

The Thrilling Mysteries of a Convent Revealed!
Mr. Peterson, 1835.

This work is a most fascinating account that keeps you spellbound. The occult ritual of installing the Jesuit General for the United States, including drinking fresh blood from a human skull, the burning of the Bible and the trampling of the American flag under foot, is enough to make any Bible believing Calvinist's blood boil! Fear? Rather rage over these acts of blasphemy and high treason as we reach for our Swords of Just Defense! The account is found in Chapter IX.

THE

THRILLING

MYSTERIES

OF A

CONVENT REVEALED!

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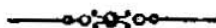
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LITERARY NOTICE.

“This book will be eagerly sought for and appreciated by all those sincerely and conscientiously opposed to the worst of tyrannies—*the tyranny of religion*. It is unquestionably one of the best works that has been issued during the nineteenth century. Mr. Peterson has been at considerable expense in getting up this interesting book; and we feel assured that it will have a rapid sale, as there are few persons of the present day, but who wish to be made fully acquainted with this important subject. The author grapples his subject with a keen, determined intellect, and all the bigotry, fanaticism, practises, and doings in a Convent, are here exposed to the light of the noon-day sun. It is a work of especial interest at the present time. The author is one of the most celebrated Methodist preachers now living, and what he exposes and narrates he does from the heart. All should read and study it. It is a rich, highly interesting work, and the *low price* at which it is published, will, as it should, bring it within the reach of the tens of thousands in every section of our country that should read it.”—*True Sun*.

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THE MYSTERIES OF A CONVENT.



CHAPTER I.

Antique mansion—Family portraits—Count of St. Aubyn—Father and daughter.

Towards the close of the last century, there stood, within a few miles of Paris, an ancient, moss-grown chateau, embosomed in oaks, whose gnarled limbs, covered with mistletoe, gave evidence of their antiquity, and showed that they had battled against many a fierce onset of the elements.

This venerable pile, with the ample and handsome demesne in whose midst it stood, was the family seat of the Counts of St. Aubyn, through whose long line of succession it had descended from sire to son, in spite of political convulsions which had shaken the State to its very foundations. Every thing about the building wore the impress of time. The furniture, throughout its almost numberless rooms, was of the most antique fashion, and had been preserved with great care, indeed with a sort of superstitious reverence. Over the spacious fire-place in the great dining hall, which had so often rung with the voice of revelry, was suspended the once brilliantly illuminated, but now discoloured, pedigree of the family; while upon the oaken panelled walls were hung suits of mail, and implements of war and of the chase, many of which were of the most primitive and curious construction. In various parts of the building were to be found portraits of those members of the family who had been remarkable for achievements on the battle field, or in the tournament; for learning, for statesmanship, or for personal beauty: the mailed warrior, the tilting knight, the grave councillor of state, the robed priest, and the lovely belle of her day. In the chapel, the floors and walls were covered with marble tablets and monuments, whose bass-reliefs and inscriptions declared the honours of the race in bygone days; while in the library was carefully preserved an ancient volume of vellum, heavily bound, and clasped with brass, upon whose broad pages the chaplains of the family had been wont to record the history of the successive counts. An old oaken chest, which stood in one corner of this room, was filled with musty rolls and moth-eaten parchments, that told many a curious tale, and contained the evidence of many a dark transaction.

Charles, the Count of St. Aubyn, at the period when our story opens, had distinguished himself in the wars of France, and had fought many a well-contested battle; but having, in the last of these, received a dangerous wound which wholly incapacitated him for the further service of his country, in the army, he had retired to his patrimonial residence, where he spent much of his time in superintending the education of his only daughter, Louise,

a beautiful girl, now in her eighteenth year; his remaining leisure being devoted to the management of his estate, and to court intrigue.

Naturally of a cold, haughty, and tyrannical disposition, which his long career as a military leader had by no means abated, but, on the contrary, had greatly aggravated; excessively vain of his ancestry; impatient of all contradiction, and ambitious of power and preferment; Count St. Aubyn was but ill prepared for the accomplishment of a task which had been early devolved upon him by the death of the countess, soon after giving birth to Louise; and this task was rendered the more difficult by her inheritance of her father's traits of character; and by the fact that, while absent from home in the service of his country, he had confided his daughter to the care of a maiden aunt, who was too indolent to take any interest in what so nearly concerned her neice, and to the chaplain of the family—a Roman Catholic priest—who thought that any knowledge beyond that of the breviary was wholly useless for a young and beautiful girl, sole heiress to a noble name and princely estate. Possessing, however, an inquiring mind and great natural talents, Louise spent much of her time, from the age of twelve years, in her father's library; reading such books as suited her fancy, and especially delighting in the perusal of the volume of vellum which contained the history of her ancestors. Finding, too, the key which unlocked the old oaken chest, she eagerly pored over the contents of its time-rusted parchments. At other times, she would ramble over the gloomy pile, passing from room to room, spending hours in looking at the family pictures which smiled or frowned upon her from the walls, and in examining the curiously wrought-tapestry with which some of the rooms were draped; or, going forth into the forest near the chateau, she would stroll from place to place, as her fancy dictated, or sit by the side of the rippling stream, lost in bright musings, engendered by the works of fiction she had read. Companionship she had none, save when, after supper, she entered the servant's hall, where she would sit until midnight, listening to the legends which were recited to her by the old retainers of the family, who had spent more than half a century in the household, and by those who had accompanied her father to the wars. Then, retiring to her room, with her imagination wrought up to the highest pitch, she would lie awake for hours. Thus raised until she had passed her seventeenth year, it is not wonderful that when Count St. Aubyn, himself, undertook to superintend the education of his daughter, he should find her mind in chaotic confusion, and her disposition wilful and impatient of all restraint.

Fortunately for both of them, the protracted illness consequent upon the severe wound that he had received in his last battle, and during which Louise had nursed her father with the greatest affection and tenderness, scarcely ever leaving his bedside, had served greatly to attach them to each other, preparatory to those collisions of temper which were sure to be the result of the association, as teacher and pupil, of two persons so unhappily constituted as Louise and the Count. In spite of this, however, scenes frequently occurred in the Library, during the three years which were spent by them, in this relation, which would beggar description; the father in a storm of wrath; and the daughter

alternately weeping passionately, and then turning upon her parent, with all the fury of an ungovernable spirit. Indomitable in his purpose, however, the Count had at length succeeded, to some extent at least, in bringing Louise into subjection to his iron will, when events occurred which changed the whole tenor of her life, and marvellously shaped her future destiny. A recital of these we shall defer to the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Events foreshadowed—A daughter's anxiety—A scene of terror—The victim's doom—The daughter's horror.

CAUSES had been in operation, for years, tending to revolution and bloodshed in France :—causes which it is the province, not of the writer, but of the historian, to trace and to record. The tremblings and ominous mutterings of the glaciers had long been felt and heard :—good men, and there were a few, had stood aghast, as the earth reeled beneath their feet, in fearful expectation of sudden and dire catastrophe ; bad men, and their name was legion, had, with malicious exultation, looked forward to mighty upheavings of popular excitement, which should benefit them by the change they should effect, be that change what it might, and ruin whom it would. At length, the mountain masses are loosened ; the avalanche descends, crashing, crushing, destroying, in its downward rush, life, honour, fortune,—all that it had cost the labourers of centuries to rear :—at one fell blow, civil government, the rights of man, religion, are overwhelmed in one undistinguishable mass of utter ruin ; while anarchy, cruelty, and impiety, sit enthroned in gloomy grandeur and the wide-spread desolation, wearing a triple crown, baptized in the blood of more than a million of victims ;—fit emblem of that worn by "*Babylon the great, the Mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth ;*" which would exalt thus to sit gloating upon the ruins, not of one province or state only but of all the world ; while the wailings, not of infidel France alone, but of *Protestantism* every where, should come welling up as sweetest melody in her ears.

Count St. Aubyn,—Count no longer, for titles of honour had been abolished,—was not one of those who could be inert or inactive at such a crisis as this ; and soon rendered himself obnoxious to the fury of the "*Infernal Triumvirate.*" He had, of late, been frequently absent from home, during the day, but had always returned, at night, for the protection of his daughter. At length, however, he came not, as usual ; and Louise felt greatly alarmed, for she was apprised of passing events, as they occurred from day to day. She went to the great hall door, and, looking out upon the darkness, waited long and anxiously for her father's return but he came not. She sent messengers to the city, that she might, if possible, learn what had befallen him. The old clock, which stood in the hall, and whose tickings seemed to vibrate through her every nerve, at last told the hour of midnight. Still he came not, nor had her messengers returned. She knew not what to do, nor where to send ; she feared the worst, yet hoped hourly for her father's arrival. Wearied and exhausted by

anxiety, as well as chilled by the damp night air, she went to her room, and tried to compose herself, but in vain; the old clock continued to sound forth, from its iron throat, hour after hour, and still her father,—whom she loved, in spite of their outbursts of temper in the past,—her father came not. Hastily summoning her maid, she bade her descend to the servants' hall, and order the coachman to get ready the carriage; and, just as the day broke, she threw herself into it, and, saying, "To the city," leaned heavily upon the cushions, in a perfect fever of excitement.

It was already seven o'clock when she reached the gates of Paris; and here fresh difficulties arose in her path. She was refused admittance; but, opportunely for her, a friend of her father, who had some influence with the guard, arrived just at the moment, and succeeded in bribing him to let her pass; the stipulation being made, however, that the carriage should remain outside the barrier, and that she should enter the city, alone and on foot, so as to attract no observation.

What a scene met her gaze, on her entrance into the thoroughfares through which she had repeatedly passed before, a light-hearted maiden, richly appareled, seated in the old family coach, by the side of her father, the Count; of whose dignified and commanding appearance she was so justly proud. Now, alone, on foot, and, happily for her own safety, but indifferently clad, with her heart palpitating under the influence of fear and anxiety, she had to make her way through a dense mass of human beings, heaving and rolling like the waves of the ocean, when moved by the storm. Here were men, drunken with excitement and intoxicated with power, for the mob ruled—drunken men uttering the most awful blasphemies, and crying, in tones which called the very soul within her, "*Blood! Blood. More Blood!*" Here were women with dishevelled hair; torn and ragged dresses, besmeared with blood; countenances haggard and pale for want of food; women blaspheming, and crying, in accents of despair—"*Bread! Bread. Down with the Aristocrats—give us bread, or we die.*" There the infuriated crowd was making a bonfire of the elegant but broken furniture which had just been taken from a neighbouring mansion—that mansion in flames; while another party was dragging to the guillotine the late owner of this princely establishment—his only crime, perhaps, his wealth. A few steps further on, and she beheld some unfortunate being hanging, lifeless, from a lamp-post; and advancing but a short distance beyond, she encounters a dead body, lying upon the pavement, with its ghastly, upturned features, ground by the heel of some ruffian, until they could not be distinguished. Blood, blood, blood—every where; in the street; on the pavement; standing in great puddles, running in the gutters, spattered upon the walls in the houses, staining the faces and garments of the populace; blood crying to heaven for vengeance upon the regicides, the homicides. O, it was a horrible spectacle—a sight to have sickened her woman's heart—a sight which she never forgot, and which mysteriously affected her whole after life, as it stood in connexion with the event of that morning, which froze that heart to stone, and for ever dried up that kindly emotion. Drawing her shawl closely about her person, and stopping from time to time to recover herself, as in the swayings to and fro of the maddened crowd, she was now hurried rapidly forward, and now almost hurried to the

ground. She had succeeded in passing through several streets, as yet unharmed, when, on suddenly turning a corner, she stood in full view of the guillotine; around which was gathered a motley multitude of men, women, and children, all vociferating that terrible cry—"Blood! blood!" One glance sufficed to tell her that she had found her father, but under what fearful circumstances. There he stood erect upon the scaffold, casting a look of dignified defiance upon the surging mob, thirsting for his life. A moment more, and he, who had never feared death upon the battle field, calmly lays his head upon the block. Spell-bound, Louise sees the fatal knife descend with lightning speed, but she sees no more: with one wild shriek of agony she falls swooning upon the hard stones; the last link severed which bound her in sympathy to her race.

CHAPTER III.

Returning consciousness—Louise the orphan—A friend in need—Genuine sympathy—Disinterested generosity.

ON recovering from the state of insensibility into which she had been thrown by the dreadful spectacle that she had witnessed, she was surprised to find herself on a low pallet, in a small and ill-furnished apartment, with a female bending over her, whom she did not recollect to have seen before, busily engaged in chafing her temples.

"Where am I?" cried the unhappy girl. "O, where am I, and where is my dear father? I have had such a horrible dream! I thought I saw my father lay his head upon the bloody block—that I saw his gray hairs floating on the breeze, and then—I saw that terrible knife—but tell me, O, tell me," she added, eagerly grasping the arm of the stranger, "have I been dreaming, or is it, indeed, a fearful reality? Speak, I entreat you, for my poor head reels so, that I cannot remember any thing."

The good woman sought to soothe her, and to evade the question; telling her how important it was for her to be quiet; but all her benevolent efforts were in vain. Louise pressed the question, until, finding it was still evaded, she screamed in agony—

"Then, indeed, it was no dream. They have murdered my poor father. Take, O take me to him!" and again fell back exhausted and faint upon the couch.

Her kind hostess again succeeded in restoring her to consciousness; and then, in spite of all entreaties, refused to answer any questions, until she could have tried to sleep.

Louise, fully aware of her loss, and that she was truly an orphan, for her father had been cruelly murdered before her eyes; her mother had died in giving her birth; and she had not a blood relative in all France; wrung her hands in silent agony, and tossed from side to side upon the bed, until at length wearied nature yielded to the soft impulse of sleep: and she lay, for four or five hours, in unconsciousness of the sorrows which had settled down upon her young spirit, like a pall of darkness.

While she thus sleeps, it may be as well to inform the reader, that, when Louise uttered the cry of horror, and swooned in the

street, on seeing her father guillotined, there stood not far from her in the crowd, an old soldier, in the dress of a labourer, who, attracted by her scream, and looking upon her face, discovered in her the daughter of his old general, the Count St. Aubyn, whose blood was, at that moment, streaming from the neighbouring scaffold. Hastily seizing the poor girl, as she lay upon the pavement, her dress stained with the crimson fluid, which stood in puddles all about her, he raised her in his arms, while the rushing crowd seemed ready to trample them both beneath their impatient feet; and, forcing a passage, with his brawny shoulder, through the heaving masses of human beings, who appeared to be demons incarnate keeping their infernal holiday on the green earth, which blushed in blood, he made his way as best he might, until, turning into a by-street which was less thronged than that through which he had passed, he presently reached the outskirts of the city, and arrived at his own humble dwelling. Here depositing his unconscious burthen upon the bed, and bidding his wife take care of the stranger, until his return, he went forth, and, going to a restaurant, bought a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine, with which he hastened home; the shouts of the maddened multitude, from a distance, even now and then falling upon his ear, as victim after victim sank beneath the stroke of the guillotine. Accustomed as he had been to the mingled cries of the battle-field, and to scenes of carnage, there was something indescribably dreadful to him in these fiendish shouts of citizens imbruing their hands in each other's blood, and in the wild excitement of neighbours fighting against their neighbours, in mortal strife and deadly hatred.

On re-entering his dwelling, he found Louise sleeping disturbedly, and, seating himself by the side of his wife, proceeded to relate to her the events of the morning, and to inform her who their guest was.

Presently Louise awoke, and, heaving a deep sigh, cast a hurried glance from one to the other of the strangers who sat near her bedside, as if to inquire where she was, and who they were.

With a kindness and consideration that would have done honour to those who make greater pretensions to refinement than this humble couple, Marie—for this was the good woman's name—approached Louise, and, placing her hand affectionately upon her forehead, from which, as well as from her hair and dress, all stains had been carefully removed while she had been sleeping, pressed her to take some nourishment, and placed before her the bread and wine which the old soldier has brought home. Louise succeeded in taking a little of both, and then, thanking her kind but unknown friends, begged they would satisfy the enquiries of her mind.

Pierre Loubat—her generous preserver—then proceeded to relate what had occurred during the interval of her unconsciousness, and assured her that, as long as she desired it, his house, humble as it was, should be her home; adding that her father, under whom he had served in the army, had saved his life on the battle-field; and that, while he had an arm to raise, it should be outstretched for her protection.

"Thanks, most kind friends," replied Louise, who, while listening to the good Pierre, had covered her face with her hands; the heaving of her bosom, and the tears as they fell upon her

dress, meanwhile evincing her deep emotion; "a poor orphan, for truly such I am, cannot reward you, for your benevolence to her, but may that God who has promised to be a father to the fatherless, pour upon you his choicest blessings."

"Speak not of reward," was the prompt and feeling response of the labourer; "your noble father has laid me under eternal obligations, and it is but a poor return to befriend his child. You have only to command my services, to secure them in any way you may require."

"But tell me," he presently added, "are there none of your relations in the city, to whom you would like to send a message by me?"

Louise shuddered as this question fell upon her ear; and, with a fresh gush of tears, replied, "Alas, I have not a blood relative on earth. My parents are both dead; and I know not another being, besides myself, in whose veins flows the blood of the St. Aubyns."

"But your father must have had many friends in Paris, who would be glad to be of service to you now."

"My father had friends, while in prosperity; but now that he is dead, and by means of the guillotine, who would dare to befriend his child? To apply to them, would be but to throw myself upon the same block, and to meet the same fate."

"The Virgin forbid!" exclaimed Marie, devoutly crossing herself.

"Alas! poor young lady," said Pierre, in tones of heartfelt sympathy, "how sad is your condition! Be assured, at least, that neither Maria nor I will ever desert or betray you."

A fresh burst of grief was the only response that Louise could make.

At length, as though a sudden thought had crossed her mind she asked,

"Do you know M. De Montmain, the banker?"

"I know where he lives," replied he.

"You will greatly oblige me then," said Louise, "if you will go to his house, to-morrow morning; and say to him, that the daughter of the Count St Aubyn would be glad to see him here, for a few minutes, on business."

"I will most cheerfully," quickly returned Pierre, as if it did his noble heart good to have an opportunity of redeeming his promise to the poor orphan.

Here Marie interposed, and, insisting that Louise should be left to seek rest, made arrangements for the night, and, giving up their own bed to her, retired to a little room adjoining that in which she was to sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

Kind-hearted banker—Noble resolve—A generous proposal—Obligation returned—A thankful heart.

ON the following morning, at an early hour, Pierre called at the residence of M. de Moutmain, and having with some difficulty, succeeded in seeing the banker, informed him that a young lady

wished to see him, on business, at No. 58, Rue de Nantes, and that if he would go with him, or say when it would suit his convenience to make the call, he would show him the way.

"But my good friend," replied the banker, "you have not told me her name; and these, you are aware, are not times for a man in my situation to be calling on nameless damsels, simply because they express a desire to see him. Who is this unknown lady?"

"The daughter of General St. Aubyn, who was guillotined yesterday," answered Pierre, bowing respectfully, and brushing away a tear from his eye.

"The daughter of General St. Aubyn, who was guillotined yesterday!" slowly repeated M. de Montmain, looking fixedly upon Pierre. "Impossible!" added he, "How came she there?"

"I carried her there on my shoulder, from near the scaffold on which she had seen her noble father perish," answered Pierre; "and I intend to protect her with my own life, now that she is an orphan, without home, and without friends." As he said this, the good soldier drew himself up to his full height, and looked as though he saw before him some one who had intentions of injury towards his young protégée.

The banker saw the noble bearing of the veteran, and, reading the devotion to her interests which he had unconsciously betrayed, took him warmly by the hand, exclaiming,

"Noble-hearted man, the great God will bless you for this kindness to the orphan. Come, show the way to your house; I will follow you anywhere."

Advancing hastily along the less-frequented streets; for no one, who had anything at stake, loved, in those troublous days, to linger by the way, or to mingle with the crowd; the banker and the old soldier soon reached the dwelling of the latter, and were seated by the bed of Louise, who was too feeble to arise.

M. de Montmain immediately recognised the daughter of the deceased General, whose features she bore very distinctly, and whom, indeed, he had once seen at her father's; and, addressing her in tones full of sympathy and kindness, asked if he could in any way serve the child of his old friend.

"I am an orphan, and destitute"—replied Louise, her utterance almost choked with emotion—"and having no home to which I can safely repair, while I am willing to become a burden to these kind-hearted people, who have saved my life, and perhaps, at least, my honour, I have sent for you, M. de Montmain, to know if my father, at the time of his death, had any money in your hands, and if in any way I can, as his sole survivor, obtain that money, or any portion of it?"

"There are in my hands, belonging to the estate of your late father, 18,000 francs;" replied the banker—"but you are aware, Mademoiselle, that, in times like these, it is impossible to foresee what may happen, as well as to take any legal steps, to secure to you the inheritance; besides, if it were known to the government that this amount were now standing on my books to the credit of General St. Aubyn, it would be seized upon immediately, and confiscated to the purposes of the State. In this dilemma, it is very difficult to determine what is best to be done."

Having said this, the banker sat for some time in deep thought; at length raising his eyes from the floor, upon which they had been intently fixed, he said,

"I will tell you what I will do, Mademoiselle Louise; I am under obligations to your excellent father for advances made me in my business, when I greatly needed them. This money is rightfully yours, independent of all legal proceedings, which are now of course entirely out of the question: but eighteen thousand francs is a large sum of money, and if it were discovered, after I had paid it over to you, that it was in my possession subsequent to the General's death, the Government might confiscate that amount of my funds, and hold me responsible for the entire sum. But you need money, and must have it; I will, therefore, in the course of two hours from this time, pay you the sum of ten thousand francs, and take your receipt for that amount, together with a bond of indemnity against any loss that I may sustain by the act, payable out of the estate; should these troublous times ever pass away, and men's right be once more respected and established. The remainder to be left in my hands, subject to the establishment, at some future time, of your claims, as heiress of your father."

"You have my thanks, M. de Montmain, for this generous offer," said Louise, in tones which at once evinced her surprise at the generosity of the banker, and the relief which it afforded to her mind. "I will most cheerfully sign any writing you may require, and shall consider myself under obligations to one who has manifested so much honesty and true kindness of heart."

The banker hastened home, and, returning in about an hour, placed in Louise's hands the sum of ten thousand francs in gold, taking the necessary papers to secure himself from loss, as far, at least, as possible, under the circumstances; and, assuring her of his readiness at all times to serve her, for the sake of her father, he bade her adieu, and left the house.

Louise at once called the good Pierre to her, and, counting into his hand, in spite of all his remonstrances, five hundred francs, desired him to consider them as his own, and to take the remainder into his safe keeping, for her use. It is unnecessary to add that the trust was never betrayed.

CHAPTER V.

A comfortable retreat—Retribution—The peasant girl's victim—Blood for blood—The chiefs receive their merited doom—The orphan's curse.

EIGHTEEN months rolled away, and still found Louise an inmate of the same family which had first afforded her protection. They lived not in the same house, however; for she had insisted upon their taking one somewhat larger and more comfortable, at her expense, while it was at the same time less exposed to the prying eye of curiosity, and her safety was, therefore, rendered the greater. The good Marie ministered to all her wants, and submitted to all her caprices; while Pierre daily brought her the news from the city.

Meanwhile, the first of that "Infernal Triumvirate" which had condemned her father to death by the guillotine, and had deluged France with the blood of her citizens, had fallen beneath the knife of the peasant girl, who putting aside the weakness of her sex,

and clothing herself with enthusiastic devotion to the interests of her native land, bared her arm in the name of Freedom, and inspired with a heaven-born heroism, tracked the monster Marat to his lair, and there stuck that knife to the heart of him whom she believed to be the foremost in the butchery of her countrymen, and whose death would, she thought, give birth to the liberties of France.

Next fell Danton—a victim to the jealousy and to the wiles of the unprincipled Robespierre—but while he met the fate which his atrocities so richly merited, his dying prediction was fully verified, for, in falling, he dragged with him the arch-murderer, Robespierre, from the guilty seat of power, which they had occupied together.

On the morning of the 29th of July, 1794, at daybreak, the streets of Paris were filled to repletion with masses of human beings, all converging to one point of general attraction. The populace of this great and wicked city, their hands and garments reeking with the gore of the thousands whom they had slain in the fever of popular excitement, had grown weary of the sight of blood, and yet they were thronging to witness another execution. Onward they press, one cry sounding above all others—"Down with the tyrant—down with Robespierre. To the guillotine with him!" What, Robespierre! Ay, that name, at mention of which, as it passed from lip to lip, hundreds of thousands, nay, all France, had trembled:—that name, whose magic power had led the maddened multitude to deeds of violence, and to words of blasphemy which astonished the world—that name, which had swept, sirocco-like, over the land, blaspheming and blighting—that name, once so powerful, now so powerless—that name, once so dreaded, now so contemned. How are the mighty fallen! Robespierre is about to expiate his crimes, upon that very scaffold to which he had sentenced so many victims. The guillotine stands on the very spot where the unhappy Louis XVI. and his noble consort, Marie Antoinette had suffered. It stands in the Place de la Revolution. Around it gathered the dense crowd, waiting impatiently to witness the death of him who had promised them riches, and fields of grain, but who had, instead, fed them upon the blood of their fathers, and husbands, and brothers. Now the crowd disports to the right and left; and, amid cursings, and execrations, and shouts of exultation, the band of conspirators, against the liberties of France, slowly advances. There are Henriot, and Couthon, and St. Just, and Dumas, and Coffinal, and Simon, and others, but conspicuous among them all is Robespierre—the master-spirit, and arch-conspirator, the tyrant, the bloodhound, of the Revolution. The bodies of Henriot, of Couthon, and of Robespierre, are mutilated—mangled in the bloody scene consequent upon their seizure, the night before. They all stand around the fearful instrument of death, each awaiting his turn. One by one they ascend the platform, above which the glittering blade is suspended, and each is beheaded; a wild shout of joy goes up from the congregated thousands who witness this last offering to liberty. At last comes the tyrant's turn, and, as he mounts the scaffold, a yet wilder shout ascends from the multitude, who are frantic with exultation. There he stands, the last of the dreaded enemies of human rights! See the blood oozing from the bandage that holds up his fractured jaw; it runs down upon his clothing; the exe-

cautioner snatches the bandage from his head ; the broken jaw falls upon his breast ; and one yell of terrible agony is wrung from his stoical soul, which had borne the anguish of the previous night, without a groan. But, what cry is that which pierces the ear, whose tones, sounding even above the yell of mortal pain which filled every heart with horror, are heard ringing out shrill and clear upon the air ? It was the voice of a woman—a young and beautiful woman, whose dress of deepest mourning, and whose pale face, showed that she has been a sufferer from the tyrant's cruelties. Hark to the voice ! "Murderer of my father, your agony fills me with joy ; descend to hell, covered with the curses of the orphan ! aye, covered with the curses of all the orphans and widows you have made in France !" See, he shuts his eyes, he would fain stop his ears ! he would gladly hush his conscience, but he cannot ; the iron has pierced his soul—" *there is a God.*" The retributions of that hour declare it. Robespierre feels it ; and, with remorse gnawing at his vitals, he bows his head upon the block, and his doomed spirit passes into the awful presence of Jehovah : exultant shouts proclaim the joy of France, that a tyrant has been removed from the face of the earth ; while the whole scene declared the presence of an avenging Deity.

The execution over, the crowd dispersed ; and Louise St Aubyn, leaning heavily upon the arm of Pierre, the old veteran, walked slowly homeward. It was she who, having heard what was to transpire that day, had clothed herself in mourning, and, standing beneath the guillotine, had cursed Robespierre, the murderer of her father.

CHAPTER VI.

Louise longs to leave France—Looking towards America—Prevails upon Pierre and Marie to accompany her—Arrival in the new Republic—Church of the Jesuits—Interview with Father Jubert.

FRANCE was hateful to Louise, since the death of her father, and the atrocities which she had witnessed, and of which she had heard ; and she longed to leave its shores. She had heard much of the young Republic across the broad Atlantic, and determined to go thither, that she might no longer be surrounded by those whom she regarded as lawless murderers, against whom she had in secret vowed eternal hatred. Indeed, her heart was filled with bitterness towards her whole race, save the good Pierre, the kind Marie, and the generous banker, M. de Montmain ; the only beings, in all the world, towards whom she felt one emotion of regard or esteem.

On the morning succeeding the tragical events narrated in the last chapter, Louise called Pierre and his wife into her room, after breakfast, and, bidding them be seated, she said to them :

"My friends, I hate France ; I wish to leave it, and seek an asylum in the new home of the sorrow-stricken, the United States. I am unwilling to leave you behind ; will you go with me ?"

"But Mademoiselle," replied Pierre, who was much astonished at this intelligence—"we have not the means ; and, besides, we should starve, when we got there, without friends, and without business."

"As to the means of getting to America"—responded Louise—"leave that to me; I will provide them. It is as little as I can do in return for the kindness which you have manifested to me, during the many months that I have spent under your hospitable roof. I will pay your passage across the ocean; and, when we reach that friendly shore, we will take a house, and live together as we do here. Our good Pierre can find something to do; you, Marie, and I, can keep house, and thus we will do very well. I have seven thousand francs left; and, while these last, you shall not want. Come, let us leave this horrible country, and go at once where at least our lives will be safe, and we can earn our daily bread in peace. What say you, my friends?"

"Ah! it will be hard to leave Paris, with all her faults," answered Pierre: "but yet, I feel well assured, from what I have heard about that far off country, that Mademoiselle Louise advises for the best. We love her,"—continued he, addressing himself to his wife—"and we will go with her; we can soon earn enough, by our labour, to repay what she may advance for our expenses. Come, Marie, say yes, and we will go with her."

"Well, Pierre, be it so, then. We have nothing to keep us here, save our love for la belle France, and who knows but we may grow rich in America, which we assuredly we cannot do here."

"By the way," said Pierre, "it just occurs to me, at this moment, that the captain of the new brig, the Jean Maurice, told me, the other day, that he would start from Havre for New York, some time next week. If you say so, Mademoiselle Louise, I will see the captain, and ascertain what he will charge to take us all to that place."

Suffice it to say that the arrangements were all made to the satisfaction of Louise and her companions; their passports obtained, hers being in an assumed name; and on the Thursday following the conversation that has just been related, the Jean Maurice was breasting the waves of the ocean, on her way to the new world.

In due time the brig arrived at its port of destination; and, in a few days, Pierre had taken, at the request of Louise, a nice little house in the suburbs of the city, which was plainly but comfortably furnished; and here the three friends, whom misfortune had so singularly bound together in strong ties, lived in the enjoyment of quiet and repose. Pierre soon found profitable employment; Marie busied herself with household affairs; while Louise employed her time in embroidery, lessons in which she had taken before she left Paris, and for which she received a handsome remuneration from a French merchant, who had been for some time established in business.

Some weeks rolled away, when, one morning, Louise entered the confessional in the church of the *Jesuits*, at New York; and, after a full confession, sought absolution from the priest who was present. He inquired who she was, and, manifesting great sympathy for her sorrows, asked for her address; telling her he would call, in a few days, and pay her a pastoral visit. This priest was a young man, of about thirty years of age, of handsome features, commanding figure, polished manners, and was a refugee from France, being a descendant from a noble family; his name, Jubert.

It was not long before Father Jubert stood before the dwelling of Louise St. Aubyn, and, lightly rapping at the door, was admitted into the little parlour, where sat her whom he came to see. The blush mantled upon the cheek of Louise, as she looked at the handsome priest; and, Jesuit as he was, and accustomed to the maintenance of an iron control over himself, the tell-tale blood which mounted to his face, told that an impression had been made upon his heart which would be exceedingly dangerous to the peace of both.

The interview was a long one; for Father Jubert insisted upon having, from the lips of Louise a full account of her past history; and, during its recital, manifested the deepest interest in its details.

At length, the narrative was completed; and the priest had arrived at the conclusion that Louise St. Aubyn possessed rare qualifications for membership in the order of Jesuits, and that if she could but be persuaded to join that order, it would be at once a most valuable acquisition, while it would render more easy of accomplishment, certain intentions of his own, which had been formed in his mind, while, with flushed cheek and fire-flashing eye, she had told her thrilling story.

He, therefore, related to her, at her request, his own history, taking care to expatiate upon the happy retreat from worldly anxiety, which he had found in the bosom of the church, and in association with the order of which he was a member. His impassioned eloquence, while he enlarged upon this topic, made a deep impression upon the mind of Louise, already predisposed, by misanthropic feeling, to abandon the world, and shut herself out from its tumult and its sorrows; and the wily Jesuit, finding that he had succeeded beyond his expectations, thought it best not to push the matter, at that time, any further, but to leave the impression to deepen itself, and work its own way.

Rising gracefully from his chair, and offering his services to Louise, in the most delicate manner imaginable, he promised to visit her again; and took his leave, with all the refined politeness of the accomplished Frenchman.

CHAPTER VII.

Louise's reflections on the interview—Its effect on Louise—Anxiety of Pierre and Marie—The heart's consolations—The wily Jesuit.

THIS interview with father Jubert left the mind of Louise in a tumult of emotion, such as only a being of her peculiar mould is capable of. Before the disastrous event occurred, which made her an orphan, she had had but little intercourse with those of the opposite sex; and then only when, on State occasions she had visited Paris, in company with her father; and although her imagination had often been inflamed by the perusal of romances, which she found in the library of the chateau, and which she had devoured with great avidity, she had never before met with any one who had inspired her with the feelings which she experienced in the interview with the young, the handsome, and the polished, French priest. In short, she had fallen desperately in love with him; and her quick woman's wit had made the discovery that the passion was a reciprocal one. Had he been of low origin in his

native land, she would have spurned the idea ; but, as he had informed her that he was a son of the Count Jubert, than whose there was no better blood in France, her romantic disposition seized eagerly upon the adventures ; and her fondness for excitement of every kind, that might relieve the tedious monotony of her every-day life, found nutriment upon which to feast itself, in the flame which the Father Jubert had inspired in her bosom.

"But he is a priest," said she to herself, as she thought of the circumstances which had transpired in the interview ; and this, instead of shocking her by the new phase in which it presented the subject to her mind, only served to make the affair more romantic, and therefore, the more pleasurable to her excited fancy.

"Yet he loves me, I know ;" she added, mentally. "Did not his voice falter, and his cheek redden, as he spoke to me ? and, when he bade me good bye, how his hand trembled, as he pressed mine ! He loves me, I am sure of it. What a pity he is a priest ! How handsome he is ! How agreeable !" And thus she sat reasoning and communing with her own thoughts, until Marie announced that dinner was on the table.

"Mademoiselle does not eat to-day," said Pierre, with some anxiety, as he observed that Louise scarcely touched the food on her plate, and seemed greatly abstracted during the silent meal, "I hope you are not unwell."

"I am quite well," replied Louise, aroused, for the moment, from her reverie—"I was only thinking of the past, my good Pierre, and that made me sad."

"Ah ! do not let your thoughts go back to the sorrowful days that are past, Mademoiselle Louise ;"—said Marie, with a tear in her eye—"it will injure your health ; think only of that happy time we now see, and of the bright future."

But Louise heard not what was said by the kind-hearted Marie ; she was thinking of the handsome priest, and of the pleasant tones of his voice, which seemed still to vibrate as sweet music upon her ear.

Her simple friends exchanged looks of sympathy, little dreaming of what was passing in the mind of Louise ; and, her plain meal being finished, she retired to her own room, and spent the afternoon, not as usual over her embroidering frame, but in the reveries of a passionate imagination, and in building air-castles for the future. She devised a thousand schemes by means of which she thought, for a moment, the obstacles in the way of her union with Father Jubert might be removed ; and as insurmountable difficulties would throw themselves around each of these, as if in mockery of her anxiety on the subject, others would arise, to be in turn destroyed by some impossibility that would suggest itself. Thus was passed the afternoon and evening of that eventful day ; and, at last, overcome with fatigue, consequent upon the strength of her emotions, and the unwonted mental exercise, she fell asleep, and dreamed of the handsome young priest.

Father Jubert, meanwhile, had sat himself down in his comfortable room, and, after recalling to mind the incidents that had been related to him by Louise in their interview, and reflecting upon the traits of character which she had developed to his keen observation, as well as the beauty of her face and person, which had indeed made a most lively impression upon his heart, as she had supposed ; taxed his inventive powers to devise a plan by means of which she might be induced to enter the order, and he

accomplish his private purposes. Having succeeded in this, to his own satisfaction, and determined that no time should be lost in carrying his plan into effect, he turned to his writing-table, and addressed to the superior of the order in Rome, a letter, containing some general information, and a summary of the events which had transpired in the last month, not omitting to say enough, in reference to Louise, to attract the attention of the superior to her case, and to evince with what avidity the writer seized upon every circumstance which might promote the interests of the order.

CHAPTER VIII.

The lover's dream—The confessional—Its effects on Louise—Her determination to enter the Convent of St. Mary's—Sorrow of her friends—Enters the Convent, under the appellation of Sister Frances—Father Jubert's wily schemes.

ON awakening, the next morning, Louise found herself, as it were, in a new world;—a world containing but two inhabitants, the priest of whom she had dreamed, and herself. She arose, and dressed herself with more than her usual care: and, after breakfast, telling Marie that she was going to confession, repaired to the church which she had visited a week before; and there, to her great joy, she found Father Jubert in his seat, ready to listen to her. With palpitating heart, she entered the confessional, and her tremulous voice betrayed the emotion of her soul. The priest heard her through, and then administered consolation to her; but what was said, or what was done, in that hour, the writer is not prepared to say. Let it suffice that Louise left the church, with a smile upon her countenance, which bespoke the joy of her heart, and, in the course of a few days, astonished the good Pierre and his wife, by informing them that she had made up her mind to enter the convent of St. Mary's, in New York; and that she should give to them one half of the remaining money which she had brought from France, to be their own: so that they might not suffer from the step she was about to take.

Marie, who loved Louise, burst into tears, and wrung her hands in the bitterness of her sorrow, declaring that she should die without the presence of her good mistress, for so she termed her; and Pierre stood mute and motionless, as if he were striving to comprehend what had been said to him. Meanwhile, Louise soothed them, by telling them that she had no longer anything to live for in this world, that her situation was a peculiarly distressing one, and that her happiness would be greatly promoted by placing herself under the protection of the nuns, in association with whom she could spend her days in acts of devotion and works of piety. She also assured them that her entrance into the convent would not prevent her from seeing them frequently, and from affording them assistance, at any time, should they require it.

Thus assured, her kind friends reluctantly consented to their separation from Louise; and, during the remainder of that day, Marie's eyes were constantly red with weeping.

Some ten days were spent by Louise in making preparations for her conventual life, during which time frequent visits were

paid to the family by the nuns of the convent, and by Father Jubert; the latter interesting himself for Pierre so much as to set him up in a small but lucrative business, by means of the money which Louise had presented to him, in token of her friendship, and of the appreciation in which she held his past kindness and fidelity.

Before entering the convent, Louise, under the direction of Father Jubert, made a safe investment of her remaining money, subject to her own order while living, reversionary to the order at her death; and, procuring the services of an agent to visit France, and attend to her interests there, executed an instrument in writing, donating the one half of whatever might be realized from her father's estate, absolutely to the Jesuits, and retaining the control of the other half in her own hands, with an obligation that it should be given ultimately to the convent in which she should end her days.

In due time, she entered the convent, and, having passed her novitiate satisfactorily, became a nun, under the appellation of sister Frances; and, from the moment of her introduction into the order, assumed a position, and acquired an influence, which amply attested the sagacity of Father Jubert, and verified the soundness of the conclusions which he had drawn from their first interview.

Meanwhile, the latter, who was the confessor to this same convent, had not been idle, but had laboured industriously to promote the interests of sister Frances, between whom and himself a solemn compact had been entered into, on the morning of that last visit to the confessional, to which allusion has already been made. By means of an underground communication between the monastery, in which he resided to avoid scandal, and the convent, by the connivance of the sister Porter, who was charged with the care of the gate which opened into the latter building from the arched way which formed this communication, he visited sister Frances almost nightly in her private cell, where he instructed her in the mysteries and usages of the Jesuits, and prepared her fully to act that part which she afterwards filled with such distinguished ability. Nor was the father confessor wholly disinterested in these labours; he was duly rewarded; and, as subsequent events will demonstrate, they were coupled with his own schemes of personal ambition. A more unhallowed compact than that which existed between this priest and sister Frances—a compact instigated by a Jesuit mind, and the foul offspring of passion and of pride—was perhaps never entered into, nor ever more fearfully punished.

CHAPTER IX.

Honours in prospect—Ecstasy of Father Jubert—Power, apostrophe to—The compact not to be forgotten—Arrival of the Legate—His treatment—Approaching ceremony—High Mass celebrated—Consistorial Hall, its splendid furniture and fittings—Precession of priests—The ceremony of Installation—Awful Oath—The cup of blood—The Bible cursed and burned—Fierce exultation of the priests—The American flag of liberty trampled under foot, and torn in pieces—Father Jubert made head of the Order of St. Ignatius Loyola, for the United States of America—Homage and obeisance of the priests—Oath of allegiance.

FIVE years had passed away, when, one morning, a large and

carefully-sealed document, bearing upon it the impress of the Father General of the Order at Rome, was handed to Father Jubert. Dismissing the servant who had brought it, he broke the seals, and sat down at his writing-table to read it. As he progressed in its perusal, he became singularly affected; and, at length, arising from his chair, greatly agitated, his eye dilated, and his countenance expressive both of astonishment and joy, he stood erect, and, with the letter held almost at arm's length, he gazed upon it intently, as though he found it difficult to comprehend its meaning. Then, snatching his cap from his head, he threw it up in the air, and clapped his hands in very excitement, exclaiming, as he did so:

"Well, it has come at last; and I—yes, I—Francois Jubert,—am Head of the Order of St. Ignatius Loyola, in these United States."

Again seating himself, and carefully examining the seals, the envelope, the outside and inside, of the document which conferred this high dignity upon him, as though he yet feared that there might be some mistake, he appeared to be fully satisfied with his scrutiny, and, replacing the missive upon the table, again arose and paced the room from one end to the other, talking to himself, and occasionally uttering audibly a sentence or two.

"It is well," he said; "I have richly merited this honour, young as I am."

"Power! dearest idol of my soul, I have thee; aye, and will use thee, too!"

"Louise, our compact shall not be forgotten."

"But when does he say the installation is to take place?" Here he seized the letter, and read,

"The Legate, by whom you are to be installed, within ten days after his arrival in New York, is the bearer of this letter. See that he is treated with all the respect due to his high office."

"Treated with all the respect due to his high office," slowly repeated the Jesuit. "Aye, that shall he be; and he shall be made a stepping stone to further power. I must away to see this Legate."

So saying, he carefully locked up the important document, and, arranging his dress, went out to make the necessary preparations for the suitable reception of him who bore so honourable a commission as the representative of the Supreme Power at Rome.

Several days of feasting and ceremony had passed by, that set apart for the installation of Father Jubert had arrived.

At an early hour in the morning, High Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the monastery; after which all the members of the order, resident in the city, together with several from a distance, who had been hastily summoned to attend, adjourned in procession to the Consistorial Hall, in the same building. This was a spacious room, with arched ceiling, some sixty feet in length, by thirty in width; the walls heavily draped in black cloth, which hung in deep folds, so as entirely to shut out from sight the openings both for windows and doors. At one end of this apartment was a platform raised some three feet above the floor, being covered with rich carpeting of the best fabric. Upon this platform or dais, was placed a sort of throne, painted a bright scarlet, ornamented with gold, and surmounted by a magnificent canopy of silk, of the same colour, trimmed with heavy gold fringe. In the

centre of the room was suspended from the ceiling, a richly cut-glass chandelier, with almost innumerable lights brilliantly burning; while placed at convenient distances around the hall were candelabra of silver, supporting massive branch candlesticks, each having several lights. At the lower end, there was a neat but small organ, of powerful tone, and seats for the choristers arranged near it.

Immediately in front of the throne stood an altar, upon which was placed a golden censer, sending forth its clouds of sweet incense to perfume the air; and near this altar, an ancient, curiously carved chair, lined and cushioned with black velvet, and studded with gold-headed nails, intended for the occupancy of the candidate for the honours of the occasion. Seats of a plainer description, but displaying the same contrast of colours, were arranged along the sides of the room, on either hand.

As the procession of priests, clothed in their long black robes, with their peculiarly shaped caps upon their heads, and having the youngest member of the order in the front, bearing a massive silver crucifix, and the oldest in the rear, with the Legate in the centre, supported on the right hand by the candidate, and on the left by the Father Superior of the monastery; and all, save these last, walking two abreast, entering the ante-chamber, they severally armed themselves with drawn swords, which were placed in racks on either hand; and, as they passed through the looped-up drapery which covered the ample door-way, between two sentinels, who, fully armed, were there found on duty, they severally gave the watch-word, on the right and left—"A bas la Liberté."

Having entered the spacious hall, whose whole arrangements presented a most imposing appearance; the Legate was escorted to the throne, by the entire body of priests, who kneeled in a circle around him, while he seated himself, and exclaimed,

"Honour to his lordship, the Legate of his Holiness the Pope, and Vicegerent of the Father General of the Order of St Ignatius Loyola!"

Then rising, and taking their appropriate seats, the crucifix, meanwhile, having been placed in an upright position in a receptacle for its foot, provided for the purpose, near the altar, a low-toned, but beautiful, chant was sung by the choir, assisted by the organ, whose rich notes seemed to fill the apartment with fleeting melody.

The Legate, wearing a robe of gorgeous grandeur, then arose, and, with a distinct voice, read aloud the authority, appointing Francois Jubert the Representative of the Supreme Head of the Jesuits in the United States; and commanding his installation as such, by the hands of the Father Romeo, there present for that purpose.

"The will of the Father General be done!" cried all the priests, devoutly crossing themselves and bowing low, as the Legate took his seat; while a joyous peal burst forth from the organ.

Directing the Superior of the monastery to present the candidate at the altar, the Legate proceeded to dictate to the kneeling priest, the rest all standing, the following oath, which was repeated by him in an audible voice:

"I, Francois Jubert, in the presence of the Holy Mother of God; of St. Ignatius Loyola; the Legate of the Father General of the order of Jesuits, and of these members of the same, here

assembled: do most sincerely and solemnly swear;—that I will and do renounce all allegiance to king, prince, potentate, and power of every kind, and however constituted, which may now or hereafter hold civil rule in this or in any other country in which I may be called to reside; acknowledging, now and for ever, no other civil or religious rule whatsoever, save that of his Holiness, the Pope—the Vicegerent and Vicar of Christ—and of the Father General of the order of St. Ignatius Loyola; hereby solemnly engaging to surrender myself, at all times, as I now do, body, soul, and spirit, unreservedly to their sole control; to have no will or mind of my own, but unhesitatingly and without question, in all things, to think, and speak, and act, as they may direct.

“I do most sincerely and solemnly swear eternal hatred to all forms of government, whether monarchical or republic, and by whomsoever administered, whose tendency is in any wise, directly or indirectly, to limit, or subvert, or control the supreme and rightful authority of his Holiness, the Pope, or the Father General of the order of Jesuits, to reign over the whole world; and to use my best endeavours, at all times, for the overthrow of all such governments, and the universal extension of that of the order of which I am a member.

“I do sincerely and solemnly swear eternal hatred to all sects, societies, and institutions, of every kind, whether political or religious, which tend to the establishment of civil or religious freedom in this or in any other land; and to use my best efforts for their destruction; ever keeping in my mind that divine maxim of the order, that—‘the end justifies the means.’

“I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will not appropriate to my own purposes, any funds that may be entrusted to my care or keeping, as belonging to the treasury of the order; but will sacredly apply the same to the uses to which they are set apart, rendering to the Father General at Rome, quarterly, a true and faithful account of the same; and that I will further use all possible means to increase the wealth of the order, for the better accomplishment of the purposes for which it has been instituted.

“I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will not expose, to any person or persons whatever, nor permit the same to be done by others, any of the secret instructions that may be given to me by the Father General, or any of his duly accredited agents; and should any such at any time fall into the hands of those for whom they were not intended, I will deny, even with oaths, their authenticity, affirming them to be forgeries.

“I do most sincerely and solemnly swear to regard the orders, instructions, and requirements, of the Father General of the order of Jesuits, as of paramount authority to those of his Holiness the Pope, whenever the latter shall clash or conflict with the former; and, should I ever discover any plot or conspiracy, or intention of evil in any person or persons whatsoever, towards the interests or safety of the order, I will, without delay, communicate the same to the Father General, and do all in my power to contravene and to thwart such plot, conspiracy, or intention of evil: always esteeming his interest and authority, as the head of the order, paramount to all others.

“I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will keep a

true, faithful, and permanent register, and forward a copy thereof quarterly to the Father General, of all events, political or religious that may come to my knowledge, and of all persons, by name, residence, and occupation, whether Protestant or Catholic, who may in any wise, or to any extent, obstruct the progress of our order, or say or do aught against it; and by my agents, officers, and emissaries, do all in my power to injure their business, and ruin their character and fortune.

"I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will, at whatever inconvenience or sacrifice to myself, repair, without delay, to Rome, or whatever other place I may be ordered by the Father General; and should I in any manner violate this my oath, I will inform him of such violation, and undergo any punishment that he may think proper to inflict upon me therefore.

"To do, and keep, and perform, all of this, I devoutly call upon the ever blessed Trinity to witness my sincerity; and should I ever prove a traitor to the order, or betray its interests, or its secrets, may the severest pains of purgatory be suffered by me, without cessation or mitigation, for ever and ever."

"Amen! and Amen!" shouted all the priests.

This fearful oath—so fully embracing all the destructive features of the Jesuits, and so faithfully portraying the real objects of their organizations—having been taken by the candidate, he was sternly ordered to arise from his kneeling posture, and to place his hand upon the cross, the symbol of his faith; while the whole number of priests were made to surround him, and, pointing their naked swords at his body, were directed to thrust the steel to his heart, should he falter or hesitate in the least in obeying the order which should next be given to him, and which was wholly unexpected by him; a test of the promptitude to comply with any mandate that he may hereafter receive from the Supreme Head of the order, though its performance might involve even death itself.

The Superior of the monastery, by direction of the Legate, then handed to the candidate a small cup, formed of a section of a skull, into which had been poured about half a gill of a dark fluid resembling human blood. Bidding him hold this cup to his lips, the Legate thus addressed him:—

"Francois Jubert, the honour which I am about to confer upon you, by the authority of his Holiness the Pope, and of the Father General of the order of St. Ignatius Loyola, is of too august a character, and involves interests of too great moment to be lightly bestowed, or to be given to one who quails at the sight, or smell, or taste, of human blood; if you have been sincere in taking the solemn oath which has just been administered to you, and if you are worthy of the high honour for which you are the candidate, you will not hesitate to drink the contents of that cup. If you are insincere or craven in spirit, you will hesitate and die. *It is blood—DRINK!*"

No sooner had the word passed the lips of the Legate—uttered in a tone of powerful emphasis, which ran through the vast apartment, and vibrated on the nerves of the priests—than the candidate swallowed the contents of the cup, without even blanching, as though it had contained the most delicious nectar; and, to show that he had done so, held it up at the full stretch of his arm, as his commanding stature towered above the priests who surrounded him, its bottom turned upwards.

"Lower your swords!" cried the Legate, "the candidate is worthy."

The priests let fall their sword points, and, as they did so, a rich and triumphant gust of music sounded forth from the organ; while the choristers chanted the patron saint and founder of the order.

"Bring forth the accursed book," cried the Legate, when the music had ceased.

A copy of the Protestant Bible was then handed to the candidate; while a chaffing dish of burning coal was placed before him.

"That book," said the Legate, "is the great enemy of our Order. It must perish from the earth, or we must cease to exist. Curse and burn it, in token of your enmity and ours, and of your determination to do all that lies in your power for its destruction, and with it for that of all heretics."

"I curse thee, thou text-book of heresy!" exclaimed the candidate, placing the book upon the blazing coals; "I spit upon thee, vile cheat, uncompromising enemy of my order. I burn thee; and, as thou consumest in that flame, so may all heretics be burned in that fierce flame which shall wreath itself around them, in that hell prepared for the reception and punishment of all those who put their confidence in thee; and reject the true Scriptures, the only true and infallible church."

As the sacred volume—the charter of human liberties—crackled and glowed under the action of the fire, and its smoke ascended heavenward, like the spirit of many a martyr, whose body has been burned by the minions of popery, a shout, wild and fierce, arose from the congregated priests, which shook the room in whose midst they stood; while again the organ and choristers sent forth swelling pœans of praise to "*Mary, the refuge of sinners—the blessed Mother of God.*"

"Bring forth *the ensign of freedom!*" hissed, from between his teeth, the proud Legate, concentrating unutterable hatred in the manner in which he called for the American banner, under whose stars and stripes, Washington and the worthies of the revolution had fought and bled.

"This vile rag," he cried, as the flag of the Union was being unfurled from its staff, "fit emblem of those hellish principles which have wrested this noble land, with its fertile fields, its majestic rivers, and its ocean lakes, from the hands of an imbecile king; which have revolutionized France; and which, if not prevented from spreading, will one day overturn the thrones, and destroy the ancient established monarchies of Europe; that vile rag is more to be dreaded by us, as an order, than all things else, beside the Bible. If it be permitted to pollute the pure air of Heaven by its foul embrace, for half a century longer, it will float on every sea, on every land, and be the rallying sign for the nations of the earth. It must be torn down; it must be trampled under foot; it must trail dishonoured in the dust, or our cause is lost. In token of your love for the order, and determination to uproot liberty—accursed name, more cursed thing!—tear it from its support, and trample it beneath your feet."

Hastily obeying the mandate, the candidate flung the stripes and stars upon the floor, and, with an energy which declared the feelings of his heart, ground them with his heel; while, in a voice of thunder, the Legate cried—

"Jesuits, destroy the enemy of your order. A bas la Liberte."

Like as a herd of famished wolves rush upon their prey, rending and tearing it in pieces, while growling and screaming in horrible discord, they overturn each other in their efforts to gratify their rapacity: so rushed these Jesuits upon the ensign of the world's freedom, and, pushing each other aside, in frantic fury, they soon tore it into a thousand fragments, while their yells and shouts added to the terrible uproar of the scene. Meanwhile from the choir came forth, in strains of wild excitement, as though the downfall of man's liberty and the universal triumph of Jesuitism were already secured, and the world were fixed in eternal slavery, civil, political, and religious—the "Te Deum Laudamus!" insulting high heaven with blasphemous ascriptions of praise, as though it had been instrumental in a destruction of all that is dearest to man, and of highest appreciation in the sight of God and of the blessed angels.

In the meantime, the Legate had received, from an attendant priest, a gorgeous robe, which might have well become a monarch, and, when the insulting strains had died away, and the priests, at his command, had resumed their places, he advanced to the candidate, who stood near the crucifix, and, throwing the garment upon his shoulders, led him to the throne, and, seating him there, turned to the priests, saying—

"Behold, Jesuits, the Father General of the order of St. Ignatius Loyala, for the United States of America; whom I declare duly appointed, and installed in that high office. Approach, and do his Lordship reverence."

So saying, he caused the priests to kneel around the throne, and to repeat after him the following salutation and oath of allegiance:—

"Hail, most worthy Father General, we honour thee!

"We solemnly swear full and explicit allegiance to you, as the representative of the Father General of the order; and to obey, without hesitation, or question, any command that you may give to us, while holding the said high office; here surrendering ourselves body, soul, and spirit, 'as dead corpses,' to your control and government, to be directed and used as your judgment, and that of Him whom you represent, may dictate."

It was a proud moment for Francois Jubert; and well did it repay him for the toil, anxiety and effort, which it had cost him to gain the eminent distinction.

A choral burst of melody, swelling the general joy and congratulation, closed the ceremonial; and the priests, arising from their knees, and preceded by the Legate and their new Father General, repaired, under the conduct of the Superior to the refectory, where a sumptuous banquet awaited them.

CHAPTER X.

The Father General's affections for Sister Frances on the wane—Removes her, by instituting her to the office of Superior in the Convent of Annunciation—Her active and proselyting efforts shortly after assuming office—Emily de Vere—The Superior's base conduct towards her.

FOR some months prior to the occurrences which have just been

described, the Mother Superior of the Annunciation, distant some fifty miles from the city of New York, had been in very feeble health; and, among the first acts which the Father General was called upon to perform after his installation into office, was to appoint a superior to fill the vacancy occasioned by her death.

He had not lost his attachment to Sister Frances, but, with the inconstancy of the Jesuit character, he had for some time past thought it no harm to look upon other pretty faces besides hers; and his facile conscience saw no impropriety in intrigues with other nuns than the good sister, who, exceedingly jealous of her power over him, maintained a most rigid watch upon his conduct; so vigilant, indeed, that there had already occurred some interesting quarrels between them, which, however, were easily made up, although they left traces of uneasiness behind them upon her mind, conscious, as she was, that her personal attractions were not as fresh as once they were.

It was, therefore, a great relief to the Father General to have it in his power to appoint Sister Frances to the vacancy; as, while he adroitly persuaded her that it was an honour which he had long been anxious to see conferred upon her, and one for which she was peculiarly qualified, he would thus be removed from her immediate espionage, and be more at liberty to act as he pleased.

Connected with the Convent of the Annunciation, was a very large female boarding-school, which, in the great dearth of the means of education existing at this time, was very extensively patronized by Protestant families. This was represented to Sister Frances as being a very strong inducement to her acceptance of the appointment, since it would afford her ample opportunity for the protection of the interests of the order, in proselyting to the true faith the children of heretics, who should be entrusted to her care.

Ambitious of power and of preferment; and such an appointment as this, with its cognate rank and influence in the order, having been an object held in view in the original compact, to which allusion has already been made, Sister Frances felt a sacred joy in its contemplation; while, at the same time, her mind misgave her somewhat as to the real motives of the Father General; but when, in an interview which she had with him, in her private room, she broached the subject, and he, with well-affecting surprise, the most solemn protestations, and fondest caresses, assured her that she was wholly mistaken; she suffered herself to be deceived, and accepted the office, as an additional proof of the undiminished affection of her priest lover.

In the course of a few weeks, she was duly installed Mother Superior of the Convent of Annunciation, and entered upon the duties of her new station, with a spirit and zeal, as well as exhibition of talents of the highest order, which bespoke her adaptation to it, and presaged a brilliant career for her in the future.

With a tact rarely equalled, and by means of her winning manners, and consummate skill in accommodating herself to the peculiarities of those whom she wished to control, she soon succeeded in engaging the affections of the nuns, and especially in securing those of the young ladies who were boarding pupils in the establishment. In the course of five years after her installation, she was the instrument of converting not less than thirty-five of

the latter to the Romish faith: twelve of whom joined the order, and became nuns.

Among the latter was a Miss Emilie de Vere, a young girl, some sixteen years of age, of surpassing beauty, and the only daughter of a wealthy planter in Louisiana, who, having lived in New York for some time before he removed to his southern home, had selected the Convent of the Annunciation, as a suitable place for the education of the child, because of its remoteness from the city. Mr. De Vere was descended from Protestant parentage, as was his wife, but thought well of the Catholics, and apprehended no danger in thus placing his daughter in their hands, while he went to his far-off home, not expecting to see her again for some three years. Great was the self-gratulation of the Mother Superior, when the rich heiress joined the Catholic church, but greater still when she wore the habit of a nun, and bore the name of Sister Theresa, two years before the time of which we are now writing.

In the course of one of his somewhat frequent visits to the Convent,—during which the Mother Superior was always careful to keep, as much as possible, out of sight, all those nuns who had any pretensions to personal attractions,—the Father General happened to meet Sister Theresa in one of the passages; and, immediately recognising her as one whose great beauty had strongly attracted his notice, on the occasion of her taking the religious vows, he entered into conversation with her; and, while holding her hand in his, and giving her some fatherly advice, the Mother Superior, having occasion to pass that way, unseen by them, had witnessed a portion of the interview, and imagined that she saw enough to warrant a jealous feeling on her part, and to determine her to prevent any further occurrence of a similar sort. Dissembling her true feelings, however, she met the Father General, in half an hour afterwards, with a brow as placid as if nothing had occurred to disturb the quiet current of her emotions. To gratify her vindictiveness, nevertheless, as she dared not reproach the General, she degraded the poor nun, for a month, to servile work in the kitchen, without assigning to her any other reason for so doing, than her own will.

CHAPTER XI.

The Father General's visit to the convent—His interest for Sister Theresa—The deformed nun—Proposes a meeting at midnight with Sister Theresa—The Mother Superior's kind entertainment of the Father General in the private parlour—Her chagrin at his abruptly leaving her—Suspicion—Sister Theresa's sorrow and anxiety at receiving the Father's note—Her trepidation on meeting the Father General—He reassures her—His wily stratagems to accomplish his base object—A wolf in sheep's clothing.

THE Father General again visited the convent, in about six weeks after this unpleasant occurrence; and, as he approached the great iron gate, the image of the beautiful nun arose to his mind, and he determined, if possible, to learn something more about her; but, aware of the sensitiveness of the Mother Superior, he knew that his inquiries must be made with great caution.

There was, in the convent, a deformed nun, who, because of a grudge which she bore to Mother Frances, and of the uniform kindness with which the General had treated her, had, on more than one occasion, been of service to him in his intrigues in the convent. He determined to make use of her on this occasion.

Accordingly, seizing a favourable moment, he took Sister Martina aside, and asked her who the beautiful nun was. The communicative sister answered his question, and said so much about her, and the cruel treatment which she had recently received at the hands of the Mother Superior, for she knew not what offence, as she affirmed, as greatly to enlist his feelings in behalf of Sister Theresa. Hastily writing a few words upon a piece of paper, which he took from his pocket-book, he handed it to the nun; directing her to give it to Sister Theresa, and to be discreet about the matter, saying that he would reward her handsomely, if she did not betray his trust. Then returning into the parlour, where he had left the Superior, he chatted gaily with her until they were called into the refectory to tea. While seated at the table, the nuns and boarders all present, both the Father General and the Mother Superior were models of propriety and decorum; and the former, especially, was careful not to cast even a look which could serve to excite any suspicion in the mind of the Superior, while their juniors were greatly edified by their pious conversation concerning some of the saints, and the miracles that had been wrought by them.

Arising from the table, the Mother Frances invited the General to her private parlour, the room in which she usually entertained him, when he visited the convent. This was one of a suite of rooms, three in number, set apart for her own special use, and never intruded upon save by her own invitation or permission:—all of these, save the last, opened upon the great passage which ran through the house, on the second floor. The first of this suite was furnished as a private parlour, in very neat and elegant taste. Communicating with this, by means of a sliding panel, so ingeniously contrived as to be known to but few of the inmates of the family, was a beautiful bed-chamber, most tastefully fitted up; and beyond this, and accessible only from this room, was a smaller apartment, arranged as an oratory, having a mahogany reading desk, a magnificent ebony crucifix, an escritoire inlaid with mother of pearl, and some hanging shelves, upon which were arranged a number of elegantly-bound volumes—the entire suite of rooms was handsomely carpeted, and abounded with indications of female taste and refinement.

Having seated themselves upon a sofa placed at one side of the private parlor, and conversed for some time upon general subjects, the Superior arose, and, taking from a small sideboard a richly cut decanter of old wine, with some glasses, and a plate of delicious spiced cakes, which she had prepared with her own hands, she placed these upon a table which stood in front of the sofa, and invited the General to partake of them, and to join her in a game at chess, of which she knew he was passionately fond, and for which she had arranged the materials before him.

They thus occupied themselves until the convent clock tolled the hour of eleven, when the Father General, pleading a headache, and affectionately as well as most gracefully saluting the Mother Superior, asked leave to retire to his own apartment, which was

situated on the first floor, and elegantly furnished. This the latter rather ungraciously granted, with an air which showed that she was disappointed; and the priest retired.

Meanwhile, the note had been handed to Sister Theresa, by the deformed nun, and had greatly excited her mind by its contents.

"Meet me in the garden, near the plum tree, alone, at midnight:"—she repeated, for the twentieth time, as she sat in her room, with the note in her hand, thinking over its contents.

"What can he mean?" And then, as she thought that his intentions towards her might be those of evil flashed across her mind, she burst into tears, exclaiming—

"What have I done or said, that could lead him to think so meanly of me?"

"Have I not spurned the base overtures of my own confessor, Father Jerome?"

"Gracious heaven, into what hands have I fallen?"

Here a sense of her helpless condition, as a poor, friendless, and unprotected nun, was forced upon her mind, with such terrible conviction, that she became fearfully agitated; and throwing herself upon the bed, she wept as if her very heart would break.

"O that I had known all this," she said, her voice broken by sobs—"before I took the vows!—How sadly have I been deceived!"

"O, what shall I do? Where shall I hide myself? My honour, my life, is hunted by those who made me vow eternal chastity and purity!"

"But recently I was degraded to the condition of a menial, I know not why; and now this priest, as if he were master of an eastern harem, and I his Georgian slave, bids me meet him alone in the garden at midnight! Good God, what does this mean?"

"O that I were once more within reach of my dear father! how gladly would I fly to him for protection!"

She again burst into tears, and wept most bitterly: then, as a sudden thought occurred to her mind, she started up, exclaiming—

"It may be so. Perhaps Sister Martina may have intimated to him that I have been badly treated, and, in order to know all about it, without the danger of being interrupted by the Mother Superior, or in order to keep her from knowing that he had spoken to me on the subject, he may have selected this time and place with a view to secrecy. It must be so."

The more she thought about the matter, the more fully convinced she became that this was the true state of the case; and while she felt grateful to the good Father, as she now called him, when she regarded him as intending to befriend her, she reproached herself for having thought so ungenerously of him. The idea of being revenged on the Mother Superior, dried up her tears; and she determined to keep the appointment.

It now wanted but a few minutes to twelve; and, wrapping herself up in a heavy shawl, to guard against the chilly midnight air, and, with her heart beating wildly within her breast, she left her room, and noiselessly creeping down the great stairway, pausing at almost every step, as she fancied that some one had discovered her; while she started at the very pantings of her own bosom, she reached the back door of the hall; where, finding the key in the lock, she turned it with great caution, and then, slowly opening one side of the folding leaves, so as to avoid any

creaking which might give notice of her movements, and looking out intently to see if any one was passing about, she went forth, quietly drawing the door to behind her, and, with quick and silent step, hastened to the garden. It was a moonlight night, but hazy and somewhat cloudy.

On arriving at the spot which had been designated in the note, she was surprised to find that there was no one there but herself; and she was about to conclude that she was the victim of some treacherous plot, when she beheld the Father General rapidly approaching her. On reaching her, he extended his hand, in the kindest manner, saying, as he did so :

"Thanks, Sister Theresa, for this evidence of your confidence in your Father General. I was half afraid that you would not meet me here, at this lonely hour; and that I should be deprived of the opportunity of doing you a kindness. But," added he, perceiving that she trembled as he spoke to her, "fear not, my child; I mean you no harm; but will protect you from all injury and insult."

Reassured by these words, which she believed to be sincere; and feeling ashamed of her previous misgivings with regard to the Father's intentions, which now seemed to be so wholly unfounded, the nun thanked him for his kind consideration, and said—

"I have every confidence in the honour of the Father General, and cannot suppose that he would betray that confidence."

"Never," replied the wily Jesuit, who quickly perceived the change that had been wrought in the feelings of the trusting girl; for she no longer trembled, nor seemed disposed, as at first, to withdraw her hand from his.

"I have heard," he continued, "no matter how nor from whom, of the cruel conduct of the Superior towards you, recently; and I wish you to tell me, if you can, why she did so?"

"I know not," replied Sister Theresa. "I have endeavoured faithfully to perform every known duty, and to comply, as far as I could, with every rule of the institution. I have always treated the Mother Superior with marked respect; rendering instant obedience to her every command; and I cannot imagine why she suddenly, and without assigning any reason whatever for it, inflicted so severe a punishment upon me, and degraded me so in the eyes of the whole convent. Had the punishment been continued for a short time longer, I should have been seriously ill, for my health is but delicate at the best."

"When did she order you to this menial service?" asked the Father, eagerly.

"On the very day that you left the convent, on your last visit before the present," replied the nun.

"I see it all," muttered the priest, as if communing with his own thoughts; "it is as plain as it can be. Poor fool, to think that I belong to her, soul and body, and that I cannot be civil to a pretty nun, but that instantly, as soon as my back is turned, the poor nun must be a victim of her jealousy and wrath. Pshaw!" he continued, as if still talking to himself; "she shall suffer for this." Then, seeming to recollect himself, he said to Sister Theresa.

"Never mind. I am your friend and protector. I have the right and the power to shield you from oppression and from in-

sult; and, should your feelings ever be outraged again, I require you to let me know it at once, that I may take the necessary steps to redress the wrong. Meanwhile, say nothing, but leave this matter in my hands."

"I know not how sufficiently to thank you for your kindness," responded the nun; her heart really touched by what she believed to be the sincere friendship of the Father General, and fully prepared to feel all its force, by the lonely life that she had led—a life so full of disappointment as to the expectations which she had formed when entering upon the religious duties of a nun—and, with the tears standing upon her cheek, she continued, "but if you will show me how I may evince my gratitude, I will most cheerfully do it."

"You can show your gratitude, Sister Theresa, by loving me," replied the priest, in low and thrilling tones, gently putting his arm around her waist, and drawing her to him, on pretence, as he said, of protecting her from the cool night air; but, as he perceived that she shrank from his embrace, he added,

"Fear not, my child; I love you too well to mean you any harm."

He then entered into a lengthy conversation with her, touching her studies, her employments, and what not that was likely to interest her mind, and inspire her with confidence; and then, telling her it was time that they should return to the house, he inquired the number of her room, and its position in the building; saying to her that, on the following night, he would visit her there, in order to instruct her how to spend her time in the future, so as to prepare herself to occupy the position of Mother Superior, in her own turn, when she should be a little older and more experienced.

Meanwhile, the wily priest kept his arm around Sister Theresa, and, walking thus to the house, he gave her what he called the kiss of peace, at parting, and each sought their own room; the former feeling assured that he had gained a victory; the latter, as she had never done before in all her life; her soul a sea of tumultuous emotion. The Father General soon fell asleep and dreamed of beautiful nuns and bowers of roses; the unhappy Sister Theresa laid awake for hours, tossing restlessly upon her couch. She felt that she was caught in the coils of the priest, and that it was as useless for her to struggle against what seemed to be her inevitable destiny, as for the poor fly, caught in the meshes of the spider's web, to attempt to escape its impending fate. She felt that she was powerless in the hands of an all-powerful foe; and, though she deeply regretted having kept the appointment, and met the Father in the garden, yet, strange to say, she did not after all wish to avoid the meeting on the following night. In truth, the arch magician had infused his poison into her young soul; and his foul necromancy had thrown a spell upon her, which she no longer desired, or had the strength, to break. She was doomed, and yet she trembled not; she was in chains, and still she hugged those chains to her breast, and seemed to delight in wearing them. The priest had silenced her monitory fears; had thrown her off her guard; had awakened feelings of gratitude, which were easily transmuted to others of a warmer nature; and the hellish work was well nigh completed—the consummation waited but for the occasion.

Oh, ye self-annointed, self-exalted priests, that put yourselves "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;" "sitting in the temple of God, showing yourselves that ye are God;" "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" ye "false prophets;" ye "ravening wolves in sheep's clothing;" ye "blind guides," that "compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and, when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves;" ye smooth-faced hypocrites that devour virgin innocence, "and, for a pretence, make long prayers;" ye priests, that work your damning deeds, in the dark shrouding of the midnight hour; and then, with unblushing countenance, go forth in broad day, and look honesty in the eye; when the disparting veil of eternity shall be drawn aside, and the judgment trump shall summon you to stand before the dread bar of Him whose searching gaze now penetrates your convent walls, your monastic cells, your dark hiding-places, where works "the mystery of iniquity," and reads all your damnable crimes as though they stood emblazoned in the face of the noontide sun; ah! how will ye quail then! how will ye seek to escape the fearful inspection of that hour, in the presence of a congregated universe, and unbidden try to hide yourselves, and your hellish deeds, in the depths of eternal night! But know, "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, ye cannot escape the damnation of hell;" "the Lord shall consume you with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy you with the brightness of his coming." Babylon "shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

CHAPTER XII.

Interregnum—The family of Mr. Moreton—Discussion on the education given in boarding-schools.

THE reader must now suffer himself to be carried forward over an interval of three years, and be presented to an interesting family circle, whose members will have a large share in the scenes of the following pages.

Mr. and Mrs. Moreton were the parents of an interesting family, consisting of two sons and three daughters, living in the town of —, in the state of Pennsylvania, about eighty miles from the city of New York.

Mary, the eldest of the five children, was a handsome brunette, just entered into her seventeenth year, and had been wholly educated in her native town. Julia, the next in age, was fourteen, and gifted with strong natural powers of mind, but not as handsome as her sister Mary. Mrs. Moreton was a lady of excellent judgment and refined manners, but, like her husband,—who was a merchant, in very comfortable circumstances—not a member of any church. Having received a better education than her companion, she had, in matters of this sort, acquired considerable influence over him; while, with the sagacity and prudence of a business man, he looked narrowly to the expenses, and was, to a certain extent, liable to the charge of penuriousness; yet he dear-

ly loved his family, and was willing to incur any reasonable outlay, for anything he thought would promote their happiness, or secure their advancement in life.

One winter evening, after tea, when the young children had been sent to the nursery, Mary having gone to a party at a neighbour's, and Julia being seated at a table by herself, engaged in preparing her lessons for the next day, Mr. and Mrs. Moreton were sitting in their snug back parlour, by a blazing fire, talking over domestic matters, when the following conversation occurred between them:

"I think, Mr. Moreton, that we ought to send Julia to a good boarding school. She is fast growing up to womanhood; her teachers here cannot instruct her much further; and, besides, there are many advantages to be enjoyed at such a school, which she cannot possibly have at home."

"Why so? Have we not good teachers in our town, as good as any where else? I am sure that Mr. Treadwell has advanced Julia very rapidly; and I heard you tell Mrs. Winslow, the other day, that she had learned more, in the same length of time, under his instruction, than from any other teacher to whom she had ever been sent."

"Very true, my dear, and yet I discover that Julia is greatly interrupted in her studies, by the company which her sister receives; and when visitors are in the drawing-room with Mary, Julia seems to think it very hard, indeed, that she must sit up stairs, and study. I find, too, that her head is full of dress, and jewellery, and parties, and beaux, young as she is; and, when she passes through the streets on her way to school, she sees a great deal to divert her mind from her books. Besides, these mixed schools may do well enough for younger children, but Julia is too old to go any longer to one where boys and girls are taught together. In short, I think it high time that she should be sent from home, to a good boarding school, for at least two years."

"Well, but I do not see what you would gain by sending her to such a school, even on your own showing. Will she not be as fond of dress there as here, and will she not find quite as much to distract her mind from study?"

"Certainly not. In a well-regulated boarding school, every thing is taken care of, and provided for, even to the minutest details. Extravagance in dress, and fondness of display, are discouraged as much as possible; and, indeed, there are no incentives or opportunities for either, since the young ladies are seldom seen upon the streets, and the visits of young men are forbidden: while, on the other hand, by means of a systematic arrangement of time—a useful occupation being found for every hour;—the presence of teachers of the very best abilities, who have adopted the business as a profession, and not as a merely temporary means of support; and the stimulus to study which is furnished by the competition of a number of schoolmates, for the honours of the institution, a healthful ambition is excited, and habits are formed, which not only greatly facilitate the acquirements of a thorough education, but are of essential service in after days, when school-books are laid aside, and the sterner duties of life make hourly demands upon our industry, patience, and fortitude."

"And still it seems to me that, if the same system and discipline were established at home, which you say are to be met with

in these boarding schools, and whose importance I readily admit, the same results might be secured, and certainly at much less expense."

"Impossible, Mr. Moreton! how can I, in the midst of home distractions, and with such a family as I have, adopt any such course? The house is to be kept; the younger children are to be attended to; company to be entertained; visits to be returned; Mary requires a large share of my time and care; for her education, conducted entirely at home, is exceedingly defective; and this reminds me of one most important advantage that is derived from these schools,—the early formation of habits of *self-reliance*. Now, you know what a baby Mary is; and yet she is seventeen. She cannot move without me. All day long it is, 'Ma, show me how to do this;'—'Ma, do go to such a place with me, or out shopping;'—'Ma, will you fix my hair, or adjust my dress?'—'Ma, will you just go into the parlour with me to see my company?' I cannot go alone.' I do verily believe that it would be the same thing if she were married, and that she would not be willing to go to housekeeping without me. It is not so with Miss Ramsey, or Miss Paterson, who were both playmates of Mary's, when they were children, and you know that they were educated at boarding schools. They were amiable, modest, and accomplished young ladies; and yet they make their own dresses; assist their mother in keeping house; are handy at almost every thing; are always self-possessed and agreeable in their manners; and, for all I can see, love their parents just as fondly as Mary does hers; while they are not dependent upon their mammas, as she is upon me. I do not know what Mary would do if I were to be taken away from her, or what she will do when she is married."

"Well, my dear, I see you have thought a great deal more about these things than I have; and I am therefore willing to try the experiment, next spring, for one session. If the result is satisfactory, we will continue Julia at some good boarding-school until she graduates; if not, she must come home, and finish her education here."

"But, Mr. Morton, believe me, that is not the way to try the experiment, as you call it; it does not afford time enough to do the matter justice; and I really believe that one session only would be both time and money thrown away. Send her with the expectation of continuing for one year, or not at all."

"Be it so, then; but where shall we send her? Have you made choice of any school, in your mind?"

"I have been thinking of two schools; but really so far as I have any means of judging, there appears to be but little, if any, difference between them. Both have their ministers of high standing, who have employed, as assistants, the best teachers, I am told, within their reach; and have equal facilities, I suppose, for the education of those who may be sent to them. The one is at Philadelphia, and the other near New York; and, as the former is rather more convenient for us, as well as cheaper than the other, I should prefer it:—besides, it is in our own State."

"Ah!—these Protestant schools are too expensive for me, my dear; I cannot afford to send Julia to one of them. Why not send her to one of the Catholic schools?"

"Mr. Morton, you astonish me!—Send her to a Catholic school! Would you have our Julia to be made a Catholic?"

"And why, pray, should that be the result? I do not see that it follows, as a necessary result."

"It may not as a necessary result, but it appears to me to be a very natural one. I must confess that my Protestant education inclines me to look upon Romish institutions with a very suspicious eye; and my observation in life has but confirmed my prejudice on this subject, if prejudice it can be properly termed. Did not Miss Williams, after having been at a Catholic school for about a year, write home to her mother, for permission to be baptized by a priest, and join the church? And you recollect that Miss Beaumont, when at our house, on her way to the nunnery school, where she had been for a year or two, told you that she believed the Roman Catholic to be the only true religion; giving as her reason that it was more probable that the translation of the Bible, which was made by the Pope and his Cardinals, should be truer than that made by one man, King James of England; and when you asked her where she had got that precious piece of information, she replied that sister Agatha had told her so. And yet the parents of both these young ladies are strict Protestants, and members of the Presbyterian Church. You, doubtless, remember, too, to have heard, also, of a young lady, whose name I do not recollect, but who was the daughter of Protestant parents, and who, having graduated at a Catholic school, determined to become a nun, and refused to leave the institution, even to pay a farewell visit to her friends, before separating herself for ever from them. Indeed I have never conversed with Protestants who had been educated by Catholic teachers, that would suffer one word to be said, in their hearing, in disparagement of that church. Now all this confirms me in the fear that, if our daughter should be sent to a Catholic school, she will either, become a member of that faith, or be so weakened in her attachment to her own, as seriously to be injured by it, if, indeed, the result do not tend to infidelity."

"Well, my dear, you are certainly very eloquent on the subject, and yet you have failed to convince me that your fears have any other foundation than prejudice; and while, if I thought there was any real danger, I should be quite as unwilling as yourself to expose Julia to it, I am convinced, I must give my preference to that school which costs the least, provided the educational advantages are equal, and I presume they are. I therefore prefer that Julia should go to the nunnery school."

"It does seem to me, Mr. Moreton, that there must be some mistake as to the superior cheapness of the Catholic schools, *in fact*, while I admit that *in appearance* they are so. Are you sure that they are cheaper in the end?"

"I have seen and compared the circulars put forth by both sides; and certainly so far as these, in their respective statements of terms, &c., afford proper data upon which to form an opinion, the Catholic schools seem to have the decided advantage: but I am aware that, after all, it is exceedingly difficult to arrive at the truth of the matter in this way. The only sure method of determining the question, is to compare the bill as made out and paid at the close of the sessions."

"Yes—and I know that many parents have been greatly disappointed when they called for their bills, and found them so much higher than they had expected, by reason of *extra charges*,

as more than to equal the difference in the apparent cost of education at these Catholic schools, as set forth in these circulars. And then, there is such a thing, you know, as finding a cheap article of little real value after you have bought it, when a small addition to the outlay at the time of purchase would have bought one infinitely superior, and of permanent worth.

"Well, my dear, it grows late: suppose we defer the further consideration of this matter for a few days, until I shall return from New York, where I must go, next week, for goods."

So saying, the subject was dropped for the present; and, Mary having returned from the party, after a lively conversation upon the incidents of the evening that she had spent at their neighbour's, the family retired for the night.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Moreton visits New York—His conversation with Mr. Vandusen—Its effect upon Mr. Moreton—Mr. Vandusen's letter to the Mother Superior.

DURING the following week, Mr. Moreton went to New York, to purchase goods; and, while sitting in the counting-room of Messrs. Vandusen and Co., with whom he dealt largely, waiting for his bills to be made out, the senior partner remarked to him—

"By the way, Mr. Moreton, you have a family, have you not?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply—"a wife and five children; three of whom are daughters."

"Where are you educating them?" asked the merchant.

"The oldest has finished her education," returned Mr. Moreton—"but the next oldest ought to be sent to a boarding-school somewhere, and I must confess I am greatly at a loss where to place her. I would like to send her to the Catholic school at Bethlehem, because it is so much cheaper than our Protestant schools; but Mrs. Moreton is so opposed to trusting her daughter in the hands of the Catholics, that I do not like to say positively she shall go there."

"It is very natural, indeed, that the women should feel thus opposed to these Catholic schools. My wife, for instance, was violently opposed to them; but they are, after all, the best schools, my dear sir, depend upon it. Our oldest daughter has been for two years at the convent school, some fifty miles from this city; notwithstanding the opposition of her mother, who reluctantly yielded to my wishes in the matter; and I assure you that she is making most astonishing progress in her studies. Mrs. Vandusen, finding this to be the case, has become quite reconciled, and now sees the folly of her former dislike to these institutions."

"But you have a very excellent boarding school in your own city, I am told, conducted by a Presbyterian minister; I should have thought that you would have patronized that school, as you belong to that denomination," remarked Mr. Moreton, in an interrogative tone.

"So I do belong to that denomination, my dear sir, but I do not feel as if I were under any obligation, for that reason, to pay fifty per cent. more for the education of my daughter at a Presbyterian school, than I would have to pay at one belonging to

the Catholics. These Protestant schools are too high for me; Mr. Moreton; I cannot stand their unconscionable prices."

"That is just what I told Mrs. Moreton;"—was the reply, in a tone that evinced the gratification of the speaker at finding that he was not mistaken in his views, as expressed to his wife; for he was exceedingly tenacious of his opinions—"but she was under the impression that the *extras* which are charged in the bills, made the Catholic schools the most expensive, after all."

"It is a mistake, my dear sir, depend upon it,"—said the merchant—"at least such has not been my experience; and the 'truth of the pudding'—you know the rest... I surely ought to know all about it, after two years' experience."

Mr. Moreton felt perfectly satisfied upon the point of expense, but asked Mr. Vandusen to tell him, candidly, what he thought about the efforts of the priests and nuns to proselyte Protestant children to the Romish faith; and whether he had any reason to believe that they had tampered with the religious faith of his daughter.

"It is all humbug, sir;"—replied the latter, with some warmth of manner,—“the result of sectarian bigotry. I am astonished, as a practical man, that sensible people should have raised such a hue and cry about the proselyting disposition of the Catholics. I assure you that I do not believe a word of it.”

Mr. Moreton thanked the merchant for his information, and expressed his determination to send his daughter, the next spring, to the Catholic school at Bethlehem.

"But," replied Mr. Vandusen, "is not that too near home, sir? My advice to you would be, not to send your daughter where she would be anxious to come home every week, because it was so short a distance to travel, and where she would be dissatisfied if she did not get to visit her friends frequently; but to place her at school at such a distance as to make it inconvenient for her to go home oftener than once in six months, since her mind would be undisturbed by the proximity of her relations, and her progress in her studies would consequently be the greater;" and assured Mr. Moreton that he considered the school to which he sent his own daughter, the very best in all the country.

Convinced by his arguments, Mr. Moreton thanked the merchant again, and, having settled his bills, bade him farewell, and returned to the hotel where he was stopping.

No sooner had he left the counting-room, than Mr. Vandusen, with great glee expressed in his countenance, sat down at his desk, and wrote the following letter, which he despatched to the post office.

"New York, December 6, 1810.

"To the Mother Superior of the Convent of the Annunciation.
"DEAR MADAM,

"I have just had a long conversation with one of my customers, a Mr. Charles Moreton, of Pennsylvania. He is a wealthy merchant, having two daughters to be educated; one of whom he will no doubt send to you next spring; and the other, in due time, if he should be pleased. I found his head full of the usual notions about *extras*, and *proselyting*, and all that, but succeeded in sweeping the cobwebs from his brain. I think you may certainly calculate upon his bringing you his daughter in the spring. When she arrives, you will credit my account with twenty dol-

lars, according to our contract. I hope my daughter's health is good, and that she progresses well in her studies. The affair of the —— comes on swimmingly. I shall, without doubt, get that money secured to the order.

"With the highest consideration, I remain

"Your unworthy servant,

"CONRAD VANDUSEN."

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Moreton's sanguine partiality to Catholic schools—Mrs. Moreton's fears and doubts—Julia sent as a boarder to the Convent of the Annunciation—Mr. and Mrs. Moreton attend the first examination—Engaging manners of the Mother Superior—Extras—The parents receive alarming intelligence—Distress and anxiety—Mr. Moreton hastens to snatch his child from her impending doom—Arrives at the Convent, and demands to see his daughter—Falsehood and treachery of the Mother Superior—Julia rushes into her father's arms, and is borne by him from the hatred Convent.

WHEN Mr. Moreton returned home, he related to his wife the conversation which had taken place between himself and Mr. Vandusen; laying great stress upon the fact that the latter was a member of the Presbyterian Church,—than which none had a more inveterate hostility towards the Catholics, or had done more to expose the errors of their doctrines, or the enormity of their practices; and, as he said, it spoke volumes in refutation of the slanders which had been heaped upon the Catholics, that a Presbyterian should bear such testimony as he had borne to the excellence of the convent school, the cheapness of its terms, and the absence of intention or effort to proselyte the children of Protestant parents. Withal, the fact that he was sending his own daughter to this same school, and his highly respectable standing as a merchant, forbade the idea of any insincerity, or want of sufficient intelligence upon the subject.

Still Mrs. Moreton was not convinced, in spite of all this array of imposing testimony; and, while her husband gently insinuated that she was very obstinate in her prejudices, she could not wholly rid her mind of apprehension, or be brought to believe that there was no real danger incurred in sending Julia to a Catholic school.

But finding that it was useless to argue the matter any further with Mr. Moreton, she reluctantly yielded the point; hoping that she might be able to fortify Julia's mind so strongly against the wiles and sophistry of a crafty priesthood, so that she might safely pass the fiery ordeal which she fully believed was about to be placed before her child; and when, in the following spring, the time fixed for the departure of Julia with her father for the convent school, arrived; and the vehicle which bore them away, receded from her view, she returned from the street door into her sitting room, with a heavy heart; feeling as though a dark cloud, surcharged with evil, had gathered over herself and family.

On his return, after having placed Julia at school, his wife had a thousand anxious questions to be answered; all of which he answered so readily, and with such apparent satisfaction to him-

self, that her fears were quieted, and hope gained the ascendant. He informed her that, on their arrival at the convent, after a fatiguing but rather pleasant journey of four days, the Mother Superior, whom he represented as a lovely French woman, in the prime of life, and of most elegant manners, received him with the greatest kindness, and throwing her arms around Julia, kissed her affectionately, welcoming her to the institution, and promising to be a mother to her, while she continued there; that Julia had found one or two old acquaintances among the pupils, and seemed to be satisfied; and that, on his expressing a wish that his daughter's principles should in no way be interfered with, she assured him, in the most frank and positive manner, that he need not entertain any fears on that subject, as they had no desire to make proselytes of the children of Protestant parents.

"In short," added Mr. Moreton, "she is one of the most agreeable ladies I have ever met with; and I feel well assured that our daughter is placed in good hands."

Five months passed away, and the summer vacation came on. Mr. Moreton and his lady had attended the examination; and, although Julia's progress did not meet their expectation, yet they supposed that this might be attributed to the novelty of the position in which she had been placed—away from home, among strangers, for the first time in her life—and they indulged the hope that she would do better, the next session.

On calling for his bill, he was surprised to find that it was larger than he had anticipated. There was so much charged as an *extra* item for this, and so much for that; so much for fuel, and for room rent, and for stationery, and for medical attendance, although she had not been sick an hour during the entire time; and so much for store goods, &c.; amounting in all to some thirty or forty per cent. more than he had expected. Unwilling, however, to dispute the account; fascinated as he was by the elegant manners of the Mother Superior, and gratified by the deference and respect which were shown to himself and wife, by all the inmates of the family, he paid the bill, without a word of complaint; resolving in his own mind, that for the future, he would take care to avoid all extras, by furnishing every thing from home, as far as practicable, and by prohibiting the opening of store accounts for his daughter's use. Besides, he prided himself, as a business man, upon his tact and foresight; and, Mrs. Moreton being present, when the settlement was made with the accountant, though she was engaged in conversation with the Mother Superior, he was very unwilling that she should know that he had been outwitted; especially when so much had been said on this very point, prior to placing Julia in the institution.

Julia appeared pleased to revisit her home; but her mother was pained to find that she did not manifest as great an attachment to it, as before leaving it for school; and that she more than once wished for the time to come when her father was to take her back. She found, too, that her daughter loved to talk of the Mother Superior, and of sister this, and sister that, frequently extolling their great kindness to her, their piety, and their happy condition; seeming to think that the life of a nun was the very beautiful, with her, of human happiness on earth. When Mrs. Moreton would attempt to combat this notion, she found Julia disposed to be wayward, and to resent the attempt as an insult, by impli-

cation, offered to those whom she so highly esteemed. Knowing her impulsive nature, however, and how every novelty that pleased her was wont to effect her mind, she thought this a mere girlish effervescence of momentary excitement, and that after a while, when the novelty had worn off, she would see things in a truer light.

At length came the day for Julia's return to school; and her mother, having given her much excellent advice, and made her promise to write, either to herself or to her father, once a fortnight, bade her adieu. Arrived at the convent, Mr. Moreton and Julia were received with similar demonstrations of kindness to those which had marked their first reception, while there seemed to be more of familiar cordiality in the attentions paid to them; and the former, having given the necessary instructions as to his daughter's expenses, left her; congratulating himself that he had effectually guarded against heavy bills, for the future.

The second session had expired, during which Julia's letters had been received regularly, in keeping with her promise; and, there being no vacation between that and the ensuing session, she did not come home, her father's business engagements preventing him from going to her; but, as her mother's anxiety about her was greatly quieted by the regularity with which her letters arrived, and the improvement both in style and penmanship which they indicated, it was determined that she should remain for the third term.

But after Julia had been thus at school, fifteen months, and when her parents were congratulating themselves upon the selection which they had made of a school for her—albeit Mr. Moreton had ascertained, beyond all question, that in point of economy he had gained nothing, since it had cost him something more, at this professedly cheap school, for the education of his daughter, thus far, than it would have cost him at Protestant schools, which had been denounced as being so unconscionably extravagant in their charges; a letter was received from Julia, which filled their minds with dismay and deep anxiety for the future. It was written at great length, evidently with studied care, and in a style so wholly different from her former letters, or from anything that might have been reasonably expected of her, as to convince them that she had not written it herself, but copied it from the dictation of others.

After thanking her parents, in very measured terms, for their care and affection hitherto manifested towards her, and particularly for having placed her at the convent school, where she had enjoyed so rare advantage, and spent the happiest period of her existence—she proceeded to state that, without any efforts having been made, on the part of her teachers, to bias her mind, or to change her religious faith, she had become convinced that the Catholic was the only true faith; that all beside was heresy; and that she felt it to be her imperative duty to join the Catholic church, and, at the proper age, to become a nun; but that the *respect*—that was the cold word which she addressed to her kind and affectionate parents—the respect which she entertained for them, constrained her to ask their consent, before she took so important a step—adding, that she hoped they would not withhold this, since, in that event, she must obey God rather than man, and should proceed, in spite of their refusal,

None but those who live only for their children, and feel that these constitute the end and object of all their plans and purposes, can imagine the feelings which rushed tumultuously into the bosoms of the father and mother, as they perused this harrowing letter. They seemed to themselves to have been sleeping, in fancied security, on the very brink of a frightful precipice, and to have suddenly awakened to find it crumbling under them, and ready to carry them with it, in its headlong plunge into the yawning abyss beneath. The mother sat in speechless grief; while the scalding tears ran down her cheeks. The father, feeling that his own penuriousness had rendered him deaf to the warnings of his wife, when her fears led her, in the outset, to deprecate the step that had wrought this mischief, was self-reproached and self-condemned; yet, recollecting that the interposition of his authority might and could avert the impending evil, did not give way to his feelings, but stood pale, stern, and with contracted brow, thinking what course he had best pursue. For some minutes, neither uttered a word.

It was noon—and the untasted meal had for some time stood unnoticed on the board: no member of that unusually so happy family felt any inclination to partake of it. There they sat, as if death, or worse than death, had snatched away one beloved of all. At length the mother, with a strong effort, broke the painful silence, and said, in the tones of one nerved by urgent resolution to a decisive step.

“Mr. Moreton, we must go to Julia. She cannot resist the appeal of a mother’s love. We will save her yet.”

“We will start at once,” was the prompt reply of the determined father; and, giving immediate orders that the carriage should be got ready, they were soon on their way to rescue their child from the imminent ruin which threatened.

Having travelled as rapidly as possible, they arrived at the convent, in the afternoon of the third day from home; and, while the mother remained in the carriage at the outside gate, in accordance with the plan which had been previously adopted for their government, Mr. Moreton hastened up the long avenue, heavily shaded with large forest trees, through which it wound its tortuous way—fit emblem of the practices of those who dwelt within that dark and gloomy pile of imprisonment and shame; and, knocking at the hall-door, demanded to see the Superior. The sister porter invited him into the parlour, where presently he was joined by the lady whose elegant manners had so fascinated his judgment, on their first interview, but whom he was now disposed to regard as the most treacherous of her sex; since she had betrayed the sacred trust committed to her hands by confiding parents, for he could not doubt that this woman was at the bottom of his daughter’s defection.

She met him with unusual affability, and an appearance of the utmost gratification at seeing him; and was proceeding to make inquiry as to the health of Mrs. Moreton and the family, when he interrupted her by saying,—

“I wish to see my daughter, madam.”

With a most winning smile upon her countenance, the Superior replied—

“I regret very much that you cannot now see Julia, sir; she has been somewhat indisposed, but has fallen asleep: and it would be injurious to her to awake her.”

Satisfied that this was a mere ruse, on the part of the Superior, to gain time, or to accomplish some other purpose of her own, the indignant father, throwing off the restraint which, until this moment, he had maintained upon himself, cried, in tones of great excitement:

"My daughter, Madam; I want my daughter. Where is she?"

"You cannot see your daughter, sir," replied the Superior, with cool self-possession, still retaining a bland smile upon her countenance. "She is ill in bed, and cannot be seen."

"I am her father, and must see her;"—and, as he thus spoke, with increased energy of manner, he took a step forward, as though he would force his way to the apartment of his daughter.

The Superior, however, anticipating his purpose, instantly rose, and, intercepting him, stood full in his way, between him and the door. Then, drawing herself up to her full height, while she assumed an air of offended dignity,—a slight flush of excitement playing upon her really beautiful countenance,—answered quietly, but firmly—

"I rule here, sir; and I say to you that you cannot see your daughter. I say to you, further, that *she* does not wish to see *you*."

"Does not wish to see her father? What does this mean?"—inquired Mr. Moreton, his whole manner indicating the greatest surprise and agitation of soul.

"Because she has renounced you, together with all the vanities of this sinful world, and claims the protection of this sanctuary;"—haughtily answered the Superior.

"It is false!"—thundered the outraged parent, who, now wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, was about to push the Superior aside, and would doubtless have committed some act of violence, but, just at this moment, his daughter, who had by some means learned the arrival of her father, or heard his voice in altercation with the Mother Superior, rushed into the room, her dress greatly disordered, and, passing by the latter, who tried in vain to arrest her, threw herself into his arms, crying, in accents which thrilled to his inmost soul—"Father, save me! O, save me!"

Clasping her to his bosom with an energy that mocked all interference, for he was a powerful man, the father cast a look of proud defiance upon the no longer mild and placid Superior—who, with the countenance of a demon, and the eye of an infuriated tigress, that had just had snatched from her jaws the prey which she was about to share with the whelps, advanced as though she would tear Julia from the grasp of her natural protector;—and, pushing her outstretched arm aside, hastened with the almost fainting child to her mother; who, meanwhile, too remote to see or to hear what had passed, waited in great anxiety the return of her husband to the carriage.

The reader can imagine how pleasant was the surprise to Mrs. Moreton, and what must have been the revulsion of her feelings, when Julia, throwing herself upon her bosom, and putting her arms around her neck, cried, in a voice almost choked with emotion—"Forgive me, my dearest mother; I will never leave you again."

Driving rapidly away, Mr. Moreton went to the neighbouring village, where he handed to a friend a sum of money necessary

to pay his daughter's bill at the convent, together with an order for the delivery of her clothing; and then turned his horses' heads towards home.

CHAPTER XV.

Julia's narrative—Specious and artful conduct of the Mother Superior—
How the letter was wrote.

DURING the journey homeward, and after they had reached that dear spot,—over which had so recently gathered thick gloom and deep sorrow, but where sunshine and gladness now reigned,—Julia related to her parents what had transpired during the time that she had spent at the convent school, the most prominent of which is here summarily laid before the reader.

It seems that, on her arrival at the convent, when first brought there by her father, Julia became a great favourite, both with the nuns and with the boarders. Her vivacity, her talent at repartee, her general amiability, and her studiousness, gained the respect, and won the affection, of all, from the Mother Superior down to the lowest menial. The former soon fixed upon her as a suitable subject of which to make a useful and valuable acquisition to the order; and, with the quick perception of a strong mind trained under Jesuit influence, readily discovered the prominent traits in her disposition, and devised the plan by means of which she might best accomplish her design; yet, with all the cunning and wariness of her class, she so completely disguised her real purpose, that Julia only became aware of it at the very last moment, as it were, and then only through the instrumentality of one who had previously fallen a victim to the same artifice, and who perished in the same coils.

During the first session of the school, the Mother Superior did nothing more than gain the affections of the young girl; well knowing that this must be a first step, and that with these her confidence would be acquired as a necessary consequence. In order to do this, she treated her with distinguished kindness; allowing her many privileges which were not granted to others; and encouraging her frequent visits, in the evenings, to her private parlour—save when the Father General came to see her—where she was sure to find something nice to eat, and something that would interest her mind; her taste in both respects being carefully consulted. She placed in the hands of Julia, rare and beautiful pictures, representing the miracles and prominent incidents in the lives of the Saints of the Church and would have her to read aloud interesting passages from their history. She would also speak to Julia of these; while the silvery notes of her voice would fall like sweet music upon the ear, and the girl's enthusiastic soul would be enrapt by the magic of her descriptive and narrative powers. All day long, Julia's studies were enlivened, and her tasks made lighter, by the anticipation of spending an evening in the Superior's private apartment, where every thing was so snug and so comfortable.

But all this time not a word was said about the peculiar dogmas of the Romish religion, save in the most careless, and, as it were, accidental manner; not a disrespectful allusion to the Protes-

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But all this time not a word was said about the peculiar dogmas of the Romish religion, save in the most careless, and, as it were, accidental manner; not a disrespectful allusion to the Protes-

tant faith was pronounced at all, it was with the utmost apparent kindness of feeling, and with the greatest show of consideration for those who bore it. Neither was Julia required to comply, at any time, with Romish forms and usages, further than was generally expected from all Protestant pupils; but, if a peculiarly interesting or imposing service was to be performed, her curiosity to witness it was aroused, beforehand, by slow and gradual approaches which wholly concealed from view the real object; and, after it was over, it would be introduced in the most natural manner imaginable, as a topic of conversation, and so as to lead an ardent and imaginative mind to inquire into its purport.

Thus, without appearing to seek it, frequent opportunity was afforded for the explanation of Catholic dogmas, and their implanation in Julia's tender mind, before she was aware of it. No wonder, then, if with such a nature as hers, impulsive, confiding, and enthusiastic; fond of novelty, and delighting in excitement; with so much around her to furnish aliment for her mental appetites; and, added to all this, the presence of a master spirit—wise, strongwilled, unscrupulous—which knew well how to control and adjust this complicated machinery for the production of the largest results in the accomplishment of its own occult purposes; Julia should have been so fully, yet unconsciously, trained by the Mother Superior, in the short space of five months, as to be made to think and feel just as the latter might will that she should; and to be ripe for the development of her plans, on Julia's return from home, at the close of the summer vacation. No wonder, too, that, under the circumstances of false colouring which had been thrown around her, she should regard the life of a nun as being the fullest embodiment of human felicity; as all sunshine, without an obscuring cloud, or fitting rack, to dim for an instance its brightness.

On her return from home, however, after the vacation, the rich politician, into whose hands the unwary girl had so unfortunately fallen, began to narrow the circle of her toils, and to bring them to bear more directly upon the focal point of her schemings. The first object to be accomplished was to destroy her confidence in her own religious faith; and although this had, to a certain extent, been covertly but successfully, done, yet the completion of the work was to be cautiously effected, or great mischief to the plans of the Superior might be the result. The social evenings spent in her room afforded suitable opportunities for this; and, as it was more than likely that Julia would not return home before the expiration of ten months, time was not wanting. Besides, how really easy the task with a young girl who had been so imperfectly instructed, as she necessarily was, in the principles of her faith. Before the third month had elapsed, the end was gained:—Protestantism was rejected, and it became a light affair to substitute Romanism in its stead. On the day before the session closed, Julia was baptized in the chapel, and became a member of the Roman Catholic church.

All this time, there had been no compulsion. Led in silken fetters, Julia never for a moment supposed that she was captive to the iron will of another, but seemed to herself to have taken step by step, wholly of her own accord; until not only was effected what we have seen, but she had been made to believe that it was right and proper to conceal from her parents what had occurred.

Nay, more, that it was right and proper to deceive them as to the true state of her feelings, and make them conclude, from the tenor of her letters, that she was still a firm adherent to the faith of her ancestors; "the end—your devotion to the service of God and the Virgin," said the Mother Superior—"will sanctify the means;"—the deception of her best friends, her parents.

Now that she was a member of the Catholic church, she was more than ever in the power of the Superior, and subject to her control; while the latter, in her turn, found increased means of exercising that power, in the imposing ceremonies, the mystic symbols, the thrilling music, the demoralizing confessional, and the constant appeals made to the innate superstition of poor fallen human nature; indeed, in all that pertains to the ritual of that church. In these, Julia found excitement; in these, therefore, she took an enthusiastic delight; and whenever, on the reception of a letter from home, or from any other cause, old associations and old attachments would linger about the hearthstone of memory, and rekindle its embers, the Mother Superior, from whom she concealed nothing, would promptly but adroitly smother them, until she became completely weaned from all that were once most dear to her; and her great anxiety now was not to be recalled home, from the scenes and pursuits in which her happiness seemed to be so completely involved.

She was now in a fit state of mind to be influenced to take the remaining steps, and to be made a permanent member of the family in which she resided; in other words, to become a nun. As this was a step, however, in which she could be forcibly controlled by her parents, at least until she was of age; and as the Mother Superior had now gained all that was immediately necessary to the ultimate accomplishment of her great design; she determined to await the close of the ensuing session, which was to be her last, before anything further should be done; and, meanwhile, to do all in her power to confirm and establish Julia in her new faith.

Thus things progressed until within a few weeks of the termination of the third session, when the Mother Superior, having prepared a letter which she thought would answer the purpose, placed it in Julia's hands to be copied. After numerous alterations and corrections, which suggested themselves from time to time, had been made, this letter was finally sent to Mr. Moreton, but, by some unaccountable detention in the post office, did not reach him as soon as it should have done, by at least ten days. This delay was the salvation of Julia, as will be shown in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sister Theresa, her sufferings and death—Her dying warning to Julia—Its effect upon Julia—The Mother Superior's rage in the chamber of death—The Father General's base scheme to enrich the order—The Mother Superior in a dilemma.

It appears, from Julia's recital to her parents, that, while rambling over the convent building, one day, she found, lying upon a pallet of straw, with ragged and insufficient bed-clothing spread

over her, in a small room, in a remote and rather unoccupied portion of the vast pile, a poor nun, whose countenance bore the traces of great beauty, but who was fearfully wasted by disease and suffering. Discovering, on conversing with her, that she was greatly neglected by the members of the household, Julia requested, and obtained, permission, from the Mother Superior, to visit this nun, which was the more readily granted because the latter really knew nothing about the true condition of one who had long been lost sight of by her as an helpless and ruined victim, save as her name was from time to time reported upon the sick list. From that day on until the poor nun died, Julia spent an hour or more by her bed-side, every day, and occasionally sat up with her, a portion of the night. Her kindness to Sister Theresa—for that was the name of this poor nun, whom the reader will recollect as having had an interview with the Father General, in the convent garden at midnight—soon won her grateful affection; and, as her light footsteps would be heard daily ascending the stairs on her errand of mercy, Theresa's countenance would beam with gladness. Sometimes, when Julia would be seated by her bed-side, she would look up in her face, with a smile of heartfelt gratitude, and would press her hand earnestly, while the big tears would start to her eye, and trickle down her cheek, as she whispered a prayer to the Virgin, for blessings on her benefactress.

On the morning of the very day upon which Mr. Moreton reached the convent, as related in the chapter preceding the last, Julia paid her usual visit to her patient, as she called her, and was alarmed to find her a great deal worse than she had been previously. Taking her by the hand, Sister Theresa said to her, in tones of deep emotion,—“Dear Julia, I am dying: I feel that I cannot live much longer; and because I love you for your love to me, and for your charity to a poor deserted nun, I wish to give you a solemn charge, as from the lips of a dying woman; which it would embitter my last moments to withhold from you, while it is the best return I can make for your exceeding kindness to me. Never consent to become a nun.”

Julia started back, as though she had been stung by an adder, and seemed to doubt if she had heard aright, or as if she thought that the poor nun, might be out of her head.

Sister Theresa read her thoughts; and, again taking her hand, and pressing it earnestly in her own, repeated the charge in a still more solemn and impressive manner than before. Julia would have spoken, but the nun said to her—“Listen to me. I had thought that my melancholy story would have died with me; and, indeed, I know not that I shall have strength to relate it to you; yet, deeply indebted to you as I am, I cannot better employ my remaining strength than in communicating that which may save you from a fate like mine. In the narrative which I am about to give you, you will find abundant cause for the charge which has filled your mind with astonishment.”

“I am,” continued Theresa, “the only child of wealthy parents in the south, who placed me here, some years since, as a pupil in the convent school. For two years after my arrival, the Mother Superior lavished upon me acts of kindness similar to those which she, I know, has exhibited towards yourself and others, and with the same motives. By degrees—for I have not the strength to relate to you all of the particulars—she led me to

abandon my own Protestant faith, and to embrace Romanism—until, at the end of the second year, I found myself a novice, fully committed to take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—and eventually I became a nun; my parents, however, being kept in profound ignorance of the whole matter, until the final step had been irretrievably taken. My mother, as I have since learned accidentally, when informed of it, took to her bed, and never left it until carried to her grave. My father has more than once applied at the door of the convent, for permission to see me, but without my knowledge, and in my name has been refused; being told that I did not wish to see him; and, when it was too late, I have been told of his visit, for the purpose of harrowing my feelings, and making my sufferings the greater. I know not whether he is yet alive or not.” Here Sister Theresa’s tears interrupted her narrative; and she was compelled to pause, for a few minutes, while she gave vent to them. Then, resuming the story of her misfortunes, she said—

“After the imposing ceremony, which attending my adopting the religious habit, had been gone through with, and I had time to sit down, and calmly reflect upon what I had done, I found myself a prey to the keenest self-reproaches for my folly, and to irrepressible longings after my home and my dear friends. I found, too, that the manner of the Mother Superior was wholly changed towards me. She no longer invited me to her private parlour, where I had spent so many happy hours. She no longer met me with kind words and loving looks: but, in the place of these, had assumed towards me an aspect of cold and haughty control, and kept me at a most cruel distance. I was subjected to menial offices, to heavy tasks, and to severe penances, which seriously affected my health. I had no amusements, no relaxations—I was cut off from all those associations and endearments after which my heart yearned, and for the enjoyment of which I felt myself qualified by the possession of a warm and generous nature. In short, I was buried alive. In vain I sought for some one into whose bosom I could pour the tale of my sorrows, even among those around me who were as unhappy as I; for so completely were they under the tyrannical control of the Mother Superior, that, when once or twice I sought consolation from this source, my confidence was betrayed, and severe punishment was the consequence. My Father Confessor made dishonourable proposals to me, and I spurned him from me; but the tempter came in the garb of an angel of light, holding the olive branch of friendship in his hand, and with the sweet words of sympathy upon his oily tongue—I could not resist him—and fell. O horrible fall! how fearfully punished! The tempter was the lover of the Mother Superior; she found it out, and, not daring to punish him, although it led to a terrific scene between them, which had like to have resulted in very serious consequences to both, but was at length compromised, and a reconciliation took place; her jealousy and wrath found their mark in me; and my untimely and painful death is the result. But what wonder that I fell beneath the insidious approaches of the wily Father General, who knew all the loneliness of a poor nun’s life, the yearnings of her heart after kindness, and the sufferings and bitter disappointments which I had previously endured. What wonder that I should first feel grateful to him who spoke to me the only words

of soothing which fell upon my greedy ears; that I should then love him; and then——. But, dear Julia, do not despise me—do not forsake me. I have repented in dust and ashes; I trust there is mercy in heaven for me, who have been so bitterly deceived on earth. For years I have endured a living death; and since my health has failed me, and I have no longer been able to render any service to the establishment—a period of thirteen months, during most of which time I have been confined to my bed—I have been wholly neglected by both the Superior and the nuns, save as necessity required their attention at distant intervals. Even the Father Confessor has visited me but once, and then at my own most urgent request: until you, my dear Julia, accidentally discovered me, and began that series of kindnesses which has lit up the gloom of my sick room, and alleviated my sufferings to so great an extent. God bless you for it, noble-hearted girl!”

It had cost the nun a great effort to make this recital to Julia; and it had been frequently interrupted by a gush of tears, or the hard, dry cough which was rapidly taking her to the grave; and, when she had concluded it, she fell back exhausted on her pallet. Her kind nurse administered some cordials which she had brought with her—the purchase of her own pocket-money—and, after lying quietly for some time, Sister Theresa, turning to her with a countenance upon which the seal of death was legibly impressed, said to her:—

“May heaven reward you, dear Julia, for your goodness; I cannot in any other way than by my poor thanks. But let me most earnestly entreat you to heed the warning which I have given you, in this relation of my sad life since I entered this prison. O, if you would not bring sorrow upon your relations; if you would not have every kindly affection, every generous emotion, every faculty of mind, crushed, and seared and withered—if you would not live with a burning void within your bosom—a craving appetite after friendship, and love, and social happiness, which is doomed never to be satisfied; if you would not witness scenes which curdle the blood, and freeze the very soul—if you would not loath yourself and all about you—if you would not be tempted, as I have been, almost daily, to commit suicide, as affording the only means of escape from conventual pollution and imprisonment—if you would not die, at the last, away from your kindred and friends, deserted by all, as I am—by all but you, whom God seems to have sent to me as an angel of mercy, to pity her whom her race contemns—O! if you would escape all of those evils, aye, ten thousand more; I beseech you, never consent to become—”

“Vile wretch! what means this?” cried, or rather shrieked, the Mother Superior, who, for the first time, alarmed at Julia’s long visit to the sick nun, had crept stealthily up stairs, and arrived in time to overhear the last sentence or two of the charge which had just been uttered, or rather so abruptly interrupted by her exclamation. When Julia, almost beside herself with terror, looked around to discover the source from which this interruption came, she beheld the Superior, standing in the doorway, pale with rage, her eye flashing fire, and her hand uplifted as though she would smite the poor victim, lying helpless on the couch of suffering.

But that victim was beyond the reach of her malice—she was dead; and the other, whom she was about to immolate on the altar of religious bigotry, had escaped her coils. The scales had fallen from her eyes; the delusion had been dissipated, as the morning mist; she seemed to have awoke from some dream which had fast bound her senses in illusion, and to have become sensible of the realities which surrounded her, threatening her destruction.

The Mother Superior saw it all at a glance—saw, too, that her passion had betrayed her, and had served to make the matter worse; but, confident in her own abilities, and fondly hoping that she could yet recover the ground which she had lost, set herself about the work, with infinite address. It was, however, too late. Overcome with excess of emotion, Julia sat weeping as if her heart would break. The Superior, putting her arm around her, and gently bidding her arise, left the death-chamber, carefully locking the door behind them, and led her down stairs to her own bed-room, where, laying her upon her own soft couch, she told her to compose herself, and try to sleep. Then, entering the adjoining room, which we have said was fitted up as an oratory, and which contained an escritoire in which she deposited her valuable papers, she took, from a secret drawer, a letter received that morning, and which she perused with great attention. It ran thus:

“*New York, July 10, 1812.*”

“To the Mother Superior of the Convent of the Annunciation.

“DEAR MADAM,

“I have just been informed, by the Father Beaupres, resident at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, that the father of Emilie de Vere, now the Sister Theresa, a member of the convent under your spiritual government, has recently died, leaving an immense estate, and making provision, by his last will and testament, that his only daughter, this same Emilie, shall inherit ‘the whole property, if she will renounce the Roman Catholic faith, and leave the convent in which she is;’ and that, in the event of her refusing to do so, the said property shall go to distant relations, in France, the daughter having nothing.

“I wish you to converse with the Sister Theresa, and devise some plan by means of which this inheritance can be secured to the order. I shall repair to the convent on the fifth day from the date of this letter.

“I remain as ever, yours,

“FRANCOIS JUBERT.

“Father General, &c.”

The Mother Superior felt greatly agitated, as she perused this document, and scarcely knew what to do. Here was an immense fortune within the grasp of the order; but she upon whose life it depended, was dead. True, no one knew it as yet, besides herself and Julia; but she had reason to believe that Julia had heard enough, from the lips of the dying nun, to have influenced her mind unfavourably towards the order, and, perhaps, to have undone the entire work of the last fifteen months. O, how deeply she regretted her want of consideration, in permitting Julia to attend upon the sick nun; but so fully had she succeeded, as she thought, in the work that she had planned and executed as re-

garded the former, and such was the tyrannical dread in which she held every member of the household, that she could not suppose it possible that the latter would have dared to say one word to Julia about the past; until her apprehension having been excited by her pupil's long absence,—for she had not come down to the dinner-table, as usual,—she had ascended to the sick chamber, and there overheard a portion of what passed, as has already been seen. Should Julia, when she went out among the boarders, make known the fact of the nun's death, it would for ever destroy all hope of securing the inheritance; and even if she could prevent this, which would be a very difficult affair, because of the impression that it might make upon her own mind, still the dead body was in the house, and must be disposed of in some way, without the knowledge of any member of the household. She bit her lips in very intensity of thought; and her feelings were wrought up to a high pitch of excitement, by her malignity to the dead nun, who, she feared, had achieved, although unconsciously, a wonderful retribution upon herself and upon the order, for the wrongs which she had endured at their hands; by apprehension that Julia was lost to the convent, unless something could be done to prevent it; and by anxiety to bring order out of this chaos, and victory out of this apparent defeat; when she heard a gentle rap at her chamber door. Instantly passing from the oratory into her bed-room, where Julia still lay upon her couch, she opened the door, where stood a servant to inform her that a gentleman wished to see her in the parlour. Not supposing, for a moment, that it might be Mr. Moreton—whom of all other persons she least wished to see at that time,—she hastened to the room where he awaited her; neglecting, as she left her chamber, to close the door behind her. Presently, Julia, overhearing the altercation between her father and the Superior, and recognising the voice of the former, flew down the stairway, and rushed into her father's arms, as has before been related, and thus escaped from the dangers which were becoming so imminent around her.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Mother Superior outwitted—Cursing and praying—Hasty summons to the Father General—Insulting the dead—Jesuitical conduct.

WHEN Mr. Moreton bore Julia away from the parlour of the convent, the Mother Superior stood in speechless amazement, for an instant, and then, hastening to the front door, watched his rapid progress along the avenue, until he was lost to her sight, when, like one who had been spell-bound under the influence of the night-mare, she seemed to become suddenly aware that something must be done, or Julia, her victim, would be lost to her for ever, and the harvest of all her schemings be destroyed, just at the moment when it was ripe for the sickle of the reaper.

Pulling violently the hall-bell, she ordered the servant who answered the summons, to call two male servants that belonged to the establishment, and were at work in the garden; but whether, during the interval that elapsed before they made their appearance, she had concluded that any further steps would be impru-

