

A TOUCHING EXAMPLE OF GRATITUDE.

One beautiful October afternoon two women, mother and daughter, were walking along the river bank in Paris toward their home, situated not far from the Church of Notre Dame, in the little island formed by two arms of the Seine and known as La Cite—the city—because originally the whole of Paris was included within that island. They were apparently tradespeople in comfortable circumstances. The mother by birth belonged to the lower order of society, while the daughter by her education approached nearer the better class; but both, the mother in her still green old age, and the daughter in her cheerful and blooming youth, bore on their faces a strong impress of mildness and honesty.

They walked fast as people used to the scenes daily to be seen on the streets of Paris, and yet the attention of Madame Charlier (for such was the name of the good lady) was attracted by the display of a dealer in second-hand furniture, and it was indeed such as might have awakened the thoughts of a philosopher on the vanities of life. In this confused medley were to be seen many relics of past ages; there old swords, carved furniture, antiquated armchairs covered with Chinese silk, pictures, chinaware, gilt bronzes belonging to the first empire, so called Gothic clocks of Louis XIII's time, furniture of the commonest kind by the side of fancy and expensive articles. There they were tumbled together awaiting to tempt passers-by by their low price or their oddity.

At the door the storekeeper had hung several pictures with little hope of finding a buyer. They were mostly family portraits, which had long since ceased to interest anybody. These they represented and their friends had taken their places in the City of the Dead, and indifferent owners had hastened to get rid of them. All at once Madame Charlier stopped before one of these neglected pictures with an exclamation of surprise.

"What is the matter, mamma?" said her daughter. "It is she!" replied the mother. "Yes, it is she! Look at this picture; it is Miss Christine d'Erlanges!" "Are you sure of it, mamma?" "Yes, yes! How could I fail to recognize her face? Here is the coat of arms of her family. Miss Christine's portrait in a second-hand store! It will not stay here a moment longer."

She hastily entered the shop and asked the price of the picture. The dealer took it down and called his customer's attention to its beauty. In truth it was a poorly executed portrait, representing a young girl, apparently twenty years old, in a white dress and holding a book in her hand. The face was mild, refined but pale; her black eyes, under deep arched eyelids, were calm and penetrating. No doubt it reproduced the features of one who bore her sickness with resignation. It was enclosed in a gilt frame, which had suffered much from dust and neglect. At the top was the escutcheon of the noble family of Erlanges. Madame Charlier promptly paid the price asked for it, took the picture and started for home.

Her home consisted first of a store-room containing simple, substantial articles of hosiery, but nothing showy and fanciful; then came a large room, answering both the purpose of a family room and a dining room. There was all round an appearance of comfort, a full supply of furniture and many colored and framed pictures on the walls. In the place of honor, in an ebony medallion, was to be seen a wreath of white roses, which years had turned yellow. It was, no doubt, a wreath which had crowned the head of a young girl at her First Communion, or had been laid on her coffin; at any rate, it was held in high respect by the Charlier family.

Madame Charlier carefully put the portrait on an armchair and looked at it a long time, while tears trickled down the good lady's cheeks. "Yes, yes, it is she," she said, talking to herself; "here are her eyes so mild and kind, her fine forehead, her beautiful hair, her little hand, so thin and white; it is she indeed. I feel as if I were thirty years younger."

"What is the matter, mother?" said her eldest son, who now sat at her side. "What old portrait is that? What a dabb it is!" "Hush, hush, Alphonse; you do not know how much you hurt me."

"It is not my intention, God knows, dear mother. But tell us what you find to interest you so much in the old picture."

"It is the portrait of my best friend, my benefactress, Miss Christine d'Erlanges!"

"What, mother, that young lady whom you loved so much and in whose honor we are all called Christine and Christine?"

"Herself, my dear children, and may you be worthy of bearing that name, for she was an angel of God, and all that I owe to her."

"Mamma," said the young girl who had accompanied her mother in her walk, "please to tell us how you came to know Miss d'Erlanges. We know nothing about her except that she was very good and that you still regret her."

The whole family sat at a round table. Madame Charlier took her knitting, in which her nimble and experienced fingers did not need the aid of her eyes. Victorine and Charlotte, while bending over their sewing, listened attentively to their mother, and Alphonse was cleaning the frame of the portrait he was reverently holding on his knees.

"You must know, then, my children," continued Madame Charlier, "that in 1819 I was a poor orphan in the streets of Paris, without any other help than my needle, without any other hope than that which in the heart of all young girls. Well, I was not exactly on the street, since I lived in a garret; but, with the exception of a dress or two, a little underwear, a table, two chairs, a bed, a chafing dish, I had nothing in the world. My father and mother had been dead for years; my god-mother had taken me in, and had taught me embroidery. She died also, the good woman, and left me alone; poor and friendless. I worked all week for a large store, and when Sunday came I went walking with some girls of my own age. And here I must confess that, if I have done any good, my children, I owe it entirely to God, for I was then very ignorant and my companions were very giddy. They worked but little, but had a great deal of fun; they attended balls, gaily attired in lace and ribbons—perhaps they had pawned their underwear to get their fineries. They often pressed me to do as they did, but I resisted; one day, however, as I was dependent and my rent was due, I yielded, and I promised Laurette, one of my companions, to go to the ball with her that night. I wanted to drown my troubles, but God knows how I could have done it in that way! I worked the whole afternoon, in anticipation of the evening, fixing a white dress, and while repairing my toilet I was trying to keep away from me the troublesome thought of the 14th of the month, the date on which my rent fell due and the bill I owed to the coal dealer, for I was indeed very poor. I wanted to keep off my troubles, but they crowded on me faster than ever. I was ready to put my hat on, when I heard a knock at the door; I opened it, thinking it was Laurette. What was my surprise to see a young lady, fine looking, mild, well dressed, of distinguished appearance and followed by a chambermaid.

"Am I addressing Miss Nathalie, embroiderer?" she said. "You are, miss," I said, confused as I was, "Please come in."

"The fine young lady, as a good fairy, entered my poor garret, where all was in disorder. She did not seem to take notice of it; but taking from a work basket the richly embroidered and almost finished trimmings of a silk dress, she said, with that kindness which wins hearts: 'Here it is, miss, a piece of work which I have commenced and which must be finished to-morrow noon; I am somewhat indisposed and the physician forbids me to work. I have heard of your skill, and I thought that perhaps you could finish the embroidery on these trimmings by to-morrow noon.'

"At the same time she offered me a price which exceeded what I could earn in six days. It is true I would have to pass a sleepless night; but would it not be so if I went to the ball? I made up my mind at once. I saw my rent and my coal bill paid, and I accepted the offer of the young lady. She thanked me as if I had rendered her a service, and left.

"I set to work at once; Laurette came, but to no purpose. She made fun of me, but I let her talk. She tried to take my work from me, to put my hat on and to take me by force, but all in vain. She went off disgusted.

"I worked most of the night, and the next day at 11 o'clock my work was done and waiting for the fine lady. At exactly noon she knocked at the door. I was glad to see her again. She paid me at once, thanked me and in giving me her address said she might have some more work to give me.

"The good young lady was named Christine d'Erlanges. She lived close by, and the next day I went to see if she had any more to do. She occupied a beautiful suite of rooms on the first floor with her father and mother. She invited me into a small parlor in which there were books, many curious articles and pictures and this portrait which you see here, my children. It was then fresh and young, like the person it represented. The father and mother fondly looked at it; it was the sunshine of the household, for Miss Christine was so good, affectionate, obliging that she made everybody happy around her. I saw her often; she took an interest in me; she made me talk and I was happy in her company. I would have been ashamed to have been seen by her in Laurette's company, who was so wild, so by degrees we became estranged, although we did not fall out. I didn't know much about housekeeping, and things were often upsidown in my little room. At first Miss Christine took no notice of it apparently, but one day as she brought me some work she looked around and advised some changes, but was careful to add, 'Do you not think it would be better so and so?'

"I caught her meaning. As soon as I got up the next day I swept my garret, made my window clean and bright, made up my bed and put every piece of my little furniture in place. Miss Christine, who was pleased at it, gave me a small bureau and a few yards of calico for curtains for my bed and my window. My dear children, I believed myself to be in a queen's palace; my little room, clean and orderly, became so dear to me that it pained

me to leave it. I never went out, even on Sunday, except to go to Mass. Miss Christine insisted that I should take walks with her mother's chambermaid, who was virtuous, prudent and yet lively as one is at twenty. We enjoyed each other's company, and I assure you I did not regret my former companions. At night I read good books which Miss Christine lent me, and work made days pass off quickly. I was happy; my work enabled me to live comfortably; my little household, better kept and better watched than formerly, became cheaper; as I kept company only with honest people, my reputation was good. I had acquired some information from the books Miss Christine lent me, and I improved my handwriting by copying the models she gave me. I was still lacking one thing; Miss Christine saw it in the course of time and she provided for it. I was the greatest gift of her kindness to me.

"We all noticed with an anxiety which we tried to conceal from each other that Miss Christine's health was becoming poor. She was growing thin, her eyes had a brightness which frightened and pained me; she coughed a great deal, and she said, when asked about it: 'Oh, it is nothing; it will soon pass off.'

"She still went out walking as usual, went to Mass and visited the poor. All the sick and old people of the neighborhood knew well the good young lady who knew so well how to console them and who waited on them with her own hands; for, my dear children, Miss Christine was a true Sister of Charity, but this did not keep her from being amiable and lively. With all that, she was talented. She painted, embroidered, touched the harp, and what not? She was always busy. Alas! the day came when she could no longer go out, nor even leave her room; she was feverish and suffered from night sweats and painful oppressions. For me it was no longer to live to know her so sick; I availed myself of all possible opportunities to hear from her. She was told of it and sent for me.

"She was lying on a lounge, pale, thin, only a shadow of herself, and when she extended her hand to me I burst into tears. 'Good Nathalie,' she said, 'you shall not leave me; I am going to ask mamma's permission to keep you near me till—'

"She did not end and I saw that she understood her situation. From that time I never left her; I worked near her, helping as much as I could the chambermaid and the nurse, whose cares became more and more necessary. The disconsolate father and mother hardly ever left the room of their sick daughter; they never took their eyes from her and eagerly drank in all her words. They wanted to treasure up memories of her when she should be no more.

"She had me to read to her; she read only books of piety, treating of the mercy of God, of the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the happiness which death brings to those who sincerely love God. These books made an impression on me, but Miss Christine soon saw by some question which I asked her that I did not understand many points of Catholic doctrine. It is true that, when I was a child, there were not many priests and no Sisters. France was then painfully recovering from the horrors of 1793. The children of the common people grow up ignorant of the faith in which they had been baptized. Scarcely could you acquire some fragments of Catholic truth in the instruction for first Communion; after that we learned nothing more, and forgot by degrees what we had learned.

"Such was my case; through habit I went to Mass, but I knew very little of religion, of the duties it imposes, and of the consolations it brings.

"Miss Christine did not want to die till I was better instructed, and to that end she left her favorite reading and had me to read, as if for herself, instructive, solid, touching books, the sense of which she explained to me and which gave me for our holy religion a love and a reverence which, thanks to God! have not remained barren. What a precious gift, my children! If ever I go to heaven and if yourselves go there, if all of us succeed in serving faithfully on earth our good Master, we have to thank for it that good and pious young lady who, although dying, had the charity to instruct an ignorant girl as I was. Surely God has rewarded her already for such a good action!

"But what of her daily acts of charity? In her bed of suffering, where she endured a real martyrdom, she never forgot the poor; she sent the chambermaid and myself to bring them some assistance, all the allowance made to her by her parents went that way. Here she paid the rent, there she sent clothes to some poor old woman; again she sent food to the sick. She relieved wants outside of her own neighborhood. One day she learned that a young girl was sick in a miserable garret at some distance from her house. She sent me there, and I went hurriedly. Guess whom I found in this desolate room, on a wretched pallet, without medicine, help and human sympathy? It was my poor Laurette herself. She had been guilty of many a folly, and she had passed through many a trial. She recognized me and wept bitterly. I consoled her as best I could, gave her the help which Miss Christine was sending her, and at once went to tell Miss Christine of my sad discovery. She took a lively interest in it, and with a dying hand wrote to the superior of the Sisters of Charity to recommend to her my poor friend. Laurette recov-

ered. Thanks to the good Sister she found employment in a store with honest people and led an exemplary life till her death. Cure and conversion, she owed it all to our generous benefactress.

"This was, my children, one of her last good works. We watched her growing weaker, like a lamp growing weaker for want of oil. She lay on her bed all day, but even on this bed of suffering she tried to do something for the poor; she was making clothes for little children; although weak and exhausted, she sewed with zeal to celebrate, as she said, the coming Christmas in clothing poor and forsaken little Jesus. She did not see this feast on earth, but, without doubt, she celebrated it in heaven. Towards the middle of December all her strength left her; all that she could do was to suffer, which she did with a peace and a calm beyond human expression. Even on the day of her death she spoke to me words of love and tenderness; she told me to be good and to remain faithful to God. Then turning to her mother: 'Dear mamma,' she said, 'I desire that my small amount left me by my aunt be given to Nathalie; I am sure she will make good use of it.'

"Having spoken thus, she looked at us with a peaceful and serene smile, a smile indelibly impressed on my memory; with this last sign of love she turned on her side and seemed to go to sleep.

"Half an hour later we heard her breathing more heavily. I leaned over her, there was a change in her face; there was in it something grave and suffering which I had never seen before. It was the last struggle. She died kissing the feet of her crucifix.

"I will not tell you, my children, what anguish that death caused me; after thirty years the wound bleeds yet. And this is but right, for what I am and what I have I owe it all to Miss Christine, to her generosity and good example. It is to her that I owe my little business, for your father, who was so good and honest, married me, not because I had a small dowry, but because I had the reputation of being an honest, quiet and laborious girl, and also because I could read and write—humble talents which Miss Christine d'Erlanges had so much contributed to improve.

"When I saw her for the first time I was at the fork of two roads, one leading to what was good and the other to what was bad. She carried me along with her by the irresistible ascendancy which her personal charms, her strong intelligence, but above all her kindness of heart gave her. See the good she has done me, and see if it is not just I should venerate her portrait and keep as a treasure this white wreath which adorned her coffin. No, my good children, one can hardly realize all the good a well-educated and kind-hearted young lady like Miss Christine can do. I wish that all young ladies knew it, that they might be prompted to become Christine d'Erlanges."

The children were deeply interested in the recital of their mother, and from that day the portrait, disdained by ungrateful heirs, was treasured up by the Charlier family with deep tenderness and veneration.

AN EXTRAORDINARY CATHOLIC MISSION.

By the Rev. A. P. Doyle, C. S. P.

The story of a great mission has its points of interest to evangelistic workers of every shade of religious belief. A short time ago, in the Church of the Paulist Fathers there was brought to successful conclusion one of the most notable examples of revival work that the religious history of New York has to record. For five weeks the great stone church on the upper West side was thronged night and morning, and the priests who were engaged in giving the mission heard the confessions of 13,342 people, by actual count. If there had been placed at the doors of the church the turnstile to record the comings in and goings out of the people it would easily have registered 125,000 admissions during the sessions of this great mission. And still it was only a local affair, making no pretense to any metropolitan influence; nor was it specially heralded in the papers by any press agents. It was intended only for the people of the parish of the Paulist Fathers, and among them it did splendid work in the condemnation of vice, in the elevation of standards of morality, and in the general awakening of desires for deeper spirituality.

of the confessional, with no one to listen to the tale of a sinful life but God and His representative, the sinner pours out his guilt-laden heart, with the hope of securing forgiveness. Through the instrumentality of the confessional the best results are secured. There is established the personal touch between the missionary and the penitent's soul. There is under consideration the spiritual needs of a particular individual. The sinner comes to kneel in the darkness on one side of a partition; and there, as if alone with his Judge, he lays bare the diseases of his soul to the skilled physician; he asks the advice of a faithful counselor, and he accepts the decision of a prudent judge. Before he came he had the conditions necessary for repentance—sorrow for the past and a purpose of amendment for the future—and he comes now to place what will be very effectual barriers against backsliding into sin.

It is the vigorous preaching of the great truths, the impressing on the mind with all the earnestness and eloquence of an experienced preacher the paramount importance of the soul's salvation, the danger in the commission of sin, the dread of its eternal loss by the sudden overtaking of death, the facing of the judgment of an angry God—it is all this, joined with the personal contact with the individual soul, which the confessional offers, that make the mission such a tremendous machine for spiritual regeneration.

The motto adopted at this mission was "divide and conquer." For this purpose it was announced that the mission would be so divided that a certain section of the parish would enjoy its advantages during a specified week, the church not being large enough, though its seating capacity exceeds 3,000, to accommodate all the people at once. The first week was given to the married women, because it is generally found that they are the more religious-minded, and once aroused will do the most effective work with the men. The second week was given to the single women; the third week to the married men, and the fourth week to the single men. During each week the services were in the evening and 5 o'clock in the morning; and night and morning their respective weeks the various classes of the parish filled the big church from altar to door, crowding the aisles, overflowing into the chancel, sitting on the altar steps and extending out into the vestibule, so that it was impossible for many to gain even access to the church. This crowd at night with only a slight diminution of numbers, was duplicated in the morning at 5 o'clock, long before the drowsy city was stirring from its slumbers and in spite of zero weather and inclement storms.

Perchance there is no better measure of the depth and earnestness of one's religious life than the magnitude of the sacrifices which one is willing to make in order to cultivate it. And to most people the effort of rising before the dawn and rushing through the cold streets and gathering in a crowded sanctuary to accomplish a sacrifice is no small feat.

Reverence was waged upon vice in every form, not only by a vigorous condemnation of it, but by the cultivation of the opposite virtues. The virtues that make for a better home life were especially emphasized, particularly the cultivation of total abstinence. Pledge cards were signed to the number of two thousand six hundred and forty by persons who declared their intention of refraining entirely from the use of intoxicating drinks for periods of time ranging from a few years to a life-time.

On the whole the mission was a splendid instance of the vigor of the faith among the common people. The statement is frequently met with nowadays that religious faith is dying out from among the masses. Such manifestations of it as were witnessed during this mission conclusively prove that such is not the case among the Catholic people.—The Independent.

Dr. Chase's Cures Catarrh after Operations, Fall.

Toronto, March 16, 1897. My boy, aged fourteen, has been a sufferer from Catarrh, and lately we submitted him to an operation at the General Hospital. Since then we have resorted to Dr. Chase's Catarrh Cure, and one box of this medicine has made a prompt and complete cure.

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