



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XVIII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1867.

No. 8.

LOVE AND MONEY.

A TALE.

A cry rang through the air which made him hasten back to Italy. Nationality, patriotism, independence, are great words, and demand our respect when uttered by brave and good men.

Love of country is most praiseworthy, and little deserving of honor is he who does not possess it. What excites to deeds of daring and renown more powerfully than love of country? Cosmopolitans are seldom little else than men of weak understanding and small heart. Why should not every one love the land of their birth, the soil upon which he first trod? Why should not every one work night and main to add to its glory? Patriotism is the soul of the arts and sciences. Really talented men have always been proud of the country of their nativity, and have striven to raise its character. Yet this word patriotism has been often borne aloft as a standard by cowardly assassins and blood-thirsty maniacs, whose only thought is plunder and how they may elevate themselves on the ruins of order. Anarchy, moral depravity, licentiousness, vain-glory, can march beneath it; but, though unchecked at first, they must eventually give way before justice, when the sacred emblem will take its proper position. Sardonia cried out 'Independence' with a lusty tongue, and the soldiers of its tyrant-king rushed to the gates of Naples for the purpose of relieving its citizens from the yoke which they averred could be nothing else than galling, seeing that their ruler was not Victor Emanuel. The armed legions without and the few bribed partisans within created much clamour, and Francis was obliged to fly. But the evil current of revolutionism did not stop here. Rome, the city of the Popes, should be changed into the seat of the successful robber-king. Pius IX. should be displaced. Men of progress and enlightenment demanded the downfall of the beacon of learning. The peace-loving, sweet-souled pontiff was obnoxious to certain persons. The poor, the lowly of Rome and of its provinces looked to him as a father. Truth and evangelical purity throughout Christendom turned to him for protection; guilefulness scoffed at him, and, catching up patriotism as its ensign, waved it right skilfully in the air, so as to meet the eye of the unsuspecting and easily duped. But the right-hearted rose up also, and went forth to meet the cowardly foe. Pius wanted no soldiers to awe his own people into subjection, for they, excepting the emissaries of hell-begotten clubs, were vowed to support his cause, not alone for the sake of him, whom they respected and revered, but for the sake of the Church, of which he was, and we hope will be for many years, the visible head. Demagogues harangued, functionaries rebelled, lovers of change said the papacy had had its reign, that it was a grey-haired, babbling old fool, and should be swept from the world; but they were only a very few when compared to the mass, who loudly proclaimed that it had stood the test of time, that the popedom was the corner-stone of the entire European fabric, and, for its presiding influence in the ages of storm, fraud, and violence, the nations which now stand the civilizers and ornaments of the world could not but have been destroyed by the flood either of barbaric hordes or Islam sensualists.

Again the crusaders' shout was heard on all sides; again brave Christians seized the sword to fight for the maintenance to Christ's vicar of the small patch of land which a selfish king coveted; again hardy sons were found to brave all dangers, to endure all fatigues; again fathers and mothers sent forth the eldest born, the dear ones of their household, to defend the sacred land from the spoiling touch of Victor Emanuel and his lawless agents, to prove in the face of heaven that there were yet some willing to die for the faith which a Man-God had preached, and for which noble martyrs had given their lives in all times. True, Pius IX. had too paternal a heart to wish the death of any of his children. He knew that the wrath of God could visit that sacrilegious invader who had dared to point his cursed finger at the territory of Rome; but he knew as well that it was given to the good and true of this world to counteract the influences of the wicked. For that reason did he permit Lamoriciere to head an army which, though small, still served to show that he would not submit without protest to robbery from physical force. 'To arms, to arms!' shouted Catholics of all nations. 'To arms, as enterprises are vain; to arms in defence of the grand constitution which has been a model in all ages to all free states; to arms, in support of the head of the Christian republic, in support of the illuminating centre of literature. Justice has been outraged.' This call was heard by Robert, and he answered it. Burning with a desire to aid as best he could the cause of religion, he went to repel the attack made upon it under the hypocritical guise of patriotism.

Some years had elapsed since the time that Alice had entered France. Years laden with

fruit which she availed herself of. Louis Girot was unwearied in his care of her; he was continually watching her; incessantly teaching her, in his simple merry way. He took a trip to Cork to seek out her father; but he was not to be found. Louis came back not very disconsolate, for he promised himself that all would turn up well yet. He never strolled through the boulevards that he was not on the look out for Robert. Being in the habit of composing feuilletons, he could not divest himself of the idea that though the end of Alice's adventures might be delayed for long, still that it would come at last. That it was to be a happy end, a grand flourish of trumpets, he had no doubt, and that it was allotted to him to lead back her old sweetheart, and renew the friendship between them was his task. Louis followed every foreign-looking person that he saw in the streets, kept sentinel at the doors of cafes for hours together, thinking he might chance to meet with Robert. He had Alice's description of him written in his pocket-book, and he had several little boys engaged to apprise him if they met with this gentleman. Robert had been in Paris while this search was on foot, not aware that two sweetmeat shops were thriving on the money Louis spent in the purchase of bon-bons for the children who were bound by contract to make known the arrival of an Irish gentleman in the city. We must confess that the brave doctor had a partiality for bon-bons; there was not a pocket in which he had not some, and the young folk knew this, and perhaps they cheated the unsuspecting little fellow, and elated his hopes as to ultimate success.

Alice had, after some wavering and indecision followed the bent of her good inclinations, and become a Catholic. This was not owing in any way to Louis. Many a year had she thought on the subject, for that which her mother had written before her death recurred to her often. Those words which she had read were not forgotten by her. They were too ardent, bore too much of a heavenly spirit, were written by too loving a parent for her to forget them. They were seeds which in the days when the sun shone unclouded, when gaiety surrounded her, when men and women called the fairest and brightest child of earth's fair children, she little heeded. They were buried deep, but when the time of affliction came, when sorrow dimmed the lustre of her eyes, when her step had lost much of its elasticity, when she saw the world as it is seen only by few, nothing can be gained by its flattering us, they grew, for the tears which she had shed seemed to have strengthened and enriched them. The thought-spring of her soul was cleared, and, away from contaminating influence, she was again inclined to listen to the voice of conscience. All her doubts she referred to Louis, and he was the best guide for her. He observed her keenly, and he saw with pleasure that she had a wish to know the Truth. He allowed her, if we might say so, to swim about, watching her movements from the shore. At intervals he would urge her by that all-meaning word of his, 'Courage.' Valorous little Girot was not afraid to cast himself into the waters for the purpose of bringing her safe to shore. Why should he? He had read every book upon Church history, he was fully conversant with the writings of the fathers; he was one upon whom not the smallest iota of information could be lost; but, at the same time, he did not wish to draw Alice to the faith through the mere force of his intellect. He knew that if he expressed his decided antipathy to her remaining a Protestant she would have consented, to embrace his belief without being exactly convinced as to the correctness of the change. Alice would go to any length to gratify any person to whom she owed a debt of gratitude. Louis would not have it thus. He argued with her; that is, he strove to do so, but finding she was unable to oppose him in any way, he changed his arguments into advice, and after a lengthy course of exercises, after he had proved to his perfect satisfaction that she understood everything, he enlarged his discourses, and at last the wish of his heart was fulfilled. Alice, convinced, entered the Church.

Soon afterwards, Louis went to join, as a medical officer, the army of the Pope. Irishmen were flocking to Rome, and Louis always remembered to look at each one he met, very scrutinizingly, and inquire their names, hoping to meet with Robert Power: for though having been told by Alice that when she last saw him he was a Protestant, still he said to himself 'Who knows what might have occurred to him since then? A good number of years have passed; and if, as Alice affirms, he was a young man of wisdom beyond his years, and attainments of no mean order, why should he not have become a Catholic? Then, if so, why might he not come to defend the Faith of his Church?' Louis was continually begging a place in some battalion, but, most unaccountably, he was never officially appointed; so, taking his valise, and

strapping it on his back, he went forward to Perugia. There he had something to do in a few days, for the resistance of its defenders to General Fanti was the cause of much bloodshed. Whilst the fighting lasted, Louis was about, sword in hand, to attempt to stop the progress of the invading troops; but they were too many, and at length he had to retire, into the fortress, which surrendered towards evening. He could hardly control himself, and show a bold front, when he found that he was a prisoner, without even a scar. Emeshed in the web which the King of Sardonia had woven of his own soldiers and the home malcontents, he found himself totally impotent, and all his efforts useless, for, as we have said, the garrison had to surrender. Many a brave man besides Louis felt bumbled at this; but there was no help for it; they were compelled to submit. Foreigners were to be sent to the frontier; so Louis, with others, was ordered to proceed to Genoa.

Meanwhile, the troops under Lamoriciere were hemmed in on all sides, and the capture of Spoleto followed that of Perugia. The Irish and Franco-Belgians sought to hold it, and they acted with the greatest bravery. The fire was opened at eight o'clock in the morning from four batteries, which poured an incessant rain of shot and shell. After three hours' bombardment, the Archbishop came to ask the garrison to yield. This appeal was in vain, for the answer returned was, 'Irishmen do not know how to surrender; and then the deadly fire recommenced, and continued for four hours. At three o'clock the Piedmontese column advanced, sheltered by innumerable rifle-men, and began the assault. They were driven back, suffering severe loss, and finding the place was not to be won in this way, they now relied entirely upon the destructive effects of their guns. The defenders could not return these destructive volleys, for their last cartridge was expended. By every method they tried to reduce the Piedmontese to come again to a hand-to-hand fight, but they obstinately kept to their artillery, knowing that in the end it would dismantle the fortress. Twice the magazine was on fire, and its walls and gate being destroyed; and then there being no hope of success, the terms offered by the besiegers were accepted. In this fortress was Robert Power, unsurpassed in cool and undaunted bravery.

The prisoners from Spoleto arrived in Genoa shortly after those of Perugia. Some of the former had already gone on ship-board, whilst others remained until they were furnished with the means of returning to their homes.

In one of the hospitals in Genoa Louis met with several of the prisoners, and one day, by following up with a careful examination a few remarks made by one of them, he discovered Robert Power. The following day he went, and, finding the patient better, he dropped some hints about Alice, not exactly mentioning her name, but seeming as if he had divined history.

By degrees he drew the curtain slowly, gently, cautiously, until, growing tired of a disguise, he told Robert that he knew Alice; that she was Paris, well, but not happy,—not happy, because that she had wronged him. The hero of Spoleto,—the man who had faced all dangers, who had met the foe with a firm front,—now thinking of his youth, of the elm with its merry choristers and happy group beneath,—thinking of her who had stolen the key of his heart, and having locked it up to all love but hers, then turned and smiled upon another, grew weak and child-like, and tears fell upon his beard. Louis, being a knowing fellow, took this moment as the best for saying that, if he came to Paris, Alice would receive him with delight,—would heal up the wound which she had inflicted. So Robert had ventured to hope.

The old year was dying out, the new one was coming in. Much rejoicing, much laughter, much music filled the air. You see that house on Patrick's Hill. We may as well go in and make one of the party, for the inmates are old friends of ours, and it is but a family re-union. With a serious look upon her face Alice, and opposite her is a man who, having seen the world, to use a worn-out phrase, was not contented until he was married to Alice in a church near Paris after the Italian campaign. And there, near the bright fire sits Henry Morton, with a listless expression, save when now and then he takes something from his pocket, and looks at it earnestly; then his gaze is fixed, and he smiles disagreeably. We will turn from that figure, for it does not please us: we think of former times. Poor Morton, he has been rescued from a death in a lunatic asylum by Mrs. Williams, who met Alice in the streets a couple of days ago, and told her where her father was. Ay! and we have Louis Girot here also, and he is looking sad. We come in at a bad moment. There the bell rings out. Alice runs to the window; flings it up, listens to the sounds as they are borne to her ear by the wind. Her husband goes to her side,—Louis stands in attention.

'How beautiful cries, Alice, 'a New Year for us all.'

'A New Year of love and happiness,' answers Robert. 'I often told you, Madame Alice, that it would be all right some day, and I was prophetic.' 'Louis, we owe you much,' Robert says. 'Very much. We can never be sufficiently grateful to you.'

The bells are ringing merrily now. A HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR US ALL.

O'BRIEN.

THE END.

PROTECTING PROVIDENCE.

She was beautiful, despite the gray worn look of care that had settled upon that once proud and radiant face; queenly, despite the poverty of the cheap print gown and faded shawl that were draped around her graceful form, and the old worn straw hat that shaded the masses of her luxuriant hair. The room was bare and comfortless, its meagre furniture consisting of two rickety deal chairs, borrowed from the landlady, and a poor, stained bedstead in one corner, on the had, straw stuffed mattress of which lay all that was left of Margaret Dismore's only friend in this world,—all that was left to the friendless girl of her mother, save a bitter memory.

Not a tear softened those dark, strong, despairing eyes, as she folded the patched coverlet over the thin and wasted frame of the dead,—as she covered the pinched wan face, so still, so cold to her now; but a great sobbing groan labored in her breast, though the tears were so frozen around her heart she could not weep.—That mother had died of want, and starvation was the inheritance she had left her child.

Margaret had bravely toiled day and night, but the poor pittance her needle won barely sufficed to earn their daily bread, and the poor attic that gave them shelter. Many times she had been forced to go all day without a morsel, that her mother might have the little bread she could purchase; and now it was three days since she had tasted food, and her little purse was empty; for she could not leave the dying bed of that poor sufferer to go in search of work.

With tender care she folded the pale thin hands, and covered the poor, sad, patient face, ere she donned her bonnet, and went softly out, and down the dark, creaking stairs. No need of treading with stealthy step now, Margaret; she will not awaken. Those wistful, hungry eyes will not unclose, and follow you with a mute appeal for bread. She sleeps so deeply, hunger will not find her out.

Presently the young girl returned with a coarse-featured, rough man, who, without moving his hat, walked up to the bed, grasped the post, and shook it.

'Is this 'ere the article?' he gruffly demanded.

Margaret bowed.

The man whistled softly as he looked at it with a critical eye; shook it again, and poked his fingers into the straw mattress.

'Rickety,—good for nothing,' he pronounced.

Margaret's cheek paled, and she asked anxiously,—

'But you will give me something for it?'

'Why, 'tain't worth nothin'; got lots of this kind a furniture cheap as dirt. No call for 'em neither.'

'For Heaven's sake, don't refuse to take it!' exclaimed the poor girl; 'it is all I have in the world to get a coffin for her with! It must be worth something?'

'Well, I can take it in the way o' trade, and knock together a pine box for ye, I s'pose,' said the man, slowly. 'Tain't worth it, though.'

And so it was agreed that he should find a coffin, and take for his pay the bed on which the dead was laid. It came in the afternoon, and Margaret followed her mother's corpse, on foot and alone, to the green grave down near the shore, two miles away from that desolate attic in the hot, noisy, heartless city. Still tearless, she crept back the long, dreary way, and up the dark stairs to that lonely, lonely room.

The bed was gone, and she stood in the bare and cheerless chamber, lighted only by the dim rays that struggled in through the narrow, dingy pane of the little window in the roof. Impelled by the incessant gnawings of hunger, she looked around in eager search of some little article that had been overlooked; but vainly,—there was nothing left to pawn.

'To-morrow I must work or starve,' she murmured, drearily. 'All is gone but this useless life; and Heaven may see fit to take this, too.'

Casting off her bonnet, she staggered forward towards the borrowed chairs, drew them together, and wrapping her thin shawl around her, extended her weary limbs on the miserable couch, and slept.

She moaned and tossed in her long but restless slumber; and morning broke, finding her still unrefreshed, and trembling, so from exhaustion, that she could hardly creep down the long stairs, and out into the street.

All day long she wandered up and down in

search of work, which alone would bring her the coveted bread; passed stalls spread with tempting odours of generous food; passed ladies, flaunting like butterflies, in gay silk, and rich laces and ribbons;—a moneyless, friendless, starving, out-cast. Ah! what a lovely lady swept by her then, gathering in her faintly-gloved hand the heavy folds of her rich silken robe, lest it should by chance brush against that mean, coarse print! Yes! and the very daisy nestling in the blonde of her French hat, that alone would have purchased bread enough to have saved the poor girl's life a week.

Alas! human life is valued fearfully cheap in these dense, crowded cities—they are so packed with misery and woe.

Night came: another day without work—without food. Margaret turned faintly homeward, with despair blackening out all hope in her heart. As she passed the grand saloon, not far from her obscure lodging, the lamp that swung in the arch above the entrance to that gilded hall of vice and sin, gleamed full in her haggard but still rarely beautiful face. A group of loungers stood upon the marble threshold, and one among them set his evil eyes upon her; one who was well versed in the black arts of the world, and had taken his degree in sin. He knew well what the despair in those dark wild eyes meant; he had seen and profited by it in many a fair young face, before Margaret crossed his path; and he followed her with a bad smile on his lips, and a crime in his black heart.

He found her half fainting, lying across the threshold of her room; and raising her tenderly, with words of pity, that fell like balm on her sore and bruised heart, he bore her in his arms to a chair. He spoke kindly, with the sorrowful interest of a friend sent by Heaven to her relief: he drew from her trembling lips the story of her suffering, and, strong and evil as he was, shuddered when he heard she was actually starving.

But his evil eyes gazed on the rich, perfect beauty of her form—the splendid loveliness of her dark, proud face, and radiant eyes; he took her little warm hand in his own, and in a soft voice, full of tenderness, he breathed into her ear words so strange, the bewildered girl scarcely dreamed their meaning. What a home he painted for her!—what luxury, ease, and splendor, in exchange for that bare room, famine, and a pauper's grave! Then—gloss it over as he might, with the honeyed eloquence his false lips had uttered; and, alas! too often not in vain—the horror of that gilded lie suddenly broke upon her, and with a moan she buried her face away from his sight, and shudderingly gasped:

'Oh, my God! hast Thou forsaken me?'

He gently strove to take her hand, he kissed it, he murmured in her ear.

She only moaned, and called on God to save her in her great peril. Still he whispered at her ear; he offered her food, and she has tasted nothing for four days! What crime is there a starving wretch will not commit for food?—Have not men been known to prey human flesh, to drink warm human blood, to allay the gnawing pangs of hunger?

Margaret sat alone. The tempter had gone; but he would soon return with food, food, food. She almost raved. How long the moments seemed! But he would come—he would bring her bread—and then? The moment she had tasted she was lost—sold! That moment would seal her separation from the mother who had prayed for, and loved her forever. She had let that mother die from want. Should she now sell herself to eternal death, to save a life henceforth accursed? No! better death than that.

To her excited brain, it seemed as if a face, long loved and lost, of one she had wept as dead, arose pale and sad before her, and that the melancholy eyes watched and waited her next resolve. She cried out, in her pitiful helplessness, on the name of the Father of the fatherless, and a voice seemed to ring through the room as the pale face faded:

'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!'

With a new energy, the strength of her momentary insanity, Margaret fled wildly, fearfully, down the dangerous stairs, into the street, anywhere—she cared not, so that she fled from him so far that he could not find her out, and tempt her to her own destruction.

Through dark lanes and crowded streets she wandered, unmolested, until she found herself on the silent wharfs, looking down into the bright rippling waters. Their murmurs, as they rose and fell, plashing around the black rotten pier, seemed to lull the fever seething in her brain, and to soothe her troubled heart. She sat down on a coil of rope, clasping her arms round the pier, and looked steadily down upon the water watching a bit of seaweed rise and fall on the waters, or a spar floating slowly out to sea. And another tempter arose in her own heart, there came the intense longing to lie down upon the shore, and let the rising tide bear her away