



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. VIII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1857.

No. 12.

THE RIVALS.

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER XIX.

The next morning, when Francis arrived at the sessions house, he found that the affair had taken a still stranger turn than before. Lacy did not appear; he was confined to his house by illness, and Tobin seemed to have undergone the influence of some magician in the night. He had lost all recollection of the document which he had furnished to Francis Riordan, and he was unable to supply any evidence whatever respecting the conspiracy which was yesterday alleged with so much perseverance. No reason could be discovered for this change of sentiment, and no remedy was to be found.

Neither was there any effort made to renew the ancient charge against young Riordan. He remained at liberty, and received one or two significant hints from Mr. Leonard that there was little fear of any attempt being made to place it under any restriction.

The conduct of the prisoners, his proteges, likewise seemed extraordinary in the eyes of Francis. They seemed perfectly contented with their situation and not in the least dismayed when fully committed for trial. One of them, who saw him look uneasy and surprised, told him that he need not feel the least alarmed upon their account, though he could not at that moment let him know the cause of the security he felt. The mystery was cleared however, at the following assizes, where both the brothers were discharged for want of a prosecutor.

The reader may, without any effort at detail on the part of the historian, imagine all the consternation and delight with which Esther was once more received amongst her friends.—It consoled her uncle for the failure of his cherished schemes of religious amelioration in the cabins, and old Aaron for the defeat which he had sustained at the hands of Davy Lenigan.

From that time forward, the habits, the character, and the health of Lacy, seemed to have undergone a singular alteration. His enmity, his love, and his ambition, appeared to have been altogether blasted. He appeared but little in public, and the virulence of his animosity against his humble neighbors was observed to soften and abate by slow degrees. In a few months his name was seldom heard in courts of justice, was seldom seen at the head of committals in the public prints, and at length sounded in the ear of those who heard it, like that of one departed from the world. There was a mixture of kindness and pity in the tone with which his name was mentioned among cottage circles, which, more than all besides, demonstrated the alteration which had taken place in Lacy's character.

It was with a feeling of sincere concern and pity, likewise, that Esther learned, in some months after, that her disappointed admirer was dangerously ill, and supposed, indeed, to have already reached a hopeless stage in his disease. She was seated at table, when the account arrived, and it affected her deeply and visibly; for she well knew that, whatever Lacy had been to others, he had always loved her with a deeper and a truer passion than men so evil minded generally feel.

From day to day the accounts became more alarming, and, at length, a messenger, sent especially by Francis, for the purpose of enquiring into the condition of the sufferer, returned with astonishment upon his countenance to say that Mr. Lacy, though unable to leave his room for two days before, had suddenly disappeared from among his attendants, and fled, no one knew whither.

Disturbed by this intelligence, Esther arose and walked out into the air, while Francis mounted his horse, and rode across the mountains to offer whatever assistance lay within his power.

The evening was calm, and Esther sat to enjoy it in a rustic seat, placed in a corner of the solitary mountain recesses in which Lough B— was situated. Before her lay the lake, a still and dark expanse, crossed by a few broad gleams of light from the western extremity. On the opposite side, a solemn precipice sunk suddenly upon the level water, its sides rugged with granite, interangled with stunted shrubs, its forehead bald and frowning, and its foot slipped in a mass of the tenderest green, which the waters kissed in silent veneration. On the right hand, a small cascade just served to deepen the sense of solitude on the mind of the beholder. On the left, the shore scarce rose above the surface of the lake, and the summits of some distant hills, which appeared above the undulating heath, suggested the idea of an interminable extension of the vale which here commenced. Around the shores of the craggy side, the shrubs were silvered with a dripping moisture, occasioned by the oozing from another lake, which lay at a loftier elevation on the other side of the mountain.

In a boat, on the lake, was a servant of the house, who was employed in angling for some grey trout. Esther watched him pulling gently

to the land, drawing in his skiff, and carrying his net well loaded to the house, without stirring from her attitude of contemplation.

In this situation, she was surprised by the appearance of several peasant children, who were advancing by the winding road that led out of the valley. They were all attired in white, and one, a peachy cheeked boy of five or six years of age, held in his arms a kind of effigy, dressed up in female habiliments, and having the breast bone of a goose as a succedaneum for the human countenance. When they came in sight of the lady, they suddenly halted, and a whispering consultation ensued, which from the stooping position of many of the figures, seemed to consist of certain words of encouragement and counsel, addressed to the bearer of the effigy. Advancing then within a few paces of the seat on which Esther lay expecting them, they separated, and fell back on either side, suffering the little fellow to advance alone, and speak for them to the lady. Esther watched his demeanor in this awful crisis with a natural interest. Looking up in her face, with a bold smile, and a blush, which was the only mark of conscious hardihood in his appearance, he said with great distinctness:

"Good morrow, ma'am."

"Good morrow, sir," replied Esther, smiling, but relaxing nothing of her stateliness, nor in any way assisting him.

"Somethin', ma'am, for Miss Biddy, if you please."

"And who is Miss Biddy, sir?"

"This was not in the little fellow's lesson, and he looked sidelong over his shoulder for assistance from the prompter. A girl, somewhat older, and with a sisterly resemblance in the face, advanced a step or two, and said, with a downcast eye and a timid accent:

"Saint Bridget, ma'am, if you please."

"And who is Saint Bridget, love?"

This again was a question too deeply theological for any head in the little assembly, and they all looked at one another with puzzled and enquiring eyes. But as Esther, although a conscientious Protestant, was not, in the language of the cottagers, a "convarter," she did not think it necessary to press it any further. Recollecting that the following day was the anniversary of the saint above named, and remembering also the village customs, which used to afford her so much delight in her infancy, she placed a liberal donation in the hand of "Miss Biddy's" youthful advocate, and had the pleasure of seeing the whole party hurry off, whispering together, and conversing in suppressed exultation.

"I hardly know what my uncle might say," she murmured to herself, "if he knew that I encouraged so profane a ceremony. But whatever claims the great virgin of Kildare might lay upon me in a religious point of view, I cannot avoid feeling some interest in the name, when I recollect that it has suggested one of the Irish melodies."

"Scarcely had she uttered these words, when a low hoarse voice, at her ear, said, in a tone of deep anxiety and earnestness:

"Be not alarmed, Esther! Let me entreat you, Esther, not to feel alarm."

She sprung to her feet at the sound of this startling voice, and, looking back with great rapidity, beheld a figure that sent a shivering thro' every nerve within her frame. Richard Lacy was standing underneath a fading laburnum; his attire of a meaner appearance than had ever been usual with him; his face (to use an untranslatable French expression) utterly *decharne*; his eyes sending out a wild and sickly fire, and his whole figure wearing the plain and visible marks of diminished fortunes, of ruined hopes, and faded energies of mind and person.

"I, too," he said, perceiving the irrepressible emotion and surprise with which Esther gazed upon him, "I, too, you see, can play the spectre when I please." And he pointed with a horrid smile to his ghastly countenance, and then to his attenuated frame.

"Mr. Lacy!" Esther said, in a low voice, and panting with agitation.

"And yet," he continued, with the same ghastly calmness in his utterance, "it is but the rehearsal of a part that I must soon be called to enact in gloomy truth. They are calling for me fast, but I am come here first to finish my last scene before your eyes, for I have loved your praise, once, far too well. I could not die, Esther, without bidding you farewell, not that I fear it yet for many a day, but it is possible."

"Oh, do not say it."

"Wherefore should I not," he exclaimed with sudden energy—"Why do you bid me not? I could tell you who has brought me to that point, I know, and you know, who it is that made this world look worthless in my eyes, and crossed my life with torture, disappointment, woe and want; and yet you bid me to remain among the miseries which that one has spread about me, you bid me hug the rack to which that one has bound me! I could tell you who it is, but I will not;—Ah, shrink not from the declaration of a dying man."

"Dying!"

"Aye, dying, though it be by morsels. Dying a fearful and despairing death; dying all full of blood; all hopeless; all dismayed; aye, for the first time, all dismayed with my forebodings!"

"Oh, do not—do not speak so shockingly—"

"What should I do?"

"Repent—!"

"Of what? Count me up, first, the sum of that which I have laid upon my soul; and number, then, the years which this worn frame is fitted to outlive, and see if I have time to wash the mass away. I could not bear the horrors of my bed at night. Such shaples—such shrieks—such menaces—such dreams of horror and of anguish. They told me that I had no chance of life, and yet they wished to tie me down to all the horrors of solitude and recollection. But I could not bear the fever in my mind, and I hurried from that troubled host of thoughts, to look for peace and pity and refreshment in your presence."

"Oh, would I could afford it!" exclaimed Esther, with great earnestness and warmth.

"But you cannot," cried Lacy, bitterly.—"They tell me, at my house that I am changed; they think, because my looks and actions are no longer what they were that I am altered too in mind and in affection. Because they see not the fever of ambition burning in my eye, they think I am content; because they mark not the working of hate upon my brow and lip, they think I am appeased; because they see not the turmoil of love in all my conduct and my speech, they think I am resigned. But they deceive themselves. I am still disgusted with the thing I am, although I make no effort to become what I would be."

"Believe me, believe me," said Esther, "I feel for you."

"And is that so much?" the half delirious man exclaimed, standing erect, and knitting his brows upon her, "Is that so wonderful? For you, Esther, I would have been the glorious thing that I have failed to become; and for you have I become the miserable thing I am! Is this—?" he exclaimed, throwing up his arms and remaining in an attitude of despairing wonder, "Is this the end of all my early projects, of all my hope, of all my love? The innocent have died—the sinless wept—my hands have become clammy with gore. I am loaded with the curses of bereaved kindreds, the world labours to leave me from its breast, and the dreaded deep roars for me like a hungry monster—and this is all my case, that Esther feels for me!"

"O, Richard! Richard!"

Not before, in this interview, had Esther ventured to address him thus familiarly by his Christian name. The suggestion of intimacy which it conveyed struck through his bosom with a softening influence; he clasped his hands, bent gradually forward, and every limb appeared to feel the agitation. Esther, feeling her power, resolved to use it for his benefit.

"Return to your home," she said, bursting into tears, and extending her hands towards him in deep pity—"Repress those horrid fancies; live, and be Esther's friend! Oh, do not yield that strong and gifted mind to false and destructive imaginations. Whatever may have been your faults, you have much much to hope, for you have been strongly, terribly tempted. A single one of those many passions, which have consumed your youth, might have sufficed for the endangering of many a soul. Despair not then, for your own sake—for mine. Return to your home, employ your days in offices of benevolence and kindness, deserve all that you can, and believe me, I know, I feel, that there is much within your power."

The unfortunate Lacy listened to her with motionless attention, and seemed, when she had made an end, to feel regret that he could not continue to enjoy the happiness he felt in hearing her. He then folded his arms, and remained some moments with his eyes dilated, and fixed in mournful meditation on the earth.

"Esther," he said at last, "that one support, at least, is left for me—Whether I succeed or fail, at least remember that I obeyed you at the instant. Whatever be the color of the repute that may remain after me, remember that to you, at least, I was not guilty of any error; whether I die detested or forgiven, forget not that to you, at least, I lived sincere, unchanging, and devoted."

He took her hand in his, regarding her at the same time with the air of despairing resolution which one feels at resigning for ever a sole and ruling hope. He then walked up the pathway, until he was hid by the interposing shrubs.—When she could no longer behold him, Esther sunk down upon the seat which she had left, and relieved herself by crying bitterly.

He kept his word with Esther, in adopting the course of life which she recommended; but the shock which his health had undergone was too severe, and he died before the year was ended. This event was regarded by some with pity, and

by the greater number with indifference. Whether the change in his conduct were affected by the influence of true repentance, or merely a new direction given to the ruling passion; whether it was found available or otherwise, are questions not to be solved on earth; but, as we know that the just Author of human nature always proportions his mysterious aids to the violence of those passions which he has implanted in the heart, it may be hoped that Lacy's exertions were not made in vain.

PROTESTANTISM IN CENTRAL OCEANIA.

(From the Weekly Register.)

For more than twenty years past Protestantism has overrun the still savage islands of Oceania, where it maintains, under the name of missionaries, many agents at a very considerable cost. These agents relate the events wherein they have been actors; and to hear them, they have obtained the most brilliant successes. A missionary priest who has passed a great many years in the midst of the savages of Oceania, conversing with them in their own language and visiting the greater number of the clusters of islands where the Protestant agents had introduced Wesleyanism, has furnished the *Univers* with a few notes from which will be seen the reliance to be placed in the one-sided reports of the Methodists. The relations between Europe and Oceania are becoming every day more frequent, and the time is approaching when men the least inclined to receive the testimony of the Catholic missionaries will be enabled to judge between their testimony and that of the Protestant agents. But up to the present time very few persons have had the means of testing the truth of the statements of the latter. What can he know of a country and people of whose language one is ignorant and with whom communications can be held but for a few days? for up to the present time, the travelers who have visited the islands of Oceania have stayed but a short time, and not knowing the language and customs of the country, they cannot have formed a very exact idea of the natives and their manners, and the progress which religion has made amongst them. If, therefore, they have spoken of missions, they have only been able to do so from the reports of the missionaries themselves, Catholic or Protestant. We translate from the *Univers* the following account:

To win over a chief of some ability and influence by presents and promises; to excite his ambition by the perspective of an absolute sovereignty; to induce him to take up arms, and with a few Bible stories interpreted to serve the occasion, to make him declare a furious war against all unbelievers, &c.;—such are the means constantly adopted by the Methodist missionaries.—A chief of Vava'u, since called King George, was made their tool at Tonga. It was he who, excited by the Methodists, conquered by force of arms the whole of that archipelago to the Wesleyan sect, and consequently became absolute ruler thereof. Blood flowed; whole villages were massacred without distinction of age or sex, and corpses were carried in triumph to the Methodist Missionary-house, as being the principal agents in the war. It was in 1852, that Pea, the last village that made any resistance, fell into their hands, the Tongians have therefore submitted to force. The islands were converted to Wesleyanism and submitted to the sway of King George.

During a few years the isles of the archipelago Viti (Feejee) were inundated by Tongian catechists, who were sent to convert the people; but the population, disgusted by their tyrannical conduct and the disorders of which they were so frequently guilty, refused to be moved by such missionaries—they succeeded only in making a few proselytes. The conduct of the two principal catechists was little likely to conciliate the affections of the islanders; one of them set fire to the white men's village, the other concocted a plot for assassinating the whole body, with their wives and children. Both these worthies met their death in trying to carry out their abominable design. The whites and almost the whole of the archipelago consequently ranged themselves on the side of a Pagan chief who was most strongly opposed to the Methodists. The King George was called in to the help of Wesleyanism, which was in great danger of disappearing from the archipelago of Viti. This Prince embarked with an army of 3,000 men.—On his arrival he met with few obstacles. The Pagan chief, who alone could offer resistance, having had the misfortune to allow a Methodist minister to penetrate into his presence, died suddenly. The minister gave out that God had punished the chief for his obstinacy in refusing to acknowledge the Evangelical truth—but the people maintained that the minister had poisoned him. King George, finding so serious resistance, contented himself with massacring two or three hundred islanders, burning some villages, and following up the other terrified tribes, offering everywhere on his passage Methodism or death.

I have myself heard him declare that unbelievers should be treated, not as men, but as wild beasts. I have followed the traces of this army, which left behind it nothing but famine and desolation. I have heard the Vitiens (Feejeeans), while effeminately bowing their heads to the yoke, cry out, "What religion is it you wish to impose on us? Those who profess it pillage our goods, ravage our fields, burn our houses, outrage our women, although we are not your subjects. In what respect are you better than us? Yesterday, you were the weaker party, and you told us that war was forbidden by your God. Today, you are the strongest, and you come to impose on us your belief with arms in your hands." However, the Vitiens, vanquished by King Geo., ended by consenting to adopt Wesleyanism, which in their hearts they detested. That was all the Methodists desired, for they care little about interior conviction—they are only too happy if they only obtain, even by the most unworthy proceedings, an exterior profession of their sectarianism. Thus it was that, in 1855, the Archipelago of Viti was converted to Methodism. I abstain from speaking of vexatious details of wars of small importance which took place from time to time as a means of propagandism. Is it desirable to convert a village? then they immediately send there a catechist belonging to a tribe more powerful. If he cannot succeed in winning them over by his exhortations and threats, he resorts to all sorts of insults and immoralities. The initiated population rise, and the catechist is either driven away or assaulted, and then the cause of his religion is won—war is declared by the catechist's tribe, and the unfortunate tribe who refused to adopt Methodism is forced to embrace it in order to avoid death.—Such was the case with the islands of Matuka, Moala, Totoea, &c. But without going into further details, the principal facts which have led to the conversion of Tonga and Viti, have they not a sufficient significance to show the course followed by the Methodist missionaries?

These facts, public and notorious as they are on the spot—how should they be known in civilized countries, particularly in those which more particularly contribute by their subscriptions to support such a mission? What are the reports they receive? Reports written by Methodist missionaries themselves, who take good care to falsify facts so as to appear in the right. Thus King George will be represented as a hero and absolute monarch in Oceania, and all who refuse to submit to him, even in matters of religion, are rebels who should suffer every kind of punishment. On such grounds the Catholic population of Pea, in Tonga-Taboo, have been held up as rebels to their sovereign, while indeed King George has no right in the island. It was only after a long period of years of persecutions and vexations, that Pea decided upon resistance and accepted the war which had been declared against it in order to force it to abandon its religion.

The island of Ovolau, in the Archipelago of Viti, will also be represented in a state of rebellion against Thakobau, its chief. But why? good care will be taken not to accuse Ovolau of having separated from its chief, because it has refused to enter into the plot set on foot by the former and the principal Wesleyan catechists for assassinating their own chiefs and all the whites who live on the coasts. A catechist set fire to the white men's village: all their fortunes were in a few minutes a prey to the flames; one of their children fell a victim to the fire. In order to stop the just demands which such a proceeding would naturally call forth, Thakobau, in concert with the Wesleyan catechists, formed a plan of massacring all the whites, with their wives and children, and the inhabitants of Ovolau, who refused to concur in this infamous design, are therefore called rebels. Refer to the account of the Methodists as to the expedition of King George to Viti. What did he go to do there? A mere visit in search of a pirogua that his friend Thakobau had given him. The war which took place was against his will, and was provoked by the rebels of Ovolau, who fired upon one of his piroguas. A promenade with 3,000 men, and such a distance, for the simple purpose of looking after a pirogua, does not seem very likely. This is one of the Polynesian stories which the natives are in the habit of retelling when they wish to conceal their real intentions. There one would laugh at such a statement; and a greater reason for so doing would be that, in fact, the plan of the campaign for the conquest of Viti to Methodism had been settled a year before, and was known throughout the archipelago. It was this very reason which led to the first Tongian canoe which attempted to land at Ovolau being fired upon. King George, in sending this canoe, thought his plan was yet a secret, and he wished to ascertain if it were so. He was the aggressor, but he did not wish to appear so.

I could cite a number of facts falsified in the reports of the Wesleyan ministers; but these which I have reported are sufficient to prove how they have constantly cut them down or dis-