

## THE ROMANCE OF A JESUIT.

From the French of Do Beugny d'Hagerne.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The two young men journeyed together to Naples, Charles keeping up his companion's courage as best he could. A great shock awaited the Count de Plelan on arriving at his destination for his mother did not recognize him. On the doctor's arrival he learned that Mme. de Plelan was suffering from a partial paralysis of the brain, and that her recovery was very doubtful, though quite within the bounds of possibility; everything depended on judicious treatment, change of scene, and efficient nursing. Yves de Plelan decided therefore on taking his mother back to Paris, and after a few days of repose, the sad party started homeward by a different route to the one the three ladies had taken when travelling from France. They travelled slowly and avoided all that could recall the past to the poor invalid, who gradually sank into a state of total forgetfulness of the past and an absolute indifference as to the present.

On nearing Paris the young people took counsel together as to how they had best arrange their future movements so as to secure all that care and comfort for Mme. de Plelan of which she stood in so great need.

Marguerite urged the great affection that she bore her benefactress as a reason for being allowed to remain and minister to that good lady's wants, and it was finally decided that Mlle. Moissac should be asked to take up her residence at the Rue Vanneau, and thus enable Marguerite to remain there and pay the debt of gratitude which she owed to the good and suffering friend who had indeed been so true a mother to her young daughter's friend and companion.

On arriving in Paris, Charles hastened to make their desires known to his friend Mlle. Moissac, and the good lady at once joyfully accepted the mission offered her, since by so doing she was enabled to render service to her dear Marguerite and Marguerite's brother as well as to her old friend Mme. de Plelan. Last but not least was the charitable little lady delighted at looking forward to having a few gold pieces put into her hand at the end of every month, and thus having at her disposal extra means wherewith to solace her beloved poor. She was soon installed in her temporary home, and together with Marguerite concerted every means that their affection could suggest to alleviate their friend's malady, and perhaps obtain its entire cure.

Charles had been to the Court on arriving in Paris and had also called on the Berthier ladies. The law-suit was to be hurried on now that the young lawyer was again ready to give all his attention to it, and he now made such important discoveries, concerning one of the prosecuting parties, Mons. de Noircote, that he no longer had any doubt as to the favourable issue of the affair.

From the time of her arrival in Paris, Mme. de Plelan's state of mind as well as her bodily health had gradually improved, and finally her son and her friends had the happiness of perceiving that the use of her reason had been completely restored to her.

Naturally, the Count de Plelan and Marguerite had been much thrown together during Mme. de Plelan's illness, and the young girl alone seemed unconscious of the affection with which she had inspired the young man. First, obtaining Charles permission, Yves de Plelan pleaded his cause with Marguerite, and in spite of the young girl's recalling to his mind her own inferior position and want of fortune, he succeeded in gaining her consent to be his wife. Mlle. Moissac was loud in her felicitations, and Mme. de Plelan ratified her son's choice with every expression of love and gratitude to the young "angelic girl," as she termed her, who was so rich in every virtue and attraction, and who had already given her such proofs of daughter-like affection.

Mlle. Moissac profited by this atmosphere of approaching marriage to attack Charles again about Mlle. Berthier, and asked him point blank when he would allow her to be the bearer of a message from him to the young lady's mother asking the daughter's hand. Charles replied by imparting to her confidentially that his heart was filled with another image than that of Mlle. Simonne Berthier, whose great qual-

ities, however, he fully appreciated, and who he hoped might find a husband who would be worthy of her. He promised to reveal the name of the object of his affections as soon as this sister should be married and the Berthier law-suit brought to a conclusion.

At length arrived the day which had been fixed for the important trial. Monsieur de Noircote had chosen one of the most renowned lawyers in Paris as his advocate, and this great pleader smiled derisively when he learned that his adversary was a young beginner pleading his first cause. He would have preferred a less easily gained victory than the one he fully anticipated gaining. This celebrated lawyer spoke for two hours during which time he held his audience spell-bound beneath the charm of his eloquence. He maintained his client's right to demand reimbursement, and in support of his pleadings he brought forward much corroborative evidence and made many quotations from distinguished legal authors.

On rising to reply, Charles commenced by excusing himself for daring to measure his young untried skill with that of one of the greatest glories of the French bar. After this exordium, he took his adversary's arguments one after the other and completely annihilated them.

At first he spoke quietly and slowly like one who is sure of himself, proceeding cautiously, but suddenly unmasking his batteries he made a masterly attack, not on the opposing pleader, but on the chief prosecutor himself, the unprincipled de Noircote. He followed up this gentleman not only in his transactions concerning the case in hand, but also through his whole life, bringing forward evidence to prove how frequently he had previously been mixed up with disreputable undertakings and how he had been guilty of deeds which well merited the interference of the criminal law. In a magnificent peroration Charles showed how this unprincipled man, lost to all sentiments of uprightness and honour, had attacked two ladies whom he believed to be defenceless, in order to frighten them into yielding to his demands. He showed how the prosecutor well knew he could never gain his cause before a law court and had therefore applied privately to the ladies and tried to extort a large sum of money from them as payment for withdrawing his suit. The young lawyer wound up by saying:

"He would even have considerably diminished the price he asked, would we but have listened to his overtures, but this we declined doing since I deemed it unjust to allow my clients to pay that which they did not owe; since I also deemed it advisable that their rights should be confirmed to them for ever by a court of justice: and, lastly, since by unmasking this man I consider that we are conferring a public benefit in preventing our adversary from adding to the list of those whom he has victimized."

After the close of the proceedings the elder lawyer came to our hero saying:

"Allow me to congratulate you, my learned brother; your maiden effort has been a superb one, and from this day forward you take your place as a master in the art of pleading."

"Judgment has not yet been given," replied Charles.

"That is true, but nevertheless your cause is won, and when the judge gave me the opportunity of replying to you I waived my right of so doing, for I recognized that I would be pleading in an unjust cause."

When the Court rose, Charles' friends and fellow lawyers hastened to him and would have made him a regular ovation. Escaping from them, he hastened to the church of Our Lady of Victories and remained there in prayer for more than an hour.

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A fortnight later Charles ran up the stairs leading to Father d'Aradon's room, and on entering, exclaimed:

"Father, from this very day there is nothing that need any longer bind me to the world. My sister, as you know, was yesterday married to Count de Plelan, and has no further need of me. You have yourself told me that no one should enter the religious life with the intention of seeking there a refuge from the trials of life."

"At any rate this should be avoided as much as possible."

"I think I understood your idea, Father, the value of a