

THE CASE OF PIERCE CONNELLY

*From a study relating to his psychological development and affective disorders, prepared by the psychologist Georges Cruchon, S.J., of the Gregorian University in Rome. Abridged English version by Mary Etheldreda Wilcox and Ursula Blake, SHCJ.*

Dearest mother of all the sins of my most sinful life  
few lay heavier than those I have committed as a Son,  
& mother how much have I bitterly to remember--how  
much have you to forgive me for yourself & for my dear,  
dear father? O mother how I do wish you could forget  
all I have been since I was a child.

(From a letter of Pierce Connelly written two weeks  
after his reception into the Catholic Church, Rome,  
15th April, 1836 [D3:927])

In the following study, use has been made of some of the decrees of Vatican II and of postconciliar documents. Psychologists and psychiatrists who are specialists in the matter of affective maturity have been consulted. Various papers of Pierce Connelly's family have also been used, in particular, one written by Colonel John C. Groome, the grandson of Pierce's brother Henry.<sup>1</sup>

I

The Church in conciliar and postconciliar documents has underlined the necessity of an affective or emotional maturity for priests and for candidates to the priesthood. Optatum Totius 11 asks for "wisely planned training" to develop "in seminarians a due degree of human maturity, attested to chiefly by a certain emotional stability, by an ability to make considered decisions, and by a right manner of

<sup>1</sup> The Groome Family and Connections: A Pedigree. Compiled by Henry Connelly Groome. Philadelphia, 1907. Archives Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Extracts are taken from the section by Colonel Groome entitled "His Maternal Ancestry."

passing judgment on events and people."<sup>2</sup> With religious men and women in view the document Perfectae Caritatis 12 insists that "candidates should not undertake the profession of chastity nor be admitted to its profession except after a truly adequate testing period and only if they have the needed degree of psychological and emotional maturity."<sup>3</sup>

More recently, in a 1974 document issued by the S. Congregation for Catholic Education and entitled, A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy, there occurs this statement:

The specific matter of priestly celibacy is associated with the basic problem of the emotional maturity of the candidate. It is part of the wider and essential problem of psychological and moral maturity as shown by a mature personality. It is a harmony and an integration of tendencies and values. . . . As modern psychologists correctly observe, maturity is not one single quality. . . . In general, however, one can judge as mature one who has brought to reality his vocation as a man; in other words, a person who has acquired a ready and habitual capacity to act freely.<sup>4</sup>

The text further specifies:

Deeply connected with the emotional factor is the problem of adaptation, which consists in facing one's problems calmly, in accepting responsibility for them and working out solutions for the difficulties encountered. Inability to adapt, on the other hand, carries with it a domination of negative emotions, hostility factors note well this word, dependence, social inadequacy and at the same time, the pressure of unresolved problems.<sup>5</sup>

In Pattern and Growth in Personality Gordon Allport states that the mature adult is characterized by his emotional stability:

We readily note the difference between the person who has emotional poise and one who is emotionally clamorous

<sup>2</sup> Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., Documents of Vatican II (New York: America Press, 1966), p. 448.

<sup>3</sup> Abbott, p. 475.

<sup>4</sup> (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, April, 1974), p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

and who gives way to outbursts of anger and passion--including over-indulgence in alcohol and obsessive outbursts of profanity and obscenity. The egoist, the roué, the infantile person have not passed successfully through the normal stages of development. They are still preoccupied with bits and pieces of emotional experience.<sup>6</sup>

Here we should note the reference made by Allport to Freud's and Erikson's theories that difficulties met in childhood leave deep scars on the unconscious.

Allport goes on:

Especially important is the quality called "frustration tolerance." Irritations and thwartings occur daily. The immature adult, like the child, meets them with tantrums of temper, or with complaining, blaming others, and self-pity. . . . It is definitely not true that the mature person is always calm and serene, nor is he always cheerful. His moods come and go; he may even be temperamentally pessimistic and depressed. But he has learned to live with his emotional states in such a way that they do not betray him into impulsive acts nor interfere with the well-being of others.<sup>7</sup>

Although we often find skilful people who are immature, we never find mature people without problem-pointed skills.<sup>8</sup>

Treating the subject from the psychiatrist's point of view, one must note the relation of anxiety to neurosis.

Anxiety (l'angoisse) is an intense emotional distress, set up when a person feels that his security is threatened. The threat may be exterior, as in the case of fear. But it can also be interior when the scale of values built up by the type of person--referred to above by Allport--finds itself threatened.

Anxiety amounting to neurosis must be distinguished from normal anxiety. The former is characterized by an excessive reaction on the part of the subject to the problem in question. Indeed,

<sup>6</sup> (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), p. 287.

<sup>7</sup> Allport, p. 288.

<sup>8</sup> Allport, pp. 289-290.

the subject finds himself in a state of alarm; a red light, a danger signal has appeared at the level of the subconscious or the unconscious.

Whenever he feels threatened and incapable of coping with trials, the child or adolescent invents a variety of defense mechanisms: untruthful denials to himself or to others; false excuses and rationalization; flight into imaginary situations far from the real world; exaggerated search for success and adulation.<sup>9</sup>

But according to his temperament, to the experience he has acquired, and to his capacity, the child (or the adult, later on), may very well react with hostility, rage, violence and resentment. Remember that in a neurotic individual these impulses are out of all proportion to the apparent cause. In one sense such outbursts bring more relief from tension than do impulses which are repressed. These latter in weaker temperaments sometimes turn into psychosomatic troubles, into hysteria, or even into phobic derangement.

In an immature adult frustrations in love and esteem are the most likely to cause hostility. This is the thesis proposed by Dollard in Frustrations and Aggression.<sup>10</sup> A frustrated person feels that the self-image that he has built up to respond to the demands of the real world has been deeply wounded. In any case the immature person, who is incapable of mastering his reactions, turns in upon himself and his own interests and, in consequence, is no longer able (if he ever was) to interest himself in others, or to give himself to them.

The priest, having neither wife nor family, lacks affective support and has a greater need than anyone else of emotional balance and of a margin of security which will in moments of stress allow him not only to face up to problems but also to devote himself to others. He needs to have found an indispensable degree of love of God in Christ and in his ministry.

Married people have a similar need. The admiration and love that a woman shows her husband can ward off emotional crises.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1951), ch. I, "The Search for Glory."

<sup>10</sup> John Dollard et al (New Haven: Yale, 1939).

<sup>11</sup> This would have been the case as far as Cornelia was concerned. She created a happy home for Pierce until his ideal of marital separation for the sake of religious life led them both to a mutually accepted sacrifice.

Both are sustained and encouraged by their mutual love. But if one of them is threatened with the loss of this love, or with the loss of the self-esteem which arises from the idealized image of his own person, latent neuroses may at some point in later life loudly declare themselves.

## II

These notions will now be applied as far as possible to the case of Pierce Connelly. Stress will be laid on the document written by Colonel John C. Groome, who was, through his mother, a great-nephew of Pierce.

After mentioning Henry Connelly, who died in 1822, and his four sons of whom Pierce was the eldest, the Colonel says that he will write about Pierce, his grandfather's brother, whose career was certainly very strange.

We first hear of this gentleman as a young clergyman of Philadelphia. He had a University education and was regarded as a man of considerable ability. With a fine presence, he combined engaging manners with an enthusiasm in his calling which at that time may not have been founded on the personal ambition that he afterwards displayed.

Account should be taken of the contrast--to be referred to again in due course--between the dispositions of Pierce in his Protestant Episcopal ministry, and those which he manifested as a Catholic. In the former he displayed an extraordinary apostolic zeal, traveling over extensive territory and putting his health at risk, so that his bishop, on arriving for a visitation, found him prostrate with exhaustion. And when he later retired from the ministry he was obliged to take some rest.

Destiny at this time drew together his life and that of a very remarkable woman, Cornelia Augusta Peacock. Of a good family in Philadelphia, beautiful and accomplished, she became engaged to Mr Connelly and, notwithstanding the objections of some of her relatives, married him in 1831. Shortly after the wedding he accepted the rectorship of Trinity Church at Natchez, Mississippi, where his family had some property and left Philadelphia with his wife to assume charge.

The first few years of their married life passed auspiciously: both husband and wife were respected and loved by their parishioners, their home was a happy one,

and they were blessed by the birth of two children, Mercer and Adeline. Then a decision, for good or evil, changed the tenor of their lives. A doubt, divinely inspired perhaps, arose in Mrs Connelly's mind as to whether, after all, theirs was the true faith, and, that it was not, she presently became convinced.<sup>12</sup>

Thus it was that her husband was led to resign his charge and renounce the Orders he had received on October 5, 1828, in the Episcopal Church. He made known his resignation as pastor in September 1835.

That his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, however, should appear as a spectacular gesture which he wished it to be, he determined to go to Rome and there be received into the Church which he now proposed to adopt. This he did, but his wife believing that there should be no delay in transferring her allegiance, was baptized in the Cathedral at New Orleans and made her First Communion in November, 1835, a month before they sailed for Italy.<sup>13</sup>

So with his wife and two children he arrived in Rome. Noting the interest that his conversion aroused, he frequented aristocratic circles and, as his letters to his brothers indicate, began to show signs of something approaching megalomania, out of a desire to be at the focal point of attraction. He fascinated the devout Catholic, Lord Shrewsbury, who became his supporter, the witness at his abjuration, and later on his very good friend. Cornelia on her part made friends with Lord Shrewsbury's daughter, who married the Prince of Sulmona, later the head of the great Borghese family.

At Roman social functions they were both introduced also into the world of cardinal princes of the Church. More than once they were received by the pope. Pierce traveled in Italy and England on behalf of Lord Shrewsbury, made the acquaintance of the Jesuit fathers at Stonyhurst, and received invitations from the great English Catholic families, "where he was much edified by the living faith he witnessed."

<sup>12</sup> It was, rather, her husband who had the first misgivings about his allegiance to the Episcopal Church (D 2:41-42).

<sup>13</sup> It was Bishop Rosati of St. Louis who encouraged the visit to the heart of Catholicism for educational reasons and, it would seem, for Mr. Connelly to make inquiries about the possibility of his ordination in the Catholic Church (AV 7-8).

After these rather spectacular events of 1836-37, the Connelys returned to Natchez where they received an invitation to teach at Grand Coteau, Louisiana. There Cornelia showed herself to be a most successful music teacher at the Sacred Heart Academy, while Pierce drew criticism for his English teaching at St. Charles College. At the end of two years his attraction to life in the Catholic ministry returned and, in October 1840, he proposed a matrimonial separation to Cornelia if permission for this could be obtained from the Pope.<sup>14</sup> Everything however depended on Cornelia's consent, since she would be required to take a vow of perpetual chastity before her husband could be ordained.

Cornelia was at first overwhelmed with distress, but the love and devotion she bore her husband led her to share his views, and in her turn decided, little by little, that it was God's will for her to become a nun.<sup>15</sup>

It is not necessary to relate here all that happened before Pierce's ordination. Mercer, the eldest son, thanks to the generosity of Lord Shrewsbury, was sent to a college in England. Cornelia lived with Adeline and Frank at Grand Coteau. Pierce traveled for a year or more as tutor to Robert Berkeley, the eldest son of a notable English family. He then returned to America to fetch his family, since his wife's personal presence was required in Rome. It was not until March 1844 that Pierce formulated the Connelys' joint request to Pope Gregory XVI for their matrimonial separation, which to their surprise was granted almost overnight. Accordingly, Pierce began his ecclesiastical studies and Cornelia entered as a quasi postulant at Trinità dei Monti, where Adeline was already in the boarding school. Cornelia lived with Frank and his nurse in a small house in the convent grounds. Pierce received minor orders in the church there in May 1844, the deed of separation between himself and his wife having been executed in the previous month.

After only fifteen months of preparation Pierce was permitted to be ordained a priest on 6 July, 1845, Cornelia having pronounced her vow on the previous 18 June. Aware that her vocation was not

<sup>14</sup> He had made a request to this effect to the Holy Office in 1836, together with his petition for conditional baptism, etc. The reply of 22 March to the Cardinal Vicar, Charles Odescalchi, left open the possibility of Pierce Connelly's ordination after a further investigation of the circumstances (D 3:82).

<sup>15</sup> Cornelia maintained that both she and Pierce had received a divine call to religious life.

to be fulfilled in the Society of the Sacred Heart, Cornelia felt inspired to work, under the direction of Giovanni Grassi, SJ, upon a foundation for "all the spiritual works of mercy" and made plans accordingly to return to America.

Meanwhile Monsignor Wiseman, the future cardinal, seconded by Lord Shrewsbury and some of their mutual friends, saw Cornelia as the ideal foundress of a non-cloistered congregation which for women converts would play an analogous role to that of John Henry Newman.<sup>16</sup> The congregation was expected to reach a high level of education, typically English education, for girls of all classes. Pope Gregory is understood to have told Cornelia: "From England let your efforts in the cause of education reach America" (D 72:137).

Much of the foregoing has come from the account given by Col. Groome, who goes on to show that Pierce Connelly's ambitions, hitherto fairly reasonable, from now on increase at an inordinate pace. Pierce, who became a country chaplain at Alton Towers, found little scope for his many gifts and, conscious of the greater importance of the role assigned to his wife, sought to assert his influence in the direction and control of the new Society.

Mother Connelly very much wanted her rule to be based on that of the Jesuits, but Mr. Connelly, already jealous of their influence because, apparently, he bore a grudge against Father Roothaan for refusing to accept him as a novice, himself drew up a rule which he presented personally to the prefect of Propaganda in Rome without having consulted his wife, and asserted that he was asking for the approbation of this rule for "a little Society that he had established."<sup>17</sup>

Moreover he took his children from their respective schools without a word to Cornelia and hid them abroad as a device for getting their mother to come and find them. Then, as if nothing had happened, he returned from Rome bearing a blessing from Pius IX for Cornelia, appeared at the convent in Derby and demanded an interview with his wife. He remained there for six hours in the parlour, very

<sup>16</sup> Newman established the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Birmingham in 1840 and absorbed Faber's community which had begun two years before.

<sup>17</sup> The fact is that with the help of Father Connelly Cornelia had previously drawn up a rule in outline "according to the spirit of St Francis de Sales." But the one he himself presented in Rome in 1848 was his own expanded version, made without any consultation with his wife and ascribing to himself the role of founder.

angry, till he finally retired vowing a terrible vengeance on the convent and on the spiritual directors of his wife, particularly Wiseman, against whom he rapidly developed a deep and savage animosity.<sup>18</sup>

Pierce then asked Bishop Walsh of the central district for permission to have confidential intercourse, either by letters or by personal interviews, with his wife, whom, he said, he could not abandon since he had promised to protect her for life. As this permission was refused him, he publicly apostatized and introduced proceedings in the Court of Arches for the restitution of conjugal rights; the decision was given in his favour. Cornelia thus threatened was obliged to have recourse to the Privy Council, where the decision of the lower court was virtually reversed. Then Pierce, says the colonel, apparently lost self-control. He published pamphlet after pamphlet against Rome, and sent an open letter to Lord Shrewsbury explaining the reasons for his abjuration. He made a last appeal to the House of Commons in 1851, "in terms so gross and slanderous" that the propriety of having it printed formed the subject of a debate in that body.<sup>19</sup>

Little by little his Protestant friends abandoned him and his activities in England ceased. Later on he was welcomed back into the Episcopal church, and in 1867 founded the American church in Florence, Italy, of which he had charge until his death in 1883.

To Pierce's story the colonel adds this conclusion: "His life was colourful if not admirable. A forceful man in some ways, with many gifts, impaired by his egotism and instability of character."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Pierce took Merty and Adeline from their respective schools on the 11th and 12th of January 1848. It must be remembered that it was upon a decision of Bishop Wiseman that the two younger children were sent away to other boarding schools despite Cornelia's intention of keeping them with her. Their absence, in Wiseman's eyes, made meetings of husband and wife no longer necessary. This was all in striking contrast to the attitude of both the pope and the cardinal vicar when the Connelys were in Rome. See D 5:58.

<sup>19</sup> Gompertz, p. 181; petition, D 6:161-164; debate, D 6: 167-173.

<sup>20</sup> "He was unbalanced mentally and emotionally," according to Susan Groome Harney, Pierce's great-niece, in a letter to Sister Marie Madeleine Amy, SHCJ, 3 June 1956.

What explanation can there be for the fact that this man, who as a Protestant minister, as a husband, and in his relations with many other people of every rank and nationality had shown himself so full of goodness and charity, should suddenly adopt all the characteristics of the egoist? What explains his alarming fits of anger and bitter invective passion against those who opposed his desire for communication with Cornelia and for the consolation of her presence? There are signposts to a solution of this problem in certain statements and events.

Pierce had, as we have seen, an attractive, brilliant character, but at bottom he was ambitious, lacking in judgment, inclined to enhance his own image. At the time of his conversion, for instance, he was happy to lead a spectacular life in Rome. Similarly, later on he was not satisfied with his post in a small Jesuit college with limited horizons, but desired that in some way the whole of the Catholic and Protestant world should hear of his amazing conversion to Catholicism and to the Catholic priesthood.

In fact, he always possessed ill-concealed ambition. As long however as he lived with his wife (for four years as a Protestant minister, for five as a Catholic teacher at Grand Coteau) she brought him peace and sustained him with her admiration. This esteem satisfied his daily ambitions but, after their final separation, he gradually realized that his wife had found a career that in some ways provided openings greater than the potential of his own life. This could be a cause of jealousy.

How can this be explained? An initial insight into this matter came from the Connelly Papers in the Oscott Archives, Birmingham. Here in a letter from Cornelia to her husband a strange fact is related. She tells him that in his absence a letter has come for him from his mother, written in answer to his own on the subject of ambition, etc. Cornelia (still a Protestant herself) says:

She [Pierce's mother] seems to have the true protestant idea of humility--that is she endeavours to clothe you with it forgetting she is naked herself, all the while. Speaking of your brothers she says "you put too much stress upon what you have done for them remember that the same father and mother that raised you raised them though your advantages was [sic] much greater than theirs."

(D 2:46-47)

One may therefore surmise that Pierce's mother considered that her highly gifted, even brilliant, son had shown from his earliest years a certain degree of ambition. This will have grown, I would think, because being the eldest Pierce saw himself replaced in his mother's affection by the children born after him. The others were perhaps less gifted, though the fourth succeeded very well in his university studies. Moreover their professional life was less important than his own since they had less brilliance and fewer oratorical and literary qualities than he had.

Something of this kind may have been at the bottom of Pierce's conduct, creating an overwhelming desire for self-assertion and revenge triggered by some deep disappointment in his early childhood. If one remembers what has been said about the importance of childhood frustrations in regard to the development of later temperamental reactions, one sees that Pierce can have early acquired the need of compensation. His desire to shine is evident even in his Protestant ministry in his manner of attracting attention to himself at the price of continual extremely fatiguing work undertaken over a wide area on behalf of his parishioners. Such work indeed eventually brought him to a state of prostration. But this type of nascent exhibitionism was held in check, I would surmise, by the love that he received from his wife and by the admiration that she showed him.

The day came however when he began to miss this conjugal affection. As assistant chaplain to an English lord in the midst of the local clergy, Pierce perceived that Cornelia was about to lead a life in the Church which might in the event be more brilliant than his own. At this point the sudden lack of his wife's loving and admiring presence brought the situation into full crisis. His desire for importance took on a pace that, if not caused by dementia, showed at the very least signs of serious neurosis. He began to create terrible scenes and showed an atrocious lack of self-control even in a public parlour of the convent. He cited his wife before the law courts. He publicly apostatized. He wrote pamphlet after pamphlet against the Church. Instead of continuing in the pastoral ministry in which as a Protestant pastor he had succeeded so well, he now abandoned the Catholic apostolate which he had exercised for only three years. He showed a fanatical interest not only in English but also in Irish and international politics. He could barely think of others and sought to compensate a frustration that had become intolerable. Pierce's life had, in fact, become centripetal.

Did this desire for power smoulder first under the frustrations of childhood? If his mother had refused to give him a privileged position among his brothers his craving could by now have developed so far as to unhinge his mental balance. Ability and self-control would both be lost and his reactions appear typically neurotic.

That, it seems, is the explanation of the apparent reversal of Pierce's conduct, a reversal that is only apparent because in him ambition had been on the increase throughout his youth. When this passion for power broke loose in middle life it assumed incredible proportions. His egoism became such that, in an already abnormal family situation, he not only deprived the children of their mother's love but took full possession of their lives. According to Colonel Groome, he was an obstacle to their normal development. Mercer died at the age of nineteen, and the two surviving children, Adeline and Frank, never married, though at one point Frank became involved with a Tuscan lady and had an illegitimate child by her. Yet he had very great artistic gifts and a pioneering spirit. He was a prolific sculptor and painter whose work was much appreciated in England, America, and New Zealand. Adeline, according to George Connelly, was ruled by the whims of her father, who employed her in his service but neither gave her freedom to grow up nor the opportunity to marry and found a family.<sup>21</sup>

This unconscious "sacred selfishness" is the typical sign of an unhappy frustrated character; it would surprise us in Pierce did we not know of his early childhood's frustrations and also those which came to him in later life. He should not, therefore, be judged severely. Certainly the man did suffer, but in the context of an immature personality able neither to build up a sufficient measure of self-security nor to shape human gifts within a chosen ideal, that of a Catholic priest.

Compare Pierce's attitude with that of his wife, now a nun and a foundress. Day by day she suffered as her husband sank lower and lower in her own esteem and in that of the Catholic Church, yet she always remained calm and mistress of herself. Clearly this can only be explained because Cornelia had, in the Lord, found him who could be her heart's sole love, and in whose strength she could bear any sacrifice.

<sup>21</sup> "You have utterly sacrificed her to your own selfish enjoyment of her company," George Connelly writes in a letter to his brother Pierce when Adeline has visited her uncle in Philadelphia at the age of twenty-five. HCJ/R. D 9:51.

This assessment of Pierce's psychology is corroborated by another document, a letter dated from Tivoli, October 16, 1844,<sup>22</sup> written by Pierce to his youngest brother, George. The latter had blamed Pierce for showing a surprising worldliness and vanity for a Catholic seminarian and for over concern about his reputation. Pierce seeks to justify himself by pointing to the example of the saints who, he declares, show us that one can very well be holy and humble interiorly while acting exteriorly as a man of the world. He then quotes St. Thomas, whom he is studying at the Collegio dei Nobili in Rome, in order to prove that every man has a right to defend his own reputation.

Then he comes to a more painful subject, which has been causing him acute remorse: his relationship to his mother. Because of it he sees little hope that she, and his brothers also, will follow him into the Catholic Church. He feels guilty for not having always shown his mother the grateful love that he owed her. But knowing one's duty and performing it are two very different things, above all in the matter of love, and doubtless without the help of grace one cannot go from one to the other. Pierce observes: "The hearts of all are in the hands of God, men are only the instruments in His hand--without Him they are tools in a chest." He uses this argument as an excuse though it is only partially valid, and hopes that it may gain him some forgiveness from his brother and his family. Indeed he writes: "It seems not to have pleased God to give me any of the blessed influence necessary to do good in my own family." What he judges to be a gift of God he declares that he has not received. Then he adds an ambiguous phrase in which one is not quite sure whether he is speaking of the love of parents for their children, or of children for their parents: "Love even of parents does not depend always on merit, yet perhaps if I had deserved more love I should have had it." (His mother's love? or love for his mother? or both?) /Underscoring not in the original./ He then proceeds to show clearly that love does not always depend on reason or will: "At any rate, influence /that one may have on one's family/ depends upon love /merely received? or experienced?/ more than upon arguments: because reason, though nobler than the will /that resists/--but love is stronger than pride and conquers the will so that it no longer resists reason."

This little theological lecture on gratia victrix is truly admirable! Yet the very ambiguities reveal a painful conflict

<sup>22</sup> D 5:67-71, cited below, passim.

still unresolved in Pierce's mind. "It is true," he seems to say, "that I have not always shown enough love to my relations. But is love a question of good will? Is it not first of all a gift from above? Or perhaps from one's parents?"

If a child thinks--erroneously perhaps--that he has not had his fair share of maternal affection, is it not natural, understandable even, that he should experience a real interior conflict--albeit unconscious and involuntary--which prevents him from returning his mother's love? It is clear that Mrs. Henry Connelly thought she had done her duty and given as much love to Pierce as she had given to his brothers. Nevertheless, the eldest, who in the first place receives the whole of his mother's love (and his father's), feels frustrated when younger brothers (and even the father) appear to take a share of this prize from him. Again, what proof have we that Pierce's mother did not feel drawn more to one or other of her children? It has often been shown that the mother rationalizes her attitude in regard to her children and pretends to love as much as his siblings the child whom she secretly rejects.

However that may be, Pierce must have analysed his own motives with all the delicacy of conscience which characterizes a convert, yet without being certain whether the lack of affection for his family was purely an act of ill-will or attributable to a lack of grace received. He believed sincerely that he was not altogether guilty, and that he had not received that grace which overcomes the resistance of pride "so that it no longer resists reason."

At the end of this short study in which I have tried to throw a little light on the strange behaviour of Pierce Connelly when he began to miss his wife, I would like to say that this is only an "interpretation" made with the help of psychological skills, which must of necessity remain conjectural when it is a matter of someone who cannot be questioned directly but who betrays himself in certain documents. While seeking to cast light upon the case, one does not presume either to absolve or to condemn Pierce as a person.

To treat him as insane is to apply an easy but odious label, and one which explains nothing at all about a man who has suffered and has become embittered. Pierce had his attractive side and Cornelia knew it well. But perhaps he was never able to take the final step away from the love that is sought for, in order to reach that which is given without self-seeking, and of which his wife was so perfect a model.

Cornelia, I think, would not have allowed Pierce's behaviour to be judged severely. She suffered in silence from the wounds he

inflicted and from the malicious, or at any rate painful, conclusions that others drew about her hardness of heart towards her children. This was the rule that she had imposed upon herself, not through stoic insensibility, but from love of that unique Love who would know how to transform into saving grace the bitter crosses through which she shared his own.

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(from Cornelia's COMMONPLACE BOOK, HCJ/R, p. 223)

#### COTTAGE COOKERY

##### BAKED RICE PUDDING

- 1 Chop 2 ounces of suet fine (not on Fridays or abstinence days) and sprinkle over the bottom of a baking dish
- 2 Strew in a pound of rice that has been nicely cleaned and washed, then mix with it three ounces of brown sugar, and a teaspoon of mixed spice, grated lemon peel and a pinch of salt. Fill up the baking dish with 5 pints of water, and bake in a very slack oven till it sets; it should be done gently, and will take from 2 to 3 hours.

#### COOKERY FOR THE SICK

##### GRUEL

Mix well a tablespoon of oatmeal (which will weigh just one ounce) in a basin with a quarter of a pint of cold water, till it is quite smooth; then gradually pour over it about half a pint of boiling water, stir, and mix it; then put all into a clean saucepan, and stir it over the fire until it boils. Strain it through a sieve into a clean cup, and have a little bit of toast to eat with it. Some persons season Gruel with salt, others with sugar and a little bit of butter. This quantity will only make a cupful, and sick persons should only eat a little at a time, and have it made fresh each time.