

THE LION OF FLANDERS;

THE BATTLE OF THE GOLDEN SPURS.

BY HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

St. Pol's soldiers had not reckoned on fighting; they were busied in packing together a crowd of precious things, when the axes of the butchers, and death in their train, took them by surprise.

On the field of battle the conflict had not yet ceased; about a thousand horsemen still persisted in their defence; they had resolved to sell their lives as dear as possible. Among them were more than a hundred noble knights, who had vowed not to survive this defeat, and so fought on with a calm and despairing courage.

When some Lillards, among whom were John van Gistel, and a number of the men of Brabant, saw that escape was impossible, they mingled with the Flemings, and shouted,

"Flanders! the Lion! Hail, hail Flanders!" They thought thus to elude the notice of their countrymen; but a clothworker rushed from the throng towards John van Gistel, and struck him a blow on the head which crushed his skull to fragments, muttering the while,

"Did not my father tell you, traitor, that you would not die in your bed?"

The others were soon recognised by the make of their weapons, and hewn down or pierced without pity, as traitors and recreants.

The young Guy felt a profound pity for the remaining knights who maintained so brave and obstinate a defence, and called to them to surrender, assuring them that their lives should be spared. Convinced that neither courage nor intrepidity could avail them, they yielded, and were disarmed, and given into the custody of John Borlout.

And now there remained on the field not a single enemy to be vanquished; only here and there in the distance were seen a few fugitives hastening to secure a safe retreat. The Flemings, amazed that their fighting was over, and maddened with rage and excitement, rushed in crowds in pursuit of these hapless Frenchmen; near the Plague hospital at St. Mary Magdalen, they overtook a company of St. Pol's troops, and put every man to death; a little further on they found Messire William van Mosschere, the Lillard, who had fled from the field with a few followers. Seeing himself surrounded, he fell on his knees and begged for mercy, pledging himself to serve Robert de Bethune as a loyal vassal.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Although a great part of the Flemish troops was engaged in pursuit of the flying enemy, there still remained some companies drawn up in order on the battle-field.

John Borlout gave orders to his men to keep a strict watch on the field until the following day, according to the custom of war. The division led by Borlout consisted now of three thousand men of Ghent; and in addition to these, many others had remained on the ground, either wounded or exhausted by fatigue. And now that the victory was won, and the chains of their fatherland broken, the Flemings testified their joy by repeated cries of, "Flanders and the Lion! Victory! Victory!" Their shouts were echoed back from the walls of the city by the men of Ypres and Courtrai with even greater energy.

The captains and knights now returned to the camp, and thronged round the golden knight, to express to him their fervent gratitude; but, fearful of betraying himself, he answered not a word. Guy who was standing at his side, turned to the knights, and said:

"Messires, the knight who has so wondrously delivered us and all the land of Flanders, is a crusader, and wishes to remain unknown. The noblest son of Flanders bears his name."

The knights were silent immediately; and every one was endeavouring to guess who this could be, who was once so brave, so noble, and so lofty of stature. Those of them who remembered the meeting at the wood in the valley were not long in recognising him; but remembering their pledge, they kept proud silence. Others there were who had no doubt that the unknown was the Count of Flanders himself; but the wish of the golden knight to remain unknown imposed on them also the obligation of secrecy.

After Robert had conversed awhile with Guy in a low voice, he cast his eyes over the surrounding group of knights; and then turning to Guy, with trouble depicted on his features, he said: "I do not see Adolf van Nieuwland; an agonising doubt troubles me. Can it be that my young friend has fallen beneath the sword of the foe? That would indeed be to me an intolerable and an enduring grief; and my poor Matilda! how will she mourn her good brother!"

"He cannot be dead, Robert; I am sure that I saw his green plume waving just now among the trees of the Noerlander wood. He must be in close pursuit of the foe; you saw with what irrepressible fury he threw himself upon the French in the battle. Fear nothing for him; God will not have allowed him to be slain."

"O Guy, are you speaking the truth? My heart is wrung that my hapless child cannot taste the joy of this day without an alloy of bitterness. I pray you, my brother, let the men of Messire Borlout search the field, and see whether Adolf is among the slain. I will go to console my anxious

Matilda; the presence of her father will be at least a momentary consolation."

He then greeted the knights courteously, and hastened to the Abbey of Groeningen. Guy gave orders to John Borlout to disperse his men over the field, and to bring the wounded and dead knights into the tents. As they began their search, they were seen suddenly to stand still, as though arrested by some sight of horror. Now that the heat and rage of the conflict had subsided, their eyes ranged over the broad plain, where lay in hideous confusion the mangled bodies of men and horses, standards and broken armour. Here and there a wounded man stretched his hands towards them with a piteous cry, and a low wailing, more dismal than the dreariest solitude, filled the air; it was the voice of the wounded, crying, "Water! water! For God's sake, water!"

The sun poured in glowing rays upon the miserable men, and tortured them with unappeasable thirst. Flocks of ravens spread their dark wings over them; their hoarse cries were blended with the moans of the wounded; they fixed their talons in the yet quivering limbs of the dying; while troops of dogs, allured by the smell of blood, had poured forth from the city to deepen the horrors of the scene.

As the men of Ghent roamed over the field, they sought those in whose bosoms were yet some pulses of life, and brought them with care into the camp. One band was employed to fetch water from the Gaver brook; and it was a piteous sight to watch the eagerness with which the wounded seized it, and with what gratitude, with what glistening eyes, they welcomed the refreshing draught.

The soldiers had received orders to bring every knight they found, killed or wounded, into the camp. They had already recovered more than half of the slain, and had traversed a considerable extent of the battle-field. As they drew near the place where the strife had been most deadly, they found the dead more numerous. They were busily removing the helmet of Messire van Machelen, when they heard close at hand a low moan, which seemed to issue from the ground. They listened, but all was still again; not one of the bodies around gave the faintest token of life. Suddenly the moan was repeated; it came from a little distance, from between two prostrate horses. After many efforts, they succeeded in drawing one of the horses aside, and found the knight from whom the sound proceeded. He was lying stretched out across the bodies, and drenched in the blood of many of the foe. His armour was indented and broken by the tread of horses; his right hand still convulsively grasped his sword, while in his left was a green veil. His pallid features bore the impress of approaching death, and he gazed on his deliverers with restless, wandering looks. John Borlout recognised in a moment the unfortunate Adolf van Nieuwland. They loosened in haste the joints of his mail, raised his head gently, and moistened his lips with water. His failing voice murmured some unintelligible words, and his eyes closed as if his soul had at length taken its flight from his tortured body. The cool breeze and the refreshing water had overpowered him; and he lost for some moments all consciousness. When he at length opened his eyes, like one whose life was ebbing fast, he pressed Borlout's hand, and said,—so slowly, that between each word there was a long pause—

"I am dying. You see it, Messire Joan; my soul cannot linger much longer on earth. But will me not; I die contented, for our fatherland is delivered—is free!"

His voice here failed him. His breath grew shorter; his head drooped; he slowly brought the green veil to his lips, and imprinted on it a last kiss. This done, he lost all consciousness, and fell apparently lifeless in the arms of John Borlout. Yet his heart continued to beat, and the warmth of his body betokened remaining life; so that the captain of Ghent did not altogether abandon hope, but conveyed the wounded knight to the camp with the tenderest care.

Matilda had taken refuge in a cell of the Abbey of Groeningen during the battle, whither she was accompanied by Adolf's sister. Her terror and anxiety were extreme; her relatives, her beloved Adolf,—all were in that fearful conflict. On the issue of this contest, waged by the Flemings against so overwhelming a foe, hung the freedom of her father; this field of battle would either win again for him the throne of Flanders, or forever crumble it to dust. Were the French victorious, she knew that the death of all she loved was inevitable, and that some horrible doom awaited herself. As the war-trumpets echoed over the field, both maidens shuddered and grew pale, as if in that sound the stroke of death had descended on them. Their terror was too great to be expressed in words; they fell on their knees, buried their faces in their hands, and hot tears streamed down their cheeks. And thus they lay in fervent prayer, motionless, almost lifeless, as though sunk in heavy slumber, while from time to time a deep groan broke from their crushed hearts. As they caught the distant sounds of the fight, Maria sighed:

"O God Almighty, Lord God of Hosts, have mercy on us! Bring us help in this our hour of need, O Lord!"

And Matilda's gentle voice continued: "O loving Jesus, Redeemer of men, shield him! Call him not to Thee, O Jesus most merciful! Holy Mother of God pray for us! O Mother of Christ, consolation of the afflicted, pray for him!"

Then the roar of battle came nearer, and filled their hearts with fresh alarms; and their hands shook like the tender leaves of the aspen-tree. Deeper sank their heads upon their breasts, their tears flowed more abundantly, and their prayers were murmured with fainter voice; for terror had paralysed all their energies.

The strife lasted long; the appalling cry of the troops, as they fought hand to hand resounded through the lonely cell. For long hours those low-whispered prayers went forth; and still they prayed, when the golden knight knocked at the abbey-gate. The sound of heavy footsteps caused them to turn their eyes towards the door, and they were still and motionless with sweet anticipation.

"Adolf comes again!" sighed Maria. "Oh, our prayer is heard!"

Matilda listened with greater eagerness, and replied in tones of sadness: "No, no, it is not Adolf; his step is not so heavy. O Maria, it may be a herald of evil tidings!"

The door of the cell turned on its hinges, a nun opened it, and the golden knight entered. Matilda's tender frame trembled with fear; she raised her eyes doubtfully and timidly to the stranger who stood before her and opened his arms to her. It seemed to her a delusive dream; but her agitation was fleeting as the lightning which flashes and is gone; she rushed eagerly forward, and was clasped in her father's arms.

"My father!" she exclaimed; "my beloved father! do I see you again free,—your chains broken? Let me press you to my heart. O God, how good Thou art! Do not turn away your face, dearest father; let me taste all my bliss."

Robert de Bethune embraced his loving daughter with unutterable joy; and when their hearts at length beat more tranquilly, he laid his helmet and gloves of steel on the low stool on which Matilda had been kneeling. Worn by his exertions, he sank into a coach. Matilda threw her arms around him, gazing with admiration and awe on him whose face had been ever to her so full of consolation and strength,—on him whose noble blood flowed in her veins, and who loved her so deeply and tenderly; and she listened with beating heart to the words which that beloved voice murmured in her ear.

"Matilda," said he, "my noble child, God has

long proved us with suffering; but now our sorrows are ended; Flanders is free,—is avenged! The Black Lion has torn the Lilies to pieces, and the aliens are discomfited and driven back. Dismiss every fear; the vile mercenaries of Joanna of Navarre are no more."

The maiden listened with agonised attention to the words of her father, she looked at him with a peculiar expression, she could but faintly smile. Joy had come so suddenly upon her, that she seemed deprived of all power and speech. After a few moments, she observed that her father had ceased speaking, and she said:

"O my God, our fatherland is free! The French are defeated and slain; and you, my father, I possess you once more. We shall go back again to our beautiful Wynaendael. Sorrow shall no more cloud your days; and I shall pass my life joyfully and happily in your arms. This is beyond hope,—beyond all that I have dared to ask of God in my prayers!"

"Listen attentively, my child; and be calm, I beseech you: this day I must leave you again. The noble knight who released me from my bonds has my word of honour that I would return as soon as the battle was over."

The maiden's head sank again upon her breast, and she sighed, in bitter grief,—

"They will put you to a cruel death, O my poor father!"

"Do not be so fearful, Matilda," continued Robert; "my brother Guy has taken sixty French knights of noblest blood prisoners; Philip the Fair will be told that their lives are hostages for mine; and he cannot allow the brave survivors of his army to be offered up as victims to his vengeance. Flanders is now more powerful than France. So I implore you dry your tears. Rejoice, for a blessed future awaits us; I will restore Castle Wynaendael again, that we may live in it as in days gone by. Then we shall again enjoy the chase, with our falcons on our wrist. Can you not imagine how merry our first hunting-party will be?"

An inexpressible sweet smile and a fervent kiss were Matilda's answer. But on a sudden a thought of pain seemed to cross her mind; for her countenance was overspread with gloom, and she bent her eyes on the ground, like one who is overcome by shame.

Robert looked at her inquiringly, and asked: "Matilda, my child, why is your countenance so suddenly overcast with sadness?"

The maiden only half raised her eyes, and answered with a low voice:

"But,—my father,—you say nothing of Adolf;—why did he not come with you?"

There was a slight pause before Robert replied. He discerned that, unknown to herself, a profound feeling was slumbering in Matilda's heart; therefore not without design he answered her thus:

"Adolf is detained by his duty, my child; fugitives are scattered over the plain, and I believe he is pursuing them. I may say to you, Matilda, that our friend Adolf is the most valiant and the most noble knight I know. Never have I seen more manliness and intrepidity. Twice he saved the life of my brother Guy; beneath the banner royal of France the enemy fell in numbers beneath his sword; all the knights are repeating his praises, and ascribe to him a large share in the deliverance of Flanders."

While Robert was uttering these words, he kept his eye fixed on his daughter, and scrutinised every emotion that flitted across her expressive features. He read therein a mingled pride and rapture, and had no further doubt that his conjecture was well founded. Maria, the while, stood with her eyes fixed on Robert, and drank in with eager joy the praises which he bestowed so lavishly on her brother.

While Matilda was gazing on her father in a transport of bliss, there was heard suddenly a confused noise of voices in the court of the monastery. After a few moments all was again still; then the door of the cell opened, and Guy entered slowly and with a disturbed countenance; he came near to his brother, and said:

"A great disaster has befallen us, my brother, in the loss of one who is most dear to us all; the men of Ghent found him on the field of battle, lying under a heap of slain, and they have brought him here into the monastery. His life trembles on his lips, and I think the hour of his death cannot be very distant. He anxiously begs to see you once more ere he quits this world; wherefore I pray you, my brother, grant him this last favor." Then, turning to Maria, he continued: "He desires to see you also, noble maiden."

One cry of bitter anguish broke from the hearts of both maidens. Matilda fell lifeless into her father's arms; and Maria flew to the door, and rushed from the chamber in an agony of despair.—Their cries brought two nuns into the cell, who took charge of the unhappy Matilda; her father stooped and kissed her, and turned to visit the dying Adolf; when the maiden, perceiving his intention, tore herself from the arms of the nuns, and clinging to her father, cried:

"Let me go with you, my father; let me see him once more! Woe, woe is me! what a sharp sword pierces my heart! My father, I shall die with him; I feel already the approach of death. I must see him: come, come speedily; he is dying! O Adolf! Adolf!"

Robert gazed on his daughter with tender compassion; he could not doubt now the existence of that secret feeling which had slowly and quietly taken root in his daughter's heart. The discovery gave him no pain, caused him no displeasure: unable to comfort her with words, he pressed her to his heart. But Matilda disengaged herself from these tender bonds, and drew Robert towards the door, crying,

"O my father, have pity on me! Come, that I may once more hear the voice of my good brother, that his eyes may look on me once more before he dies."

She knelt down at his feet and continued, amidst burning tears,

"I implore you do not reject my petition; hear me; grant it, my lord and my father."

Robert would have preferred leaving his daughter in the care of the nuns; for he feared, with reason, that the sight of the dying knight would completely overwhelm her: yet he could not deny her urgent prayers; he took her, therefore, by the hand, and said:

"Be it so, my daughter; go with me and visit the unfortunate Adolf. But, I pray you, disturb him not by your grief; think that God has this day bestowed on us a great mercy, and that He may be justly provoked to anger by your despair."

Ere these words were ended they had left the cell. Adolf had been brought into the refectory of the monastery, and laid carefully on a feather-bed upon the floor. A priest, well skilled in the healing art, had examined him with care, and found no open wound; long blue stripes indicated the blows he had received, and in many places were large bruises and contusions. He was bled; and then his body was carefully washed, and a restorative balsam applied. Through the care of the skilful priest he had recovered a measure of strength; but yet he seemed at the point of death, although his eyes were no longer so dull and lustreless. Around his bed stood many knights in deep silence, mourning for their friend. John van Renesse, Arnold van Oudenarde, and Peter Deconinck assisted the priest in his operations; William van Gulck, John Borlout, and Baldwin van Papenrood stood at the left hand of the couch, while Guy, Jan Breydel, and the other more illustrious knights, gazed on the wounded man with their heads bowed low in sorrow and in sympathy.

she had seized his hand, and was bedewing it with her tears, while Adolf bent on her an unsteady and almost vacant look. As Robert and his daughter entered the refectory, the knights were all struck with wonder and emotion. He, who had come in their hour of need, their mysterious deliverer, was the Lion of Flanders, their Count! They all bowed before him with profound reverence, and said:

"Honor to the Lion, our Lord!" Robert left his daughter's hand, raised Messires John Borlout and Van Renesse from the ground, and kissed both of them on the cheek; he then beckoned to the other knights to rise, and addressed them thus:

"My true and loyal vassals, my friends, you have shown me to-day how mighty is a nation of heroes! I wear my coronet now with a loftier pride than that with which Philip the Fair wears the crown of France; for of you I may well boast and glory."

He then approached Adolf, took his hand, and looked at him for some time in silence; a tear glistened awhile beneath each eyelid of the Lion, and at length dropped—a pearl of price—upon the ground. Matilda was kneeling at the head of Adolf's couch; she had taken her green veil from his hand; and her tears fell hot and fast upon this token of her affection, and of his self-sacrifice and devotedness. She spoke not a word; she did not even steal a look at Adolf; but covered her face with her hands, and wept bitterly.

The priest, too, stood motionless, his eye steadily fastened on the wounded knight. He marked some wonderful changes passing over his features, which spoke of returning life and vigour. And in truth his eyes had lost their fixed and glassy expression, and his countenance no longer bore the signs of approaching death.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.)

DISCOURSE OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SACRED COLLEGE.

"I take part with you, and I take it with all my heart and in great sincerity, in the sorrow for the losses we have suffered in these days—losses so much more sorrowful inasmuch as they have occurred in the midst of the present agitation of the world."

"This agitation, whose very long period is not yet at its term, nor shows signs of terminating—whilst the Church shines with the grand examples of faith, of force, and piety, which go forth from her and arise in her bosom; whilst it administers to you, venerable brethren, new fatigues which you accept with so much abnegation, and new motives to combat and always sustain intact the rights of the Spouse of Jesus Christ against the abuse of power—this agitation, it cannot be denied, is the cause that this Church itself is opposed, trampled underfoot, and persecuted both within and without in such a way that, like the Hebrew people on one occasion, it is constrained with one hand to repair the walls of the mystic Jerusalem spoiled by rebels, and with the other to brandish arms against the enemies who assail it from without."

"Internal enemies, although they are few, persecute her; external enemies, and they are many, persecute her. The internal enemies may truly be called seditious, and untidily with the external are all moved and animated by the spirit of haughtiness and of pride, and the one class as well as the other cry and repeat in various tones: 'Non serviam'—'I will not obey.' The former assail the Church with voice and with pen, publishing works of greater or lesser design, but which all tend to diminish the authority of the Church. Some are printed anonymously, and they depart from the room of some saloon. External enemies assail the Church with fire and with sword; they usurp, destroy, attack not only property, but the most sacred rights."

"The first write and speak on their own accounts having no mission: *Ex semetipsis loquuntur*, as Jesus Christ himself said to the Pharisees. And in consequence they walk blindly—*Nubes sine aqua*—preaching errors in abundance. They speak, but they cannot say with the divine Master, with that assertion, true prodigy of humility: *Mea doctrina, non est mea, sed ejus qui misit me, Patris*. We likewise, venerable brothers, can say with all truth: *Mea doctrina non est mea, sed . . . Patris*. Our doctrine all comes to us from God, and we do no more than spread his voice."

"But what shall we do meanwhile, and what is the assigned task to check the fierce assaults? The Church laments the seditions, and exclaims: '*Filiis matris mee pugnaverunt contra me*.' And it repeats: '*Filius enutriti et callata; ipsi autem spreverunt me*.' We meanwhile will follow the teachings of the apostle St. Paul; '*Argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientia et doctrina*'—admonish, pray, and cry, if need be, adopt the arms of the Church, the canonical penalties, when it may be necessary, in order that the simple and the weak may not fall into the snares of these deceivers."

"And pointing to the other enemies, we will exclaim at the foot of the throne of God: '*Usquequo, peccatores, Domine usquequo peccatores gloriabuntur*?' Oh! my God, and how long will these persecutors pant for prey, to despoil the Church in material substance, always ready—and this is the worst—to take from her her rights, to deprive her of her liberty of teaching, of preaching, of ordaining—in fine, of all the liberties which thou hast conceded to her, and especially the liberty of teaching? Since not to others, but to the apostles alone thou hast said: '*Euntes docete omnes gentes*.'"

"But, venerable brothers, as we oppose ourselves to the haughtiness of the one, so shall we remain safe from the ferocity of the others. Yes, to these, who already seem judged by God, we should oppose that constancy which has been, until now, the admiration of angels and of men, and with the help of God it will finish by triumphing. In fine, up to the present we may say that we are persecuted, but that we have continued strong in the exercise of our duties; *Persecutionem patimur, sed sustinemus*. Let us continue in the same manner, venerable brethren, until the end of our days. And so we may be able to present ourselves before the tribunal of God, and say: 'Behold we have been faithful guardians of thy Church militant, and we have done all that was in us to sustain its rights.' And therefore, with the trust of the apostle, we may be enabled to ask the crown of glory in the Church triumphant."

"May God bless these our desires, and with his benediction pour forth renewed courage upon you and on me. May the same benediction descend upon your families, upon all things which concern you, and remain with you to the consummation of your days."

"Benedicto, Dei, etc."

A CONVERSION.

The event of the return to the holy faith of the Catholic Church of Paul Feval, the distinguished French novelist, is already well known, and it may not be necessary to mention here the fact that this eminent writer is now engaged in the sacred services of his Redeemer.

Paul Feval writes thus: "I am besieged from every side for a sketch of the history of my conversion. In case I should do this, it will be by reason of the pressure of the demand. It transpired in a most simple manner, for I was, indeed, unworthy of the manifestation in my behalf of a miracle."

I have enjoyed a tolerably brilliant career, and was considered an honourable and happy man. A multitude of my fellow-creatures did me the honor

of holding my name in high estimation, but I knew and despised myself.

It came to pass that I was caught, quite unawares, by the mania of a financial exploit, which, in a whirl of excitement, carried me off with a hoard of stolen treasure. I fell, not from any precipitous height, still it was a fall. In my prostrated condition I looked around me for those whom I always believed to be my friends; but it was in vain. In this utter desolation a few helpless, beloved beings whose vitality greatly depended upon my own existence were my only companions. And at this juncture I did not possess even the courage to face poverty, or to reconcile myself with the inevitable, for the longing to die grew stronger in me. Still possessing what once a few called "talent," I paused. But oh! the sad thing. Shortly before I fell this talent's value was unimpaired, but at the hour it was offered in exchange for break those heartless speculators with our talents closed their doors against me (but not so one, to whom my heartfelt thanks are due). I commenced to reason within myself, maybe talent had deserted me also, or perhaps I had never possessed it. The buyers of this article, I opined, are, after all, the best judge as to its value. I continued to work, but it was insignificantly small, and desperately bad. One day, just after finishing the first page of one of my miserable attempts, I beheld dark despair settling by me closely; the devouring fire of her eyes was fixed upon mine, and fear completely overpowered me. It was then that I raised my suppliant voice to Almighty God. He did not come, for he was already with me! In the innermost parts of my soul I heard his answer to my petition, and I realized the truth that he had mercifully touched the lowest depth of my conscience. And then the first tears of repentance burst from my eyes; these were even sweeter to me than the morning salutation of my beloved mother, who, in the days of my early childhood, roused me from my cradle with a kiss. The morning following these events I consulted with a distinguished gentleman whose experience was great, but who made no pretensions, and who loved me. Considering his age, he might have been my son; however, I called him my father. He instructed me in matters of such vastness and manifold greatness, which I learned to comprehend. It seemed to me the work of a moment, when these inculcated truths had passed from his heart into my own, that I understood how to remove the veil from the depth of my poor soul, and confessing my sins, obtain through him forgiveness of the same from our Father who is in heaven. The following day was Christmas. My wife and daughter conducted me, in a trembling condition, and my heart strangled with emotion, into the sanctuary where the remains of martyrs of our own times, and where more of them will join them, are entombed. I joined the holy supper-table, and celebrated my second communion forty-seven years after the first. Thus have been connected two periods of my existence over the chasm of a lost half-century. God be praised in the greatness of his mercy! I arose with new vigor and strength. With the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, I shall live and die so strengthened! Upon our return to the house, the happy faces of the little ones greeted us. What a feast it was! they almost devoured me with kisses. Since then cheerfulness has returned into our midst. During the vacations we are having splendid times. We number, all told, ten. Every evening the eight children kneel around their mother, and I, before the crucifix, read the prayers contained on the first page of the catechism. Their voices respond in various keys; some are already manly, others still sweet and youthful. One is a soldier for to-morrow, another a sailor for next year. That blonde, silk-haired boy will join, after six years, the Polytechnic, and this fat and helpless angel proposes to plead in twelve years. One is amongst them who works already for her living, and who yesterday declared she did not know of what use her studies would ever be. She is the eldest of the other three, who will also have to work. They know this, and are proud of it. May God bless them all, my father, they are good children and possess loving hearts. In former times their greatest pleasure consisted in distributing alms. Of all the pleasures money affords, this they miss the most. Madeline, who is seven years old, forgets herself sometimes so far in saying, "Our good God must restore to us something, so as to enable us to make donations to the poor." Judge whether I could feel annoyed at this sentiment. Yesterday, however, I met her quite happy and reconciled by the discovery which she professes to have made. In a triumphant manner she addressed me thus: "Do you know that to have only ten sous and to donate all of it is worth one thousand francs?" She has only ten sous, and these are her one thousand francs for "her poor." My father, I cannot remember the time when we loved each other so dearly as we now do. They will never be rich, this is quite certain; but whatever may be in store for them, may Almighty God's providence permit me yet to be cheerful.—*La Revista Catolica*.

PROMINENT IRISHMEN IN AMERICA.

J. C. CURTIN.

Some twenty-five years ago the subject of our sketch first saw the light in the town of Lindsay, Ontario, Canada. His parents were good Irish Catholics, who believed in giving their son a thorough education. In his fifteenth year he entered St. Michael's College, Toronto. It appears his stock of information at this time was quite astonishing; but, like the famous Gibbon, at the same time of life, he "had an amount of erudition that would have puzzled a doctor, and an ignorance of which a school-boy might be ashamed." The classical course at St. Michael's required five years. J. C. Curtin made it in three. He came out first in his class on two occasions in ten consecutive weekly examinations. Thus by superior ability he managed to "jump" two classes, and did not fail to carry off a good share of the prizes. Yet he never aimed at the bauble of a prize. It was knowledge he wanted—knowledge he worked for. He hated "gramming"—as old Carlyle calls it—and certainly he did not love mathematics, and though he followed the "course," he was at the end a trifle more ignorant than when he began! In rhetoric and English composition, however, he stood invariably at the head of his class. On completing his studies at Toronto, Mr. Curtin went to Montreal, entered the Grand Seminary of St. Sulpice, made a four years' course of theology, and graduated about eighteen months ago from that famous institution. While pursuing his theological course he wrote much for the newspapers, and also managed to acquire a thorough knowledge of several modern languages. He speaks French with the ease of a Parisian, and he is quite familiar with German, Spanish and Italian. Having completed his course at the Seminary, Mr. Curtin concluded that his sphere was journalism. About a year ago he came to New York City, joined the editorial staff of the *Irish World*, in the columns of which he wrote eagerly every week. He had the satisfaction of seeing many of his spirited and ably-written articles copied by other journals. Severing his connection with the *Irish World*, Mr. Curtin became connected with the *New York Tablet* as assistant editor about two months ago. When Mr. Harpe—some weeks ago—resigned the editorial charge of the *Tablet*, he succeeded him. Though young in years, he has succeeded in laying by such an immense stock of knowledge, that he can easily, at any time, make large drafts on his rich intellectual bank; and never do his notes come back dishonored.—*N. Y. Sunday Citizen*.