

**THE MERRY ORDER OF ST.  
BRIDGET: PERSONAL  
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
USE OF THE ROD; PP.1-236**

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The Merry Order of St. Bridget: Personal Recollections of the Use of the Rod; pp.1-236 by  
Margaret Anson

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**MARGARET ANSON**

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MERRY ORDER OF ST. BRIDGET

*PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF*  
*THE USE OF THE ROD*

By MARGARET ANSON



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THE  
Merry Order of St. Bridget.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CHATEAU DE FLORIS.

LAURA HOUSE, BAYSWATER,  
*April 10th, 1868.*

MY DEAR MARION,

I am sure you must have wondered what has become of me in all these years (three, isn't it?) since we met at Lord E——'s place. Perhaps you won't care to hear from me again, and will fancy I have forgotten our old friendship; indeed, my dear, it is not so, but I've been knocking about a bit, and seen the world. I've been in Paris two years in two different places, and learned as much in that time as many folks do in a lifetime. Cooped up as you are in a humdrum sort of

A



place, with one old lady, you can have no idea of what goes on in livelier households. In my last place I was one of *six* lady's maids, all with nothing to do but to attend to some separate part of our lady's toilet. I entered her service from that of a grave austere woman with no ideas of colour beyond brown and grey, and a tremendous church-goer, so you may imagine what a change it was. I soon wearied of that place, you may be sure, and was glad when the Marquise St. Valery took me into her service. The Marquis was immensely proud and very poor, but he bestowed his titles and position upon a banker's daughter, whose wealth was said to be fabulous. When she married and took her station among the *élite* of Parisian society, she made up her mind that she would be unapproachable in the matter of luxury. My dear, I can give you no idea of her magnificence or her extravagance. Her house, her carriages, her servants, and the splendour of her attire, were the themes of all Paris, and when she appeared in public she had quite a retinue of admirers and flatterers; while at home she seemed to hold a levee from morning till night. Her toilettes were the admiration of all the fashionable world, and her dressmaker had only to announce that she had anything in hand for

the Marquise St. Valery, to have her shop crowded from morning till night with ladies eager to get a sight of what the Queen of fashion was going to appear in next. She was a large voluptuous-looking woman, with a splendid bust and arms, and almost anything looked well upon her,—and for luxurious habits, I never knew anyone who could approach her. I fancied I was pretty wide awake before I went there, but I learned things I never dreamed of in that establishment. If I had you with me for a day I could tell you such things ! Perhaps I may put some of them into a letter yet. *Nothing* I could see done or hear of being done by fine ladies would astonish me now after what I have seen in that place as well as my present one. We were six of us lady's maids, and every one had her special duties,—mine was her ladyship's head, and it was no sinecure, for her hair was her weakest point ; it was neither of good quality nor luxuriant, and yet, when she was dressed, she appeared to have a magnificent head. This was my province, and she would change her style half-a-dozen times a day sometimes. You see it was no trouble to her, except to sit and have it put on ; so she would wear Madonna bands in the morning, ringlets in the car-

riage, and a Pompadour coiffure for the evening. I had enough to do with it all. Another maid had the dresses, a third the under linen, and a fourth took charge of her stockings and shoes. Then there was one over us all whose business it was to arrange the toilettes, and superintend the general effect, and woe to her if our lady was not pleased! With all her money, the Marquise had an exceedingly vulgar temper. The other maid had charge of the bath and the linen belonging to it, and her post was not easy to fill. My lady was particular about her scents and powders, and was given to changing her mind at the last minute, and railing because water could not be drawn off and fresh put in in half-a-dozen seconds. Then she has pages I don't know how many; they seemed to be all over the place, dressed in all kinds of fantastic liveries—one to hand letters, another to fetch refreshments, another to be always in waiting, &c., &c.; indeed, there was no end to her vagaries, and for a long time I wondered what she wanted with so many of them, and how she kept them in order. I soon found out. She practised whipping, as almost every fashionable lady does, and kept them in order with the rod. I dare say, shut up as you are, you have never seen any-