

# A Dying Man Administered by a Dead Priest

By A. Le Braz

Lomm Greun was a day labourer at a farm at Kerniz. At that time even rich people had no clocks, much less poor people. Lomm Greun was accustomed to look at the sky to know if it was time for him to go to his work. Directly he saw the dawn he got up and dressed and set out.

One night on awaking he thought it was daybreak, and sprang at once from his bed.

It was wintertime. Lomm started off, half asleep. As he came into the high road he met a Priest carrying the Host, accompanied by a serving boy ringing a bell.

The Priest, as he passed Lomm, said to him, "Follow me."

It is not possible to refuse to obey a Priest who bears the Body of our Lord. Lomm followed, bareheaded, repeating prayers for the person about to receive the Last Sacraments.

The Priest and the boy took a field-path.

"So," thought Lomm, "it seems the sick person is at Trégloz. Perhaps it is old Guilcher."

It was as he supposed in the parish of Trégloz, and it was old Guilcher. He lay stretched on his bed and about to die. Two men were apparently in attendance on him, but they were both fast asleep on their seats. They did not once open their eyes while the Priest administered the last Sacraments to the dying man. Lomm, who was kneeling on the threshold, could not help being disedified thereby.

The Priest, having ended his duties, made the sign of the Cross, and said, addressing old Guilcher: "My good man, I have long owed you the Sacraments. I have now given them to you. I have acquitted my debt."

Lomm Greun never understood the meaning of that speech.

The Priest then went out of the house.

"Go now to your work," he said to the labourer; "you will be early."

When Lomm reached Kerniz he found no one up but the maid-of-all-work.

"You are early," she said; "the family is not up yet; I am just lighting a fire for the soup."

"So much the better," answered Lomm; "at anyrate I shall not be accused of idleness."

And while the soup was being prepared he went to clean out the horses' manger. When he returned to the house he heard one of the young men at the table asking, "Have you heard the news? Old Guilcher has died without the Sacraments."

"That is not true," exclaimed Lomm. "If old Guilcher be dead, he died as a Christian should. I myself attended the Priest who administered Extreme Unction to him, and I saw him receive the Viaticum." And Lomm related his adventure.

"Faith," replied the labourer who had spoken, "I met but just now one of the men who were sitting up with Guilcher. It was from him that I heard the story. There were two of them, and they were both so sleepy that they did not know at what hour the old man passed. It was Yves Ménèz that I met. He was on his way to the town to fetch the Silver Cross, and was very much afraid of the reception he might meet with from the Rector."

"Well, I had better make a clean breast of it," murmured Lomm Greun. "I shall be off to the Presbytery."

And to the Presbytery he went.

When he had related his story the Rector said to him: "Of one thing I can assure you, that the priest you followed does not belong to this world. The carelessness of the two watchers might have cost old Guilcher his soul. But God has infinite resources for salvation. Lomm Greun returned to his work, but from that day forward he was always absorbed in thought and remarkably grave, not to say sad.

In the spring he died.

*(Related by Fantic Omnès. Bégard, 1888.)*