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## LORENZO; OR, THE EMPIRE OF RELIGION.

BY A SCOTCH NON-CONFORMIST, A CONVERT TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Translated from the French by a Lady of Philadelphia.

### CHAPTER IX.

Lorenzo resumed in these words: "Towards morning, the jailer brought me some nourishment; he remained, with arms folded, standing opposite to me. I took a cup of broth, which he had placed before me, and drank half of it. He presented me a piece of fowl. 'My wife,' said he, 'sends you this; eat, you must preserve your strength.' I kindly thanked him. Taking my hand, he said: 'It seems that the visit you have received, has rendered you more reasonable.' 'I have made the sacrifice,' I answered, in a low voice, and stifling a sigh.

"He looked at me in great astonishment, and I can conceive his surprise at the sudden change, believing that the same person was in prison.— My situation was not to be compared with Henry's, devoid as he was of religion, which gives comfort in the midst even of the greatest misfortunes. I declined eating, but finished the cup of broth, and reiterating my thanks to the jailer, said, 'give my thanks to your wife; tell her to pray for me to Him who takes account even of a glass of water offered in His name.'— He urged me still to partake of the fowl, but seeing me resolved to eat none of it, 'I will leave it with you,' said he; 'perhaps, at a later hour, it will be acceptable.' Then, taking my hand, which was burning, 'if you do not eat,' said he, 'you will scarcely be able to bear the punishment, which you have to suffer. Think too,' he exclaimed, with earnestness, 'that you have a soul to save or lose forever.' He then left me. I reflected a long time on his words. I knew that I was to be deprived of sight; but was ignorant of the manner. I had read and heard of criminals having their eyes torn out, and that they often died during the infliction of the punishment. I would have preferred death to the future which opened before me, and I began to look upon my approaching end as a favor, and I prepared myself, with calmness and resignation for the judgment of God, who made me feel a thousand times more of love than fear.

"I was on my knees, buried in my thoughts, when the jailer returned; he held in his hand a light and a book. 'I think,' said he, 'that this evening your sentence will be executed; here is a book to engage your attention in the interval. I did not bring you a light before, because you were so unreasonable that I feared you would have abused the privilege; but, truly, religion has gained the upper-hand. I wish then to give you this last consolation, whilst you are yet in a condition to receive it.' I took the book, and thanked him; it was the lives of the first martyrs, and a collection of hymns, bound together. Whilst I was looking over the book, he regarded me with an earnestness, which alarmed me, I was afraid that he guessed my secret; but I soon discovered that it was through mere curiosity, and that not having until then visited Henry and me, except with a dark lantern, he had not known our features: 'You are very young,' said he, sighing.

"I continued reading, but all my thoughts were concentrated on my position. I knew that on demanding to see the Duke of Medina, I should be saved. But probably Henry was still in Spain; the condition of Count Tancredi might have delayed his departure; I should endanger his life, and baffle my undertaking.

"I asked if it were possible to obtain a delay of five or six days. I learned that I could not, and that already three days had passed, since my sentence should have been put in execution. I blessed, in my heart, the adorable designs of Providence, who had wished to save Henry, and I insisted no more. I read, for some time, the lives of the martyrs, and my heart became inflamed at the thought of the rewards which were promised me. I offered myself, with rapture, in sacrifice to Him, who had died for me upon the cross; and faith and love elevating my soul, I even longed, ardently, to survive the execution of my sentence, in order to prolong a life of trouble and destitution, which an eternity would crown with so much the more happiness, in proportion to the length of my sufferings.

"Whilst my soul was exalted even to heaven, my body felt fatigued and exhausted. I slept soundly, and was only awakened by the noise of the door opening. Several persons entered.

"Convinced that my hour had arrived, I raised my soul to Him, who alone sustained me, and offered no resistance, as two men tied my hands behind my back, and placed me on the bed.

"I understood, in their Spanish tongue, that they were astonished at my youth and resignation. One made the sign of the cross on my forehead, 'Suffer for our Saviour Jesus Christ,' said he, 'you will have a recompense.'

"This thought animated anew my courage, and destroyed all idea of suffering. A bandage was bound tightly across my eyes. It was, I

thought, of herbs, and contained something so damp and cold, and so penetrating, that I was unable for a long time to recall my recollection.

"At last, my chains, the darkness which surrounded me, made me sensible of my unhappy fate. 'O mighty God!' I exclaimed, 'have you abandoned me?' I was alone: six hours, which appeared an age to me, passed.

"After this, the jailer entered, and without changing my position, he gave me some broth, mixed with wine. 'I have obtained,' said he, 'that this means should be employed to deprive you of sight, because neither your life, nor health will be endangered by it.' 'I thank you,' I replied; 'for although this life may be burdensome to me, I owe it to you. May heaven recompense you!' 'They have bound you, only that you might not tear away the bandage, which must remain upon your eyes for twenty-four hours.' 'If I promise not to remove it, would you trust me?' 'Yes, for after all, you would but expose yourself to a more cruel punishment.' 'That consideration is not necessary to induce me to keep my word.' He unbound my hands, and left me. It was then about nine o'clock.

"I fell upon my knees, and passed several hours in prayer; consolation and peace took possession of my soul. I, a thousand times, blessed divine Providence, and don Silva, who had been the instrument in guiding me to the knowledge of truth, and to whom I owed my resignation, and my future and eternal hopes.

"Towards evening my jailer and some other persons entered; they untied the bandage. God has placed in the heart of man a ray of hope, which does not abandon him even in the greatest distress; and which he often entertains against the clearest evidence. I felt it, alas! in my frightful state, and without wishing to acknowledge it even to myself, I dared still to hope that my misfortune was not consummated. But as they uncovered my eyes, and I felt the mild warmth of the lights, which they held near, yet nevertheless, found myself involved in total darkness, a cold sweat covered my face, and I became insensible. When I recovered, I was on my bed; the surgeon of the prison near me; for the jailer, having discovered my wound, which I had disregarded, and which was much inflamed, had promptly sent for the surgeon. He asked me if I had been wounded before or since my abode in prison. I made no reply. He placed a bandage upon it, and took the greatest care of me. I then occupied myself with the sole desire of completing my sacrifice, by the sanctification of the remainder of my life. I inquired to which I was condemned, perpetual imprisonment, or the galleys? They told me, that it depended on my choice. I did not hesitate. Don Silva had proved to me, and I had myself seen, what good could be effected among the slaves, by one of religious principles. The humiliation of this state was a further motive to determine me, for I had no longer any other ambition, than to increase by earthly afflictions, the eternal glory towards which all my thoughts were directed.

"I was then, together with six convicts, sent to ——. My companions laughed, sung, and related the causes of their condemnation; as for me, I kept profoundly silent. Nature did not always second grace; I prayed at intervals; at other times my mind dwelt upon the thought of my life but just begun, and yet already lost; my friendship for Don Silva, and the renunciation of my brother Arthur, which, of all my sacrifices, afflicted me most.

"Arrived at ———, we were placed in a galley; then conducted, two by two, to the work for which we were destined. My companion was to teach me to be useful to him in his labors. My companion soon became attached to me, as I worked unceasingly, often doing his task with my own. He had little sense of religion, but his soul was not dead to gratitude. I spoke to him of God, of his goodness, his mercy, and love; and I applied myself to confirm within my own soul, a settled peace, which rendering my temper more equal, would give to those around me a higher idea of religion, to which I owed all.

"A clergyman occasionally visited us. It was with inexpressible happiness that I received the sacraments of penance and the holy eucharist.— To avoid scandal, and all embarrassing questions on the nature of my crimes, I told the chaplain that I had approached the sacraments only twelve days previously. This was true, for I had communicated in the morning of the day, on which I was attacked in the forest; but he no doubt supposed that I had received communion since my apprehension; Henry's arrest being much anterior to this period.

"By degrees, I became accustomed to my new life; I began even to enjoy myself, in the midst of my misfortunes. God gave me grace, to have Him almost always present to my thoughts; my soul only lived on earth to diffuse the divine peace and love, with which it was filled. My companion became fervent, and manifested the most lively repentance for his sins. A short time after, he fell sick, and died in sen-

timents the most consoling for his eternal salvation. I scarcely quitted him for a moment; I felt his loss as that of a real friend; so true is it, that religion makes difference of conditions disappear, and supplies, by her unspeakable charms, the want of education, delicacy, and grandeur of soul.

"I had been several months at ——— when a part of the slaves were about to be sent to Bayonne. The name of this city made my heart palpitate. They were going to occupy that vessel to which Don Silva had conducted me. They would enter the chapel, where, for the first time, I had been present at mass. Perhaps Don Silva was still the consoling angel of the place. I asked to be of the number of those who were going to leave, and obtained permission without difficulty.

"During the journey, we suffered a great deal from the excessive cold of the mountains we had to traverse; my wound opened afresh; it had never been entirely healed, and now caused me great pain. I found an inexhaustible source of consolation in Him, who disposed of me, according to the adorable designs of His providence, and who deigned to sustain my patience and my courage. Arrived at Bayonne, we were soon established in our new abode.

"The following morning, I inquired if Signor Don Silva was still in Bayonne; and upon receiving an affirmative answer, I experienced such violent emotion at the thought of again meeting my friend, the only being in the world to whom I could confide my troubles and open my heart, that I fainted. Alas! I felt but too well that nature was not annihilated in me; and that I still loved Don Silva with all the ardor which had ever been natural to me. On reviving, I felt my hands pressed with affection, and I believed myself the sport of a dream; but, my name, pronounced in a low voice, made me start. I was in the arms of Don Silva. Recovering immediately my presence of mind, 'I pray you,' said I, 'respect my secret, and see in me only the unfortunate Lorenzo (I had taken this name on quitting my prison), little worthy of being distinguished from the mass of convicts.'

"Don Silva was too much affected to reply. We were alone. 'Great God!' he exclaimed, 'hast thou abandoned this soul, redeemed and saved by such multiplied graces! What have you done, dear and unhappy Hidalla?'

"I threw my arms around him: 'Don Silva, condemn not your friend, without hearing him,' and assuring myself that we were alone, I fell at his feet; I made the confession of my life, since our separation, and I concealed from him no circumstance of it. He raised me with emotion; urged me to discover the truth, and return to my family: to this I objected. 'Each day,' said I, 'I renew my sacrifice in the depth of my heart; it is the pledge of an eternity of happiness and glory. I live but for that future life.— Permit me, encourage me to finish my career, as it has been commenced. I have not deserved the unspeakable joy of again meeting you.— Heaven is too kind to me; I know not how to be sufficiently grateful.'

"Don Silva was bound by the secrecy of confession; he acceded to my request. I returned to my task with a soul overflowing with gladness, and replenished with consolations. Don Silva saw me every morning. He said mass; and I often had the happiness of receiving the holy communion. He came daily to read to me, whilst I worked. I had, as it were, received a new existence. This abode of shame and misery became to me a paradise of delight. Yes, Sidney, I was the happiest of men, with a pure conscience; remote from the tumult and agitation of the world; a profound obscurity, and occupations all elevated by supernatural motives; not a sigh, not a step, which may not have been profitable for the future life, and all the charms of a most holy friendship. Ah! Sidney, when shall it be given you to know the ineffable joy of the continual presence of God; and the delight which the thought of immortality gives.

"I learned, through Don Silva, what had become of Henry Walsingham, and although I had not named him, for whom I bore captivity, I saw that he was informed of it, when he told me that Henry was converted, and had made his abjuration to him. I obtained from him, a promise that he would never give Henry any intelligence of me; and I wrote to him the two notes which he received, by means of a merchant who was going to pass Walsingham castle.

"However, if adversity elevates the soul, strengthens it, and detaches it from passing things; friendship and its delights, how pure so ever they may be, enfeeble and diminish more or less, our spiritual strength. This, I experienced. Accustomed, with Don Silva, to rise to the contemplation of celestial things, I supposed myself disengaged from the earth, and all its miseries and vain attachments. Alas! the death of my friend showed me what I was, a reed shaken by the tempest, and as though swallowed up in the waves of tribulation."

Here Lorenzo covered his face (which was wet with tears) with his hands. Then, deeply sighing, "There are griefs which time can never weaken, and of which, religion seems pleased to let us fathom the whole extent, in order to purify us, and to serve to the glory of Him who sends them.

"Two days passed without my seeing Don Silva; during two years he had rarely missed a day. I learned that he was sick; my prayers were unceasing, but too eager, too little resigned; they were not worthy of being heard.

"My angelic friend had filled the measure of his good works; he was called to an eternal recompense. Feeling his end approach, he obtained permission for me to be led to him; I fell on my knees at his bedside, and burst into tears. He asked to be left alone with me:

"Hidalla," said he, 'the moment of our separation draws near; I bless and adore the will of Him, who calls me. I regret life only on your account. I feel all, that the loss of your sole confidant, of the only friend of your misfortunes will cost you; but He, who takes him from you, can give you another. But, perhaps, he wishes to possess your heart without any division. Calm yourself, then, my beloved Hidalla,' he continued, observing me almost suffocated by my sobs; 'my friend, my brother, I leave you but for a very short time, which will pass as a dream, to be followed (I confidently hope) by changing and eternal happiness. You are still free to seek consolation in your family. I do not, however, require it. If God sustain your courage, it will be well for you, who have sacrificed all for Him; Arthur, Silva, and the world. Never forget the grace of your conversion, and all that the infinitely good and merciful being has done for you. To Him, I confide you. I could wish to have labored more faithfully in his service. Oh! that I could describe the joy which shall gladden your last hour, when you will be able to produce before his throne of justice sacrifices, nothing less than the total abandonment and renunciation of all the pleasures of this world.'

"Don Silva's words filled my soul with new courage; I pressed his hand to my lips. 'Yes,' I exclaimed, 'I will finish the work which the Most High has begun in me. I resign myself to every suffering. Pray for your friend, that he may obtain strength and perseverance.'

"He promised never to forget me, and desired my prayers for the repose of his soul. I remained near his bed during the administration of the sacraments, and whilst the last prayers were said, to which he responded with great recollection.

"At the conclusion, his voice became weak; he pressed my hand, and blessed me, making the sign of the cross on my forehead. 'Adieu,' said he, 'until the day of our eternal reunion. Remember that I shall await you, and that it depends upon yourself to rejoice in me.' These were his last words. They left me with him, until feeling his hand cold and icy, and calling without receiving any reply, I was certain of my earthly desolation. My strength forsook me. I remained motionless near him I had lost. The attentions of my companions were not able to restore my disordered mind. I cannot give you an exact account of what befel me after the death of Don Silva. Finding their care useless, it was determined to transfer me, with some others, to the maritime town of ——. Robert was one of the number. Change of air restored me by degrees to a calmer state. The continual fever, which I before had, left me. My strength was re-established. I recovered the peace and joy of a soul entirely resigned.

"Nevertheless, when I understood that the Marquis of Rosline was at ———, nature again disturbed me. I was troubled by the idea that Arthur would look upon his brother with contempt, indifference, or at most a humiliating compassion, without knowing him; and whilst his voice would make me leap for joy, I could never behold him.

"I passed the night in a strange agitation, and shedding many tears, urged by the desire to embrace Arthur, make myself known, and return to my family. Grace, however, triumphed. I renounced this enjoyment, and promised myself in exchange for it, a more solid joy in heaven, as the price of my renewed sacrifice. I slept, and dreamed that I saw my brother. I found myself on my knees in a church. Arthur appeared above the altar, with a smiling countenance, holding a palm in his hand. He blessed me. 'Your prayers have been heard,' he said, 'I am a Catholic. Adieu, till eternity.' I awoke, calm and consoled. Again, for an instant, I thought that in discovering myself to Arthur, I should bring him to the truth; but very soon, I reflected that God has need of none in the execution of His designs, much less of so weak a creature as myself.

"Arthur's conduct occasioned me new combats. Determined to keep an inviolable silence about my name, I foresaw, at the same time, all the violence of the assaults my heart would have

to sustain. You know what has passed since this time. I feared only the presence of the Marchioness of Rosline, the only one of the family who knew me personally; Lord Donovan having been several years dead, and the Duchess of Salisbury, my mother, from whom I have been separated almost since my birth, and who would never have recognized her son in the person of Lorenzo."

### CHAPTER X.

Lorenzo having closed his narrative, added with a profound sigh, 'I have but one wish upon earth: it is the conversion of my beloved Arthur—and of you.' He then remained some time with his head resting upon his hands, and profoundly recollected. I was sensibly affected.— His conversion, the particular graces he had received, his conduct in the trying situations in which he had been placed, all made upon me an impression which I did not wish yet to acknowledge. Agitated and struggling with my various emotions, I arose and walked with rapid strides along the room. I was buried in my reflections, when, raising my eyes, I saw the marquis of Rosline standing before me, leaning upon the mantelpiece. His eyes were steadily fixed upon me. Struck by his unlooked for presence, I was about letting an exclamation escape, when he, by a sign, withheld me.

At the same time, the voice of Lorenzo recalled me to his side. "Do me the kindness to tell me," said he, "if Arthur has spoken to you in private since the other day, on the subject of your reading, and if he has made any prohibition."

"None; but I wish, on my part, to respond to his generosity; without, however, resisting that interior voice which inspires me with esteem for your religion, and with the resolution to search into it. I have disclosed my intention to the marquis."

Lorenzo appeared to feel great satisfaction. "Persevere in this just design, my dear Sidney, and request my brother to be present at your spiritual conferences; this will be a mark of your confidence in him; he will feel it, and perhaps heaven will hear my prayer, and grant me the happiness of seeing Arthur open his eyes to the truth. Oh! then I shall have nothing to regret."

The whole soul of Hidalla animated his words. I felt great embarrassment at the presence of the marquis, and the impossibility of acquainting his brother of it. A moment after, perhaps through pity for me, or delicacy, he put an end to my trouble by touching the lock of the door, which was open, and pretending only then to enter, he came near Lorenzo and inquired after his health. After some minutes he left the room, making me a sign not to betray him. I kept his secret. In the evening, Lorenzo came to sup with us.— Henry was not yet informed of anything that had passed. The marchioness of Rosline and Caroline kept up a cheerful conversation. Arthur, absorbed in his reflections, took no part in it. The next day, while seeking Lorenzo, I went to the chapel, thinking to find him there, but what was my astonishment at beholding there, on his knees, and so profoundly thoughtful that he neither saw nor heard me, the marquis of Rosline! His example induced me to pray a moment to the God who, my friend said, was present in the sanctuary. I then went to the garden, where, meeting Lorenzo, I apprised him of what I had just seen.

He pressed my hand. "God is all powerful and infinitely good. He will hear me. I feel assured of it."

The marquis called me, but perceiving Lorenzo, he joined us. "Hidalla," he said, "I am going to deprive you, for a moment, of Sidney, to whom I have something to say; but solitude is not unpleasant to you, for you are never alone."

These words, and the subdued air which accompanied them, added to the astonishment which Arthur's conduct occasioned me. "I have had news to tell you," said he; "political affairs are in a grievous state. The queen (Mary Stuart) has numerous partisans. Lord Murray also.— Peace will not be established without trying events. I have no intelligence from Lord Seymour, who has left the kingdom. Many are expatriating themselves, and passing into France and Spain. You can either do likewise or remain with us; but this is the moment to decide, whilst yet affairs permit deliberation."

"I do not hesitate," I interrupted, "and unless you are certain of my being either useful or necessary to my uncle, I entreat you to let me share your lot, your opinions, and dangers; and still continue over me your mild and valued guardianship."

"My son Edmund is not dearer to me than you, Sidney," affectionately resumed the marquis. "You will ever have a father tenderly attached to you, in the members of mine. Henry lives unconnected with affairs of state. If you lose a friend, it will be myself, who from my position must follow the different political movements.—"