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THE CATHOLIC COUSINS: A TALE.

CHAPTER V.

On the following morning, as Emma, according to her usual custom, was superintending the education of her younger sisters, her cousin Isabella unexpectedly and unannounced entered the room.

'I am afraid I am interrupting you, dear,' said Isabella, as she advanced towards Emma, and affectionately embraced her, 'I don't know how it is,' she added, laughing, 'but I seem to be most unfortunate in all my visits, for if I pay a visit in the morning, I am too early; if in the afternoon, there is no one at home to receive me;—and if in the evening, it is sure to be some evening on which my friend had pre-arranged to go to the theatre, or attend some concert or lecture; I sometimes think I am just like 'Paul Pry,' always intruding, and yet at the same time continually hoping that I do not; I often fancy, indeed, that my friends must think me a great bore.'

'You do yourself great injustice, then,' said Emma, smiling with almost sisterly affection on her cousin, 'for were I to tell you all the complimentary remarks your friends made about you, I'm inclined to think it would cause you to become so vain, that none but a lord or a prince would be permitted even to have a chance of being sung for your fair hand.'

'You naughty girl,' replied Isabella, playfully, stamping her little foot, 'you make me so cross, I've half a mind to lead you to my father, and accuse you to him as being the author of all my sentimentality and 'foolish nonsense,' as he is pleased to call it.'

'Is uncle here?' joyfully exclaimed Mary and Kate, who had, on Isabella entering the room, silently arisen to embrace her, and then quietly resumed their studies, with as much diligence and application as if no one but their sister were present.

'Yes; I left him in the parlor with Frank. Mary and Kate, who were both passionately fond of their uncle, immediately solicited permission to put their books by; and no sooner was their request complied with, than they lightly skipped out of the room, like two little fairies, and in a few minutes were locked in the fond embrace of their uncle.'

'Oh, Emma,' said Isabella, now that she and her cousin were alone, 'I have such a piece of news to tell you,' and she clapped her hands, and shook back her rich luxuriant tresses which gracefully hung over her shoulders, and beautifully contrasted with her alabaster neck, which was simply adorned with a coral necklace, 'you remember the last evening you spent with me, don't you?'

'Yes.'

'And the note which you discovered under the ivy-leaf?'

'Yes, I recollect it well; I opened the note; I see you seem shocked, but I dare say you'll be much more so when I tell you I read it; and, what is more, I answered it.'

Emma looked amazed, indeed, but made no reply, and her cousin continued in the same strain. 'The note to which I allude contained no writing, but it expressed the sentiments of the heart much more eloquently than words could express, for it contained a red tulip.'

'The poor flower must have been most unmercifully dealt with to be squeezed into so small a compass,' observed Emma, smiling; 'and I am sadly afraid the rough handling I gave it must have somewhat damaged its delicate calyx.'

'I always thought that tulips had no calyx,' said Isabella, inquiringly; 'is not the calyx an outer cup, or wheel of leaves, surrounding the corolla?'

'It is,' replied Emma, 'and therefore the calyx, in most instances, is at once discernible, even though reduced to the dimensions of a membranous ring; but there are cases where the calyx is united with the corolla, and sometimes so completely of the same form, and even color, that unless one has a practical knowledge of botany, it is almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other. Now, with regard to the tulip, the three outer floral leaves constitute its calyx, while the three inner ones form its corolla. I think it is Professor Lindley who says that when there is only one series of floral integuments, that series is the calyx, and, of course, such being the case, a calyx, it would seem, may exist without a corolla, but not a corolla without a calyx.'

'Well,' said Isabella, impatiently, 'I wish I knew as much as you do, but I never could apply myself to study, although I was always very fond of reading; I think I once had a taste for botany, but the long string of Latin names almost frightened me out of my senses, and I told my governess that if she ever insisted on my learning them by heart, I'd lock her up in the coal-cellar, and never let her see the daylight again; and I imagine the threat had the desired effect, for she never after that pressed me to learn botany. But about the tulip. Do you understand the language of flowers,' continued Isabella, almost in the same breath, 'oh, it expresses so beautifully one's thoughts.'

'I must admit I am not conversant with the language of flowers,' replied Emma, 'that is to say, I should never be able to communicate my ideas to another through the medium of flowers; but what about your young knight's red tulip?—Suppose it was emblematic of something very, very sentimental?'

'Yes; don't you know?'

'No.'

'Guess, then.'

'A declaration of love?'

'Yes; and Isabella clapped her hands in high glee. 'How did you guess, Emma?'

'What, have I guessed right?' asked her cousin, half doubting.

'Certainly; and I really begin to think that you know more of the language of flowers than you wish to own?'

'Well, I assure you,' rejoined Emma, smiling, 'that it was all guess-work, for never until this moment did I know that the red tulip indicated a declaration of love.'

'It is all very fine to say so now, Emma,' said Isabella, playfully looking into her cousin's face, with an arch smile, 'but, *entre nous, vous savez*,' and she shook her head as much as to say you know what I mean.

'Well, replied Emma, 'if you are determined not to believe me, I suppose it is of no use my trying to convince you against my inclination; but talking of the language of flowers, it puts me in mind of a very beautiful anecdote I was reading the other day. There was a society, consisting of a hundred members, and it was called the 'Emblematic Language Club,' for the members, when they met together, transacted all their business by means of emblems. The rules of the society preventing any from conversing with one another, except in the emblematic language of signs. It happened one evening, that as all the members were assembled together, a stranger entered, and bowing politely, advanced silently towards the president, and signified by signs that he was desirous of being elected a member of their society. The president immediately filled a glass full to the brim of water, indicating thereby that they could not admit another, as there would not be room or accommodation for an additional member. The silent applicant took up a leaf, and lightly placed it on the surface of the water, without causing it to overflow, implying by this act, that as the leaf neither disturbed, nor caused the water to run over, so in like manner he would neither disorganize, nor be the means of expelling any of the existing members by his being admitted into the society. The president, who could not but admire the adroitness with which the young stranger had so beautifully expressed himself in the emblematic language, was obliged, nevertheless, to reject his application, in consequence of the rules of the society limiting the number of the members to a hundred and the president reluctantly wrote on a tablet, *one and two noughts*, and showed it to the stranger, who immediately taking the pencil out of the president's hand, set a nought before the *one*, signifying thereby that as a nought placed before a hundred did not augment its number, so in like manner his insignificant presence amongst them might be considered as nothing. The whole assembly were in raptures, and unanimously expressed by emblems, that they unhesitatingly elected him a member of their society; while the president, anticipating their wishes, transferred the nought which the stranger had placed before the hundred, by setting it after the second nought, implying by this, that in electing him a member of their club, they increased their number from one hundred to a thousand.'

'Oh, what a beautiful anecdote,' exclaimed Isabella, 'do you know, it quite takes my fancy.'

'I thought it would,' rejoined Emma, 'and that is the reason why I told it to you.'

'Oh, it is so beautiful,' repeated Isabella, musingly.

'Yes, I think it is,' responded her cousin;—'but by-the-bye, dear, I am afraid I interrupted you in what you were going to tell me about yourself and the red tulip.'

'Oh, not in the least,' said Isabella, gaily, while a slight tinge of crimson mantled on her cheeks, as she added, 'I think I told you all, except, indeed, it is that I didn't tell you the name of the flower which I sent the handsome young cavalier.'

'Well, perhaps, that had better remain a secret, for unless you sent him a flower emblematic of a downright refusal, I am afraid I should severely censure your imprudence.'

'Why so?'

'Oh, for several reasons. In the first place, to carry on a correspondence with a stranger, whether by means of an emblematic language, or

in a straightforward way, is, to say the least of it, highly injudicious; and in the second place, to do so without the knowledge of your father, is, in my opinion, unquestionably wrong; and I do not think I could express myself too forcibly against such an act. I could tell you a story about a young lady of fortune, who, without the knowledge of her parents, acted much in the same way as you are doing, and after a romantic adventure for some months, was inveigled into a marriage with a *crossing sweeper*, which caused her such mortification, that in three days after she had discovered the position in which she had unwittingly placed herself, she died of a broken heart.'

'Oh, what a goose,' exclaimed Isabella; 'but, Emma, is it really true?'

'Quite true.'

'Oh, I should so much like to hear the story; will you tell it to me?'

'Well, I will, if you wish, but not at present, for you must come up stairs and take off your bonnet, before adjourning to the drawing-room, and Emma placed her arm round her cousin's waist, and led her up stairs.'

CHAPTER VI.

The moment Isabella entered the drawing-room, she exclaimed, 'Oh, you industrious little sempstress, what have you not been doing?—Why, there are as many dresses here, of all shapes and sizes, as would stock a London warehouse, and she advanced towards towards the sofa, which was almost covered with every kind of needlework, but particularly children's clothing. 'Emma, do you mean to say,' she added, 'that you made all these dresses yourself?'

'Yes, with the assistance of my sisters.'

'Well, their little bits of fingers were not capable of rendering much aid, I am afraid; but will you be kind enough to satisfy my curiosity respecting the final disposal of these goods.—What bazaar are they destined to grace?'

'They are not intended for any bazaar,' replied her cousin, carelessly.

'Then, what on earth are they intended for?' said Isabella, 'for I perceive that most of them are too small for your sisters, and, consequently, it is very evident they were not made for them.'

'No, they are clothes we are making up for some poor children.'

'You don't mean to say you employ your time that way?' asked Isabella, with unfeigned surprise.

'Some of our time,' said her cousin thoughtfully.

'Well, that's more than ever I could do,' rejoined Isabella; 'any kind of needle-work is bad enough, even if it's for oneself; but the idea of sitting down to make clothes for a parcel of poor people, whom one can take no interest in, is a thing I never could, nor I suppose ever shall, understand.'

'We should all take an interest in the poor,' observed her cousin, 'for was not our blessed Lord poor when He became man for the salvation of the world?'

'Oh, that's quite a different thing,' said Isabella, in a tone which seemed to imply that her cousin was digressing from the subject at issue.

'Why is it so different?' asked Emma, with a smile; 'surely, if our blessed Lord preferred the humble garb of poverty to the gorgeous robe of wealth, did he not by this act dignify the lowly state of the poor; besides, independently of this argument, there are several passages in the Sacred Volume which command us to succour and comfort the distressed?'

'I yield to your superior judgment,' replied Isabella, half provoked and half in fun, for she was always reluctant to admit that she could be in error; but the word argument sounded like the report of a cannon in her ears, for it always seemed to her like the prelude of a long, tedious discussion.

'Do you know, Emma,' she continued, 'I've just learnt a new song; and she lightly sprang towards the piano, and before her cousin had time to reply, she commenced to sing.

'How do you like that?' said she, jumping up from the piano, and almost forcibly seating her cousin on the music-stool she had just occupied; 'Now you must play and sing something.'

'What shall I play?' asked Emma, as she lightly ran her fingers over the keys of the instrument.

'Oh! anything you please,' replied her cousin; 'anything that comes into your head.'

'Very well,' said Emma; and she immediately sang with much feeling a couple of verses.

'Thank you, dear,' said Isabella, as her cousin rose from her seat; and then she added, naively the last verse, and particularly the two first lines—

'Its lustre descends on the high and the low, Regardless of titles, regardless of birth,—'

sound very like a gentle hint, indirectly given to remind me that religion showers its blessings on the poor as well as the rich.'

Emma smiled.

And her cousin continued. 'I admit that in theory it is all very well that we should sympathize with the poor, but I cannot agree respecting the practice of such notions; religion commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves.—Now, pray, how are we to do this?'

'The parable of the good Samaritan sufficiently explains to us in what manner we are to love our neighbor as ourselves,' quietly remarked Emma.

'Then with regard to the teaching of Jesus Christ,' said Isabella, 'did He not say, "that he who hath two coats let him give to him who hath none?" Now, you surely don't mean to say, that He intended us to carry that out to the letter.'

'Unquestionably.'

'Oh, Emma, surely not; for according to that nobody would have any change of clothes, seeing that there are such numbers of half-starved, half-clothed, wretched looking beings in the world.'

'Isabella,' said Emma, gravely, 'the sacred words which have been uttered by the lips of our blessed Lord cannot be refuted, nor yet can they be explained away for the convenience of those who wish to enjoy the good things of this world. Rest assured that he who giveth to the poor shall never want for aught: for are we not told that whatsoever is given to the poor is lent to God, and that he will repay it a hundred fold? and we must remember, too, that this is not the mere invention of man, but the words of God himself. And who is God? The supreme Author of all things. Oh! how little do the proud think of this. How applicable to them are the words of our Blessed Lord, when he said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Few rightly contemplate who the poor are; they look upon them as a set of ill-mannered, low-born creatures. Their external appearance, perhaps, may seem uncouth; their emaciated features, perhaps, repulsive to the eye; but they have souls, ay, immortal souls, for which the Son of Man came down from Heaven to redeem with his precious blood upon the cross. Never should we harden our heart or close our ears to the cry of distress, or spurn the importunities of the poor, for who knows but that the soul of the applicant may be a redeemed soul, destined to inherit the courts of Heaven, and reign for ever and ever with God. On the last judgment-day, when we should see all those holy souls radiant with celestial glory, would we not then ardently desire to have had it in our power to administer to our earthly wants: would we not then wish that we had parted with all worldly possessions, and thereby clothed and fed those saints of God? Our blessed Lord, it is true, did not say that we should not enter the kingdom of Heaven if we did not sell what pertained to us, in order to provide for the wants of our suffering brethren, but He said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor." And again he said—"Sell what you possess, and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old—a treasure in Heaven which faileth not; where no thief approaches, nor moth corrupteth; for where your treasure is, there will be your heart also." Now, surely, if we cannot bring ourselves to sell all that we have, we at least should make it a point to do something towards alleviating the miseries of the poor.' Their conversation was interrupted by Captain Melville entering the room, accompanied by his nephew and niece.

When I commenced this narrative, I had intended gradually to develop the character of each of those whom I have had occasion to introduce into the preceding pages, and to have shown my readers how good example, timely advice, and gentle persuasion, can more effectually attain its object than severe looks, harsh words, or untimely censure. If we endeavor forcibly and suddenly to bend a bough, in all probability it will snap asunder; but, on the other hand, if we gently, gradually, and perseveringly even try to cause it to assume the form of a circle, we may satisfactorily do so without the slightest fear of its breaking. Circumstances oblige me to curtail this narrative, else I should have endeavored, in a few additional chapters, to show, in a more pointed manner than I fear I shall be able to do in the space I have now limited myself to, how Emma not only was the means of rescuing her cousin from that world of fiction and deceitfulness into which her own wild fancy had led her, and which most likely would have plunged her into an abyss of misery from which she could never have hoped to extricate herself, but how also, by her unostentatious Christian example and wholesome seasonal advice, she had had the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing Isabella reject the world, and all its pomps and vanities, and fly into the bosom of the Catholic Church with a purified soul, reflecting on others the glory and the mercy, and the marvellous power of God, whose goodness knoweth no bounds.—Emma was also instrumental in bringing James Cranstown into the true fold of Christ. We

are all aware how through life often circumstances, perhaps trifling in themselves, are productive and great and important things; so in like manner was it with regard to the strange way in which Sir Thomas accidentally formed the acquaintance of the Misses Wilson, whose travelling-carriage was capsized, as my readers will recollect, on the Kensington-road; for they were the means of introducing Sir Thomas to their friend Captain Melville, who, on his death-bed, resigned his daughter Isabella to his guardianship. The constant intercourse between Sir Thomas' ward and her cousin Emma, who was frequently on a visit with her, paved, as it were, the way for James Cranstown, who had been ordained a clergyman of the Church of England, to become a Catholic; nay, more than this, to sacrifice every worldly advantage, in order to enrol himself in the sacred ranks of the priesthood.

It is not now my intention to trespass further on my readers' patience, by entering into details as to how he was first struck with Emma's pious demeanor, her love to succour the distressed, to pour the balm of consolation into the souls of those who were afflicted, and even to deny herself many things in order to alleviate the wants of the poor. Suffice it to say, that first the amiability of her disposition, and, secondly, her timely, well judged observations on the grand truths of religion, removed from his mind his prejudice against Catholics, and then made him thirst after a further knowledge of the ancient faith, and at length caused him to examine more minutely the pretensions of Protestantism, entering the Mother Church, with a soul overflowing with the grace of God, and an untrusting zeal for His honor and glory.

Such, my readers, is the moral of this narrative, and I hope it may be productive of some good, even if only to one soul: then I will be satisfied that I have not written in vain.

THE END.

JESU DULCIS AMOR MEUS—JESUS CHRIST THE OBJECT OF OUR LOVE.

The reason for selecting the subject 'Jesus Christ the Object of our Love' in his Sermon at the opening of the Cathedral of Northampton, is thus explained by H. E. the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster:—

'There has appeared a book entitled 'The Life of Jesus,' which, having done much mischief abroad, where it was first published, has been introduced into our country, translated, that, if possible, it may make equal havoc among its people. It is chiefly in the industrial classes that it may dangerous; neither the poor who do not read, nor the more highly educated, who have leisure and means at hand to study it, are so likely to be affected by its poison.

'And this is the more perilous, because it is the more artfully concealed. It is not a tissue of blasphemies, nor a scurrilous declaration, as so many preceding attacks on our Lord's character have been. It does not repel by its coarseness, but rather strives to allure by elegance of style, by respectfulness of feeling, and by showy and affected learning. Many have been deceived and led astray, by these false attractions.

'Do not suppose that I am going to undertake the refutation of this work. But I think it may be possible to suggest, even in a single discourse, a thought, which may serve as an antidote, or rather a preservative, against this wicked work, and, what is more useful, against its false principles, should they be urged upon you.

'And the thought is this: Of all human beings, Jesus Christ is the only one, who has been able to propagate and perpetuate, without limit of place or time, a personal love and affection towards Himself.'

'This is, then, the one thought throughout the Sermon, and the development of the above idea is somewhat as follows:

'There are three solemn utterances in Holy Scripture which express the manifestation of God to man, namely, God is Love; the Word was God; the Word was made Flesh: Jesus Christ, coming on earth, brought with Him, inseparably united to Him, the divine attribute of love, in a form, and with a fulness of grace and truth, incommunicable to any merely human being. And the possession, manifest and undeniable, of this singular quality can only be attributed to His divine prerogative.'

Human love has a very narrow sphere. It is mostly limited to one's own house, kin, or small circle of friends, and even then it can only extend a few years into the past.

Few men ever thought of really loving an intellectual master, or even a human religious guide. The Eutychians did not love Eutyches,

* A sermon preached at the opening of the Cathedral of Northampton, on Thursday the 23. of April, 1861, by H. E. Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster.