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CLARA LESLIE.

A TALE OF OUR OWN TIMES.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

'You had a brother at Oxford, Miss Leslie?' said Courtney. 'Yes. Did you know him?' 'I did,' he replied, 'he and his friend De Grey.'

'I have wished so to speak to you for a long time. I have been so unhappy since you have been absent.' 'There was a sympathetic kind of a noise, and Mr. Wingfield asked, 'Has anything happened to disturb your home?'

'Consider what you are doing,' replied Mr. Wingfield. 'You are taking upon yourself to pronounce that the Church of England has no Sacraments, no priests; that you yourself have never received the Body and Blood of Christ, have never been confirmed, perhaps never been baptized—and all this on your private authority!'

the Church of England,' replied Clara; for she still trembled before that mighty system of devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, which is the last barrier Satan always throws before the soul that is returning to the fold of Christ, and speciously takes indeed the form of an angel of light, when he lures his wives under the guise of greater honor to the Lord of Glory.

Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.' She scarcely heard the concluding prayers; all was once more an indescribable chaos, and she perfectly trembled at the promise she had made.

'And he can still love us, Mr. Courtney.—You know they tell me converts change so, they forget all their old affections.' 'At any rate, your brother is not changed on that point,' replied Mr. Courtney, 'if I can judge by the overflowing love and affection with which he received me. He only seemed surprised and grateful to find that I could still love him as much as ever.'

'Ob, no, not at all,' replied Clara, amid her tears; 'but I took to reading 'Loss and Gain.' Mr. Morris gave me leave to do so, and that upset my mind first.'

'The Church of England sends her children to primitive antiquity to bear out her teaching,' replied Mr. Wingfield. 'She appeals to the first centuries, and challenges Roman controversialists to prove her not part of Christ's Catholic Church. It is on account of our strength in the Fathers that the Roman controversialists have lately changed their mode of attack, and no longer openly assert, as they did in the days of Milner, that the Church of the Fathers was precisely like the modern Church of Rome, but they fall back on the new system of Development. The controversy is one which requires years of study—study so intricate that neither you or I are up to it.'

'You must not trust your excited feelings,' said he; 'they are no guide. Now, Clara,' he added, 'you have often told me that I am the Voice of God to you; now is your time to prove you love and affection for me. Will you promise me one thing?'

'Here I am,' said she; and Catherine was in a moment at her side. Her face was flushed, her eyes brilliant. Clara thought she looked unusual; but Catherine said nothing, and tenderly asked Clara what had happened with Mr. Wingfield.

CHAPTER XV.—ANGLICAN DIRECTION. 'Courage, dutiful maiden; the nails and bleeding brows. The pale and dying lips, are the portion of the Spouse.' It was Christmas Eve of that eventful year 1848, and Clara sat restlessly in Catherine Temple's boudoir, starting at every sound, and her heart sinking within her with a feeling of dead sickness, and half fainting whenever she fancied she heard the door-bell ring.

'I do doubt the sacraments,' said Clara, in a low tone. 'I never did before, and the doubt is agony. I have no peace left.'

'I have looked at only that till now,' replied Clara; 'but now I seem to open my eyes to another side—the Evangelical side—of the question, and the whole Communion Service seems on their side, not ours.'

Mr. Wingfield was silent, then went on in a few minutes: 'Do you know the formula of abjuration?' 'I do,' replied Clara, producing it. 'I procured it at once.'

CHAPTER XVII.—NEW SORROWS. 'The arrow cannot wound the air, Nor thunder rend the sea, Nor injury long afflict the heart That rests, O Love in Thee!'