

NARKA, THE Nihilist.

By KATHLEEN O'MEARA.

CHAPTER XXI.—CONTINUED.

Basil's vehement exclamation covered another sound that came at the same moment from the wall behind him. He dropped into a chair, too stunned to utter a word.

"Marguerite," Basil said, "if you knew what this revelation is to me!" "I do know," she answered, in a low voice, and her lids fell.

"I thought you had done it accidentally." "And you kept my secret! Marguerite!" "Marguerite!"

"Before she could start up or prevent him, he had fallen down before her, and was sobbing with his head upon her knees. Marguerite was too frightened by the suddenness of the action and by the violence of his emotion to know what to do; but Basil mastered the paroxysm quickly, and stood up, and then sat down beside her.

"Narka had by this time regained her self-possession, but she had no longer the courage to come out of her hiding-place. She had first listened involuntarily to the dialogue, and now she could not show herself; it was too late. She heard Basil sobbing, and she guessed, more by instinct than by sound, that he had fallen down at Marguerite's feet; if her life depended on it, she could not have pushed open the door and looked at him there."

"Yes," he went on, after a moment's silence, "I thought I had shot him; but I was not certain. When Father Christopher was arrested I knew it was too late to accuse myself; the police had fastened the crime on him. The only thing I could do was to go to St. Petersburg and see for his release. I came away, believing he was to be set free the next day. Did Ivan tell you why he murdered Larchoff?"

"Yes; he confessed everything. It was a terrible story." And she repeated it as Ivan had told it. "My God! how horrible!" Basil rose and walked the length of the room; then he sat down near Marguerite again, and speaking deliberately, but like a man who was constrained to give utterance to something that would not be held back, "I too have a confession to make," he said: "that murder changed my whole destiny—perhaps. I had set my heart on making you my wife. There was an end of that hope the moment I felt there was blood upon my hands; and I loved you as I have never loved any other woman."

"Both were too absorbed to notice the dull sound of something falling heavily to the ground close by. "Oh, Basil! and Narka?" Marguerite said, in a tone of pained reproach. "You love Narka?"

"Yes, I love Narka, and I will do my best to make her happy. I will be good to her; she shall miss me, but I will love her for you was a unique thing in my life."

"The moment was too solemn, Basil himself was too free from self-consciousness, for the strange avowal to make Marguerite feel shy, to cause her any embarrassment. It was a startling confession for her to listen to; but it told her nothing she had not known before. She knew perfectly well that night at Yrakov that the course of her destiny was suddenly changed. It was all like a dream. She looked back to the dream now, and saw spread out before her, like a landscape seen in a looking-glass, the life that might have been a panorama of golden days crowned with honors and delights; but the vision stirred no shadow of regret in her heart, nor did it move her life to a momentary recoil from the past that she had chosen. Far from it. She knew that her present lot was beyond the reach of change. With an almost involuntary movement she felt her crucifix, and closed her hand upon it, silently renewing her self-consecration.

"Basil too had been carried back to the past, but not with the same glad assent in his remembrances. "My God!" he cried, with a sudden burst of passionate feeling, "it is as if a reprieve had suddenly come to me, after being under sentence of condemnation all these years!"

"Thank God!" Marguerite exclaimed, fervently. "And now you will give up once and forever these wild and wicked theories that have led you and Narka into such trouble? God has been very good to you, and you owe Him a return. You have now an opportunity of redeeming the past; you must begin from this out to lead a noble and useful life; you must break off with conspiracy and revolution, and work for your country in wiser and better ways. Promise me that you will."

Basil fell back and thrust his hands into his pockets. "If I had only myself to think of," he said, after a pause, "but I have contracted engagements, and that it would not be honorable to break; it

would be cowardly to abandon those who are risking, and who will go on to the bitter end, risking their lives for the sake of overthrowing tyrants."

"That is just nonsense—rank nonsense!" protested Marguerite, with her old impulsive manner. "They will never overthrow anybody but themselves. I know them well—a set of hot-headed fools and fanatics! I see them every day, and I hear the wild nonsense they talk. But what is excusable in many of them is downright criminal in you; and your example would give many of them the courage and the excuse to give up the whole thing—be sure of that. There are very few in Russia, I dare say, as in France, who after a while do not see the madness of the work they have embarked in, and who would not gladly get out of it if they could. Besides, you are not worth so much to them; you will never go far enough to do the work they want; you think that talking and writing and stirring up passionate desires for liberty is doing a grand thing; but they want it to lead to action, that is, to assassination, to wholesale murder. You will never lend your hand to that; you will only go far enough to ruin yourself, without satisfying them. Give it all up. Oh, Basil! for heaven's sake give it all up, and begin to lead an honorable, useful life. Narka will make it a happy life for you. She will be as noble and loyal and loving a wife as any man was ever blessed with. Think, too, of all that she has suffered for your sake! All but death! Yes, that time in the fortress was worse than death! Make it up to her now, and guard her, at any rate in the future, from those horrors that she has gone through in the past. She was very near falling into the hands of the torturers again. It was almost a miracle that she escaped being given over to the Russian authorities. A man whom we had helped in trouble waylaid the policeman and rescued this," Marguerite continued, taking the casket from the table.

"Do you know what was in it?" Basil asked, as he took it in his hand and tore off the paper that covered it. "The papers you gave her to keep, and those revolutionary articles of yours that Ivan Gorff gave her to translate."

"Good heavens!" Basil exclaimed, greatly excited. The sight of that ivory box brought back his boyhood to him; he remembered the morning he gave it to Narka full of sweets for her birthday; he kept turning it round and examining it with the same interest. "My poor Narka!" he murmured.

"You will make it all up to her now; promise me you will?" Marguerite pleaded. "You will give up conspiracy?" Basil did not answer. He was moved to his centre, but his will was torn in opposite directions—pity and tenderness for Narka drew him one way; what he called honor drew him another.

"Basil," Marguerite said, and the blood mottled her cheek, and her voice trembled, "you say that you care for me once; for the sake of that old affection, to prove to me that it was something deeper and better than a passing fancy, promise me what I ask you. I ask it in the name of God, of your mother, of all that you ever held sacred!" Her voice broke a little, and her eyes were full of tears.

Still Basil hesitated, but it was only because he was struggling with the emotion that choked him. "I promise you," he answered.

After a pause Marguerite said, "Now all our prayer must be that the reprieve may reach Father Christopher in time." She staid on a few minutes, asking questions about the distance to Irkutsk, calculating the chances and perils that must be reckoned with on the way homeward. The time was too long.

"You won't wait to see Narka?" Basil said. "No; she is perhaps asleep, or at any rate she is resting. You will tell her about Ivan; his confession will be an immense relief to her; but the rest will be a great shock. She will be horrified too to hear about Shenk."

Basil accompanied Marguerite downstairs. In the hall he said: "I wonder how long it will be before you can get me into the prison? I should like to see him once."

"Oh yes, do go and see him; I am sure it will be a consolation to the poor fellow. Goto-morrow morning and ask for Sœur Jeanne; or, stay, if you go there now you will find her. Say that you have a message to her from Sœur Marguerite, and the porter will let you in."

"I will go at once," said Basil; "and by the time I get back Narka will probably be up, and able to see me." He stood and watched Marguerite till she crossed the court and disappeared. Then he went out and called a cab, and drove to the prison.

As Marguerite walked rapidly homeward she felt nearer to perfect happiness than she had felt for a long time before in her in-out to lead a noble and useful life; you must break off with conspiracy and revolution, and work for your country in wiser and better ways. Promise me that you will."

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A LAST CONFESSION.

Cardinal Moran, in his recently published "History of the Catholic Church in Australia," among other interesting tales of the missionary labors of the saintly Archbishop Polding, tells the following story:

The Bishop, being summoned on some errand of charity, had to travel a considerable distance into the interior and unfrequented part of Australia. Falling ill by the way, he was tended and cared by an old lady, who, on his restoration to health and strength, exacted from him, as a return for her kindness and attention, a promise that, wherever he might be at the time, he would come, if summoned, to attend and administer to her in her last hour. Many winters and summers rolled away, and one autumn night, when the chill blasts were tearing the leafy covering from the forest trees, a summons came for him to hasten to the deathbed of his benefactress. Leaving everything without a moment's hesitation, he started to redeem his promise. Over mountain and rock, through forest and morass, on he went, little heeding falling rain or prowling beast. Hour after hour sped by as he toiled forward on his journey; and when at length, faint and weary, he reached the appointed spot, he found the place deserted. While the Bishop meditated what was further to be done, his attention was attracted by the steady thud of a woodman's axe in the distance.

Turning his steps in the direction whence the sounds proceeded he soon came upon a sturdy old Irishman feeling timber, and learned from him that the old lady, fearing his non-arrival, had set out, ill and dying as she was, to seek spiritual comfort and assistance, though whether she had gone the good Irishman could not say. Feeling that it would be useless to go in search of her the Bishop sat down on the trunk of a tree, and, addressing the woodcutter, said, "Well, my good man, after all, I don't intend to have come here for nothing; so kneel down and I'll hear your confession." At first the man objected, alleging his want of preparation as an excuse; but, his scruples being at length overcome, he knelt down, penitent and sorrowing, and soon received absolution for his sins. It was then arranged that he should go to Communion during the week, and they parted. Doctor Polding set out on his return, but had not gone many steps when he heard a crash; and hastening back to understand the cause, found the penitent dead—crushed beneath the trunk of a fallen tree.

Gems from the Columbian. The religion of little kindnesses can be practiced a hundred times a day. Usually it matters little what your reputation is among men so long as your Guardian Angel has a good opinion of you.

Every morning make the Good Intention—offer the prayers, works and sufferings of the day to God to be gone through for His sake.

The Catholic Church is the undying champion of the divinity of Jesus Christ and of His redemption. He is God in the flesh and no one comes to the Father except through Him—neither is their salvation in any other name.

Protestants no longer believe the absurd teachings of their first preachers that we Catholics adore the statues of Christ and the saints that adorn our churches. They have reduced their own false belief against us to the accusation that we "worship" the Blessed Virgin Mary. When they find out the truth, they will cast aside this blasphemous notion that we pay divine honors to a creature, on to their intellectual heap of refuse.

NEW BOOKS. "THAT FOOTBALL GAME." The boy-world is in a ecstasy of delight, for Father Finn has not only given us a new story, but positively the best book he has ever written. He calls it "That Football Game," and the acquaintance he displays with that very lively sport is equalled only by his thorough knowledge of boys.

There is a pure, healthy, vigorous tone about the book that is decidedly refreshing when we compare it with the milk-and-water stuff so often met with in books for boys. Published by Benziger Bros., New York. Price, 50 cents.

Old Men and Kidney Disease. Aged persons troubled with weak back, impaired kidneys, pain in the back and base of abdomen, scalding urine, with a small quantity of water at a time, a tendency to urinate often, especially at night, should use Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. You know the Doctor's reputation, you know the value of his work and that Dr. Chase would not risk his reputation on an unknown and untried remedy. Every druggist in Canada sells and recommends them.

CATHOLIC UNSOCIABILITY.

The standing complaint of years against Catholic unsociability is quite as pertinent to-day as at any previous time in the history of the Church in this country, if not a little more so, says an exchange. While we are united in faith and worship we are woefully divided on other points. A unit at the altar, outside the Church we ignore the ties of spiritual kinship. There it is each one for himself and the devil take the hindmost. This curious state of things represents an element of weakness in Catholic social organization. If the spirit of brotherhood which distinguishes membership in Christ's Church on essential particulars of belief and practice were carried out in the subordinate matter of social fellowship the Catholic world would be so closely and solidly welded together that its influence for good on the rest of the community must be immeasurably greater than it is, while its power of self-protection and vindication of rights and liberties would prove well-nigh invincible.

Evidences of this want of sociability manifest themselves in endless ways. There are scarcely any Catholics of mature years who have not been made to feel its unfortunate effects. Congregations, particularly in towns and cities, gather Sunday after Sunday, year in and year out, for the purpose of public worship, and disperse as often without broadening or developing the bond of sympathy which ordinarily exists among people who meet frequently in pursuit of a common object. It is a very remarkable peculiarity when viewed in the light of experience in other forms of human mingling. In no other assemblage are individuals brought closer together by vital ties of fellowship, but strange by natural tendency of such close communion in obedience to the highest impulses of our intellectual and spiritual being is thwarted and defeated. The sentiments begotten of pious adhesion to the gentle gospel of love and charity appear to be religiously stifled in the majority of cases, when they would assume practical shape conformably with the divine injunction regarding our duty to our neighbor. We profess to revere law, but fail to obey it.

The Blind See. Of the eighty cures attested by the medical committee of Lourdes in connection with the National Pilgrimage more than one are cases of eyesight given or restored. One is that of a little girl, who, according to her medical certificate, had been blind from her birth. Her eyelids were always closed. The other day, after application of Lourdes water, the lids slowly opened, displaying for the first time the blue iris beneath. The child at once distinguished things and people, and now sees as well as anyone.

Another case is that of Theophile Taupin, of Paris, a patient of Dr. Panas, of the Hotel Dieu. He was suffering from a malady of the eyes that rendered him blind. According to his doctor's certificate he had to give up work and to be led about. At the halt which the pilgrims made at Poitiers an amelioration of his state took place while he was praying in the church of St. Radagonda. He was then able to perceive the statue of the Blessed Virgin. At Lourdes the amelioration became a cure. He can now see to walk and to work.

One of the most remarkable cases is that of Mademoiselle Alphonse Duval, suffering from more than one organic disease. On the evening of Sunday the procession at the Grotto had for a moment to be stopped in order that she might be carried away. Her death seemed imminent. That night a doctor ordered that she should be carefully watched as she would probably die before morning. The next evening, after the Papal Benediction, she rose suddenly and went towards the Church of the Rosary, almost running and saying that she was cured. In truth she was cured, her state of health at the present time leaving nothing to be desired.

But this was not all. A fresher who had to leave Lourdes that night had promised to be converted could he but see one miracle. He saw the miracle of Mlle. Duval's cure, and a quarter of an hour afterwards was at the priest's feet in the confessional. It was a case of saying with the blind man of the Gospel: "I was blind and now I see!"—Liverpool Catholic Times.

Increase of Catholic Schools in Scotland. The School Board Chronicle in its leading columns discusses the Scotch Education Report and points out the following interesting fact: "Important in the summaries of the statistics of school accommodation is the record of steady growth in the number of Board schools, and of slow but continuous decline in the number of Voluntary schools belonging to the several denominations. The Roman Catholic schools, are, however, an exception. In their case there is a slight increase each year, and a very large aggregate increase since the year 1872. The Public Schools are 2,739, and the Voluntary schools of all denominations only 390, of which now 97 are Church of Scotland, 9 Free Church, 71 Episcopal, 183 Roman Catholic, and 90 un-denominational."

The Best Pills.—Mr. Wm. Vandervoort, Sydney Crossing, Ont., writes: "We have been using Parmelee's Pills, and find them by far the best pills ever used." For delicate and debilitated constitutions these Pills act like a charm. Taken in small doses, the effect is both a tonic and a stimulant, mildly exciting the secretions of the body, giving tone and vigor.

A PROVIDENTIAL CONVERSION.

The annual retreat of the students of St. Francis Xavier's College, New York city, was conducted this year by Rev. John G. Whitney, S. J., of New Orleans, the mention of whose name brings with it the memory of the peculiar and undoubtedly providential manner in which he was converted to the Catholic faith twenty years ago. The story was widely circulated at the time and many will readily recall the incidents. Father Whitney in the early seventies was a teacher on board the school ship St. Mary. One day a party visited the ship and one of the number, a lady, while crossing the gang plank, dropped a book into the water. When it was taken from the water it was in no condition to be carried away, so Mr. Whitney promised to take care of it and return it to its owner at a later period. The book proved to be a copy of "The Invitation Heeded," by James Kent Stone (Father Fidelis). Something in the title and appearance of the work led the young teacher to read it, and when he laid the book aside it was with the resolve that he, too, should heed the invitation and become a Catholic.

Shortly after this he met the venerable Jesuit Father Duranqui, who was for many years chaplain of the Tomba Prison, New York city. From Father Duranqui Mr. Whitney received another book, dealing with the missionary work of the Society of Jesus in distant countries. Then was born a second resolve—to become a Jesuit priest. A few months afterwards Father Whitney was baptized by a Paulist Father, and in August, 1872, he entered the Society of Jesus.

Let Us Retreat.

In those parts of the world where the Church has been long established and the spiritual needs of the faithful quite adequately supplied, nothing is more appreciated than the retreats for the laity. We have such things here in our missions and retreats, but one does not involve any suspension of one's labors or absence from one's home, and, therefore, while they inspire a spiritual glow to the aroused soul, expose it inevitably to the distractions of the world.

Monastic quiet, the clean, conventional guest-chamber, the plain fare, the presence of neighboring religions, the order of a regular life, are circumstances which give reality to the atmosphere diffused in time of retreat. The novelty, the peace, the spirit of a religious house are most delightful to the worldly weary soul. Many a man and many a woman also, whose useless past and sinful present foreshadow a hopeless future and impel them to the despair of suicide, would save their life and their soul, besides, did they but know the soothing influence of a retreat and the consolation of the confessional.

Many among us know the sweet silence of the vacant church where only He abides, whose Presence fills the world and lives by day and night, while men and their affairs clatter outside. The retreat in some monastic house is merely this silence prolonged, while the interior voice speaks to the awakened conscience.

Why should this spiritual luxury be left to the clergy? Have not men in the world souls also which they treasure and try to purify? Why, therefore, should it seem strange of men and women of the world to seek God in the solitude and silence of the religious retreat? There is nothing strange in such conduct. To leave one's desk, to hold one's tongue for a week, to look at the crucifix even for a short while and rest one's weary eyes from temptations at which we have been staring blindly for many a day, and then to listen to the truth and not to customary lies—that is a prospect to tempt even a pagan, let alone a Christian.

For the men who enjoy its advantages the world dwindles and heaven is enlarged, and, after all, if our belief is based on fact, that is the true proportion which we often fail to note, but can never fail to desiderate.—Visitor.

Home Life.

The home life must be the sweetest. Keep out all bickering and strife. The world is full of backbiting and misunderstanding and envy. The home must be a refuge. The man is to be pitied who, after a hard day's work amid the storms of business cares and fears, cannot drop anchor at evening in the quiet harbor of a peaceful home. We want to get rid of our grumbling, fault finding spirit in the home, and learn to speak words of praise and approval. It is as easy to lift the wife when she does well as when she mis-acts or has weak coffee. It is wiser to praise the children for their good deeds than to be unceasingly nagging them about their mistakes. Make them happy, and the richest results will follow.

Sleeplessness, Mental and Physical Fatigue. Go hand in hand. The waste of the body that ought to be restored by rest and sleep suffers increasing diminution: the loss of strength and vigor of body and mind follows. It is in this class of diseases that the medicinal power and the digestive functions stimulated to increased and more efficient action. This imparts to the whole system the much needed impetus, the nerves are soothed from a state of irritability to one of repose—sleep, with all its benedictive influences, comes back to lend its aid to the process of restoration. Digestion keeps pace with the improvement of appetite, and in a short time the nervous, miserable sufferer regains his old-time vigor and the capability to enjoy life and all its affords. Maltine with Coca Wine is sold by all druggists.



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