

A VOICE FROM AFRICA.

Bishop Angaran, C. S. P. - Letter from the Centre of the "Dark Continent." - III. - Our "88. Leo XIII" Resolves - Pastoral Visitation.

IV.

Dublin Irish Catholic. And so, through all sorts of difficulties and perils, our steamer "Leo III" reached at last Bangal—that is, the gates of the rapids, which now barred our passage. Our Mission station of St. Paul's is three miles beyond this spot, higher up the river. The small prugoon can manage to pass the rapids, and so Father Gourdy was not long coming up with his tiny boat. On meeting me he told me of the narrow escape he had from getting too near the grailion of his ferocious parishioners. Still, would you believe it, notwithstanding the dangers he had run, he was not a bit the less cheerful and contented than when he first set foot on the banks of the river. He was simply sublime, or sublimely simple, but did not suspect it.

My first visit was to the little cemetery where our beloved martyred brother is awaiting his glorious resurrection. I was inclined to pray to him rather than for him; for we love to think that he is in Heaven with the holy martyrs praying for the conversion of those savages for whom he laid down his life so courageously. Whilst I was praying there, another grave was being opened for a little orphan who had died the previous night. Now, whilst the grave-diggers were at their work, other men, watchmen armed with guns, were beating the air round the Mission in order to prevent a nocturnal attack from the Bondjos, always ready to seize human flesh, dead or alive. It was a truly mournful sight. These precautions are necessary. An armed patrol all round the Mission house and premises must put the cannibals off the scent that a burial is going to take place. They seize every opportunity to get a human prey. Not long ago a boy was fetching water at the spring close by the house. As he filled his pitcher he heard some Bondjos whispering to one another: "Guana!" (meat). And looking around he saw the fellows staring at him with their assegais. He gave the alarm, fired off his gun, and put the aggressors to flight. On another occasion one of the poor orphans of the Mission was killed at twenty yards from the house, but the Bondjos had no time to carry away his body. Isn't this a fearful life of ours? But do you not think that Almighty God has reserved special seats in Paradise for the Missionaries of the Bondjos? I think so, at all events. Such are our difficulties; yet, withal, the good work is progressing, and there is not a week when we cannot save some little creature or other from the flesh pot of those horrible cannibals. What a consolation for us to rescue these little ones from the horrible fate always impending over them!

But alas! our resources are not commensurate with the work to be done or with the desires of our hearts. For this reason do I hope that every charitable and humane soul who comes to know of our work and wants to assist us in this most humanitarian enterprise. Yes, Christian charity will enable us to rescue the bodies of the little children, whilst we shall rescue their souls from sin and hell, and make them become children of God by holy baptism. Thus, by our united efforts, we shall deliver them from the double slavery of man and demon.

In the course of my last pastoral visitation I had the happiness to administer the sacrament of confirmation to one hundred and fifty children, and at present a good many more are preparing for the same blessing. Since 1890 we have snatched over a thousand children from slavery and, therefore, from the butcher's block. Of this number about one-half died after receiving baptism. Those poor children had had to undergo such sufferings; and had been so awfully ill-treated before they came to us, that they were mere walking skeletons. In this case we can get the children for very little, as the price of a slave depends on his physical condition; 'tis flesh that's wanted in the market, not bones. Now, when these children see the care we bestow upon them in our orphanage, they are simply nonplussed. They cannot understand how a free man can take such an interest in miserable slaves as they are. When once at home with the older orphans they show a charming simplicity. We speak to them of God, of the soul, of a heaven for the good, of a place of punishment for the wicked, by little and little they come to understand us; their hearts open to hope, they believe. Then, we tell them that to go to God in heaven after death we must be marked with the Precious Blood of Our Saviour who sends us to them. Soon they desire to "become friends of God"—they ask for baptism especially after seeing a baptism of orphans, and their happiness is then truly great. Now, those who die after having been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism go straight to heaven, where they are our patrons and intercessors. They surely pray especially for the kind benefactors of the Mission, to whom they are mainly indebted for salvation. They pray for their companions, for us the fathers in God, and for the conversion of the poor blacks. Those, on the contrary, who continue to live, thank to the care which is bestowed on them, become, or are destined to become

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

GLENCOONOGE.

By RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERRIDAN KNOWLES. CHAPTER XXVII.—CONTINUED.

At his words of scanty praise, a glow of pleasure rushed warmly through her frame. You will say so when you hear all, when you learn what a dark and solitary place the world was to me. You do not know, and if you are satisfied, Estace, you need never know, what difficulties I had to face. I had not been trained to fight the battle of life. What the balmy air and warm sun of early summer are, after the long blowing of east winds, that is my husband's love to me. After all I had gone through, I was still so proud, I spurned and flung him back his love. And what a prize I was throwing away! Why he is a man apart, his character is unique. How brave and gentle, generous and strong, open and free of soul he is! For my sake never despise him, but treat him as a brother.

"And do you feel no pang, poor girl, to think that your marriage has cut you off forever from the social rank in which you were born?"

"It was not my marriage cut me off. Poverty had done it long before. On that dreary time when my mother and I were trying to live up to a position, and to keep up an appearance we could no longer maintain. And through it all to find our friends dropping away one by one! When my mother died, her small annuity died with her, and I had no power, even if I had had the heart, to continue the struggle. I fled away from it all, and at last found a hiding-place here. The position which you see me has never been so full of humiliation as my former one had grown to be; I have cares and responsibilities, but how different from the ignoble cares which filled my life before! Oh, yes, I have found peace here, and happiness."

"I have not come home a beggar. The tide of fortune had turned in my favor before I left Australia. I shall go back there with new life, shaking once more with an ambition—the ambition to restore you to that position in which you were born. Was it poverty deprived you of it? then wealth shall give it back; and this husband of yours after all will not, I think, be so great a hindrance as I thought. This is a splendid place hardly heard of in the outer world; not known even by the birds of passage that fly through it in the summer-time. No one need ever learn that you are married to a peasant's son. And for the rest—I have been jealously watching this alert, active, bright-eyed and well-tempered youth, and believe me, you will find in him fine traits in his character. His intelligence is quick, he has a natural good taste, and these will tell him what to do and what to avoid. His sympathetic temperament will make him friends. His physique, too, and his bearing are in his favor—all, in short, qualities which give ease and grace besides. He is so young, I do not see why these advantages, with the addition of a little venture, should not make him capable after some time of holding his own in society. I remember from my own knowledge, and I have since both heard and read that, given wealth and the power that springs from it, the demands of society are not exorbitant. Conn, with his quick ear, would soon, under good tuition, lose the roughness of his brogue, and bring those cadences of voice under the control of the monitory. With a little experience he would learn not to startle in company by expressing opinions not generally accepted, or by being too much in earnest. I am told he is a first-rate dancer. Why, the fashionable dances would be child's play to him; and depend upon it, he would make himself an agreeable partner; wait, wait—he should join some club, Irishmen are born politicians, and he might talk politics; it does not require much knowledge. He expresses himself well enough; he would soon be competent to chat about the last new play, and the private lives of the performers. I have no doubt whatever but that he will acquire himself well in all many games and pastimes. No man with a figure like that, continued Estace, could play his cards so well as you. Good value for the money, otherwise than well-in-time. With his knowledge of horses, the chances are ten to one he would shine upon the turf. Yes, Janet, would it not be a pleasure to you, would it not be a noble reward to him, when he was poor and knew that you were poor, loved you for yourself alone; that he, I say, through you, should be lifted to your level; that he should be rich, courted, admired, flattered in the great world by you? But this is an ideal to be striven for and to be realized in the future; for the present we can only—"

"It shall never be realized," she interrupted almost fiercely; and then suddenly checking herself and looking at her brother steadily, she added, "perhaps you are warning me; there is no need, believe me."

"Warning you?" he repeated, astonished. "Has the prospect I hold out no attractions?"

"The book-keeper only shook her head. "Have you no ambition, Janet?"

"Only to keep what I have got. Experience has made me a coward. Having so much to lose, I cannot risk it."

how surprised and how glad he will be when he hears! Consider, remember you and he are brothers. Once more, for my sake, do not patronize him, but be friendly."

"There must be two parties to a friendship, Janet."

"I will answer for him. Who is that in the world with the?"

"It looks like Mr. Jardine."

"Or one of the firm of Goble and Lend?"

"Who are they?"

"The people who bear us ill-will, which we should be made to feel if they have bought the inn as we expect. I will tell you about them later on. Oh, you have much to hear! No, you are right. It is Mr. Jardine. What brings him, I wonder?"

"They watched the boat approaching; it was taking straight for the pier; so he needed now to creep along the winding channel, for the tide was full. A newer and more pressing interest had suddenly succeeded the one which had possessed the book-keeper's mind for many weeks past, and even to an hour ago; and she was less eager now to learn the news of which they in the boat must be the bearers, than to catch her husband's eye, draw him quickly apart, and tell him at once her strange intelligence. Their eyes soon met, and without waiting for the book-keeper's waving of his cap might mean, she beckoned him to follow, and hurried up to the doorstep of the inn."

CHAPTER XXVIII. THE FATE OF "THE HARP."

Estace Chalmers, on the other hand, sauntered down to the pier's end, which he reached just as Mr. Jardine landed. The position which you see me has never been so full of humiliation as my former one had grown to be; I have cares and responsibilities, but how different from the ignoble cares which filled my life before! Oh, yes, I have found peace here, and happiness."

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"Only to keep what I have got. Experience has made me a coward. Having so much to lose, I cannot risk it."

"You would be content to go on living here as book-keeper in this inn?"

"I had nothing better. I would be satisfied with even a poorer and a harder life so that it might be passed in Glencoonoge, where my happiness has taken such deep root."

"Thank Heaven! still of the same mind," returned Estace Chalmers, beneath his breath, turning away and beating his foot upon the ground. "Now will fate still be against me? Will my plans at last cease to miscarry?"

you! They say women can't keep a secret. Egad, ma'am, you keep yours close enough all conscience; and if it had not been in the first place that I got a clue elsewhere—looking at Mr. Chalmers—and that the impressions derived from the quickness of my own perception were confirmed by what, without his being at all aware of it, I was able to extract from your husband there—"

"From me?" cried Conn, coloring, and with indignant incredulity.

Every one laughed at Conn's astonishment, which could not have been more sincere if he had been the most reticent and discreet person alive.

"Nonsense, man," continued Mr. Jardine, avoiding at all hazards the expression which his timidity made him think was imminent, "there is nothing to regret or be ashamed of in my good fellow—upon my word, looking Conn up and down as if it struck him now for the first time, "as fine a young man as ever I saw! Six foot one in his stockings if an inch, and you may thank your husband, ma'am, for your discovery."

"Listen!" exclaimed the book-keeper. "What is all that uproar in the hall? And look! the road is full of people!"

It was only that more boats had returned, and the people were flocking from the village and the hills and the cabins in the immediate neighborhood, and in their eagerness to learn the fate of "The Harp," were invading the precincts of that venerable hostelry itself. When the O'Doherty and I arrived on the scene, the crowd was so dense that we dismounted at some distance off, and made our way to the inn with some difficulty on foot. Everybody was so intent on what they were discussing, that we were hardly noticed, and I passed an instant on the fringe of a group of which old Matt Dwyer was the centre—not now as orator, but as listener to an excited account of what had happened, delivered by Palsey Hoolahan to those gathered about him. Matt Dwyer listened with open mouth and with an astonishment that was almost apoplectic.

"Ye tell me so?" he said between his teeth, "and you're a man of the world! It beats anything I ever heard of! Begor! Dinn, the beggarman's brother, was nothin' to it, nothin' to it!"

Father John apparently had arrived just before us. We found him in the crowded hall, where his bewilderment at the extraordinary state of affairs was increased by the contradictory information which a perfect babel of voices was pouring into his ears. Learning at last where the book-keeper was to be found, he made for the bar parlor, where the O'Doherty and I followed in his wake. His appearance at the bar-parlor, where those assembled there, who were consulting anxiously as to how they could clear the house and shut the doors, without hurting the feelings of the people. But Father John was equal to the occasion, and he had a ready-made plan. He had a door open on him as soon as he should be outside, he drove the people in the hall before him, and emerging himself last of all, stood upon the doorstep facing the crowd.

"My friends," said he, "you've heard now all that's gone on for the present about the events of this day; and I assure you, you know a great deal more about them than I do myself. So now disperse, and go quietly to your homes, and do not be making confusion worse confounded. As for Conn, he'll be at the station to-morrow—just that the station will begin to-morrow. Sure what else have I come for to-day, but to hold the same. And let every man, woman, boy, girl, and child amongst you that's old enough, be at Mass to-morrow at 5 o'clock. And for good reason, don't be putting off your consciences till the end of the time, and then be coming in scores, driving me distracted with the numbers of ye. Remember what I tell ye. So now, my dear people, go quietly to your homes, and God be with ye."

his face and his renewed interest in everything that was said and done. We presently left Father John and Mr. Jardine over their punch (they had got deep into politics, and arguing chiefly with a view to convincing each other, had already without knowing it changed sides more than once), and went in search of the book-keeper and her companions. These we found together in the old parlor which seemed to me on that last night of my stay in Glencoonoge to be so full of recollections. Alicia and Bell, under the auspices of the book-keeper, had been inspecting the deserted bar and its mysteries; and Bell had handled powders and glasses, had turned taps, pulled handles, served imaginary customers, held imaginary parties with them, all in a tone and with a dash that made the book-keeper love her work, other men, watchmen armed with guns, were beating the air round the Mission in order to prevent a nocturnal attack from the Bondjos, always ready to seize human flesh, dead or alive. It was a truly mournful sight. These precautions are necessary. An armed patrol all round the Mission house and premises must put the cannibals off the scent that a burial is going to take place. They seize every opportunity to get a human prey. Not long ago a boy was fetching water at the spring close by the house. As he filled his pitcher he heard some Bondjos whispering to one another: "Guana!" (meat). And looking around he saw the fellows staring at him with their assegais. He gave the alarm, fired off his gun, and put the aggressors to flight. On another occasion one of the poor orphans of the Mission was killed at twenty yards from the house, but the Bondjos had no time to carry away his body. Isn't this a fearful life of ours? But do you not think that Almighty God has reserved special seats in Paradise for the Missionaries of the Bondjos? I think so, at all events. Such are our difficulties; yet, withal, the good work is progressing, and there is not a week when we cannot save some little creature or other from the flesh pot of those horrible cannibals. What a consolation for us to rescue these little ones from the horrible fate always impending over them!

"The book-keeper in the best of spirits jumped up and said she would come, and she brought her hooded cloak. Mr. Chalmers excused himself, saying he must not desert his good friend Mr. Jardine and Father John."

"They don't want you," said I; "they are having a pitched battle, and if you go back you will stop their enjoyment."

"I'll wait for them here, then," and he shook hands with the girls and with me, wishing me a pleasant journey on the morrow.

"There are roses somewhere not far off," cried Bell, sniffing as we emerged into the open air.

"Have you forgotten our famous tree?" said the book-keeper. "It is laden now this year with buds. Someone just opening, and you shall have some to take home."

It was thoughtless indeed of Bell not to have remembered the old white rose tree that for many years had been the pride of "The Harp." Conn had trimmed it year by year till now it grew over the whole of the west wall, and over half the front of the inn. The day and more accessible at the side, the book-keeper said, and we followed her along the garden pathway past the front windows of the inn. Then there ensued a series of cries and laughter as the womenkind in the dark peered themselves in trying to break the thorny boughs, and their fingers bled. But Conn came to the rescue, and with his horny hands and high reach, saved every one a world of trouble. We were returning laden with treasure—Bell leading this time—when just as she was crossing again before the window of the room we had just left, she stopped, and motioning us to make no noise, stood looking in. We all gathered round, following her example. There was no one in the room but Mr. Chalmers. He had thrown himself into Mrs. Egan's chair, and was resting his head on his hand with his eyes closed, as if he were asleep, and a long day's work and a task accomplished had earned an interval of peace and quiet.

"Come away, don't waken him," whispered some one; and we all moved noiselessly on.

"Don't you come, Conn?" I called to him, as he remained upon the door-step, looking after us when we began to walk homeward.

"That I will, sir," he cried, when he saw I had fallen behind the rest, and he joined me just as he was, bare-headed.

The moon high over the lake shone down upon its waters, and on the islands and on the forested hills, and on the distant mountains distinct in the clear air many miles away. It was a still scene, so calm, so unearthly beautiful, it seemed a desolation to talk in ordinary parlance, and Conn and I for a time were silent, while the book-keeper, and the two girls in their white dresses, glided on before, like spirits lighting and mocking us with their bright voices and soft laughter.

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