

THE ROMANCE OF A JESUIT.

From the French of De Beugny d'Inverno.

CHAPTER XII.

The first case that was entrusted to Charles was one concerning a theft alleged to have been committed by a servant named Pierre Bouvier. In investigating the circumstances attending this case, the young lawyer discovered that the accused party had formerly been in Mme. de Plelan's service, and in following up one clue after another, Charles became acquainted with many circumstances connected with that lady's past life and her many severe trials. The more he learned concerning certain passages in the past life of the Countess and her deceased husband, the more did he learn to respect and esteem her and to thank God for Marguerite's having fallen into such good hands.

Time went on, Charles continued steadily progressing in legal knowledge and efficiency, but in 1847, when the Republic was proclaimed, he had for a time to take up arms and aid in maintaining order in the metropolis. Though several times he was exposed to the greatest dangers, he was fortunate enough to escape unharmed. During these public commotion and troubles, Mme. de Plelan had returned to her chateau in Brittany, taking the two young girls with her, and Charles' mind was thus quite at ease concerning his sister's safety, although he felt lonely enough when he found himself so far separated from her.

During the year 1849, his patron, Mons. B——, who fully appreciated his brilliant talents, confided some very important affairs to his management, and he succeeded with them so admirably that when he had finished keeping his terms, he was proclaimed by common assent to be the cleverest of the rising lawyers and certain of making his mark.

In the month of September, 1860, he received a letter from his sister in Brittany telling him that the three ladies were about to start on a six months tour through Italy, and would be in Paris in a few days.

Charles found the two young ladies wonderfully improved in looks, and remarked that Mlle. de Plelan had also gained much in health and strength. After a few days' stay in Paris, the party of travellers took the train for their first halting-place, and Charles once more found himself alone.

His friend Mlle. Moissac, had conceived so sincere an admiration and friendship for him that she lost no opportunity of serving him and Marguerite in every way that she could devise, and it was during the latter's absence that the kind lady rendered him a very important service, by introducing him to two ladies, Mme. and Mlle. Berthier, who were involved in a somewhat intricate law-suit. These ladies asked Charles to defend their cause, and he willingly undertook to conduct their case to the best of his ability. Mlle. Berthier was far better acquainted than her mother with all the intricacies of their position. The point at issue was whether the manufactory of the late Mons. Berthier had been sold by these ladies at an unjustifiably high price. One of the parties concerned against the Berthiers, was Charles' old enemy, Lerouttier, and he, in common with the others who were interested, demanded that the sale of the manufactory should be annulled and the proceeds of the said sale refunded. By this arrangement the widow and her daughter would be left penniless, since the sum received for their property, amounting to \$100,000, constituted the whole of their fortune.

Mlle. Berthier and Charles had many interviews examining inventories and other legal papers, and the young man was quite surprised at the young lady's great intelligence and aptitude for business. After these necessary interviews on legal subjects the young people frequently remained in conversation on general subjects, and Mlle. Berthier proved to be so agreeable and well-informed that Charles was full of her praises to Mlle. Moissac, who did not fail to encourage him in frequenting the young girl's society. She even went so far as to sound him on the subject of a possible marriage between the two, despite his energetic asseveration that he had no thought of ever marrying.

Things were in this state when a letter arrived from Marguerite summoning her brother to her aid. During an excursion that the two young girls had made to the Isle of

Capri, a violent storm had set in and whilst the sailors were doing their utmost to run their boat on shore at Resina, at a league's distance from Naples, a wave had dashed over it and had thrown all its occupants into the water. Though borne senseless to land, Marguerite's strong constitution had enabled her to get over the shock they had received, but Mlle. de Plelan had sunk beneath it and she had died the next day. Mme. de Plelan had fallen senseless shortly after her daughter's death, and when the doctors arrived they pronounced her to be suffering from apoplexy. Marguerite begged her brother also to announce the terrible tidings to Mons. Yves de Plelan, the only son of Mme. de Plelan, whose address she did not know.

Charles could not do otherwise than hasten to his sister's aid, and at once applied to the court for the postponement of the Berthier case, and having taken leave of his clients, he obtained Mons. de Plelan's address, wrote a line to Mlle. Moissac, and took the train to Lyons, on his road to Naples. In Rome he found Count de Plelan's name registered at the same hotel as he was himself stopping, and introducing himself to the young man, he, with the utmost delicacy, broke to him the sad news of a sister's death and a mother's dangerous illness.

(To be continued.)

BOOKS AND HOW TO USE THEM.

(Concluded)

Not but that among novels, as among poems, which have not yet received the sanction of time, we perceive many a gem bringing home to us many a beautiful lesson, and we may humbly and thankfully accept the gift. I find in several of our living writers purpose, style, and art of a high order. One of the most successful of them—Mr. W. D. H. Howells—once remarked to me that he could no more conceive a novel without a purpose than an arch without a keystone. Various are the ways in which the goodness of that purpose may be shown. Now it is to place before us an ideal of life in its diverse phases, now to caution us against some of the evils gnawing at the vitals of society, now to bring the past nearer, now to photograph glimpses of things passing away for ever, now to put us in presence of higher truths, and we have well-written and powerful novels illustrative of all these ways. To mention names were tedious.

I am not unmindful of the distinctively Catholic novel. It is of recent growth on English soil. That eminent churchman and scholar, Cardinal Wiseman, saw in the "Last Days of Pompeii" the model of an idea which, carried out, might prove most fruitful in bringing before the minds of the people a vivid picture of the Christian Church passing through the various stages of her struggles and her triumphs. His fertile brain accordingly projected a series of novels intended to rehabilitate the past, and, with his usual versatility, he turned aside from his oriental and scientific studies, and led the way in that delightful story of "Fabiola," which continues to be read with unabated interest. Then followed "Callista," a classic of finer fabre and more delicate structure, abounding in subtle traits of character, and penetrated with that keen sense of the beautiful so peculiar to the Grecian mind. It is a book that grows upon one with every successive perusal. Other works of merit were modelled on these, and though the list is short, it is select.

Nor am I unmindful of a number of living writers professing the Catholic faith whose pens, though not devoted to exclusively Catholic subjects, have produced, and still produce, good reading. Two of the most prominent—Lady Georgiana Fullerton and Kathleen O'Meara—have recently dropped out of the list. Rosa Mulholland, Christian Reid, Annie Keary, Mrs. Cashel-Hoey, Miss Tincker—in her earlier works—Richard Malcolm Johnston, Justin McCarthy, Marion Crawford—with some exceptions—the Rev. John Talbot Smith, Maurice Francis Egan, and those two honoured pioneers of the Catholic novel in America, Mrs. James Sadlier and Mrs. Hanson Dorsey, are among those that recur to memory. I name them for the reason that all of them have left some work and exercised some influence for which we may be grateful.

But there is now coming into vogue a pernicious species of novel, all the more dangerous because of its insidiousness.