rochemont wished his friend to see them. When Elizabeth went downstairs she found them examining them together.

"They must be put somewhere for safe keeping," Uncle Bertrand was saying. "It should have been done before. I will attend to it."

The gentleman with the kind eyes looked at Elizabeth with an interested expression as she came into the room. Her slender little figure in its black velvet dress, her delicate little face with its large soft sad eyes, the gentle gravity of her manner made her seem quite unlike other children.

He did not seem simply to find her amusing, as her Uncle Bertrand did. She was always conscious that behind Uncle Bertrand's most serious

expression there was lurking a faint smile as he watched her, but this visitor looked at her in a different way. He was a doctor, she discovered. Dr. Norris, her uncle called him, and Elizabeth wondered if perhaps his profession had not made him quick of sight and kind.

She felt that it must be so when she heard him talk at dinner. She found that he did a great deal of work among the very poor---that he had a hospital, where he received little children who were ill--who had perhaps met with accidents, and could not be taken care of in their wretched homes. He spoke most frequently of terrible quarters, which he called Five Points; the greatest poverty and suffering was there. And he spoke of it with such eloquent sympathy, that even Uncle Bertrand began to listen with interest.

"Come," he said, "you are a rich, idle fellow; De Rochemont, and we want rich, idle fellows to come and look into all this and do something for us. You must let me take you with me some day."

"It would disturb me too much, my good Norris," said Uncle Bertrand, with a slight shudder. "I should not enjoy my dinner after it."

"Then go without your dinner," said Dr. Norris. "These people do. You have too many dinners. Give up one."

Uncle Bertrand shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"It is Elizabeth who fasts," he said. "Myself, I prefer to dine. And yet, some day, I may have the fancy to visit this place with you."

Elizabeth could scarcely have been said to dine this evening. She could not eat. She sat with her large, sad eyes fixed upon Dr. Norris' face as he talked. Every word he uttered sank deep into her heart The want and suffering of which he spoke were more terrible than anything she had ever heard of--it had been nothing like this in the village. Oh! no, no. As she thought of it there was such a look in her dark eyes as almost startled Dr. Norris several times when he glanced at her, but as he did not know the particulars of her life with her aunt and the strange training she had had, he could not possibly have guessed what was going on in her mind, and how much effect his stories were having. The beautiful little face touched him very much, and the pretty French accent with which the child spoke seemed very musical to him, and added a great charm to the gentle, serious answers she made to the remarks he addressed to her. He could not help seeing that something had made little Mademoiselle Elizabeth a pathetic and singular little creature, and he continually wondered what it was.

"Do you think she is a happy child?" he asked Monsieur de Rochemont when
they were alone together over their cigars and wine.

"Happy?" said Uncle Bertrand, with his light smile. "She has been taught, my friend, that to be happy upon earth is a crime. That was my good

sister's creed. One must devote one's self, not to happiness, but entirely to good works. I think I have told you that she, this little one, desires to give all her fortune to the poor. Having heard you this evening, she will wish to bestow it upon your Five Points."

When, having retired from the room with a grave and stately little obeisance to her uncle and his guest, Elizabeth had gone upstairs, it had not been with the intention of going to bed. She sent her maid away and knelt before her altar for a long time.

"The Saints will tell me what to do," she said. "The good Saints, who are always gracious, they will vouchsafe to me some thought which will instruct me if I remain long enough at prayer."

She remained in prayer a long time. When at last she arose from her knees it was long past midnight, and she was tired and weak, but the thought had not been given to her.

But just as she laid her head upon her pillow it came. The ornaments given to her by her Aunt Clotilde somebody would buy them. They were her own--it would be right to sell them--to what better use could they be put? Was it not what Aunt Clotilde would have desired? Had she not told her stories of the good and charitable who had sold the clothes from their bodies that the miserable might be helped? Yes, it was right. These things must be done. All else was vain and useless and of the world. But it would require courage--great courage. To go out alone to find a place

where the people would buy the jewels--perhaps there might be some who would not want them. And then when they were sold to find this poor and unhappy quarter of which her uncle's guest had spoken, and to give to those who needed--all by herself. Ah! what courage it would require. And then Uncle Bertrand, some day he would ask about the ornaments, and discover all, and his anger might be terrible. No one had ever been angry with her; how could she bear it. But had not the Saints and Martyrs borne everything? had they not gone to the stake and the rack with smiles? She thought of Saint Elizabeth and the cruel Landgrave. It could not be even so bad as that--but whatever the result was it must be borne.

So at last she slept, and there was upon her gentle little face so sweetly sad a look that when her maid came to waken her in the morning she stood by the bedside for some moments looking down upon her pityingly.

The day seemed very long and sorrowful to the poor child. It was full of anxious thoughts and plannings. She was so innocent and inexperienced, so ignorant of all practical things. She had decided that it would be best to wait until evening before going out, and then to take the jewels and try to sell them to some jeweller. She did not understand the difficulties that would lie in her way, but she felt very timid.

Her maid had asked permission to go out for the evening and Monsieur de Rochemont was to dine out, so that she found it possible to leave the house without attracting attention.

As soon as the streets were lighted she took the case of ornaments, and going downstairs very quietly, let herself out. The servants were dining, and she was seen by none of them.

When she found herself in the snowy street she felt strangely bewildered. She had never been out unattended before, and she knew nothing of the great busy city. When she turned into the more crowded thoroughfares, she saw several times that the passers-by glanced at her curiously. Her timid look, her foreign air and richly furred dress, and the fact that she was a child and alone at such an hour, could not fail to attract attention; but though she felt confused and troubled she went bravely on. It was some time before she found a jeweller's shop, and when she entered it the men behind the counter looked at her in amazement. But she went to the one nearest to her and laid the case of jewels on the counter before him.

"I wish," she said, in her soft low voice, and with the pretty accent, "I wish that you should buy these."

The man stared at her, and at the ornaments, and then at her again.

"I beg pardon, miss," he said.

Elizabeth repeated her request.

"I will speak to Mr. Moetyler," he said, after a moment of hesitation.

He went to the other end of the shop to an elderly man who sat behind a desk. After he had spoken a few words, the elderly man looked up as if surprised; then he glanced at Elizabeth; then, after speaking a few more words, he came forward.

"You wish to sell these?" he said, looking at the case of jewels with a puzzled expression.

"Yes," Elizabeth answered.

He bent over the case and took up one ornament after the other and examined them closely. After he had done this he looked at the little girl's innocent, trustful face, seeming more puzzled than before.

"Are they your own?" he inquired.

"Yes, they are mine," she replied, timidly.

"Do you know how much they are worth?"

"I know that they are worth much money," said Elizabeth. "I have heard it said so."

"Do your friends know that you are going to sell them?"

"No," Elizabeth said, a faint color rising in her delicate face. "But it is right that I should do it."

The man spent a few moments in examining them again and, having done so, spoke hesitatingly.

"I am afraid we cannot buy them," he said. "It would be impossible, unless your friends first gave their permission."

"Impossible!" said Elizabeth, and tears rose in her eyes, making them look softer and more wistful than ever.

"We could not do it," said the jeweller. "It is out of the question under the circumstances."

"Do you think," faltered the poor little saint, "do you think that nobody will buy them?"

"I am afraid not," was the reply. "No respectable firm who would pay their real value. If you take my advice, young lady, you will take them home and consult your friends."

He spoke kindly, but Elizabeth was overwhelmed with disappointment. She did not know enough of the world to understand that a richly dressed

little girl who offered valuable jewels for sale at night must be a strange and unusual sight.

When she found herself on the street again, her long lashes were heavy with tears.

"If no one will buy them," she said, "what shall I do?"

She walked a long way--so long that she was very tired--and offered them at several places, but as she chanced to enter only respectable shops, the same thing happened each time. She was looked at curiously and questioned, but no one would buy.

"They are mine," she would say. "It is right that I should sell them." But everyone stared and seemed puzzled, and in the end refused.

At last, after much wandering, she found herself in a poorer quarter of the city; the streets were narrower and dirtier, and the people began to look squalid and wretchedly dressed; there were smaller shops and dingy houses. She saw unkempt men and women and uncared for little children. The poverty of the poor she had seen in her own village seemed comfort and luxury by contrast. She had never dreamed of anything like this. Now and then she felt faint with pain and horror. But she went on.

"They have no vineyards," she said to herself. "No trees and flowers--it is all dreadful--there is nothing. They need help more than

the others. To let them suffer so, and not to give them charity, would be a great crime."

She was so full of grief and excitement that she had ceased to notice how everyone looked at her--she saw only the wretchedness, and dirt and misery. She did not know, poor child! that she was surrounded by danger--that she was not only in the midst of misery, but of dishonesty and crime. She had even forgotten her timidity--that it was growing late, and that she was far from home, and would not know how to return--she did not realize that she had walked so far that she was almost exhausted with fatigue.

She had brought with her all the money she possessed. If she could not sell the jewels she could, at least, give something to someone in want. But she did not know to whom she must give first. When she had lived with her Aunt Clotilde it had been their habit to visit the peasants in their houses. Must she enter one of these houses--these dreadful places with the dark passages, from which she heard many times riotous voices, and even cries, issuing?

"But those who do good must feel no fear," she thought. "It is only to have courage." At length something happened which caused her to pause before one of those places. She heard sounds of pitiful moans and sobbing from something crouched upon the broken steps. It seemed like a heap of rags, but as she drew near she saw by the light of the street lamp opposite that it was a woman with her head in her knees, and a wretched

child on each side of her. The children were shivering with cold and making low cries as if they were frightened.

Elizabeth stopped and then ascended the steps.

"Why is it that you cry?" she asked gently. "Tell me."

The woman did not answer at first, but when Elizabeth spoke again she lifted her head, and as soon as she saw the slender figure in its velvet and furs, and the pale, refined little face, she gave a great start.

"Lord have mercy on yez!" she said in a hoarse voice which sounded almost terrified. "Who are yez, an' what bees ye dow' in a place the loike o' this?"

"I came," said Elizabeth, "to see those who are poor. I wish to help them. I have great sorrow for them. It is right that the rich should help those who want. Tell me why you cry, and why your little children sit in the cold." Everybody had shown surprise to whom Elizabeth had spoken to-night, but no one had stared as this woman did.

"It's no place for the loike o' yez," she said. "An' it black noight, an' men and women wild in the drink; an' Pat Harrigan insoide bloind an' mad in liquor, an' it's turned me an' the children out he has to shlape in the snow--an' not the furst toime either. An' it's starvin' we are--starvin' an' no other," and she dropped her wretched head on her

knees and began to moan again, and the children joined her.

"Don't let yez daddy hear yez," she said to them. "Whisht now--it's come out an' kill yez he will."

Elizabeth began to feel tremulous and faint.

"Is it that they have hunger?" she asked.

"Not a bite or sup have they had this day, nor yesterday," was the answer, "The good Saints have pity on us."

"Yes," said Elizabeth, "the good Saints have always pity. I will go and get some food--poor little ones."

She had seen a shop only a few yards away--she remembered passing it. Before the woman could speak again she was gone.

"Yes," she said, "I was sent to them--it is the answer to my prayer--it was not in vain that I asked so long."

When she entered the shop the few people who were in it stopped what they were doing to stare at her as others had done--but she scarcely saw that it was so.

"Give to me a basket," she said to the owner of the place. "Put in it

some bread and wine--some of the things which are ready to eat. It is for a poor woman and her little ones who starve."

There was in the shop among others a red-faced woman with a cunning look in her eyes. She sidled out of the place and was waiting for Elizabeth when she came out.

"I'm starvin' too, little lady," she said. "There's many of us that way, an' it's not often them with money care about it. Give me something too," in a wheedling voice.

Elizabeth looked up at her, her pure ignorant eyes full of pity.

"I have great sorrows for you," she said. "Perhaps the poor woman will share her food with you."

"It's the money I need," said the woman.

"I have none left," answered Elizabeth. "I will come again."

"It's now I want it," the woman persisted. Then she looked covetously at Elizabeth's velvet fur-lined and trimmed cloak. "That's a pretty cloak you've on," she said. "You've got another, I daresay."

Suddenly she gave the cloak a pull, but the fastening did not give way as she had thought it would.

"Is it because you are cold that you want it?" said Elizabeth, in her gentle, innocent way, "I will give it to you. Take it."

Had not the holy ones in the legends given their garments to the poor? Why should she not give her cloak?

In an instant it was unclasped and snatched away, and the woman was gone.

She did not even stay long enough to give thanks for the gift, and something in her haste and roughness made Elizabeth wonder and gave her a moment of tremor.

She made her way back to the place where the other woman and her children had been sitting; the cold wind made her shiver, and the basket was very heavy for her slender arm. Her strength seemed to be giving way.

As she turned the corner, a great, fierce gust of wind swept round it, and caught her breath and made her stagger. She thought she was going to fall; indeed, she would have fallen but that one of the tall men who were passing put out his arm and caught her. He was a well dressed man, in a heavy overcoat; he had gloves on. Elizabeth spoke in a faint tone. "I thank you," she began, when the second man uttered a wild exclamation and sprang forward.

"Elizabeth!" he said, "Elizabeth!"

Elizabeth looked up and uttered a cry herself. It was her Uncle Bertrand who stood before her, and his companion, who had saved her from falling, was Dr. Norris.

For a moment it seemed as if they were almost struck dumb with horror; and then her Uncle Bertrand seized her by the arm in such agitation that he scarcely seemed himself--not the light, satirical, jesting Uncle Bertrand she had known at all.

"What does it mean?" he cried. "What are you doing here, in this horrible place alone? Do you know where it is you have come? What have you in your basket? Explain! explain!"

The moment of trial had come, and it seemed even more terrible than the poor child had imagined. The long strain and exertion had been too much for her delicate body. She felt that she could bear no more; the cold seemed to have struck to her very heart. She looked up at Monsieur de Rochemont's pale, excited face, and trembled from head to foot. A strange thought flashed into her mind. Saint Elizabeth, of Thuringia--the cruel Landgrave. Perhaps the Saints would help her, too, since she was trying to do their bidding. Surely, surely it must be so!

"Speak!" repeated Monsieur de Rochemont. "Why is this? The basket--what

have you in it?"

"Roses," said Elizabeth, "Roses." And then her strength deserted her--she fell upon her knees in the snow--the basket slipped from her arm, and the first thing which fell from it was--no, not roses,--there had been no miracle wrought--not roses, but the case of jewels which she had laid on the top of the other things that it might be the more easily carried.

"Roses!" cried Uncle Bertrand. "Is it that the child is mad? They are the jewels of my sister Clotilde."

Elizabeth clasped her hands and leaned towards Dr. Norris, the tears streaming from her uplifted eyes.

"Ah! monsieur," she sobbed, "you will understand. It was for the poor--they suffer so much. If we do not help them our souls will be lost. I did not mean to speak falsely. I thought the Saints--the Saints---" But her sobs filled her throat, and she could not finish. Dr. Norris stopped, and took her in his strong arms as if she had been a baby.

"Quick!" he said, imperatively; "we must return to the carriage, De Rochemont. This is a serious matter."

Elizabeth clung to him with trembling hands.

"But the poor woman who starves?" she cried. "The little children--they

sit up on the step quite near--the food was for them! I pray you give it to them."

"Yes, they shall have it," said the Doctor. "Take the basket, De Rochemont--only a few doors below." And it appeared that there was something in his voice which seemed to render obedience necessary, for Monsieur de Rochemont actually did as he was told.

For a moment Dr. Norris put Elizabeth on her feet again, but it was only while he removed his overcoat and wrapped it about her slight shivering body.

"You are chilled through, poor child," he said; "and you are not strong enough to walk just now. You must let me carry you."

It was true that a sudden faintness had come upon her, and she could not restrain the shudder which shook her. It still shook her when she was placed in the carriage which the two gentlemen had thought it wiser to leave in one of the more respectable streets when they went to explore the worse ones together.

"What might not have occurred if we had not arrived at that instant!" said Uncle Bertrand when he got into the carriage. "As it is who knows what illness--"

"It will be better to say as little as possible now," said Dr. Norris.

"It was for the poor," said Elizabeth, trembling. "I had prayed to the Saints to tell me what was best I thought I must go. I did not mean to do wrong. It was for the poor."

And while her Uncle Bertrand regarded her with a strangely agitated look, and Dr. Norris held her hand between his strong and warm ones, the tears rolled down her pure, pale little face.

She did not know until some time after what danger she had been in, that the part of the city into which she had wandered was the lowest and worst, and was in some quarters the home of thieves and criminals of every class. As her Uncle Bertrand had said, it was impossible to say what terrible thing might have happened if they had not met her so soon. It was Dr. Norris who explained it all to her as gently and kindly as was possible. She had always been fragile, and she had caught a severe cold which caused her an illness of some weeks. It was Dr. Norris who took care of her, and it was not long before her timidity was forgotten in her tender and trusting affection for him. She learned to watch for his coming, and to feel that she was no longer lonely. It was through him that her uncle permitted her to send to the curé a sum of money large enough to do all that was necessary. It was through him that the poor woman and her children were clothed and fed and protected. When she was well enough, he had promised that she should help him among his own poor.

And through him--though she lost none of her sweet sympathy for those

who suffered--she learned to live a more natural and child-like life, and to find that there were innocent, natural pleasures to be enjoyed in the world. In time she even ceased to be afraid of her Uncle Bertrand, and to be quite happy in the great beautiful house. And as for Uncle Bertrand himself, he became very fond of her, and sometimes even helped her to dispense her charities. He had a light, gay nature, but he was kind at heart, and always disliked to see or think of suffering. Now and then he would give more lavishly than wisely, and then he would say, with his habitual graceful shrug of the shoulders--"Yes, it appears I am not discreet. Finally, I think I must leave my charities to you, my good Norris--to you and Little Saint Elizabeth."

THE STORY OF PRINCE FAIRYFOOT

PREFATORY NOTE

"THE STORY OF PRINCE FAIRYFOOT" was originally intended to be the first of a series, under the general title of "Stories from the Lost