

STORIES OF



BLESSED JULIE

BY

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WHAT A SIMILE CAN DO.

In the sunny part of France where, long ago, English soldiers fought and won great battles, there lived in a small cottage a little girl called Julie. She loved Jesus with all her heart, and Jesus loved her, and helped her to become a great Saint.

Before she was seven years old, Julie knew all her Catechism, and when school was over she used to say the rosary with the village children, or tell them about Our Lord and His Holy Mother. "I want lots of little souls," she used to say, "to teach them how to love and serve God." One little boy stood at the gate and would not listen to Julie's lessons, but in the end her bright smile won his heart. After that she often helped him, and when he was grown up and had money of his own, he wrote to thank Julie. "I owe all my success to you," he said in his letter.

IN THE CORNFIELDS.

During the long summer days when the fields of wheat were golden in the sunshine, Julie used to earn a little money by going to help the reapers. She bound the wheat into sheaves, which the men set up in the sun to dry. At mid-day they all sat down together under the shade of a big tree to have their dinner.

Julie was now nearly grown up, and while the reapers rested, she told them about Our Lord, or joined them in singing hymns. One day she took up a stalk of wheat. "Look !" she said, "it is of wheat like this that the bread is made for the white hosts that are consecrated at Mass. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament comes to us in Holy Communion to be the Food of our souls, and in the Sacred Host He stays with us day and night in every Catholic Church. Let us often visit Him and tell Him all that makes us glad or sorry."

RIDING TO TOWN.

Julie's father used one room of his cottage as a draper's shop. Times were bad, and people were too poor to buy his cloth, so that the family had to do without many things that they had had before. Julie made up her mind to help. A kind farmer lent her a horse. On its back she packed big rolls of cloth, and then rode off to the nearest town. She was not sure of the way but read the sign-posts as she went along. About mid-day she came to the town, and rode slowly through the streets, looking for a shop where she could sell her goods. When, at last, she went into one and showed her rolls of stuff, the kind shop-man bought all she had with her. It was a very happy Julie who rode home to give the money to her father. After this she often sold his cloth, now in one town, now in another.

A FRIGHT AND ITS RESULT.

In the winter-time when it grew dark early, Julie's father often read aloud to her, while she used to sew or wind her wool. One evening all was quiet and peaceful, even Julie's cat was asleep before the fire. Suddenly the crack of a pistol was heard, and the crash of broken glass. Some one had tried to shoot Julie's father, and though he was not hurt, she was so startled and frightened that it made her very ill. For eight years she had sharp pains in her legs, and at last could only walk on crutches. Yet she always had a bright smile, and still did all she could to help others not only at home, but also in the village, where she often sat up all night nursing the sick. She began each day by going to Mass and receiving Holy Communion. She spent a long time in Church, and always went there for Night Prayers. The people sang a hymn every evening before going home to bed.

TAUGHT BY GOD.

The priest who had given Jesus to Julie for the first time was very pleased to see her growing up so good and holy, and he told the bishop about her. This made the bishop want to see Julie, and she was taken in a carriage to his house. Two or three priests were in the room, and one of them wrote down what Julie said when the Bishop asked her all sorts of questions. She was not puzzled by even the hardest things the bishop asked, and when she had gone away, he turned to the priests and said : " That crippled girl seems to have learnt from God Himself. I think she will do great things later on." Yet when Julie was about thirty she was again very ill, and for twenty-three years she could not walk at all, and had to lie down all day.

BURIED IN HAY.

About the year 1794 those who ruled in France put in prison as many priests as they could find, or sent them out of the country. Thus it came about that in Julie's village there was no one to say Mass or instruct the people. Julie, who was called the '*Saint of the Village*' did it instead. This made some of the men very angry, and they tried to get rid of her.

One night a band of rough men came to the house where she lived, and went into every room looking for her. Happily they did not find her, for friends carried her out in the dark, and laid her in a cart standing near, half full of hay. Julie's niece helped to cover her all over with fresh hay, then climbed into the cart herself. The farmer drove off quickly to the nearest town, where a kind lady sheltered Julie and her niece until their hiding-place became known. Then they often had to go from one place to another, until the times became peaceful once again.

A WONDERFUL SURPRISE.

When the priests were able to go back to France, Julie, who was still a cripple, with two friends Frances and Catherine, became the first *Sisters of Notre Dame*, and opened a small school. A holy priest asked Julie to join in a novena to the Sacred Heart, but did not tell her that it was to obtain her cure. On the fifth day, he came to her in the garden, and said: "In honour of the Sacred Heart, take one step." Julie did so, though it was many years since she had been able to stand. "Take another step." Julie obeyed. "Now a third." Julie did as she was told. God had cured her. Yet she did not tell the Sisters at once. The next morning she wheeled herself to the altar-rails as usual. After Mass she let everyone go to breakfast, then walked downstairs. The children saw her first and clapped their hands. In a few minutes all were back in chapel, thanking God for this wonderful favour.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE.

Julie was so pleasing to God, that He sometimes showed her what was going to happen in the future. Before her cure, she was once quietly thinking about Jesus, when He showed Himself to her as He was when hanging on the Cross. Round the foot of the Cross she saw nuns in a dress she had not seen before, and heard a voice saying: "These are the daughters whom I will give you." Long years afterwards Julie recognised in some of those who came to be Sisters of Notre Dame the faces she had seen in that vision.

On Candlemas Day 1806, Julie had another vision of Jesus on the Cross, and saw her Sisters teaching children of many different races white, yellow, and black: in Europe, America, Asia, Africa and the Islands in the Pacific Ocean. The Banner at which Julie is working is still kept by the Sisters in Namur.

"THIS IS NOT THE PLACE FOR YOU."

After Julie and the Sisters had been teaching for about five years, they had to leave France and go to Belgium. The journey, which took up a whole week, was made in a covered cart, and before starting they asked the angels to keep them safe from harm.

It was January and the roads were slippery with snow and ice. One evening the coachman stopped before a lonely inn. Julie felt that all was not well, and as she walked up and down the road praying, she suddenly saw a young man who said: "This is not the place for you! Go further on. Flee from this house." He then disappeared. At that moment two of the Sisters ran up saying: "We have just seen a kind old woman, who said 'Sisters, this is not the place for you. Go further on.' We wanted to bring her to you but she disappeared."

These warnings were from God's angels, and in a very few minutes, Julie and the Sisters were in their cart again, driving away to another inn as fast as the horses could go.

"LITTLE SERVANTS OF THE LORD."

When Julie went away she left several Sisters behind in France. It happened that she had to go back there two or three times. One day turning a street corner she met three Sisters who were delighted to see her, and asked to go with her to Belgium. Julie was quite willing to take them, and set off on the return journey as soon as she could. Just as they were leaving the town they met a mad dog, which had already bitten several people. The Sisters were terrified, but Julie said: "Do not be afraid, God is with us." She let the dog come quite close, then spoke to it gently and kindly. "Let us pass, my friend," she said: "We are the little servants of the Lord, and are going to do His work." At once the dog became quiet and let the Sisters pass. Afterwards, when they were out of its way, it became as mad and dangerous as before. The Sisters all thanked God for keeping them safe.

"MY EYES ARE SO BAD."

After Julie and all the Sisters of Notre Dame had left France, Julie made the Convent in Namur the Mother-House, and lived there during her last years on earth. Once she walked to a small town about twelve miles away, where a lady wanted her to open a school. It happened that the lady was out, and Julie sat down to wait for her. Meanwhile two little girls came up to the house to ask for a remedy because one of them had something the matter with her eyes. The servants told the children to go away, as the lady was not there, and as they passed Julie she called them to her. "What is the matter, dear child?" she asked.

"My eyes are so bad," replied the little girl. "Come, it is nothing at all," said Julie, "let us kneel down and say a prayer together." Then she made the Sign of the Cross with her thumb on the sore eyes, and the child stood up quite cured. How pleased she was! After thanking Mere Julie, she ran home full of joy to tell her mother.

POTATOES AND PAVING-STONES.

In the beginning all the Convents of Notre Dame were very poor. At Ghent the Sisters sometimes had barely enough to eat, so one Spring they pulled up all the stones which paved their court-yard, and planted potatoes. Julie knew nothing of this, and the next time she came, she was surprised to see the stones gone and green leaves in their place. "I know you are poor," she said to the Sister Superior, "but do you no longer trust the good God? Come, we must undo all this. Give the children an extra hour of play and let them jump and run on this potato-field of yours; the Sisters can then put back the paving-stones." It was no sooner said than done. Nimble little feet trampled down the green shoots, the stones were put back and the potatoes forgotten. Late that Autumn a Sister noticed green leaves struggling up between the stones. She lifted up some of the stones, and found large potatoes beneath them. Julie was asked what was to be done. "Let them be used," she said, and enough potatoes were taken up to last the Sisters through the whole winter.

A LITTLE GIRL GOES FISHING.

A little girl in the Sisters' school in Namur tells about herself.

"One day Mere Julie came into our class and found me kneeling in the middle of the room. She asked what I had done, and the Sister said: 'This little girl came late for Catechism, because she went to fish in the river.' Mere Julie asked me if this was true. I told a lie, and said 'No.' Then she spoke to me very kindly, and I cried so much I had to take out my handkerchief. In pulling it out of my pocket, two or three little fish I had caught fell on the floor. I was so ashamed I cried still more. Mere Julie, seeing I was sorry, made me promise never to tell a lie again. Then she told me to ask pardon of my mistress, and promise her that I would try to be good. After that she consoled me, and asked the Sister not to punish me any more. I never forgot how kind Mere Julie was to me that day."

IN TIME OF WAR.

During the last few years of Julie's life, France was at war, and many battles were fought in Belgium, a large part of which then belonged to France. Several Convents of Notre Dame near the battle-fields were broken into by soldiers, but none of the Sisters were hurt.

At Namur Julie placed the Convent under the care of Mary Immaculate, and gathered Sisters and children in the Chapel five times a day to pray for peace. Hundreds of soldiers tramped through the town, and it was difficult to get enough food. At last a Sister came to tell Julie that there was nothing left. "Go back again to the larder, Sister," she said, "the good God will make you find what we need." The Sister obeyed and found just enough food for the day. Sometimes Julie went to visit the wounded soldiers in the hospitals of the town. Some of the children used to go with her to carry hot coffee and other little things which she gave to the poor men. When she had made friends with them in this way, she talked to them of God, and helped them to be good and patient.

GOD BLESS THE POPE.

One of Julie's journeys to France brought her a great joy. "I have to go to Paris," she wrote to Namur, "and please God, I shall obtain the blessing of the Holy Father for all my good Sisters." The Pope, Pius the Seventh, had been taken away from Rome by French soldiers, and was a prisoner in what had once been the palace of the French King.

Julie had one Sister with her, and they took it in turns to ride on the donkey which carried their food and clothes. On arriving at the palace, Julie left the Sister to take care of the donkey, and went to see the Pope. He received her very kindly, and after they had talked together for a long time, the Holy Father blessed Julie, and gave her a small crucifix, still treasured by the Sisters. When she left the Pope, Julie had tears in her eyes, and all the way home she kept silence. When she reached the Convent again all she said was: "I have seen the Holy Father; we have wept together over the troubles of the Church." All Blessed Julie's children like to pray, as she did, for our Holy Father the Pope.