



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XIV.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 1864.

No. 46.

HOW MRS. O'DOWD LEARNED ITALIAN.

I was newly married when I came abroad for a short wedding tour. The world at that time required newly married people to lay in a small stock of continental notions, to assist their connubiality and enable them to wear the yoke with the graceful ease of foreigners; and so Mrs. O'D. and I started with one heart, one passport, and—what's not so pleasant—one hundred pounds, to comply with the ordinance. Of course, once over the border—once in France—it was enough. So we took up our abode in a very unpretending little hotel at Boulogne-sur-mer, called 'La Cour de Madrid,' where we boarded for the moderate sum of eleven francs fifty centimes per day—one odd fifty being saved by my wife not taking the post braadial cup of coffee and rum.

There was not much to see at Boulogne, and we soon saw it. For a week or so Mrs. O'D. used to go out muffled like one of the Sultan's five hundred wives, protesting that she'd be recognized; but she grew out of the delusion at last, and discovered that our residence at the Cour de Madrid as effectually screened us from all remark or all inquiry as if we had taken up our abode in the Catacombs.

Now when one has got a large stock of any commodity on hand—I don't care what it is—there's nothing so provoking as not to find a market. Mrs. O'D.'s investment was bashfulness. She was determined to be the most timid, startled, modest and blushing creature that ever wore orange flowers; and yet there was not a man, woman or child in the whole town that cared to know whether the act for which she left England was a matrimony or a murder.

'Don't you hate this place, Cornelius?'—she never called me Con. in the honeymoon. 'Isn't it the dullest, dreariest hole you have ever been in?'

'Not with you.'

'Then don't yawn when you say so, I abhor it. It's dirty, it's vulgar, it's dear.'

'No, no. It ain't dear, my love; don't say dear.'

'Billiards, perhaps, and filthy segars, and that greenish bitter—annisette, I think they call it—are cheap enough perhaps; but these are all the luxuries I can't share in.'

Here was the cloud no bigger than a man's hand that presaged the first connubial hurricane. A married friend—one of much experience and long suffering—had told me of this, saying, 'Don't fancy you'll escape, old fellow; but do as the ministry do about Turkey—put the evil day off, diplomatize, promise, cajole, threaten a bit if needs be, but postpone;' and, strong with these precepts, I negotiated, as the phrase is, and with a dash of reckless liberality that I tremble at now as I record it, I said, 'You've only to say where—nothing but where to, and I'll take—up the Rhine, down the Danube, Egypt, the cataracts.'

'I don't want to go so far,' said she, dryly, 'Italy will do.'

This was a stunner. I hope the impossible would have stopped her, but she caught at the practicable, and foiled me.

'There is only one objection,' said I, musingly, 'And what may that be? Not money I hope.'

'Heaven forbid—no. It's the language. We get on here tolerably well, for the waiter speaks broken English, but in Italy, dearest, English is unknown.'

'Let us learn, then. My aunt Groves said I had a remarkable talent for languages.'

I groaned inwardly at this, for the same aunt Groves had vouched for a sum of seventeen hundred and odd pounds as her niece's fortune, but which was so beautifully 'tied up,' as they called it, that neither chancellor nor master were ever equal to the task of untying it.

'Of course, dearest; let us learn Italian; and I thought how I'd crush a junior counsel some day with a smashing bit of Dante.'

We started that same night—travelled on day after day—crossed Mont Cenis in a snow storm, and reached the Trompetta as way-worn and wretched-looking a pair as ever travelled on an errand of bliss and beatitude.

'In for a penny?' is very Irish philosophy; but I can't help that, so I wrote to my brother Peter to sell out another hundred for me out of the 'Threes,' saying, 'dear Paulina's health required a little change to a milder climate—(it was snowing when I wrote, and the thermometer over the chimney-place at 9 degrees Reaumur, with windows that wouldn't shut, and a marble floor without carpet)—that the balmy air of Italy' (my teeth chattered as I set it down) 'would soon restore her, and indeed already she seemed to feel the change.' That she did, for she was crouching over a pan of charcoal ashes, with a railroad-wrapper over her shoulders.

'It's no use in going over what is in every one's experience on first coming south of the Alps—

the daily, hourly difficulty of not believing that you have taken a wrong road and got into Siberia, and strangest of all it is to see how little the natives think of it. I declare I often thought soap must be a great refrigerant, and I wish some chemist would inquire into the matter.

'Are we ever to begin this blessed language?' said Mrs. O'D., to me, after four days of close arrest—snow still falling and the thermometer going daily down, down, lower and lower. Now I had made inquiries the day before from the landlord, and learned that he knew of a most competent person, not exactly a regular teacher who would insist upon our going to work in school fashion, but a man of sense, and a gentleman, indeed a person of rank and title, with whom the world had gone somewhat badly, and who was at the very moment suffering for his political opinions, far in advance, as they were, of those of his age.

'He's a friend of Gioberti,' whispered the landlord in my ear, while his features became animated with the most intense significance. Now, I had never so much as heard of Gioberti, but I felt it would be a deeper disgrace to confess it, and so I only exclaimed, with an air of half incredulity, 'Indeed?'

'As true as I'm here,' replied he. 'He usually drops in about noon to read the *Opinione*, and, if you permit, I'll send him up to you. His name is Count Annibale Castrocara.'

I hastened forthwith to Mrs. O'D. to apprise her of the honor that awaited us; repeating a little 'in extenso' all that our host had said and finishing with the stunning announcement, and friend of Gioberti. Mrs. O'D. never flinched under the shock, and, too proud to own her ignorance, she pertly remarked, 'I don't think the more of him for that.'

I felt that she had beat me, and I sat down abashed and humiliated. Meantime Mrs. O'D. retired to make some change of dress; but, re-appearing after a while in her smartest morning toilette, and a very coquettish little cap, with cherry-colored ribbons, I saw what the word Count had done at once.

Just as the clock struck twelve, the waiter flung wide the double doors of our room, and announced as pompously as though for royalty, 'Il Signor Conte di Castrocara,' and there entered a tall man, slightly stooping in the shoulders, with a protusion of the very blackest hair on his neck and shoulders, his age anything from thirty-five to forty-eight, and his dress a shabby blue surtout, buttoned to the throat and reaching below the knees. He bowed and slid, and bowed again, till he came opposite where my wife sat, and then, with rather a dramatic sort of grace, he lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it. She reddened a little, but I saw she wasn't displeased with the air of homage that accompanied the ceremony, and she begged him to be seated.

I own I was disappointed with the Count, his hair was so greasy, and his hands so dirty, and his general get-up so uncared for; but Mrs. O'D. talked away with him very pleasantly, and he replied in his own English, making little grimaces and smiles and gestures, and some very tender glances hid duty where his parts of speech failed him. In fact, I watched him as a sort of psychological phenomenon, and I arrived at the conclusion that the friend of Gioberti's was a very clever artist.

All was speedily settled for the lesson—hour, terms and mode of instruction. It was to be entirely conversational, with a little theme-writing, not getting by heart, no irregular verbs, no declensions, no genders. I did beg hard for a little grammar, but he wouldn't hear of it. It was against his 'system,' so I gave in.

We began the next day, but the Count almost ignored me altogether, directing almost all his attentions to Mrs. O'D.; and as I had already some knowledge of the elementary parts of the language, I was just as well pleased that she could come up, as it were, to my level. From this cause I often walked off before the lesson was over, and sometimes, indeed, skulked it altogether, finding the system, as well as Gioberti's friend, to be unconscionable bores. Mrs. O'D., on the contrary, displayed an industry I never believed her to possess, and would pass whole evenings over her exercises, which often covered several sheets.

We had now been about five weeks in Turin, when my brother wrote to request I would come back as speedily as possible, that a case in which I held a brief was high in the cause-list, and would be tried very early in the session. I own I was not sorry at the recall. I detested the dreary life I was leading. I hated Turin and its bad feeding and bad theatres, its rough wines and rougher inhabitants.

'Did you tell the count, we were off, on Saturday?' asked I of Mrs. O'D.

'Yes,' said she, dryly.

'I suppose he's inconsolable,' said I, with a sneer.

'He's very sorry we're going, if you mean

that, Mr. O'Dowd; and so am I too.'

'Well, so am not I; and you may call me a Dutchman if you catch me here again.'

'The count hopes you will permit him to see you. He asked this morning whether he might call on you about four o'clock.'

'Yes, I'll see him with sincere pleasure for once,' I cried; 'since it is to say good-bye to him.'

I was in my dressing-room, packing up for the journey, when the count was announced and shown in. 'Excuse me, count,' said I, 'for receiving you so informally, but I have a hasty summons to call me back to England, and no time to spare.'

'I will, notwithstanding, ask for some of that time, all-precious as it is,' said he in French, and with a serious gravity that I had never observed in him before.

'Well, sir,' said I stiffly, 'I am at your orders.'

It is now seventeen long years since that interview, and I am free to own that I have not even yet attained to sufficient calm and temper to relate what took place. I can but give the substance of our conversation. It is not over-pleasant to dwell on, but it was to this purport; The count came to inform me that, without any intention or endeavor on his part, he had gazed Mrs. O'Dowd's affections and won her heart.—Yes, much-valued reader, he made this declaration to me sitting opposite to me at the fire, as coolly and unconcerned as if he was apologizing for having carried off my umbrella by mistake. It is true he was most circumstantial in showing that all the ardor was on one side, and that he, throughout the whole adventure, conducted himself as became a grand gallantuomo, and the friend of Gioberti, whatever that might mean.

My amazement—I might almost call it my stupefaction—at the unparalleled impudence of the man, so overcame me that I listened to him without an effort at interruption.

'I have come to you, therefore, to-day,' said he, 'to give up her letters.'

'Her letters?' exclaimed I, 'and she has written to you?'

'Twenty-three times in all,' said he, calmly, as he drew a large black pocket-book from his breast, and took out a considerable roll of papers. 'The earlier ones are less interesting,' said he, turning them over. 'It is about here, No. 14, that they begin to develop feeling. You see she commences to call me "Caro Annibale"—she meant to say Annibale, but, poor dear, she mistook. No. 15 is stronger—"Annale mio"—the same error; and here in No. 17, she begins, "Diletto del mio cuore quando non ti vedo, non ti sento, il cielo stesso, non mi sorride qui. Il mio Tiranno"—that was you.'

I caught hold of the poker with a convulsive grasp, but quick as thought he bounded back behind the table and drew out a pistol and cocked it. I saw that Gioberti's friend had his wits about him, and resumed the conversation by remarking that the documents he had shown me were not in my wife's handwriting.

'Very true,' said he, 'these, as you will perceive by the official stamp, are sworn copies, duly attested at the prefettura—the originals are safe.'

'And with what object,' asked I, gasping—'safe for what?'

'For you, illustrissimo,' said he, bowing, 'when you pay me two thousand francs for them.'

'I'd knock your brains out first,' said I, with another clutch of the poker, but the muzzle of the pistol was now directly in front of me.

'I am moderate in my demands, signor,' said he, quietly; 'there are men in my position who would ask you twenty thousand; but I am a gallantuomo—'

'And the friend of Gioberti,' added I with a sneer.

'Precisely so,' said he, bowing with much grace.

I will not weary you, dear reader, with my struggles—conflicts that almost cost me a seizure on the brain—but hasten to the result. I beat down the noble count's demand to one half, and for a thousand francs I possessed myself of the originals, written unquestionably by my wife's hand; and then, giving the count a final piece of advice, never to let me see more of him, I hurried off to see Mrs. O'Dowd.

She was out paying some bills, and only arrived a few minutes before dinner hour.

'I want you, madam, for a moment here,' with something of Othello, in the last act, in my voice and demeanor.

'I suppose I can take off my bonnet and shawl first, Mr. O'Dowd,' said she, snappishly.

'No, Madam; you may probably find that you'll need 'em both at the end of our interview.'

'What do you mean, sir,' asked she laughingly. 'This is no time for grand airs of mock dignity, madam,' said I, with the tone of the a'eng-

ing angel. 'Do you know these? are these in your hand? Deny if you can?'

'Why should I deny it? Of course they are mine.'

'And you wrote this, and this and this?' cried I, almost in a scream, as I shook forth one after another of the letters.

'Don't you know I did?' said she, as hotly; 'and nothing beyond a venial mistake in one of them.'

'A what, woman—a what?'

'A mere slip of the pen, sir. You know very well how I used to sit up half the night at my exercises.'

'Exercises?'

'Well, themes, if you like better; the count made me make clean copies of them, with all his corrections, and send them to him every day—here are the rough ones—and she opened a drawer filled with a mass of papers all scrawled over and blotted—And now, sir, once more, what do you mean?'

I did not wait to answer her, but rushed down to the landlord. 'Where does that Count Castrocara live?' asked.

'Nowhere in particular, I believe, sir, and for the present he has left Turin—started for Genoa by the diligence five minutes ago. He is a grand gallantuomo, sir,' said he, as I stood stupefied.

'I am aware of that,' said I, as I crept back to my room to finish my packing.

'Did you settle with the count?' asked my wife at the door.

'Yes,' said I with my head buried in my trunk.

'And was he perfectly satisfied?'

'Of course he was—he has every reason to be so.'

'I am glad of it,' said she, moving away—'he had a deal of trouble with those themes of mine. No one knows what they cost him.' I could have told what they cost me; but I never did, till the present moment.

I need not say with what appetite I dined that day, nor with what object humility I behaved to my wife, nor how I skulked down in the evening to the landlord to apologize for not being able to pay the bill before I left, an unexpected demand having left me short of cash.—All these, seventeen years ago as they are, have not lost their bitterness, nor have I yet arrived at the time when I can think with composure of this friend of Gioberti.—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

ENGLISH HOSTILITY TO IRISH INDUSTRY.

(From the Morning News.)

In old Palermo still stands the stately palace built by Roger, the first King of Sicily, eight hundred years ago, as the home of manufacturing industry. Many a storm has beat upon its grey walls, many a day, many a century of change, have crossed it since the Norman conqueror of the Byzantine monarch raised its arches, enclosed its halls, and gave it up in all its luxury and magnificence as their residence to the captive artisans whom he bore away in triumph from Thebes, from Athens, and from Corinth, the crescent cities of the Peloponnese. If, by building a palace for manufacture, we could make it take up its permanent abode amongst us, well would it be worth all the cost and toil of the undertaking. King Cheops, beside the Nile of old, forced his people to raise the pyramid that bears his name, by sternest tyranny of deed and word. For such a purpose as the Exhibition opened yesterday in Ireland, no stimulus would be wanting. With the aspect of this land before him—with Decay written on its face, as Omnipotence is written in the scheme of the Creation—not the poorest, not the most ignorant peasant is there, from Benmore to Mizen Head, from far Eris to wind-beat Skerries, that would not give the toil of his hands and the mite of his means to such a labour of love as making a home in Ireland for prosperous mechanical industry. How it would be encouraged, how it would be fostered, is told in the efforts made for the success of the Dublin Exhibition of 1864 by its originators. How it would be welcomed we have amply testified in the munificent hospitality accorded by the Chief Magistrate of this Metropolis upon the occasion, in order to have it wanting in no feature of public interest, public regard, or public demonstration. So much done for our success in manufacture is well done. Such motives guiding the conception, the opening, and furtherance of the exposition of arts and manufactures that was given to inspection in the last twenty-four hours no one can dissent from its value as a public object, its merits as a public undertaking, its claims as deserving the fullest public support. We require the extension of manufactures amongst us, we require the amount of mechanical information which best conduces to their success, we require the spread of the industrial education in practice

and in principle, that sustains, develops, and renders manufactures prosperous; but, worse than all, and more than all, we require capital and sustained effort to make all these primary qualifications for the attainment of fortune triumphant, and not failure.

But praiseworthy as is this effort, deserving of every aid and certain to receive it, if Ireland does not show great marks of progress as a consequence, no one should be suffered to mistake the cause of her backsliding. In the exhibition of industrial development, no doubt, we may show less forward in position than England, or even Scotland. We cannot hope to build one of these palaces of industry that in London, in Manchester, in Paris, or in New York have dared the world to competition, haughty in the mechanical skillfulness, or the developed resource of the people who raised such temples of Peace and Art. Such a phenomenon would be an anomaly in history. Success in manufacture and in commerce have been the record of success in every empire. So it was in Egypt, in Carthage, in Greece, in Rome, in that Byzantine Empire that stretched from the Danube to the Peloponnese—'from Belgrade to Nice, from Trebizond to the winding stream of the Meander.' With the migration of power, the migration of art and manufacture have been coeval. The ignorant beggars of Alexandria are the descendants of the highly civilised subjects of the gorgeous Pharaohs; the squalid fishermen of Tyre and Sidon, are the successors of the merchants that penetrated to the farthest West. The pauperised Greek traces his pedigree in an unbroken line to the masters of the slaves, cunning of craft who worked with profit the looms of Thessaly and Epirus, who created the wealth of Athens and the commerce that spread its white wings abroad on 'the Holy Sea.' The arts and luxury of the innumerable people of the Byzantine rulers are represented to-day by the filth and stupidity of the Mussulman. Rome alone has escaped the utter fall of the empire she displaced, or the Empire she created; she has been revived by the presence of the Chief of Catholicity, and degradation and destruction let loose by Pagan and Barbarian have been stopped by the voice that stayed Attila. These are testimonies sufficient to show the point we press. England in her prosperity is one of the modern examples that further it. That we are not forward in manufactures is only what, from our condition and the analogy of history, might have been expected. So far we need not fear to face our position—to demand comment upon it, if philosophy alone, or broad views of human, social and political economy were the basis by which we should be judged.

But there are flippant talkers or flippant thinkers, who speak or reason without reference to history, and make no account of its revelations. These are to be found in those British publicists and platform orators who point out the advantages of the British Constitution and British principles of free trade to Ireland, and declare if we are backward in commerce, and trade and manufacture, that the backwardness is all our own fault. Those are the men who proclaim the perverseness of Irish 'Celtic nature' to be improved—who have a bowl of abuse ever ready to be shouted against us on a favorable opportunity. To them it may be useful to enumerate a few facts that tell how safe English manufacture was made before free trade was proclaimed as the great British doctrine. In 1710, by a solemn declaration of the House of Commons, with reference to America, the erection of factories in the Colonies was marked as dangerous to British commerce. In 1732, in the same Colonies, the export of hats was prohibited from province to province, and the number of apprentices to hatters were limited. In 1750 the erection of any factory or machine for the purposes of iron manufacture in the Colonies was prohibited. This was so much done against growing manufacture in any country under the dominion of England. For the sake of repression Ireland suffered likewise, and from similar legislation. What more did England do for the furtherance of her own manufacture? We know how her conduct penalised trade and destroyed manufacture, until the Volunteers thundered 'Free Trade' from their guns as their cry for liberty. But what was the supplement to her course? In 1765, by an Act of Parliament, she prohibited the egress of artisans from her shores. In 1781 she prohibited the exportation of any machinery for woollen manufacture from the limits of England. In 1783, machinery for the manufacture of cottons, and all machinists and workers in the trade, were also prohibited from leaving the kingdom. In 1785 engines used in the manufacture of iron and steel, and all workmen engaged in that labor, were compelled to remain in England. In 1799 miners of every kind were placed under the same prohibition. How did the Legislature enforce the observance of those laws? Will it be believed, that in some instances, the extreme penalty of death was enforced for any violation of those enactments, and