

CARDOME

A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

BY ANNA C. MINOVICH

CHAPTER XXIII

The reception came to an early close, and the officers of Morgan's cavalry left the ball-room for the saddle. They rode that night and the next day, fighting their way through a town of considerable importance and coming out of it the victors; captured the enemy's stores at another place and spread everywhere as much consternation as if they were half the Confederate army instead of a few hundred dauntless men.

"Major," then said Morgan, "this is a strange meeting!" "As our parting was sad, Captain, ah! I beg pardon, it is Colonel now, and ought to be General! But," he continued hastily, "I may have done you harm in sending for you. The undertaking is perilous." "By your own example you once taught me in danger," interposed Morgan, light flashing from his beautiful eyes.

"I see here two other friends of mine," said Mr. Davidson. "Permit me first to speak to them; then, as we go to the town, I shall outline my plans for conducting this enterprise." He greeted Clay Powell and Hal, after which he rejoined Colonel Morgan. As they rode forward, Mr. Davidson began to give an expression of his opinion.

"This imprisonment of Southern ladies," he cried, passionately, "is the worst of many bad actions that have disgraced the North's method of conducting this war. I swear to you that I, who, on the declaration of war, Southern though I am to the heart's core, felt that I could not take up arms against the flag I once fought under, have, since seeing that flag wave over yonder prison, regretted bitterly, bitterly, that I ever struck a blow in its defence, that I ever wore the same uniform as those ruffians who countenance such proceedings! Great God! have the valor and manhood of the North fallen so low that tender maidens and delicate women are dragged from their homes and thrown into prison, where by the terrible weapon of fear they are made to work from morning until night to supply clothing for the men who are sworn to kill their fathers and sons? Morgan," and he struck the pommel of his saddle with his clenched hand, "it has been nearly three months since, on hearing of Miss Castleton's imprisonment, I, in the guise of a minister, obtained permission to visit this prison freely, and I swear there have been times when, seeing what those gentle women must endure, I have been ashamed to meet their eyes, because the creatures set over them are men like myself. And I further declare that not one soldier who goes down into the hell of battle and pours out the last drop of his heart's blood for his country is more the hero than are those brave, patient, sadly persecuted women!

What they have endured!—Indignities, insults, privations! Who shall attempt to measure their anguish of soul, their sorrow of heart? But I could do nothing, for I knew not whom to trust. I could only wait until a Southern regiment was near enough for me to communicate with it. God sent you, my friend, in answer to my prayer. "Since the rumor of your advance reached me," Mr. Davidson went on, with a smile, "I have departed from the saintly character that is supposed to distinguish a minister of the gospel, and have descended to the level of those who are in authority in the New York women's prison, and that is how indeed, I have spent this evening with them in

ricious drinking, and I left them, fighting drunkenly over their glasses like the brutes they are. But they will be asleep before I return. I saw to it that the good wine which I wasted on them possessed a stronger opiate than nature gives the grape-juice. There is one, however, whom I strongly suspect, for I have often caught his eyes fixed on me with a peculiar, knowing expression; and tonight I saw him, unobserved as he thought, pour his wine on the floor. I have been cautious, but it is not true that sometimes our very caution betrays us? This man came here recently and was, I firmly believe, sent by one who, for other than purely patriotic reasons, was instrumental in inaugurating in Kentucky this mode of punishing Southern ladies.

"I do not quite grasp your meaning," said Colonel Morgan. "To speak freely, then," began Mr. Davidson, "Miss Castleton was arrested at the investigation of one man, Howard Dallas, and while I believe he is doing him an injustice, I believe that the whole scheme originated in his wily brain." "On what do you base your convictions?" questioned Morgan. "For answer Mr. Davidson threw back his head and swept the cloudless sky with his glance, whereat Morgan smiled and asked: "Do you still seek knowledge of human events from the stars, Major?" "Yes," he replied, slowly. "The lives of human destinies cross, become tangled. The stars hold the secrets of their unravelling and sometimes reveal it to the earnest, humble student. You may have heard how my own life was crossed and then ruined? Out of its wreck there rose the hope, the desire to do one thing—right a wrong. He who has that claim on me rides behind us; and I find that, not unlike my own, his life bids fair to be ruined by the same baleful influence. In its overthrow others will be involved."

Then he said, rather irrelevantly it appeared to his listener: "Howard Dallas is a suitor for Miss Castleton's hand, and she has twice refused him. This brings me to a subject on which I am in need of advice: I must keep all knowledge of Miss Castleton's whereabouts from Howard Dallas, for a time at least. This must be done," he said, with emphasis, "for I foresee that a powerful agency is at work to mar, perhaps ruin, her life. A number of gentlemen of Covington and Newport have promised to lend me assistance in sheltering and shielding the other ladies until such times as they can communicate with relatives. Once we get them outside of the prison they will have friends who will care for them and defend them. But Miss Castleton must be provided with a place of secret refuge. She is not safe while her habitation is known to that unscrupulous man."

Colonel Morgan rode on for a few paces in thoughtful silence, then he turned to suddenly illuminated face to his companion and said: "I have solved your difficulty! There is a life-long friend of mine living in Ludlow, a friend to whom, if in need, I could go as freely as I could to those bound to me by the closest ties of relationship. This friend will gladly welcome Miss Castleton into his family until such time as the relieving of Judge Todd will give her back the protection of his home."

They had now reached the foot of the hill. At the suggestion of Mr. Davidson, the party left the main street for one narrow, dark, deserted alley. They marched over its breast, in dead silence. An alarm now meant not only defeat of their project, but capture or death to themselves. A line of lilac bushes partially screened the old frame house which had been made to meet the requirements of a woman prison when this mode of warfare was adopted by the Federal authorities. On reaching its dense shadow the men paused, while Mr. Davidson crept across the yard and listened at the door for the sentry's tread. Not hearing it, he concluded that the drooped windows had taken effect and that the prisoners were at the mercy of the one who could unlock the door. A key that would do this for him was in his hand, but as he placed it in the lock there came to his quick ears the sound of a foot stealing over the bare floor. The walker might be the wary sentry, or some woman, who, weary of waiting for the release that had been promised to her and her companions that night, was daring discovery and possible death rather than pass another day in captivity. Every moment was precious, still he waited for the sound of that footfall which had ceased. To open the door and find the sentry standing there was to reveal the plot. Tumult, however short-lived, would arouse the guards from their drunken sleep. The shooting certain to follow would awaken the town and bring out the Union soldiers on Morgan and his few men.

It was then a hand fell on the shoulder of the waiting man, and turning quickly he saw Morgan, whose fears had been aroused by the unexpected delay. "Some one is awake!" whispered Davidson. "I heard the footstep. Whoever it is knows that we are coming and is waiting for us."

"Then he shan't be delayed any longer!" returned Morgan; and he lifted his sword high in the moonlight, a signal for his men to advance. He did not know how many were waiting for him behind that closed door; he only remembered that in the chamber above innocent helpless women were expecting him to deliver them from their cruel captivity. In

the next instant his little company was around him, Hal leading the way.

"Now unlock the door," said Morgan. As the bolt slipped back, he stepped boldly across the portal. The full light that suddenly illuminated the small room blinded him for an instant. Then over the awful stillness came the click of a trigger that had fallen back under a paralyzed finger, while a voice cried, in horror-stricken accents: "Morgan!"

"You!" said Morgan, not even deigning to cover the speaker with his pistol. Hal, pressing forward, saw that the man whose hand had fallen powerless from his gun when he had Morgan at his mercy was the one who had attempted to steal Lucy Menefee's gray horse and fending Morgan's anger in consequence, had deserted.

"Traitor! Coward!" hissed Morgan, white with passion, for the one act the soldier gentleman could never palliate was that of a betrayer. His chest was heaving, and those who knew him best knew that he was making a struggle to keep his anger in check. The man folded his arms and looked at his former chief, but without any of the abject fear of that first moment. To him still, as to every man who served under him, Morgan was his idol, and he passionately hoped that his treachery might there be wiped out in a death administered by his hero's hand. But Morgan turned scornfully away and said to Mr. Davidson: "Will you please question that fellow for me, Major?"

Answering the questions put to him, the man confessed that he had been appointed to his position by Howard Dallas with the explicit direction to watch Miss Castleton. He had suspected Mr. Davidson from the outset. He knew that the scheme to liberate the prisoners was under preparation and had warned the other guards, who were not as completely under the influence of the drugged wine as the supposed minister had imagined, but were now waiting in the room at the rear of the building until he should give them the signal, upon which they were to rush on, and surround and capture, or kill the party of rescuers.

"And what was your signal to be?" asked Mr. Davidson. "I was to shoot the first man who stepped across the threshold," answered he; "but," and a tragic expression crossed the still young face as he looked from his questioner to his former chief's haughtily averted head, "I could not shoot Morgan!" "Will the guards remain there until you give the signal?" asked Mr. Davidson. "They will not stir until a shot is fired," returned he calmly. "The signal must not be given!" said Mr. Davidson; and instantly every gun was levelled at the man, who smiled and said: "Put down your guns, gentlemen! They are not needed after Morgan's words!" Then he waved his hand toward the stairway and said: "You will find the prisoners up there." And again he folded his arms and waited.

"Major, will you notify the ladies that we are here?" asked Morgan. Mr. Davidson stole up the carpeted stairs, and in the next moment the first prisoners were on their way to freedom. Hal stood near Colonel Morgan, straining his eyes for the first glimpse of one fondly remembered form, and when Mr. Davidson reappeared, with Virginia leaning on his arm, he all but sprang to meet her.

Before the first of the advancing ladies could open her lips to give voice to her gratitude, Morgan said, quickly: "Not a word, madam, I beg of you! We are yet in danger, and discovery may mean death for every one. Lieutenant Todd, for Morgan never forgot little things, "escort Miss Castleton, so the Major can look after this man," pointing toward the ex-soldier, who stood as immovable as a stone, his eyes fixed on the scene. Hal sprang to Virginia and folded her to his heart, kissing her white, tear-wet face with all his old boyish devotion, which had been made deeper by the suffering both had endured.

"Oh, Hal!" she said, brokenly, "My darling!" and then they followed blindly with the others.

The town, with its soldiers, lay around them. Behind were the guards, waiting for the signal that was to call them to the defence of their prisoners. Through those manifold dangers, which required but a sound to swarm into ready, fearful life, Morgan led the way. At the appointed place the rescuers were met by several gentlemen, and in a brief space of time, with no words save a heartfelt "God bless you!" from the happy women to Colonel Morgan, the liberated prisoners had been hurried away—all except Virginia.

"Colonel Morgan has considered your safety," whispered Mr. Davidson, and then hastily unfolded to her the proposal made by the commander, and concluded by urging her to accept it. "What else can I do?" she asked, with a ghastly smile. "You forget, Mr. Davidson, that I am now utterly alone, and when you and Hal leave me, as you soon must, friendless also." "No, don't you say that, mad honey!" said Chloe, emerging from the shadow cast by the tall trees edging the street, "for you've got yoh ole Chloee!" and she clasped and kissed her mistress's thin, white hand.

"An' look at yoh, honey-chile," she went on, "out yah in his night air an' jeh, an' not de sign uv a shawl on yuh shouldr! Come right 'way an' git into de cyahage."

Colonel Morgan, who had been holding a low conversation with Clay Powell, now advanced and, bowing over the hand which Virginia extended, said: "Though I regret the circumstances under which we first met, Miss Castleton, I am glad that I have the honor of knowing you. The thought that I have been able to assist you affords me more pleasure than I can express. As perhaps our good friend, Major—"

"I have told Miss Castleton of your forethought," interrupted Mr. Davidson. "Colonel Morgan," said Virginia, "with so many dangers around you and your brave men, I must not detain you even to thank you and them for what you have done for us to-night. I beg you to leave this town immediately. You have put yourself in great peril to-night—oh! if it will permit me to tell you because of your noble conduct, what would we do? Mr. Davidson has told me of your kind provision for my safety and comfort. He will see that I and my woman reach your friend's home."

"I am sorry," said Colonel Morgan, "that I can not accompany you, but my duty bids me return to my command. However, two of these gentlemen will escort you to your destination, Captain Powell and Lieutenant Todd, your friends as they are also mine."

At his name Virginia started, and turning her fair face toward the group of men she saw, for the first time that night, Clay Powell. "We meet again," he said, in a low voice as he clasped her hand. And then the thought of both, in the following momentary silence, went back to their last meeting in the old library of Cardome. Tenderly he laid her hand on his arm, as if to draw her forever away from the dangers and sorrows that were clustered so thickly around her.

"Sometimes," said Miss Castleton, "I hope to have the pleasure of renewing our acquaintance. Until then, if you even think of me, let it be of one who feels that in having been of service to you he has indeed been highly honored."

As he turned to his horse, the man who had been his soldier asked from the place where he stood apart: "What for me, Colonel?" "What do you deserve?" asked Morgan, pausing with his hand on his bridle rein. Then he sprang into his saddle, but as he was riding off, the man cried after the retreating figure: "I shall one day deserve something better of you than your scorn, my Colonel!" And he who had disgraced Morgan's command afterward made good his words.

CHAPTER XXIV

A busy winter followed for Morgan, after his Kentucky raid. The gallant conduct of his command and the efficient service it rendered drew forth praise from the military leaders and words of approval, with the reward of a General's rank, from President Davis. The next spring saw the inauguration of a series of brilliant achievements in the battle of Monticello, but which he was unable to hold against the enemy's superior numbers. Morgan was hastily ordered to the support of Cluke, to prevent the Federals from penetrating further south of the Cumberland. The order admitted of no delay, and though they exercised the greatest expedition, the afternoon was half spent and still they had not reached the scene of conflict. The Confederates under Cluke had been engaged with the enemy almost the entire day, and now saw that, still holding the advantage, they must meet defeat, for their ammunition had failed. Vainly Colonel Cluke scanned the road by which Morgan was to stand against the larger and more fully equipped force.

"We'll not yield while we've a cartridge left!" he cried. "When our last is gone, we'll charge them with our empty guns and a Rebel yell!" And then full on the Federals they poured their last volley but one, and the enemy reeled before the withering fire. But only for an instant. Then back to the charge with renewed force, and something like despair began to show on the sternly set faces of the Confederates, as they waited the next command. But over the smoke-wreathed field a sudden wild shout rang out, and the cry, "They come!" as down from the hill like madmen rode Morgan's Cavalry. On they came—now dashing into the shadows of the trees into clear, full sunshine, which the buckles and bridles caught and flashed back in a thousand broken rays, while the swords of the officers and the gay trimmings of their uniforms added a blinding splendor to the scene. On! On! with never a pause, never a swerve, until the battle-plain was reached, and then line quickly, heroically they fell, the enemy opened on them their fire of artillery. The roar of the guns was followed by a mad charge across the field. This was gallantly met and the Federals felt again how dire was Southern wrath as Cluke sent in to their ranks his last round of ammunition. Then he gave way before the onrush, but with no man turning his face from the foe. As the regiment backed out it divided, and through the opening thus made Smith's line dashed, with Morgan's

Cavalry plunging after. And as they fought from their lips broke a cry, awful, fear-transferring, the terrible cry of the Rebel—the man who would be free!

The Federals yielded, but rallied with stubborn resistance to meet the next charge. A second time they gave way before that small band of fiercely determined men. A third time to the charge, to be a third time repulsed; and then the trumpets called retreat, while a wild shout of exultation broke from the Confederates. The day was won.

As he saw the Stars and Stripes go down, and the flag of the Confederacy waving over the hard fought field, Phil McDowell fell unconscious from a side-wound that he had received early in the encounter. With his beautiful bay mare standing over him, they found him, as his father had been found after the battle of Buena Vista, wounded to the death, but with his face to the enemy, his hand still clasping his good sword. Tenderly he was borne to the hastily arranged cot under the friendly arms of an oak, and summoned the surgeon; but one glance at the wounded soldier told the man of science that his skill was unavailing. The sun was going down behind the solemn trees when Phil opened his eyes to consciousness. Surprised at finding himself lying there, with the anxious faces of his friends around him, he half rose, then fell back, muttering: "Ah, the shot! I remember!"

He strained his eyes for Hal, who was stationed near the head of the cot, with averted face, striving to conceal the emotion he could not control. Phil's right hand had found his and drew him to his side, and in the dying crimson light the eyes of the two men met in a long, comprehending gaze. Here General Morgan approached, and as he looked down on the white face of his Captain his eyes were tender with unshed tears. "This is a bitter day for me, my friend," he said.

Phil's lips tried to form the words which his affectionate veneration for his chief prompted, but they died unuttered.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Captain?" asked Morgan. "Any wish I can gratify?"

A light came into Phil's dying eyes and made radiant his pain-wrung face, as he said, in thrilling tones: "Let me see the flag once more!" Morgan turned away and brought with his own hands the banner that he and his men had followed to victory that day. As he placed it beside the dying soldier, its stainless folds were caught and ripped out by the sick one of the silken, gold-fringed corners and pressed it to his lips; then he slipped back into unconsciousness.

TO BE CONTINUED

IN THE SIERRA MOUNTAINS

A TRUE STORY

By Rev. Richard W. Alexander.

Pioneer stories have held audience since man first learned of the dangerous lives of the early settlers; and there are those among us to day who have verified in their own persons the adventures of such men, and could supplement the most wonderful tale by experiences of their own just as thrilling. In the days when the thirst for gold drove men westward one would think all religion was dead, but now and then comes back a tale of God's mercy that reads like a wonderful dream, or a piece of fiction. This is the case with the true story I am about to tell.

Thus said a famous missionary as we sat together one evening in a quiet rectory parlor. He was in a reminiscent mood, and I was glad he was going to give me some of his wonderful experiences in his successful quest for souls. He stopped a moment and, folding his arms and leaning back his head in the great armchair, he began: "In the early '60's," the Passionist Fathers were called to the diocese of X—, and they located in V. City. The mines in V. City were in full blast and so was every deviltry. The town was wide open. Dance halls, saloons, and gambling dens ran without supervision. The city was full of the worst characters, male and female. The Fathers were a small community, three in number, and a lay-brother. Father Pedro, the superior, was a very large, handsome man, remarkable in his size and weight, which was near to three hundred pounds, but he was so well proportioned that he did not seem to be unusually heavy. He had been laboring in Nevada for some time and was a great favorite. He saw great possibilities of saving souls, where priests were few among these reckless people, and the other two Fathers went out to different mining camps to say Mass, and preach, and do whatever good they could among the wild characters gathered here from the four quarters of the earth.

In V. City it was common talk that many of the miners left their earnings and gold dust with the Fathers for safe-keeping, and that there was a goodly sum stored away in the modest little Convent. This report was untrue, as the Fathers dared not risk the safe keeping of such a dangerous treasure. Nevertheless the report persisted and more than once friends begged the good priests to watch out for bandits. One evening, Father Pedro was in the yard back of the small Monastery cutting wood for his fire. After a

while he saw a man sitting on a fence near him, watching him at his work. The man had a surlly look, and as he continued to sit and watch Father Pedro, and now and then to come a look at the Monastery, Father Pedro went to him and asked him pleasantly what he was doing there.

The man answered gruffly without raising his hat, which nearly all the miners did: "Can't I sit here? I'm out of work, and have no money. I'm not hurting nobody!" Father Pedro laughed, and laid down his axe. "Sure! you can sit there as long as you want. But suppose you come here a minute—you look like an honest fellow. Here is a dollar someone gave me, go down to the R— Hotel and get a square meal, and perhaps you can get work there; if not, come back here to-morrow, and I think I can help you to a job."

The man looked sheepish, but he sprang off the fence, and with a muttered "Thank you," the dollar and disappeared. Next day Father Pedro waited to see if the fellow would return; he noted the scowling face and the sheepish look, but the man never came back, and Father Pedro concluded he must have obtained work.

Time passed on and Father Pedro had entirely forgotten the incident. So many similar ones were in his life. And he always clothed them with kindness. Winter had come, and a severe one, in V. City. Father Pedro had been away to visit some of the "stations" up in the mountains. He was worn out and weary. He returned on Tuesday evening, and after he had eaten supper, sat down to rest a little while before he repaired to the Chapel. An old newspaper was on the table nearby, and he picked it up carefully and began to read it. His eyes caught an account of the capture of a desperado of the worst type who was known all over the town, who was a bold robber and had committed several cold blooded murders. He had been condemned to death and was to be hung on Thursday morning. Several clergymen of different denominations had called at the jail to help him to prepare for death, but he had cursed them all and even attempted violence towards one of them. His conduct was already like one of the damned, and there was neither compassion nor sympathy for him. Father Pedro, however, felt a thrill of pity for this poor wretch. He was only twenty-eight, and from the date of the paper his execution was only two days off. Could he save his soul!

He had just come home from a wearisome journey, it was late Tuesday night, deep snow was on the ground, and the town where the criminal was in jail was miles across the mountains. But a soul might be saved. One for whom Christ died! It roused all his missionary spirit. All weariness was forgotten. His great size and muscular strength often served him well in meeting the desperate characters about him. They respected his appearance, and soon listened to him. He determined he would make the effort. He went immediately to a lively stable, secured a sleigh with a strong pair of horses, and started. He travelled all night long, the way over the mountains was rough and dangerous, the snow and wind were blinding, and he had to stop and change the horses, promising to get them on his return. At 8 o'clock Wednesday morning he arrived at the jail. When he inquired for the criminal, he was told he was well secured in the strongest cell in the building. Father Pedro said to the authorities: "Well, I have come over the mountains to see that man. I am a priest."

"But, Father," was the answer, "he'll kill you with his flat. He is like a wild animal!"

"Don't worry about me," said Father Pedro. "Do I look as if I would take a beating!" The jailer looked admiringly on the fine physique of Father Pedro, but shook his head. "I wouldn't dare; Father, that man is a fiend, and as strong as the devil!" "Well, let me have a look at him, anyhow," said the priest. "Can't you do that?"

"Oh, yes; if you want it, I'll let you look at him, since you are a priest. But you won't want anything else when you see him."

The warden led Father Pedro into a long iron-barred corridor. The cells were all empty but one, and as their footsteps sounded in the stone floor, and showing his teeth like an animal, appeared at the little grating which was made in the solid steel door. "When he saw big Father Pedro he began to cry out before the astonished warden: "Oh, Father, come in! come in!" "Open the door!" commanded Father Pedro. "No! I dare not," said the warden, "he will kill you!" "Open it, man, and let me in! Have no fear. I have none!" The jailer hesitated, but Father Pedro persuaded him. The door was unlocked and Father Pedro entered.

"Now lock the door and go away," said the priest. When the door was closed Father Pedro shut the little grating. Then he turned to the prisoner, who fell on his knees before him crying and sobbing. "Oh! Father! Father! God sent you, I have prayed for you to come, and wicked as I am God heard me!" "Why, my poor man, my son, surely you don't know me; I never saw you before."

"Oh, Father, you did; you did; and God sent you to prepare me for death. I ought to be a Catholic." "My poor man! God has indeed been good to you; I don't know how it was, but I felt I must come to you. I rode over the mountains all night to get here. Surely God sent me. Come, my son, let me help you to make your confession."

"It's a long confession, Father," said the sobbing man, still on his knees at the Father's feet. "It's years and years!" "Never mind," said Father Pedro. "Let us begin, and God will help you."

And as there was no other place, Father Pedro sat down on the narrow iron bed, took his stole out of his pocket and placed his hand on the poor fellow's head, with one arm around him. Surely the angels in Heaven looked down with joy on that prison scene in the gloom of that winter day, although it was not yet noon.

The criminal made his confession and Father Pedro pronounced the saving words of absolution over that sorrowing soul. Truly he was penitent, and, as he said, he was ready to expiate by his execution the crimes of his scariest life, and suffer all the shame and terror of it. God was too good to send him his big Father Pedro.

"But," said the priest, puzzled beyond everything, "how did you know me? I am sure I never saw you before, even though God's inspiration forced me to come to you." "Father, don't you remember some months ago in V. City, when you were in the yard cutting wood for the night? A man was sitting on the fence watching you, and you called him, and spoke to him like a son, and gave him a dollar to get a meal and a bed in a hotel, and told him to come back next day if he did not get work. I was that man, Father. I had come with murder in my heart, so look over the ground. I intended this night to break in, and get the money and gold dust, they said you had stored in the house. I would not have hesitated to kill you, but— here the poor wretch broke down and hid his face.

Father Pedro slowly recalled the circumstances. "Remember, my son, and I missed you the next day. I hoped you would come back and tell me you had obtained work."

"Father, the memory of those kind words, that dollar, broke me all up; how could I rob a man like you? If I did murder afterwards, the thought of you has kept me from worse, and when I was arrested I became wild with fear lest I might never see you again. I cried to Heaven day and night, and when those other men came I could have torn them to pieces. You were the true Minister of God. Father stay with me till the end."

And Father Pedro, deeply touched, promised; and he kept his word. When the warden came to the door of the cell, and locked in through the little grating, he saw the fierce criminal weeping at the priest's feet, and Father Pedro with his arms around him!

There was silence between myself and the good missionary for a moment, then he rose up, and said: "Father Pedro declares he thinks that poor fellow's repentance and his awful death brought him a very short purgatory, and he feels he has a new friend in Heaven."

I was moved more than I dare say, and took refuge in silence.

PROTECT THE LAMBS

There recently appeared in the daily press an article by a writer who deplored the fact that city children have to amuse themselves in such unlovely and unesthetic surroundings. Unashingly ash-cans, lurid posters, tastelessly decorated windows, raucous noises, and badly dressed men and women abound along the gray and cluttered pavements of the streets that are the chief playgrounds of the thousands of boys and girls who grow up in our large towns. If these children, the writer would imply, could daily behold masterpieces of art and architecture, listen to classical music, and play in beautiful gardens that are much frequented by correctly arrayed ladies and gentlemen who pronounce their final consonants distinctly, the citizens of to-morrow would be more cultured and more those of to-day. Perhaps they would; provided, however, that the writer's suggestion could at once be carried out. Crowded tenements, no doubt would then disappear, beautiful parks would be multiplied, and courses in practical esthetics would be joyfully followed by each city's entire population.

But civilization should precede culture. It is of much more importance that the boys and girls of our large towns should be protected from the health of their souls, than that they should be able to tell a Rubens from a Murillo, appreciate Beethoven, dress tastefully, or pronounce a pure u. That the pitfalls lying in the paths of children nowadays are by no means few must be clear to everybody. Satan and his agents were not more eagerly endeavoring to rob our little ones of their innocence, their faith, and their spirit of docility.

The Church, the State and the home, therefore, should be more vigilant than heretofore in safeguarding from moral dangers our boys and girls. Catholic parents are