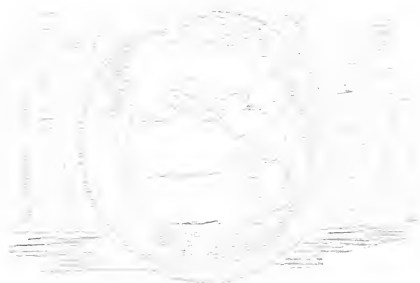


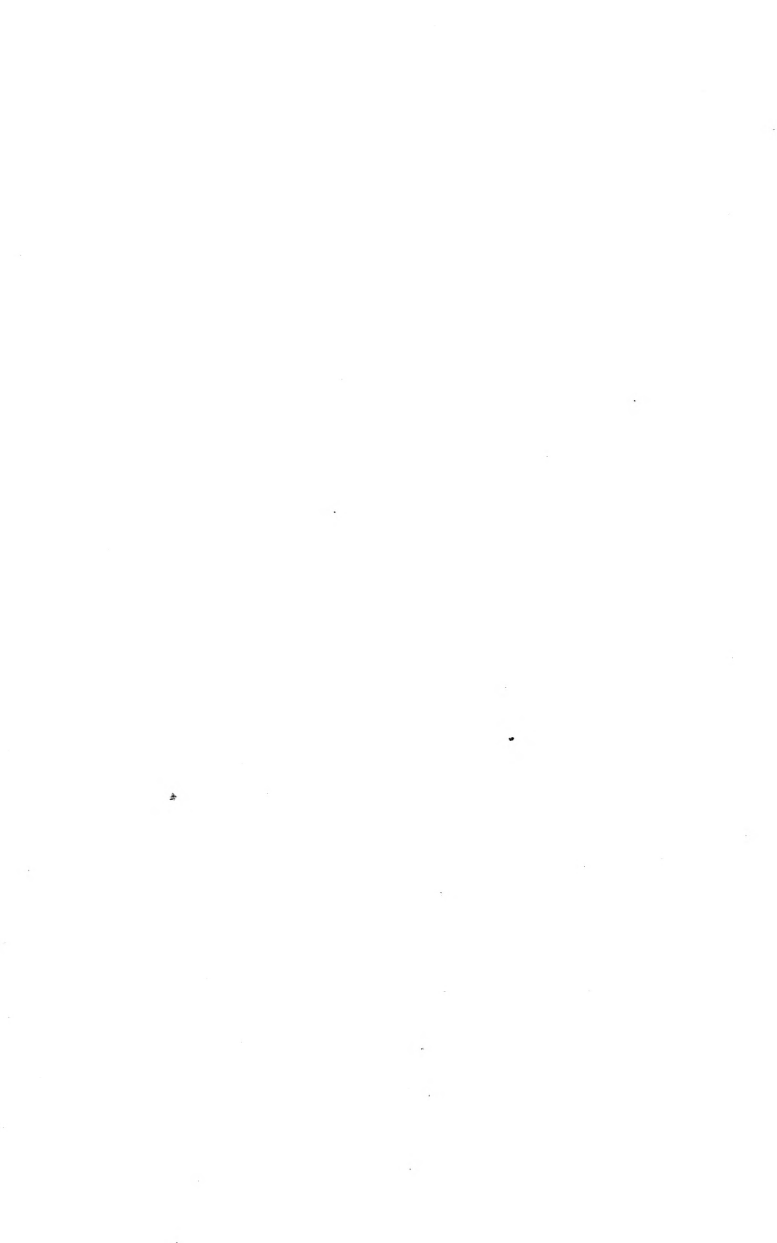
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EDITH O'GORMAN.

TRIALS AND PERSECUTIONS

OF

MISS EDITH O'GORMAN,

OTHERWISE SISTER TERESA DE CHANTAL,

OF

ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT,

HUDSON CITY, N. J.

Written by Herself.

WITH AN APPENDIX BY THE PUBLISHERS.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

A remarkable experience and wonderful success are here narrated. The author of this book had suffered great wrongs at the hands of a powerful Ecclesiastical hierarchy. Here she has spent most of her convent life. Here, a little more than a year ago, penniless, friendless, almost hopeless, she came to tell the story of her sufferings, and to unmask the errors and evils of the Romish Church. With earnest purpose, manifest sincerity and conscientious motives, she addressed herself to a task for which but few would have had sufficient courage. Public attention was immediately awakened, and an intense public interest aroused in behalf of a woman who simply claimed the right to tell the story of her wrongs, and to vindicate herself against the unjust aspersions of her enemies.

This story is here rehearsed for wider dissemination among the American public. As a brief history of a checkered and eventful life, as a significant protest against a church which

had nourished and yet misguided her. The book is deserving of an extended circulation and careful perusal

It affords me pleasure to speak of the high regard in which the author is held in this city—to commend her volume to the favor of the public, and to express the hope that her candid story may fulfil its mission.

Respectfully,

HENRY A. CORDO,
Pastor of the North Baptist Church,
Jersey City, N. J.

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PREFACE.

I do not solicit the attention of the public for the purpose of exciting sympathy or seeking redress. Sympathy, though grateful, can do little to repair misfortunes, or to redress some wrongs; as for vengeance, if it be proper to consider it at all, it must be left with Him who has said, that it is His, and that "He will repay." I write because I feel that I ought not to be—nay, cannot be silent, knowing what I personally do of the wrongs and errors incident to the Romish system of religion; and knowing also that the *truth* will never be given to the public except by those who can write as I can, from personal experience and positive knowledge.

In laying this book before the public, I am guided by truth. I do not make a single statement which can be refuted. I give names, dates, and facts, challenging contradiction. My object is purely charitable. I wish to enlighten the blind, deluded, and superstitious Catholics with reference to the errors of their religion, and the unnatural discipline, and pernicious influence of the conventual life; and also to arouse the lukewarm, indifferent and unsuspecting among Protestants whose daughters may be attendants of some convent school, where they are being enticed from them through the intrigues and cunning of Jesuits and Sisters of Charity, who are adepts in beguiling unstable

hearts through the empty, theatrical, and alluring ceremonies of a religion which has a peculiar charm for children and weak minds, and for all who live according to the senses—not the spirit.

I have also truthfully detailed my own bitter experience, so replete with persecution and sorrow, that it will cause many to exclaim, “Is it possible that one woman can have endured such numerous and severe trials?” Few indeed, have tasted sorrow like unto mine; and I now bless “the Hand that chasteneth,” for in no other way could I be cleansed from the dross of Catholic superstition, than by the purifying furnace of tribulation. Through the gate of suffering I have come out of bondage, and entered into the blessed “liberty of the children of God.” Praise be to His ho’y name forever! This book is my own production, simple and true, and as such, I trust it will meet the approbation of my readers; and may God grant that it may be the means of saving one immortal soul from the slavery of Romanism and the living tomb of convents! If only one soul should be saved, I shall have accomplished a noble work!

EDITH O’GORMAN.

CHAPTER I.

MY DEPARTURE FROM HOME.

I am the eldest of eight children, and was born in Ireland, August 20th, 1842, of respectable parents. My mother belongs to a high and noble family; her maiden name was Margaret Byron. In her youth, on account of her great beauty, she was known as the "Rose" of "Stone Park," her native place in the County of Roscommon, Ireland. She married my father against the will of her parents, and came with him to America in the year 1850, and finally settled in Rhode Island, where they reside at the present time.

From my infancy, I was carefully instructed by my good mother, who instilled in my soul a deep reverence for the creed and traditions of the Roman Catholic faith. I was educated in Protestant schools, and there bravely confronted every opposition or reproach offered to my religion. I defended its tenets; I would have given my life for its preservation, for the defense of its reputed purity, as I am now willing to brave calumny and persecution, aye, even death, for the unmasking of its impurity and errors. I was inclined to prayer and piety from my early childhood. I longed for something better than the fleeting fol-

lies of society, than the empty vanities of a sinful and ungodly world. "As the hart wearied with the chase, panteth after cooling waters," so did my soul pant for the life-giving fountain of Eternal Truth. Earthly pleasures failed to fill the void in my heart,—indeed, that heart is narrow which can be filled by aught save the perfect love of God. I sought peace at the shrine of the Virgin Mary and the Saints, at the Confessional; in the confraternities of scapulars and rosaries, but all in vain. I could find no abiding place in Christ. My senses were charmed with the imposing forms and ceremonies, the music, flowers, candles, pictures, and beautiful images, which constitute the worship of Roman Catholics; but possessing an instructed intelligence, my soul remained empty. Were I a mere being of sense, only, I might have been satisfied.

In August, 1861, I was visiting in Newport, R. I. I sought forgetfulness of religion among the gay and giddy throng in pursuit of worldly pleasure. But my heart and soul became disgusted and wearied with the emptiness and vanity of such a life. I was certainly created to be something more than a mere votary of fashion and folly. However, a change was near. The 15th of August is observed as a holy day among Catholics, for honoring the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. I attended mass that morning in the beautiful St. Mary's Church, of Newport; in the afternoon I went to confession, to Father J. Hughes, of Hartford, Conn., who was visiting Newport at that time for the purpose of assisting Father O'Rielly, who was then in poor health. In obedience to the teachings of the Catholic church, which enjoin penitents to disclose to

their confessor every secret thought, every impulse of their being, I confided to my confessor the doubts and fears I had concerning the sufficiency of my religion. I told him I derived no benefit from my devotions to Mary, nor from frequenting the Sacraments of Confession and Communion; that I failed to find delight or satisfaction in worldly pleasures, etc., and that I was most unhappy. He advised me, in the most affectionate manner, to enter a Convent, as it evidently was my vocation, and the only way in which I could save my soul. He extolled the vocation of celibacy as the very highest grace that God could bestow upon His creatures; telling me I could receive no greater proof of God's love for me than in being called to be the bride of His only Son Christ Jesus, and not the bride of a mere sinful creature—man. He pictured the life of a Nun as the most holy and perfect imitation of the example of Christ and Mary, assuring me that within the sacred precincts of the cloister, aided, as I could not fail to be by, the good example of my sister nuns, who were in possession of such holy peace and complete repose as the saints in heaven were enjoying, I would soar high above the atmosphere of human love, and would live in the pure light of holiness, and the perfect love of God. He told me my nature was of such an exalted description that human affection and worldly pursuits would always fail to supply my craving for happiness, and nothing save a perfect consecration of my life to God would secure for me the heavenly peace for which I was yearning.

He advised me to read the writings of St. Alphonsus Liguori, especially the "Nun Sanctified." This saint extols virgins

consecrated to God, and says of all happy states the vocation of a nun is the most perfect and sublime, because their affections are not fixed on their families, nor on men of the world, nor on goods of the earth, nor on the dress and vanities of women; they are unshackled by worldly ties, by subjection to friends or relatives, and are removed from the noise and tumult of the "wicked world."

I was then nineteen years of age, an age when the heart is most susceptible to those impressions which may be called romantic or sentimental. Naturally possessing an impulsive and enthusiastic nature, I was filled with a desire to make some great sacrifice to God; and I listened with pleasure to the advice of my confessor. Thenceforth I began to lead a new life; I would spend most of the day in the church. I took great delight in self-imposed penances, such as fasting every day on one meal, and abstaining from everything that would afford my physical senses delight. I would remain hours together in prayer, and often experienced great consolation and ecstasies therefrom. In the Confessional I would speak of the visions, ecstasies and spiritual consolations I experienced in prayer, and of my great desire of self abnegation. My confessor flattered me in my delusion, telling me that the Lord had endowed my soul with His highest gifts, and He had designed me from all eternity to become a great saint, "and all visions, ecstasies, and self-annihilation, came from God, and denoted great sanctity." At the same time he urged me to hasten my entrance into a Convent, because, if I delayed long in the world, God would withdraw from me those heavenly gifts.

As a natural consequence of these false teachings, I soon became puffed up with my own self-righteousness, and was led to regard myself better than others. And yet I was called humble. Because humility was a virtue I tried to acquire it by performing certain humiliating acts, such, for instance, as washing the feet of some filthy mendicant, or performing the most menial offices of a servant.

I now look back and regret the precious time wasted in the observances and practices of unprofitable devotions, hurtful in themselves, inasmuch as they were not performed for the glory of God, but, on the contrary, for the glory of self. In the true light of God's grace I can now attribute all the spiritual consolations and ecstasies I experienced as a Catholic, to self-complacency and spiritual pride. I thought I loved God, but it was self-love actuated me. I thought I was a model of humility, but I possessed "humility with a hook," continually fishing for compliments and the good opinions of creatures. I thought I was blessed with the true light of God; yet I was perfectly blind, and knew it not. I was taught to think myself a saint, and all the time I was ignorant of the first rudiments of true sanctity. However, like all deluded souls, I was not conscious of my true condition; I was completely charmed with the novelty of my new experience, and was sincere according to the light given me; hence, I firmly resolved to sacrifice my life on the altar of self-consecration, and sever every human tie which bound me to the world.

Naturally possessed of strong affections and deep attachments, I endured the greatest pain and anguish in sacrificing

my home. The love I bore my mother amounted almost to idolatry, and the thought of a separation from her was death in itself. How *could* I leave her, never again to see her dear face, nor hear her beloved voice? All else I could give up, but my mother, never! It would break my heart to leave my own dear gentle mother.

This thought of being forever separated from my beloved mother, would sometimes fill my soul with doubts and murmurings against God. Why could I not love God and arrive at sanctity, without breaking the holiest of earthly ties? Why had God given me such an affectionate nature, if it was unlawful for me to exercise it? Why must I crush and blight my life and talents within the gloomy walls of the Cloister? Why bury my heart in a living sepulchre? Why shut out from myself every object of beauty and love, that the hand of God had formed? Was not such a God more an arbitrary tyrant, than a God of mercy and love?

I often experienced such rebellious reflections as the above, and as in duty bound, discovered them to my confessor. He would tell me such thoughts were wicked temptations from the devil, who would fain cheat me of my holy calling and perfect devotion to the religious life, by attacking me in the weakest point, my ardent affection. My spiritual director chided severely my weakness in listening for one moment to the suggestions of the "evil one;" telling me I must choose between God and my mother. I could not serve both; and if I made choice of the latter, I would lose my immortal soul, and be damned, quoting the passage, "whoever loveth father or

mother more than me, is not worthy to be my discip'le." My heart seemed torn from my body in the fearful struggle I endured before I could consent to give up my earthly mother, and accept the Virg'in Mary in her place; however, the salvation of my soul was the one thing necessary, and I must save it, cost what it might. I made choice of God. The holocaust to Him should be complete. I thought He required the sacrifice, and I made it. "The greater the sacrifice, the greater the merit." I was so thoroughly imbued with this false idea of salvation, that I firmly resolved to stifle every natural affection of my heart, tear asunder every earthly tie, and bid an eternal farewell to my beloved parents, my darling little brothers and sisters, and every thing I held sacred and dear, and to devote my young life to a perpetual crucifixion of the nature my Creator had given me. Poor slave that I was, in my blind delusion I could not realize that the merits of Christ had secured my salvation, independent of my self-imposed merits!

The next difficulty to be surmounted was to gain the consent of my parents, which I at first failed to do. My disposition being amiable and cheerful, I was generally loved by all my friends, and more especially by my parents who looked upon me as the "sunbeam" of their home; therefore, the thought of an earthly separation was to them unendurable. In this difficulty I also had recourse to my Father confessor, who was the umpire to be consulted on every occasion. The advice I received from him was, to go without their consent if I failed to get it. I must despise the counsel and commands of my

parents in this respect, and embrace the conventual life despite their wishes, because the allegiance I owed to God and my spiritual guide took the precedence, and I was bound to follow his advice under penalty of committing a "grievous" sin. He condemned my parents, and called them "agents of the devil," in trying to rob God of my soul.

My father, seeing my determination to enter a convent, reluctantly gave his consent, comforting himself with the reflection that I would be numbered with the elect—fighting the good fight—one of the "chosen few." After one year spent in prayer and meditation on the important step I was about to take, the eventful day arrived when I must separate myself from all I loved on earth, all the happy and dear associations of my innocent girlhood.

The first of October, 1862, was my last day at home, the last day spent in the society of my dear parents, my little brothers and sisters, my beloved associates—the last day of happiness for weary, weary, years of desolation. I cannot now recall that day without the deepest emotion. Oh, why did I first break up the family circle? Why did I impose upon myself such a living death? Why did I not listen to the voice of my heart, and of reason? But alas! it is too late now to repine, the fiat hath gone forth and can never be revoked.

I must now take the final farewell of the home circle. All are there, but in a few moments one will be absent, never again to take her accustomed place among them. I kneel at my father's knee to receive his blessing, ere I leave him for-

ever. Tremblingly and in broken accents he prays God to bless his child, while the hot tears, dropping like rain upon my bowed head, as I listen to his prayer, convulse me with an unspeakable grief.

Once again I lean upon my idolized mother's breast and listen to the throbbing of that loving and faithful heart, bursting with sorrow as she clasps to her embrace for the last time, her first born child. Dear heart, where I had so often been pillowed and soothed in childhood, and where girlhood's griefs had so often been assuaged, shall I never rest there again? Farewell, my darling mother! were I being conveyed from you to be buried beneath the earth, I could not be more literally dead than I must thenceforth be to you and to the world. Farewell, my little brothers and sisters! I will no longer soothe and humor your childish fancies, nor lull you to sleep with your accustomed lullabys. Farewell every dear and familiar object! my eyes must rest upon you for the last time. Farewell, my beloved associates, and bosom friends! we will no longer share each other's joys and griefs. Farewell, to all the loved ones, and oh, forgive me if I ever wilfully occasioned you annoyance or pain. Father, mother, brothers, sisters, forgive all my faults, and pray for me!

All are in sobs and tears.

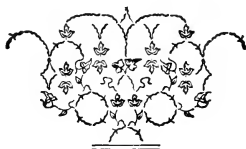
I at last tear myself from my mother's embrace, and the last object my eyes rested upon that never-to-be-forgotten night was the beautiful loving eyes of my grief stricken mother, looking after me so full of sorrow and tenderness.

Ah, mother, dear mother, better a thousand times for you

and for me could you have seen me conveyed to the grave, than to the wrongs and sufferings that awaited me in the living tomb of the convent.

The tie is broken. The knot is severed. I am with you no more.

Farewell home, happiness, mother—all of earth, Farewell!



CHAPTER II.

ST. ELIZABETH'S CONVENT, MADISON, N. J.

St. Elizabeth's Convent is delightfully situated on the Morris and Essex R. R., nearly midway between the stations of Madison and Morristown, and commands a beautiful view of the surrounding country. The main building, formerly known as "Seton Hall College," is exclusively occupied by the nuns. The Academy or boarding school for young ladies is a separate building, as also is "St. Joseph's preparatory College for boys." The schools there are conducted with consummate skill; and with few exceptions the pupils become warmly attached to the nuns, of whose lives they see only the fair and poetic coloring which hides from the world the privations, intrigues, and horrors within. Of these schools I will speak more at length in another chapter. Adjoining the nunnery is a chapel for the use of nuns and pupils; attached to this chapel is a beautiful Gothic cottage, fitted up with many of the appurtenances of modern luxury, and occupied by the Chaplain and priests. The grounds are spacious and well regulated. The buildings are shaded by tall and stately trees, giving to the place the appearance of an Eden-like retreat.

This community of Sisters of Charity is a branch of Mount St. Vincent, near Yonkers, N. Y., and was established in the diocese of New Jersey, by Bishop Bayley, of Newark, in the year 1859. Among the first of the sisters appointed to the Newark diocese was sister Mary Xavier, for whom Bishop Bayley formed a deep attachment, and as a proof of his devotion to her, he granted her the exclusive privilege of reigning "Mother Superior" for life, notwithstanding it is contrary to the rules of the order, which forbid superiors to hold office longer than three years, and then only by vote of the sisters. However, Mother Xavier, by her shrewdness and dexterity, is well fitted to fill the office to which she has been appointed. She is a lady about thirty-five years of age, somewhat below the medium height, urbane and polished in her manners, and possessed of a large share of Jesuit strategy and plausibility.

The order of Sisters of Charity was founded by St. Vincent de Paul, in the year 1633, in France, and introduced into the United States by Mother E. Seton, in the year 1812, near Emmettsburg, Md. There is a division among the sisters of St. Vincent, and the sisters of Mother E. Seton in regard to rules and dress. The costume of the Sisters of St. Vincent consists of a grey flannel habit clumsily made, and singular looking "cornet" worn on the head, cut out of white linen in the form of wings to represent the "dove," and presenting a very uncouth and repulsive appearance. The Sisters of Mother E. Seton are attired in a black woolen habit, with a cape covering the waist, a white linen collar, tastefully turned down over the cape; the face nearly concealed by a black cam-

bric cap, drawn closely around the head, and tied in a neat bow under the chin. The chaplet of beads, to which is attached a large crucifix, is suspended from the waist nearly to the feet. The habit of novices is similar to that of the professed nuns, with the exception that novices wear brown instead of black. The Sisters of Madison adopt the above dress of Mother E. Seton.

On the 2d of October, 1862, at 11 A. M., I beheld for the first time this establishment, this whited sepulchre so fair and beautiful without, but within full of corruption. I was unusually depressed in spirits as I approached that convent prison in which I was thenceforth to be entombed, and shut out from the beautiful world. The outward aspect of nature seemed to pity me; the heavens were clouded, and the wind sighed through the trees with the voice of a human mourner. There was a profound silence about the place, a silence which accorded with the solemn loneliness of my heart still smarting with the pain of separation from all I loved. Had death stripped me of every friend or relative on earth, I could not have felt more bereft, lonely, desolate, and grief stricken than I did that gloomy Autumn morning, when I stood in the solitude of the convent grounds. My heart and soul filled with a vague uncertainty concerning the unnatural discipline enforced within its walls. I was not wholly ignorant of the obligations required of me. I knew ere I entered, that I must leave my own will, judgment, reason, and liberty outside the convent doors, and subject myself blindly to the guidance of superiors. I was tempted to turn back from the slavery, hardships, deprivations,

and austerities of that unnatural life to the liberty, love, warmth and protection of my father's home ; but I had gone too far, I had put my hands to the plough, and if I should turn back, I would not be fit for the " Kingdom of Heaven." I approached the main entrance and rang the bell. A sad, pensive looking sister answered my summons at the door, and ushered me into a spacious and elegantly furnished parlor, where I was received by Mother Xavier, who in a most gracious and affectionate manner welcomed me to her "abode of peace." She expressed herself highly pleased with the refinement of my appearance and manners, telling me that her "prayer had been answered in the Lord sending me to her, as she was very much in need of educated and accomplished sisters." She portrayed in the most glowing manner the "blessed advantage of my holy vocation which called me away from the noisy, sinful world to the safe and peaceful haven of a religious life in the convent ;" assuring me I would receive an hundred fold of heavenly gifts if I would only remain faithful to my vocation, and forget my country and my father's house—because it is not sufficient that the body quit the world, the heart also must quit it and break off all attachment for it. "All those," said she, "that enter our holy order must not only consider that they quit father, mother, kindred, friends, and whatsoever they possess in the world, but must believe that Jesus Christ addresses them in these words : "He that hates not father, mother, brothers, sisters, yea and himself, cannot be my disciple."

Oh, blind votaries of a benighted faith! the only sacrifice our merciful Saviour requires is a contrite and humble heart, which

His true disciples give Him without severing the golden links wrought by God himself, which can not be broken with impunity, nor cast aside, nor torn asunder, without becoming a chain of iron pressing upon the bleeding heart, stifling every pure and spontaneous desire, crushing every lawful and noble affection, and leaving the heart and soul a dry, barren, desolated waste, incapable of producing aught save a diseased and noxious vegetation.



CHAPTER III.

THREE MONTH'S EXPERIENCE AS A CANDIDATE.

I was permitted to rest one week ere I would enter as a candidate, and during that time I was treated as all visitors are, with great kindness and affection by the mother and sisters. At the end of the week, I was stripped of my worldly clothes and attired in the plain black dress and white muslin cap of the candidate, and entered upon a probation of three months, during which time my disposition was studied and tried. I was sent to work in the dormitories, study halls, refectories, kitchen and laundry. It is a custom established in all convents to employ freely, candidates and novices in every species of toil, and the more repugnant and distasteful any kind of occupation is perceived to be to particular individuals, the more certainly are they chosen to perform it. Accordingly the candidate known to have been most delicately and tenderly nurtured, whose hands have never before come in contact with hard service, is there chosen to perform the most menial offices. Therefore I was chosen to perform the most distasteful and laborious work in the convent. The manner of the sisters changed from the sweet, gentle beings they at first seemed to

harsh, unkind, tyrannical task-masters. I found among them every nationality and disposition. I was never accustomed to unkindness, therefore I was extremely sensitive, and deeply wounded by the least unkind look or word. I could not please the sisters, no matter how much I would try. In the dormitories I would labor two or three hours, making beds, etc., and the sister in charge, without any provocation, would compel me to undo my work, and then remake them, while she would remain standing over me, with as much severity in manner and tone as a slaveholder would display towards a slave. Also in the kitchen, refectory, and laundry, everything I did the sisters termed half done, although I was confident that in many respects my work was really well done.

I was one day commanded to scrub with a brush and sand, on my knees, the large study hall. Such work was new to me, therefore most laborious. Nevertheless, I performed my task in the best manner I knew how. Moreover, being of a delicate organization, it was accomplished with great pain and difficulty, and consequently took me a long time to complete it. When my task was nearly finished, the novice mistress appeared and in a furious manner chided me for my laziness; snatched the brush from me with such violence as to tear the skin from the palm of my hand, at the same time throwing a pail of water over the hall, and thereby compelling me to re-scrub the hall in less time than it could usually be performed by a woman familiar with such work all her life, while the task was rendered next to unendurable by the pain of my hands, which were torn and bleeding. This is a small specimen of

the trials which awaited me: it was but the beginning of sorrows.

On another occasion, I was obliged to wash all the pots and kettles, and scour all the knives and forks in the establishment. My hands, which were naturally very soft and white, began to look soiled and dirty. Having remarked in my simplicity to Sister Margaret, the housekeeper, "Indeed sister, I am now ashamed of my hands!" she sharply returned, "Well thin, I'll be afther making ye more ashamed of 'em." Accordingly she called me out into another room where a sister was white-washing the walls, and commanded me to dip my hands into a pot of hot lime. I hesitated a moment, thinking certainly she could not mean it; however I was soon convinced of her earnestness by her harsh tone, "None of yer airs now; but do as I bid ye, or I'll tell the mother of ye." I put my hands down into the hot lime, and she held them there some minutes. For several weeks my hands were in a most pitiable condition. The skin would crack and bleed at every movement, causing me to suffer the most excruciating pain, and yet I was forced to wash and hang out clothes in the frost and cold of December, the skin from my bleeding hands often peeling off and adhering to the frozen garments. Of course they presented a most shocking appearance, their smoothness and whiteness gone, they were red, swollen, and chapped. I made no complaint, but bore that penance in silence, remarking to a sympathizing candidate that I justly merited it for being so proud and vain of my hands.

I was one day appointed to wait on the table in the young

ladies' refectory, and while there, I conversed a few moments with a young lady from Providence, who recognized me, and was acquainted with many of my friends. Sister Cleophas, the rectorian, overheard me, and the consequence was my subjection to a public humiliation before the community, being obliged to throw myself prostrate on the threshold of the community-room, to be walked over as a door-mat by the other sisters.

I could give many more instances of singular unkindness which were visited upon me during the three month's candidature; but those mentioned must for the present suffice, as I have not time nor space to dwell long on a three month's experience when in one volume I must relate an experience of ~~ix~~ years. Had I yielded to the temptation, which, during those three months, often urged me to fly back to my home from that cruel life, I would have been saved a great deal of suffering, but I am not one of those who, daunted by unforeseen sufferings, draw back from a purpose but half accomplished. The results often dawned upon me, but they did not intimidate me. To every fresh exaction I readily and often cheerfully submitted. I had become so thoroughly imbued with a spirit of self-sacrifice that my feet ran rapidly along the thorny road I had begun to tread, and no penance or mortification appeared too hard, no amount of self-crucifixion too great to be endured for the atonement of my sins. I was a dupe, a slave, a captive—a captive under a yoke most cruel and despotic, because it fetters and binds the affections, and tramples upon the purest and holiest ties of our social being. Through the false zeal and blind fervor which then actuated me, I had learned to over-

come everything which was repugnant to me, and instead of shrinking from those things naturally offensive to me, I began to seek them.

My superiors soon became satisfied that my vocation for the religious life was from God, and the mother held me up to the novices as a model of simplicity, humility, and docility. Finally, on the 1st of January, 1863, my hair, of which I was once very proud, was shorn from my head, and I was clothed in the brown habit of the novice, receiving the name of Sister Teresa de Chantal, by which I was thenceforth to be known. Oh, I can never forget the awful solemnity of my feelings on that never-to-be forgotten New Year's day, when I put off the old and familiar scenes of life, and embraced the new and unfamiliar austerities of an untried experience. And oh, how often during that day would come the harrowing reflection—Home, and mother, lost, lost to me forever! Never again to enter that hallowed circle! Never again behold its loved ones! Never again to make the walls ring with my girlish joy! Never again to listen to the sweet voice of my mother, as it breathed its melody in my poor lonely ear! But this was a vain and futile shrinking; alas! I had deliberately consigned myself to an inevitable destiny, and no power can avert it now. I had as I thought laid myself down forever at the feet of Jesus, to become his bride, and live like him while on earth, poor, despised, and self-sacrificing; henceforth only subject to the will of those appointed to rule over me. Little did I dream, when entering on this dark and tortuous path, whither it would conduct me.

CHAPTER IV.

RULES AND DAILY ROUTINE OF THE SISTERS.

BEFORE I proceed further with my experience, I will briefly portray the daily routine of a Sister of Charity according to the rules. At the first stroke of the bell, which rings at half-past four in the morning, every sister rises hastily from her bed, falls prostrate and kisses the floor. Should a sister fail to rise at the first sound of the bell, even if ill or indisposed, she is reported to the superior and required to do penance as for a great crime. Sisters are lauded for reporting the short-comings of each other. All dress in silence, and make their beds in one half hour.

At five o'clock another bell is rung, and all repair to the community-room or chapel, for prayer. After some vocal prayers to the Blessed Virgin, and the invocation of saints, the morning meditation is then read. The meditation is generally divided into three points, each point mentioning some subject of contemplation: such as the suffering of souls in Purgatory, or some circumstance in the life of the Blessed Virgin, or saints; and, during Lent, on the passion of CHRIST—the meditation is made on the knees, the body being kept erect and motionless.

This position, for an hour, is very painful, and it often happens that many of the sisters faint before the exercise is over. The meditation concludes with a prayer to the Blessed Virgin in the following words: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy mother of God: despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O ever-glorious and blessed Virgin! Amen." The sisters then kiss the floor, and the bell rings for mass. On the missions sisters attend the parish Church.

After mass the sisters assemble in the refectory for breakfast, which consists of the best of beefsteak, strong coffee, etc. Silence is always observed in the refectory during meals, while one of the sisters reads aloud from the lives of the saints; the priests, and superiors, however, give permission for talk and recreation whenever they feel like it. After breakfast, the sisters repair to their different duties until nine o'clock, when the bell rings for school.

At half-past eleven the sisters and pupils kneel in prayer and examination of conscience until twelve o'clock, when school is dismissed and dinner served. This is a savory meal of rich soups, roast meats, all kinds of vegetables, and delicious desserts, with porter, ale, etc. (Sisters, like the priests, live on the fat of the land, extorted from the poor Irish people, who would give their last "Guiskeen" to "His Riverince," or the "Howley Sisters.") After dinner there is recreation or play till school time, when the sisters again engage in teaching.

At half-past three all say the rosary or beads, litany of the saints, etc., and school is dismissed; the sisters then go to the church or chapel for one-half hour's adoration of the consecrated

wafer, or, as it is called, the "Blessed Sacrament." Supper is served at five o'clock.

Any observation or inquiry respecting the health or absence of sisters is prohibited. The rules wisely forbid the sisters to ask unnecessary questions, and two sisters must not talk together alone; there must always be a third party present. Sisters are permitted to visit the sick and prisoners during the spare time from their devotional exercises, before or after school; however, none must be out after six o'clock in the evening.

At half-past six the sisters listen to reading from Rodriguez's "Christian Perfection," or the "Conferences" of St. Vincent de Paul, until seven o'clock; they then have recreation for one hour.

At eight o'clock the bell rings for Chapter, which I will try to explain as follows: The Superior sits and listens to the accusation or confession of the sisters, which each one makes on her knees in the following manner, "My sister, I accuse myself of having walked too heavily; of making too much noise in shutting the doors; of giving my eyes too much liberty; of running down stairs too fast; of not rising at the first sound of the bell in the morning; of eating between meals; of kissing a little infant for its beauty. I spent too much time in the parlor; also conversed too long with Father so and so. For these and all other sins, which I cannot call to mind, I humbly beg a penance, and also request my sisters to point out to me the faults which they may have observed in me, contrary to our holy rules.' Penances are then inflicted by the Mistress of Chapter, ac-

ording as she likes or dislikes the sisters, and if she is actuated by jealousy or envy, she will keep the sisters on their knees two hours at a time, while she will unjustly accuse them of faults which they never committed. (Sisters sin with impunity against the direct commandments of God without reprehension, while the least insignificant offense against the rules and customs is punished with severe penances.)

After chapter they join in vocal prayers from the prayer book. The lights are then extinguished, and all retire to their different cells. (Chapter nights sisters retire about 11 o'clock.) The superior often dispenses with the rules and gives refreshment to the priests, when they often linger until the "wee sma' hours."

Sisters are obliged to go to confession every Friday to the parish priest, and every three months they make an extra confession to a Jesuit or Passionist Father. The rite of confession affords the fathers great freedom to accomplish the purposes they may entertain. Seated in the Confessional, priests are empowered to propound questions which, from the lips of others, would be deemed flagrant insults; kneeling before him, a sister must listen to and answer questions which fire a pure soul with indignation, and are calculated to destroy every feeling of modesty, which is the handmaid of chastity and woman's most beautiful gift. Auricular confession in the Roman Catholic Church is the underlying element which gravitates to the priest as its centre.

The Confessional is a spiritual Court of Justice; the priest is God's legate; he hears the accusation of the soul in its own

condemnation ; he is minister plenipotentiary to the Omnipotent. Confession produces deleterious effects upon the soul of woman through the undue persuasion of priests working upon her sensitive scrupulosity and the excessive intensity of her nature. After her mental strength has been drawn to the proper point, she is irrevocably in his priestly toils. Oh, how much of this is carried on and buried in the cess-pool of the confessional ! Sisters are obliged to regard the voice of their confessor with as much credence as if Christ himself addressed them ; therefore, no limit is placed to their confidence until they are victimized by the black-hearted betrayer.

In the Convent, superiors and officers are elected by vote (one illustration of the woman's ballot-box). There are factions and party feelings. The defeated party are jealous of the triumphant ; consequently it becomes a hell of contention, strife and envy. Sadly do they mistake who think nuns are free from the evil susceptibilities of human frailty. Neither is it to be wondered at that many of them become hardened hypocrites by thus living in direct opposition to the best part of their nature, while many others become the sorrowing victims of Convent wrongs. Oh, how many gifted and talented young minds are pining away in their prison-cells without the courage to escape such a life of mockery ! In a wild and youthful enthusiasm they made their choice ; and they must abide by it until death claims them as his own.

CHAPTER V.

THE VOW OF POVERTY.

I SHALL now proceed to show the obligations of nuns as bound by the Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. A sister is bound by the vow of poverty to have no dominion—no property—no use of any temporal thing—without license from a superior; hence, two things necessarily follow: first, that the vow of poverty obliges a nun not to possess, or take, or receive, any temporal thing, in order to keep, make use of, or dispose of it, in any manner whatsoever, without leave of the Superior. Second, that a sister acts contrary to her vow of poverty, not only when without permission she takes, retains, or in any manner disposes of anything that belongs to the community, but likewise when she accepts of anything from persons abroad, though they be parents or friends, without the consent of the superiors, from whom it is a sacrilege to conceal anything; therefore no limit is placed to the despotism of superiors who selfishly monopolize all things for themselves and the priests.

A sister commits a most grievous sin if she violates the most trivial obligation of her Vow of Poverty; for instance, if a sister, without leave of a superior, should give to another a pic-

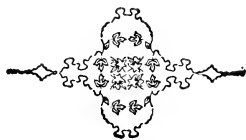
ture, book, flower, pin, or needle, she would sin mortally ; because the act of giving it away would show she had been proprietor of it. Neither can a sister, without license, take a book out of the library, or anything out of the wardrobe, refectory, or any other place, without acting in direct opposition to the vow of poverty. If a friend should send to a sister any delicacy, or any memento of friendship, the superior will take it from her and give it to another ; for it is as much for one as another, and every member of the community may claim it equally. St. Austin says, in relation to the vow of poverty, as observed by religious orders, “ If any one should have anything given him and he should conceal it from his superior, he is guilty of theft.” St. Basil is of the same opinion when he says, “ For a religious to possess anything as an individual, without the superior’s consent, is theft.” Hence, as taught by the most eminent doctors of the Catholic Church, it is clear that a sister who receives or keeps anything in private is guilty of theft and sacrilege.

In order to have complete control over the beclouded minds of subjects, wily superiors will draw on their fears and imaginations by relating frightful examples which God made of those *religiuses* who violated their vows. In order to illustrate the ignorance and blind superstition of Catholic sisters, I will select a few examples from the “ Christian Perfection,” of Alphonsus Rodriguez, Spanish Jesuit, which is daily read to Sisters of Charity and Jesuits. Rodriguez says, “ We read in the chronicles of St. Francis that there was a brother in one of the Convents of his order who knew how to read a little, and, desirous

to learn more, found means of procuring himself a Psalter. But as St. Francis' rule prohibited all lay-brothers to learn to read, the father guardian, understanding he had got this book, asked him for it. He answered that he had it not; the guardian pressed him to tell where he had put it, and showed him that to live proprietor of anything was to live in a continual breach of his vows; yet the brother would not hearken to what he said, nor obey him. Not long after this he fell dangerously sick, and the guardian, for fear he should die in that state, commanded him, in virtue of holy obedience, to restore the book or tell him where he had hid it; but this unhappy man, being hardened in his sin, died without declaring anything. The night after he was buried, when the sacristan rang to matins, he saw a frightful ghost coming suddenly towards him; and hearing a melancholy, mournful voice, without being able to understand anything distinctly, he was seized with such fear that he fell down as if dead. The religious, having heard the first peal of matins, wondered why the bell did not ring again; and, after having waited a little they went to the church and found the sacristan lying along as a dead man, who, coming to himself, told them what had happened. After they had begun to sing matins, the same ghost appeared again, crying and howling out lamentably, but did not utter any word so clearly as to be understood. The guardian, to encourage his religious who seemed very much affrighted, commanded the spirit in the name of God to tell who he was, and what he wanted there. To whom it replied, I am the lay-brother whom you buried yesterday. Then the guardian asked him if he stood in need of the prayers of the religious?

to whom he answered, no, for they could do him no good, as he was eternally damned on account of the book which he had kept in his possession at the hour of his death. Since, therefore, replied the guardian, we cannot do you any service, I command you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to depart hence immediately, and to return no more to disturb us. These words were scarcely uttered when the ghost disappeared and was never seen after."

Examples like the above are daily quoted from the writings of so-called saints, calculated to engender the most rank ignorance and superstition. Oh, what duplicity is here practised by those in authority upon the darkened minds of their unfortunate dupes, who accept these lying legends with as much avidity as a prattling little child accepts the fables of the "Arabian Nights."



CHAPTER VI.

VOWS OF CHASTITY AND OBEDIENCE.

THE two vows known as Chastity and Obedience will doubtless prove startling to those to whom Jesuitical casuistry and doctrine are unknown pursuits of study. A sister breaks the vow of chastity by looking a man in the face; she must not raise her eyes when speaking to one of the opposite sex; she must not touch a sister's hand, or habit, or allow herself to be touched by another. If allowed to see a father or brother, she cannot take his hand; she must renounce all curiosity, never look around her, nor through a window, nor toward a door when opened to see who enters. She must walk in the cloister and street with down-cast eyes, never showing a sign of recognition to an acquaintance.

Should a pupil linger beside a sister longer than is necessary, the sister is reported to the superior as being too familiar with the children. On account of my natural cheerfulness of character I was a particular favorite with the children and scholars in general, consequently my pupils were very affectionate toward me, often manifesting their love by taking my hand, encircling my waist, sitting at my feet, kissing my habit, etc.,

whereupon I would be reported as guilty of great impropriety, because I would venture to show any affection toward some gentle girl whose sunny smile would cheer my sad and isolated heart, which seemed perishing for love and sympathy. I was thus forced to recoil from their innocent demonstrations of love as from a serpent's touch, which, if I failed to do, I would be reported by the spies of the community who are ever on the alert.

Should a sister's thoughts go out into the world, or should her mind overleap prescribed limits, especially with reference to a priest, she must make known that thought at the Confessional. In other words, should a sister fall in love with a priest she is bound to tell him of it, and obtain his advice about it. Should a sister, on a mission, entertain an affection for a priest, she can inform the superior, and ask for a change of place.

A sister is bound to accuse herself of all things relating to chastity; must disclose any temptation, nay, less than that, a dream, a vision against purity must be minutely detailed to the confessor. Here note the infamous craft of these regulations: A young girl being bound by her rules to disclose every impulse of her nature to her confessor,—the priest thus informed can take advantage of her as he may feel inclined. Sometimes policy will induce him to express a holy horror at the offense with a view to exalting his sanctity, especially if he have an aversion for the penitent, or should deem her an unsuitable subject for his purposes. On the other hand, should his evil heart suggest to him the moral destruction of this sister, how great the facility he possesses for its accomplishment. In the

book of the "Conferences," St. Vincent directs that a priest shall not be permitted to enter the apartments of the sisters. The devil, he remarks, "is always at work, and even angels have fallen;" and yet the novices sleep in cells without doors. It is also forbidden that a sister should see a priest alone in the parlor; neither is it allowed that she should visit a priest alone; yet she may remain at the Confessional for any length of time alone with her confessor; and she may confess to him in his own room in case of his indisposition. The priests often enter the rooms of the superiors, and remain there for a considerable time; nor is any one permitted to open the door, or enter the room during their stay. When a priest enters the room of a superior, or officer, should a private sister be present at the time, she is told to withdraw at once; nor is any one allowed to enter while he remains.

Various injunctions and examples, as the following, are daily read to the sisters. St. Alphonsus Liguori says, "a deliberate glance at a person of a different sex, enkindles an infernal spark which damns the soul." St. Clara would never look in the face of a man. She was greatly afflicted because she once involuntarily saw the countenance of a priest. (There are not many St. Claras in the convents of the nineteenth century!) It is related of St. Arsenius, that a noble lady went to visit him in the desert to beg of him to recommend her to God. When this saint perceived that his visitor was a woman, he turned away from her. She then said to him, "Arsenius, since you will neither see nor hear me, at least remember me in your pray-

ers." "No!" replied the saint, "but I will beg of God to make me forget you, and nevermore to think of you."

By the vow of Obedience, a sister is required to give up not only her will but also her judgment and reason. Her superior, a woman oftentimes of inferior intellect, ignorant, superstitious, and domineering, cannot be addressed except on the knees of the sister; she must kneel at her feet, and listen to her commands as coming from the mouth of God. A sister must obey promptly the first sound of the bell which calls them to the different exercises of the day and night, and instantly drop everything she is engaged in. Even if writing she must leave a letter half formed. A sister must obey blindly, i. e., obey without reasoning on any point, and submit will and understanding to a superior; therefore, a sister must submit indiscriminately to everything commanded, though that which is commanded should even be criminal. This obedience is called perfect because it obeys without discussion or examination; hence, a sister in the observance of obedience must be as a dead body which sees not, answers not, complains not, nor has any perception; so a sister must have no eyes to observe curiously her superior's actions; must make no reply to the prescriptions of obedience, no matter whether they are criminal, repulsive, or absurd. A sister must obey as if she had no feeling, accordingly she must be in the hands of superiors like a staff which is taken in the hands to walk with. A staff goes wherever it is carried; it has no motion but what it receives from the hand that controls it. A sister must be the same; she gives herself into the hands of her superiors, to do with as they like. When a sister receives

a command from her superior, or confessor, she is taught to believe that she is more certain of doing the will of God in obeying their orders than if an angel came down from heaven to manifest His will to her. Her rule says, that obedience is the only sure way that leads to salvation. The vow of obedience is supreme—the voice of the superior, the voice of God; therefore, if any command clashes with the vow of chastity, or any other obligation, the vow of obedience must have the supremacy.

A sister is in the greatest danger of moral death who thus gives herself to the guidance of passive and blind obedience. Her conscience is stifled; she must not trouble herself about the sin or its consequences, when she is bound to think the *vow of obedience* the only way to heaven. Oh, what blasphemy! what delusion! May the blessed light of the Son of God shine upon their poor misguided souls, and let fall from their darkened eyes the scales of error, and give them to know and feel that Jesus is the *only* way, the truth, and the life. Such is the earnest prayer of my heart for all deluded children of superstition. None, save those who, like myself, have been groping in the black wilderness of Romanism, and at last have found deliverance by the light of Jesus, can know what it means.



CHAPTER VII.

A MISSION TO ST. JOSEPH'S ORPHAN ASYLUM, IN PATERSON, N. J.

I HAVE briefly treated of the vows and regulations of Sisters of Charity in the preceding chapters, in order that my readers can more clearly understand the nature of the obligations enforced upon me by these vows. I will again resume my personal experience. On the fourth of January, 1863, four days after I was clothed in the habit of the novice, I was sent to Paterson, N. J. At the sight of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, that cold winter day, my soul was filled with the most conflicting emotions, and I became so overpowered by my feelings that I gave way to a copious flow of tears as I entered the community room, to present myself to my new companions, whom I will now introduce to the readers, as follows :

Sister Mary Joseph, the sister-servant, was a most stern and unfeeling woman, well calculated to render my novitiate one of unmitigated tyranny. She received me in the coldest of cold manners, and my affectionate greeting to the other sisters was also repulsed by their coldness. They appeared like mere statues, without feeling, without heart. Sister Gertrude, a

weak-minded woman of twenty-six years, was next in office to the sister-servant. Sister Ann Joseph, a cranky, sharp-visaged woman of thirty years, was mother of orphans. Sister Mary de Sales, a German, about twenty-two years of age, born and brought up in the woods of Boonton, N. J., without any education, in fact, unable to write her own name, had been nevertheless appointed to teach the orphans. This sister was one of those weak souls who are always scandalized by their neighbor's faults; consequently she was the principal spy of the house, always reporting the faults of her companions to sister Mary Joseph, who commended her for it. Lastly, sister Mary Gonzaga, another cruel and stern woman of thirty, filled up the number of those uncongenial souls, among whom my desolate and lonely heart was destined to become still more desolate and lonely.

On the morning following my arrival, Sister Mary Joseph promoted Sister Ann Joseph, to be house-keeper, and installed me Mother of the Orphans. This office, to me, was one of the most trying that could possibly be imagined, and no language can express the feelings I experienced when I first beheld these poor children huddled together in a cheerless class-room, without fire, without shoes, bare shoulders, and bare arms, crying and shivering with the cold, presenting altogether the most forlorn and miserable scene I had ever before witnessed. The daily regimen of these poor children is as follows: They rise at six o'clock, hastily dress, and repair to the bath-room, the older orphans always assisting the younger because the sisters are forbid touching them. After they are washed and combed, they

proceed to a cold class-room for morning prayers; then to a scanty and unpalatable breakfast, which, without any change, always consists of dry bread and coffee, without milk or sugar, made from the refuse coffee of the sisters' table. The orphans' table is covered with a black, greasy oil-cloth; to each child is thrown a piece of bread, which is eaten from the table without a plate; the coffee is served in tin cups. Their appetite is never satisfied on the scanty allowance given them; and they retire from the refectory almost as hungry as when entering it. It is most painful to witness the wistful and yearning glances they cast at the fragrant and tempting meats on the sisters' table.

The oldest of the orphans is scarcely twelve years, yet they perform all the work in the asylum. They do all their own washing and ironing; scrub the halls, dormitories, class-rooms, and refectories; make beds, sweep, and wash dishes, etc. At half-past eight, A. M., those who are permitted to attend school assemble in the clothes-room, where they divest themselves of their old and tattered clothes, and don the red or green plaid uniform with which they appear in public. At twelve o'clock they again march, two by two, to the refectory, where they partake of a meal, if possible, more uncomfortable than that of the morning. Their dinner consists of soup made from poor and infected meat thickened with the waxy remnants of the unleavened wafer, and crusts of mouldy bread, portioned out to them in cups, from which they eat with discolored pewter spoons. I never saw a plate, or knife and fork, on the orphans' table.

At one o'clock they again go to school, and remain until

three, when school is dismissed. After school the uniform is replaced by their old comfortless rags. At five o'clock they have supper, which consists invariably of mush and molasses, and, for a change, mush and buttermilk. Sometimes the weak, little stomachs of these children refused their unpalatable food; and on such occasions sister Ann Joseph, the house-keeper, would stand over them with a leather strap, called Cat-o'-nine-tails, and whip them until they ate the nauseous food; or else they were starved until they were glad to eat anything.

I could not refrain from weeping when, on the second day of my arrival, sister Ann Joseph (their former mother) compelled them to run with bare feet in the snow for one-half hour, and she applied the cat-o'-nine-tails vigorously on the bare shoulders of those who stopped or hesitated. This sister ridiculed my tender feelings toward the orphans, telling me I would soon get hardened to such things. I asked her what object she had in thus exposing those poor little ones to such hardships; she replied, "to make them tough and hardy," as she did "not believe in making hot-house plants of orphans;" and she further remarked, that during the two years she had charge of them she never failed to make them run in that manner twice a week, winter and summer, and that I must enforce the same discipline.

Notwithstanding the severe instructions given me in regard to the government of these forlorn little ones, I resolved to rule them in love and kindness. Their helpless and desolate condition made a deep impression on my mind and called out all the sympathy of my heart. I spoke to them tenderly, and smiled

upon them affectionately, and they soon ceased to tremble at my approach. They were in such great fear of the sisters, that the very sight of one would send them, shivering and crouching with terror, out of sight. I assisted the young children in all their necessities; I combed their heads, which, through neglect were swarming with vermin, and covered with sores and scabs, rendering it the most repulsive office I ever performed; however, with daily combing, and the use of red-precipitate, they were in a good condition before three weeks had passed. Every Saturday I bathed their neglected bodies, which were also covered with vermin. This treatment, to which they had been strangers, soon obtained the affection of their little hearts for me, and they would hail my approach with pleasure, every eye beaming with welcome whenever I came near them. They ventured to sit at my feet, and by my side, vying with each other who would come the nearest to me, while I would relate to them little anecdotes as I sat mending their tattered clothes. I was only with the orphans in the morning, before school, and after school in the evening, until the next morning, as I was also obliged to teach sixty children in the Parochial school.

But this state of things was not to last always. Sister De Sales, the "reporter," seeing the affection and, as she called it, undue familiarity which I manifested toward the poor orphans, reported me to sister Mary Joseph, who called me to account for it, and forbade me allowing the children to come near me. I told these little ones the command I had received from my superior, at the same time assuring them of my love, and that I would show them all the kindness in my power. I was sub-

jected to the closest scrutiny by the sly sister De Sales. It was a matter of astonishment to her why I never whipped the orphans, and one day she reported to sister Mary Joseph that one of them, named Mary Grey, had told her a falsehood, and ought to be punished severely for it. Accordingly she came to me with an order from sister Mary Joseph, commanding me to inflict a severe chastisement. I called Mary Grey aside, and chided her for her fault by portraying to her in vivid colors the enormity and hideousness of the sin, and in punishment I told her to go on her knees and ask God to forgive her, which she did very contritely. But the poor child was not to escape so easily; sister Mary Joseph, who was watching through a side door, strided into the room, and in a fierce manner asked me why I did not obey her orders and punish the child. I replied I had. To which she responded, "I'll teach you how to punish her,—you are spoiling those orphans, and soon they will rule the sisters." She then took the child into a cellar, commanding me to follow her. She tied this little child, only about six years old, across a broken chair; stripped off her clothes, and in a merciless manner applied the lash on the tender flesh, which rose in purple stripes at every stroke. Such cruelty I had never before witnessed, and the tears rolled down my cheeks at the sight. But the sight of my emotion maddened her, and turning to me she said, "I'll teach you to get over your fine feelings, and at once!" She then gave me the strap, commanding me to beat the child in the same manner she had. I remonstrated, saying I thought the child was punished enough on that occasion. Whereupon she took up a large clothes-

stick and gave me a blow with it across the shoulders, asking, "was that the way to practice the vow of obedience, as a superior's orders were not to be questioned but obeyed blindly?" There was no alternative, I must obey. I took the strap, and offering the action to God, for the first time in my life I raised my hand to inflict pain. Oh, it was a terrible trial; and I can never forget the agony of that day, and the reflections which followed. I had sacrificed all that was sacred to me on earth, and entered a convent, and for what? To labor as I thought, in the service of the poor and afflicted, and secure the salvation of my soul, aided by the example of meek and holy women; whereas, I found them cruel, hardened, and unfeeling. I expected to meet with Christian love and kindness, yet a Sister of Charity had struck me a severe blow with a large stick, and compelled me to act inhumanly. Oh, how my spirit resented such treatment, and my soul was filled with bitterness toward that cruel sister. But my conscience reproached me with sinfulness of entertaining such thoughts against a superior who represented God to me. I humbled myself, and knelt at her feet, confessing to her the feelings I entertained for her, and which her conduct called forth. I asked forgiveness, and requested her to pray for me that those temptations might leave me. She replied, "she would rather pray for the devil than for me," and ordered me out of her presence.

My heart was convulsed with an unspeakable agony, and my soul was plunged into dark waters, temptation, and despair. I retired to my lonely cell, where I seemed to see the outstretched arms of my beloved mother beckoning me with inexpressible

tenderness to come to her again and find happiness in her love. Oh, what a temptation was this to my crushed and bleeding heart to forsake the gloomy convent, and fly to my mother; to revolt against the authority of cruel superiors and break the chains which detained me in that cold and living sepulchre! But the very idea froze my blood, and an invincible terror paralyzed me. What, break my holy vows? cause so much scandal to a church which had nourished me with so many graces and blessings? become a spectacle to all the world, and an execration to the community? Alas! I had not the moral courage to brave so formidable a disgrace. What, damn my immortal soul? become a traitor to my holy vocation? I could not, I could not. I must save my soul at every cost. No matter how much and how great were the sufferings inflicted in this life, my reward would be eternal.

Such reflections were a foretaste of the many fearful struggles my heart endured for weary years in the convent. I had of my own free will commenced a life of unnatural warfare against all that was human, every heaven-bestowed instinct must be repressed and destroyed, no escape from my dreary tomb—I must abide the consequences of that false step and resign myself to my desolate fate, without love, without sympathy, a poor, forlorn orphan.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUATION OF MY EXPERIENCE IN PATERSON.

About four weeks after the events related in the last chapter, I was one day trying to reach something from the summit of the wardrobe. I was standing on a pine step-ladder, about four feet from the floor. Not being quite able to reach up far enough, I stood on "tip-toe," when the step-ladder suddenly slid from under my feet, precipitating me to the floor, and as I fell partially upon the steps, they were completely demolished. My back was severely hurt; but no matter about my personal injuries, it was the steps I lamented, because I knew I would get a severe penance for breaking them. Tremblingly I gathered up the fragments of the broken ladder—tremblingly I carried them to Sister Mary Joseph, and tremblingly I knelt at her feet and asked a penance. The words she addressed to me on that occasion are as vividly stamped on my mind as if it were yesterday I heard them. They were such unlady-like expressions, so different from anything I had ever heard before, that I will give them *verbatim*. "You great clumsy, wallowing, floundering flat-fish, it's just like you to destroy everything you touch, and as a penance you will put your lazy back to work and

make another pair just like them." Had she commanded me to fly in the air, it could not have appeared more difficult to me than to make a pair of steps. I had never in my life performed a carpenter's task of any description ; however, *obedience* would not permit me to remonstrate, or offer any excuse or argument, no matter how inexpedient and absurd the command, as "perfect obedience requires a soul without a will, and a will without an intellect." It being Saturday, there was no school, so I had all day to perform this penance at the neglect of every other duty, which I was obliged to perform before midnight. I called Emma Scanlan, the oldest of the orphans, to my assistance, and sent her into the cellar to find some pine boards, with saw, axe, hammer and nails, while I repaired to the chapel to ask St. Joseph, who was a carpenter, to teach me how to make the steps ; and then expecting a miracle, I went to my task. But St. Joseph did not come down from heaven to help me as I superstitiously expected. I sawed and hammered, and hammered and sawed, until night, before I succeeded in getting anything together in the shape of steps, and although not so complete as the former they were quite as substantial. Again I presented myself to Sister Mary Joseph to know if my workmanship would suit her ; but she was determined not to be suited, and notwithstanding the time and labor I had spent trying to obey her unjust commands, she ordered me to put on my bonnet, and go out and beg the price of them before supper. This was another deep humiliation to me ; however, I succeeded in begging five dollars from the deluded people who are afraid to refuse the "holy sisters" anything. Sister Mary

Joseph kept the five dollars for herself, and the steps I made were in use when I left Paterson, where I suppose they are now kept sacred as a relic of the since rebellious Sister de Chantal.

One morning in May all the sisters were employed making flower-beds in the garden before school time. I was busy digging with a little fire shovel, and while thus engaged a large earth worm flew up in my face, causing me to scream. It being the hour of silence, Sister Mary Joseph asked who had broken the rule by screaming? Sister De Sales, ever ready to report, answered that it was Sister Teresa de Chantal. I explained to her the cause, whereupon she ordered me to take up the worm and eat it. I was horrified at this command, and told her I was afraid it would poison me. To which she responded that even if I was sure it would kill me, it was my duty to obey, reminding me of St. Catharine of Sienna who ate worms out of a cancer in a woman's breast; and saying, that if I ever expected to become a Saint, I must imitate their mortification. Naturally I have the greatest abhorrence to any creeping thing, and the very thought of taking it in my hand, was unendurable. But to eat it, ugh! disgusting! I had no sooner taken the worm in my hand than overcome by my sensitiveness, I let it fall with another scream. At this Sister M. J. became exasperated, took the worm and forced it into my mouth and made me chew it until I became violently sick at the stomach.

Christian readers, this is an appalling picture, and perhaps you are ready to ask, Is it not overdrawn? So far from this.

believe me, it falls far short of the reality ; for no language can describe the scene as it really occurred, or the suffering it occasioned me. To you, it may seem absurd and unheard of, nevertheless it is a bitter fact, and I challenge Sister Mary Joseph to contradict it, and she is still in the community of Madison.

I have seen sisters, voluntarily and without any compulsion, eat worms and bugs. Sister De Sales always picked out the worms from apples, or any other fruit she ate, infected with them, and would come and eat them before me with great gusto, in order that I might take example from her self-mortification, and admire her sanctity in such performances. I would have been much more edified and benefited, had she set me an example of Christian charity instead of the monstrous excesses she set forth as laudable, under the names of "sanctity" and "holy austerity."

A great number of holy days are observed among the nuns, and on such days the priests spend the time in the convent, recreating with the sisters, without any regard to infringements of the rule, which allows only certain hours of the day for recreation. On these days I always managed to steal away to the chapel, but Sister Mary Joseph, to whom my piety was a stumbling block, forbade me to act differently from the other sisters, and commanded me to remain at recreation on those days, even if I did not take part. I will relate an incident which occurred on one of those days. A number of priests were spending the afternoon with the sisters, and having a merry time over their wine, ice-cream, cakes, candies, nuts, etc., in the community-

room. The floor of this room was bare. A large insect running on the floor attracted the attention of Sister Ann Joseph, who arose from her chair, and killed it with her foot, causing a very disagreeable noise, and leaving an ugly stain on the floor. I could not refrain from ejaculating, "Oh, sister, how cruel!" This exclamation attracted the attention of the priests to the act, which they did not appear to have noticed before. Sister Mary Joseph was mortified to have the priests notice the unlady-like action of Sister Ann Joseph, and she gave me a look which plainly said, "you will suffer for that." However, the evening passed away without any reprimand; but the next day she sent a child to the school after me, ordering me to her presence at once. I obeyed and found her in the hen-yard with a large carving knife in her hand, and a hen tied by the feet. She addressed me thus: "I will cure your sensitive nerves, and teach you never to mortify me by causing priests to notice the faults of the sisters. A mere novice like you to presume to find fault with the professed sisters!" She then bade me take the knife and cut the head off the hen. I took the knife and commenced to cut the hen's head. The hen began to kick and jump, which caused me to drop the knife and tremble in sympathy with the hen. I told Sister M. it was impossible for me to kill it, because I could not endure to see it suffer. She insisted, and I again tried, but with the same success as before. I tried again and again, and did not succeed till after one hour of the greatest suffering to both hen and myself, as I fainted twice during the operation.

I was not the only sister who suffered through the severity of

Sister Mary Joseph ; for she seemed to take delight in inflicting punishment on her helpless subjects. If the orphans did wrong, or destroyed by accident anything belonging to the house, I was held responsible, and made to suffer accordingly.

It frequently occurred on the Sabbath that Sister Mary Joseph would tell me to array the orphans in their green uniform for church, and just as they were ready, she would enter the class-room, come toward me and violently strike or push me, demanding to know why I did not "dress them in their red uniform." I would reply, because she had told me the green. She would then give vent to such invectives as "you lying, lazy creature, change the green for the red in five minutes, or I'll break every bone in your body," etc. The poor children were obliged to change their clothes in about five minutes to be in time for church, causing the greatest confusion among themselves, and leaving everything in the wildest disorder, and so keeping me busy until noon in restoring things to their proper order.

It was unusual to hear Sister Mary Joseph speak civilly to the sisters, but what a transformation was there in her manner and countenance when she received and conversed with her admiring guests in the parlor! She appeared then all smiles and amiability. To the world, she was a Saint, a sweet, "holy sister." Behind the scenes, she was a demon, a fierce, arbitrary virago. I will lift the curtain which hides her from the world a little higher.

I was one day obliged to consult her on a matter of obedience relative to the orphans. Fearing lest I should forget it, and

incur the penalty of a severe penance, I left my class in the school and hastened to the community-room, where I expected to find her at her post of duty, but she was not there. I noiselessly went to her bed-room, and cautiously opened the door fearing to disturb her if she should be asleep or indisposed. She was not asleep, but entertaining a Reverend Father whose name I will not give, because he is now dead, and I have chiefly to treat with the living who can defend themselves if I wrong them—in a manner very little in accordance with convent rules, or the idea of a young girl who judged all things charitably and thought evil of none. She was enraged at my intrusion, and violently pushed me through the hall and down the stairs. The fall was so severe that I walked lame for over one week. She was afraid I might report her conduct to the other sisters; therefore in the evening she called me to her room, apologized a little for throwing me down stairs, and begged of me not to mention to any one the adventure of the afternoon. With her accustomed plausibility she put a construction of innocence on her conduct, which I received with unquestioning simplicity. Her excuse was that Father D. was suddenly taken very ill while calling on business, and that she insisted upon his resting on her bed, where she could more readily minister unto him. I have given a simple fact, let the mind draw its own inference.

I do not accuse all the sisters of the community of being immoral; no, there are many pining souls, who, like myself, in all sincerity labor to become Saints, with the strange fervor which the Catholic Church teaches. What language can possibly de-

pict the pitiable condition of those poor deluded ones who are the victims of error so dark, and doctrines so fatal and ruinous? Poor creatures, is there no remedy? None: unless the power of God burst their bonds and set them free. From the depth of my heart I thank God that He has set me free at last; free from delusion and superstition; free from priestcraft and tyrannical superiors; free from convent rules and regulations; free from its prison walls, and unholy discipline. But it required the deep cuts of the chisel, and the hard and heavy strokes of the hammer to sever the chains of my captivity.



CHAPTER IX.

SOME ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF CRUELTY TO THE ORPHANS.

An orphan's fate is most desolate under any circumstances, but how much more so is it, if these poor waifs are cast entirely among strangers, and especially among those women whose hearts never throbbed with maternal love and joy, and where the unrelieved monotony and sterile dreariness of their unnatural mode of living have smothered every vestige of tenderness and compassion, and whose rule and vows oblige them to crush out of their natures every human tie, every womanly impulse, every maternal instinct. What is the fate of orphans entrusted to the care of such beings? Let the following statement of facts determine :

In the month of March, 1863, in company with Sister Mary Joseph I attended the dying bed of a poor woman named Mrs. Stanton. Her husband had been killed on the battle field, and she was compelled to go out washing to support herself and child. Finally her health failed, and she was dying. Troubled about the fate of her dear child, she sent for the Sisters of Charity, and with her dying breath commended her little one to the mercy and care of Sister Mary Joseph, entreating her

to be a mother to the orphan, for the sake of Him who saith, "Inasmuch as you have done these things to the least of my brethren, so also have ye done them unto me." Annie Stanton, the name of this little one, was scarcely three years of age and was a most lovely and interesting child. Young as she was, she grieved for her mother, and it was truly heartrending to hear her piteous cries of "Oh, take me to my mother! I want my mother! I want my mother! O my mother, my mother!" Ah, poor child! your mother has gone, and no one on earth can ever fill her place, no matter how kind they may be—nothing can ever supply a mother's love and care.

It is impossible for me to analyze, much less describe, the emotions of my heart, when Sister Mary Joseph handed this newly made orphan over to my charge to share the same fate as the rest. I trembled to admit that it was not in my power to shield this darling child from suffering, of which the length and depth can scarcely be comprehended. Alas! the unhappy child must soon, like myself, discover the hard truth, that mother and home were gone, gone forever. However, I resolved to alleviate the hardships of this child as much as I possibly could. Annie would go at the appointed time to the refectory only to leave it with her coarse food untouched. I often unobserved shared my own meals with her, but the spy De Sales was ever on the alert, and soon made known to Sister M. Joseph my "partiality"—as she termed it; consequently I was made to fast on bread and water for one week as a penance. Nevertheless I would on every available occasion pilfer from the Sisters'

table and give palatable food to the weak and delicate among the orphans. I was often severely penanced for it.

Every night before I retired, custom demanded that I should arouse the younger of the orphans and see them to the water closet. Some of the little ones were not easily awakened, therefore I would take them in my arms and carry them, contrary to the rules which forbade sisters to touch them except to inflict correction. One cold night I was caught by De Sales in the awful act of carrying Annie Stanton, whereupon I was of course reported, and Sister Ann Joseph was sent to watch me, and give me instructions in regard to the manner in which I should treat the orphans. The following night Annie Stanton cried at the unusual manner in which she was awakened. Sister Ann Joseph dragged her from the bed, and ordered her to walk on the cold floor. The child, half asleep, refused, and began to call her mother. Touched by this appeal I went toward the child in order to coax her. Sister Ann Joseph pushed me back, took off her hard leather shoe and began to beat her on the delicate flesh, which rose in black and blue ridges at every cruel blow. I could not endure this, but pulled sister away, asking her if she meant to kill the child. My interference enraged her; she sent another child for the leather strap, placed the little naked body across the bed, and beat that child till the blood came. The shrieks and screams of her victim infuriated this woman, who then seemed the personification of a fiend, to such an extent that in order to smother her cries, she dragged the little one to the bath room, placed her in the tub and turned a shower of ice water upon her, keeping

her under it until she became so chilled that her body stiffened out as if dead. As a very natural result of such barbarity, a violent fever ensued which nearly resulted in death. Never can I forget the cries of that suffering child, as she pleaded for mercy from that heartless woman, a woman too, bearing the name of a "Sister of Charity," and "Mother" to the motherless little ones under her care.

On another occasion sister Gonzaga took Mary Carrigan, a girl nine years of age, for the trifling offense of picking some gooseberries from the Sisters' garden, and shut her up in a dark closet in the cellar infested with rats and mice, from eight o'clock in the morning until five in the evening, and when this sister of Charity went to release her little victim, she found her in an idiotic condition, clinging to the wall; this brutal punishment had resulted in transforming that once bright and intelligent child into an *idiot!*

In the fall of 1864, for some slight offense Sister Mary Joseph beat Mary Gray with so much severity as to cover her naked body with black and blue stripes. This poor child, made desperate by repeated ill usage, ran away from the Asylum; was picked up in the streets and taken to the poor house, where she was discovered, and brought back to the convent.

Sister Ann Joseph beat so unmercifully a child about eleven years of age named Jennie Carney, that she also ran away bearing on her body the marks of cruelty. Lizzie Madden, twelve years of age, ran away twice, on account of ill treatment, and when she was captured and brought back the second time, Sister Mary Joseph tied her to a post with a rope, and

scourged her most inhumanly. Kitty Rooney, a sweet little child of five years, was obliged to be kept out of sight for two weeks, on account of the way her face was disfigured, by the beating and kicking she received from Sister Gonzaga.

I could relate many other instances of the sisters' unkindness to the children in the asylum, but I will merely direct the reader's attention to one more. Mrs. Berry, a poor widow, placed her two children in the asylum sometime in 1863. These children were named Sarah Ann and Mary Berry. Sarah Ann, the youngest, was about three years old. Sister Ann Joseph was infirmarian to the orphans, and she formed a marked dislike for this child, and in every possible way caused her to suffer. One day in January, 1864, Sister Ann Joseph ordered Sarah Ann away from her scanty breakfast to the infirmary in order to give her some medicine. This was a matter of surprise to me, as I knew of nothing ailing Sarah Ann that morning; moreover she was a very healthy child, never having been ill while in the Asylum. In about ten minutes after Sarah Ann left the refectory, and while I was at my breakfast, Emma Scanlon came running for me in breathless agitation, calling "O Sister, Sister! come quickly, Sarah Ann Berry is dying." I hastened to the class room where I found the child writhing on the floor in mortal agony. On taking her up she immediately expired in my arms. Fifteen minutes had scarcely elapsed after she left the refectory in the glow of health, ere she was a lifeless corpse, her sudden death spreading terror to the hearts of us all. I sent for Sister Ann Joseph who came into the class-room extremely pale and agitated.

I said, "Sister, what medicine have you given this child? See, she is dead." She authoritatively replied, "I gave her salts, what's that to you? I believe I have charge of the infirmary!" "Yes, sister, but are you sure it was salts you gave her?" Looking her steadily in the eye, for I felt a strong conviction that all was not right, as her past repeated unkindness to the little dead child rose up before me.

In a sharp angry tone she replied, "the child died of the heart disease, and it is none of your business what I gave her," slamming the door violently as she went out. I had the painful task of laying out the little corpse in its pine coffin, and it was conveyed away in six hours after death, by the undertaker, to a pauper's grave in the cold earth.

No physician was called in; no investigation made, nor the slightest inquiries permitted to be circulated in regard to the sudden and mysterious death of this poor child. Even her mother would not be permitted to see her until she threatened to report Father McNulty, and get her child disinterred, unless he would give her a permit to look again upon the face of her dear child, before the grave would hide her away forever from the earthly vision.

I have given plain and true facts with regard to the treatment of orphans in St. Joseph's Asylum in Paterson, facts which would never reach the public, if I had not renounced Romanism.

Orphans cannot complain to their friends, because they cannot see them alone; a sister is always within hearing. A day is set apart every month for visitors to see orphans, and on that

day they are arrayed in a neat looking uniform, drilled and warned in regard to their every word, look, and manner, and if they trespass these injunctions, they know the punishment which awaits them. Orphans are forbidden any communication with the parish children; they are completely walled in with their plaints and pleas from the ears of a bamboozled humanity; and whoever dare to make known those grievances to the public, let them be anathema, is the voice of the Church of Rome.

I have dared to make known many things regardless of the curses which Rome may heap upon me, or the violence she may use against me; and in the statements I have made in this chapter relative to the orphans, some of the parties have boldly corroborated them, as the following digression will show.

Having mentioned in some of my public lectures examples of cruelty to orphans, Dr. John Quinn, the Catholic Physician of the Asylum in Paterson, entered into a controversy with me in the papers, endeavoring by falsehoods to blindfold the public. He says, "I myself attended the child Sarah Ann Berry for heart disease before she entered the Asylum, and I told her mother she would not live long." I gave a lecture in Paterson, April 22d, 1870, confronting Quinn with the facts. Mrs. Berry, the mother of the child, was in my audience. After the lecture she came forward before several witnesses, among them Rev. G. Winans, Rev. M. Dally, Messrs. Turner and Williams, besides a large number of ladies and gentlemen, and embraced me, tearfully thanking me for the kindness I had shown her children. She then and there testified that every word I had

said about the treatment of her children was true, and stated that neither Dr. Quinn, nor any other Doctor ever tended her child for heart disease or any other disease, and that she never spoke to Quinn in her life. She gave further testimony of the cruel treatment her other child Mary received from the sisters, and when she took her away from the asylum, the sisters retained the good clothes her child had brought to the asylum, and "sent her out of it clothed in scarcely rags enough to cover her." Jennie Carney, one of the orphans whom I mentioned as having run away from the asylum on account of ill treatment, was also in my audience. She too came forward, being then a young girl of seventeen years, and with great affection greeted me. She publicly testified to the truth of my statements about the orphans.

Thus it is that truth will and must prevail. Dr. Quinn was ignominiously defeated, even by Catholics, and I was vindicated.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONVENT SCHOOL SYSTEM.

THE unkindness of Sisters of Charity to children extends farther than the orphans, as the children of parochial schools can testify. When a child fails in recitation or conduct, the rod is called into requisition, and the hands and bodies of those little ones often carry to their parents marks of the sisters' cruel correction. Another mode of punishment is to keep delinquents confined to the class-room from nine o'clock in the morning until six in the evening without dinner or a moment's recreation; yet the poor parents stand in such awe of the sisters that they dare not complain for fear of incurring the displeasure of priests, who threaten with excommunication all parents who withdraw their children from the parish school and send them to public schools. This, however, those Catholics sometimes do who prefer their children's advancement to the priest's absolution.

The parochial schools are poorly regulated, and more time is spent in handling "beads" and saying "Hail Mary" than in the regular instruction of the children. Again, these parish schools are entirely under the supervision of the priests who

engage the sisters to teach, and from the contributions of the parish pay to the Reverend Mother, for each sister's service, the salary of four hundred dollars per annum. It is impossible for the children to advance rapidly in these schools, because they are not properly instructed. It often happens that one sister may have from one hundred and eighty to two hundred children to teach, and sisters are sent to teach who are ignorant themselves. Sister de Sales' class of orphans was one year learning how to spell words of one syllable. The priests spend a great deal of their time in the parochial schools, making love to the pretty young sisters, while the rest of their time is spent in mumbling Latin *offices*, drinking wine, or "whisky punch," and making merry on the "fat of the land."

NOTE. In treating of cruelty to children, or the sisters' incompetency to teach, I do not allude to a boarding school institution, or to the Academy in Madison, or to any select pay-school taught by Sisters of Charity. The sisters do not so far forget themselves, or their church policy, as to impose cruelties on those children whose parents pay a tuition fee of from two hundred and fifty to three hundred dollars per annum. I will here state that there can be no greater kindness shown to pupils than is bestowed on the children of wealthy parents, and especially those of Protestant parentage who are open to conviction in the way of Catholic dogmas. Such pupils are taught well, but not in solid branches of science or history. They appear to aim to give a superficial show of accomplishments, according to the capacity of each pupil, in order that parents may be satisfied; at the same time every exertion is

made to win the affections and secure the confidence of those pupils so that their young minds may be impressed with the alluring doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.

Seldom do these attempts fail in creating at least a strong fascination toward the showy and theatrical forms and ceremonies, which generally possess a peculiar charm for children. And yet Protestant parents send their children to be educated in distant convents, deluding themselves with the silly idea that no attempt will be made to indoctrinate their young minds with Romish errors. Are such parents not aware that the Catholic religion is one of exclusive pretensions, accounting all those outside its pale as doomed to eternal damnation; and that sisters are especially bound to use every effort for the conversion of "heretics?" If Protestants are ignorant of this, it is the result of indifference, and it is a most serious fault in them to be so thoughtless as to send their daughters to Roman Catholic Convents to be educated. Is it not a contradiction in itself, this protesting against a creed and espousing it in their children? If Protestant parents consider it necessary to send their children away from home to be educated, are there not hundreds of Protestant schools where every branch of knowledge is taught by intelligent and experienced teachers? Why then support Catholic schools in preference to their own institutions? That the Romish seminaries of learning are liberally encouraged and supported by many of the Protestant community is a fact which cannot be denied. And do Roman Catholics support Protestant institutions, either literary or religious? If they have ever given a single cent to found or build up institutions

which are Protestant—which they maliciously denounce as “heretic”—is something altogether unknown to me. Yet Protestants, kind souls, lend Romanists a strong arm to build up and support their peculiar institutions. “Heretics” countenance and support liberally the institution in Madison; and a large number of Protestant young ladies from different parts of the Union have attended it, from its first foundation in 1859.

I have been brought to see the unwholesome influence that is exerted over Protestant young ladies who receive their education in that institution. Prodigious efforts are made to impress popish doctrines upon their tender and susceptible minds; and I can safely say there is not one out of ten who leaves that institution whose mind is not filled with the religious tenets of the Church of Rome. I am acquainted with several young ladies educated at St. Elizabeth’s, and with few exceptions they all felt more or less inclined to embrace Catholicism. The sisters are seemingly very mild, amiable, and pleasing in their dispositions to Protestant pupils—engaging and winning in all they say and do—and are possessed of all the charms and machinations necessary to initiate themselves into their good graces, and to gain them over finally to popery.

The sisters will blandly tell Protestant parents that they will make no effort to instil the Catholic religion in the minds of their children, and that they will be perfectly free to practice the precepts of their own religion. Certainly they do not compel scholars to study the Catholic Catechism, or expound the “Christian Doctrine,” yet the latter must be present at those exercises and listen attentively to the Catholic interpre-

tation. They must also be present at every Catholic devotion in the chapel, which is hung with pictures, and decorated with everything pleasing to the eye and charming to the senses.

Protestants, look at this. In Convent schools your children are denied the blessed privilege of hearing the Bible read, or even of reading their pocket Bibles which were given them when they left your homes. This question of education is the question agitating the public mind of to-day in the Catholic effort to deprive the public schools of the Bible. Will Protestant parents still continue the Convent education of their children? Will they so thoughtlessly and unwisely hazard the spiritual welfare of their precious children in this way? These facts speak for themselves. I need not make any reflections on them, but I do make an earnest appeal to Protestants to stand by themselves and their principles, and entirely do away with the Catholic education of their daughters. To subject that system to a just and severe investigation, I, as an ex-nun, can assure them, is an impossibility.



CHAPTER XI.

MY SISTER VISITS ME IN PATERSON.

FIFTEEN long, weary months had passed, since I entered the Convent, and during that time I had not heard from home or friends. I had written to my parents twice, but every letter sent, or received, being subject to the inspection of the superiors, I never knew whether my letters had been sent from the Convent; and as I had not received any, I had given up all hopes of ever hearing from my home. Although I had offered this trial as a sacrifice to God, still my heart yearned to hear from that dear mother who had so tenderly watched over me in the past, and from whom my insane folly had rendered it forever impossible to receive comfort again. Oh, how often my soul struggled against the temptation of despair and remorse, at the step I had taken, and from which there must be no looking back! I had no one but myself to blame; my own hand had clasped the chain which I then thought nothing but death could unclasp. Oh, the nights of conflict and anguish followed by days of outward calmness and apparent conformity, the dissimulation of which was again the subject of remorse! Oh, how keenly I suffered the penalty of my in-

fatuation! Encircled as I had been with the mercies of a bountiful God, I had cast them all from me to follow a path which He never marked out for any of His creatures.

Inexperienced, simple-minded, and enthusiastic, I had fallen an easy prey to the sophistries of my spiritual guide, to whom I entrusted implicitly every sacred feeling and aspiration of my young heart, and who so skilfully tampered with the ardent impressions and fervent elements of my nature as to cause them to assume the unnatural proportions of religious fanaticism. Oh, the pernicious influence of Confession, that terrible arm of priestcraft! that diabolical device for seduction! that subtle means of piercing the most sacred secrets, and keeping in chains the weaker sex! Extreme conscientiousness had always been my characteristic. It had been the moving principle of my entrance on conventual life. Sincerely anxious to save my soul, and infatuated by the belief that I could not do it in the outer world, I had placed myself on the altar of self-immolation—self-atonement. Being possessed of more than a common degree of fervor, nothing in the shape of self-denial had daunted me, nay, it had rather subtly fed my spiritual pride. *Self-glorified* by the great sacrifices I had made of my home, my friends, and my relations, for the sake of self-satisfaction, I felt that I must finish the work I had begun, and endeavor to forget them; that being entirely disengaged from all earthly things I might think of nothing else but my soul's salvation. And at that time I was deluded with the thought that the greater sacrifice I made the more it pleased and glorified God. Despite the effort to forget the things that were behind, long buried

memories would awake as if in mockery of the robe of stoicism in which I was seeking to envelop myself, and in defiance of the barriers which events had been erecting about me. The convulsive sobs and deep drawn sighs which these memories prompted declared me to be clothed still in all the panoply of human weakness, of human love, and of human desires; earthly affections only slumbered to be awakened into new life on the slightest occasion.

It was the feast of the Epiphany, January, 1864. Sister Mary Joseph met me in the hall, and in a sharp tone ordered me to go to the parlor and stay just ten minutes. These were the only words she condescended to address to me, and I, thinking some lady of the parish wished to see me in regard to her children, and that I was restricted to a ten minutes interview as a trial of obedience, proceeded to the parlor. But oh, how can I picture my surprise to meet there my oldest sister, Gertrude! In my joy, forgetting every restraint, every obligation of rule which forbids the sisters to make any demonstration of affection on meeting their relatives, I threw my arms around her neck and kissed her fondly, holding her for several moments to my throbbing heart. I was entirely overcome by this sudden and unexpected meeting of a sister dearly loved. Before I could control my feelings sufficiently to inquire about home the ten minutes had expired. I could not endure the thought of parting with my sister so soon, therefore I hastened to sister Mary Joseph, and on my knees begged her to grant me a little extension of the time in which to see my sister. She refused to grant me a single minute more. I then asked her if she

would not, at least, send some refreshment to her, as she was very weary after her long journey from Rhode Island, and besides she had had considerable difficulty in finding me, having gone first to Madison. This little act of Christian charity she refused on the plea that she could go conveniently to a restaurant, as there were plenty of such places in the city. She sharply told me I ought to be very grateful for the favor of seeing my sister at all, and that she would not have granted it if she could have denied my "proud sister," who steadfastly refused to go away without seeing me. Language is powerless to describe the overwhelming grief I felt in being forced to turn away that sister without another word, even without a caress. Oh God, what a trial! Fifteen months without a word from those I so dearly loved—without seeing one dear familiar face! and then at last, when a sister comes to see me, sent by dear parents who were anxious to know my fate, I, after all her long journey to a strange place, am obliged to send her away, powerless to offer her even the least act of courtesy or kindness;—to send her away without having the time to communicate a single message of love for my darling mother, or even inquire about her, while my poor heart had so many questions to ask about home, and how each had borne my absence from them. My sister, who was very unfavorably impressed by the unkindness of Sister Mary Joseph, asked me if I was happy among such vulgar companions. With convent dissimulation I was forced to reply in the affirmative, for, was not a sister in the hall listening to every word we uttered? With a heavy heart I closed the door on that sister, and, unable

to longer restrain my deep emotion, hastened to the chapel to offer my bleeding heart anew on the altar of sacrifice. The short visit of Gertrude recalled all the anguish of my separation from home, and the strangely cruel manner of her reception at the Convent added more keenly to my sorrow. Oh, how my nature rebelled against this system, which, without any cause, took delight in inflicting pain! Where could my struggling, trembling soul find shelter? Not in God, for I had no light to seek Him alone; but after a severe conflict I at last seemed to find a temporary shelter under the subtile charms of spiritual pride.



CHAPTER XII.

MY PROFESSION, AND MISSION TO HUDSON CITY.

My novitiate lasted one year and five months, seven months less than was usually required on account of the perfect docility I had shown to arbitrary superiors, and my resignation to the many severe trials imposed upon me. On the 16th of July, 1864, I was summoned to the Mother-house, in Madison, to take the irrevocable vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I entered on a retreat of eight days, and in silence and retirement prepared myself for the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom, whom my fertile imagination had clothed in the fairest of human colors. I contemplated this celestial spouse in a terrestrial manner, because the imagination cannot very well picture God.

On the 25th of July, 1864, in my twenty-second year, I was clothed in the black habit of the professed nuns, and pronounced the final vows which espoused me to HIM whom the angels serve, and cut me off entirely from the world. In making these vows I had offered to God a perfect holocaust, meritoriously renouncing riches by my vow of poverty, my body, and all earthly affection, by my vow of chastity, and my will and lib-

erty by the vow of obedience. These vows were a second baptism, a sacrifice so heroic and excellent that Saint Bernard calls it a "glorious martyrdom." It is indeed a continual martyrdom, the martyrdom of a religious is not ended by one blow, it is a long suffering daily revived. It is a martyrdom which God rejects because it places self-righteousness on the Mediatorial throne from which the *One* Mediator is ejected. And oh, what a naked, unsubstantial, comfortless atonement is here offered to an outraged God!

I had taken upon myself this continual martyrdom, and at every cost I would be faithful to my obligations, and scrupulously exact in the observance of my vows. I had forecasted the difficulties and anticipated the requirements these vows enforced; nevertheless, inasmuch as it is impossible fully to foresee the future of any state of existence because of the changes which we ourselves undergo, and much less calculate all the phases presented by the conventual state to the ever-varying human heart, I did not foresee the intricate paths and heart-wringing suffering which would eventually lead me out of the meshes of delusion into the broad day of religious liberty.

After my profession I was permitted a few weeks of vacation in Madison; whence, on the 15th of August, 1864, I was sent, in company with sisters Josephine and Agnes, to establish a Convent in Hudson City, N. J. My heart was oppressed with a sad foreboding of great and unforeseen trials, when I arrived at my new destination that sultry August day. "Future events cast their shadows before." Was it not a foresight of the bitter heart aches, the fierce conflicts, the wild temptations, the awful

despair, which awaited me there, that cast such an undefined dread over my soul that day?

Father Venuta, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, had everything in readiness for our reception. Our task of establishing a new parish school was not an easy one. The sisters had never been there before, therefore it required a great deal of perseverance, and patience, to gather the children together. However, on account of the daily increase in our school, we were obliged to send to Madison for another nun. Sister De Sales was sent to us. Sister Josephine was the appointed sister-servant. She was another edition of sister Mary Joseph. Sister Agnes was a novice, and of her trials I will speak in another chapter. I was next in authority to sister Josephine, and I soon became the popular favorite with the children and the people; from which cause I suffered a great deal through the jealousy of sister Josephine.

I never witnessed so much squalor and misery as I saw in that parish. My heart ached for those poor priest-ridden people, and questioned in secret why there was no remedy? I visited them in sickness and affliction, in their poverty and misery, in the jail, and in their comfortless abodes. I have often scrubbed the filthy floors of their shanties when the women were ill or intoxicated, and in every way I tried to relieve their misery as far as lay in my power. Father Venuta, their pastor, was a passionate Italian, who never visited his *poor* people except on his never-ending begging expeditions. On the rich, however, he lavished his priestly services. He not only begged himself from his *poor* parishioners, but he also sent the

sisters to beg for him ; he would often say to me in his peculiar style, when he wanted me to beg : " Ho yoo are sooch a goode seesther, and the people doos like the leetle seesther, and they weel geeve yoo plenty of mooney."

My heart often refused to take money from the poor people who would give me their last cent rather than refuse the " Holy Sister." I always found the ignorant poor more willing to give to the priests and sisters than the rich, who, as a general thing, are more enlightened. Priests are dressed in purple and gold vestments when they say mass, and they are attired in the best of broadcloth on other occasions, while those from whom they extort the means for their luxury, are in rags. Catholics build up elegant houses for their clergymen, and furnish them with every modern comfort and luxury, while their own poor shanties are bare and comfortless. Catholics are burdened with a tax in their priesthood without deriving any real good from it for themselves.

A priest will not even say a mass for the poorest among his flock unless he receives one dollar. Priests receive one dollar for each mass they say during the year ; and sometimes they have so many " intentions " that they sell them to each other. By an " intention " I mean the arrangement made by a priest with a parishioner to pray for the latter, or his departed friends. Now, suppose a Mr. McNulty should give Father Venuta fifty dollars and request him to say fifty masses for his soul, perhaps in the week or month following the priest might have one hundred persons apply in the same manner ; these masses, or

“intentions,” which he could not say, he would sell to other priests. A priest can only say one mass in a day except Sundays, when he can say two; yet he is often paid for more masses than he can say in one year. If he is honest he will sell them to some priest who has not so many applications. But what guarantee has the applicant that the masses are ever said?

The mass is the “unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and the daily oblation of Calvary.” Now, if the mass is so very holy, why are priests paid for all they say? and why do they even peddle them around for sale? Priests will extort money in every way from their blinded followers, and then in their necessities abandon them to die of starvation,—which they often would were it not for the humane charities of Protestants whom they are taught to despise, and believe condemned to eternal damnation.

My dear Catholic readers, I now look pityingly upon you, as I was once in the same condition myself. I did not lose my faith in the purity of the Catholic church without a fearful struggle. I would gladly have your eyes open to the truth of what I state as facts, in order that your daughters and sisters may escape sufferings like those of Sister Teresa de Chantal. Tear down the false staging which keeps from you the true worship of Christ. I desire you all to be saved through Christ alone.

In the Catholic church the worship of Christ is behind the theatricals of gaudily dressed priests, incensed sanctuaries, ornamented images of the Virgin Mary, beautiful pictures, frescoed

paintings, wondrous statuaries of imaginary saints and martyrs, rosaries, scapulars, medals, relics, and Agnus Deis, with their accompanying indulgencies; and associated with most entrancing music, fragrant flowers, lighted candles, gorgeously dressed altars, surpliced acolytes, blessed ashes, holy water, consecrated wafers, holy oil and chrism. There are also the attractive ceremonies of extreme unction, absolution, confession, satisfaction, besides the lenten fasts, and days of abstinence, genuflexions and stations of the cross, the crosier and mitres with the pontifical high mass decorations, latin liturgies, illuminated missals, gold and silver ciboriums, ostensorium and chalices, candelabras and vases, crosses and precious stones, costly laces, fine linens, and the royal puple, with numerous minor forms and ceremonies. All these, my Catholic readers, before you can get to Christ. You say, "but we are not worthy to go to Christ, so we send to Him, His holy Mother, and His saints, and His holy priests." Now, Christ invites all to come to Him in truth and humility; and, in order that we might go to Him the more readily He clothed Himself in our lowly humanity. We all have one great boon to procure, our soul's salvation. If we are truly desirous of securing it we will not trust it to an ambassador, no matter how trustworthy, but we will go ourselves to the Fountain of Life, Christ Himself, then we will be sure that we will not be deceived. I never realized the truth of God until I had completely torn down the false staging which hid Him from me. But oh, the unutterable anguish, the fearful desolation of spirit I experienced, in the awful tearing away of my once venerated faith! I now thank God in my

innermost heart for my wonderful deliverance. I am now covered with His righteousness. I am no longer the same; Jesus is now my only refuge. Adored Lord! increase my faith, perfect it, crown it. Having drawn me from the *pit* and borne me at last to Thy true fold, keep me in Thy sweet pastures and lead me to eternal life.



CHAPTER XIII.

SISTER AGNES, SHE LEAVES THE CONVENT.

Sister Agnes had been in the novitiate about six months when she came with us to Hudson City. Her name in the world was Teresa McGehan; her friends were wealthy and resided in Brooklyn, L. I. She was very beautiful; her face had a power of most varied expression, with a touch of pathetic sadness that penetrated my heart and caused me to become deeply interested in her. She had been engaged to be married to one whom she loved with all the intensity of her nature; but death deprived her of the beloved one, and a hue as of the grave rested upon her young life. She came to the convent to seek balm for her anguished heart, and rest for her troubled spirit. Poor, deluded one! The dull monotonous life of a nun was not adapted to her warm, susceptible, sensitive nature, and she soon realized the bitter truth. A "particular friendship" soon sprung up between us. Sister Josephine subjected Sister Agnes to the deepest humiliation; she compelled her to work in the kitchen, scrub the floors, and perform all the hard and menial offices in the house. Sister Agnes possessed a powerful self-will, strengthened as it had always been by her.

friends, who had never thwarted her in the most trifling caprice, consequently she was unable to yield her will in submission to the cruel demands of a superior who was in every way her inferior, and so against the unjust commands of Sister Josephine she frequently rebelled. Her friends often visited her, but she was never permitted to see them alone. They would send her delicacies which were never given to her, and every movement of hers was watched and reported by the spy, De Sales. Sister Agnes frequently confided to me the great interior trials she suffered, and how fearfully she was tempted with uncharitable thoughts against some of the sisters. She often gave expression to the following words, "Sister, God forgive me! but I *hate* Sister De Sales with all my heart, and as for Sister Josephine, I despise her." I counseled her to bear all trials patiently for her soul's sake, and that the grave would soon come to our relief, and our reward would be eternal.

One day Sister Josephine commanded her to carry a large basket of clothes down stairs. Sister Agnes replied they were too heavy to carry alone, whereupon Josephine undertook to assist her, at the same time pushing the basket against Sister Agnes, causing her foot to slip from the step, and she was violently precipitated to the bottom of the stairs. Sister Agnes fainted, and remained several hours as if dead. She was unable to leave her bed for one week, and was constantly spitting blood in large quantities. This cruel outrage towards Sister Agnes fired my soul with indignation, and I threatened Sister

Josephine that I would write about her to Father McQuade* and inform him of her cruel treatment of Sister Agnes, whom she came so near killing. My threats enraged her to such an extent that she slapped me on the face, with her large masculine hand. I turned to her my other cheek which she also slapped, and in her fury she pulled off my head dress, and dragged me along the hall by the hair of the head. I know not how her rage would have terminated if she were not at that moment called down to the parlor to see Father Senez, the ex-Jesuit of Jersey City, who was deeply enamored with charming Josephine, who never exhibited her temper before him; to him she was "Son idole, la belle Josephine." When a few hours afterwards I entered the cell of Sister Agnes I found her weeping convulsively. She told me she had decided to leave the "convent hell," even if her soul should be damned by the action; she could no longer endure such a life. At her earnest request I wrote a letter to her sister, Mrs. Devane, of Brooklyn, imploring her to come and take her away from the convent. This letter I sent unknown to Sister Josephine. In a few days her friends called, and with great joy took her away from the convent; they were always opposed to her remaining there. Her friends wrote to Madison for her clothes and property, of which they never received one-third. Poor Sister Agnes! on the day of her departure from the convent, she

* Father McQuade was at that time Father Superior over the Sisters, and President of Seton Hall College, in South Orange, N. J., but since that time he has been made Bishop of Rochester, N. Y.

clung to me, sobbing as if her heart would break, and exclaiming, "O sister, I fear I am lost, and that my soul will be damned eternally for abandoning my vocation, but I cannot help it. I have not your submissive perseverance which patiently submits to the cruelty of convent life!" Poor misguided soul! she thought she would find love, and calm, and rest, and heaven-born peace, for her sorrowing heart, in the convent, but alas! with all other deluded ones who embrace this life, she had found only unkindness, coldness, suspicion, jealousy, and ceaseless strife and unhappiness: instead of peace she had found the most racking doubts and mental conflict; instead of rest a ceaseless strain of convent observances, and mental and physical toil. Happy girl! to shake off the shackles of conventionalism; would to God she could shake off the chains of Romanism also, and find eternal rest, and peace, and joy in Christ!



CHAPTER XIV.

INSANITY OF SISTER VIRGINIA AND REBELLION OF SISTER ANN ELIZABETH.

Among those sisters for whom I entertained a particular attachment, none were so dear to me as Sister Virginia. Ellen O'Grady was her worldly name, and she had, before she left the world, resided with her mother in Newark, N. J. She entered the convent a few days after myself, therefore she was a candidate with me. She was one of those beautiful, highly gifted souls whom one rarely meets with in a life time. There was a certain congeniality of thought and ideas which strongly drew us together, and to each other we poured out our several trials. Her refined and exalted nature felt most acutely the trials of convent life. Among her various accomplishments she excelled in penmanship, and after she received the habit of the novice, she was retained at the mother-house, and appointed teacher of ornamental penmanship to the young ladies of the Academy. So after our three months candidateship had expired, our intercourse was limited to the few weeks vacation when the sisters all meet in Madison for the annual retreat.

The last time I saw her was in July, 1866. Never will I forget the final words she spoke to me as I was about leaving again for Hudson City. She clasped my hand and with deep solemnity of word and manner, said, "Sister, convent life is a living death which I feel I cannot longer endure, for I shall *go mad*. I feel it! I feel it!" Deeply moved by her words I replied, "Dear Sister, drive such thoughts from your mind. It is true that we have realized that conventualism is a system calculated to destroy the brightest intellect and talent, and root out of the heart every beautiful and tender feeling; nevertheless, dear sister, the awakening comes too late—too late. We must persevere for our soul's sake until the welcome angel of death comes to our deliverance." She rejoined, "I trust, my sister, that the words I utter against my vocation will not scandalize you; yet I feel that I will never see you again, and I must speak out to you my convictions; for to no one else in the community would I utter them. The enormities which I witness here daily, and the outrageous insults offered to my nature cause my reason to totter on its throne; and I feel—I know, that I shall lose my mind." She then embraced me most affectionately, begging me to pray for her, while her expressive blue eyes filled with tears, and her beautiful and sensitive lips quivered with emotion as she uttered the words, "Good bye, my soul's companion! Good bye forever! If you see me again, I feel that I will be insane—mad." How prophetic were the words! When I went to the mother-house again on the retreat of 1867, Sister Virginia was not there;

she was an inmate of the Insane Asylum, at Mount Hope, Maryland.

Sisters never know what takes place in the different houses of the order, therefore I was most anxious to learn the cause of Sister Virginia's insanity, but it being against the *rules* to make any inquiries or ask unnecessary questions, I did not dare to inquire about her; however, one of the novices gave me the following account: It was the 22d of June, 1867, the morning of the distribution in the Academy, that Sister Virginia was found by Sister Madeleine at her writing desk, her head buried in her hands. When Sister Madeleine spoke to her, she began to cry and scream, "I am mad! I'm mad!" During three days and nights she was unmanageable, and in her ravings reproached the sisters with all manner of crimes. When she became more calm she was attired in worldly clothes and conveyed to the Insane Asylum, at Mount Hope. This Asylum is under the superintendence of the Emmetsburg Sisters of Charity. The last I heard of her was that she was considered hopelessly insane; reason had flown from its beautiful seat, and that once highly gifted and talented girl is now a mental wreck, another of the many such victims of that accursed and deplorable system of conventualism. Poor Virginia! could she have abandoned the loveless, hopeless life she led in the convent, when she first felt the dread foreboding of the sad fate which came upon her, and returned to the love and care of her mother, she would have been saved from mental shipwreck; but alas! she was bound by vows which she would conscientiously keep even at the sacrifice of reason.

However, several sisters did rebel and leave the Madison Community, among them was Sister Ann Elizabeth. This sister was one of the first candidates when the community was established in the diocese of Newark, in 1859. Sister Ann Elizabeth is well known in Jersey City, where she was superior for several years in St. Peter's parish. In the community of Madison, a council is convened every month for the purpose of settling all the difficulties of the order. It is in these councils sentence is pronounced upon refractory sisters, and all the secrets of the community discussed. The council consists of the reverend Mother Xavier and three sisters next to her in office, presided over by the Father Superior, who at that time was Father McQuade. Sister Ann Elizabeth was one of the sisters who sat in this council. She was an Irish lady possessing great dignity of character, which could not brook anything degrading. When she was admitted as a member of the council, her eyes were opened, and she could not remain a member of a community where she knew they did such wicked things. I remember the last time I saw her was during our summer vacation in 1866. She came into the study hall, where the novices and young professed nuns were assembled, and thus addressed us: "Sisters, I advise every one of you to leave this abode, and go back to your homes, for I am sure the curse of God will fall upon this Community on account of the crimes covered up, and which I as a member of the secret council know. Sisters, if you knew what I know, you would fly from here." Sister Ann Elizabeth was very much excited while she spoke, and we all looked upon her in amazement. Mother

Xavier came in while sister was speaking, and in the most bland and sympathetic manner said, "Sisters, I request your prayers for our dear and worthy Sister Ann Elizabeth, who has become another victim to insanity. Do not notice what she is saying—she is crazy." Sister Ann Elizabeth was not insane, she was in possession of all her mental and physical powers; she went to Bishop Bayley, and demanded to be dispensed from her vows; took measures to have the money she brought to the convent refunded to her, and with it she went to her friends in Ireland.

Several sisters followed the example of Sister Ann Elizabeth, and most of them professed nuns. The following sisters left the convent in less than two years: Sister Ignatius, Sister Alphonsus, Sister Seraphina, Sister Jane Frances, Sister Scholastica, Sister Clara, Sister Ann Maria, Sister Camilla, and Sister Ann Joseph, whom I introduced to my readers in Paterson. When she left the convent she had been *infidèle à ses vœux de chasteté et était enceinte*. Suspicion rested upon Rev. Father Brann, D. D., formerly of Jersey City, as her accomplice. Besides these, three sisters became insane, four died, and others, whose mysterious disappearance was never accounted for. All those sisters I have mentioned, who left the convent, remained Catholics, therefore the world will never know the circumstances which led them to surmount the difficulties of an escape from the unnatural discipline of convent life, and even if they do not remain Catholics, perhaps their own share in sins will prevent them from denouncing a system

which is a disgrace to civilization; but at the judgment day there will be a fearful unraveling of clerical and monastic entanglements. That day will unmask to the world the false hearts of priests and nuns; and in the hands of a strictly just God I leave them.



CHAPTER XV.

REV. WILLIAM M. WALSH.

One Saturday evening in April, 1867, Father Venuta came into the convent as usual to hear the sisters confession, and when he was about to depart he turned to me, and in a jesting manner said, "O Seesther, you will have a new priest to-morrow—a nice young Irishman." Why did a terrible presentiment of some mighty sorrow overshadow my soul, and with an icy grasp chill my inmost heart as Father Venuta made this announcement? Why was I so oppressed by an undefined weight of impending evil? Ah! it was the wierd foreshadowing of one of the most bitter trials and cruel wrongs that ever pierced a pure woman's heart. Let the sequel show.

On the Sunday of his arrival, Rev. William M. Walsh was conducted by Father Venuta into the convent, and introduced to the sisters. When he was presented to me, he extended his hand which I feigned not to see, because I experienced an unaccountable shrinking from contact with him. Father Walsh at that time had been four years a priest, and was just arrived, in company with five other priests, from Australia, where his brother, Rev. Thomas Walsh, is also a priest.

At the time of my introduction to this man, he was about twenty-six years of age. In personal appearance he was tall, graceful, and dignified, possessing a handsome face, and a most fascinating and winning manner. He had such a meek and holy expression of countenance that his brother priests called him the "Angelic," or the "Youthful St. Aloysius." Dear readers, pity me in this most painful task of speaking of this person. Oh, how can I portray to you the depth of his treachery! or recall his perfidy! The Roman Catholic church is composed in great part of hypocrites, but Father Walsh was certainly one of the most consummate hypocrites I ever met, and yet, it might have been otherwise, were it not for that curse of society, Romish Celibacy, a system which, instead of twining a wreath of celestial flowers for Hymen's brow, crushes and buries the sweetest of all human affections in the grave of infamy, where the body and soul perishes. Father Walsh *might have been* a bright ornament to society and the world, for he was possessed of great intellectual capacity. He might have been a kind, loving, and devoted husband, a tender and indulgent parent, for his temperament was most ardent and affectionate. When I speak of the unutterable injury this man tried to inflict on me, and the cruel persecution and heart-wrung sorrow he has occasioned me, I blame the accursed *system* more than the *man*. The man I leave with "Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live;" but the wicked system I deplore and condemn.

Father Walsh, after his introduction to me, placed himself

in my way daily, often spending two hours at a time in my class-room. His manner was always kind and affectionate, while he treated me with most profound respect and marked attention. One day, about six weeks since I first saw him, he was reviewing my class, and when the exercises were over he handed me the book, at the same time clasped my hand, and with an inexpressible tenderness in look and tone, said: "Sister, I love you—I love you; O God! better than my own soul do *I love you!*" At these strange, passionate words, I snatched my hand from his burning clasp, and without uttering a word I retreated from the school-room, flew to my cell, bolted the door, and flinging myself on my knees in an agony of grief, prayed for strength to combat this, the greatest temptation of my life. O God! what words had I heard; "Sister, I love you—more than my soul I love you!" Oh, how they pierced my inmost being! an anointed priest of God had been guilty of uttering such words to *me*, a consecrated virgin! a spouse of Christ! Oh, sacrilege, sacrilege!! It was a crime for me to listen to such words. I had made vows to God, and I would be faithful to them, even though my heart should break in the attempt.

For several days I avoided Father Walsh by retreating from the class-room as soon as he entered it. Finally he called after school hours, and requested an interview with me in the parlor. Tremblingly I went to meet him, praying God to help me. When I entered the parlor I was astonished at his haggard appearance and his sad, unhappy look. I said, "Father, whatever you have to say, speak it quickly, and do not beg of you repeat the words you uttered last to me, for I cannot

listen to them, they are sacrilegious." He replied, "Oh Sister! dearest sister! forgive me. I know my words trouble you, but I must speak them, my heart is breaking! O my God! why did I ever become a priest. Dear Sister, when I first saw you I loved you, and I have not known a happy moment since, and I fear never will again. Oh, sweet love, I am fearfully tempted! I cannot drive you from my thoughts. In my masses, prayers, and divine offices, your image comes between me and my God! O sister, I cannot help loving you. I *do worship you*, and how happy we might be if it were only lawful for us to be married! Oh, if you were not a sister, and I were not a priest!" At these words he wept bitterly, while his frame shook and trembled with the deepest anguish. In my girlhood days, before I entered the convent, I had listened to many professions of love and proposals of marriage, but my heart had never responded to them. I had never loved man, as I felt I was capable of loving, and I always regarded marriage in such a *pure* light, that in order to enter into its sacred cares and responsibilities I must meet a man to whom I could give all the deep love of my nature. Such a man I had never met; and now when it is too late, when I am forever shut out from all human love and affection, I am moved for the first time by the passionate appeal of this man—an appeal which called forth a pure response from the very depths of my nature. I could have loved that man, but it was too late. When his emotion had in a measure subsided, he said, "And now, dear love, tell me that you love me also." My heart ached while I replied to him thus: "Father, I am sorry that you have crossed my

path. Would to God that we had never met! And now that we have, we must separate. It is sinful for us to remain in the same place—we can never be anything more to each other than we are at the present. Are we not both bound by vows, whose sacred obligations we must fulfil, else forfeit the salvation of our immortal souls? and if we lose our souls what doth the whole world profit us, or what shall we give in exchange for them! I am sorry, Father, if my words pain you, but know that my heart is breaking while I conscientiously speak these words of duty. I have already sinned in listening to you, and I beg you will never repeat such expressions of love to me again. I will this day write to Mother Xavier and beg of her to remove me from here to some other place where we will not be in danger of meeting each other, and then dear father, let us hope that we will meet, and be united in heaven.” I then immediately left the parlor—left him weeping, and hastened to my cell, and there in mortal anguish which none but God can ever know, I cast myself at His feet and His holy Mother’s, and with a suffering heart prayed to be delivered from one of the severest trials that human infirmity can encounter, an unlawful love. Oh, the mental conflict I endured in that terrible struggle between conscience and inclination! On one side my poor hungering, perishing human heart was pleased to know that it had found some one to love, and was beloved in return. On the other side conscience goaded me, styling that love a crime, a sin, a sacrilege! Only those who have experienced such a conflict can ever know or understand its meaning.

I wrote a letter at once to Mother Xavier, explaining to her my temptation, and imploring her to remove me to another city. I received no answer to that letter. Father Walsh did not immediately renew the expression of his love verbally, but his every look and tone exhibited it. I avoided seeing him as much as I possibly could, and was wretchedly unhappy. Thus passed two months of the sorest temptation, when I was called to Madison to make the annual retreat. After the retreat I went on my knees to Mother Xavier, and pleaded with her for Christ's sake, and my soul's salvation, not to send me back to Hudson City, because Father Walsh loved me, and I loved him. I told her, "I ardently desired to be faithful to my vocation, and if she would thus remove me from the place of trial, I might succeed in driving his love from my mind." She laughed at me, exclaiming, "Indeed, you ought to feel highly honored to have won the *love* of such a handsome young priest, but I guess you only imagine it, and if you are not *tried* you will never gain the victory."

"Yes mother, but our Lord says—'those who love danger shall perish in it,' and if wood is thrown in the fire it will burn."

She replied, "So you have come to dictate to your superiors have you? Is that keeping the vow of obedience, which of the three vows has supremacy?" I left her and repaired to the chapel, and if ever a bursting heart poured forth a fervent prayer to God, that heart was mine as I cast myself at the foot of the cross, and begged my heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ His beloved Son, to save my blood-bought soul, and not

to place me where I would be tempted beyond my strength. I made this prayer with so much faith and confidence in God, that I felt sure He would not place me in danger of losing my soul. "The ways of the Lord are unsearchable, yet he doeth all things well." My soul was to be saved through the fiery crucible of tribulation. God would not permit my soul to be lost, although I often afterward, in my fearful desolation and struggle, reproached God for what I then thought was my destruction, but which proved in the end my salvation.

After the retreat of July, 1867, I was the only sister sent back to Hudson City, who had ever been there before. I was placed in Sister Josephine's office, while she, who had been a superior in different cities for over seven years, was that year sent to Trenton, to fill the lowest office in the house there. Her arbitrary spirit could not brook this humiliation, nor could her heart bear the trial of being so far removed from her *dear* father Senez, in Jersey City, therefore three weeks afterward she left the convent, went to Jersey City, and assumed the office of *housekeeper* to Father Senez, to whom she was so warmly attached, and causing thereby no little scandal to the community.

Sister Aloysius, Sister Mary Clare, and Sister Ann Maria were the sisters sent with me to Hudson City. The action of Mother Xavier in sending me back to Father Walsh, seemed by the sequel a vile plot on her part to effect the ruin of my soul and body, and rob me of the priceless pearl of innocence which was dearer to me than a thousand lives.

CHAPTER XVI.

MY BROTHER VISITS ME IN HUDSON CITY.

MY duties now more than ever brought me in contact with Father Walsh. I told him after I came back, that as long as Mother Xavier had treated my entreaties to be removed from there, with contempt, the only hope remaining was for him to go to Bishop Bayley and request another parish. This he refused to do. Father Walsh was not troubled so much as myself with conscientious scruples. I wondered how he could dare to offer the sacrifice of the mass, or administer the sacraments, when his thoughts were fixed on me instead of those sacred duties. He often repeated his love in the most endearing terms, and with burning eloquence, begged me to leave the Convent and go with him to some foreign country and there get married by a Protestant minister and be happy. He said he could not live without me; that I was dearer to him than God or his soul's salvation, and for my sake he would sacrifice his religion and his hopes of heaven. I was strictly exact and scrupulously faithful to my vocation. No unkindness or cruelty on the part of the sisters could make me abandon it; even my great love for my mother or home could not tempt me to leave the Con-

vent or break the vows upon which I thought my salvation depended. Purity was my standard above all virtues, and prizing it more than my life it was in vain he held out such inducements. At that time a marriage by a Protestant minister appeared to me as null and void, consequently no marriage, a mere concubinage, another form of degradation and debasement. Moreover, as a strict Catholic, I believed an anointed priest ought not to think of a woman. "Once a priest always a priest, according to the order of Melchisedeck;" and I being a consecrated virgin to the Lord, viewed the idea of marriage as utterly impossible as long as I should remain a Catholic. I clung to my church with all the tenacity which characterizes sincere Catholics who think there is no salvation outside of the sacred precincts of their church; and to throw off a religion which had been instilled into my heart from infancy and had become as it were part of my nature, required a miracle of divine grace which at that time I neither looked for nor desired. I might love Father Walsh because I could not help it, but I could avoid a life of degradation. No love could make me sacrifice my honor and virtue.

I felt it was a mere mockery for me to go to confession and communion while I was continually distracted by the burning words, tender glances, and loving manner of Father Walsh, for I was human in every sense of the word despite the unnatural restraints placed upon me, and my poor humanity groaned and writhed under its weight of temptation.

At the same time I was also troubled about some articles of the Catholic faith, especially the "doctrine of transubstantia-

tion." An incident occurred which caused my faith in the Eucharist to waver. I had charge of making the "hosts," which are prepared from an unleavened batter of flour and water. One Sunday there was a large number of communicants, and the priest, not having enough of "hosts," sent into the Convent for some more. I had none prepared to send him immediately, but in about fifteen minutes I sent him two hundred. The time, however, for consecration was past, yet the priest gave the wafers *unconsecrated* to the people. I afterward apologized to the priest for not being able to supply him in time with the "hosts;" to which he replied, "It is just as well, the people did not know the difference." And is there any difference? was a question which filled my soul with doubts.

Was Jesus Christ, as true God and true man, really and substantially present unde the appearance of bread and wine? Was he really hidden in the unleavened "host," with or without consecration?

The priest said it made no difference. Yet my faith had taught me that as soon as the priest had pronounced over the "host" the words of consecration, the body of Jesus Christ was immediately present therein—the same body that was born of the sacred Virgin, the same that died upon the cross, that was raised again to life, and sits at the right hand of God the Father; that in a hundred thousand masses which are said throughout the extent of the whole church in the space of an hour, God works this miracle only at the moment the priest finishes the words of consecration.

These were the truths I must believe without embarrassing

myself with curious researches, and yet I had heard a priest, who had the power to *create* a God by a few words, say there was not any difference between the consecrated and unconsecrated "hosts." This was a great blow to my vivid faith in the Real Presence, and I struggled against it as a most trying temptation. To doubt an article of the Catholic faith is a more grievous sin than the commission of a murder, because for the murderer there is the remedy of a good confession and the priest's absolution; but for a soul that hesitates to believe, and doubts the sufficiency of the Catholic faith, there is no salvation. I trembled at this temptation, and I thought God had forsaken me and delivered me over to the devil, but blessed be God! He gives death and gives life. He conducts even to the gates of hell, and brings back again to a clearer, truer, and more glorious life.

Added to the numerous temptations which then assailed me was an internal aridity of spirit which desolated my soul, requiring a most powerful effort of will to keep me in the path of duty. Assailed by temptations, difficulties, and contradictions from without, and by disgust, torpor, and despair within, heart-sick, perplexed, afflicted, forsaken, and cast down, I struggled to gain the victory in the contest between nature and grace, between faith and reason; but dry and hard as my daily bread was then, it was sweet in comparison to that of which I was to partake ere I entered into rest. The cup of bitterness I had to drink to the very dregs.

In the midst of these internal and external trials I received a visit from my brother John. On the 20th of November, 1867,

I was called into the parlor to see a young man, without any idea that it was a brother. I did not know him at first, he was so changed from the beardless school-boy of sixteen to whom I bade farewell five years before. I could scarcely believe that the tall, handsome young man before me was really my brother John; and then my poor heart had given up all thoughts of ever seeing any member of my family. He was on his way to San Francisco, and while waiting in New York City for the steamer to sail, had found me out and called to see me. I could see him unrestricted, for I was then in charge myself. He questioned me about my happiness, which I assured him was complete in being the spouse of Christ, and that nothing on earth could exceed the joy I experienced as the bride of the King of kings. How in the very depths of my heart I despised myself for practising such dissimulation, in the very time, too, when I seemed to be lost in an impenetrable wilderness of midnight darkness, hedged in on all sides by thorns and briars from which I tried to extricate myself only to become more and more entangled, pierced, and torn! I tried to look heavenward, but only to find black, black darkness, no light, no ray of hope, no escape, yet I dared to utter a falsehood, and tell my brother *I was happy*.

Brother spoke to me of my home, and all its loved ones; spoke to me of my darling mother, told me of her grief because I was gone from her; of her anxiety when she could not hear from me, and of her anguish that she could not see me. Oh, my mother! if I could have seen you, and spoken to you of my temptations, my trials, my difficulties at that time, you might

have saved your daughter from the precipice upon which she was standing, you would have shielded her from the fearful tempest which was about to burst in fury upon her unprotected head! John sailed on the 21st of November, for California. The following letter was written by him to my parents just before his departure, and was afterwards given me by my sister Gertrude :

ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL,
New York, November 20th, 1867.

DEAR PARENTS.—I wish to inform you that I have seen my sister. She is in Hudson City, N. J. I went to Paterson, and the sisters told me she had gone from there three years ago. I had considerable difficulty in finding her, but was repaid an hundred fold for the trouble—the very sight of her would have been sufficient reward. She is the very image of happiness and contentment. She was overjoyed to see me; kissed and embraced me, and I did the same; and why should I not? my own dear sister! my beautiful sister! She is really happy. She is Superior there, and the people think everything of her; they venerate her; and who could do otherwise? I was not aware that I loved her so much. I found it a task to come away with a heart at all. I had the pleasure of her company for three or four hours, and we talked volumes in that time. They were the happiest hours of my life. I gave her Gertrude's picture, mother's, and my own. O! I cannot paint the scene that took place when she saw mother's picture. Dear parents, she looked as beautiful as ever, with her large deep blue eyes,

bright golden hair, and holy, mild expression. She is looking as hearty and rosy as ever, and there is nothing feigned—it is all so real. Oh, how affectionate and kind! she carries an indescribable charm with her. I am told that the women of the place, when they meet her, kneel down and ask her blessing. Let it be remembered, that our interview was witnessed by no third person. Please send this letter to Gertrude, in Boston. She wishes to see Gertrude, and wants her to come and see her, or else write to her. Direct to Sister Teresa de Chantal, St. Joseph's Convent, Hudson City, N. J. She sends her kindest love to all. If nothing happens I sail to-morrow. Good-bye, and pray for your

Affectionate Son,

JOHN SANSFIELD O'GORMAN.

Farewell for a few ocean weeks."

From the tenor of this letter it is plainly seen how well I succeeded in deceiving him, and how completely I hid from him my true condition. Although I suffered in the deception, still I could not let my brother know that I was miserably unhappy in the life I had voluntarily chosen. And thus it is that many Catholics are deceived in the true condition of their friends and relatives who are pining uncomplainingly in their prison home; but God had decreed that one day I should lay bare Convent hypocrisy, lift the veil, and let all the world know the hidden crimes of the sanctuary.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY ESCAPE.

ALMOST driven to desperation by the importunities of Father Walsh, I sent the following letter to Mother Xavier, of which I carefully preserved a copy :

“HUDSON CITY, December 15th, 1867.

In the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

DEAR MOTHER: Once again I address you in order to beg of you to remove me from the terrible temptations which surround me here. ‘My soul is sorrowful even unto death.’ Will you not have pity upon me, and take me away from Father Walsh? How can I worthily receive the sacraments, when by my weekly confessions I must accuse myself of listening to expressions of an *unlawful love*—a sacrilegious *love*? and how can I avoid it as long as you permit me to remain near the occasion? Now, Mother, I beg of you for Christ’s sake, for religion’s sake, and for my soul’s sake, to remove me from this awful danger. I wish to be faithful until death to my vocation, and I beg of you to listen to my prayer, and remove me from this heavy cross.

Yours in the hearts of Jesus and Mary,

SISTER TERESA DE CHANTAL.”

To this letter I received the following reply :—

“ST. ELIZABETH’S, MADISON, Dec. 28th, 1867

SISTER TERESA DE CHANTAL :

MY CHILD—Your last letter to me shows a very rebellious and unresigned spirit. Remember, Father Walsh is a holy priest of God, and will do nothing wrong; he knows better than you what is a sin and what is not. I am sorry that you are not in a more tranquil state of mind. Remember, the *will* of your superiors is that of God, and they *will* you to remain where you are. Your Mother in Christ,

MOTHER MARY XAVIER.”

From this letter my readers can see I had nothing to expect from the woman whose *will* I was bound to obey. Every day Father Walsh’s protestations became more ardent. I entreated him, if he loved me, to prove that love by keeping away from me, and not to see me at all. I represented to him the anguish his expressions of love occasioned me; I pointed out to him his infidelity to his sacred obligations, which he seemed to hold very lightly, as he so often urged me to leave the convent and go with him. However, a crisis was at hand which would change the whole course of my life, brought about by Father Walsh attempting one of the most appalling crimes that has ever called for retributive justice at the hands of injured humanity. Oh, how can I speak of it? how recall it? how express the untold anguish, the awful suffering I afterwards endured, which resulted in my being torn away from my close

membership in the Catholic religion, a religion which had been indeed part of myself.

The 19th of January, 1868, came on Sunday. I was performing my usual office of Sacristan, and at seven o'clock in the evening was engaged in the church removing the vesper decorations from the altar, and adorning it for the morning's early mass. While thus employed Father Walsh came in and knelt down on the altar steps as if in prayer. He then came behind the altar where I was arranging some flowers into bouquets, which were intended to ornament the tabernacle, and pulling a small pocket-flask out of his pocket, said, "Dear sister, I notice you have a very bad cough, I have bought some cordial for you, which is a sure remedy; I am confident it will do you good, and I wish you would try some of it now, dearest." At the same time he poured some of the "cordial" into an ablution glass and offered me to drink. With all the simplicity of innocence I drank what he gave me. In a few moments I experienced such a feeling of numbness that I was obliged to stagger to a chair to avoid falling, and then an unconsciousness or stupor came upon me from which I awakened much sooner than the *would-be destroyer* anticipated, and thus he was prevented from carrying out his base design of accomplishing that most outrageous of crimes, *viol.*

The Lord had saved me, but O God! what an awakening! what a revelation! what a wrong had been attempted! A man who had professed such an undying love, a man whom I had trusted, a man anointed of the Lord, a *holy* priest who daily *handled, ate, and drank* the body and blood, soul and divinity

of Jesus Christ, had, in the very presence of the Blessed Sacrament, before the holy Tabernacle, under the Lamp of the Sanctuary, in the house of God, attempted the most atrocious of crimes—to desecrate a consecrated virgin! Oh, what a disgrace to humanity! What a sacrilegious crime! No wonder my brain was crazed. No wonder I rushed from the church frenzied, distracted, *mad*. No wonder I became deranged in comprehending the horrible enormity of such a crime. All is a blank in my memory from the time I rushed out of the church until Saturday, the 25th of January, when I came back to consciousness. I afterwards learned from Sister Aloysius, that on that terrible Sunday evening, at about eight o'clock, I rushed into the community-room with the most heart-rending look of despair and horror depicted on my face, and there gave way to the most incontrollable grief she had ever witnessed. She called in Dr. Hays, Senior, of Hudson City, who told her I was threatened with insanity, the result of some terrible shock. She immediately telegraphed to Mother Xavier, who sent back a dispatch ordering me to be conveyed in a carriage to Madison. Heartless woman! she was obliged to remove me at last. I became so unmanageable in the carriage that the sisters were compelled to stop at the Orphan Asylum, in South Orange; and it was there I found myself on the 25th, when I awoke again to consciousness. The horror of the crime attempted, and the effect of the drugs administered, produced a temporary insanity, but the agony I endured, the injury I sustained, was enough to derange almost the strongest mind, situated as I had been, beyond the hope of a recovery.

I went to confession in South Orange and told the priest the fearful crime which had been attempted; and that man, appointed a spiritual guide to souls, chided me for making such a noise about it, because a man was *not* responsible for what he did when blinded by passion, and therefore it was not a crime, and I must not take it to heart as one. Such were the words addressed to my sinking, perishing soul, by a holy priest of the church. Such the excuse offered in palliation for a crime that would disgrace the evil one *himself*. Priests and sisters seemed linked together for my destruction.

On the following Monday, Mother Xavier came from Madison to see me, and finding me apparently well, she said, "Well, well, the idea! Why, De Chantal, I thought you were sick! Indeed, it's only putting on airs you are! the *idea* of a Sister of Charity putting on airs, and making believe crazy. Well, well, come now, put on your bonnet and go with me. You are worth a dozen crazy sisters yet! The *idea* of you cutting up so!" and she continued bantering me in the above style for some time. I made myself ready to accompany her, thinking she was going to take me to Madison; but no, wicked woman! she takes me back again to Hudson City. Could anything be more malevolent than this action of Mother Xavier's? Can anything be more inhuman than to take a wounded, frightened lamb, and re-thrust it into the jaws of the wolf? than to thrust a child, all burned and blistered, back into the fire? Thus my lacerated heart was thrust back to be relacerated.

On Tuesday, the 28th, Father Walsh had the audacity to come into the convent, and, without ceremony walked up stairs

into the community-room where I was. The sight of him so maddened me that I cannot remember what he said, I think it was something about forgiveness, and that he could not live without me. I ordered him out of my presence; called Sister Aloysius, and told her to go down to Jersey City and tell Mother Xavier, if she did not come and take me away I would expose the Community. Mother Xavier, who had remained in Jersey City all night came up again to Hudson City, and for the first time I rebelled against *obedience*, and vehemently denounced her command. I also appealed to Father Venuta, who told her to take me to Newark, for two or three weeks, until I became more tranquil, but that then she must send me back again because the people of Hudson City could not get along without the "leetle Seesther." Accordingly, on Thursday, the 30th, Mother Xavier left me in Newark where I was to remain until I should become "more tranquil."

"Man proposes, but God disposes." The next Friday morning I was sent to teach in St. Patrick's Parochial School, some little distance from the Newark Convent. How could I teach with my brain on fire, my heart bleeding, my soul in agony! I was desperate and not responsible for anything I might do. My soul abhorred the priests; they were vipers. I condemned the sisters, and the convent as all defilement. I could not remain there longer; the very thought was unendurable! I would fly—escape—but where? and would not my soul be eternally damned if I abandoned my vocation? Ah! and would it not be also damned if I remained in the convent? If so I would rather be damned *out* of the convent than *in* it.

Therefore, wild with excitement, I donned my bonnet and shawl, appointed a monitress over my class, and turned my back on convent life, forever. On the porch of the school-house I met Rev. George Doane, who accosted me with a fascinating "good morning, Sister." He did not notice that I was alone, a very unusual thing for a Sister, as she must always have a companion with her, if only a child. Of course the affable, effeminate, and boyish Father Doane never suspected that I was running away from the convent, else he would not have permitted me to depart so unceremoniously without bidding him farewell, at least. I did not premeditate the step I took that stormy January day, else I would have made better provision. Goaded to desperation I only thought of escaping from the hateful presence of priests and nuns, and with five dollars which a servant girl gave me in Hudson City as a New Year's gift, I fled in midwinter, out into the world, without shelter, without protection; but better that than the abode of vipers and a life of sin.

I knew not where I was fleeing. I cared not; O, anywhere, anywhere out of the Convent! I asked a child I met on the street to accompany me to some depot, and I found myself on board of a train, without a ticket, without even knowing the destination of the train until the conductor told me Philadelphia. Not until I found myself in room 91, Continental Hotel, Philadelphia, where my name is registered as Sister Edith Crafton, not daring to register Sister T. De Chantal for fear of being recaptured, without money and in my nun's dress, did I fully realize my true position. I had been borne up during

the day by an unnatural state of excitement, but when that had passed away and I was free from pursuit, I felt to the full extent my desolate, destitute, and miserable condition. I paced my room all night; my heart seemed rent asunder with conflicting reflections. I had fled the Convent—by one step had thrown off all restraint of vows and vocation which had chained me for so many suffering years. Oh, fearful reflection! I was by so doing doomed to perdition. Thus it appeared then, blind votary that I was. If I had only thrown off the delusion years before I would have been spared a world of woe.

I remember that night, the 31st of January, 1868, was the first time I had beheld my face in a mirror for nearly six years, and oh, what a change! I did not know myself, and repeatedly asked the reflection in the glass, "Is that Edith O'Gorman? is it Sister Teresa de Chantal, or who is it? What is it? Am I crazy or dreaming, living or dead?" Having been buried in the Convent so long I knew nothing of the world, especially such a world as I found myself then in, without money, without shelter, without friends, without protection. What was I to do? Where could I go? What would become of me? But He who clothes the lily of the valley had me in His care, and He did not let me perish. I knelt down and prayed; and then the thought occurred to me to write to Bishop Wood, the bishop of Philadelphia; I did so, requesting an interview, and sent the letter to him in the morning by one of the waiters. In the afternoon I saw him, and under the seal of the Confessional (he could not take any step to have me sent back to the Convent from any knowledge he might receive through the Confessional

without breaking his auricular oath,) told him who I was, and what I had done. Owing to the fact that Bishop Wood had been brought up a Quaker he treated me kindly; and he tried to persuade me to go back to the Convent, or else retire into one in his diocese. I refused to comply with his request, I would try to save my soul in the world, but on no condition would I immure myself again in a Convent, to meet, perhaps, a repetition of such wrongs as I had experienced.

Bishop Wood gave me money which enabled me to change the nun's dress for a secular garb; and he also recommended me to go to confession every week to Rev. Xavier Schnuttgen, a Redemptionist father, belonging to St. Peter's Monastery, corner of Fifth Street and Girard Avenue. I had an interview with the latter, who sent me to board in a private French Catholic family, at No. 1336 Coates St. Father Schnuttgen told me never to tell a living soul that I had ever been a nun, on account of the scandal it would bring upon the church; he said I must pass for a "widow." I told him "I could not do that inasmuch as the only husband I ever had was God, and He certainly was not dead." He then counseled me to pass for an orphan, which I could more readily do, as no orphan's fate could be more desolate; and as such he introduced me, February 8th, to a lady from Boston, in order that I might give her instruction in the Catholic Decalogue, as she was about to join the Catholic Church.

Oh, what a school for prevarication, and deviation from the straight-forward path of truth and virtue, is the whole system of Catholicism! How grievously lamentable that the ground-

work of any faith should be so unpropitious to the nourishment of truth and virtue! A priest, by his vow of Celibacy, cannot take a wife, nor lawfully exercise the rite of a parent, but he can approach a virgin; can pander to every illicit pleasure; can unfeelingly burden the world with his miserable offspring; for, is not the door of penance open to him through the key-hole of the Confessional? and does not that give him the passport to salvation? The world is injured both by his excesses and abstemiousness. If he keeps his vow, it may be suicidal to health; if he breaks it, there is poured from the sanctuaries of the church one of the most demoralizing streams of perdition—an effluvium sending out the poison of death!

The Romish Church teaches that God has ordained celibacy as the very acme of the Cardinal virtues; but who can recognize a God ordaining any law to deteriorate the race—to destroy a proper sentiment? even when one is a most suitable subject for celibacy, how is it with another having the natural amount of sympathy for all that is physical in human nature—with warm affections rounding into passion, what is his fate? It is by the infamous endeavor to feed his appetency under the hypocritical garb of sanctity, and at the same time stand unblushingly on the altar before the tabernacle of God, raising the chalice of salvation in atonement for the people who innocently trust him—nay, worship him, that God and man are disgraced by this celibate's deformity of soul, of mind, and of principle. His hypocrisy may be a life-time augmenting the cess-pools of the Confessional, and in thus disburdening his

guilty conscience, a clique of men become copartners in his offence, by the protection their auricular oath extends to him and themselves.

Ah! if the secret annals of priestly archives could be laid bare to the world, what a blotch would be blazoned on the brow of Rome!!



CHAPTER XVIII.

SICK AMONG STRANGERS.

Three weeks after I left the convent I was prostrated on a bed of sickness. My heart had been so oppressed and crushed by its terrible weight of grief, that it gave way, and a violent spasmodic action ensued, accompanied with fever, which brought me to death's door. My illness continued for several weeks, and, dear reader, language cannot express the woe, the hopeless desolation which overwhelmed me. I prayed for death; prayed that I might lose my mind, and cease to be sensible to the accumulation of sorrow which had blighted my life. Only twenty-five years of age, and a broken-hearted fugitive, thrown upon the cold mercies of a selfish world. I was sick, and as I thought dying among strangers, without a hope of salvation, without a ray of heavenly light. O God! how vain appeared all my self-sacrifice in the light of eternity! and oh, those long years of suffering were all lost! So much penance and self-denial! My life a dreary, desolate blank—no certainty, no hope in death—all dark, all dark! Where then was my heavenly Spouse, for whom I died to the world? Where all the meritorious works I had done? Did they comfort me then?

Ah! no. In the clear light of eternity the delusions which had so long clouded my mental vision were dissipated. What terrible destiny consigned me, as I then thought, to die among strangers, far from my home, far from my mother, who in the hour of sickness would have tenderly hovered near me, ministered to my wants, and soothed my dying agony? But there was no mother near to cradle me in her arms; no father's presence to cheer and strengthen me; no sister's face to smile upon me; not a single glimpse of the dear forms that gladdened my once happy home. And then beyond the tomb I had no hope, no looking to the merits of Christ, to the atoning blood of Calvary's sacrifice. Oh, what inexpressible terror, dismay, and darkness, for a soul entering into eternity with no hope in Christ, no hope in aught save *goodself*, which in the last hour dwindles away into the meanest insignificance! God had the keeping of my immortal soul, and in His infinite mercy he plucked the burning brand, and snatched my soul from the yawning gulf.

One day I awoke again to life, and the first object my conscious eyes rested upon, was Father Walsh standing by my bedside weeping. When I could rally strength sufficient I enquired how he found me, and why he dared to come near me? Mrs. Willt, the lady with whom I boarded, discovered from my feverish ravings that there was a Father Walsh in Hudson City, whom I spoke about, and fearing that I might die, had telegraphed to him that I was dying, and he had come to behold *her* whom he had caused to fly from a convent and take refuge among strangers, and his heart was saddened to

see my misery. He said he also had suffered, when he learned that I ran away from the convent without leaving a clue to my whereabouts, and he supposed I had committed self-destruction, until three months after my flight he had received the telegram from Mrs. Willt. I will do this man justice when I say that he never acted other than in the most tender, chaste, and respectful manner afterward, never ceasing to deplore his attempted wrong to me—and I forgave him.

In order that no suspicion might rest upon him as a priest, he passed for my uncle. He engaged Dr. Shurtz to attend me, and every attention that money could bestow I received. And then I learned that he had a sister in Philadelphia, a widow lady named Mrs. Margaret Sullivan, who in comfortable circumstances resided in South Sixteenth St. I think her number is 967; however, her residence was four or five doors from the corner of Carpenter Street. During my convalescence, Father Walsh came from Hudson City to see me twice a week, always returning the same day, and when I was sufficiently recovered he introduced me to his sister, Mrs. Sullivan, who treated me with great kindness. When my strength permitted, I again went to confession to Father Schnuttgen, where a circumstance occurred which prevented me from going to that Monastery again. A large fleshy German brother opened the Monastery door in response to my summons. I asked to see Father Schnuttgen. The brother told me he was engaged giving instruction to a lady in one of the parlors. There are in that Monastery four parlors or reception rooms, arranged two on each side of the hall, and at the end of the hall is the

grated entrance to the Monks' inclosure, and no secular is allowed to cross its threshold. The brother conducted me into a reception room, on the left-hand side of the entrance from the street, telling me Father Schnuttgen would see me when disengaged. The brother, instead of retiring then, remained to converse with me, remarking he had not seen me in several weeks, and inquired if I had been ill, because I looked pale. I told him I came near dying, and requested him to pray for me, because I was afraid I had lost my vocation, and could not be saved. He replied, "O yes! you will go to heaven, you are so good, so nice!" he then came near me, and before I was aware of his intention, stooped down and tried to kiss me, at which I screamed and ran out in the hall. Father Schnuttgen hearing the scream came out into the hall, and asked, "What is the matter?" I responded indignantly, pointing to the brother who stood in the parlor door, "Ask that brother!" Father Schnuttgen took me into the confessional, and in the sternest manner rebuked me. He said I was too particular, and that the brother meant no harm, and that I had sinned grievously by screaming, thereby bringing scandal into the Monastery. With an audacity that alarmed me, I told him I believed priests were all bad, and all they cared for was not to be discovered. I left the confessional without waiting for his absolution, and turned my back on that Monastery forever. This happened in May, 1868.

Father Walsh wished me to leave Coates street, and reside with his sister, where he could see me often. I declined to leave Mrs. Willt. He then said, "sister, you have left the con-

vent, and are now free; come with me to where we are not known, I will then throw off the priesthood, and become a Professor. We can get married by a Protestant minister, and in a life-long love and devotion, I will repair the fearful suffering I have occasioned you." I told him that although I had left the convent and had discovered the hypocrisy of priests, nevertheless I could not cease to be a Catholic, and as such I could not look upon a Protestant marriage, especially to an anointed priest, in any other light than as degradation; and as nothing can justify a woman in becoming that most wretched of all beings, I would rather live and die a fugitive. I would rather submit to starvation than ever lead a life of debasement. I told him to drive such thoughts from his mind forever, because I had taken a resolution to go far away where he could never see me again on earth, a step designed for both his salvation and mine; that I had a cousin who was Lady Abbess of a Presentation Nunnery in Killarney, Ireland, and I would go to her if he would supply me with the means, and if he truly loved me he would not refuse." I advised him at the same time to "shut himself up in an austere Monastery where he could never see a woman, and there do penance for his great sin; and in thus living to God and religion we would finally meet in heaven, never more to be parted." He unwillingly gave his consent to this proposition, and I made preparations to go to Ireland, and on the 10th of June, in compliance with Father Walsh's request, I sent a telegram to Bessie Murray, his housekeeper, telling her to meet me in the Jersey City Depot at 5 P.M. of that day. She did, and at the request

of Father Walsh, took me to the Pacific House, in Greenwich Street, New York. Mrs. Keogh, the housekeeper in that hotel, was an acquaintance of Father Walsh, and he called to see me the next day, introducing me to her as his sister from Philadelphia. I told Father Walsh that I could not go to Ireland without seeing my parents once again, but I would never tell them anything I had suffered. If they were ignorant of my unhappiness, I would never undeceive them. Having requested him to engage my passage to Ireland, I took the Stonington boat for home on the evening of the 11th of June, 1868.

Words cannot describe my feelings upon beholding again that home to which six years before I had bade farewell as I thought forever. Neither can I paint the scene that took place in that home at my return. After long suffering, years of separation, I was once more clasped in my darling Mother's arms; and my dear father pressed to his heart his long absent, and as he thought, lost (to earth) daughter. I cannot speak of that meeting! Six years before I had left that home in all the happiness, brightness, hopefulness, trustfulness, and innocence of my girlhood, only to return from the sanctuary of the convent, with happiness wrecked, life blighted, heart crushed, trust betrayed, hope fled, but, thank God, innocence preserved. With that prevarication which I had learned in the convent, I hid everything from my parents. My conscience as a Catholic forbade me to make any disclosure which would bring scandal on priests or religious.

My parents were staunch Catholics, and would not believe, even from my own lips, the awful truth. They were consoled

by the thought that I was content with convent life—and I would not undeceive them; moreover as Catholics, with all their affection for me, they would rather see me dead than have me abandon a vocation to which they thought I had been specially called by God. Whatever fears they entertained I disarmed, by telling them that, in order to acquire greater sanctity, I had permission to retire into a more austere and secluded convent, and having obtained the consent of superiors, I had come to see them before I cut off every avenue of further communication with them; and then I left them.

I will not attempt to portray that parting. Ah, my parents! why did you suffer me to leave the protection of your home, to be tossed about in a sea of misery, of persecution, of defamation, of calumny, and of slander? But who could foresee the dangers, the snares and pitfalls, which were set for my destruction, or who conceive the desolation, destitution, and hardships which awaited me? After I parted from home I went to Boston to see my sister Gertrude. I learned from her that after she had received the letter which brother John had written home about me, she started on the 17th of March, 1868, to see me. She called at St. Joseph's Convent, Hudson City, and inquired for Sister Teresa de Chantal. Sister Aloysius told her she could not see me, because I was at the mother-house in Madison, and moreover, it being the season of Lent, sisters were forbidden to see their friends. My sister replied she would go to Madison, and demand to see me, as she was determined not to go back without an interview. Sister Aloysius became alarmed at this expression of perseverance, and finally told her that it was impossible for her to see me,

because six weeks before I ran away in the nun's dress, and they had not the slightest clue to my fate. My sister was amazed at the untruthfulness of Sister Aloysius, and she turned from the convent with a sickening horror creeping into her very soul.

Although from conviction Gertrude had ceased to be a communicant in the Catholic Church, she yet thought convents were the abode of holy women who would not stoop to falsehood. Almost stupefied by what she had heard, she could not go to her home and tell her parents that the daughter who had "chosen the better part," was not in the convent, and no clue to her whereabouts existed—therefore she returned to Boston without letting my parents know anything about my disappearance. She suffered alone! I felt that I could not entirely deceive Gertrude, so I told her I had run away from the convent to escape a priest who was tormenting me with professions of love; but I did not breathe to her the crime he attempted. I told her I was going to Killarney to enter the convent with my cousin—and thus I parted with her.

The managers of the convent did not dare to advertise for me lest it should lead to discoveries which would bring scandal on their community. No effort being made to clear up the mystery, a suspicious silence was left hanging over it all—but the Lord of the Universe has said, "There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed." They who are chief ministers in such wickedness will yet be divested of their borrowed plumes; and the rottenness and corruption of their system, that whited sepulchre! shall become a spectacle to angels and to men.

CHAPTER XIX.

MY VOYAGE TO IRELAND.

From Boston I wrote to Bessie Murray, who met me on the morning of the 10th of July, and took me to the Stevens House, in Broadway, telling me Father Walsh had made every arrangement for my departure on Saturday, the day following. Father Walsh called at the Stevens House, Friday noon, I saw him in the ladies' parlor, for about one hour; he was very sad, and suffering from neuralgia in the face. He told me Dr. Hays, Sr., of Hudson City, was going to Ireland on a visit, and that he had placed me under his protection in the Steamer Hibernia, of the Anchor Line. He then left me, saying he would be over in the morning with my ticket and the check for my baggage. On Saturday morning Bessie Murray called and informed me that Father Walsh was very sick, and it was quite impossible for him to go out in the morning, but that he would accompany Dr. Hays on the tugboat in the afternoon, and meet me on the steamer. Father Walsh had given Bessie \$100 to purchase a first cabin ticket in the Hibernia, but she, impelled by a spirit of malice, for which I could never account, purchased a steerage ticket in the City of Baltimore, of the Inman line.

Without suspecting any foul play, I accompanied Bessie, who instead of taking me on board the *Hibernia* at Pier 20, North river, took me to Pier 45, and hurried me on board the *City* of Baltimore, assuring me that Father Walsh would come in the tugboat at twelve o'clock, in company with Dr. Hays. Not until the steamer anchored at quarantine to wait for the tugboat, which was to bring the mail and some cabin passengers, did I discover the fraud that woman had practiced upon me. She had hurried me away from the hotel without a breakfast, and not having partaken of much food since I left Boston, the sea air had sharpened my appetite, and I felt weak with hunger.

From the time I went on board the steamer I sat on the cabin deck alone and desolate. I was attired in the deepest mourning, a long crape veil concealing my face from the many curious glances directed toward me. I had noticed two priests on board who watched me closely. Finally one of them drew near and thus accosted me: "Sister!" At the word sister I gave an involuntary start of surprise. The priest, noticing my confusion, laughed and said, "I knew by your appearance you were a *sister* in disguise, although the Bishop whom you see over there would have it that you were a widow!"

He sat down beside me, and I told him I had run away from the convent.

This priest introduced himself to me as Father Flannery of New London, Canada, and told me he was going on a visit to his friends in Ireland, in company with his Bishop. He then

gave me an introduction to Bishop Walsh of New London, Canada.

I finally became so faint that I went down to the ladies' saloon to have some lunch. The Stewardess, a large coarse looking Irish woman, came in, and before she gave me anything to eat, asked to see the number of my berth. I handed her my ticket, not dreaming that it was a steerage passage, when she looked at the ticket, she almost kicked me out of the saloon, at the same time calling, "James, take this woman to the steerage." "James" came and conducted me down a dark hole where there were assembled a number of dirty men, dirty women, and dirty children, with any amount of dirty mattresses, tin cups and kettles. And what did it all mean? I could not understand why I should be thrust down a steerage, without even a dirty mattress or tin cup necessary to the passage. I ran away in spite of "James," and made my way back to the cabin deck. I told Father Flannery the unaccountable treatment I had received, showing him my ticket. He informed me that the Steamer Hibernia had just passed us, and then went with me to the ladies' saloon, and made the stewardess give me some lunch. After conversing some time with Bishop Walsh, he advised me to go back on the tugboat if Father Walsh should not come. The tugboat came, but no Father Walsh. Father Flannery accompanied me on board the tugboat, and I noticed two more priests among the cabin passengers who went on board the Steamer. One of them I recognized as Father McKenna, of New York City, but being deeply veiled he did not recognize me. When I arrived in New York

I went back to the Stevens House, and wrote a letter to Father Walsh demanding an explanation of the events of the day. He came to the hotel Monday morning, the 13th of July, and I saw him in the parlor; he said that Bessie had made a mistake, and secured a ticket for me on the wrong boat; that the cabin passage in the Inman line was more expensive than the Anchor line, and she not having money enough, had purchased a steerage ticket. He said further, that it had caused him a great deal of pain and trouble, and he had sent a large sum of money in gold by Rev. Father McKenna, of New York, for me, on the City of Baltimore, as Bessie had told him the name of the steamer, and that he had also tried to go on board the tugboat, but was prohibited because he had no pass.

Bessie Murray told me herself afterward, that she had put me on the wrong boat purposely, because she was afraid I would tell Dr. Hays about Father Walsh, and she would "rather put her soul in hell than suffer any harm to come to poor dear Father Walsh, because *she loved him.*" I was anxious to depart in the first steamer that sailed, therefore on Tuesday afternoon, Father Walsh came to the hotel and gave me a cabin ticket in the steamer Propontis, of Tapscott and Brothers, Pier 45 East River. He promised to meet me on board the steamer, (which sailed at two P. M.) at twelve o'clock, and give me some money in gold. I had lost my baggage, as it had been sent on board the Hibernia, and I was quite destitute, but Father Walsh said he would send Bessie to purchase me a trunk, and some garments ready made, and send them on board the Propontis.

On Wednesday, the 15th of July, 1868, at ten A. M., I left the hotel in a carriage, and went on board the *Proponitis*. About one half hour after I embarked, the vessel sailed. Oh, the indescribable despair of that moment! The ship was sailing, and I had no money, no clothes, nothing! In my wild grief I ran to the first man I met, who happened to be the chief steward, and asked him if he would not "please to stop the steamer, or else send me ashore in a boat?" Captain Higginson tried to console me, assuring me that my "friend" would send the money to the office of the company in Liverpool, England, and I would get it as soon as I arrived. He was sorry the boat sailed before the appointed hour, but it could not be avoided, etc. The captain introduced me to the only lady cabin passenger on board, Mrs. Captain Burnell. I went down into my stateroom, where I was detained by sea-sickness and physical prostration for thirteen long dreary days and nights. I believe I should have died on that voyage were it not for the kind care of the chief steward, William Matthias. God bless him! he was indeed the good Samaritan of the vessel to me. Out on the wide ocean without a friend or home. Oh, the terrible anguish of a soul, all, all alone!

CHAPTER XX.

ALONE IN A FOREIGN LAND: MY RETURN.

ON the 28th of July the steamer *Propontis* sailed into the docks of Liverpool, England. The passengers left the ship, but I remained on board alone. I had no other shelter. I was again cast, a poor waif of humanity, on the mercy of strangers. What was I to do? Where to go? Oh, intolerable questions! I had no money, not even a change of linen, and the wide ocean stretched between me and my few friends. There was no help for it. Cold charity must be entreated, reluctant sympathy importuned, and perhaps countless repulses incurred, before my tale of woe would be listened to, or one of my wants relieved. Gentle reader, may you never feel what I then felt! may your eyes never shed such scalding, heart-wrung tears! may you never appeal to Heaven in prayers so hopeless and agonized, as then left my lips! Never may you experience such poignant grief, such a forlorn abandonment, which, in that foreign land, overwhelmed me.

The chief steward was the only person who partly understood my forlorn condition, and he was a poor man with a wife and four children depending on him. To him I made known my

intentions. I really did not wish to go to Ireland, for the walls of the nunnery loomed up before my mental vision like a living tomb. I was filled with only one thought, one desire, and that was to return to my home and—die. Mr. Matthias appealed in my behalf to the captain, who kindly promised to take me back to Boston, as he expected to sail for America on the 11th of August. However, in a few days Capt. Higginson received orders to sail into the Mediterranean Sea, thus dashing my new found hope to earth. I told Mr. Matthias I would make known the circumstances of my abject condition to Bishop Goss, the Catholic prelate of Liverpool. Accordingly Mr. Matthias furnished me with a carriage and I proceeded to the palatial residence of Bishop Goss, where I was informed by the gate-keeper that the worthy Bishop was *spending* the summer months in the Isle of Man, the fashionable resort of the *élite*, and that Rev. Dr. Porter, president of the Jesuit College, would supply the bishop's place during his absence. To Dr. Porter I then proceeded, and was favored with an interview. I made known to him my errand; he refused to give me money for my passage either to Ireland or America, but entreated me to remain in Liverpool and reside in one of his Convents. To this I partly consented as it seemed the only remedy left. "Beggars cannot be choosers," and some shelter would be afforded me in this way at least.

I returned to the ship and told the chief steward the decision I had almost made. Mr. Matthias was a good Presbyterian, and rather than permit me to do what he considered such a wicked thing as condemn myself again to a convent prison, of-

ferred to pay my passage back to my friends if I would accept a steerage berth. He said, if he could afford it, he would gladly send me back in the cabin. From my inmost heart I thanked that good Christian man, and gladly accepted the steerage ticket which he secured for me in the steamship *Siberia*, of the *Cunard* line, and he also replenished my wardrobe, which, as the reader already knows, was sadly deficient. *William Matthias* was actuated by a purely humane and charitable motive; he said that he never in his life had witnessed such suffering as mine in that voyage from *New York* to *Liverpool*, and his tender heart pitied me. He will meet his reward from Him who has promised to reward for even a "cup of cold water" given in His name.

On the 12th of August, 1868, I embarked in the *Siberia* and turned my face toward home. While the ship was in *Queens-town* harbor I noticed a priest enter the steerage passage. I knew him to be a priest by his hypocritical and down-looking countenance. No matter under what garments priests appear they have a look peculiar to themselves. He also recognized me as a nun, because convent life imprints upon the human face a peculiar expression which years are required to eradicate. He was in a state of constant intoxication, and one day he introduced himself to me as *Rev. Father Owens*, and in the course of conversation confessed that he had been suspended in *Ireland*, "because he had a great weakness for whisky and women." He showed me a letter from his Bishop, recommending him to a Bishop in *America*, where his propensities were not known, and he expected to get a church there.

We were out three days from Queenstown when a fearful storm arose and lasted nearly three days. Who can describe the terror of a storm at sea?—the wild panic, the fearful despair of hundreds of human souls expecting every moment to be launched into eternity? On the 16th of August, near midnight, we were precipitated from our berths into floods of water, the hatchways were open and the water poured into the steerage, drenching us through; and then the piercing shrieks, the wild confusion, the German clatter, the Irish wail, the cries of children, the shouting of the sailors, the roar of the angry waters, made up a scene which no human pen could adequately paint; and yet I never felt so calm. I had no fear of death. I made one fervent act of contrition to God and calmly prayed for death. But this was not to be. The storm abated, and the steerage, with its hundreds of human souls, presented a most wretched, miserable, and filthy aspect. I could not partake of the coarse fare furnished there, and I know not what would have become of me if I had been compelled to remain in that steerage eight days more. Again God raised up a friend for me in Rev. Mr. Green, a missionary, who was returning with his wife and four little children from a nine years' sojourn in Turkey to his home in Portland, Maine. This gentleman was attracted toward me, and thus addressed me: "Madam, your refined and delicate appearance indicate that you are not accustomed to the hardships of the steerage. I feel that some reverse of circumstances has placed you there. I will speak to the captain, and if he will permit, I will take you into the cabin in order that you may assist my wife, who is now suffering from

sea-sickness, in the care of her little ones." And thus I passed the remainder of the voyage in the first cabin.

The *Siberia* sailed into Boston. Mr. Reade, the quartermaster, who had been very kind to me, assisted me ashore, placed me in a carriage and I drove to my sister's house, after an absence of six weeks. I answered to my sister's inquiries by pouring into her ears the harrowing details of all my wrongs, trials, and hardships, which I thought she would keep secret in her own heart, and, with a true woman's sympathy, shield me from renewed sufferings. But I had not yet drained to the dregs the bitter chalice; only through the crucible of renewed suffering could I be thoroughly purified from the dross of Romanism.



CHAPTER XXI.

THE ARREST OF FATHER WALSH.

It is painful for me to make the remark that Gertrude was not a Christian. Her own words, "I hate Catholics and detest Protestants, I hate, abhor, detest the whole of God and man!" will convey to my readers her sentiments, and the bitterness of her heart against all created things, therefore she was the last one to whom I should have confided my sorrows. A few days after my arrival she left me at her house in Boston, and went home, bearing the trail of the serpent into that paradise where there had been but peace heretofore, and my father in his anger forbids my name to be mentioned in his house. After this home visit, Gertrude went to Hudson City, and on the 25th of August, 1868, confronted Father Walsh in his own parlor, and wrung from him a confession of his attempted crime. He expressed his deep repentance, told her he was going to join the order of Dominicans, and had already made arrangements to enter St. Rose's Monastery in Springfield, Kentucky. Gertrude told Father Walsh I was in Boston, although I never intended he should know anything about my fate. She gave him one week to betake himself out of the

country, and proceeding to Providence, R. I., there called on Bishop McFarland, and laid the case before him. He told her that Mother Xavier had written to him at the time of my flight, and in that letter stated that I had given entire satisfaction up to the time of my disappearance, but that a few days before I left the convent, I had "manifested symptoms of insanity." At the same time she requested Bishop McFarland to make inquiries if I had gone to my home. Bishop McFarland took notes of my sister's charges, and sent them to Bishop Bayley, of Newark, with an order to suspend Father Walsh from his priesthood. Gertrude then returned to Boston, but I was entirely ignorant of her movements. She went to the office of Starkweather & Sheldon, criminal lawyers, at 33 School St., Boston, and engaged their services in a suit against Father Walsh, having the writ made out in my name and without my consent.

On September 7th, she went in search of the defendant, and failing to find him in Hudson City, she went to Father Corrigan, in Jersey City, who gave her the address of Father Walsh at Mount Holly, Burlington, N. J., where he was stopping a few days with Father McGahann, preparatory to going West. Gertrude told Father Corrigan that she heard Father Walsh was about to become a Monk, but she wished to see him before he went away, as she owed him a *debt* which she wished to pay. Father Corrigan replied that every one regretted the loss of Father Walsh, as he was such an eminent priest in holiness; in fact that was the cause of his retiring

into a Monastery, his nature being too "Angelic" to be tainted by the breath of this "impure world."

Gertrude took the train to Burlington, and arrived at Mount Holly on the evening of the 8th. She found Father Walsh, and made arrangements to meet him on the Wednesday following in Boston, telling him I was ill, and wished to see him. Father Walsh, never suspecting her true motive, promised her that if nothing happened in the interim he would be in Boston on the day appointed. Owing to circumstances which he could not control, he failed to arrive. She again set out in quest of the delinquent, and succeeded in finding him at his Sister's, Mrs. Sullivan, South 16th Street, Philadelphia. She appointed a meeting on board the Bristol boat for Boston, at five P. M., on Friday, the 18th. In the meantime, Father Walsh went to Mount Holly to make it all right with Father McGahann for the few days he was to be absent, not by any means telling McGahann his destination.

Gertrude and Father Walsh arrived in Boston on the morning of Saturday, the 19th of September. She took him to the Adams House, on Washington Street, where he registered his name, and after shaking hands with him hastened to her lawyers and told them Father Walsh was in Boston, and at the Adams House. A writ, after Gertrude had taken oath to all it contained, was placed in the hands of Deputy Sheriff Merrill. She accompanied this deputy to the Adams House, and pointed out the unsuspecting priest, who was immediately taken in charge and conducted to the Boston Court House.

Gertrude applied in person to Father Babst, a particular

friend of hers, in order to procure bail for Father Walsh. (This Rev. John Babst was at that time President of the Boston Jesuit College, but he has since been made Provincial of the Jesuits in the United States and Canada, and at present resides in the Jesuit College, Sixteenth Street, New York.) In the meantime I received the following letter from Father Walsh :

“SHERIFF’S OFFICE, COURT HOUSE.

MY DEAR, DEAR, SISTER.—Oh come to your poor helpless friend! I am now under arrest and would not be allowed to see you. Will you come to me, for God’s sake? They require bail for my appearance, but how is your cruelly persecuted one to find bail in a strange city to which you alone have attracted me. Oh sister! remember my love and kindness toward you always, and come and let your poor penitent father free. Ah, Gertrude, you have acted the traitor too well! Come and see me *dear, dear* sister. I cannot realize my dreadful position, and know not what I write. Oh, my God! give me yet a little patience. I have sinned against thee, dear Lord! Thy *will be done*. Come and see me in this office immediately dear sister, otherwise I shall be put into the “*den of thieves*.” Come, dear sister, and tell me what you want me to do. This is now the “prayer of the weary one.” May God and his holy Mother put it into your heart to act again the part of Sister de Chantal.

I am your unfortunate friend, .

W. M. WALSH.”

When I received this letter I was petrified with grief and

astonishment. I could not weep although my heart was weeping blood. In calm despair I accompanied the bearer of the letter to the Court House, and deeply veiled I entered the sheriff's office, where I beheld Father Walsh very much depressed and cast down. Gentle reader, pity me in that trying scene, when, for the first time in my life, I entered a sheriff's office and found it full of men who all stared at me as I entered. What a position for a shrinking, sensitive woman to be placed in! and what an errand had brought me there! Nothing could have induced me thus to expose modesty than a conscientious duty to avert scandal from the Catholic religion, and to prevent the imprisonment of an anointed priest, and a man I once had loved, and whom I had forgiven.

Father Walsh was not impenitent; he was going to make a life-long atonement for his sins among the austere order of Dominicans; and although he had sinned knowingly, sinned grievously, yet he implored pardon from his Heavenly Father Who is "ever ready to forgive all who trust in Him, and renounce their evil ways." I told Father Walsh I had nothing to do with his arrest, and I would never give my consent to his imprisonment. The sheriff said I had nothing at all to do with it, as it was my sister who took oath against him.

Gertrude, whose plans were substantially thwarted by Father Walsh's writing to me, and my consequent appearance in the prisoner's favor, soon after indignantly walked into the sheriff's office, and in sharp tones, before all present, ordered me out of the office in the following words: "Shame on you, bold woman! You are not your mother's daughter to concil-

iate with that poltroon. Do you think a true woman would let such an act go unpunished?" I replied to her calmly, "A true woman would shrink from publicity in such a case. He has injured himself the most, and conscience will be to him a more salutary punishment than a disgraceful imprisonment. Let him retire into a Monastery to do penance and implore forgiveness of God! And now Gertrude, I am not a minor, and I am the injured party. I'll forgive him." She replied with great vindictiveness, "I will not forgive him! he must go to jail; that is the St. Rose's Convent I have in view for him, and where I trust he will do penance for the next fifteen years. Edith, come away from here."

I left the sheriff's office and proceeded with her through the court yard to the office of Starkweather & Sheldon. These gentlemen were very courteous and sympathized with me, but as the case could not be settled that day, they committed Father Walsh to the Suffolk jail. The next day, which was Sunday, Rev. Father Babst and Rev. Father Suple of Charlestown, visited him in the jail, and in the afternoon they settled the case by paying the sum of \$300 into the hands of the lawyers. I did not know Father Walsh was released until Monday morning, and Gertrude was so enraged with me because I had broken up the suit, that she uttered the bitter remark: "I'll have revenge if I wade through hell to get it! and I'll go to my father, secure his power of attorney, and have Walsh re-arrested in the criminal court of New Jersey, and there you will have no power to interfere." I was not aware at that time that my parents were entirely ignorant of

Gertrude's proceedings and knew nothing of the arrest of Father Walsh. My father would never have consented to it if he had known her intentions. Fearing she would carry out her threat, and actuated by the one motive to save the church from scandal, with fifty dollars in hand, I went in pursuit of Father Walsh, to tell him to leave at once the State of New Jersey. I arrived at Father McGahann's, Mount Holly, Tuesday, September 22d, at four P. M. Father McGahann was surprised to see me, and at first failed to recognize me, as it was the first time he had met me since I left the convent, and was ignorant of my escape. Father McGahann had not seen Father Walsh since the 18th, but was expecting him back from the Dominicans in New York whither he had gone to make arrangements for his departure west.

I saw Father McGahann knew nothing of the events that had taken place, and I could not inform him. He asked me to wait until the next day, and if Father Walsh did not come then he would give him up. I went to the Davis Hotel, Mount Holly, and remained all night suffering much anxiety of mind lest Father Walsh had been re-arrested. The question which troubled me was, why had he not arrived in Mount Holly, as he had left Boston twenty-four hours in advance of me? In the morning I went to Father McGahann's Church to Mass, after which he invited me to breakfast with him. About nine A. M., while we were conversing in the parlor, Father Walsh made his appearance, dejected, downcast, and unshaven. Father McGahann was very much surprised by the deplorable aspect Father Walsh presented, and thus accosted him, "Well

William, what has happened to you? here is Sister de Chantal who has been waiting since yesterday to see you. What kept you?"

"Well, James, if you must know what happened to me, I have been in jail."

"In jail, William! Arrah, what brought you to jail, and what jail were you in?"

"To tell you the truth, James, I hardly know what jail myself; all I can tell you is that I put up in the Boston jail Saturday, breakfasted and dined there on Sunday, settled my account at the jail Sunday evening, and here I am now, James, more dead than alive,—or is it dreaming I am?"

"Faix, we are both dreaming I think," said Father McGahann, falling back in his chair, in dismay.

"Will you tell me William, what you were doing in Boston? sure, it's with the Dominicans I thought you were; what in the *wide, wide* world took you to Boston at all?"

"Sister de Chantal's sister took me there."

"Is it the little thing that was here the other day?"

"Yes, James, that little fly in the brown silk walking suit."

"Arrah Billy! what made you go with her? Musha, may the devil shoot her, but she is smart to hoist you off to Boston jail! and may the devil hikers you for going with her—but we are all fixed now in earnest! Come William, tell me all about it, for God's sake."

Whereupon Father Walsh tearfully confessed all to Father McGahann, expressing the most sincere regret for all the suffering he had occasioned me. I then explained to Father

Walsh why I was there, requesting him to leave the State of New Jersey without delay, because of Gertrude's threat.

Both the priests were alarmed, and Father McGahann hurried Father Walsh away while I was to remain in Mount Holly until Father McGahann returned. However, at the depot they met Fathers Sheehan and Fitzsimmons, who were posting down in hot haste with a report which had appeared in the New York *Tribune*. They all returned together to the house, and Father Walsh showed me the publication in the newspaper. My readers will observe from the statement of facts which I have given, the falsity of the following paragraph :

From the New York *Daily Tribune*, of Tuesday, September 22d, 1868.

“REMARKABLE SUIT IN A BOSTON COURT.—*Boston, Sept. 21st.* A few days ago the Rev. Mr. Walsh, a Catholic clergyman, was arrested in a civil process on the charge of seduction in August last of Miss Edith O'Gorman, otherwise Sister Teresa de Chantal, who had been an inmate of the convent of Notre Dame, Hudson City, New Jersey; to which institution Walsh was attached in the capacity of spiritual adviser to the nuns. On leaving the convent Sister Teresa went to Philadelphia, whither she was followed by Walsh. About the 24th of August, he sent her to Liverpool in a steamer, but the girl's sister, Gertrude O'Brien, came to a knowledge of the facts, at that time, and at once set about rescuing her sister from her life of shame. She now lives in Boston where, the entire family helping, Gertrude succeeded in getting her sister back

from Liverpool to Boston, and obtained from her a recital of her wrongs. She wrote at once to Messrs. Geo. C. Starkweather & Sheldon, well known criminal lawyers, and told her case. They informed her that she must get Walsh to Boston in order to do anything with him. With true woman's art she concocted a tale which brought him here, and he was at once arrested in a civil process, in which the victim claims \$5,000 damages, and lodged in jail. This morning he obtained money enough to pay the damages, and is now out of Massachusetts. It is said that he has been suspended from his^e priesthood by his Bishop."

Dear readers, what my sensations were no language can describe as I read that base and lying document. I, who had endured every kind of suffering, hardship, and privation, rather than sacrifice honor and virtue, was by that carelessly printed card paraded before the public as "fallen," especially in the part which reads: "the girl's sister, Gertrude O'Brien, came to a knowledge of the facts at that time, and at once set about rescuing her sister from her life of shame." And then too, consider this: "She now lives in Boston, where, the entire family helping, Gertrude succeeded in getting her sister back from Liverpool!" Oh, how false! as my family knew nothing of my misfortunes, and Gertrude did not dream of making an effort toward my return from Liverpool. She did not even know I had been there until I told her, after getting back through the charity of William Matthias, on the 22d of August. The false report stated that I was sent to Liverpool on

the "24th of August," and further gives the public to understand that I decoyed Father Walsh to Boston, and received damages to the amount of \$5,000. False! false!! my sister was the actor in the case, and three hundred dollars was the exact sum paid by Father Walsh to Starkweather & Sheldon, which sum he borrowed from Rev. Father Supple, of Charlestown, Mass., and which was not even sufficient to pay the "costs" of suit.

I could not help blaming Gertrude for this new suffering, which opened afresh the gaping wounds of my harrowed heart. Father McGahann prepared a contradiction in my name to that inaccurate and injurious card, which, though not as explicit as I wished, nevertheless refuted many of the false statements. It was as follows :

"THE CASE OF THE REV. MR. WALSH, LATE OF HUDSON CITY.
To the Editor of the *Tribune*.

SIR: In a Boston dispatch headed, "Remarkable Suit in a Boston Court," you say that the Rev. Mr. Walsh has been suspended from priesthood on charge of seducing Miss Edith O'Gorman, otherwise Sister Teresa de Chantal, while she was an inmate of the convent of Notre Dame, Hudson City, N. J. I, the alleged victim, Edith O'Gorman, formerly Sister de Chantal, am prepared to swear that every charge contained in said article is untrue from beginning to end. It is a foul calumny that I have ever been seduced in my life by anybody. It is also untrue that the Rev. Mr. Walsh was my spiritual adviser. It is untrue that he ever followed me to Philadelphia except by,

as I then thought, my dying request. It is false that he ever sent me to Liverpool except by my own earnest request. I left the convent unknown to my superior, and all whom I esteemed in this world. I went to Ireland of my own account. I have no sister married, and hence "Gertrude O'Brien," mentioned in your article cannot be my sister. I have a sister named Mary Gertrude O'Gorman, living at No. 48 Essex Street, Boston, who has brought a great deal of misery upon me. I have never written to Messrs. George C. Starkweather & Sheldon, on any business whatever. Whoever has given such scandal to my character must hold himself responsible for his conduct. I have never enticed the Rev. Mr. Walsh to Boston. This awful charge might never have come to my notice except through the goodness of a friend. No matter how opposed I am to appear in public print, I consider it a duty I owe to myself, to the holy community to which I belonged, and to the Rev. Mr. Walsh, who has been injured on my account, to send you the above statement, and I beg that this contradiction will be copied by all the papers that have circulated the grievous scandal.

EDITH O'GORMAN,
Alias SISTER TERESA DE CHANTAL."

Rev. Father Sheehan took the above letter to the New York *Tribune*, and it appeared on the morning of September 25th. Father Walsh, in the presence of Fathers McGahann, Sheehan, and Fitzsimmons, proclaimed me to be the purest minded woman he had ever met; he expressed the deepest sorrow for

all the suffering he had occasioned me, and before all present confessed he loved me then if possible, more than ever, and imploring my pardon, we parted forever. The priests were moved to tears in witnessing the separation of two human hearts, which were it not for an accursed system, might have been spared so much suffering and a life-long separation.

The 25th of September, 1868, was the last time I saw Father Walsh, and I was left alone and unprotected in a cruel world to bear the whole weight of its calumny and opprobrium. September 26th, Father McGahann sent me to Baltimore, giving me the name of Agnes Barry, and telling me that under an assumed name and in a strange city, I could get a school to teach from some of the priests. September 28th I stopped at Barnum's Hotel, Baltimore, and the next day I was directed by the Jesuits to a boarding house at 132 North Calvert Street, where as a transient boarder I paid two dollars per day. I went to several priests seeking a situation as teacher, but every vacancy was supplied. My money nearly all gone, I wrote to Father McGahann, and received the following letter in reply :

MOUNT HOLLY, N. J., September 31st, 1868.

DEAR SISTER:—I received your letter to-day and really it pained me very much, O God! I fear you are falling away from the only true Catholic faith. Oh, dear girl! pray to God to drive such temptations from your mind. I would suggest that you enter upon some devotion, say the "thirty days prayer"—that God through the intercession of our Blessed

Lady might free you from such temptations. Should you commence this prayer let me know the time and I will pray for you in my masses. About looking out for a school I think you have been too hasty. You should remain quiet for the present, and do everything after quiet consideration. You can remain where you are for a week or two, till you find some suitable situation, and during that time I would suggest that you pray a great deal to our Divine Lord and His immaculate Mother, and I am sure God will assist you. Do not give yourself any further uneasiness about poor Father Walsh, as, thank God, he is on his way to where he cannot possibly be found out; and I hope God will give him grace to repent of the path he has taken in causing you so much suffering, and in bringing scandal upon the Church of God. I have not heard much about the matter since. Father Sheehan has been with me assisting me at the Triduum, and has told me that all the papers copied the contradiction, and commented largely on the affair. He requested that you make an affidavit in confirmation of the statements in the contradiction. You will then please write out the contradiction and go before some magistrate and swear to the truth of what you have written, and send it to me. Do not forget this but do it without delay. I will send you letters of recommendation next week, which will be time enough for you. You are at present unfit for anything. When you become more tranquil it will be time enough to look out for a situation; the quieter and more retired you keep yourself for the present, the better. I hope you will consider the necessity of again retiring into the convent. Father Renahan

has taken to his bed and is inconsolable. Father Hogan is frantic; has written to me twice the same day. Oh, dear child! it is a blow which has withered many hearts. Write often to me and I will send you every news. Your only salvation is in prayer, and may God give you the grace of prayer!

Yours very truly in Jesus Christ,

J. J. MCGAHANN."

After receiving the above letter in compliance with the Jesuits' advice, I put the following advertisement in the Baltimore *Sun*:

"An accomplished young lady wishes a situation as Governess or Lady's Companion. Address Agnes Barry, 132 North Calvert Street."

The same day about two P. M. an elegant carriage drove up to the door, and a magnificently dressed lady enquired for Agnes Barry. This lady said she had seen my advertisement, and as she needed a companion or waiting-maid she had answered it. I told her I expected letters of recommendation from a Roman Catholic priest in a few days. She replied very graciously, "Your face is all the recommendation I need," at the same time requesting me to accompany her then in her carriage, and gathering together my scanty wardrobe I complied, thanking God in my inmost soul that I had succeeded in getting a situation.

We alighted at an elegant mansion in an aristocratic looking neighborhood. The lady, who seemed extremely affable, conducted me into a luxurious chamber which she told me was

to be mine. She requested me to take some rest as she would not require my services that day, and then retired with the excuse that several visitors were awaiting her in the drawing room. I knelt down to thank God for the blessing of a comfortable home. No suspicion of wrong crossing my mind until about one hour after the lady had left me, I was astonished to see an elderly looking man enter my chamber. At first I thought he was the lady's husband who had entered the room without knowledge of my presence there. However, I was doubly surprised when he came and sat down on the sofa where I sat reading a book, and gliding his arm around my waist, made use of language which sent the blood tingling through my veins with indignation. I sprang from the sofa and demanded to know what he meant and why was I there to be thus insulted? he replied, "So then you are ignorant of the character of this house?" I told him I only knew that I had been engaged by a lady there as companion; but a suspicion that I had been ensnared to a *maison d'infamie* crossed my mind, and paralyzed my senses with unspeakable horror. I went to the door to find it locked, as unperceived by me he had sprung a secret spring when he entered. "O God! have mercy upon me and save me!" I ejaculated, and kneeling down in a voice of heartrending supplication, I addressed the following to the Blessed Virgin: "Remember, O most holy Virgin, that no one ever had recourse to thee without finding relief. Oh, come to my assistance most immaculate Virgin, and save your child from defilement! Remember, O most holy

mother, that I am the consecrated spouse of thy divine Son! O holy mother save me!"

While I repeated this prayer that man stood aloof from me, and when I finished he said, "are you a Catholic and a consecrated Virgin?" I looked at him, and with lightning-like rapidity the thought flashed through my mind that he was a Roman Catholic priest. I arose from my knees and confronting him, I replied, "I am a Catholic, and *you, sir*, are a Roman Catholic priest. I am a consecrated virgin, and on account of priestly depravity I ran from the convent, and am out on the wicked world without a friend or home; and oh, sir! if you possess one spark of humanity, if there is any truth or virtue in the Catholic Church, you a priest of that faith will open those doors and let me depart unsullied?" He looked at me in surprise and his quivering lips denoted he was deeply moved while he exclaimed, "My God, have I come to this? child put on your bonnet, and depart as you came." He then accompanied me to the hall door, and held it open while I passed out, at the same time saying, "pray for priests."

I found myself in a strange part of the city, and with the greatest difficulty I again made my way back to North Calvert Street. I could scarcely realize the fate I had so miraculously escaped through the treachery of that degraded woman. Was it possible that one of my own sex could fall so low? Woman when good and pure is the most beautiful of God's creatures, but there is nothing in hell or earth so vile as a degraded woman. O woman, woman, why destroy the beautiful handiwork of thy Creator by making yourself a fiend incarnate.

I was so inexperienced in the ways of the world that I never suspected the existence of such degradation. I resolved never again to advertise for a situation.

I had ten dollars left and with that I left Baltimore, and as I had no one else to go to. I went to Father McGahann, whom I found in great trouble on account of another malignant and lying report which had appeared in the *New York Tribune*. I learned afterward that Gertrude had given her lawyers fifty dollars to secure their affidavits in confirmation of the statements which no Boston paper would give publicity to, and the *New York Tribune* was the only paper which published the false report. If the statements had been only truthfully made, I would not have felt such poignant grief, but the thought that a sister, whose duty it was to shield and protect me, should open afresh the gaping wounds of my bleeding heart, was overwhelming in itself. Her aim in making the matter public was chiefly to show up the secret crimes of priests, but, for her sister's sake at least, why did she not see that the statements published were truthful?

No matter what way I turned I seemed to be beset by new sorrows, and each trial seemed greater than the preceding one. Thus, pressed down upon all sides I was overwhelmed in an accumulation of sorrows. John Russell Young was then acting editor of the *New York Tribune*; he did not immediately publish the letter which was again "loosely made" by the Boston correspondent, and so received a sharp letter from Gertrude, asking an explanation why the report had not appeared. Let my readers judge by reading this report, how

fearfully I was again wronged, and what injustice and calumny was heaped upon my unprotected head.

[*From the Tribune of October 6th, 1868.*]

BOSTON.

THE CASE OF EDITH O'GORMAN—Documentary proofs of the affair—Narrative of the events.

A card was recently published in our columns denying the truth of the story sent us by our Boston correspondent. This has been generally copied, and the *Tribune* denounced for publishing false news. We now print a letter from our Boston correspondent, together with the documentary evidence upon which his narrative was based, and with this statement dismiss the subject.

BOSTON, Sept. 28th, 1868.

In the *Tribune* of the 22d September, there appeared a paragraph which narrated briefly and imperfectly the seduction by Rev. William M. Walsh, a Catholic priest at Hudson City, of a Sister of Notre Dame, by the name of Edith O'Gorman, or as she was called in the convent, Sister Teresa de Chantal. On the 25th September, a card appeared in the *Tribune*, signed by Miss O'Gorman, which denied the seduction point blank, and evaded the other statements in the paragraph, some of which were hurriedly and loosely made. After the publication of that card, your correspondent at once went to work in gathering proofs to substantiate his statements, and he has obtained among other documents, the following: First, a certified copy of the sheriff's writ, taken out by Miss Edith

O'Gorman herself, on the 15th inst., in which the property of the Rev. Wm. M. Walsh is attached for \$5,000 damages. To this writ Miss O'Gorman, (who now apparently denies that she was ever seduced by Mr. Walsh,) asserted as follows :

“ First Count—And plaintiff says defendant made an assault upon her, and by force debauched and carnally knew her, whereby the plaintiff was made sick for a long time, to wit: for the space of one year, and her life was endangered, and she was subjected to great pain and anguish of body and mind.

Second Count—And plaintiff further says, defendant was her spiritual adviser and director, and defendant contrary to his duty as such adviser and director, endeavored to violate and have carnal intercourse with the plaintiff, and administered certain drugs and potions to the plaintiff, which she is unable more particularly to describe, and by means of such drugs and potions so enfeebled and overmastered the plaintiff, that he was enabled to and did thereupon debauch and carnally know the plaintiff; and in consequence thereof, plaintiff was made grievously sick for a long time, to wit: for one year, and her life was endangered and she was subjected to great physical and mental pain and agony.

Third Count—And plaintiff says defendant made an assault upon her and struck her, and ill-treated her, and kept her imprisoned for the space of one year, in consequence of which plaintiff was made grievously sick for a long time, to wit: for one year.

On the 19th inst., the Rev. Mr. Walsh was arrested in Bos-

ton by a deputy sheriff, and, being unable to procure bail, was committed to jail. The 19th was Saturday, and on Sunday p. m. Mr. Walsh settled the case, and secured the discharge of the suit by paying cash into the hands of Miss Edith O'Gorman's attorney, the well-known Messrs. George C. Starkweather & H. N. Sheldon. Your correspondent has obtained a sworn affidavit, made by Messrs. Starkweather & Sheldon, to the effect that Mr. Walsh confessed to them, that he had illicit intercourse with Edith O'Gorman, otherwise Sister Teresa de Chantal; and your correspondent also has the sworn affidavit of Miss Mary Gertrude Byron O'Gorman, the sister of Edith, and through whose truly wonderful perseverance and ingenuity, mainly inspired simply by a desire to bring a villain to justice, and to lighten, if possible, her sister's and her family's tarnished honor, the iniquity of this case has been brought to light. That Mr. Walsh was suspended from his priesthood on account of performing the deeds mentioned in the Sheriff's writ. Miss Gertrude was told so by Mr. Walsh himself, and that he was suspended by Bishop Bayley of New Jersey. In the card published in the *Tribune*, signed by Edith O'Gorman, it is stated that Mr. Walsh was not suspended.

It appears singular that a woman who one day sues a man for seduction, and obtains damages, should on another deny that she was ever outraged. The explanation is this. By some means or other, Mr. Walsh has obtained possession of her again—in fact, it is believed that they left Boston together after the settlement of the case, and went to New York. The sight of the man excited feelings of affection, which the weak-

ened intellect of the girl could not resist, and she, it is believed, is once more in his toils—he a priest, and forbidden by his Church to know the other sex, and she a professed bride of the Church, vowed to celibacy. The card in the *Tribune* of the 25th, was evidently the work of Mr. Walsh's brain, and not of the girl's; she is not capable of a document so Machiavelain in character.

The facts in regard to the seduction by the Rev. William M. Walsh of Miss Edith O'Gorman, while she was a sister of Notre Dame, in a house of the order, are succinctly these: The Rev. Mr. Walsh came to the convent six months before the outrage took place, which was on the 19th of January last. He was a curate in the convent, and the sisters did not confess to him, and therefore he was not, in one sense, their spiritual adviser. On the night of the 19th of last January, he induced Miss O'Gorman to go into the chapel of the convent with him. There he gave her something to drink, which produced stupefaction. When she awoke she discovered that she had been violated. Her outraged feelings caused her to become deranged, and in hopes of hastening her recovery, she was sent by the mother to a convent at Newark, N. J. On the 31st of January she ran away in her religious dress, and went to the Continental hotel in Philadelphia. She stayed there two weeks, and the Rev. Mr. Walsh found her boarding under the assumed name of Edith Crofton. He removed her to the house of Mrs. Willt, on Coates Street, and kept her there nearly four months. During that time, he visited her at Mrs. Willt's at various times, and she met him at New York at various times. On the 10th of last June she was at the

Pacific Hotel, on Greenwich street, New York, with Mr. Walsh, and they were seen by parties in a position they should not have been in. This is susceptible of direct proof from eye-witnesses. In the middle of July—probably on the 15th—she sailed for England in the Steamer Propontis, as she herself has said, sent there by Mr. Walsh. Out of his sight she got over her infatuation for him, (as she did lately in Boston, when she brought the suit against him) and told the steward of the vessel her tale. He took pity on her condition—in a foreign country, without a friend—and paid her passage back in the Steamer Siberia. She arrived in Boston on the 22d of August, her relatives—father, mother, and sister—knowing nothing of her seduction and adventures. Between the 22d and 24th of August, she confessed her shame to her sister, and besought her to obtain reparation. The parents of the sister reside in Rhode Island, and are highly respectable people. Bishop McFarland has charge of that diocese, and to him Gertrude O’Gorman appealed for justice. He wrote to Bishop Bayley of New Jersey about the case, and it is believed caused the suspension of the Rev. Mr. Walsh. Walsh then went to reside with some friends at Mount Holly, Burlington, N. J., and occasionally with his sister in Philadelphia. Gertrude found him at Mount Holly, when she induced him to accompany her to Boston, to see Edith, it being necessary to get him into Massachusetts in order to punish him by law. He came on and was mulcted, as has already been narrated. Such are the sworn facts of this remarkable affair, and there is documentary evidence to support every allegation. In so

base a recital as this, justice has not been done by any means to the foul wrong committed by the priest, or the heroism of the victim's sister, Gertrude. Miss Edith O'Gorman is about 26 years old, and quite handsome. Mr. Walsh is about 30, and looks like a very gentlemanly priest. It is said that there is a possibility that the Rev. Mr. Walsh will be allowed by his Superiors to marry Miss O'Gorman, and thus at least partly redeem her honor.

The following affidavits substantiate the above narrative:

We, Geo. C. Starkweather & H. N. Sheldon, both of Boston, County of Suffolk, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on oath say that the Rev. William M. Walsh, was arrested on a writ issued by us for the seduction of Miss Edith O'Gorman. That he confessed to us his crime, and that he settled the suit by a cash payment.

GEO. C. STARKWEATHER,
H. N. SHELDON.

SUFFOLK, ss., September 28, 1868.

Subscribed and sworn to severally by the said George C. Starkweather & H. N. Sheldon, before me,

WM. A. HERRICK, *Justice of the Peace.*

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, SUFFOLK, ss.

I, Mary Gertrude Byron O'Gorman, having been duly sworn depose and say that I was present when my sister Edith O'Gorman authorized Messrs. Starkweather & Sheldon to bring her suit against the Reverend William M. Walsh. I furthermore state that I have reliable information that said

Walsh was suspended from his priesthood on account of his acts charged in the writ.

MARY GERTRUDE BYRON O'GORMAN.

SUFFOLK, ss., September 28, 1868.

Subscribed and sworn to by the said Mary Gertrude Byron O'Gorman, before me,

WM. A. HERRICK, *Justice of the Peace.*

Now, Christian readers, let me lay bare the falsity of this publication, from which I have suffered so much. The statement "in the *Tribune* of September 22d, there appeared a paragraph which narrated briefly and imperfectly the seduction by Rev. William M. Walsh, a Catholic priest of Hudson City, a Sister of Notre Dame, by the name of Edith O'Gorman, or as she was called in the convent, Sister Teresa de Chantal. On the 25th of September, a card appeared in the *Tribune* signed by Miss O'Gorman, which denied the seduction point-blank"—It is entirely false in that that I never belonged to the order of Notre Dame nuns, which is an order entirely distinct from Sisters of Charity; and as to denying the seduction "point-blank," I again reiterate that I never was seduced in my life. The word *seduction* implies the consent of both parties, and death would have been preferable to me than to such consent; neither was the outrage ever accomplished.

It, dear readers, is a most painful task to speak of such a subject, nevertheless justice and truth require it. Again the correspondent says that he "has obtained a certified copy of the sheriff's writ taken out by Miss Edith O'Gorman herself

on the 15th inst., in which the property of the Rev. W. M. Walsh is attached for five thousand dollars." This is another base calumny. The Boston correspondent never saw a writ "taken out by Miss Edith O'Gorman herself." for no such writ was ever taken out; he might have seen a writ taken out by Gertrude O'Gorman, but on the 15th of August I knew nothing of the existence of such a writ, for I was then only a few days out from Liverpool in the Siberia.

This *writ* from beginning to end is full of false charges against Father Walsh and myself. The third count reads, "And plaintiff says defendant made an assault upon her and struck her, and ill treated her, and kept her imprisoned for the space of one year, in consequence of which, plaintiff was made grievously sick for a long time, to wit, for one year." How could Father Walsh imprison me for one year when it was scarcely nine months since I had run away from the convent? and it is a direct falsehood that Father Walsh ever struck or imprisoned me; on the contrary his treatment was most tender, kind, and respectful.

The Boston correspondent makes it appear that I had received "five thousand dollars damages," which falsehood I have already explained to the reader, not if they could have procured me \$50,000 damages would I have carried on the suit. I do not know as Father Walsh was ever suspended by Bishop Bayley as alleged by Gertrude. I know that Bishop Walsh, whom I met on the Steamer City of Baltimore, after he arrived in Ireland, wrote to Bishop Bayley to suspend Father Walsh, but Bishop Bayley did not.

The correspondent further says, “‘It appears singular that a woman who one day sues a man, should the next day deny it.’ The explanation is this. By some means Mr. Walsh has obtained possession of her again, in fact it is believed that they left Boston together. The sight of the man excited feelings of affection which the weakened intellect of the girl could not resist, and she is once more in his toils.”

What injustice! Never in my life have I brought suit against any one, and my readers already know that I did not leave Boston with Father Walsh; neither did I know when he left there as I did not see him until Wednesday the 22d, when he arrived at Mount Holy. And if my “weakened intellect” was unable to resist him, where was the necessity for running away from the convent, or going to Irekaud and exposing myself to so many hardships and privations.

The correspondent finally winds up with an outline of the facts, which although they contain many falsehoods, yet strangely confound the “plaintiff’s count” contained in the sheriff’s writ. He says, “Father Walsh found her boarding at the Continental Hotel, and took her to Mrs. Willt’s—and kept her there four months.” Whereas I was out of the convent four months before Father Walsh found me, and then only through the telegram sent by Mrs. Willt that I was dying. Neither did I see Father Walsh on the 10th of June in the Pacific Hotel, as it was Bessie Murry who met me at the depot in Jersey City at five p. m., and conducted me there. Dear readers, note the inconsistency of the two different cards placed before the public by the Boston correspondent in the New York

Tribune. Compare the card of Sept 22d, with that of October 6th, both false, yet both contradicting each other, while I, a defenceless woman, was forced to bear the whole weight of the calumny. It is strange that I could not always realize that there was a just God who even then sustained me in His everlasting arms, and Who one day directed that I would triumph over all my enemies, and my exaltation exceed the depths of humiliation, through which for a time He permitted me to wade.



CHAPTER XXII.

ABDUCTION TO THE CONVENT OF GOOD SHEPHERDS.

Father McGahann advised me to go to New York, and write from there to him, directing my letter to St. Peter's Church, Grand Street, Jersey City, whither he decided to go, because he could not endure the mortification of remaining any longer in Mount Holly, and he would then see what could be done for me. Accordingly I went to New York, and not having much money, I engaged a room at the Stevens House, which was conducted on the European plan. Being known there I was not required to pay for my room in advance. I wrote to Father McGahann, but received no answer. I wrote again. Still no reply. I could not understand why he should thus abandon me without money or friends.

I had been nearly one week at the Stevens House, and had not money enough left to pay for another meal in the restaurant, and as a last resort I sent a telegram to Gertrude, requesting her to send me some money, as I was starving. I did not think she would act so unsisterly as to refuse the appeal of a broken-hearted, destitute sister. Instead of money I received a most unfeeling letter, asking how I dared apply to

her for money, and why did I not "go to my Bishops and Archbishops of Babylon?"

After I received this unkind letter from Gertrude, all hope sank within me. I had not tasted food for two days, and was suffering the pangs of hunger. I lost all hope or faith in God; I cried out in the despair of my heart, "There is no God, there is no justice, no eternity!" I resolved to commit self-destruction, and made preparations to that effect by writing letters to Father McGahann and Gertrude, which I sealed and directed and put in my pocket, with another letter bearing the superscription, "To be opened when I am dead." I borrowed twenty-five cents from the clerk of the hotel, crossed the ferry into Jersey City, went into a drug store and called for arsenic, which they refused to give me. I tried another pharmacy, and succeeded in getting an ounce of laudanum, and then, in the shade of evening, I walked to Hudson City and tried to get into the church, intending to be found dead in the Sanctuary. The church was locked; I then went into Father Venuta's kitchen, very much to the surprise of Bessie Murray, whom I asked for the keys of the church. She refused to give them to me, and then exclaiming, "It will do just as well here," I drained the contents of the phial before her. She ran in dismay to inform Father Venuta, who took his hat and cane and left the house precipitately, for fear of being arrested if I were found poisoned in his house. However, Fathers Sheehan and Fitzsimmons, who were spending the evening, remained. But a merciful God intervened and saved me from myself, although

in that moment I had denied that He existed,—else I would never have attempted such an act.

I had taken too much laudanum, consequently it did not remain in my stomach; but I became very sick, and Father Venuta ordered that I should be removed to Jersey City, because I was too well known there, and it would bring too much scandal on the Church. I was sent to Mrs. Ford's, in South Second Street, Jersey City. Mrs. Ford was a poor widow, and in my sickness was very kind to me. Father Senez, the ex-Jesuit, seeing that the sympathies of the people were with me, and that they condemned the priests, sent Mr. Halliard of South Fifth Street, his head man, with a carriage, and forcibly conveyed me from a sick bed to the House of Good Shepherds in Manhattanville, N. Y. Mrs. Rooney of Hudson City, who happened to be visiting me when Halliard called, accompanied me.

In the House of Good Shepherds I was placed on a straw bed, and nourished the first day on black bread and coffee. However, the next day I was recognized by a girl whom I had reclaimed and sent there from the Hudson City jail. Oh, what a humiliation for me to be placed on the same equality with the most degraded vagrants! When the superioress heard of this she took me to her own room, and treated me with great kindness until I recovered. She then entreated me to go to Cincinnati and join her order there, which I refused, for I had lost faith in Convents, and my soul seemed plunged into the darkness of infidelity. Every hope in God was dissipated;

that was the greatest trial of all! I cannot conceive a greater hell than to be without God!

Finally the superioress opened the doors and let me go free. Mrs. Rooney had given me ten dollars. At that time I heard of Rev. Dr. H. Mattison. I went to see him at his residence in Jersey City; he was the first Protestant minister with whom I had ever conversed. He wished me to throw off the Catholic religion and let the world know its hypocrisy. I told him if there were no truth in the Catholic Church there was not any truth, neither was there a God. "Unless the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it." I could not throw off the yoke of Romanism, with its train of errors and superstition, until the Lord severed the chains.

At the time I saw Dr. Mattison I did not believe there was a God or eternity. I felt my soul plunging down, down into the black sea of infidelity. The Catholic religion seemed all a sham, a farce, and so were all religions. During three weeks my soul suffered that fearful trial, that inexpressible desolation. As day without the glorious sun would be an endless night, so also the soul of man without a God is an endless hell. Although I was sinking deep down into the gloom of infidelity, I could not save myself,—and could man save me from that frightful doom? No, no, their efforts were fruitless. But there was an Almighty arm stretched out, and it dragged me up, up, from the darkness—not all at once, but gradually, step by step, and I am saved at last, and rejoice in a new existence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MY JOURNEY ON FOOT FROM BALTIMORE TO PHILADELPHIA.

Weighed down on every side, I knew not where to turn. I could not go to friends, they had all forsaken me. I could not go to strangers, they would suspect and repulse me. I could not go to my home, its doors were unjustly closed against me. I could not go to God, I had lost all faith and hope in Him. "O! ye who pass by the way come and see if ever sorrow was like unto mine," was the wail of my bleeding heart.

In the midst of my depression and doubt, and as a last resort, I thought of going to Archbishop Spalding, whom I had always heard extolled as a model of Christian charity. I was loth to think that in the Catholic Church all its priests and bishops were false, therefore I applied in person to Archbishop Spalding in Baltimore, with the hope that he would assist me, by providing an honorable situation for me, which would enable me to earn a living.

When I arrived at the eminent Archbishop's palatial residence I had only twenty-five cents in my purse, having spent my last dollar in the journey thither. I did not think he would refuse to befriend me. But the discovery was soon made. In

the most forlorn desolation I had sought the head of the Church in America, only to find him a whited sepulchre—rottenness to the core. He would do nothing for me unless I would again enter a Convent. To this proposition I replied that I would rather perish of starvation than again immure myself in the living tomb of a Convent. He entreated and threatened me, but his urging was in vain. In some instances he used such language in addressing me as any true woman would resent. I turned from his parlors in disgust, while he in bitter sarcasm sneered: “Ho, ho, you will come back again before night, and be glad to go in the Convent, as you will soon discover that you cannot live long in Baltimore with only twenty-five cents.”

The most hardened man of the world would have treated me with greater charity than did this head of the “only true, infallible Church.” Let Archbishop Spalding deny, if he can, the fact that he permitted me to go out from his palace penniless and unprotected into the streets of a strange city. What a fate for a defenseless woman! May God help all the destitute and friendless women who are cast thus on the mercy of a selfish world!

My heart became steeled against the Catholic Church. I had put it to the test and it was found wanting. I would rather die with hunger, or perish with cold, than again seek relief or protection from its hardened priests.

With regard to seeking employment I was as ignorant as a babe; having been buried in a Convent I knew scarcely anything of the ways of the world. Soul-sick and weary, I knew not what to do, where to go, or how to find rest. With a hope-

less heart and fainting frame I rang the door bell of an aristocratic looking mansion, and in faltering accents inquired if they wanted a servant. "No, we do not—be off with you," greeted me from one of the class called menial; while at the second place where I mustered up courage enough to knock, a look of suspicion, a cold shake of the head, and the door silently closed upon me, were all the response my timid question received. Meantime the night was advancing while I aimlessly wandered through the city like a lost sheep, and at length, with an awful sense of desolation, a total prostration of hope, I turned away from the streets of Baltimore without a thought of what would become of me.

To die of starvation and cold is a fate to which nature cannot passively submit. I strayed from the city, and when the shades of night fell upon the earth, I found myself on a solitary road near a forest, which seemed to offer me an inviting shelter, and I felt that I would die in the depths of a wood rather than on the frequented streets of the city. To the forest, then, I turned, and on that chilly autumn night I found repose on Nature's breast, laying my trembling, aching frame down to rest on a bed of withered leaves, under the open canopy of heaven. With despairing eyes I gazed upon the countless myriads of stars, and reflected on the might and strength of Him who hath formed them—and after a while a feeling of hope and faith revived in my tortured heart, and I felt that God would save me. "The Son of Man had not whereon to lay His head," why then need I fear? Was I not more like Him? and the thought brought peace. When the soul feels

isolated from creatures it often draws nearer to God; and as I lay that night in the open air, a poor forsaken child of earth, I experienced a dim flash of that Heavenly light which was afterward to irradiate abundantly my entire being.

Morning dawned. The glorious sun filled earth and sky. I arose from my hard couch and looked around me. Everywhere was sunshine. The trees were gorgeously beautiful in their rich autumnal hues. I wished to remain in the forest and never leave it. I envied the birds which sang so sweetly on the tree tops. I would fain at that moment have become one of them, that I might have found nourishment and shelter there. But I was a human being, and as such could not remain there to die. Where should I turn? To Philadelphia. I could then go to Mrs. Willts; she would not refuse to shelter me and assist me to find employment. But it was a long, long way to Philadelphia, and I had no money to pay my expenses thither. What was I to do? I would walk. I could only fail and perish in the attempt; nevertheless, I would try.

With want and hunger staring me in the face I set out on that long walk from Baltimore to Philadelphia. Reader, it is too painful for me to recall and dwell upon all the incidents of that journey; they would fill a volume were I to recount minutely how, in many places, I was repulsed and looked upon with suspicion and distrust when, driven by the pangs of hunger, I solicited a crust of bread with which to sustain my unhappy life. Some would respond to my appeal with as much humanity as they might manifest toward a starving dog; while others would more humanely and in greater abundance give

me some "cold victuals," at the same time asking me a thousand impertinent or quizzical questions. To the latter I made little or no reply, because I could not enter into the recital of all the trials which beset me, and which, to strangers, would seem incredible and excite unpleasant suspicion. During twelve long nights I sought repose in the open air, and when the inclemency of the weather once drove me to a cottage to seek shelter from the storm, the door was shut in my face with the words, "we cannot harbor vagrants." O God! with what poignant arrows my sensitive soul was pierced by such unkindness and insult from my fellow beings, whom I thus found even more unfeeling and selfish than the brute creation. When tired, and struggling against hunger, I stretched forth my hand for aid and succor, only to be rudely thrust back upon the bleak desolation of a *cold, cold* world.

We have many Christian maxims beautiful in theory, but how little are they practised! Where are the kind shepherds who seek the tired, wandering lamb, tenderly bind up the bleeding wounds, and lovingly lead it into the fold? The good shepherds of the Catholic Church were feasting and carousing in their palatial homes, while I was driven forth to starve. "Come unto Me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, and ye weary of heart and I will give you rest." This is the spirit of the Christian's Lord, and how beautiful were it practised! But the world says the contrary; it says, "Come unto me, and I will heap upon you opprobrium, reproach, and recrimination, taunting, reviling, deriding, and persecuting you." Is it not the voice of a selfish world? Would I might deny

it! but my heart has harrowed through its depths; my eyes have watered its furrows with the lamentations that have gone out from my soul in despair.

When, footsore, I arrived at the Susquehanna River, and wearily wandered along its banks until I came to a town where I succeeded in begging my way across. I often strayed from the right course, and then would inquire of some humble looking farmer the straight road to Philadelphia. Oh, how often I sank by the roadside fainting from physical prostration! how often in very despair I was on the point of laying my weary body down to die, only to rise again and rally my sinking energy to reach the desired goal! Each trial I suffered was in itself well nigh sufficient to break some human heart. To be cast out and suffer a living death from parents and relations; to have the heart's truest, purest love betrayed, and highest confidence misplaced; to be abandoned by every friend on earth; to suffer the cruel injustice of base calumny and unmerited persecution; to be without shelter or food, a wandering, starving, homeless mendicant, without even the consolation of a true religion, seems indeed an incredible amount of sorrow for one weak woman to endure; and yet such was the accumulation of sorrow heaped upon me, such the sea of trouble in which I was deluged.

Ah, dear readers, how many of you would not think the burden of one of those sorrows greater than you could bear! Truly the hand of God was laid heavily upon me, but it was done in love. As there are some flowers whose fragrance can only be exhaled by pressure, so there are souls whose purity

and virtue cannot send out their good odor except by the weight of suffering—the pressure of Infinite Love. My recollections of life have indeed been fraught with weariness and pain, but so that my heart might at last reach forth to God; and it now holds truth still more sacred for its scarcity. I would not have it otherwise, and bless the Hand which hath chastened me. And as He hath permitted me to see the darkness and the desolation, so doth He now permit me to see the peace and the purity of holiness—that sweet calm which never comes but to the God-born heart, and to the soul that has passed from suffering to sanctity—from a living crucifixion, an unentombed martyrdom, to the perfect peace “which passeth understanding.”



CHAPTER XXIV.

MY CONVERSION.

Weary and way-worn I at last arrived in Philadelphia, having been twelve days on the road. I went to Mrs. Willts, 1336 Coates Street, who kindly took me in until I was able to seek employment, and which I found in less than two weeks in a most Providential manner. Being afraid to advertise after the experience I had in that line, I was advised to go to an intelligence office. Accordingly I started out to find one, and was directed to 736 Arch Street. I entered, however, the wrong building, and was surprised to find myself in a Phrenological Gallery. An affable and venerable looking man, with flowing, silvery beard and hair, approached me, wishing to know if I desired to have a phrenological chart and description of character. To this I replied in the negative, at the same time apologizing for the intrusion. I told him my errand, and was about to retire to the office indicated to me, when he requested me to be seated, that he might have an opportunity to study my head scientifically. I did so. He then proceeded to enumerate in phrenological language the different qualities he discovered, among them "unusual powers of oratory, elocu-

tion, penmanship, etc." After he had finished his delineation of my character, he said that his lady amanuensis was ill, and he thought I was fully competent to take her place, and he greatly desired that I should do so. Accordingly I engaged with Professor W. B. Elliott in the capacity of amanuensis, at a salary of six dollars a week. Here I remained during my sojourn in Philadelphia, a little over six months.

I boarded for a while at Mrs. Wartman's, Washington Square, where I was subject to all the annoyances of a large and fashionable boarding house. All the money I earned went to pay my board. At table I was subjected to the rude stare of unprincipled men and women; and in the parlor I found it convenient to sit aloof from the groups of gossiping women, who were so anxious to find out all about every new comer. I was often pained by such questions as these: "Have you no friends, no acquaintances?" "No?" "Strange! very strange!" And whispered insinuations would be thrown out, because I had no friends call to see me; and there were mysterious shakes of the head, which plainly implied, "There must be something wrong!"

Unable to endure the unjust suspicions of unfeeling women, I determined to confine myself to my little room, and afterward never mingled with them except at table. I was indeed isolated and without friends, but how could they know or understand the depths of suffering which I endured, and which filled my heart with distrust toward all creatures? However, I was at length fortunate enough to get board with a widow lady and her invalid granddaughter. Mrs. Thomas was a Southern

lady, who had met with many reverses through the war; was very respectable, though humble; poor but neat; and with her I was made to feel at home during the remainder of my stay in Philadelphia.

My heart had not as yet been touched with a live coal from the altar of God. My soul had not as yet emerged from darkness into celestial light,—but the time was near at hand. I felt it a necessity to attend church, and through force of habit went to the Catholic Church; but whenever I entered it I felt a sense of terror take possession of my soul. I could not kneel or bow down to those empty forms. One Sunday in April, 1869, I witnessed Bishop Wood, in his golden vestments, mitre and sceptre, administer the sacrament of Confirmation in the Cathedral of Philadelphia. With a new light I looked upon the falsity and hollowness of its forms and ceremonies; they appeared to me like the aimless play of children, or the gorgeous pastime of fools. I was a child no longer, therefore I could not be satisfied with this empty farce of religion, and in a sweat of agony I turned away, with the resolve never again to enter a Catholic church. I afterward visited Protestant churches of all denominations. I attended Spiritual Circles and Quaker meetings, and finally began to think that all religious systems were vain. Thus like a vessel cut loose from its mooring, without helm or guide, I wandered awhile upon the sea of doubt and uncertainty, and were it not for the infinite mercy of Almighty God rank infidelity must have been my ultimate refuge.

Who can describe the awful danger of such a position? I

saw myself like a lonely mariner far off on the boundless ocean at midnight, when the raging tempest conceals the heavens from sight; when, crying for help and no encouraging voice responds, no friendly aid is afforded, despair takes hold of the soul. But Christ was on the ship, and soon His voice was heard stilling my tempest-tossed soul with His potent words, "Peace, be still," and the troubled waters became calm. My mind had been so harassed with doubt, so cruelly agitated by conflicting thoughts and ineffectual attempts to discover the true faith, that I had formed the desperate purpose of embracing no particular form of Christianity until the hour of death; but God was watching over me. His hand was extended to withdraw my feet from the brink of the precipice.

This soul-conflict lasted from April until August, 1869, when Gertrude relented, and invited me to Boston. It was while visiting a Catholic lady in that city that my conversion took place. Not in a church, not by human eloquence, but in my chamber, at the midnight hour, and by the mighty eloquence of God alone, were the enemies of my soul put to flight, and the power of darkness dispelled. The King came to take His throne in my heart, filling it with triumph, joy, and gladness. The deliverer came as my defense, my shield, and strength, and salvation, in this world and the next! God hath saved my soul "from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." But how can I describe the awful agony, the death struggle which heralded the glorious Sun of the light of God, as it ascended the awful East, and dispersed with its wonderful effulgence the deep darkness of my soul! The day of the

Lord dawned for me on the 29th of August, 1869; the awakening was very bright and sudden. All day of the 29th my spirit seemed unusually weighed down by gloom and aridity. I could not sleep, the agony of desolation continued through the night and forced me to arise and walk the floor of my chamber. My soul murmured and rebelled against God. I reproached Him for all that I had suffered; I called Him unjust and tyrannical. In my rage and agony I was about to curse my great Creator, when, suddenly, I seemed to be completely overpowered by the majesty and greatness of God. What! I, an insignificant atom of mortality, dare to reproach my Creator? to rebel against my God? Fearful thought! and with a consciousness of my own nothingness I sank on my knees and thus prayed: "O Father in Heaven, forgive me! let Thy blessed light shine upon me! deliver me from darkness. Hear me my God, for Christ's sake!" Like a flash of burning fire those words shot from my heart, and instantaneously a dazzling light filled the room, and a clear voice rang through my soul, distinctly saying, "Daughter of sorrow, arise and shine. Go forth and teach the world the lesson you have been taught!"

I trembled with awe; the old spirit left me, and the glorious light of God burst with dazzling brightness upon my weary, darkened spirit. A thousand years seemed to have rolled over it in the darkest desolation, and *now, now*, what splendor, joy, and heavenly bliss! my shackles had fallen and celestial light flooded my inmost soul with the healing stream of salvation.

Jesus pressed me to His bosom and sealed me forever His own!

Not only did my soul emerge out of darkness, but my whole body seemed changed. I felt like a new creature,—every desire was renewed. I could scarcely refrain from crying out with the joy that was in my heart—that heart which had so long been acquainted only with sorrow and grief—that heart which had been blindly sacrificed on the altar of self-immolation to procure this heavenly peace which, by the power and mercy of God, had at last filled it. Oh, the unspeakable rapture, the glorious ecstasies of my new-born soul!

Reader, it is not in the power of language to fully describe the joy and peace of the soul which emerges from darkness into light, and is united with Christ; such happiness is far better felt than told. All murmuring and rebellion fled from my mind. I thanked God for every trial, for every persecution and humiliation I had endured. I was resigned to the Divine will, to suffer as long, and in whatever manner, my Master pleased. With Jesus it is sweet to remain on the summit of Calvary, where, removed from the world, the soul is alone with a dying God; it grasps the cross, and feels the warm atoning blood of Christ purifying, cleansing, regenerating. Oh, the joy of the soul united to Christ, clinging to the cross, washed in the atoning blood! I had passed from death to life. My heart went out to God with a yearning desire to proclaim to the world His mercy, power, and goodness to me. His heavenly strength filled my soul in rich streams, which shall go out to heal and save others. Merciful God, at last I possess Thee!

Kindest, dearest, tenderest friend! every affection of my nature is absorbed in Thee! Hush, my soul, I cannot speak it, tongues of angels cannot express the treasure of peace and contentment in Jesus.

Christian reader, how many there are who have not realized that heaven begins when, silent from all the world, we again and again repeat the sweet name of Jesus, Jesus! And how many there are who say that adored name, looking beyond Him while looking for Him! How many He is hidden from by the delusive staging of superstitious forms and ceremonies! Which of us, having once tasted how sweet the Lord is, can think but with sorrow and anguish of the blind, cold, comfortless worship of which they partake who know not the treasure of faith and salvation in Christ alone?

Dear Catholic readers, blinded in delusion, weary with sin and sorrow, come with me and taste how sweet Christ is. Throw off your weight of forms and superstitions; approach the sacred fountain of Jesus' blood, where, wrapped in His love, covered with His righteousness, your misguided souls and weary hearts will be filled with heavenly love, joy, peace, and contentment. O! heavenly bliss! delight past all expression! how consoling, how sweet the presence of Jesus to the longing, harassed soul! It is instant peace, and balm to every wound.

CHAPTER XXV.

MY WORK.

One of the signs of a perfect conversion is a great zeal to convert others ; and with this desire my heart was filled. I felt deeply impressed that my Divine Master had appointed to me a great work, but in what particular sphere it was to be carried out, occurred to me in a most singular manner. My friends were deeply astonished at the unexpected change manifested in me. Peace illuminated my countenance, which had so long been clouded with grief. A smile replaced the deep lines which sorrow had drawn round my mouth. Heavenly joy shone from eyes accustomed to heart-wrung tears.

A few mornings after my wonderful conversion, I told the friend whom I was visiting that the cause of my happiness was the grace of a change of heart. I had found that for which I had sought vainly for years. At last I had the assurance in my soul that my sins were all forgiven through the merits of Christ *alone*. I told her that I also felt that I had a great work to do. To her question, "Edith, what are you going to do?" I replied without a moment's premeditation, "I am going to lecture." I was amazed at my own words. Lecture!

impossible. *I*, a weak timid woman, could never face assembled multitudes. Naturally retiring, I shrank from publicity, and moreover I disapproved of women appearing on the rostrum. I was surprised that such a thought should occur to my mind. It was certainly one of the ideas remotest from my thoughts, but the more I tried to banish the suggestion as preposterous the more vividly it forced itself upon me as being the will of God, and if so I would hazard my life in its fulfilment. God in all ages hath chosen "the weak ones of the earth to confound the mighty." I knew that of myself I could do nothing, but "I could do all things through Him who strengthened me." God had prepared me for His work through the fiery crucible of untold tribulation, therefore I rose in the strength and majesty of God to do His will.

My nature shrank from all the opposition, danger, slander, and persecution I must encounter in the outset of such a task, nevertheless like clay in the hands of the potter, I was subservient to what I felt to be the good pleasure of God. The resolution to lecture strengthened every hour, until I seemed consumed with the desire, and accordingly I prepared a lecture. Gertrude at first regarded my determination as the result of a deranged mind, but finally was brought to think it a good work, and lent me a helping hand. She went at my request to see Ralph Waldo Emerson, and procure his interest in my undertaking. On the 20th of September, 1869, in company with Gertrude I went to Concord, Mass., and spent the day at the pleasant home of Mr. Emerson, the philosopher and poet. In the evening of the same day, I addressed an audience of

about twenty persons in the town hall. My audience, although small, was composed of the leading literary lights. R. W. Emerson and wife, Rev. Mr. Alcott and daughters, one of them, Louisa M., being the well known authoress of "Little Women;" and other distinguished names, for which the old town of Concord is remarkable, encouraged me by their presence. Mr. Emerson advised me to continue the work I had undertaken, assuring me that I had the ability and knowledge to impart instruction to mankind.

Thus encouraged I resolved to go at once to "Jerusalem and beard the lion in his den." Accordingly, with only fifteen dollars in my possession, which Gertrude had given me, I arrived in Jersey City, and in the heart of my former co-religionists, in the very community where I had spent the most of my convent life, I gave my second lecture. I had not one single friend at that time in Jersey City, neither had I money enough to pay for hall or advertisements. However, I was about my Master's work, and I knew He would accomplish it in me. I went to the office of the *Evening Journal*, the leading paper of the city, and to one of the firm I made known my object. He encouraged me in it, and directed me to the proprietor of Cooper Hall, who was kind enough to place it at my service without requiring payment in advance as is customary. The publisher of the *Evening Journal*, being a humane and generous hearted man, kindly told me to give myself no uneasiness about the cost of advertisements, and if the lecture failed to prove successful he did not wish any payment. So my first lecture in Jersey City was advertised, and on the

evening of October 5th, I addressed an audience of about four hundred persons in Cooper Hall. I knew not who among them were friends or enemies. During the lecture I was occasionally interrupted by Catholic servant girls. At the conclusion of the lecture a large number of newly made friends gathered around me, grasped me by the hand, and begged me to continue in my work, and give them another lecture. Among those who thus gathered around me, were many Catholic young ladies, formerly my pupils in the convent at Hudson City. These embraced me most affectionately, and indorsed my statements.

In leaving the hall, an attempt was made to "lynch" me, several kitchen girls threatening to "mash my face" with their umbrellas. However, aided by friends I escaped unharmed. In compliance with the request of many persons, I consented to give another lecture in Jersey City. In the meantime it was necessary that I should get board and protection in a private family, because it was unsafe for me to remain at the hotel where I had taken rooms, on account of the servants. I was introduced to Rev. L. R. Dunn, who was then pastor of St. Paul's M. E. Church; he kindly recommended me to Mrs. H. M. Dunning, a Methodist lady, who nobly opened her doors to shelter me from my enemies. In offering me a home she exposed her house to the attack of Catholics who swore vengeance upon me.

Before I proceed farther I will dwell briefly on the goodness of this lady. Mrs. H. M. Dunning is a woman of sterling ~~virtue~~ and a perfect type of the courageous Christian. When

I was friendless, obscure, and unknown, she took me in without the slightest hesitation; at a time too, when it was hazardous to herself and family, and when others refused to give me shelter at any price for fear of the mob violence of Catholics. Words are inadequate to do justice to the Christian heroism of Mrs. H. M. Dunning. She is the descendant of a brave family of Christians; her grandfather, the Rev. John B. Matthias, was the good pioneer of Methodism, in the state of N. Y. He planted the societies of Tarrytown, Nyack, Haverstraw, and many other places, enduring all the early privations of the local and itinerant ministry. His son, Rev. John J. Matthias, established Methodism in Staten Island, N. Y. This Christian lady has at the present time many uncles and cousins in the M. E. ministry. Among her cousins is Rev. B. Adams of the New York East conference. With this noble woman I found a home for nearly one year. She was to me as a tender mother, a steadfast friend, devoted sister and companion; often endangering her life by accompanying me wherever I went. Many times noisy crowds of Catholics gathered around her house, throwing stones, breaking windows, etc. She nobly defended me when falsely maligned and misrepresented. Her motive was so elevated that she offered me a home free of compensation. The practical christian church needs no abler representative than Mrs. H. M. Dunning. My soul overflows with gratitude towards her; and while I live she shall hold the first place among friends in my heart of hearts, and I shall continue to pray God to make her the recipient of many of His good and perfect gifts.

Gertrude, hearing through the press of the danger which menaced me, came to Jersey City, and remained while I continued my lectures in that city. I had prepared a new lecture entitled, "Convent Life," and delivered it in Cooper Hall two weeks after the first. The hall was crowded. Dr. Wm. Butler was there, and I was introduced to the audience by the chief editor of the *Evening Journal*. That was the first time I met that noble defender of truth, fair play, and free speech. The interest of the public being now thoroughly awakened, I prepared another lecture. I tried to secure a church which could accommodate a larger number of people than Cooper Hall, and accordingly made application for the largest church in the city, but was refused for fear of mob violence. The following extracts from editorial notices in the *Evening Journal* will explain some of the difficulties which beset me.

"A CHURCH OPENED FOR TRUTH.

In this community Edith O'Gorman appeals to the christian public, not for redress, for that she cannot get, but to expose the sins and shams of that system, and of those institutions which make such fearful wrongs possible of perpetration, and nearly impossible of punishment. She is freed at last from the trammels of early prejudice, and defying the fear of persecution she proposes to tell her sad and truthful experience. If ever any injured woman was entitled to be heard, she is. Yet in this very community where the system responsible for her wrongs flourishes, and where the spires of Protestant churches may be seen from every corner, her application for

the use of a Christian church in which to deliver a public lecture is refused. We say that this refusal was an act of cowardice of which not only Christians, but men should be ashamed. Not only this but notices of her lecture, to be given in a public hall to which she was driven by those who control the churches, were in some of the churches suppressed, the parties to whom they were given not daring to have them read. This also we must characterize as narrow-minded and cowardly. What decent excuse can be given by Protestant christians for thus declining even the smallest show of sympathy for this persecuted but brave girl, who has been converted from Catholicism, not by Protestant preaching, but by her cruel experience of the crimes and persecutions that are the fruits of the Romish conventual system. Why this discrimination in this case? To a reformed inebriate like Gough, or a reformed gambler like Green, churches are readily thrown open and notices of their lectures are read without hesitation. Yet they, noble reformers as they are, have not half the claim to christian sympathy that Edith O'Gorman has, for they were the victims of their own follies, while she comes before the community with no stain of guilt of her own upon her. The evils which they seek to reform are fearful and gigantic, but are they any more terrible than those which this brave girl exposes? That Edith O'Gorman should have to ask twice for the privilege of paying for the use of a Protestant church in which to expose the errors and misdeeds of the monastic and conventual institutions of this country, and should have been refused is simply a shame. We are pleased to record the fact

that the trustees of the North Baptist Church, have granted the use of their church building to Miss Edith O'Gorman for the purpose of giving her next lecture. There would be nothing noteworthy in this were it not for the fact that previous applications made for a similar purpose have been refused by at least two of the Protestant churches in this city. The lecturer of course willingly pays the price demanded for the use of the church, so that the refusal could not be based on financial objections. We believe her applications were refused because those who control the churches were afraid of mob violence, broken windows, etc. This reason ought not to have influenced any Protestant for a moment. If the truth against Romanism and the evil practices of the Romish priesthood may not be spoken in Protestant churches, where shall it find a voice? We do not believe that any mob will attack any Protestant church in this city, but if we feared they would we certainly would not be so cowardly as to shut up any church on that account. The advocates and friends of truth should always be bold enough to insist on their rights, and to protect others in their exercise, and no apprehension of violent opposition should ever be allowed to put any kind of a gag upon free speech. They should risk the smashing of every pane of glass, in every window of every Protestant church; the sacrifice of a lot of window glass for the vindication of the right of free speech, would not in our judgment be a very heavy thing. We are glad that the trustees of the North Baptist Church have shown that they think it right that at least one Protestant church should open its doors to give a hearing to one who is

desirous of giving testimony against error and wrong-doing, and for truth and righteousness.”

From the *Evening Journal* of Nov. 17th, 1869.

“MISS O’GORMAN’S THIRD LECTURE—THE AUDIENCE INTENSELY INTERESTED—SHE IS INVITED TO REPEAT THE LECTURE.—The North Baptist Church was filled last evening to its full capacity by one of the most intelligent audiences ever assembled in this city, to listen to the lecture by Miss Edith O’Gorman on the Roman Catholic Priesthood: their rule over their people, and what it leads to. Among the audience we noticed several of our clergymen, many of our most respectable Catholic citizens, and one-half of the audience, we should judge, were ladies. Every seat in the house was occupied, and the deepest interest in the lecture was manifest throughout. The effect produced by the lecture may be estimated by the report which we give of an impromptu meeting which was organized immediately after the lecture for the purpose of securing its repetition. Before the introduction of the lecturer, prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Parmley. Miss O’Gorman, who is decidedly prepossessing in appearance, was neatly attired in black; she proceeded in a clear, musical voice, and very distinct utterance to deliver her lecture, occupying a little more than an hour, and often eliciting the most hearty applause, etc.”

From the *Evening Journal*.

“REPETITION OF MISS O’GORMAN’S LECTURE.—Our readers will remember that the delivery of the lecture of Miss

O'Gorman on the 'Romish Priesthood,' a few evenings since, in the North Baptist Church, gave so much satisfaction to the large and respectable audience which listened to it, that an impromptu meeting was held at the close of the lecture, and it was voted to request Miss O'Gorman to repeat it in this city. A committee was appointed to carry out the resolution of the meeting, and, in accordance with their instructions, they have secured the repetition of the lecture on Tuesday evening next, Nov. 30, at the North Baptist Church, in Jersey avenue. The following correspondence explains the matter fully:

'JERSEY CITY, NOV. 16, 1869.

Miss Edith O'Gorman.:—At a meeting held in the Chapel of the North Baptist Church, at the close of your lecture this evening, a resolution was adopted that you be requested to repeat the same, and the undersigned were appointed the committee to convey to you the request. In carrying out the direction of the meeting, please permit us to earnestly express to you the desire we have that you may deem it compatible with your other duties to comply. We believe that the lessons inculcated by your able and opportune lecture are upon matters of grave importance to the people, and about which it is desirable that they should be better informed. With great respect, Your ob't servants,

LEWIS NEIL,	}	Committee.'
WM. A. LEWIS,		
Z. K. PANGBORN,		
W. B. DUNNING,		
A. D. WHYTE,		

‘JERSEY CITY, NOV. 19, 1869.

TO THE GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE,—

Very Kind Sirs:—Your magnanimous resolution being duly submitted, has been read with the deepest feeling of gratitude for the very high honor you have conferred upon me. I most gladly comply with the request stated in the resolution, to repeat the lecture on “The Roman Catholic Priesthood,” on any day next week that the committee may deem advisable. Thanking the gentlemen of the committee for their noble disinterested sympathy and support, that give me fresh heart and strength in my undertaking,

I am, Very Respectfully Yours,

EDITH O’GORMAN.’”

Thus encouraged by some of the most prominent citizens of Jersey City, and despite the numerous threats made by ignorant Catholics to shoot me in the pulpit, and regardless of the foul calumny, slanders, and persecutions of my enemies, I prepared a fourth lecture, entitled “The Confessional, etc.,” and gave it in the largest church in the city, which I procured without any further difficulty after the Baptists had bravely paved the way. Many of the Catholic priests attended this lecture, and I exposed their misdemeanors to their very faces. Among those present was Rev. Father Owens, whom my readers will remember I met in the steerage of the “Siberia” on my return voyage from Liverpool. Bishop Bayley had received this suspended priest into the diocese of N. J., making him an assistant curate with Father Corrigan of St. Peter’s Church, Jersey

City. Bishop Bayley seems to have a secret sympathy for all renegade priests, for reasons best known to himself. I exposed Father Owens to his face, and his expulsion from Jersey City was the result. My success as a lecturer was wonderfully established, as the following editorial will show :

From the *Evening Journal* of December 15th.

“MISS O’GORMAN AS A LECTURER.—Few things more remarkable have occurred than the experience and success of Miss Edith O’Gorman as a public lecturer. She came here a little more than two months ago without money, without friends, without any existing public interest in the subject that engrossed her own thoughts. She came with only a fixed purpose of making known to the public what she knows and believes of the errors and wrongs of the Romish system of religion. She came here to give her first lecture, because it was here that she spent her Convent life, and here that she escaped from it after being so foully wronged; and here if anywhere her enemies could meet her face to face if they should dare to do so. She had then only one lecture prepared for delivery, and had never herself heard a public lecture or address given by any one, except sermons by priests and ministers. The draft of her first lecture had been submitted to the criticism of Ralph Waldo Emerson—and there could be no severer critic—who advised Miss O’Gorman to carry out her design of delivering it in public, and she came here for that purpose. But up to that moment this was all the assistance or encouragement she had received. The false statement has been repeatedly made by the

Standard publicly, and by individuals privately, that Miss O'Gorman's lectures are not composed or written by herself. This statement we personally and positively know to be false. For whatever merits her lectures possess Miss O'Gorman is alone entitled to the credit. The statements, arguments, and language are all her own. Her success as a public lecturer must be regarded as extraordinary. Her third lecture drew a full house on the occasion of its first delivery, and an equally large audience was in attendance when it was repeated; and her fourth lecture, the report of which we complete to-day, attracted a larger audience to the Tabernacle than any other lecture of the season, J. B. Gough's included. Yet her first reception in this city was chilling enough. It was with some difficulty that a hall was procured for the delivery of her first lecture; the only favorable public notice which she could obtain was given to her by the *Evening Journal*; the first attempts to secure the use of churches for the delivery of her lecture failed; most knew nothing of her, or what she proposed to do, others doubted her capacity or her worth, others feared that there would be mob violence, and others still were afraid that it might not be just the proper thing to encourage or indorse a friendless girl, who had no helpers but God and her own conscientious purpose; in short, the welcome she received at first from the Protestant Christian community was of the coldest kind. We spoke, as we felt we ought, in rebuke of this indifference and cowardice, and need not now repeat it. As we expected the result would be, so it is; Miss O'Gorman has now no lack of friends, or of indorsers of the course she

has chosen. The malice and slanders of her enemies have done her no harm, and whatever may be thought of her views and opinions, no one, who has listened to or read her lectures, can doubt either her sincerity or ability. We cannot venture to predict what the result of her efforts may be. The Church of Rome has had many powerful assailants whom she has resisted with a greater or less degree of success. The attack made by Miss O'Gorman is of an unprecedented kind. It comes not in the shape of sermons from the pulpit, or essays from the press, but in that of the living voice of a wronged woman, protesting against the Church which has both misguided and wronged her, and choosing the free public assembly and lecturer's platform on which to throw down the gauntlet of defiance to her numerous and powerful enemies. The American public, even without hearing her, cannot help admiring her courage. When they have heard her, they will concede her ability and fitness for the task which she has so successfully commenced in this city."

I lectured seven times in Jersey City in less than two months. In the brilliant success which crowned my labor I discerned the powerful hand of God, whose strength was made perfect in my weakness; and to Him be all the glory. Although I encountered many difficulties and annoyances from my enemies through their unjust calumnies and slanders, yet I never for a single moment lost my peace of mind, centered as it is in God. One of the effects of my conversion is, that my heart, which was once so rebellious, now experiences a perfect

resignation to all trials and persecutions which assail me. I can now endure calumnies, base slanders, unjust suspicion, and criticisms with the same equanimity of spirit as I receive laudation and praise. Silently as the dews of Heaven descend upon the flowers of the field and cause them to give forth their fragrance, so does the grace of God descend upon my new-born soul, inspiring it with the ability to send forth good deeds.



CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MADISON RIOT AND ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION.

The North Baptist Church in Jersey City was the first Christian church in which I vindicated truth, and in that church I found a resting place, and was there baptized on the 26th of December, 1869, by the Pastor, Rev. H. A. Cordo. I did not connect myself with this church because my salvation depended on it; no, my salvation depends on Christ alone; neither was I actuated by any sectarian motive, because I regard all denominations, which are united in the One Head, Jesus Christ, as equal.

In March, 1870, I addressed the New York East, and Newark Conferences of M. E. Ministers. With reference to that address I give the following newspaper extract under date of March 26th.

‘THE THIRD DAY OF THE NEWARK M. E. CONFERENCE—
EDITH O’GORMAN BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.

Before the appointed hour to hear Miss Edith O’Gorman, St. Paul’s Church was crowded to overflowing, not a foot of standing room could be had, and many went away unable to gain admittance. This was the largest gathering since the

conference met, and the deepest interest to hear the "Converted Nun," was visibly manifested throughout the congregation. In introducing Miss O'Gorman, Rev. L. R. Dunn said the lady who was about to speak was well known in this city. She has come before the public from time to time, and given her experience of the inner life of convents. She has been requested to come here this afternoon and give us an inside view of Romanism. We know her, and her statements may be taken with the utmost confidence. She has renounced Romanism, and has connected herself with a christian church in this city. etc., etc.

Rev. Mr. Parsons, who heard me for the first time at this conference, engaged me to lecture in his church in Madison, N. J., for a benevolent purpose, which engagement I fulfilled on the evenings of the 14th and 15th of April, 1869. Through the expositions which I made in my lectures to Protestant parents of the danger of placing their children in convent schools, St. Elizabeth's Academy in Madison was stripped of its Protestant support. So when I visited Madison, the Catholics resolved to silence my voice forever, as the following report published April 16th, 1870, will explain :

"EDITH O'GORMAN MOBBED.

AN ATTEMPT TO KILL HER.

A disgraceful riot at Madison—Miss O'Gorman lectures and the Catholics assail her—the house where she stays guarded.

Miss Edith O'Gorman, so well known here as a public lecturer, gave lectures at Madison, Morris County, on Thursday

and Friday evenings of this week, and last night a disgraceful riot was created by some of the Roman Catholic population of that place, and an attempt was made to shoot Miss O'Gorman. Madison was the place where Miss O'Gorman first entered the Roman Catholic sisterhood as a nun, and the headquarters of the order to which she once belonged is located there. The lectures which she delivered at Madison were advertised, that on "Convent Life," for Thursday, that on the "Romish Priesthood" for last evening, and both were delivered in the Methodist Church before audiences that completely filled the building. Many persons on both evenings went away unable to get into the church. On Thursday evening Miss O'Gorman was frequently and rudely interrupted by Catholics in the audience, and much disturbance was created both inside and outside of the house, but no personal violence was offered. Threats, however, were freely made, that if Miss O'Gorman attempted to lecture last night, all the Roman Catholics within five miles should be assembled, and Miss O'Gorman should be "done for."

"Last night the church was again filled, and Miss O'Gorman gave her lecture as advertised. There was no disturbance inside the room during the delivery of the lecture, but a vast mob gathered outside, and several attempts were made by persons to get in at the windows, and there was yelling and uproar about the building. When Miss O'Gorman, at the conclusion of the lecture, came out of the church in company with Rev. Mr. Parsons, who was her escort, and went to get into the carriage which was in waiting, a rush was made by

the mob, a frightful yelling was raised, and all sorts of abusive language were used. The crowd closed around Miss O'Gorman, but were kept back partially by a strong body-guard of the students of Drew Seminary. The horse attached to the carriage was frightened and ran, but was caught and stopped, and with much difficulty Miss O'Gorman and Mr. Parsons entered the carriage. Just as Miss O'Gorman stepped into it, a pistol shot was fired directly at her, but fortunately the ball missed its aim, passing over her head, and the carriage was driven rapidly away to the parsonage, followed by both crowds, Catholics, among whom were a large number of women, and the students and other persons, who were Miss O'Gorman's friends. On arriving at the house it was surrounded by the mob, and stones were thrown and violent language used, but Miss O'Gorman was safely escorted into the parsonage. A strong guard of citizens surrounded the house, some constables assisting them, and nearly all the students of the seminary aiding in repelling the mob, which did not disperse until midnight. The students guarded the house till this morning, and then sent a deputation of their number on the train to escort Miss O'Gorman safely to her home in this city.

“That she is as fearless a public speaker as any man or woman that ever stood on the rostrum on in the pulpit, we think even her enemies will admit. They must not think they can advantage their cause by demonstrations of violence towards her. A church or an organization that cannot meet the attack of one woman in any way but by such assaults as were made at Madison must be weak indeed.

“This affair has created intense excitement in and around Madison. It is not known who fired the shot, but the leaders of the mob are known, and the authorities will take measures to bring the guilty parties to justice.”

God being my protector I was not intimidated by the attempted assassination. I was laboring in a good cause, and if my Master required my life I was ready and willing to sacrifice it for the sake of Him who was crucified for me. I felt immortal until His work was done. In three days after the riot I fulfilled an engagement to lecture in Morristown, about four miles from Madison, and was there received with great enthusiasm. Of these lectures the Morristown paper in an issue of April 27th, 1870, says :

“Washington Hall last evening was densely filled by a very select and intelligent audience, all intent and eager to hear Miss O’Gorman deliver her lecture on ‘Indulgencies.’ Her remarks during the delivery and at the conclusion of the lecture elicited the most intense and deafening applause, the style in some cases exhibiting her *penchant* for humorous colloquy, and at other times rising into high and classical diction.

“At the close a few remarks were made by Rev. Mr. Parsons, under whose auspices the lectures were given, who took occasion to publicly thank the citizens of Morristown for their respectful attention, and the kind interest and sympathy manifested in favor of Miss O’Gorman ; and he then donated to the Grand Army of the Republic of Morristown, an amount of money equal to that received at the previous lecture. All persons who desired, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants,

were cordially invited to come on the rostrum and be personally presented to Miss O'Gorman. Many of both sects gladly availed themselves of the coveted opportunity, after which, accompanied by her escort, she quietly went to the U. S. Hotel, notwithstanding the New York *Sun's* correspondence to the contrary. Her lectures here have been a decided success, and all express a unanimous desire to have her speak again, and nowhere will Miss O'Gorman receive a warmer or more cordial welcome than by the good citizens of Morristown, whose law abiding, order loving proclivities of free speech are apparent to all. Miss O'Gorman as a speaker certainly ranks among the first of her sex. Her appearance and manner on the rostrum are excellent, enunciation clear and distinct, appeals eloquent and earnest, and marked throughout by a simplicity of manner, and the unmistakable stamp of a true lady. She is doing a great and noble work, and the prayer of every lover of truth is that God will strengthen, aid, and protect her, as He certainly will, in her vindication of truth, and exposure of guilt and corruption. By her extreme courtesy, affableness of manner and lady-like deportment she completely won the esteem, sympathy, and affection of all who met her."

In condemnation of the Madison riot the Newark *Courier* says:

"If proof were needed of the truth of Miss O'Gorman's charges, it would be found in such demonstrations as that which took place at Madison, in the cowardly attempt to shoot a defenseless woman. Such gross disregard of law and order is a shame and disgrace to the good name of New Jersey, and which

should not be passed by unnoticed. Let each and all the cowardly scoundrels be seized and brought to justice; and let the law they have outraged be vindicated to the fullest possible extent, and we shall certainly be disappointed if the responsible heads of the Roman Catholic church in this vicinity do not only disavow all sympathy with the rioters, but also lend their assistance in securing their conviction and punishment."

On the contrary, however, the responsible heads of the Roman Catholic church made every effort to free the rioters, and the result was that through Catholic influence the would-be assassin was not convicted, although there were witnesses who could swear to his identity, and when the witnesses were called the Grand Jury refused to hear them, and the rioters were set free without even a fine or reprimand.

Dear readers, is not this a powerful evidence of the foothold Catholicism holds in the United States? Is it not most alarming that Rome in this free country and age can thus defeat the ends of justice by its insidious outworks? A creed too, which carries with it "Gunpowder plots," "blood inquisitions," and "St. Bartholomew massacres," which instigates crime and overrides the law! And here I ask in the name of humanity, why are Catholics allowed in this land of freedom thus to suppress any judicial interference with their despotism, and prevent any discussion even of their creed? In other words, why will American Protestants suffer the aggressions of Romanism to interfere with the liberty of their government? to prevent and dwarf the growth of their institutions? Will it ever be written by the future historian that the Papal Power was trans-

ferred from Rome to the United States? that the Jesuits despoiled the rightful possessors of their free government? The Roman Catholic priests are cunning, and yet exhibit in the present age an unprecedented boldness. Things are coming rapidly to an issue, and the signs of a mighty struggle are multiplying, and may soon bring a crisis so solemn and momentous as to shake to their foundation the errors of the Roman Catholic church. I have no fear for the ultimate issue, for truth will obtain the supremacy, and God will protect his own.



CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EFFORT TO SILENCE ME BY UNFOUNDED SLANDERS.

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake.” There are some men who can only war with defenceless women, and among these I will particularly classify the editors of the Paterson *Guardian* and the Jersey City *American Standard*, who leveled their spite against me in base insinuations and invectives, which I patiently overlooked and silently contemned. My enemies, having failed to silence the voice of truth by an attempted assassination, resort to the most malicious calumny, in which a Catholic reporter, in the columns of the New York *Sun*, charges me with swindling Sadlier & Co., a Catholic publishing house, and Turgis, a Catholic picture dealer. My enemies, thinking I would also silently overlook this charge, however, mistook me, for this new and malicious attack fired my soul with indignation, and alone and unprotected I confronted Sadlier and Turgis; they protested they knew nothing about it, and no such reports had originated from them. I then proceeded to the *Sun* office and requested a reporter to accompany me to those houses and have the false

charges refuted. However, I was put off until four P. M., and in the meantime I returned to my residence, where I found Rev. Mr. Parsons of Madison, who, in company with Mrs. H. M. Dunning, proceeded with me to the *Sun* office at the appointed time. Securing a reporter, we visited the Catholic firms, who were put to the greatest confusion and humiliation by our visit; and the result was that the barefaced falsehoods of the Catholics recoiled upon their own heads, as the following publication of April 27th truthfully details:

“MISS O’GORMAN’S SLANDERERS—THEIR CHARGES REFUTED.—The New York *Sun* published on the 25th an article in which it was stated that Miss Edith O’Gorman, ‘after she was expelled from the Convent,’ obtained money under false pretences from two firms in New York, Sadlier & Co., and Turgis & Co. These are both Catholic houses. There was a double falsehood in the statement, for Miss O’Gorman never was expelled from any Convent, and never applied for nor got a dollar from either of those houses since she left the Convent and the ‘Order’ to which she belonged. She acted very promptly in meeting these slanders. She called first alone on both houses and demanded to know if they authorized any such slanderous statements as were published. They disavowed all knowledge of such reports, and were very much disposed to entreat her to cease giving lectures and troubling the ‘Church,’ but she informed them that she did not appear there to receive advice, but to have them do justice by refuting the

false reports which they knew to be false. At both places the result was that the persons connected with these firms declared that Miss O'Gorman was never before in their houses except in the nun's dress, and when, as a nun, she purchased books and pictures for the Convent. So the slander in the *Sun* was effectually disposed of. Miss O'Gorman next solicited a reporter of the *Sun* to accompany her to the places of business of these two firms, and hear their retraction from themselves. In company with the reporter, and with Rev. Mr. Parsons of Madison, the visit was paid, and after much hesitation and dodging, and with great reluctance, similar admissions were made by the parties of the falsity of the reports published. Thus promptly Miss O'Gorman secured a refutation of this latest slander. What the next false accusation will be against the lady, no one can tell, but whatever it is it will be promptly met. An incident reported by the *Sun* illustrates the style of doing things adopted by some of Miss O'Gorman's enemies. In the presence of Rev. Mr. Parsons and the *Sun* reporter, the clerk of Sadlier & Co., said that the fact of Sister 'Teresa' having applied for a loan 'was reported by letter to Mother Xavier, and she returned a reply that no sister was empowered to borrow money or contract debts by her, nevertheless, she would pay back the money, and did send it to them, requesting them not to lend money again to any of the Sisters, as she would not pay it.' Now for the trap that caught Sadlier's clerk. At Miss O'Gorman's request Rev. Mr. Parsons went, immediately after hearing these accounts, to Madison, called on

Mother Xavier, who, of course, knew nothing of the interviews with the New York Catholics, and inquired if she had any such correspondence with either of these houses. She told Rev. Mr. Parsons that she *never received nor wrote any letters on any such subject, and knew nothing about such a loan!* Rev. Mr. Parsons telegraphed to the *Sun* the result of his interview with Mother Xavier. We think that will do. The parties can settle between themselves which lied about the business. We have given this account of this affair, not because the slanders were likely to injure Miss O'Gorman, but to show the fashion in which her enemies attack her, and how ready she is to meet all their attacks."

Another slander, in which Catholics tried to justify the Madison riot, appeared in the *Sun*; which, while it was malicious, was so stupid that its falsity appeared on the surface. This slander originated from a Paterson correspondent, who, although he did not sign any name, I have no hesitancy in pronouncing Dr. Quin (he who was so ignominiously defeated in his controversy with me) as the author of the letter. The *Journal of Jersey City* thus speaks of it:

"Some base and foolish persons among the Roman Catholics seemed determined to supplement the disgraceful mob violence, and the attempt to assassinate Miss Edith O'Gorman at Madison, by the most reckless forgeries and stupid lying. The N. Y. *Sun* of this morning publishes a letter dated at Paterson yesterday, but not signed by anybody, which illustrates the

foolish and blind fury of some of those Roman Catholics who are enraged by Miss O'Gorman's public charges against the Church and hierarchy. The letter in the *Sun* is, from beginning to end, an unbroken string of forgeries and lies. The *Sun* heads it 'The Roman Catholic side of the Madison riot,' showing that the *Sun* knows the author to be a Roman Catholic. But the letter does not contain one word in reference to Miss O'Gorman's lecture at Madison, nor does the writer venture to say a word in contradiction of the disgraceful facts of that Roman Catholic riot, and attempt to murder a woman. The writer commences with this sentence: 'The riot at Madison, where Edith O'Gorman is well known, ought to end her denunciatory tour.' Well, it was the intention of those who raised that mob and riot that it should end her lecturing, for they threatened that they would take her life, and did attempt to murder her. But their intention was foiled. The letter in the *Sun* states that Miss O'Gorman was 'expelled from the order and the Convent.' That is a falsehood, as everybody here and in Hudson City knows. The letter again says that Miss O'Gorman was sent to Hoboken, that she did certain things in Hoboken. Now Miss O'Gorman never was at Hoboken in her life, except to pass through the place as a traveler. But to show how scurvy and silly a liar the Paterson Roman Catholic is, we quote one of his statements. 'On account of what had transpired at Hoboken Miss O'Gorman was expelled from the Convent, and we next hear of her in an editor's office in Jersey City, where she was found by the editorial better half.

The incensed wife of the editor handled her roughly, notwithstanding the editor declared she was only helping him to read proof.' Not only is that totally false in every line and word, but there was never any circumstance or occurrence at any time or of any sort which could afford even the slightest foundation for the lie. It is a willful lie, made up without the faintest shadow of fact to originate it. But a score of similar lies have been concocted and told here, none of them receiving any credence in this community, even by the Catholic population. Who originates these silly and malicious lies we don't know, nor do they deserve any notice, except as showing that the only weapons which Miss O'Gorman's enemies seem to know how or dare to use are lying, slander, and forgery, resorted to by those who do know enough to use such base means, and mob violence, and assassination, to which the lower, more ignorant, and more excitable class of Miss O'Gorman's haters seem to take naturally."

My reputation was in the hands of my Master, and I knew He would take care of it; and if for a time He permitted the foul breath of slander to attack my fair name, it was only to add to my future glory and the humiliation of my enemies, who thus sought to vanquish me, only to find themselves vanquished and put to confusion, while I remained clad in the strong armor of truth, honor, and integrity. "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," is the soothing promise which fell from the lips of the Man of Sorrows, who was reviled, calum-

niated, and persecuted, although He was the Son of God, the essence of goodness, the King of Heaven. Although my enemies for a while compassed me about on every side, yet I feared no evil, because the Lord was my defense. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort **me.**"



CHAPTER XXVIII.

GOD BLESSES MY WORK IN THE CONVERSION OF MANY.

There is no greater proof needed to convince my readers that my work is of God and blessed by him than the evidence contained in the following recital of facts. In Newark, N. J., two Catholic families were brought to see the errors of their religion, through my instrumentality, and others in Jersey City, Hudson City, and New York. Many Protestant parents have discontinued the catholic education of their children by withdrawing them from convent schools. Among other catholics converted through my influence, is my own brother who has entered on probation in the M. E. Church; also two young ladies of Hudson City who were formerly my pupils, one of these was not only converted but was saved the awful fate of entering a convent whither the Sisters were trying to entice her, and to whom she was on the point of yielding.

Besides these evidences of the power of God which have come to my personal knowledge, there are similar conversions which have been the result of my lectures in the different places I have visited. It is not yet one year since I commenced to lecture, and in this short time my practical success

exceeds any of my more popular cotemporaries in the same field. During the lecturing season I have lectured seven times in Jersey City, four times in Cooper Institute, New York City, sixteen times in Newark, twice in Madison, Morristown, Bayonne City, Hackensack, and Parsippany, N. J., once in Suffrens, Port Jervis, and Middletown, N. Y., four times in Brooklyn, twice in Nyack, once in Hartford, Buffalo, Rochester, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Paterson, four times in Philadelphia, and Cape May—making sixty-one lectures in about four months: besides having invitations to Washington, Harrisburg, Pittsburg, Baltimore, St. Louis, Wilmington, Boston, Portland, Cleveland, and many other of the principal cities of the Union, but most of which I have been forced to decline because employed in the preparation of this work.

I have been supported by crowded houses, and by the popular good will through the Press, especially the religious organs which speak of my mission as from God. The Philadelphia M. E. *Home Journal* of May 14th, in an editorial on my lectures in that city, thus says:

“The great entertainment of the week to the citizens of Philadelphia, has been the lectures of Edith O’Gorman, the escaped Nun, who on each night addressed large and enthusiastic audiences on “Convent Life, and the Romish School System,” and the “Confessional,” Indulgences and Papal Supremacy. Having listened to her lectures we are prepared to hail the appearance of this lady as a champion of truth, worthy and well qualified to combat and expose the formidable errors and evils of Popery. Miss O’Gorman, late Sister Teresa, has

tasted practically the imaginary blessedness of convent life. She fled from its polluted atmosphere to save that which is dearer to her than life—her purity, honor and peace ; but with the stinging remembrance burned into her soul of unnamed iniquities. She has knelt with the unquestioning obedience of a blind devotee at the confessional until her reason revolted, and her ears tingled with very shame ; and instead of finding what she sought—soul-repose in seclusion, and ardently desired perfection in penance and idolatrous devotion to Mary, and a multitude of Saints,—she fled for refuge to Christ Jesus, and with her former heart idols, and the faith she entertained in Mother Church all shattered, she has found redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

“ With the new found light, and love of the gospel in her heart, there is nothing vindictive or vituperative apparent in her chaste and eloquent periods. With pity she turns to the multitude of her former associates, who grope in darkness and terror through a life of ignorance, wretchedness and sin, and are dying without the true knowledge of God, and kindly points out to them the better way. Her mission in this regard cannot fail in producing great good. In appearance and manner she is somewhat below the medium stature, possesses a fine and pleasing *personnel*, an eye that fairly blazes with the enthusiasm of her theme, and a voice of remarkable distinctness, compass, and pathos, with a fine emphasis, slightly betraying her Dublin nativity, and capable of filling the largest hall, and reaching the ear and heart of assembled thousands.

“ Her reception before a Philadelphia audience was unmis-

takably cordial. Repeated bursts of applause almost shook the dome as she laid bare the absurdity and folly of Romish tradition, described the mumbling mode of prayer on the beads, and repeated the preposterous form of priestly absolution. Occasionally a keen shaft of satire flashed forth as the thought of her own personal grief, and the malignant persecutions which assail her came up incidentally for review. That her life is in jeopardy she seems to be fully aware, but having taken shelter beneath the protecting arm of the Almighty, she fears no evil. She stands defiant before the two-edged sword of Jesuitical malice, and rings out in tones of unvarnished truth to Protestant parents and the unsuspecting citizens of this free land the tocsin of alarm against machinations which with stealthy and tireless step are compassing sea and land, to subvert virtue, conscience and morality.

“The topics she treated in her lectures embraced many features of the political, as well as educational, and religious system of the Romish Church. If she will only embody her experience and observations in a book, and we think she is competent to do this as it has never been accomplished before, such a book will prove a thunder-clap in the clear sky of that indolent, insolent, and unscrupulous hierarchy that now dreams of an easy conquest of the land of the Puritans as an Empire for the re-enactment of the tragedies of the Inquisition, a domain where human liberty must die, and dark ages come again. Should Miss O’Gorman again visit and speak in our city, which we hope she will, those who heard her on the occasion of her first appearance here, will be the most eager,

we have no doubt, to secure front seats, and hear her again. She is a communicant in the Baptist Church, and on principle never speaks to an audience until preceded by prayer to God for guidance and grace in the dangerous and glorious career on which she has entered."

Dear readers, I have given you several extracts from the press, extolling my work because I deem it the most modest manner in which may be recounted, without appearing egotistical, the wonderful success with which God has blessed my labors. Oh, how deeply my heart feels that the Lord is my Shepherd! Indeed, I shall not *want* for I trust in Him who hath made me to lie down in green pastures, and who leadeth me beside the clear waters.



CHAPTER XXIX.

FALSEHOOD UNMASKED.

In June, 1870, a creature signing himself Thomas Oscar Roland Keatinge, D. D., LL. D., came to the Third Reformed Church, Jersey City, and lectured on the Inquisition. He pretended that he had been ten years in Rome; an official in the Roman Court; Secretary to the late Cardinal d'Andrea, and assistant librarian in the Index Expurgatorius. He wrote an article entitled "Ten Years in Rome," which appeared in the *Galaxy* of December, 1869. This article is a production of his inventive imagination. In it he describes the death of Cardinal d'Andrea as having occurred on the 22d of March, 1865; whereas it is ascertained by good authority that Cardinal d'Andrea died in Rome on the 14th of May, 1868, three years and two months after "Dr." Keatinge had him dead and buried. The late Cardinal d'Andrea never had a secretary. The secretary of a Cardinal is an ecclesiastic. When a layman is chosen to fill that place he is called, not the secretary, but the Chancellor of the Cardinal. Cardinal d'Andrea, from 1852, when he was made Cardinal, down to his death, employed as Chancellor an estimable and well educated gentle-

man, whom he had known well and had been intimately associated with for years before, and who still lives in Rome.

Moreover, no person of the name of T. O. R. Keatinge, D. D., LL. D., ever filled the office of librarian or assistant librarian of the Index Expurgatorius, or of the Congregation of the Index, as was ascertained by Father Hecker when he visited Rome, and I am sure from what I personally know of Keatinge's falsehoods and power of invention, that Father Hecker says the truth when he pronounces Keatinge "false, all false!"

For the benefit of all lovers of truth, and to prevent the public from being imposed upon by the *soi-disant* Thomas Oscar Roland Keatinge, D. D., LL. D., I will relate what I know of him. I was introduced to this man by Rev. Mr. Suydam, in the Third Reformed Church, Hamilton Square, Jersey City, in June, 1870. Gertrude, who came to visit me after the Madison riot, was with me, and introduced at the same time. She admired very much his "brilliant and gifted mind," as she termed it, and accepted an invitation from him to visit his home in Scraalenberg, N. J., where he was assistant minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, of which Rev. Dr. Gordon is the pastor. Gertrude visited his home on Saturday, three days after her introduction to him. I was very much surprised by this action on her part, because naturally she is very cold and formal toward strangers.

Gertrude returned on Monday, accompanied by Mrs. Keatinge, a woman who presented a very untidy appearance, and remained over night. Mrs. Keatinge told a pitiful tale of pov-

erty and persecution to which he "Dr." and she were subjected, and in the sympathy of my heart I made some necessary purchase for her, and gave her donations from my wardrobe besides, before she returned to her home.

On Friday of the same week I was very much astonished when I returned from lecturing in Hackensack, N. J., to find Keatinge and his wife partaking of Mrs. H. M. Dunning's hospitality. I treated them with politeness, and thought them sincere and truthful, although I formed the idea that they were rather free for strangers in pushing themselves forward as guests and remaining all night. Gertrude seemed quite charmed with Keatinge's narrative of his wonderful escape from Rome. He is a strange looking man, small in stature, and wearing a profusion of brown beard; sallow in complexion, with deep set, fierce looking eyes, overhung by heavy black brows and presenting a malignant-like appearance. He talked incessantly of himself and his wonderful adventures, and I believed him to be all he represented himself to be. The couple returned to their home in Scraalenberg on Saturday, Gertrude again accompanying them. The following Tuesday I was very much surprised to receive a morning call from Keatinge; he was alone, and I received him in the front parlor; the folding doors which divide the parlors were open, and Mrs. Dunning, who was reclining on a sofa in the back parlor, could hear and see all that transpired in the front parlor. Keatinge appeared singularly pale and agitated, and after a few morning salutations he thus addressed me.

“My *deah* Miss Edith, I have bad news for you, very bad news indeed.”

Thinking something had happened to Gertrude, I asked him if it was anything concerning her.

“Oh, *deah* child, no, no! it is the Catholics, they are concocting a plot against you, so cunningly and maliciously devised, that it would damn the Queen of England herself if brought against her. Oh, my *deah* child, how can I break it to you! Promise me, *deah*, that you will bear it like the brave woman that you are.”

“Speak out, sir, I am listening.”

“Well, *deah*, I have seen the sworn affidavits of two priests, five nuns, three children, and two physicians, who have been bribed by Rev. Father Starrs, vicar general of N. Y., who has spent over twenty thousand dollars to get up this false and damning evidence against your reputation, and which Mr. Dana, editor of the *New York Sun*, and Henry Ward Beecher, of the *Christian Union*, are going to publish against you in their papers.”

In amazement I looked at Keatinge, to see if he was in his right mind. His face had assumed an expression as of indignation against such an unheard-of plot, and deep sympathy for the injustice to me seemed also to appear in his face. I replied—

“I don't understand you, sir. No one living can say aught against my reputation and speak truly. What do you mean, sir?”

In an extremely agitated manner, he replied—

“But, my deah, don’t you know that the Catholics will perjure themselves if they can crush you by so doing? They have failed to assassinate you, and now the most effectual means to silence you is to blast your reputation, which they cannot fail to do by their perjury. They are the power; consequently the public will not uphold a weak, defenceless girl after she is crushed by such a formidable enemy. And now, my deah, I do tremble for you. Your only safety is to leave this accursed country and come with us to England. As a literary man I have great influence, and will defend you by meeting their attack before we leave for England.”

“Sir, falsehood can never crush truth. God reigns, and in Him I trust; therefore I have no fear, and your proposition to leave this country and go to England is preposterous. It is only the guilty who flee; but conscious of my own innocence I do not shrink from any unjust persecution. I have already been slandered and calumniated, but remain unharmed, while the retribution falls upon those who seek my destruction.”

“But, my poor deah, you do not realize the damning extent of the plot, nor the vile things they will publish about you! I have seen them, hence my anxiety to ward it off to some extent.”

“Sir, it appears very strange to me that Catholics confide so much in you whom, you say, they so cruelly persecute. I cannot understand why they divulge to you their plots.”

“Oh, my deah! but don’t you know that it was not from Catholics I found all this out, but from Mr. Dana of the *Sun*,

and Mr. Beecher of the *Christian Union*, who have it ready for publication, and who showed to me the sworn statements.”

“Very strange, sir! but if what you say is true, I will bear it. God is my defense.”

“Now, my deah, I have not yet told you all. I have more bad news for you coming from another source, and which I fear will pain you most. I heard that you were engaged to be married to Professor William Auffray—well, deah, when the damnable plot of the Catholics came to my knowledge I thought your only safety was in marriage, so, deah, out of the purest interest and earnest desire to save you, I made it my business to go myself and see Prof. Auffray and make known to him your danger. Accordingly, last night I went to see him, and explained to him the plot against you. I entreated him that if he really loved you he would marry you at once, and thus avert in a measure the suffering which threatened to crush you. I spoke highly of your noble qualities, and told him he ought to feel highly honored to marry you under any circumstances; but, my deah, a third party had been to him and to the Rev. D. C. Lewin, Principal of the college, defaming you, and Prof. Auffray had resolved to break off his engagement with you.”

“There, sir, stop! I cannot credit all this; who authorized you to go to Prof. Auffray? he is a stranger to you.”

“Now courage and patience, my deah girl! Professor Auffray is not a stranger to me. I know him to be a French villain of the deepest dye.”

“Dr. Keatinge, I will not allow you to speak thus of a man whom I know to be the very soul of honor, and whose nobility

of character has redeemed his sex in my estimation. You insult me to speak thus of one whom I love, esteem, and respect."

"Oh, my deah girl! listen to me, and understand that I am your only true friend, and as such I warn you against this selfish Frenchman; and to convince you of this man's perfidy, it was Prof. Auffray who requested me to come here to-day, and in his name ask you to release him from his engagement, as he could not marry such a vile woman as you are. He does not wish to see you again, but requests that you return his letters, portraits, all."

Keatinge seemed so earnest and sincere that I could no longer doubt. Naturally simple and unsuspecting, it never occurred to me that Keatinge's words were all false inventions, and I replied:

"Indeed, sir, I am completely bewildered and mystified by all the strange things you have spoken to me to-day; and I must reflect and have an explanation from Prof. Auffray himself, before I take any such step as to break off an engagement which gave him so much happiness to make."

"My deah, he is not worthy of you! Oh, if you only knew what I know about that man, you would not hesitate one moment!" And then he proceeded to slander Professor Auffray, until I compelled him to desist, at the same time telling him I would write and have an explanation from that person. In great excitement he replied—

"Oh no, my deah, you must not do that upon any account; you will endanger your reputation beyond repair if you either

write to him or see him again, except to send a short note breaking the engagement. Now, deah girl, for your reputation's sake follow my advice, and give me such a note now, which I will send to him."

"I cannot now, Dr. Keatinge, I am too much astounded, and need some reflection."

"No, my deah, you must do it now—before I go. Be a true woman, and let him see you can live without him. Give me pen, ink, and paper, and I will dictate it." He went to my writing desk on the table, helped himself to note paper, and thus wrote:

"JERSEY CITY, June 13, 1870.

Sir:—After Dr. Keatinge's visit this morning you will not be surprised to know that I disclaim all further acquaintance with you. I request the return of my letters and portraits, upon the receipt of which I will forward your own. Any further explanation, of course, is unnecessary.

Respectfully,

EDITH O'GORMAN."

This note I copied mechanically, and blindly gave it to him, after which my pent-up feelings gave vent to convulsive weeping. Keatinge seemed affected in witnessing my distress, and said—

"Now, my dawling, dry up your tears, and come with me to-day to Scraalenberg, to my house. Do not grieve about that bad man, but thank the Lord you are free from him before it was too late. Oh, my dawling, I wish it were in my power

to offer you a husband's protection. My deah, do you not know that I am not really married to my wife? I do not love her. I never loved a woman but a nun in Rome, who was another such a Madonna as you! O dawling Edith! I do love you," and he took my hand and kissed it, at the same time attempting to kiss my brow.

I could scarcely credit my senses at this turn of affairs, but fully aroused to indignation I demanded an explanation of his language and action. Abashed and ashamed, he replied—

"My deah child, you entirely misunderstand me. I kissed you only as a deah brother who is willing to protect you with his life; and it is in the purest sympathy I tell you the secret love of my heart, in order that my unhappiness may modify your own. But deah child, I would not act dishonorably for all the world. I am your only friend, and would shelter you from the fury of your enemies at the expense of my life. Oh, deah child, do not, I pray, misunderstand me!"

"Leave me now, sir! I must go to my God in prayer, I am so shocked, bewildered, confused." I knelt down in a corner of the parlor to pray. Keatinge came and knelt down beside me, and placing his hand upon my bowed head, he commenced to say something about "this deah afflicted child." When I heard his voice, then a feeling of intense loathing came over me; it seemed to me that a fiend in human form was mocking God with prayer. I instantly arose from my knees, requesting him to go away as I wished to be alone. Mrs. Dunning, who had been a silent auditor and spectator throughout the scene now made her appearance, and asked an explanation

from Keatinge. He told Mrs. Dunning he was trying to save me from the plotting of my enemies, and if she was a true friend to me she would never permit me to see Professor Auffray again, etc. Keatinge then departed after accomplishing the fiendish work of making us truly miserable. He promised Mrs. Dunning he would call again on Thursday with the evidences for all his statements. After he had gone, Mrs. Dunning said to me, "Edith, if there is any plot against you, Dr. Keatinge is the only plotter. I know every thing he told you is false, and I shall go myself and see Professor Auffray, who I know is a noble and true gentleman. Edith, why were you so silly as to copy Dr. Keatinge's note and break off the engagement? Don't you know he seeks your destruction? and what is his object in asking you to go home with him, but only to ruin your reputation."

"Oh, Mrs. Dunning, I don't know what it all means! I am so bewildered and mystified I must pray, pray!"

Mrs. Dunning went herself to the Eclectic Collegiate Institute, Brooklyn, and found Professor Auffray in the deepest mental trouble. He came to see me early Wednesday morning, and told me some things about Keatinge, which I will condense. Keatinge went on Monday evening to the Institute where William Auffray was resident Professor at that time, and remained all night. He never ceased to slander me from eight in the evening until two in the morning before Professor Auffray and Rev. Mr. Lewin. He told them he had known me ten years, and represented me as the vilest woman on the face of the earth; called me an intriguing adventuress; told them

I had gone on my knees to him, and begged him to go to Professor Auffray and ask him to marry me, and a number of other such vile and malicious falsehoods, just as he had misrepresented Professor Auffray to me. He tried to get Professor Auffray to write to me and break off the engagement between us, but therein he did not succeed as well as he did with me. Professor Auffray told him that he did not believe him, and that even though I was all that he said, nevertheless he would marry me because he loved me, and his heart told him I was a true, pure woman. I told Professor Auffray all the events of Keatinge's visit to me. I clearly saw his fiendish plot to work out my destruction if he had succeeded in his design of separating Professor Auffray and myself, and induced me to go to his home in Scraalenberg.

Thursday morning Keatinge was expected to come again. I called in Mrs. Hall, an elderly lady of high respectability in the Methodist church, in order that she might be a witness to the interview. Professor Auffray also came to confront Keatinge with his falsehoods, but urgent duties called him away before that person's arrival. At one o'clock P. M., the trio, Gertrude, Keatinge and his wife, made their appearance. Mrs. Dunning, Mrs. Hall, and myself met them in the parlor where they still remained standing when I entered. Keatinge, with a diabolical smile, came toward me with both hands extended to greet me; but drawing back from him I calmly said:

"No sir, you cannot touch my hand: I have discovered you to be a malicious inventor of plots and falsehoods, and I shall make you prove all the vile calumnies you have heaped

upon me in the presence of Professor Auffray, whom you thought I would never see again. The only plot against me, Sir, is in your own evil heart. But you are foiled, thank God." He was extremely confused, changed color, and made a stammering effort to say something when I turned toward his wife and said—

"Your husband says, madame, that he is not married to you, and he wishes he could offer me a husband's protection; he called me his 'darling love' and kissed me."

Keatinge's countenance assumed the livid hue of death, as he approached me with his hand so clinched that the nails penetrated the flesh, and shaking one of them in my face he fiercely shouted—

"You're a damnable liar!"

Mrs. Dunning then stepped up to him and said,

"No Sir, she is not a liar, you did kiss her, and make love to her, for I heard and saw you myself—and don't you dare to deny it, sir!"

With the most fiendish expression, and fairly jumping in rage he hissed forth from his gnashing teeth,

"You are all damnable liars; plotters and wretches. Come wife, let us get out of this den of ——." I replied, "Go, sir! you are worse than an inquisitor."

Once more placing his clenched hand in threatening attitude over my head, he hissed—

"I am a Roman Inquisitor, and I will join the Catholics to damn you! I will pursue you to the death! and strip you of all your friends by slandering you to the public."

“ You cannot injure me, Sir. I possess that of which the whole world cannot deprive me, the peace of a good conscience.”

He then rushed frantically out of the house swearing all manner of vengeance upon me, while his miserable wife accompanied him. I can only compare her to a faithful dog following a wicked master, and in my inmost heart I pity her. Mrs. Dunning, Mrs. Hall, Gertrude, and the two servants of the house heard him make the above threats to me. I have never seen him since, but I heard in a few weeks afterward that Dr. Gordon had turned him away from Scraalenberg, as an impostor and a humbug.

The next thing I heard of him is in Boston, accompanied with a great flourish of trumpets. All the leading clergymen of Boston indorsed his appearance, by signing their names to the testimonials, which appeared in the newspapers June 23d, 1870, expressing their satisfaction with “ the letters he had in his possession, with the great seal of the Romish Church attached, testifying to his faithfulness, good character, and ability.” However, while in the midst of his infamous trickery toward the Boston Clergy, his true character was partially disclosed in the following manner. Mrs. H. M. Dunning wrote a full account of Keatinge’s falsity to her sister, who is the wife of Mr. J. P. Magee, a gentleman connected with *Zion’s Herald*, 38 Bromfield Street, Boston.

When Mrs. Magee heard of Keatinge’s appearance in Boston, she took Mrs. Dunning’s letter to Dr. G. Haven, editor of the *Zion’s Herald*. Keatinge happened to be in the office,

and the ministers charged upon him, with the contents of the letter. Humiliated by this unforeseen turn of affairs, Keatinge poured forth a volley of invectives against me, accusing me of being guilty of all manner of crimes, and indulging in the most vituperative language; he called me "vile impostor, liar," etc. Very unbecoming a christian minister indeed, were his expressions against myself. To all who heard him revile me I am personally a stranger, and I know not what effect his bitter and unmanly denunciations had upon those who heard them; but I do know that falsehood cannot outlive truth, and his evil slanders can do me no real harm.

In Boston he was sustained in his course by Gertrude, whom he had completely blinded, and who had become infatuated with him. However, she cannot fail to discover his baseness sooner or later, as all do to their sorrow who have any dealings with him. I cannot speak with certainty of the exact career of this man, because there is no credence to be placed upon his words. I know from good authority that he was turned out of the Episcopal Church in Briar Cliff, on the Hudson River, so has he also been turned out of the Dutch Reformed Church in Sraalenberg, N. J. He has never thoroughly connected himself as a member with any Christian Church since he left the Romish Church. He practices consummate deceit upon all sects. I know not among what religious body he will next make his *debut*. I am sure he was at some period a Roman Catholic priest, hence his great villainy, and according to the Church of Rome, "Once a priest, always a priest according to the order of Melchisedec," which is on a par

with, "Once a rascal always a rascal," according to the other order.

Keatinge was employed a while in the office of the *Christian Union*, which now denounces him, as very clearly appears in the following paragraph which was published in the edition of November 5th, 1870:

An Impostor.

"Within the past few weeks we have received many inquiries from persons in New England, who felt themselves aggrieved or in doubt concerning one T. O. R. Keatinge, formerly a writer for the *Christian Union*. More than three months ago we expressly withdrew all endorsement from Keatinge by an editorial paragraph. As we learn, however, that he still appeals to his former connection with this paper as a voucher for his character, a further statement on our part seems desirable. We therefore say explicitly that we are fully convinced, upon the amplest evidence, that Keatinge is an impostor and utterly unworthy of trust. We also call attention to the cards below, signed by several responsible gentlemen. The attention of New England papers is especially called to this statement, as Keatinge seems to be at present carrying on his operations in that section of the country."

The last I heard of his impositions is, that he is getting subscriptions to the amount of several hundred dollars towards a paper he is going to edit in Portsmouth, N. H. I now warn the public against him. References as to his true character can be had by applying to the heads of the Episcopal church

at Briar Cliff, N. Y., to Rev. Dr. Gordon, of Scraalenberg, N. J., to Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, and Mr. Kennedy of the *Christian Union*, and to Professor Auffray at Jersey City, and to several others besides who have suffered from his treachery and falsehood.

I unmask this man from a strict and conscientious sense of truth and justice, and not from any petty spirit of vindictiveness, because I harbor none against him. In my very soul I pity him as an intelligence lost to all truth. Although this man may revile and persecute me, still as a christian I commend him to the mercy of a God, who is willing to forgive the deepest dyed sinner if he turn from his evil ways, and with a contrite heart worship Him in spirit and in truth.



CHAPTER XXX.

MY MARRIAGE.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven and all things else shall be added unto you.”

Of all human influences that of virtuous love is the sweetest, as it is the most powerful. The world has nothing to offer more charming than a pure and happy affection, the sincere outburst of the strength and desires of the soul. Love, when it is in harmony with the enlightened and sanctified conscience, is the richest treasure of our nature. It is Paradise regained. Such a love now fills my heart, a heart so well constituted to enjoy it. My heart, which had been so cruelly tried, so wildly tossed about, so bitterly betrayed through man's treachery, had ceased to regard the whole sex, save in the most distrustful and almost bitter light. I held myself aloof from men, and merely tolerated their presence. I had shut them out from my heart, and in its secret chamber I firmly resolved no man should ever enter to disturb its peace by an unhallowed love. My heart craved something disengaged from mere earthly and selfish sentiment; in a word, my heart sought moral perfectness in man, which was something brighter and nobler than the world had

ever exhibited to me, and I had ceased to think it possessed such. However, God, who hath already showered down upon my soul innumerable *Divine* blessings, deluging it in an ocean of heavenly peace, had also reserved for me a new and delightful human existence.

Professor William Aufray crossed my path, and his honest nobility of soul influenced and filled my heart, permeating my being with a new life, a new love, a new happiness. His is a character, to me, singularly grand and beautiful. His naturally keen and progressive mind, strengthened by earnest culture, and developed in a wide range of practical and scientific attainments, shook off the trammel of the Church of Rome, in whose theology he had graduated. His strong intellect, keenly analytical, and combined with the severest moral philosophy, could never succumb to the inevitable depravity of such a system as the Romish priesthood, a system that makes vows of celibacy but not of chastity; therefore he threw off the yoke of Rome, with its train of evils. His talents could not be smothered within the narrow limits of superstition and tradition. After rebelling against Romish ordination, he was two years professor of Belles-lettres in the University St. Mandé, Paris; after which he came to this country, and has now been here three years. He entered the General Theological Seminary in New York, and was received, on the 17th of June, 1869, a candidate for holy orders in the diocese of New York, and at the present time he is an assistant in the French Episcopal Church Du St. Esprit, (where the learned Dr. A. Verren is pastor, and so has been for over forty-two years), Twenty-

Second St., New York. • However, a mind like his cannot be at home among ritualism in any form. William Auffray, at twenty-eight years of age, gave to me the first true love of his heart, which my whole nature reciprocated, and to him I was joined in the holy bonds of wedlock on the 18th day of August, 1870, by Rev. H. A. Cordo, pastor of the North Baptist Church, Jersey City.

Dear readers, how beautiful, how real, how near the heavenly is the enjoyment of such a union! All the charms and pleasures of home, and the unspeakable delights of newly wedded love, are realized by us. The perfectly married pair is indeed the perfect type of the Lord's Church. The center and throne of love's sweetest, highest power are in our home of wedded bliss—a beautiful paradise where, partaking of the tree of life and communing sweetly with God, we enjoy each other's love. And how can it be otherwise with such a husband? he is so good, so excellent in nature and character. To the truest and tenderest sensibility are added indomitable decision and dauntless courage, blended with a calm, practical judgment, great patience, and a beautiful simplicity and modesty, while suffusing all his character with a heavenly light is a living and controlling piety. He is a philosopher in thought, a hero in action, a child in feeling and simplicity, and a Christian in his daily life. To me he is both the giant oak that battles with the storm, and the gentle vine, with its green leaves and purple clusters; he makes sweet alike zephyr and storm. Powerful and handsome in person, elegant and gentle in manners, winning in conversation, ardent and affectionate in nature, he is

well calculated to make a most loving, tender, and devoted husband. Truly God was good to me when he gave me William Auffray as the strong, safe pilot to guide my frail little bark into the haven of rest ; where, anchored in his heart, so brimful of love, I am sheltered and safe at last from all the storms and tempests and whirlpools.

Thanks, my God !!



CHAPTER XXXI.

CONCLUSION.

In the Roman Catholic Church, Holy Scripture—God's word—is trampled under foot, and tradition, which is man's word, becomes practically and substantially the only and conclusive rule of faith. What was it that brought wreck upon Jerusalem, and occasioned the extinction of all its ancient grandeur? Its people preferred the traditions of men to the commandments of God, and from the moment they began to do so, corruption grew in strength, and spread its contagion to the utmost limits of the Jewish race.

The Jews had ecclesiastical authority, outward sanctity, a succession most legitimate, a gorgeous ritual, the law and the promises. They had prophets commissioned from heaven to guide and teach them; they had a Temple, the glory and the admiration of the whole earth—but in an evil hour they preferred the traditions of man to the commandments of God, and from that moment they experienced and proved the great truth, that the church which tries to steal a ray from the glory of God takes a consuming curse into its own bosom. When the Son of God came to Jerusalem, how did they receive him?

They who boasted of being the "only true church," exclaimed "Away with him, away with him!" and at last he was condemned to be crucified by a people that declared themselves the "chosen of the Most High." What consuming and crushing judgment followed? The Roman armies concentrated in hostile array around guilty Jerusalem, and every stone of that once powerful city cries out in dumb but awful eloquence of departed glory. And why? because like the Romish Church, the people forsook the fountain of living waters, and hewed out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water! My dear readers, if you wish to arrest a scarcely less dreadful national ruin; if you would stem, under God, the tide and torrent of Romish Superstition which now threatens to inundate this land of liberty, cleave closely to the Bible, and defend with your lives its sacred teachings. It is the only revealed will of God, therefore reject every practice and doctrine which has no foundation in its sacred volume. If the Church of Rome would adopt this process, it would at once dissipate the unauthorized dogmas which lamentably encumber it.

The late ecumenical council of Rome, after a long debate and much dissension, declared Pope Pius IX to be infallible; nevertheless he is now stripped of his temporal power, and the enlightened world rejoices at the change. This is a severe blow to that system of superstition, the Catholic Church, and the present turn of affairs in Italy shows how precarious is the footing she possesses even in the soil of her ancient domination.

I believe that God's truth will triumph, but I also believe that as God works by means, so on us devolves the responsi-

bility of a diligent and faithful use of the means which He has placed within our reach. Whatever those means are let us use them. Let parents in their homes teach Protestant truths, and keep their children away from Catholic influence. Let me remind you, especially mothers, to do thus. You have great power, a mother's influence in her home, when sanctified, is mighty, therefore, on the mothers of this great nation devolves a responsibility which no language can express.

Investigation and progress will bring priestcraft to the surface. The attention of the public has been attracted lately to the defense of a free school system. On this point of free education, your children cry out to yield not one inch to the demands of Jesuistry, therefore never give up your cherished, noble, free school institutions; they are the fountains from which your precious children are to draw the elementary principles of intelligence, which must be the basis of their character. None fear these schools as do the Roman Catholic priests, and they would gladly undermine the system; for in its flourishing they foresee their loosening hold upon the coming generation. They are making bold efforts, and may yet make bolder, in order to cheat your children of the blessings of a free-school education. I trust the Protestants will not suffer this encroachment without at least a show of resistance.

Again, let the legislature enact laws for the inspection of convents, in order that they may be open to the censure or approval of the public; but as those institutions now exist there is scarcely no protection or redress for the victims of convent crimes. Let the prison doors of monasteries and convents be

thrown open to their deluded inmates, so that they may return to a useful and virtuous life in society and the world.

Dear reader, you have patiently followed me from the time you beheld me filled with all the enthusiastic fanaticism which the potent priesthood of a dazzling hierarchy could inspire in an ardent and deluded girl. You have seen me sever every sacred family tie, sacrifice a happy home, and tear myself from the close embrace of a beloved mother, to place myself on the altar of self-immolation. You have sympathized with me when subject to the unmitigated tyranny, unnatural discipline, fearful temptations and struggles which beset me in the convent prison. You have seen me penniless and alone in mid-winter, thrust out upon the mercy of a cold and selfish world, flying in desperation from convent crimes, and you have had a faint picture of the desolation, trials, persecution, and heart struggles which followed. At last after grief and sorrow, whose weight and extent seem almost incredible, you have rejoiced in my miraculous conversion, and in the inexpressible light and heavenly peace of my God-born soul, and in the wonderful power of grace manifested in my labors; and you have been permitted to enter my happy home of wedded bliss, and partake in spirit of my joy. Gentle reader, in thus accompanying me through the sorrow and tribulation, the joy and gladness of an eventful period of eight years, can you refrain from exclaiming, "Verily, truth is stranger than fiction."

I have portrayed my experience with a frank truthfulness. What I have related is, alas, too true. I have given you a plain, candid, and simple statement of facts, which cannot be

refuted, and of which the testimony is accessible to all. I have been solely guided by a sincere desire to rectify wrong and remove evil, and in this brief account of cruel persecution, I have neither felt nor experienced vindictiveness, although a just indignation may here and there have colored my language with a tinge of reproach when speaking of those who were chiefly instrumental in producing or adding to my sufferings. I freely and entirely forgive my enemies, and all those who so deeply injured me, and pray God to open their eyes that they may see and appreciate the errors of a system to which I attribute all my sharp experience.

Dear Catholic readers, you must all feel in the inmost recess of your hearts that every bitter sorrow I have depicted is the result of a system of religion full of errors and superstition; and do you think I deserve to be mobbed and assassinated because I relate a true and plain statement of facts which have been developed in my own experience? Oh, how I yearn to draw you all into the one safe fold of our only Shepherd, Christ Jesus, where like me you will be fed at last with the true bread of life, and cleansed, regenerated, and sanctified by the precious saving blood of our only Lord.

How can you, with all the enlightening influences of this free land surrounding you, suffer yourself to be so cruelly blinded to the true interests of your soul? A very little faithful examination will prove to your satisfaction the hollowness of the services you attend, the insincerity and indifference of the majority of the persons styling themselves priests who minister before you at the blazing altar. Your own good sense

should impress you with the truth that no mere man, much less a selfish, ambitious, sensual man, as most priests are, can stand between you and your God. The utmost a minister can do for you is to *help* you on the way toward Heaven, by prayer, counsel, and example; and this is all good ministers do. There is but one mediator, God the Son; the Holy Word on which Roman Catholicism professes to be founded, can prove no other, notwithstanding its prayers and invocation to the Virgin and the great company of saints. Don't allow that book to be "sealed" from your eyes any longer. You have a right to consult that which concerns your soul's salvation, and your individual responsibility compels you to examine and judge for yourself: "Search the scriptures, they are they which testify of me," is a direct injunction of our Heavenly Father.

The cunning Roman clergy, knowing too well the results of a careful reading of God's word, endeavor to keep it beyond your reach; they would not have you enlightened by its pure teachings; they would not lose their blinded, superstitious followers!

And now dear readers, sad and sorrowful as has been my experience, yet I would not have it otherwise. I now bless the hand that hath chastened me so severely, for only through the fiery furnace of tribulation could I have tasted the ineffable sweetness of the children of God. Through no other means could I have been strengthened, and purified to labor in the Lord's vineyard. Dear readers, I will now lay down my pen, to resume it again when Providence directs. Truly the "Lord

hath drawn me up out of the terrible pit and placed my feet upon a rock, and put a new song upon my lips.”

The midnight woe that I 've been through was but the cross to save,

My Saviour too, was crucified,
And dying, he forgave.

Dear readers, ere I say farewell, I would ask your prayers to accompany me in my sojournings until the will of God be accomplished in me.



APPENDIX BY THE PUBLISHERS.

NOTE.—The remarkable work from which the following pages are reprinted, is entitled, “The History of Auricular Confession;” it was written in French by a nobleman of France, Count C. P. de Lasteyrie; it was translated into English by an officer of the University of France, Professor Charles Cocks; and it was published in London, in 1848, by a bookseller of the highest respectability, Richard Bentley, publisher in ordinary to Her Majesty. The work is full of terrible facts in respect to Roman Catholic priests, monks, and nuns. The 2d book treats of “confession in its relation to morality;” and the part here reprinted, comprises the 4th and 5th chapters of this book, which are derived from authentic and official records. Other chapters detail flagrant immoralities practiced in Spain, France, &c.; but these two chapters are sufficient to show the developed fruit of the papal system. They are reprinted word for word from the London edition, with the omission of the Italian notes there given, and the insertion, in brackets, of one or two translations of Latin and French expressions.

DEBAUCHERY AND IRREGULARITIES INTRODUCED BY MEANS
OF CONFESSION INTO THE NUNNERIES OF TUSCANY.

It is easy for monks and depraved priests to seduce, by the means of confession, especially among the lower orders, females who live in the world; the thing becomes still more so relatively to the nuns or *pensionnaires* confined in convents. Depravity introduced into those houses spreads like an epidemic, with symptoms and consequences more or less fatal, according to the nature and inclinations of individuals.

This species of wickedness, as I have had opportunities of convincing myself from information derived from different journies in Italy and Spain, is less uncommon than is supposed, especially in countries where the priests, and principally the monks, have much influence, and enjoy the consideration of the people. Most of the seductions that take place in what is called the tribunal of penitence, remain unknown to the public, even when denunciations, avowals, or still more positive results, exhibit proofs, either to families, or to the superior ecclesiastics, whether regular or secular. For, on the one hand, the honour of the persons compromised and that of their parents; and, on the other, the interests of the Church, and even an ill-understood reserve, which civil authority thinks proper to use on these occasions, as well as the impunity usually attached to so great a crime, are so many causes that prevent it from coming to the knowledge of the public; which, of course, renders it still more common.

We could cite, in support of what has just been said, and in confirmation of what will follow, several facts which occurred in the convents of Paris before the revolution of 1789, and particularly in the abbey of Pentemont, where, having been introduced by college companions, engaged in the ecclesiastical profession, we were able to judge, *ex auditu et visu* [from hearing and seeing], of the irregularities which prevailed in that convent. We shall, therefore, remain satisfied, without entering into any other details, with making known the excessive depravity that had long prevailed in the convents of Tuscany, the existence of which has been officially stated by the investigation made on this subject by order of the Grand Duke Leopold, and by the care of the pious and learned Ricci, bishop of Pistoia. We derive what follows from the facts, acts, correspondence, and orders of Leopold, concerning this affair, and which, remaining in the possession of the family of Ricci, have been communicated by them to M. de Potter, who has reproduced them in a work entitled "*Vie de Scipion de Ricci, évêque de Pistoie et Prato* [Life of Scipio de Ricci, bishop of Pistoie and Prato], (Bruxelles [Brussels], 1825, 3 vol. 8vo.) The monachal libertinism, introduced into convents of Tuscany by means of confession, dated from a period very anterior to the reign of Leopold. For more than a century and a half, the dissoluteness of the order of the Dominicans had excited reproach and public dissatisfaction. The spiritual direction practiced by the monks towards the nuns, was a source of scandal which was maintained and fomented by interest, dissipation, and vicious habits. We find, in 1642, a

petition addressed to the grand duke of that period, and signed by the holy standard bearer (*gonfalonier*), and other persons of Pistoia, to the number of one hundred and ninety-four. Therein, they begged that a speedy remedy might be provided for the indecent conduct of the monks in the convents of Saint Catharine and Saint Lucia. Even this affair was hushed up, in order not to compromise the first families of the nobility, to which these nuns belonged.

This kind of debauchery, which had become excessive during the reign of Leopold, was known by means of the inquiries instituted by that prince, in consequence of the denunciations of two nuns of the convent of Saint Catherine of Pistoia, who entreated him to save them from the execrable principles professed by those monks, their directors.

Thus they learnt that the monks used to eat and drink with the nuns whom they preferred, and that they passed the time with them in their private cells. The greater part of the girls used to deprive themselves of all their money and goods, and would even go without the necessaries of life to enrich their lovers. "I do not state anything," says Ricci, "of which I have not proofs." He also remarks that the monks were in the habit of passing the night in the dormitory of the nuns, and that this custom had long been observed by the priors and confessors of the nuns.

The inquiry instituted by Leopold must necessarily, as Ricci tells us, have made the scandal public, by forcing several persons to reveal the most infamous iniquities authorized by the confessors and superiors of the Dominicans. Leopold caused

all the nuns to be interrogated by the lieutenant of police, and forbade the monks, upon pain of imprisonment, to approach the monasteries, on account of the depraved conduct of all those who performed the duties of priors and confessors. It was discovered that this corruption had been propagated by the monks in the convents of Florence, Prato, Pisa, Siena, Perugia, Faenza, &c., &c.

We find, in Leopold's correspondence, a letter that had been addressed to him by a nun of Castiglione Fiorentino, which proves that the Dominicans were not the only corrupters of women. "Our convent," says she, "is under the dependence and direction of the Franciscan friars (*récollets*), or minor observantins, and, consequently, in the greatest laxity and in extreme immorality. . . . I cannot complain to the provincial; for the monks will never listen to anything in complaints of this kind. . . . The nuns are obliged to allow such enormous sins to be committed, if they do not wish to be shut up for life, under any pretence. . . . The commissioner is invited to the convent, and goes with the young nuns into their chambers, with one of them at a time, or with two at most, if they are such as may be trusted, and then he locks himself in. . . . The monks who are intimate with the nuns make them bolder than lackeys. . . . A few years ago, one was found in the convent during the night, and the constables came to turn him out!" This nun terminates her letter by entreating him not to divulge her name, for, she observes, if what she had just written to the prince were known, it would be enough to cause her to be poisoned by her companions, so low were they sunk in vice.

It may be supposed that amid depravity so generally spread throughout Italy, the Jesuits were not the only monks whose virtue had remained intact, and who had not known how to make use of confession for a vile purpose. Accordingly, an ecclesiastic of Rome wrote to the bishop of Pistoia; "I have been told that it had been known, through private letters, that the first seducer in the convent of Saint Catherine of Pistoia, had been a Jesuit. I know of a monastery where a Jesuit used to practice improper familiarities with the nuns; he used to say that by obeying him they did a very virtuous action, since they showed much repugnance." It appears, moreover, that this was a practice to which the monks had accustomed the nuns; for the Bishop of Pistoia, having presented himself before some nuns obstinate in vice, in order to restore them by gentle means to sentiments of virtue, and having told them that he had brought them the *little Jesus*, one of them replied in the most indecent manner.

Six nuns of the convent of Saint Catherine of Pistoia denounced the infamous practices of which their confessors and superiors were guilty. In this petition which was presented to Leopold, we find the following facts: "The monks often come to meet us at the side of the sacristy, of which they have almost all the keys; and there is there an iron-grating sufficiently large, where they conduct themselves in the most shameless manner."

"If, besides, they find any opportunity of entering the convent, under any kind of pretence, they come and remain alone in the chambers of such as are devoted to them. All of them,

even the provincials, are, more or less, of the same stamp. They are not ashamed to take advantage of the circumstances in which they visit the convent, to do the things of which we have just spoken. They give utterance to brutal maxims, which suppose an absence of every moral feeling. They are incessantly repeating that we are to happy in being able to satisfy all our inclinations. They say that after having left the world everything is ended with us. They add, that even the writings of Saint Paul ought to serve to enlighten us.

“All sorts of indecencies are suffered to be committed in the parlor. Though we often warn them, yet they never prevent any of the dangerous connections which are formed in the convent, and never make it their duty to interrupt them. Accordingly, it has very frequently happened, in consequence of this, that men who had managed, by address, to get the keys of the house, have entered at night. Such as allow themselves to be led by their counsels are cherished and protected on every occasion, and are gratified even in their most extravagant caprices; the others must resolve to outrage their consciences by following the same course, or to undergo an endless persecution. This is precisely what is now taking place among us.”

The inveterate corruption that had long existed among the monks whose duty it was to confess nuns was again stated in a report made to Leopold, in obedience to his orders, by the wardens of the Convent of Saint Catherine of Siena, in the city of Pistoia. After having mentioned in this report several things which prove the immorality of the monks—as, for instance,

that they repaired to the cells of the nuns, or remained alone with them—it is added: “If they administer the consolations of religion to any dying person, they eat and sleep in the monastery, and they dine with whomsoever they please, even with the vestry-nuns. Not only are the fathers, priors, and the present confessors, accused of this negligence and these irregularities, but it is avowed that the bad conduct of which the latter have been guilty, had, for a long time, become a habit with all the friars who were successively destined to perform these duties.”

The depravity of morals, and the licentiousness introduced into the convents, are further established by the letters which the prioress of the convent of Saint Catherine, at Pistoia, named Perocchini, wrote to Doctor Camporini, the rector of the episcopal seminary of that town. “To answer the questions you ask me I should require much time, and an excellent memory to remember the many things that have happened during the twenty-five years that I have spent among monks, and all those also which I have heard related about them. I shall not speak of friars who are no more. As to the others whose conduct is blameable, there are more than you imagine; among others (here she names nine of them). But why name any more? Excepting three or four friars among so many monks, whether living or dead, whom I have known, there is not one who was not of the same stamp. They all profess the same maxims, and their conduct is the same. Their intercourse with the nuns is of the utmost familiarity. When the monks come to visit a sick person, it is their custom to sup

with nuns, to sing, dance, and play with them, and they sleep in the convent. Their maxim is that God has forbidden hatred and not love. I affirm that they have the art of corrupting not only the young and innocent, but even the most circumspect and knowing; and, without a miracle, no one can frequent their company without at length yielding to this species of diabolical temptation.

“The priests are the husbands of the nuns, and the lay-brothers of the lay-sisters. . . . How many bishops are there not in the Pontifical States who have also discovered immorality in the convents of their dioceses? However, they have never rooted out the evil with which, nevertheless, they are so well acquainted. They lacked the means of being able to inspire some confidence in the nuns, whom the monks make believe that they who reveal what passes in the interior of the order are excommunicated. God is my witness that I do not speak from ill-will. The monks have never done anything to me personally of which I can complain; but I cannot help saying, that no order of men is more perverse, and that it would be in vain to seek for any persons more worthless than they. Though secular priests are ever so wicked, they can never attain, in any respect, the wickedness of the friars; the artifices which the monks know how to employ to impose on the world are beyond all description.”

Another nun makes the following declaration. She says with regard to the solicitations made to her by her confessor: “I testified to him the fear and scruples which they excited within me.” He replied: “Must I tell you plainly? You

are a precious simpleton. Follow my advice. Only try, and you will soon thank me for my lessons ; be sure your scruples will cease." Whenever this same monk paid his visits to the convent he renewed his attempts to gain his object.

"When the Dominicans came among us to assist the sick they remained whole days together, and entered alone, under any pretence, into the chambers of certain nuns. They came every day to the grate, and never spoke to us but in disgusting language, revealing to us the confessions they had heard," &c., &c.

"There exists another cursed abuse, which is, that the nuns choose a husband among the monks when they have scarcely made their vows."

What appears most revolting in this affair of the convents, is the conduct and principles of two wicked nuns, who, infected with the abominable maxims of the Dominicans, had abandoned themselves more excessively than their female companions to the most revolting licentiousness—nay, to the vilest profanation of what Catholics consider as most sacred.

The facts we relate are scandalous, no doubt ; but the opprobrium recoils upon those who give occasion to such revelations by their acts, their culpable tolerance, fatal institutions, and practices likely to foment the passions and to corrupt innocence. It is by concealing iniquities of this kind from the knowledge of the public, and by securing impunity for them, under pretence of protecting religion, that they provoke instead of checking them. The example of chastisement being the most powerful bar that can be opposed to crime, it is allowing

it to have its full swing when we do not inflict upon it publicly the punishment it deserves ; a chastisement the more necessary as it is very difficult to get at the knowledge of the offence.

The interrogatory of the nuns and other persons who inhabited the convent of Saint Catherine of Prato, took place according to the orders of Leopold, and was composed of a commission appointed by Bishop Ricci. It was written entirely by the hand of Abbot Lorenzo Palli, the episcopal vicar of Prato, and was signed by all the female inhabitants of the convent, to the number of fifteen choral nuns, thirteen lay-sisters, and five boarders. We will not mention the irreligion, immorality, impiety, or heresy, of which the monks are accused in this interrogatory—cases which very *seldom* occur in the tribunal of confession.

It results from the general depositions of almost all the nuns, that Sister Buonamici and Sister Spighi, the former aged fifty and the latter thirty-eight, had endeavored to corrupt the nuns by indecent and obscene actions. More than half the nuns depose that Sister Buonamici had behaved scandalously with her own brother, an Augustin friar and priest. . . . and that Sister Spighi had an intrigue with a certain Joam Botello, a Portuguese Jesuit.

Seven or eight years before, they had corrupted and enticed into their party three other nuns, one of whom was still a novice. They used to say to such as they wanted to deprave, that they had learned in mystic theology the doctrine which they taught them. It was, indeed, the books of ascetic meditation that had induced or authorized the irregularities of these

wretched nuns; they made use of these books to lead their companions astray, and gave them a sensual interpretation. (For the sake of decency, and in order not to shock the reader, we beg to omit the rest of this interrogatory.)

It is difficult to people who are unacquainted with the spirit of those corporations, to imagine to what an excess the wickedness of the monks may be carried, or to conceive how such irregularities could have existed so long in Tuscany. Even when they were brought to light by a virtuous prelate, the impudence of the monks was far from being disconcerted. They were seen to brave the authority of the bishop and that of the prince, to dissemble their crimes, and persevere in their abominable practices; and without Leopold's firmness in unveiling and prosecuting this mystery of iniquity, nothing could have put an end to it. The obstinate resistance made by these wretched nuns to the introduction of a more regular course of life, was owing to the perfidious counsels they received from the monks, who had accustomed them to a blind confidence and a boundless submission to their will.

"They used to say," says the Bishop of Pistoia, "that, if they acted otherwise, they would have incurred the excommunication fulminated by the holy father Pius V.; and several of them were so strongly possessed with this fear, that one of them, being dangerously ill, never asked for the sacrament to be administered to her."

We find among the papers of Ricci a letter of a nun who expresses herself thus: "Who could ever imagine how far the spirit of address and intrigue of the monks can extend, or

how many artifices, of all kinds, they have at their disposal, to resist every event; they are really astonishing. What! Pretend to struggle against the Sovereign himself! Every time I think of the trick of the provincial, to make us take the communion, in order to oblige us afterwards to sign a certificate stating that we practice the sacraments, and that everything here is orderly, I cannot recover from my astonishment. Have not the monks made use of the medium of confession to discover what we had revealed about them in our depositions?"

Not satisfied with demoralizing these poor nuns, the monks managed to be fed and kept by them, by getting from them all the money they had at their disposal; this is what we find from a denunciation made by two nuns of the convent of Saint Catherine of Pistoia to the Grand Duke Leopold, who express themselves in these terms: "Most of the nuns deprived themselves of all their money and effects, and went without the very necessaries of life, to enrich their lovers."

But what is not less revolting, is, that the Court of Rome, though informed of the scandalous immorality that existed in the convents of Tuscany, and long solicited to apply a remedy, refused to take, for this purpose, the means it had in its power, but maintained and protected the monks against all the denunciations brought against them. As late as 1774, Bishop Alamani had written in these terms to the conclave of the cardinals: "Almost all the nuns depose to the immorality and libertinism of their directors, to the material doctrine and brutal sentiments with which they endeavor to inspire them." The memorial or attestation of the nuns who complained of

the infamous conduct of the monks had been handed to the cardinals by order of the bishop.

Ricci says, in his *Memoirs*, "that the Dominican nuns had several times, but always in vain, had recourse to the holy see and the superiors of their own order; but that they had never received a single word of consolation, or even an answer." He himself addressed a letter to Pope Pius V., in which he informs him of the irregularities that were taking place in the convents under the direction of the Dominicans. He expresses himself as follows in another letter to Cardinal Corsini: "When writing to the Pope, it is not meet that I should enter into all these infamous details which, if I communicated them to you, would fill you with horror. Yet, of what excesses have not those wicked Dominicans been guilty? The provincials and priors, instead of remedying so many irregularities, of which the confessors alone were the cause, have allowed these guilty confessors to have their own way, and they have plunged themselves into the same iniquities."

The monks had so corrupted the minds and opinions of those nuns, and had so much influence over them, that the latter opposed for a long time an obstinate resistance to the measures taken by Ricci and the Grand Duke to put an end to this vileness; a resistance moreover encouraged by the court of Rome. "The monks, the nuncios," says Ricci, "and even the cardinal protector of the order, never ceased assuring them, either by letter, or through the medium of secret emissaries, that, if they remained firm, the tempest, with which they were threatened, would soon be dispelled."

One of the means which had been employed, to deprave by degrees these unfortunate nuns, was the reading and interpreting of those books of mysticism which they are accustomed to have read to young females in convents, to work their minds into a state of feverish excitement and fanaticism. We find in a letter of Mengoni, an abbot, that two nuns misused the works of the blessed Jean-de-la-Croix and other books on mystic theology, to entice into sin their fellow-nuns, novices, boarders."

These seducers passed from lectures to conversations, by which they gradually led the nuns astray, either during confession, or in the visits they paid them, even to the most immoral ideas, and thence to practices the most criminal. In short, we see, from several other declarations, that the habitual expressions and actions of those monks tended to corrupt the persons confined in the monasteries under their direction. We must not forget a means of corruption employed by the monks, that of the devotion paid to the *sacred heart of Jesus*, repeated every day to fanaticize the ignorant and credulous. It is right to make the public aware of what kind of superstition and immorality may be brought about by these absurd practices, at a time when the Jesuit-sacerdotal party is endeavoring to revive, for the purpose of enslaving the minds of the people, whatever the ignorance and superstition of the middle ages invented most contrary to the true sentiments and genuine principles of religion.

The abbot Longini wrote to the Bishop of Pistoia, on sending him two engravings representing the Saviour with his

breast open and his heart in his hand, and said to him: "Here are the last spoils of the numerous errors of the nun Buonanici. The engravings, here enclosed, were given her by a Jesuit. She was so fond of them, and kept them so carefully, that she wore them about her. I will not tell your lordship what abominable idea she had attached to these pictures, &c."

The facts related in this chapter must demonstrate that the monkish system, together with that of confession, and a Jesuitical clergy, supported by the anti-national policy of the government, and by that of a clergy devoted to the court of Rome, are as pernicious to the purity of morals as the tranquillity of families. We have seen, indeed, to what an extent depravity had spread, not only among the nuns, but also among the boarders who belonged to the first families of Tuscany. This is the fate which awaits those young persons whose improvident parents, blinded by prejudices or enticed by fashion, entrust the future lives of their children to these houses, which have been instituted and are directed according to principles of bigotry, superstition, and—what is worse—of Jesuitism. People may think that it is impossible for such serious irregularities to be introduced at the present day into female convents by means of confession. It is true, the influence of the secular and regular clergy, and that of the court of Rome, have not yet attained the necessary degree of power for such crimes to be committed with impunity, should they happen to be discovered. Besides, the freedom of the press would expose them, and stop their course. But it is not less certain that effects will result from this double system not less fatal to in-

dividuals than to the whole body of society. For, how can public vengeance reach crimes which, for the reasons we have pointed out, seldom or never come to their knowledge?

Moreover, the facts which have very lately transpired in France, as well as what has lately happened in Tuscany, prove that the evil, as we have just said, will not cease to exist, although the clergy have lost their ancient privileges, notwithstanding the abolition of special and secret jurisdictions, and a greater freedom of the press; and that, as long as that cause is not destroyed, its effects must necessarily be ever reproduced. If there be a country where people ought to be safe from such outrages it is France, and even Tuscany, where they have been divulged and branded with infamy in so solemn a manner. Yet, here is a fact, related by several newspapers in September, 1844:—

Crescioghi, an officiating priest in a parish of the Apennines, had been accused of outrages upon three young girls. He appeared before the tribunal of justice with the victims of his crime. Several witnesses inculpated the defendant in the most serious manner. After having denied his crime with the greatest *sang-froid*, he at length avowed the principal fact, still denying, however, the aggravating circumstances. In accordance with the charge delivered by the public minister, the tribunal condemned Crescioghi to five years' seclusion in the Convent of Avergna, the ecclesiastical prison of Tuscany, and, moreover, to a banishment of twenty years.

DEPRAVITY OF THE MONKS, THE CORRUPTERS OF MORALS
IN OTHER PARTS OF ITALY, BY MEANS OF CONFESSION.

We have related many scandalous facts in the course of this work; others will be found in this chapter which are not less so. It is painful to expose to public view such hideous and revolting descriptions; but great evils require strong remedies, especially at a moment when an attempt is making to cause institutions and practices so pernicious as monastic and sacerdotal confession to prevail in France. People must at length be made to know the consequences of such a system; public opinion must be sufficiently struck with the greatness of the evil to oppose a barrier to this torrent which threatens to invade everything. We must at length warn the public against this confusion of precepts and pretended religious duties, and against institutions founded to maintain the power of a foreign domination.

We have derived the facts we are going to quote from the *procès-verbaux* of the Inquisition of a town in Italy, which were carried off at the time when the French, being masters of Italy, destroyed that tribunal. They have been communicated to us on condition of mentioning neither the name of the place nor that of the person from whom we have received them. We may judge from these facts, which happened in a small district, and in a rather short space of time, what are the immoral results of confession throughout Italy, and the excessive depravity of the monks. For, save a certain number

of exceptions, we find among the corporations of that country the same principles and the same morals. We have reason to believe so, from the special informations we have derived at different periods, during a rather long residence in that classic land of monachism.

The registers of the Inquisition which have been communicated to us were very incomplete, and contained only the transactions of a few years. We have extracted from them what more particularly concerns temptation inherent in confession. What a mass of turpitude and infamy would be unveiled to the public, if it were possible to make them acquainted with the facts recorded in the registers of the different countries where the Inquisition has been engaged in these inquiries! Add, moreover, a still more considerable number of facts, which take place between the guilty parties, without anybody ever being informed of them.

Here then is an extract of what has appeared to us the most remarkable, omitting entirely what concerns heresy, blasphemy, witchcraft, covenants, and commerce with the devil, philtres to provoke love, freemasonry, treasure-finding, and other miserable practices, which betoken the ignorance, superstition, and stupidity of the monks and people.

A woman, thirty-seven years of age, named Bartolommea, the wife of a man named Bracolino, declared to the Inquisition that father Santozi, of the order of the Servites, had a very bad reputation, and lived very disorderly with a married woman.

She relates, moreover, that this monk, with others of his convent, habitually made use of licentious expressions to women.

A nun, named Ancilla Rei, of the order of Saint Francis, declared that she had been tempted, at the tribunal of confession, by the director of her convent, named Fortunato. He began with telling this nun that he loved her tenderly, and he used to call her his little dove, *nina Colomba*.

A nun, thirty years of age, named Illuminata Guidi, a claustral sister in a convent of Saint Francis, said she had denounced, a few years before, to the tribunal of the Inquisition, a priest who had tempted her in the confessional for three years.

We see, from the declarations made by this girl, "for the acquittal of her conscience," as she terms it, to what a state seclusion and perpetual celibacy will reduce certain girls. This unfortunate creature avows that the passion that pervaded her being was so powerful within her, that, from the age of eighteen to twenty-nine, she had prayed on her knees all that time, recommending herself to the most holy Madonna, and saying *Ave Marias*, and *Pater Nosters*, to obtain her intercession for a purpose which may be understood without a more particular allusion to it.

Seeing that the prayers to the Virgin did not succeed, she applied to the devil, saying: *Diavolo, fammi venire qualche persona per peccare*. The devil harkened to her prayers. But we will not detain the reader by relating all the things of which this unfortunate girl accuses herself before the Inquisition, and which are merely a mixture of the grossest supersti-

tion and the reveries of an imagination led astray by the knavery of the persons about her, and who conducted themselves towards her in a manner that I could not relate without offending propriety.

Margaret Monti, twenty-two years of age, declares that the priest Turrini had tempted her in the confessional. This priest having been questioned, on the 22d of June, 1791, answered that he had been a confessor in the convent of Saint Sebastian for three years, and that he had made overtures in the confessional, by word and deed, to Sister Gertrude Fantini; that he had often kissed her through the grating of the confessional, and that he had commanded her to commit shameful actions. He accused himself also of having used licentious language to a woman named Ottavio Paolucci, every time she came to confess to him, which happened every week or fortnight; that he solicited her to love him by calling her endearing names, and by kissing her through the grating of the confessional; and all this took place before, during, and after confession; and, finally, that he had written her an immoral letter. He had also behaved in the same way to another woman named Margaret Monti.

A maid, aged thirty-three, named Giulia Mattioli, declares that her confessor, Felice, a monk, aged forty-five, had asked her several most indecent questions. (Here follow, in the original, more than twenty depositions of such a nature, that we would not dare to publish them in any language.)

We suppress several far more abominable facts of the same kind, which we have found in the *procès-verbaux* of the Inqui

sition ; being unwilling to detain the reader any longer in this monkish mire which we have been compelled to make him pass through, in order to give him something approaching an idea of the degree of corruption which exists but too often in both male and female convents.

In so doing, our chief purpose has been to make known the evils which may result from auricular confession, and the evils to which young persons of both sexes are exposed whose education is entrusted to monastic corporations. These examples, as well as those which I relate throughout this volume, and the induction which must be formed from them, as a proof of the existence of a great many other facts which pass in the shade of impenetrable secrecy, ought to induce parents to reflect seriously concerning the dangers to which they expose their children, in abandoning the direction of their consciences and education to associations which, on their re-establishment in France, have been impregnated, without exception, with the fatal principles of Jesuitism.

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