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THAT WHICH GOD WILLS, NOTHING ELSE.

Translated from the French for the Catholic Mirror.

Under a fragrant Jessamine tree, three young girls were talking with the frankness natural to their age. They had been brought up in the seclusion of a convent; an intimate friendship had been formed between them, by the inclination we have to love that which appears similar to ourselves. And yet the differences between them were very decided. Inez, Leontine, and Julia had none of those points of resemblance which could be called the affluence of the soul, but the innocent children believed they loved one another, because the convent bell, which regulated precisely their movements, had established between them, since they were five years of age, a perfect harmony in tasks and pleasures.

How many sympathies in this world have no other origin than a hell, or even less! We move for a long time together, because the reins held by a strong hand attach to the same carriage persons often dissimilar, but who think themselves inseparable because there is no one to separate them.

It is one of the illusions of our mind, an illusion which, it must be admitted, is serviceable to us, since it hides from our eyes certain realities which would cause us to become ill-natured or melancholy, according as one's disposition was irritable or sad.

The three school girls now before us had but one single trait in common. They had received at the same time the holy teachings of religion, their faith was presented to them under attractive forms, and they had admitted it without effort, without restraint, and each in her own way loved God with all her heart. Religion, more or less understood, was their innocent passion, and truly it seemed that the aspirations which fill the heart of man at his entrance into life, had been turned towards heavenly things in these three young girls, and had given to them the desire for everything beautiful, pure and elevated. But it is a commendable excess, when a person, feeling within his heart the need of extreme devotion, throws himself into a higher sphere, and seeks far from earth to satisfy his aspirations.

Who does not know that it is easier to do wonders in imagination than to accomplish in reality very easy works? It is the illusion of all ages. We cannot accomplish what is before us and we learn to accomplish chimerical difficulties; time is consumed by useless labors accomplished in secret by that imagination which has been so truly called 'the crazy worker.'

Leontine and Julia, of ardent and generous nature, had not been able to escape from this weakness of mind which make us desire the false and neglect the true; long for the future and forget the present.

As to Inez, calmer and more intelligent, God had given her the only knowledge which does not deceive, affliction; she had early in life known loneliness of heart. Possessing none of those treasures which we only appreciate at their true value, when deprived of them, this good child had sought for happiness where alone it is to be found by those of deep affections. Extremely quiet, yet much sought for, she entered never the less into the trifling talk of the young girls who surrounded her. These had conceived for her a sort of respect which prevented neither familiarity nor affection. She was regarded as a pupil 'a part,' the companions of her own age took her for a model, and the younger ones laughingly gave her the title of little 'mother.'

Listening at doors is an indiscretion of which we are incapable, but this arbor is only closed by hues of green, and the voices of the girls come to us without our intending to receive the sound. We can therefore without scruple not listen, but 'in spite of ourselves we will hear.'

A CONVERSATION IN A GROVE.

'Oh, my friends, how good God is!' exclaimed Julia. 'How much I desire to serve him worthily. In our present position it is very difficult. But later, when our liberty is given to us, what happiness it will be to consecrate ourselves to the service of the Lord, to sacrifice ourselves completely to him. Oh, how I long to realize my dream, my bright dream of the future! And you, Inez, do you never dream?'

'Dear Julia,' replied Inez, 'it seems to me that life is a book of which we only read a page at a time.'

'Listen to the old lady,' said Leontine. 'The experience of seventeen years of wisdom and study.'

'Naughty Leontine,' exclaimed Inez, 'you are always making fun.'

'I am not making fun,' said Leontine, 'but I jest because you amuse me extremely; there is nothing youthful about you.'

'I have nothing youthful about me?' repeated Inez; 'you pay me a nice compliment.'

'I understand precisely Leontine's thought,'

said Julia. 'She wishes to say that you have more judgment than usual at your age. I do not know how it is, but you see things just as they are.'

'That is what astonishes me,' said Leontine, 'and I may say sometimes provokes me; are you angry, Inez?'

'No, don't you see she is laughing,' exclaimed Julia; 'besides, she is never angry.'

'She is right; the saints act thus,' said Leontine. 'As to me, as I am not yet in the calendar, I take advantage of it by getting angry quite often. It is too difficult to practice the virtues at our age and in our condition. We have not time to give ourselves up to pious habits for which we feel no attraction. Always duty, duty! To work, to obey, to follow in everything a very disagreeable rule. But the day will come when, like Julia, I hope to realize my dream of the future.'

'You also have a dream,' asked Julia. 'Without doubt,' said Leontine, 'and I am quite sure of seeing it realized.'

'My little Leontine, let me tell you something,' said Inez. 'I know as yet almost nothing of the world and of life, but it seems to me that we are the masters of our life only to a very limited degree. Circumstances rule us almost always. do you not see my friend? It is God who marks out our path, and we follow it.'

'Yes, but what God wishes us to do, He causes us to foresee,' replied Leontine. 'As for myself, I am perfectly decided in my choice of the kind of a life I wish to lead.'

'Why not wait till the time to decide upon these things shall arrive?' asked Inez.

'Always wait!' cried Julia. 'It is so tiresome. Leontine is right. It is necessary to study our tastes and inclinations to form a plan a plan, and to determine upon our projects.'

'There is neither imprudence nor folly in it, for we are always masters of our will, and, for my part, no one in the world could make me do any thing but what I wished.'

'I agree with you,' said Leontine.

'Now, Leontine,' said Julia, 'tell me your dream, and I will tell you mine. Inez will be the judge, and give us her opinion, being careful to make out a good case from these dangerous plans to convict us at once of lightness, childishness, and a thousand other imperfections.'

'Dear Julia,' exclaimed Inez, 'you know very well that I do not pretend to think myself superior to any of my companions; if I am rather more serious in character, it arises from the particular circumstances in which God has placed me.'

'It arises from your being a hundred times better than any of us,' replied Julia. 'Be still now, and let Leontine speak, for she is going to tell us her dream. Afterwards it will be my turn.'

'Young ladies,' said Inez, 'I will ask but one favor, that is that you will permit me to listen, and to take notes.'

'Notes?' cried Leontine, 'what a brilliant idea. There is my portfolio, but I have lost my pencil.'

'Stay,' called Julia, 'here is my pencil, I have lost my portfolio. Thus do things happen in this world.'

'Now I am ready to listen,' said Inez.—'Speak.'

'Commence, Leontine,' said Julia.

'No,' replied Leontine, 'you must commence.'

'Well,' said Julia, 'this is my dream: you will laugh at me but no matter. It is an idea which I have entertained since my first communion, and, I will admit, that on that day I very nearly made a solemn vow.'

'A vow,' exclaimed Leontine.

'Yes,' replied Julia, 'a vow. And I would have made it if we had not so often been told that we ought not to engage more actively in a religious life until our minds shall have arrived at maturity.'

'How strange,' said Leontine. 'It seems to me I have been shut up long enough.'

'So have I,' said Julia. 'What do you wish? We pretend the reverse. I will maintain that my idea, my dream, my vocation, for it is positively my vocation, is to found a religious order.'

'Is it possible?' cried Leontine. 'Do you not think there are enough already?'

'My dear friend,' replied Julia, 'mine will be an order altogether different. Such as one does not see.'

'What will be the object of the institution?' asked Leontine.

'The object? To reform all abuses, perfect everything, bring up children, relieve the poor, nurse the sick, convert the savages.'

families, pious, and even, if it be possible, of a pleasant appearance. I will have none who are really ugly.'

'Why not?' asked Leontine.

'Because,' replied Julia, 'they are not pleasant to look at.'

'That is true,' said Leontine.

'They will have a beautiful dress,' continued Julia, all white excepting the cape, which will be of deep blue. Imagine three or four hundred women of the aristocracy, loving God above every one, watching by the bedside of the poor, enduring every hardship, every grief, pestilence, storms, fire, the sword; dressing wounds, teaching children, quitting with pleasure family and country, and going into unknown regions.'

'Your ladies will be much engaged, it seems to me,' said Leontine. 'That which strikes me most is the savages.'

'It is to me an irresistible feature,' exclaimed Julia. 'To carry the faith to the simple in heart, to christianize the children of nature!'

'Dear children of nature,' laughed Leontine. 'I should be afraid that some day they would murder all the community.'

'Well,' said Julia, 'they would die martyrs. Who would wish another death?'

'I would,' replied Leontine, 'if the good God permits it. My dear Julia, what terrible sacrifices you will impose on your poor nuns.'

'Sacrifices!' cried Julia. 'But in this would be their happiness. They would come and go, they would work, and suffer, and die.'

'Why, Julia?' exclaimed Inez, 'do you love God as much as that?'

'It astonishes you, does it, Inez?' asked Julia. 'I know very well that I do not pass for pious, because I submit with difficulty to rules, because I am so lively, so hasty, so wilful. What can I do? To reform oneself is very difficult. Besides, I am now in leading strings, and that does not suit me. Later, you will see of what I am capable. It seems to me that nothing shall stop me, neither in life or death. To gain souls, thousands of souls, that is what I must do. This is my dream, my happy dream.'

'Inez,' said Leontine, 'see how Julia is moved, how intensely she feels!'

'Alas!' sighed Inez, 'I am very cold without doubt, very deficient in generosity, for none of these ideas have ever occurred to me.'

'I am convinced, Julia,' said Leontine, 'that it is your dream of the future which causes you to be deficient in your lessons and in your historical compositions.'

'Asuredly,' answered Julia. 'With your soul filled with grand thoughts, and from morning till night to do nothing.'

'Who knows, Julia,' asked Inez, 'if these little "nothings" may not be of sufficient importance in God's sight for Him some day to give a welcome to your soul as a reward?'

'You are right, Inez,' said Julia, 'I ought to imitate you, for you do everything well: but to do so it is necessary to live in the present, and I live in the future. Oh! how grand is my dream.'

'Have you ever spoken of it to those who have more experience than we have?' inquired Inez.

'It is useless,' replied Julia, 'they would not understand me.'

'How much one is to be pitied at our age!' exclaimed Leontine. 'Every one thinks he has a right to keep us silent. This is why I do not speak of my affairs to any one. It is the only plan to pursue when we only possess our great dream of the future, and our fourteen years.'

'Now, Leontine,' it is your turn,' said Julia.

'I shall begin,' said Leontine, 'by announcing to you, young ladies, that heaven has not endowed me with the courage of our friend Julia. It is not necessary to my happiness to brave pestilence, and storms, and still less savages; I wish, like our respected foundress, to do good, but, if you please, in an entirely different manner, I will be rich, because I will have my mother's fortune. My father, who has no one but me in the world, will let me do as I please. Imagine me then at twenty, and perhaps sooner, mistress of my fortune, my person, and everything else.'

'Excepting circumstances,' suggested Inez.

'Circumstances,' cried Leontine, 'we need not be troubled by them.'

'We are too wise,' said Julia.

'I wish and I intend to be free,' continued Leontine. 'I will therefore commence by marrying.'

'To be free?' asked Inez.

'Certainly,' replied Leontine. 'When we are married we can do as we like.'

'Not exactly,' said Inez.

'I shall marry a young man,' said Leontine, 'he must be very good, very pious, very rich, and very handsome.'

'You will do well,' said Inez.

'I shall spend six months in Paris, and six months in the country, which will enable me to do good in both places. In Paris, I shall be the

lady patroness, I shall assist all the charitable institutions, I shall give ecdowments, and I shall give concerts for the poor. Nothing shall go on without me, my fortune will be devoted entirely to good works, to the glory of God. See, Julia, I shall give you one hundred thousand francs for your savages.'

'Thank you, I accept,' replied Julia.

'Winter having passed,' continued Leontine, 'I shall retire to my estates. There, I shall be the Lady of the Manor, I shall open schools, I shall build churches, I shall make roads, and benefit the country.'

'There will be none,' replied Leontine. 'It is too sad a thought. I shall give to all the good people sufficient money that each may buy a field of ground, a cow, and some hens; they will be touched by my kindness, and gratitude will lead them to God. You see that in being the great lady, I shall also be a missionary.'

'Indeed, my friends,' said Inez, 'your dreams are very different from those which most young girls have; they only think pleasure, you only of doing good.'

'And you, dear Inez,' said Leontine, 'you are so wise!'

'So virtuous, so correct!' added Julia.

'Oh, how many compliments!' exclaimed Inez. 'One would say you did not love me. If I have a little more judgment than you, it is because I am seventeen.'

'Come, then,' said Leontine, 'be obliging and tell us your dream.'

'I have not made one,' said Inez.

'Why not?' asked Leontine.

'Because I have been told,' answered Inez, 'that these vain thoughts turn us from the present, and that it is only the present which belongs to us. I wish as much as you do, my dear friends, to become pious, truly pious, to contribute with all my might to the glory of God, to the welfare of souls, to the relief of suffering, but in what manner I know not.'

'How calm she is,' said Leontine: 'it is astonishing. For myself, I cannot think of all this without becoming excited.'

'Do you not think, Leontine,' asked Inez, 'that we can serve God and our neighbor quietly? As for myself, the only favor which I ask from Heaven, is to acquire that gentle piety which renders the soul eloquent even in silence, for this silence says to all: if you love me, love God.'

'You are right,' said Julia, 'but it is proper that I should keep to my intention. Remember, Leontine, you have promised me one hundred thousand francs.'

'Two hundred, if you wish,' said Leontine.

'Ah! what joy,' cried Julia. 'Dear Inez, now that we have told you all our folly, you must show us what you have written while we have been speaking.'

'Willingly,' replied Inez.

'Let me read it aloud,' said Leontine.

1st. 'Julia the founder of an order for practicing all the virtues, human and superhuman. A devotion without limit, courage under every trial. The conversion of savages, "en masse."—The Martyr's Crown.'

'Leontine, lady of the manor and general patroness. A perfect marriage. An immense fortune. Uninterrupted happiness. Terrestrial Paradise. All for the glory of God.'

'Naughty one,' exclaimed Leontine.

'You have been laughing at us from beginning to end,' said Julia.

'It seems so to you,' said Inez.

'What do you expect to do with this little paper,' asked Julia.

'Keep it as a remembrance,' replied Inez.

'Is that it, miss,' said Leontine, 'and if in the future we meet in the world, and our dreams are not realized, you will laugh at us still more.'

'Do you think I would dare to do so?' asked Inez.

'I love you so much,' said Julia, 'you may do what you like; keep this paper; we are sure of meeting, as we will all live in Paris; you will show me this piece of folly in after years, and it will amuse me. But you must write something as your expectation.'

'What would you have me write, my dear Julia. I have formed no plan.'

'Make one at once, it is easily done,' said Leontine.

'But I do not wish for anything,' said Inez.

'You must wish for something,' cried Leontine. 'Come, quick, quick, quick. Ah, there she is writing. Let me read it. Listen, Julia.'

'What do I wish?'

'That which God wills, nothing else.'

'Well, you will surely be canonized,' exclaimed Julia. 'For myself, I will love you forever. Kiss me. There, the clock is striking. Oh, dear.'

'What, is recess finished?' asked Leontine.

'Has it been two hours? We must go to recitation, and my lessons are not yet studied.'

me. Oh, what a life our's is. Deliver me from it.'

FIFTEEN YEARS LATER.

At the end of a handsome apartment, a lady of about thirty years was reclining in an easy chair: a sickly palor suffused her cheeks, and her hands were frequently clasped as though in prayer. Upon her calm brow no murmuring could be read, and if sometimes a tear rolled down her cheeks, a gentle sigh seemed to ask pardon for this involuntary weakness. No child enlivened by its play the solitude of the widow. From time to time, her friends visited her, but in their visits were beginning to show signs of weariness.

'They had for so long a time seen Leontine sick and infirm. At first they had pitied her sincerely, but at last their compassion lessened in seeing her constantly suffering. It seemed to be natural, and that she ought to be accustomed to it. Such is the pity of the world. They weep over some striking misfortune, some crushing catastrophe, but have no sympathy with the continuation of a trouble without remedy, and which has no very marked characteristics. Moreover, in sickness we gain nothing by a monotonous life; the more our sufferings are prolonged, the more unhappy we are.'

Leontine R— had experienced this. A thousand times since her widowhood she had recognized the fact that to move the crowd, it is necessary a great misfortune should come suddenly, and not be continued. Notwithstanding, she had frequently sought comfort and help where it was not to be found.

At last a good angel had come to her house, and had, if one might use the expression, 'remade' her heart.

Who was this good angel, and by what miracle of consolation had Heaven sent her to the unhappy Leontine?

We saw her formerly gay and joyous. We heard her laugh and jest in the convent garden. Leaving this pious retreat at the commencement of her sixteenth year, the young girl found the dreams of her childhood had vanished. The world and its attractions had awakened in her weak heart a doubt if she would be true to the voice from above, which had first called her.

As Leontine possessed but the beginning of piety mixed with a great ambition, the feeling had been suppressed almost at its birth by pleasure and riches. A brilliant marriage had thrown this engaging young girl into the vortex of the world, and during seven years she had been happy, if that exciting life can be called happy which steals our soul from us.

Occupying a magnificent house at Lyons, Mrs. R— became the queen of society. One blessing only was denied her, a little child upon whom could rest that fullness of love which dwells in a woman's heart, and which so willingly changes to devotion.

Leontine preserved an irreproachable character in the eyes of society; but if by her hands alms were daily bestowed as if to make up for her wasted hours, it might be said her soft heart spared itself all trouble in the exercise of charity, and in the observance of the evangelical law. Nevertheless, she was called pious, because she so regularly attended mass, at a certain hour, every Sunday, and listened to the sermons of celebrated preachers.

Poor young woman. How far she was from fulfilling the pious dreams of her childhood.

There is no road, however flowery, which does not offer to the traveler sooner or later its briars and thorns.

Leontine, becoming a widow at twenty-five, and denied the title of mother, had wept for the first time; then little by little, like a spoiled child, she again sought to find joy in the world. A second marriage was talked of, when all at once a horrible accident divided her life in two parts.

Leontine started in the cars to visit one of her friends with whom she hoped to spend several weeks agreeably. God's Providence awaited her on the road. Two trains came into collision, and a terrible accident ensued. Several travelers were mortally wounded, Mrs. R— was left almost lifeless. She was relieved, and cared for with skill and devotion, but after long months had passed, she was pronounced incurable. The health of the young woman had become injured by suffering, and by violent yet ineffectual remedies. Leontine was an invalid and a recluse. The slightest movement fatigued her. A beautiful chamber, spacious and airy, was her universe. She could hardly go out to breathe the evening air upon a terrace adjoining her apartment. The gay world which surrounded her was touched as a child who easily weeps, but who is even more easily comforted.

Who shall tell the nights of anguish succeeding the weary days in which Leontine experienced only grief and isolation? It sometimes happened that after suffering all night with high fever, the young widow really imagined herself the most