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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 XV.

"My father," said Oswald, "was a minister of the Protestant religion, and very zealous for his faith. He was a widower, had no child but me, and he educated me with the greatest care. He had given me, for a companion, his nephew Adolphus, (son of his brother, who had, in dying, consigned him to my father's guardianship.) My uncle had, further, entreated that Adolphus might be brought up at my father's house, because, his wife being a Catholic, he feared that she would strive to weaken a religious belief, which was not her own.

"Adolphus, a little older than myself, became my idol. Our tastes and our sentiments were the same. I loved nothing as I loved him. His mother came often to our house, for my father observed towards her, all the attentions and politeness, which worldly policy prescribes. She lived in the practice of the most exalted piety; offering daily to God her repentance for the faults she had committed during her life, and breathing ardent wishes for the conversion of her son.

"We lived seven years together. My friend approached his twenty-second year. His health being delicate retarded his studies, and still, with increasing years, declined. The waters of Wisbaden were prescribed for him, and we set out for them. His mother, seeing that my father did not wish her to accompany us, journeyed alone, and remained in the town whilst Adolphus inhabited it.

"My expectations were disappointed. No hope was entertained of his recovery. One day, (I shall never forget it) my father was absent from home. We were alone, when Mrs. — (Adolphus' mother) called, and profiting by my father's absence, spoke earnestly to her son of his religious opinions. She told him that his life was in danger, represented to him the importance of an eternity of happiness or misery, and spoke of the novelty of the sect, which had gone out from the Catholic Church.

"Adolphus was naturally mild and docile towards his mother, whom he loved and respected; but upon the subject of religion, which she had often before essayed without success, he was inflexible. Neither her prayers, nor tears could move him. I was so affected that I joined my entreaties to hers. He cast upon me an indignant glance, and threatened to inform my father of it. 'I love my religion,' said I, smiling, 'and nothing can seduce me from it; but I do not see why you refuse to your mother's tears, the poor favor she asks. What harm can there be in asking God to enlighten you, to make known to you the truth, and entreating him not to let you die in error?'

"Adolphus was appeased. 'That prayer would imply a doubt,' said he, 'and besides, whatever happen, I will never change my religion.' 'Oh! my dearest Adolphus!' exclaimed Mrs. —, 'these last words condemn you. The sincerity of those in error is their only excuse before God; but if a doubt presents itself, and through human respect, you reject it, your conscience becomes your accuser.' This reply struck me; the tone in which it was said, made me shudder. 'In mercy,' resumed Adolphus, 'do not trouble my last moments.' This courageous mother triumphing over the violent combats, to which nature delivered her heart; 'What timid piety,' said she, 'must that mother have, who seeing her child sleeping at the edge of a precipice, and ready to fall, uses not every effort to snatch him from it, for fear of troubling his fatal repose?'

"The entrance of my father, whom we did not expect until the following day, interrupted Mrs. —. Although he might have attributed our tears to the condition of the dying Adolphus, he suspected another cause, and asked to be left alone with his ward. 'No,' said the weeping mother, 'I will leave him no more. He is my son! Who shall dare separate me from him?'

"Adolphus rose up in his bed, and throwing his arms round my father, I heard him say in a whisper: 'I am uneasy. I fear that my religion is not sufficient for salvation. Reassure me.' My father frowned, and indignantly reproached him with his weakness; spoke of the shame, which a change of religion would cause his relatives, and menaced him with all his anger, if he presumed to propose such thoughts to him; 'which could only be,' he added, 'the reveries of his mother and the fruit of her perfidious counsel.'

"Adolphus was silent. Mrs. — seized his hand, and no longer dissembling, she spoke to him openly before my father, who, with difficulty restrained himself. Never shall this terrible scene be effaced from my memory. Mrs. — supported her entreaties, with strong and conclusive reasonings, and spoke with all the mildness and tenderness of a disconsolate mother. My father, on the contrary, I am forced to acknowledge, used no discretion, and argued with all the

vehemence with which Protestant ministers usually accompany their exhortations. He strove to dazzle Mrs. — by subtle and specious sophistry, which she repelled by two or three principles only, to which she was satisfied incessantly to return: the necessity of reflection, the danger of the new ideas, and of retaining them when God instils a doubt of their truth. She afterwards supported her position by the fact that all the sects admit the security of the Catholic faith, and attacked my father by this same argument, which condemned his hatred of the Catholic Church.

"Adolphus preserved an unbroken silence. His mother then conjured him, for her peace of mind, to say only the prayer she had entreated of him, to ask God that he would deign to enlighten him, and not permit him to die in a false faith.

"My father hastily interrupted her, and hardening my unhappy friend, dictated to him a profession of faith, according to his views. Mrs. — seeing that he had but a few hours to live, cast herself on her knees, near his bed. My father took her in his arms and conveyed her by force, to an adjoining room, under pretext of sparing her the sight of the last moments and death of her son.

"My father returning abruptly, tore from him a last protestation of fidelity to his belief, and received his last sigh. They bore me away from the chamber. I was so struck, so agitated by the loss of my only friend, that I remained a long time, in a state of mental and almost physical insensibility. Mrs. —, whom I loved as a mother, no more approached our house. I soon learned, that, attacked by a violent fever, she lay dangerously ill. Nothing stopped me; and despite the stern prohibition of my father, I passed entire days with her, and attended her as the most affectionate son. 'Heaven will bless you, kind Oswald,' said she, the evening of her death. 'God will enlighten you, I am sure. Oswald, let me enlighten the thought, in dying, that you will remember me before God, when you shall have become a Catholic?'

"I promised her, bursting into tears, and I assured her that I would delay no longer to examine, thoroughly, the principles of her religion. She expired, after having received the sacraments of the Church, with the most edifying dispositions.

"I asked my father to place me at the university. I was twenty-one years of age. I urged a wish to study law, but, in reality, my abode at my father's house, had become excessively painful. I remained two years at Frankfurt, without being able to resolve upon the project which I had meditated on entering the university, and which I have at length executed. I suddenly decided to embrace the Catholic religion, which I had secretly studied at Frankfurt; and certain of the persecution of my father (taught by the fatal example of Adolphus), I did not wish to expose myself to it, and determined to repair to Spain, to a distant relative of Mrs. —, who would not refuse me his protection, and who was the better able to instruct me as he was bishop of B.

"You know the rest. But," continued Oswald, "what you cannot fathom, is the bitterness of an irremediable grief, which time, reason, faith, will only increase the more. To lose our friends for this life is but a passing evil, and the fate of humanity; but to think they may be lost for ever!—what power, human or divine, can soften a like affliction?'

"Our religion condemns no one, individually," said Lorenzo, "no one can pronounce that his brother is lost for eternity. We know that out of the Church, there is no salvation; but many are they who, by a want of opportunity to learn the truth, innocently adhere to error, and thus are in spirit members of the Church.

Oswald appeared less uneasy by these reflections. He told me that he had made a vow of celibacy, and that his intention was, (if God should give him grace), to enter the ecclesiastical state. We prevailed on him to remain with us, until he should have positive information from the bishop of B.

Some days after, he received a letter from the bishop, who loaded him with praises, and invited him, in the most affectionate manner, to come to his house, and promising to be his support, to be a father to him in whatever state he might embrace. It was not without regret that this interesting young man separated himself from us. He promised to write to Henry, and to give us through him frequent intelligence.

CHAPTER XVI.
He longed to reach Madrid. We immediately resumed our journey, and when scarcely arrived at M—, learned the death of the duke of Medina, who had left this inheritance to Edmund of Rosline, under the guardianship of Matilda and Henry. We spent two months at Madrid, after which we proposed to Henry to visit some other cities of Spain before leaving the country. We proceeded first to B—, where the bishop re-

ceived us with all possible cordiality and affection. We saw Oswald, who lived at the seminary, in the practice of every virtue. From thence we repaired to Bayonne, where Lorenzo visited the galleys. Two of his old companions were still there; the others having been removed. They shed tears of joy on seeing him. He ameliorated their condition, as much as was in his power. We accompanied Lorenzo to Silva's tomb, where he remained a long time in prayer; it was a simple monument, a marble slab and cross, bearing the following inscription: "Here, awaiting the resurrection, Don Silva, the friend and brother of the unfortunate. R.I.P." Lorenzo having concluded his prayer, arose, and we followed for some time in profound silence, which the remembrance of his friend forbade him to interrupt. He then entered the church with us, and there also he prayed a long time, shedding an abundance of tears.

I had become acquainted with Lorenzo at T—, not far from Bayonne. My stay in this latter place recalled many interesting circumstances of my life. The recollection of the marquis brought tears to my eyes. I related to Matilda and Henry our first interview with Arthur's brother. Lorenzo again visited, before our departure, the companions of his captivity, and experienced an enjoyment worthy of his virtuous soul, in the expression of their attachment, and the memory they had retained of him. We left for O—, where we remained some days, and then prepared to return to our own country.

Arrived in England, our first visit was to Lord Howard, duke of Norfolk, the generous friend and defender of Mary Stuart. He detained us at Dove Hill, his country-seat, which had a long time been the rendezvous of the partisans of the queen. We were enjoying in this retreat a delightful peace and tranquillity, when new troubles came to assail us. Lorenzo fell into a state of debility, which seriously alarmed us. He could not sleep, and ate barely enough to sustain life. A habitual paleness had replaced the brilliancy of his complexion; and the rose of health no longer bloomed upon his cheek. His usually calm expression partook now of languor; he appeared to understand his state better than we did, and seemed to think of nothing but preparing for death, by redoubling his fervor, and by the continued exercise of every virtue. He soon became the idol of the duke of Norfolk's family.—The mother of the duke, to whom I revealed the secret of his name and of sufferings, loved him in an especial manner. One might have passed hours with Lorenzo without suspecting his blindness. His animated and varied manner confirmed the impression first made. He raised his eyes towards those to whom he addressed himself, frequently elevating them to heaven, and inclined them again towards the earth when he collected his thoughts. His eyes had, moreover, preserved that feeling expression which comes from the soul, and the liveliness of his imagination rendered surrounding objects so present to his mind, that there was nothing in his looks undecided and vague. He rarely closed his eyes, except when some one read to him, and while he was at prayers.

We spent some weeks in entire solitude at Dove Hill. The already small number of the queen's friends diminished daily; and since she was a captive at Fotheringay, under the power of the queen of England, her defenders looked upon all their hopes as vanished. Leicester, who called himself of this number, soon became a base courtesan of Elizabeth, to whom he gave all the offers of service, which he had formerly made to her illustrious captive.

It was in this solitude that I enjoyed the advantage of Lorenzo's society. His weakness visibly increased, and he could not conceal the joy it caused him. He was so affectionate and kind to me, and took so sensible a pleasure in strengthening my faith, that I had more than the others an opportunity of studying the virtues of Lorenzo whom grace had so richly endowed. The duke of Norfolk honored him with particular esteem. We had informed him of Lorenzo's birth, at the suggestion of the latter; and he often said to me: "Since my acquaintance with your friend, I know better how to support my troubles. I am more faithful to God, and have greater power over myself."

I made the same remark in relation to Henry Walsingham, observing the progress he had made in piety, since his intimate friendship with Lorenzo. This was particularly apparent when I compared his resignation on learning the death of the marquis of Rosline, with the violent despair he had manifested at the sudden illness of his child. For myself, I felt each day happier, calmer, more disengaged from the things of this world, and stronger in eternal hopes. One evening, after we had retired to our room, Lorenzo asked me to read the fifteenth chapter of the third book of the Following of Christ. When I had finished, taking my hand, he said: "Sidney, if I had less confidence in the Divine Goodness which watches over you, I would be very uneasy for

your future life. It is probable that you will one day receive intelligence of Lord Seymour, perhaps of many other members of your family, and you will then find yourself in the midst of relations, all Protestants."

Leaning my head upon his hand, and rising with some agitation, "Hidalla," said I, "let me open my heart to you. For some time I have been troubled with the fears you have just expressed. I have weighed the greatness of the danger, with my weakness, and all that I owe to the grace which has saved me. It seems to me that I have found a resource, an asylum, a refuge, sheltered from the temptation of the ties of blood and nature. There are religious orders in Italy, France, and Spain; and I have already maturely reflected on the happiness of those who, blessed with this vocation, have the wisdom to respond to it."

Lorenzo was a moment thoughtful.

"The grace of such an attraction," said he, "has nothing to surprise me after all that has preceded it; and I have often remarked that those privileged souls whom Providence snatches from heresy, are at the same time called to a higher perfection. I," he added, with deep feeling, "had formed the design of retiring from the world to one of those happy solitudes, which religion presents to those who dread the tumult of the stormy sea of life, when he, whom I desired to serve, disposed otherwise, by calling me to Henry's aid. I believe that in this I have lost nothing for heaven, since God would, in this manner, receive the sacrifice which I had made of my family, the world and liberty. If I cannot sing his praises day and night in a monastery, my heart can bless the Almighty every moment of my life; and the mercies he has lavished on me, give me hope that my sacrifice has been accepted."

Lorenzo leaned his head upon his hands, and appeared unconscious of what surrounded him. Then rising, and turning from me, to conceal his tears: "Your soul," said he with animation, "is capable of knowing all the delights of the love of God!" After pausing awhile, he resumed, "but you are still so young, my beloved Sidney, that I pray you to reflect long, and to prepare yourself by the exact performance of your duties (which are, at present, confined to a narrow circle), for that angelical and interior life." "I have wished for a long time," said I, "to unfold my mind to you"—"and what restrained you?" I blushed: "the fear that, once informed of my dispositions, you would have required me to be too soon separated from you."

In saying this the tears flowed from my eyes, and he pressed me in his arms; "it you were some years older," said he, "I should, perhaps, have desired, before leaving this world, to see you fixed in some permanent state; but I would not press you."

As the thought of this near and inevitable separation made me weep, Lorenzo spoke words of peace and consolation; but, as I observed by his countenance that he was suffering much more than usual, my sadness increased, and I conjured him for the love of God, and in pity to me, to try to take a little repose. He endeavored to smile, and promised me to take more care of his health. I withdrew to my room, but could not close my eyes. Lorenzo, whose sufferings continued, prayed through the night, in a low voice, but with so much fervor, that I distinguished, in part, what he said. He offered to God, the entire sacrifice of his life; and I, to whom his life was so dear, supplicated with tears, his relief and restoration. It was difficult to know the nature of his sufferings; he never complained; and when his extreme weakness betrayed him, he had still a thousand reasons to quiet his fears.

CHAPTER XVII.

After some weeks' stay at Dove Hill, we bade adieu to the duke of Norfolk, whom we were never to see again. He shared the common fate of queen Mary's friends: the prison, the scaffold, and death. We repaired to Rosline castle, where we awaited the duchess of Salisbury, and the rest of the family. We referred this spot, because the north of Scotland was but little disturbed by political movements. But a few days after our arrival, Lorenzo took me aside, with Henry—"I feel, my dear friends," said he, "that the moment of our separation approaches"—"I am very happy," I exclaimed; "I would give a thousand lives to preserve yours, Lorenzo, and must it be?" "God wishes you still to remain upon the earth, my dear Sidney; and you should prefer the will of heaven to your own. Pray with me, that God will grant me the favor of soon rejoining my brother Arthur. And you, Henry, watch over Sidney, when he shall have but you alone." "That will not be necessary," I exclaimed, with strong emotion, "for I shall not survive you, and all the powers of heaven and earth"—"Moderate the strength of an affection altogether human," said Lorenzo, firmly placing his hand upon my mouth, "and," he added, whispering, "see what excellent dispositions for the project of the other day." I blushed;

my tears flowed abundantly, and I had not strength to reply. "Profit," resumed Lorenzo, "by the great examples which Divine Goodness has provided for you. Imitate Henry, Matilda?"—"And render yourself worthy of Hidalla," added Henry.

Before separating, Lorenzo entreated us not to speak to the duchess of Salisbury concerning Oswald. "She is already sufficiently unhappy," said he; "Oswald's narrative would recall the greatest of her afflictions." Tears glistened in Lorenzo's eyes, who turned away to conceal them, and quickly spoke of other things. Meanwhile the mourning which the death of the marquis of Rosline caused at the castle and in the village, produced a great excitement among us all, and made a strong impression on the duchess. She recalled to memory her two husbands, and Hidalla, her son. Her conscience reproached her with not having loved the latter as she ought. This want of maternal affection was a recollection full of bitterness, which the death of Arthur rendered still more poignant.

One evening, when the duchess appeared more sad than usual, she suddenly exclaimed, covering her face with her hands—"I have no longer a son!—Arthur, Hidalla!"—"But," I observed, "there is no certainty of Hidalla's death."—"Ah, do not flatter me; for five years he has given us no evidence of existence, unhappy child of a too guilty mother. Arthur, I can at least hope, enjoys a happier life; but my Hidalla, without a guide, without a stay, neglected by the authors of his days—ah! who, in his last moments, has supported, has consoled him?—I have never shown myself a mother to him, and I only hear that name, to lament him to the end of my life. His brother wrote to him, and showed that he, at least, remembered him, whilst I alone forgot him."

My feelings urged me to tell her all. Lorenzo, perceiving it, seized my hand, and whispered—"Respect my secret; what will result from your indiscretion? A short moment of enjoyment, soon to be followed by new regrets, and a separation more harrowing still."

The duchess wept bitterly. "Never," continued she, "can the memory of Hidalla prove a consolation to me. It seems to me, that I unceasingly hear him call me a barbarous and unnatural mother."

Lorenzo, falling on his knees beside her, bathed his hands in his tears. "Your son," said he, in broken accents, "loved you; he respected you; and firmly attached to the Catholic faith, which he had the happiness to embrace, he remained faithful to it. You will meet him in eternal life, where all whom you love shall be restored to you." "Angel of peace," said the duchess, "what soothing comfort you pour into my heart." Perceiving a death-like palor overspreading Lorenzo's face, I hastened to his aid. The recollection of the moment when Arthur recognized his brother, occurred to me. "No, madam," I exclaimed, "all the respect which I owe to Lorenzo's confidence is not capable of arresting me; and I believe that the grief you will experience in seeing the condition in which your son is restored to you, cannot equal the consolation of embracing him, and brightening his last moments by the cares of maternal tenderness! Yes, the angel before your eyes, is no other than your son Hidalla, whom self-denying maxims of religion, and a true disengagement from the world, have induced to remain unknown in his own family."

The duchess, in emotions that cannot be described, embraced Lorenzo, who was insensible. I entreated her not yet to reveal my indiscretion to Lorenzo, whom she continued to load with caresses. Having recovered, he asked who was with him. I replied, that I was, making a sign to the duchess to be silent. "Why," I continued, "do you persist, dear Lorenzo, in refusing to a disconsolate mother, the last comfort she can hope for in this world?"—"Ah! in pity, Sidney, regard my weakness; shake not my resolution; it is the last perhaps, and the greatest of my sacrifices." Then, taking my hand, "I have often regretted before God," he continued, "the obscurity and abandonment in which I lived at Bayonne, and at T—." Here, known to you, Henry and Matilda, I am cherished and tended with the most delicate affection. Is this, Sidney, that life of abjection, and renunciation, which I promised God to embrace? See here the last and only occasion that remained to me, to prove my love to Him who has heaped so many graces upon me; allow me, then, to offer Him this privation, which costs me so much. I will be with my mother, I shall serve her, and offer her all the consolation of religion; but she shall not call me her son; I will not render myself the object of her tenderness; Lorenzo does not merit this favor: he will die as he has lived; unknown and obscure; but never so much so as he would have desired."

Seeing him exceedingly weak, I induced him to partake of some nourishment, and to repose a little. I gave him a cup of milk: this was all