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Volume VII

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GEORGE MOORE



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SISTER TERESA



CHAP. I.

SHE was conscious of her indolence: within and without her there was a strange, lifeless calm, a strange inactivity in the air and in her mind. In the landscape and in her there seemed no before and no hereafter. But a glance inwards revealed to her the ripple of some hidden anticipation moving under the sullen surface. The idea of returning to London stirred a little dread in her, yet she felt that for the moment she had seen enough of the convent. For the moment she could assimilate no more of it. The rhythm of the carriage penetrated her indolent body. The thud of the chestnut's hoofs in the empty road stirred a quiet wonder in her, and she looked into the sunset as she might into a veil.

The mist had gathered in the suburban streets, and over the scraps of waste ground, changing them to blue; and looking into this dim colour and dimly-suggested form, she seemed to become aware of the presence of a phantom life moving on the hither side of her life, dependent upon it, and yet seemingly not concerned by its affairs, occupied by interests and desires exclusively its own. Her perceptions gathered in intensity, and she waited, tremulous and expectant, for the moment seemed to have come for the invisible to become visible. But in spite of her efforts to keep her attention fixed, to exclude the natural, her attention wandered or it lapsed, or the natural slipt in between, intercepting her vision, and the phantom folk lost their supernatural appearance and