To Break a Habit.

"How shall I a habit break?"
As you did that habit make.
As you gathered you must lose;
As you yielded now refuse.
Thread by thread the strands we twist
Till they bind us neck and wrist;
Thread by thread the patient hand
Must entwine ere free we stand.
As we builded stone by stone,
We must toil, unhelped, alone,
Till the wall is overthrown.
—John Boyle O'Reilly

A Social Gal.

There goes the bell! A visitor, I guess,
And I'm a fright and haven't time to dress,
H'm! Mrs. Gossip from across the way,
What put it into her head to call today?
To see what she can see, no doubt,
That woman's nothing but a gad-about,
I hate her, with her superfluous airs—
That horrid girl is bringing her upstairs—
'Tis Mrs. Gossip, I declare, why this
Is quite a pleasure, I am sure. (A kiss)
Its kind of you to call—'tis quite a treat;
Let me remove your shawl, pray take a seat,
We're all upset this morning, it is true,
But we can always find a seat for you.
Pray, don't apologize—there is no need;
I'm very glad you've called—I am indeed.

THE

ROSE OF VENICE;

—A STORY OF—

Love, Hatred & Remorse.

Y. S. CHRISTOPHER.

PART I.

CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED)

'It turned out as I said. The child was brought in. It had died only a few hours before, and looked so lovely. The lady hid herself behind the nurse in order that Signor Gustavo might not see her agony. I stood by, and thought my heart was breaking, and I was trembling all over, foreseeing this result, I strove to smile, and pretended to tell the bystanders to keep quiet, in order not to awake him, for you must know it had been settled that I should play this part, and most unwillingly did I obey. But the wet-nurse, Signor Marco, helped to make matters much worse. You know she is a peasant; thinking—I say so at least—more of the pay and presents she had lost than of the child and its poor bereaved parents, she had been drowned in tears since the infant had breathed its last. She had been warned not to cry, to be calm. She obeyed till she reached the sick man's bed, and then, whether she really felt grieved or pretended it, she began to distort her face, as people generally do when they are going to burst out crying. I was aware of it, and endeavored to push her a little on one side, but the Signor Gustavo had guessed all. In a moment he almost sprang out of bed, caught the nurse's arm—she declares he pinched her most severely—and taking his child, pressed it to his breast, uttering such words of agony—that—I cannot repeat them, though they still ring in my ears. He then reproached us all for having deceived him; and, to make short of it, grew so much worse that the physicians pronounced him dying. He had always been a delicate man, as nervous as a woman; a trifle upset him. But he died like a saint, and the Signora Teresa is alone to be pitied.'

To this long account, which the maggiordomo might have given in a few words, Marco's sole reply was:

'My poor dear cousin! So young!'

'Death does not regard youth, Signor Marco. The old and the young alike must die. And now, Signor Marco, you are the heir,' continued Pietro in a lower voice, accompanied by a most profound inclination of his whole person, as if he meant to make his obeisance, and imply his most willing services had already begun.

'Hush, man! who can think of that now, in this house of mourning? Not I, assuredly. I care not for it.'

Did Marco speak the truth! We dare not affirm it. Man is frail, and the prospect of so much prosperity could not but be most pleasing to him. He added:

'Where is my uncle? Show me in to him.'

'He gave orders that you should wait a little, and that I should relate all to you, as he cannot speak on the subject.'

'You have told me all, I think,' said Marco, in an almost imploring tone, as if to say, 'Pray say nothing more, you have said enough;' then he added: 'Can I see the Signora Teresa?'

'She refuses visitors. She is like one stunned. Think what her sufferings must be, Signor Marco: she has lost all.'

'True. I do pity her. I shall wait, therefore, here till my uncle can see me.'

Saying these last words he sat down, and the maggiordomo left the hall.

He did not wait long. His uncle ordered him to be shown into his bedroom.

He found the old nobleman in an easy-chair, his head resting on the back of it, deathly pale, his eyes staring into vacancy.

By a movement of his hand he welcomed his nephew, and beckoned to a chair that was near, on which Marco seated himself, quite at a loss to find any appropriate phrase of condolence.

The old patrician was the first to speak.

'Marco,' said he, without looking at him, 'you are now my nearest relation, and my—my——' The aged father meant to say heir, but could not utter the word. 'I have sent for you that you may in a certain degree superintend these sad offices towards the departed, which in my agony of grief I am totally incapable of attending to myself; and, furthermore, that you may somehow or other console poor Teresa, who already says she means to retire to a convent.'

'Dear uncle, I am at your service.'

'I knew you would do all in your power to comfort me. From the birth of my beloved son I strove, I schemed to have him the richest man in Venice. I had succeeded in every plan, and lo! when I thought of getting him, he leaves me. Every blade of him hath been taken! I am desolate!'

And the proud patrician, unstrung by sorrow's pain, sobs like a child for his son.

Marco did not know what to say or do in order to stop that burst of grief, so he had recourse to the best expedient in all such cases, viz., to let the old man weep unchecked, for, after all, it is the wisest course to pursue, since where grief is great, it relieves for awhile the poor heart, to let it shed copious tears.

Again the old man was the first to speak.

'Take up your abode at once in my house, my dear nephew. You will then be with me whenever I require you.'

'I will do as you bid me, dear uncle. I have said already I am at your service. Perhaps you wish now to be quiet, and so I had better leave you.'

'No—yes,' said the patrician, hesitating. 'I have sent for Father Romualdo, and——'

'I understand. I shall just go home for a minute, and return to pass this night here.'

'What do you mean by this night? I have said you are to remain here always. Ring the bell.'

Marco rang, and the maggiordomo appeared.

'Pietro,' said his master, shutting his eyes, 'my nephew takes up his abode in my palace. Order the suite of apartments in the left wing to be prepared for him. He is to be obeyed, and considered as if he were my——'

The old nobleman could not finish the sentence; he hid his face, and wept again aloud.

'Illustrissimo, death pays no regard to youth. The young and the old, all must die. I will see that your orders be duly obeyed.'

He bowed and left the room behind Marco.

That same night saw Marco Centofoglia, the hitherto despised, neglected relation, installed in the princely palace of his ancestors, and treated with all the respect due to the nephew of the proud owner. That same night beheld the hitherto poor young man, who had striven hard to get on in life with his limited means, the heir of the richest man in Venice.

In the morning the mere thought of such a change would have been next to madness. In the evening it was the truest reality.

In the midst of so much and such unlooked-for prosperity did Marco think of his humble betrothed? He did, and rejoiced in the prospect of her happiness as much as in that of his own.

When the day came for the longed-for meeting—the cousins, father and child, had been already laid in the family vault, and Marco was less busy giving orders, receiving visits, paying accounts, etc., etc.,—he found himself before the time appointed at the usual place. He saw Rosalia coming, and ran to meet her, longing to tell her the change in his fortune. But Rosalia knew it already. Everybody in Venice knew it, and a sad foreboding oppressed the poor girl's heart.

'Rosalia, my dearest, all objections to our wedding are removed. I am rich now. I am powerful. Riches and power overcome all difficulties. Even if your father persists in refusing his consent, I can force him. Oh, Rosalia! how happy we shall be!' and Marco Centofoglia pressed her to his heart.

'Marco, forgive me, I cannot help it, but my heart aches. Will you love me now as you did before?'

Rosalia looked sad.

'You mistrust me, then? You think vile money can have the power of changing Marco Centofoglia's heart? I love you more instead of less. I love you with my whole soul!'

When prosperity first visits man, it is apt to produce the very contrary effects from those to which it unfortunately gives birth at a later period. In the beginning the man is happy; he is also better. His heart seems to enlarge towards all mankind, to yearn after what is right and good and noble. His spirits also are elated; every object, therefore, appears clothed in brighter colors. He does not reflect much, and in those moments he hardly needs it. The healthiest part of his nature is uppermost. He loves every one, and plans benefiting every creature that may be in need of his help. He says, 'I will not act like such an one. I will be superior to such another.' But let a comparatively short time elapse, and prosperity has done its work. The worst part of man's character then comes to the surface, the pride, egotism, worldliness, are left to set themselves to work to frustrate all the good resolutions that had flourished for a moment under the bright sun of man's better nature.

'Believe me,' Marco continued, with increasing vehemence, 'believe me, one thought alone hath pervaded my mind during these days that have beheld so great a change in my fortune, the thought of you. As I have walked through those superb, spacious halls, through galleries where luxury and art seem to vie with each other in order to produce all that is most beautiful, it is you that have been always before my eyes. I have thought and repeated to myself, 'Rosalia will be here like a queen in her realm. What man now living in Venice can boast such a bride? She will grace this palace with her stately, elegant figure. Her eyes will shine with a brighter lustre as she gazes on all this splendor and hears from my lips, 'Tis thine.' And now, after I have longed to see you, to tell you all, I hear that your heart aches; you speak as though you did not believe me, and, let me add, did not love me.'

Marco stopped, and seemed overcome with sadness.

Rosalia had never taken her large expressive eyes from off him. She drank in deep all he said; felt a voluptuous ecstasy in hearing him again assure her he loved her as before, and had thought of her alone, and answered in the tenderest tone:

'Marco, forgive me. Yes, forgive me. I did not mistrust you, but I felt a sorrow—a something I cannot explain. I care not for riches, nor for splendor. You say my wealth, and the brightness of my coat—my only thought on earth. You have assured me you love me as before. It is enough for me. I am happy again. Oh, so happy! Let me only always hear those words from your lips! Hearing them, death would be sweeter than the most prosperous of lives deprived of their beloved sound.'

Rosalia looked supremely beautiful; like one of those unrivaled faces Oriental bards dream of as lying on a bed of roses, under a canopy of jessamine and orange blossoms—the house in their voluptuous paradise!

Marco felt the influence of that beauty, beside which the loveliest of his countrywomen would have looked void of charm; more eloquent did he become, and still fonder words did he utter, to dispel the cloud from that beautiful brow. He succeeded. Rosalia's drooping spirit completely revived; the lovers parted happier than before, loving each other more than ever.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHOICE.

A fortnight had elapsed since the day in which the old patrician had lost son and grandson. Marco had rendered himself indispensable to his uncle, and the reserve of the first days having worn off, he had succeeded in restoring a little calm to the unhappy father's bereaved heart. The Signora Teresa he had seen little of; but on the few times when they had met in the old nobleman's bed-room, there had been great cordiality between them.

His uncle's health, however, had sensibly failed since the day of his double loss: and this, together with his advanced age, brought forcibly to his mind the conviction that he must soon leave his riches in other people's hands.

The uncle and nephew were sitting together. The old nobleman felt more feeble. He had a long conference with Father Romualdo, the precise purport of which was not known, but we may guess it by listening to the one that followed very soon afterwards.

The old nobleman began abruptly:

'Marco—you know that you are now my heir!'

'Dear uncle, I know I am such only through your goodness.'

'You are right; it is through my goodness, for you must know that I am not obliged to leave you anything. I can dispose of my property as I please.'

'Of course you can. I have never thought to the contrary.'

'Marco, do you think it is worth while to be rich and powerful?'

'To a certain extent it is; but I do not believe that riches and power can make a sensible man perfectly happy.'

'Then you are a fool.'

'Dear uncle—you—know——' Marco hesitated.

'I know what you mean to say. Riches and power cannot prevent afflictions. I know that too well. But then it is the doom of man to die. I tell you, wealth and power are a great blessing.'

The old man spoke as the worldly-minded always speak. Marco did not like to contradict what he had said before, viz., that riches and power are not the only means of happiness; but the difference he had noticed in the manner of all his friends and acquaintances, the degree of command he had acquired wherever he went, the ready obedience he met with in all places, were most pleasing—made him feel his importance, and made him happy. He therefore concluded within himself that riches and power are conducive to earthly happiness (that every one must feel it; but no one—himself included—like to acknowledge it.

The old nobleman continued:

'It is the trite way of philosophers to declare that riches and power are not worth seeking after; that man must not sacrifice to them his feelings and inclinations; that all ends, and such like stuff. I am now old, and have lived long enough to see that money is considered the universal panacea; so much so, that I should like to place any one of these dreamy philosophers in the position of succeeding to a large fortune, and see how many of them would refuse it. Not one. I would wager my head on it.'

He felt rather exhausted, and stopped speaking. An odd thought was coming across his mind. Perhaps his uncle meant to add some disagreeable clause in his will.

Having rested a few minutes, and sipped a glass of the best wine the island of Cyprus could produce, the old noble resumed:

'I have not spoken thus far without a meaning. Are you one of these philosophers who would willingly give up riches, power, consideration, comfort? Answer me sincerely.'

'I can't tell. It depends——'

'Say at once, without further hesitation—would you prefer being rich, or poor?'

'I had rather be rich.'

'Well and wisely spoken. Now answer me again, with equal conclusiveness. Will you, or will you not, be my heir?'

'That does not depend on me.'

'Boy—it does.'

Marco's heart beat as a school-boy's does at his first examination.

'Now listen to the conditions. Teresa, my dearest son's widow, is the daughter of the greatest friend I ever had. I loved him as a brother—much more than I did your father. On his deathbed—she was then only five years old—he entrusted her to me. I placed her in a convent; took care of her small property, increased it, and when she was sixteen years of age I presented her to my son as his bride. I have always loved her, and treated her as a daughter. How happy we have all been together! It was destined that at eighteen she should be a widow and childless. In her overwhelming grief she declares she will return to the convent, where she was brought up, and there take the veil. I cannot part with her. As it was decreed my own child's children should not inherit my fortune, I choose her children bearing my name to enjoy it. I also wish to benefit my brother's son, if he will agree to my conditions, which are as follows: You marry my daughter-in-law Teresa Zeno, and forthwith you are acknowledged as my legitimate heir, or——'

'Uncle——' put in Marco, in a supplicating voice.

'Don't interrupt me—or if you do not, you at once leave my house and return to what you were before! I give you twenty-four hours to reflect upon it. Choose. Do you understand?' he added, seeing Marco did not answer.

'I do, uncle,' said Marco, when he had so far recovered from the unexpected blow as to be able to speak. 'But I was thinking I am not the only one to be consulted in this matter. Are you sure the Signora Teresa will consent to become my wife?'

'How void of all knowledge of the customs of the world you are! Who thinks of consulting women about their inclinations! One may give way to them as far as relates to a dress, a picture, even a party of pleasure; but marriage—that is the affair for man, and man alone.'

'As for that, I don't know, uncle. I think it regards women also. They may love or hate.'

'Nonsense—nonsense! Let us see what you will say if ever you have a daughter who refuses the husband you have decided on for her.'

'I should feel in duty bound to respect her inclinations.'

Ah, Marco, how frail is the human heart! Twenty-five years later that very same room was to witness another violation of woman's dearest right, and how didst thou act then?

'And more idiot you! In the meantime respect your own welfare, and decide to your own advantage. Leave me to think about Teresa;—besides, she is so mild and obedient . . . . I feel weaker now. Call Pietro, and retire to rest.'

Marco obeyed as far as regarded calling Pietro, and going to bed; but as for resting, it was out of the question. He tossed about in his bed like one in a burning fever. There was no alternative left him—he must either abandon Rosalia, or renounce the wealthy heritage.

'How can I,' thought he, 'accept the condition my tyrannical uncle forces upon me? Can I give up my bride—her whom I date upon, and marry a woman for whom I care not? Even if I could be brought to consent, have I the right to break another's heart? Rosalia would surely die at the mere suggestion of such a thing. She would give up her life for me. Am I to be so base as not to give up houses, lands, pelf for her? After all, I shall always be a gentleman. I shall not be rich, but I can be happy. Yes, to-morrow I will tell my uncle frankly I cannot accept his conditions, and at once quit his house. And then, when Rosalia has learned the sacrifice I have made for her, will she again refuse fleeing with me? No. She will not, I am sure—but suppose she does! Am I always to be thwarted in my plans and schemes? . . . How happy I have been these few days! How my friends envy me! I am everywhere called the rich heir. . . . How can I give up all, and be laughed at for it? And return to be a nobody! . . . My courage fails me at the very thought. Was ever a man placed in such perplexity?'

Marco turned and turned again in his bed, and thought more and more. At length, when the first rays of the morning sun entered his room, and his eyelids were closing in sleep, he came to this resolution: 'Rosalia loves me more than life. I will recount all to her, and will leave her the arbiter of my fate. I know what her fond heart will say: 'Accept the condition laid upon you by your uncle; be happy, and forget me.' Then, though I shall suffer—though it will well-nigh break my heart, with her consent I can obey my uncle's wishes. Tyrant that he is, he thinks only of himself!' concluded Marco, and fell asleep, without perceiving that he also was beginning to think only of himself.

It is in man, or rather in the imperfection of man's education, that when too weak to make the sacrifices which conscience dictates, he should hit on plans and schemes that border on the verge of insanity. A species of torpor comes over him, and he follows almost without being aware of it, the paths of evil and injustice, goaded on by that fiend, egotism, which whispers in his willing ears, 'You cannot help it. 'Tis the only way left you.'

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Lecture on the World's Fair.

Shortness of space in our last issue compelled us to pass over with a brief notice an admirable lecture on a "Visit to the World's Fair," delivered before the students on the last Friday of January by Mr. James McIsaac. To extol the excellent manner in which the subject was treated by the lecturer and to thank him for his extreme kindness would be sufficient inducement for us to make a few observations, had we not another purpose in view, namely, to impart to our readers his ideas concerning the Fair, the description of the many noble edifices there, and the multifarious exhibits contained therein.

The chair was occupied by Mr. McKinnon, who in a brief speech introduced Mr. McIsaac to the audience.

The learned lecturer, after a pleasant yet very appropriate and truly striking introduction, in which reference was made to the advancement of architecture during past years and the influence to which it had now attained, proceeded to describe the architectural magnificence of the various buildings of the Fair. In general terms he alluded to the size and grandeur of the Manufacturers', Fisheries and Administration buildings, and many others; the especial beauty of the buildings of France, Germany, Italy, and the several states of the Union; but he dwelt particularly on the noble edifices erected by Great Britain and Canada. They occupied a pretty position overlooking Lake Michigan, and commanded the attention of all passers-by from the fact that the building of Canada was placed, as it were, within the shadow of that of England, thus typifying the union existing between the two countries.

A passing glance being paid to the Midway Plaisance and the great skill its construction evinced, the exhibits next claimed the speaker's attention. To attempt the reproduction of his remarks on this subject would be lamely distracting from their merits; for description, indeed, would be but a faint picture of the effect his words produced. He entered into a detailed account of our mineral and dairy exhibits and how favorably they compared with those of other nations. He touched upon the Mammoth Cheese which was always surrounded by a crowd of spectators and elicited the genuine admiration of all. He pointed out how Canada—and particularly Prince Edward Island—should feel justly proud of her endeavors in this quarter; for undoubtedly here our country surpassed all other nations.

Here followed the speaker's peroration coupled with a vivid description of the landing of Columbus, the first Mass celebrated in America, and the effects likely to ensue from the fair; and grander words we have rarely heard. He traced rapidly, but graphically, the establishment of Christianity in the New World. He started from the time the first mass was celebrated "with the blue canopy of Heaven as the cathedral dome; with the stars as so many candles and the birds in the trees as choristers," and followed it through the varying pages of its history—the trials and difficulties—touching on the many heroic acts performed by our first missionaries. He vividly portrayed the great Catholic Congress—the venerable dignitaries of the Church of Christ in convocation assembled to discuss matters of religion. He evidently reserved his powers to the last, and his genius rose naturally and easily on broad and rapid pinions when his audience scarcely expected it.

It is only to be added that the speaker in the course of his remarkable lecture at times seemed to touch with electric fire the hearts of his audience, and his frequent passages of brilliant eloquence drew forth unbounded applause; while at times again his keen wit caused "waves of mirth" to pass over the audience which were as delightful and pleasing as his serious and earnest efforts were pathetic and powerful.

At the conclusion, a vote of thanks having been proposed by Mr P D McGuigan, and seconded by M P F Doyle, the chairman respectfully conveyed the same to the learned lecturer, who replied in appropriate terms.—Collegium.

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KEROSENE OIL!
The Best is the Cheapest.
DON'T buy low grade, inferior Oil because it is a little cheaper in price than the highest grade. It is false economy as you will find it to be the dearest in the long run.
Poor Oil will not burn nearly so long as the better grades, and beside it will smoke your chimneys and make a very disagreeable odor in the house.
This fall we are selling the BEST AMERICAN WATER WHITE OIL cheaper than ever before, and we guarantee every gallon of OIL we sell TO BE THE BEST AMERICAN WATER WHITE.
Bring in your can and have it refilled at
BEER & GOFF'S.