



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XV.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1865.

No. 30.

JUSTICE AND MERCY;

OR,

THE FEAST OF ALL-HALLOWS.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was a wet, dreary October night; winter appeared already to have set in; a biting sleet was falling, accompanied by a high wind, which blew it full in the face of a Jesuit father who had been hastily summoned from his friends to administer the rites of the Church to a lady whom he had been told was dying.

Arrived at a somewhat aristocratic mansion, the priest was conducted up a spacious staircase to a large room on the upper floor.

Extended on a sumptuous bed, heavily draped with curtains of rich satin, looped and fringed with gold, reclined the lady for whom the spiritual assistance of the good father was required. She was unconscious, and had, the attendants told him, fallen into a state of insensibility shortly after she had directed them to send for a priest; and her medical attendants had previously told them that it was impossible she could recover from the fever under which she was suffering, which was, in fact, malignant in its kind.

The priest anointed her, and then employed himself in repeating the prayers for those near their end; the attendants meanwhile using every effort to restore their mistress to consciousness. Suddenly she opened her eyes, gazed around her, fixed them on the face of the priest, and then the words, 'Is it true that I am dying?' fell from her lips.

'It is, madam,' replied the good father; 'but be calm, command your attendants to withdraw, and give to God and the affairs of your conscience the few moments that remain.'

The room was cleared of the servants; and then, making a great effort, the dying lady strove to raise herself in the bed. Her long black hair had escaped from beneath the small embroidered cap she wore; her large eyes seemed to gleam with an almost preternatural lustre; the naturally dark countenance was now almost livid by approaching dissolution, her features strangely distorted; and, fixing her eyes full on the face of the priest, she exclaimed,—

'Father Eustace, why did they bring you to me? It was not you I wished to soothe me in my dying moments.'

'My dear madam,' replied the priest, thinking that she spoke the language of delirium, 'I know you not. Time presses; we have not leisure to summon another priest; let me beg of you to seek the aid which religion now offers you at my hands.'

'Eustace Vere, you know me not!' exclaimed the sufferer. 'Behold Inez de Lara dying before you, and pray that the humiliation of this moment be accepted in atonement for some of my transgressions.'

'Inez de Lara!' repeated the priest; 'is it possible that the lapse of years can have worked so great a change?'

'Yes; years and dissipation, and the remorse of a tortured conscience, combined,' replied Inez in a low voice. 'But haste! the sand of life is nearly run out, and I feel as if my moments were but few. Be quick! let me clear, by sacramental penance, a conscience burdened with the sins of many years.'

In the sacred tribunal Inez then laid bare the transgressions of her past life; ay, even to him for whom she had so deeply sinned, for whom she had slandered and injured the innocent Flora, to him whom a strange concatenation of circumstances had brought in the silence of the night to aid her transit from time to eternity.

Deeply shocked, too, was Father Eustace when she owed to him that she had seen him in Spain; that conscious then, if not fully so before, that he was consecrated to the service of God, she yet wanted courage and strength to return to a virtuous life. With bitter tears she deplored the slander she had raised concerning Flora, confessing that jealousy of her cousin's superior beauty and the interest he himself appeared to evince for Flora, was the first cause which excited her envy.

But let us pause here, for the disclosures of that night were poured only in the ear of Father Eustace, who prayed earnestly that the deep humiliation of those her last moments might be accepted.

Yet, ere she received the Holy Communion, Inez spoke of her temporal affairs, and informed Father Eustace that in a cabinet, the key of which she confided to his care, would be found a will, duly signed and sealed, bequeathing the half of her estate, with her personal effects, to her cousin Flora Douglas, and the remainder to be devoted to the use of the poor, to whom all was unreservedly bequeathed; after every effort had been made, her cousin should not be found.

A frightful change soon became apparent in

the countenance of Inez. It was highly dangerous to remain near her; yet, in virtue of his sacred office, Father Eustace must stay to sustain the spirit in its parting struggle. At one time he had feared he should have to war against a black despair into which she seemed to fall, but she had now begun to grow calm; and as the good priest gazed upon her countenance, he bethought him of old times, of the first night that he had been introduced to the ardent and imaginative young Spaniard, of her subsequent residence at the Elms, and the many months during which he had resided under the same roof with Flora and herself; and his kind heart was touched with the deepest pity for her who now lay wrestling in the arms of death.

We must even own the truth too, for right glad would Father Eustace have been had any other than himself been selected to attend the death-bed of the unhappy Inez; for, most innocent himself, he could not but feel that he had been the unfortunate cause from whence sprang jealousy and envy so fearfully exhibited in her character.

'Tell me, can this be death?' she suddenly exclaimed, fixing her eyes, now covered with its film, on the face of Father Eustace. 'I try to see you, but my sight fails; a strange feeling has seized upon my frame, and a thousand voices seem ringing in my ears, asking me if I, who have lived only in dissipation and folly, dare die in peace?'

'It is but a delusion of the Evil One, Inez, who seeks to rob you of the peace you were beginning to taste. Banish such ideas from your mind, and join me in spirit while I pray, remembering that God rejects not the penitent sinner and that you have but now received a sure pledge of His mercy in the most holy Sacrament.'

A faint smile passed over the features of the dying lady, faint as the winter sunbeam on a desert waste, and she feebly whispered—

'Thanks, good Father Eustace, for you have indeed smoothed my transit to eternity. One promise more—it is, that my name shall often be mentioned in your prayers; that you will frequently remember me at the altar of the Lord.'

'I will never forget you in my prayers, lady, and often remember you when offering up the Holy Sacrifice,' replied the good priest; and aware that the moment of departure was at hand, he signed to the nurse to approach the bed; but so peacefully had the spirit taken its flight, that they knew not the moment of its release, and some minutes had elapsed ere they could convince themselves that she was really no more.

Much depressed in spirits, Father Eustace immediately left the chamber of death, first giving strict orders that no one should approach the infectious room, save the two women who were compelled to perform the last sad duties, and who despatched them with all possible speed;—then fixing seals on all the effects of the late Mrs. Fortescue, and especially taking care to remove the will she had alluded to, he returned home at a late hour of the night, and in the morning despatched a messenger to Ravensbourne to acquaint Sir Robert with the death of his young kinswoman, and to state that he held in his hands a will which entitled Flora to one-half of her cousin's property.

The morning of All Saints has arrived, and a funeral cortege winds slowly down the road leading to the Elms. Inez had died in the last week of October, and Flora experienced a melancholy satisfaction in the knowledge that her cousin's remains were to be brought to Sir Godfrey's private chapel for interment. Father Eustace, at the particular desire of the family, accompanied the remains of the deceased lady, which were conveyed to the mansion till the vespers of the dead in the evening.

If the service of All-hallows' Eve is always impressive, it seemed doubly so to those who assisted on this occasion. Dim and more dim became the brilliant chancel, as one after another the lights were extinguished; the coronas which were suspended on either side the altar ceased to blaze with many lights; the frontal of the altar, which was of spotless marble, is veiled in sable, and the splendid reredos covered with the same funeral hangings; and before the high altar is borne the coffin which contains the mortal remains of Inez.

The commemoration of the Church triumphant has passed away; All souls is now the commemoration. *Placebo Domino*. Man in spirit now descends to that middle state in which the detained remain till their purification is accomplished. *Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine, et lux aeterna luceat eis*.

Oh, how sweetly plaintive is the office of All-hallows' Eve! how, one after another, rises up the shades of our departed, each seeming to exclaim, 'Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends!' And how well can we imagine that this state of suffering and anguish arises from its life, its love, its God! How sweetly does the prayer for rest and light hang

on our lips, especially on this solemn night of All-hallows' Eve!

And on the next morning, after the solemn service of All-souls, the interment took place, and the spot was afterwards marked by a beautiful chauntry, which the piety of Flora raised over her cousin's remains, and at which the Holy Sacrifice was almost daily offered.

Little more have we now to say. The meeting of Flora with her old friend Father Eustace was full of affectionate warmth; and, had it not been for the painful circumstance it would have brought to his mind, she certainly would have rallied him on the secrecy which he had maintained relative to the intentions which he then held, not of becoming a Jesuit father, but a simple monk in some austere order.

The dowager Lady Harcourt was yet spared for some years, to enjoy the society of the virtuous Flora; and the worthy Sir Robert likewise lived till old age fell gently upon him, and he was gathered, full of years and honor to the tomb of his fathers.

Of our other characters we have little to say. Mrs. Somers and her daughters are, we believe, passing through life as mere selfish, worldly commonplace people always do; and, having the goods of this world at their disposal, we suspect that they will not be inclined to correct their errors and become less selfish till time shall be no more for them, and the night cometh in which no man can work. Sir Godfrey and Lady Harcourt possessed abundantly the means of doing good, and they placed to profitable account the talents a beautiful Providence had committed to their care.

In conclusion, we have but to hope that our tale will at least beguile a weary hour. It has not been written without an accompanying moral, viz., to point out that the feeble graces of the person are little to be heeded, provided the sterling virtues of the mind are in our possession; and, feebly though it be, to illustrate the beauty of the Catholic practice of prayers for the dead.

*Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

THE END.

HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP LYNCH'S SECOND LECTURE ON THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL.

(Concluded from Feb. 17.)

SECRET SOCIETIES.

The motives which decided the illustrious Pontiff, (Pope Benedict XIV.) retain all their weight and force. It cannot be supposed that men of no faith will foster the growth and progress of true faith—that men of doubtful morals will be the friends of virtue.

Again; if these societies are good, why do they fly the light? Even pagans, devoid of the light of gospel truth, condemned these societies; and Cicero's *Natalis* gives the reason: '*Honestas semper publico gaudent secreta sunt*.'—Honest things flourish and rejoice in the light; wicked things take refuge in darkness; and our blessed Lord tells us why men court secrecy—men love darkness rather than light, because their works are evil. But the most obvious feature of these societies, and one pointed out in the Bull of Pope Benedict XIV., is the initiatory oath. Candidates for membership are required to take oath to labor to attain an undefined object by means unknown to the recipient. The Church interposes—forbids her children to take the oath, for it is rash, and it is a sin to take it. The prophet Jeremiah gives us the conditions of an oath—'Thou shalt swear, says the prophet, as the Lord liveth in truth, in judgment, and in justice.' (Jer. iv. 2.) In truth, that is, the form of words must express the intention of the person who takes the oath! he must tell the truth as it appears to him; in justice, that is, the fulfilment of the oath, must injure no right—must not be injurious to God—to religion, to our neighbor's person, character, or proprietor, or our own just interests: in judgment, that is, since an oath is sacred, as it invokes God to witness, it should not be taken without faith, piety, and reverence for him who is invoked; hence, in taking an oath, we must consider—1st, if it be necessary; 2nd, if we shall be able to keep it; 3rd, if that which is sworn, be just and right; hence it is unlawful to take an oath of secrecy such as is required by these societies; for it cannot be done with judgment, nor with justice, nor with truth, since the recipient knows whether the society will not exact some things against conscience or against the law of God. Such an oath is a rash oath, and the Church does forbid her children from taking it. When the society is shut up by the secrecy of an oath, we cannot know what evil may be shut up within. A society may be good in its origin; but, when the healthy light of public opinion is excluded by an oath, the society may become corrupt, proud, exhale infections breathing and corrupt society. And again; a society may commence, bound by an oath, but after a time abandon it and become

tolerable, but they must abandon the oath. 'This true and all governments do not condemn secret societies; some have encouraged them, to their cost; but the Church is one and universal, and her laws for all time and place. What she condemns, is evil in every place, and when she condemns one, she is consistent and condemns all of the same kind.'

Suppose the church tolerated these societies what grievous evils would not speedily ensue.—We have some examples—the insecurity of life. How many assassinations by members of secret societies on the plea of public utility. Have not the victims been pursued into foreign lands and their life's blood drawn by the assassin's dagger. How many even to indulge a secret pique have committed the same cruel act aided and abetted by the secrecy of the lodge. How insecure would be the throne of many a prince.—How many governors and rulers would be embarrassed in the administration of their most just and most paternal governments by workings of secret societies. How often has justice been frustrated by members of these societies when those bound by law and equity to give testimony under oath in a court of justice against a malefactor plead an excuse for not doing so their previous oath to protect a brother associate. How many may be ordered and compelled blindly to perform an act which their soul abhors menaced by the threat of their own destruction in case they disobey.

It is not the will of God that society should be composed of secret cliques. How much evil have these societies done to the church, to the community and to the individual, God alone knows. Hence these societies, by what name soever they are known, if bound to secrecy by an unlawful oath, are condemned by the church if their object or means of attaining be evil or may by the proper authorities be presently considered such. Now what good have secret societies effected and what are their aims to our consideration or confidence. As yet we have to learn their beneficial effects. No general amelioration has been effected by them—no general miseries alleviated—no progress made in true religion—no advance in the arts and sciences.—The social bond has not been drawn closer—men have not better loved their fellow-men—society is not better constituted, nor does harmony and a good understanding prevail to a greater extent under their benign influence. Sometimes they pretend to protect oppressed nationalities. This is one of the good things they have attempted and have not accomplished. Great revolutions must be accomplished by the masses and then there is no need of a secret society. But to pretend to overthrow a government by such societies, is to lay a trap to ensnare the unwary and the ignorant.

If these societies are good, why would good men abandon them and regret having been connected with them? The conclusion is too evident. Good men are never sorry for having done good, but for having done evil they are sorry. Let us instruct you with the sovereign teaching of Jesus Christ: 'Because the light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, for their works are evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God.' (John, 3, 19.) And let me exhort you in the words of St. Paul: 'Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day.'—(Rom. 13, 12 13).

His Lordship promised that his next lecture would treat of the rights of rulers and subjects.

THIRD LECTURE OF HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP LYNCH ON THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL.

St. Michael's Cathedral was filled to its utmost capacity, on Sunday evening, 12th Feb., by an audience anxious to hear the third lecture of His Lordship Bishop Lynch, on the Pope's Encyclical Letter. Subjoined we give a full report of the lecture, which was listened to throughout with marked attention and earnestness.

Our Holy Father, in the fifth paragraph of the syllabus of the Condemned Propositions, enumerates twenty errors against the rights and liberties of the Church. The Church has been constituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, her Divine Author, and Finisher of faith, a complete society and corporation, having its rights, functions, faculties and government, complete in itself, and independent of any other society, with a complete life and organic action. It is as St. Paul calls it, the Body of Christ, the living Body.—Jesus says, 'As the branches live on the trunk of a tree, so we live on Christ! We are members of St. Paul says, of Christ's Body. As the natural body had its personality, its life, and junctions, so has His mystic body, the Church. He is her life, He is her head on earth. He has appointed

His Apostles to represent Him, St. Peter the head; and now the Pope takes the place of St. Peter, and Bishops follow in the footsteps of the other Apostles. The faithful are members, too, of this mystic body of our Lord Jesus Christ and we are engrafted on it, in the sacred waters of Baptism. The Church, consequently, is the mystic Body of Christ, and is complete and independent. It would be unbecoming the divine wisdom of God to institute an imperfect society—an imperfect body, to depend for its existence and workings on a counter society, or a body opposed to it.

Christ came into the world to redeem it and to raise it from the grovelling depths of its passions, and to place it in fellowship with his Eternal Father. The world was corrupt, the world was wicked, and how could Jesus submit His Church and make it follow the dictates of a wicked and corrupt world? The world was always deadly opposed to Christ. It was opposed by its pride and by its sensuality; and if pride be found in the working of the world, it is certainly found in the courts and in high places. Men upon whose word and upon whose nod depend many trembling subjects, certainly are not disposed to humility. Emperors, kings, heads of State, do not want to submit to the Church they do not want to submit to the teachings of Jesus Christ because His teachings were against them—His teachings were against the world. He cursed the world—His teachings were against pride, He said it was the root of all evil—His teachings were against the rich, for He said 'woe unto the rich;' and again, 'it was easier for a Camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God;' consequently, men in high places wish to govern the Church, wish to appoint its Bishops, and of course to nominate their creatures and immediate friends to be their vassals in the sanctuary of God, and in fine imitate the Pagan emperors of Rome, who arrogated to themselves the office of high priest.—They, too, want to hold the divine as well as the earthly authority over their subjects. This centralisation of power, too dangerous for any ordinary individual, is called in our modern language Cæsarism. In Austria it is called Josephism; in England it is called Orthodoxy—that is, that the head of the State should be also head of the religion and the Church. Christ said, 'Give unto Cæsar that which belongs to Cæsar, and to God that which belongs to God.' The Cæsarists—those that follow the doctrine of Cæsarism—say, 'Give unto Cæsar that which belongs to Cæsar, and to Cæsar that which belongs to God.' That is, give to worldly princes the entire control of both temporal and spiritual on earth. This doctrine reigns almost universally in Protestant and infidel countries—in Russia, in England, in Prussia, in Denmark, and even in Constantinople, where the Grand Turk or Sultan is the head of Islamism and successor of the great Mohammed. The Catholic sovereigns even of Europe have endeavored to usurp the priesthood. Saul did it in olden times.—Now the princes of this earth want to enthrone the Church in her arrangements and in her action on the people. They claim the appointment of Bishops, and even of the Pope himself; they took possession, and even are doing it at present, of our abbeys and Church lands, and their creatures pretend reasons of State to justify their acts. They dictate to the ministers of God the doctrine they are to teach to the people. The head of the State, even, in France wishes even now to hinder the Bishops from promulgating to the people the sound doctrine emanating from the Holy See. State policy and State necessity are put paramount to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. State necessity, oh, yes! State necessity can it set aside the most sacred obligation of the Gospel. State necessity forced Napoleon I.—to set aside his lawful wife to have an heir to his throne, to consolidate his empire. Did it succeed? He made a sad mistake. The father died in exile and the son did not reign, but died young; and does the nephew, the present emperor, expect a better issue from State policy in opposition to the Gospel and the Sovereign Pontiff. Oh, his dynasty holds by a very frail cord, for the throne that God does not establish cannot be established.—But we will read for you the propositions condemned—this modern Cæsarism and this placing secular princes over the Church of God. We will show you that the Church, far from encroaching on the rights of princes, invariably was entrammelled in her rights by those princes—continually suffered persecution in opposing herself to the injustice and rapacity of the princes of the earth.

V. ERRORS RESPECTING THE CHURCH AND HER RIGHTS.

19. The Church is not a true and perfect, entirely free association; she does not rest upon the peculiar and perpetual rights conferred upon her by her Divine founder; but it appertains to the civil power to define what are the rights and