

LINKED LIVES.

By Lady Gertrude Douglas.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PARADISE OF GOD'S EARTH.
 "Around each pure domestic shrine,
 Bright flowers of den bloom and twine;
 Our hearts are altars all."
 —Kehle.

"Good morning, Louis. Where are your sisters?" asked Genevieve, of a tall, dark, amiable looking youth, not far advanced in his teens, who met them at the door.

"Good morning, Miss Genevieve," he responded, in somewhat lame English. "My sisters are in the atelier. Will you that I call them?"

"Oh! no, never mind. I know the way. Mabel, I ought to introduce you. This is Monsieur Louis de St. Laurent. Louis, this is Miss Forrester."

Thus made known to one another the English girl and the French youth exchanged civilities, Mabel extending her hand, Monsieur Louis making a profound inclination of his body—so profound, indeed, as to be quite unaware of the hand stretched out to him.

"What extraordinary ceremony!" remarked Mabel, much amused, so soon as they were beyond hearing.

"He is a dear good fellow!" answered Genevieve. "Those are French manners, Mabel, and Louis is very particular about their observance."

"I don't care about French manners, then. Do you, Veva?"

"Yes, dear, I like them. They are remnants of the chivalry now almost forgotten. I think it beautiful to see the reverence shown by the men and boys of this country to women."

"You seem to be very fond of the French people, Veva; and yet I have always heard they were very frivolous."

"Quite a mistake, I assure you, Mabel! Just wait till you know them better. Ah! here is the atelier, and I see all the girls busy with their work. Now is this not a delightful place?"

Mabel had only time for a glance round the long, old-fashioned room, which had a peculiarly lightsome, cheerful aspect, and was fragrant with the scent of summer flowers, when, with a triple exclamation of delight, three girls, varying in age from two-and-twenty to sixteen, rushed simultaneously to bid her welcome.

Marie, the eldest, Mabel already knew; with Marguerite and Louise she had still to make acquaintance.

This was not a formidable ceremony, for the absence of gaucherie or stiffness on the part of the French girls instantly set Mabel at ease. Marguerite was taller than Marie, more sprightly, with a better figure, with better features, and eyes quite as brilliant, though not so sweet in their expression.

Louise was still a child in every sense of the word, neither fully formed nor fully grown, but possessed of a pleasant, lovable little face, and not unlike her elder sisters.

"This is our workshop," remarked Marie when the excitement of Mabel's entrance having subsided, the girls had gathered together in the deep recess of the bow-window, which was wide open, and from which the smooth lawn below was accessible by a flight of wooden steps.

"Yes," added Marguerite, "it is our home; it is here that Marie paints, and Louise carves here; no one ever will disturb us."

"Show Mabel your paintings, Marie," said Genevieve; "where is the 'Ecce Homo' you are doing now?"

"It is not yet finished. I have been so busy with the broderie; as soon as the feast will be over, I will finish it," replied Marie, turning her easel from the wall and displaying an unfinished copy in oils of Guido's celebrated picture.

Mabel uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Ah!" cried Marguerite enthusiastically, "our Marie is quite an artist."

"But, Marguerite, be quiet, will you; you see always my work *couteur de rose*!" remonstrated Marie.

"And you, sister, never think anything nice that you do; but you are so clever, you know, you can paint the most divine saints, and you can make caricatures, too, if you will; you can embroider as well as the great Monsieur Lemoline in Paris, and—"

But here Mabel, blushing, interposed—

"Be silent, Marguerite, you vex me, my sister; Meece Forrester will be deafened with all this talk."

The mention of the broderie recalled to Mabel's remembrance her conversation with Julie, the substance of which she repeated to Marie, begging that she might be allowed to see the robe of which Julie had spoken.

"You think it nonsense, then, to make this robe for our dear Mother's feast?" inquired Marie hesitatingly, as she displayed the exquisite embroidery of silver lilies on a pale blue satin ground.

"Yes," answered Mabel boldly; "this dressing up of image seems to me a real heathen devotion! If you must pray to the Virgin Mary, why not think of her in Heaven? Surely you do not imagine that her spirit is in her image?"

"Oh! no, I do assure you no," replied Marie earnestly, her sisters echoing in chorus, while Genevieve smiled and shook her head; "we do not believe that, but we are her children, and children do always love the picture and the image of their mother—is it not so?—and we love to offer her little tokens of our love."

"Do you suppose she cares for such trifles?"

"Ah!" returned Marie simply, "what have we then on earth to give our dear Mother that is worthy of her?"

It is the heart she looks to, and she will take from us the smallest gift, just as a mother on earth would receive from her child a strip of ribbon or a picture."

"You all seem to love the Blessed Virgin so much," remarked Mabel with surprise. "I honor her and reverence her deeply as the holiest of human creatures, but I could not love her as you all do."

"Not love her!—not love the Mother of Jesus! the Mother who did nurse Him when He was a little baby—the Mother who stood by Him at the foot of the cross! Ah, I do pity you! 'Mon Dieu! it is possible?' exclaimed Marie, her eyes filling with tears as she raised them imploringly to a picture of the Mother of Sorrows which hung upon the wall.

Mabel's eyes followed in the same direction, and gazing at the beautiful face, so full of deep, yet patient suffering, there arose within her own heart something akin to love for the Holy being, who was, after all, the blessed Mother of a Son divine.

After a while, the girls took Mabel to be introduced to their "bonne Maman," as they called her—their Father's mother, the old Marquise de St. Laurent, who, according to French customs, had remained, after her husband's death, in the inn of her family, and had not suffered expulsion from her own home at the time of her son's marriage; which, in England, for the sake of domestic peace, she must probably have done.

They found her in her bedroom, which she also used as a sitting-room—an airy, cheerful apartment, full of books, pictures, flowers, and plenty of bright sunlight, to which the old lady was very partial. The Marquise looked very picturesque as she sat busily knitting in her old-fashioned arm-chair; for though she was over eighty years of age, she was never idle.

Her snow-white hair was braided smoothly under a tall, curious Breton cap, and banded across her noble forehead by a narrow velvet ribbon. Her dress, in spite of its quaintness, was undeniably *recherche*, very plain, but everything about it scrupulously neat, exquisitely finished. Her dim blue eyes, exceedingly sweet in their benevolent serenity, were, nevertheless, capable of a keen piercing power, and looking at her, one could scarcely help being reminded of the "valiant woman" spoken of by Solomon.

Mabel was much struck with her soft, modulated voice, the charming simplicity of her manners, and her true French courtesy, when, holding out the hand which Marguerite, first respectfully bending, had kissed, the old Marquise drew Mabel towards her, affectionately embracing her, and bidding her welcome to Chateau St. Laurent. Then she asked many questions respecting Jessie, the children, Elvanee—just as though they all belonged to her, evincing the liveliest interest in all that concerned Mabel's family—she could, in fact, have shown little more had she been conversing about her own people.

It was not until the 5 o'clock dinner that Mabel had an opportunity of seeing the whole of the numerous family assembled. She had during the course of the afternoon been several times introduced to a good many of them, among whom Tante Celestine, as the girls called their father's youngest unmarried sister, especially won Mabel's fancy. She was also much attracted to the lively, pretty Madame Alfred de St. Laurent, the mother of Marie and Marguerite, and had made the discovery that Louis and his elder brother, Alphonse, could make themselves exceedingly agreeable and amusing.

When the dinner-hour brought them all together, it was a goodly sight to see the long table, presided over by the old Marquise, who entered leaning upon the arm of her grandson Rene, the eldest son of Monsieur and Madame de St. Laurent, and who wore the sash of the St. Sulpice students.

"He is already a deacon," whispered Marie to Mabel. "At the next ordination he will be a priest."

The "Benedicite" having been pronounced by the young deacon, all but Mabel making upon themselves the sign of the cross, the Babol of tongues, which for the grace had been momentarily hushed, broke forth with renewed vigor. Everybody talked, nobody listened—so at least it seemed to Mabel, who felt almost deafened by the noise, to which her English ears were unaccustomed. She noticed, however, that if the old Marquise put up her hand there was instantly a general silence—every eye turned at once with respectful attention towards her as she sat at the top of the long table. While the Marquise was speaking, no one interrupted her, no one contradicted what she had to say. She was evidently, and in real earnest, the head of the family. Towards her was manifested none of that spirit so much abroad at the present time, which makes the younger members of the community despise, or at least set at naught, as old-fashioned, or ridiculously behind-time, the opinion of their elders. On the contrary, every possible attention was shown to her. Her wishes were commands, her tastes always consulted, her ideas treated with deference. The grand old patriarchal spirit lived still in the family of St. Laurent, each child belonging to it having been from its cradle trained in the good old customs and chivalrous maxims that made our ancestors in the Middle Ages what they were—so noble, so brave, so loyal, so true!

Dinner being over, the whole family assembled on the lawn, whence they dispersed by degrees in various directions—some going to walk, others to

row on the river which flowed at a little distance from the chateau, several of the elders remaining grouped about the old Marquise, who had been wheeled out in her chair by two of her grandsons, to enjoy the beauty of the summer evening.

Mabel returned to Chateau St. Anne very much delighted with her first experience of *French de famille*. She had stayed with Genevieve till quite late, and was escorted home by the three girls and two of their brothers. The homeward walk was perhaps the most pleasant part of the day, which altogether was one Mabel was not likely to forget. Jessie was pleased to see her when Mabel came in, her face brighter than for a long time it had looked; and when, after saying good night to Mabel, she went to her own room, Jessie again congratulated herself upon having brought Mabel to Vrananthes.

Mabel, meanwhile, had never felt less inclined to go to bed. Long and fatiguing as the day had been, she intended to sit up in order to write a long account of it to Hugh; but this proved a more difficult task than she had anticipated. Her heart was strangely full of conflicting emotions. The after-events of the day having by no means dispelled the first morning influences, she felt, so soon as she was quiet and alone, that something strange had befallen her. She longed to talk of it to Hugh, but a secret misgiving in her soul told her that from him, upon such a subject, she could not hope to find sympathy. Again and again she took up her pen, to make a beginning, but after the first few lines she came to a pause, her mind drawn away from her letter by an irresistible spell, which attracted her back to the solemn time she had passed that morning in the convent chapel.

She wanted to explain her feelings to Hugh, realizing as she did, in her innate truthfulness, that from him she should never need to disguise any one of her thoughts—but then how would he understand her? How could she expect him to enter into her strange, sweet feelings of that morning? To tell him that God was actually present in the church was impossible, he would be simply horrified; and were she to strive to put into words her own ideas on the conviction she had experienced while kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, Hugh would, she well knew, be very much vexed, and probably in his next letter, would forbid her ever to set foot again in a Roman chapel.

Here Mabel laid her pen down. She was getting into a labyrinth of difficulties.

"It made me so wonderfully happy to believe that Jesus was really there; besides I cannot help believing it—at least, I could not when I was in the chapel," she thought. "But then, if this is really true, what right have Hugh, or anyone on earth, to forbid my going into the churches?"

"Of course Hugh was right," answered another inward voice (a very weak, doubtful voice it was, though). "He does not believe in the Real Presence, and the Roman Church is full of corruption."

Happy thought, those corruptions of the Roman Church! Mabel's alarmed conscience took courage once more, as she enumerated to herself the doctrines that were "not Catholic, but Popish," as the weak, uncertain voice again whispered. "For instance, that dreadful one about the Immaculate Conception, of which Hugh once said that it was of all others the most blasphemous."

But here Mabel's first train of thought returned to her.

"Why can't we have the Real Presence in our churches? Why does our Lord remain in this corrupt Roman Church, and leave our own dear Church without His Presence?" mused Mabel, full of the remembrance of the entrancing sweetness that Holy Presence had imparted to her.

"The Real Presence is no doctrine of the English Church. Put it aside, it will mislead you," whispered the spirit that would have gone on for Hugh.

"False!" said Mabel, passionately, in her excitement speaking out aloud. "It is the faith of the Catholic Church—we do hold it—our Church is Catholic. Oh! Hugh, Hugh, why are you not here? If you were here I would make you confess to the truth of it. It is possible to have God in our churches. He is there. He must be."

"Who told you so?" asked the warning echo.

"Who told me?—who told me?" she repeated slowly, trying to remember some unimpeachable authority.

"Alas! only Mr. Vaughan, and he is gone over to the corrupt Church of Rome."

At length Mabel had recourse to the Book of Common Prayer, and she searched through the Catechism, the Communion Service, then read through the Thirty-nine Articles, with a sickening despair, knowing that there she would find no consolation. Not a sentence, not a word that could be twisted into the most distant allusion to the doctrine of the Real Presence. She possessed some books of devotion, indeed, that would admit of the belief; but all at once it occurred to Mabel that these books by no means embodied the feelings of her own communion. She took up a little manual—Mr. Vaughan's gift to her in ancient days. It was full of prayers by St. Bernard, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Cyprinus, and others, and clearly to her memory came the recollection of an evening at Elvanee, when, as they walked back after service, Hugh had taken the book from her, had glanced over it, and returned it to her with the remark:

"Mabel, these books are Roman Catholic prayer-books. With a great many of the prayers I have no fault to find, but remember, you must pin your faith to nothing you find in them. Do you know that they are written by Catholic saints, or rather supposed to be so? At all events, don't delude yourself into the idea that all you discover in them is according to the faith of the English Church."

At the time Hugh's words had made little impression upon her; now they came back, coupled with Genevieve's solemn warnings of the Idealistic Church, to which she (Mabel) so fondly clung. Was it going to crumble away, too, beneath her feet, as it had done under Genevieve's? Was this very faith in the Real Presence a delusion? Could she ever dare, in the greater number of English churches, to pay the adoration to the Blessed Sacrament which she had that day witnessed in the first Catholic church she had ever entered, and which her heart told her was not of choice merely, but of necessity, wherever that Sacred Presence was dwelling?

Alas! no, it would not do. Let others deceive themselves, she would not—wisely, it is to be feared, too. Mabel's heart and reason alike bore unwilling evidence to the truth which she was beginning to accept. The Real Presence was no doctrine of the Anglican Church. Hugh was right she had been under a delusion.

Thoroughly wearied, Mabel at length put away her writing and went to bed, but it was very long before she could sleep. A thousand fear were haunting her imagination; a nameless dread, for which she could not account, weighed upon her spirits. She tried to soothe her mind by repeating some of her favorite hymns out of "The Christian Year," determining that for the future she would guard herself against all these strange new influences.

"They cannot be good, they cannot be true," she murmured again and again. "Hugh is good—quite as good as Mr. Vaughan; he does not believe in them. Why must I? I won't!" argued Mabel. "There is nothing for me but to be a sober, down-right Anglican. I must take care what I am about, or I shall be deluded, as Veva has been. Poor Veva, how I pity her!"

"No, you do not, Mabel," whispered the strong inner voice once more—"you envy her with your whole heart, you would give all you have on earth to be possessed of her steady, peaceful faith, her entire rest in the 'Unam Sanctam Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam.'"

TO BE CONTINUED.

DO YOU DESIRE TO SAVE SOULS?

Do you desire to save souls and thus be numbered among those who will shine as stars for all eternity in the kingdom of God? Although we are not all called to work directly and exclusively for the salvation of soul, yet it is none the less in our power to gain many for the greater glory of God and our own sanctification.

How many saints would be added to those choirs of celestial spirits which surround the heavenly throne, unceasingly chanting the praises of the Almighty, if we should only exert a little our latent energies, reflect a little and use these innumerable means at our disposal. In the first place we ourselves would become saints. What more convincing and admirable truths than those words of Our Lord, that a cup of water given in the name of a disciple should not go unrewarded.

How much greater our recompense when we co-operate in saving souls!

One of the greatest means of effecting conversions is to help missionaries who are entirely devoted to this work. There are many institutions in the world for this purpose. In Europe the house of the foreign missions of France, whose priests are found all over the East, are supported by public charity. But we need not go to Europe to find such institutions; in our own America, there exists the Society of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart, for the conversion of 8,000,000 negroes in our land. Its Mother-house is St. Joseph's Seminary, Baltimore, Maryland. It is supported entirely by the charity of the faithful.

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ROME IN AMERICA.

An Anglican Writer Says the Church Will be a Source of Safety to the Republic.

There is a common idea, no less absurd than it is widespread, that the spirit of Roman Catholicism is hostile to all progress; that it is a monarchial and reactionary spirit, utterly opposed to freedom of thought or opinion in matters of religion, education, or politics. It is this idea which animates the enemies of the Church of Rome the world over, and which is strikingly prevalent among non-Roman Catholic thinkers in the United States of America. There, many worthy, but somewhat short-sighted and prejudiced individuals, see in the establishment and increase of Roman Catholicism in their midst, nothing but the ultimate destruction of the unity of their Republic, the hindrance to all progress, the death-blow to all freedom.

Some regard the Church of Rome as a hopeless anachronism, a feeble survival of mediævalism; others, as a source of constant menace and danger. And yet, if that Church but carries out her highest aims, acts up to her loftiest ideals, she will, in the end, be a source of safety, and not of peril, to the great Republic, in whose midst she has taken so firm a root. This is a bold assertion; but it is not made without good grounds, and without a well-founded belief in its sincerity and truth.

I may here state that, although myself a staunch adherent of the Anglican Church, I went recently to the United States, taking with me letters of introduction from Cardinal Manning to the chief American prelates in order that I might make a careful study of this question on the spot. I trust, therefore, that I am fairly well qualified to express a duly thoughtful opinion on the subject.

In the first place, then, it must be remembered that the spirit of Rome is to be ever the Church of the Nation in which she lives. Without conceding one jot or tittle of those principles and dogmas which she holds dearest, which are the very foundations of her well-being, and upon which, as upon a rock, she so firmly established that she cannot be shaken, yet, in matters of policy, as in affairs of State, it is surprising to note how frequently she moves forward on clear, broad, well-defined lines—lines laid down for her by those whose experience is the experience of ages. In whatever country, therefore, she seeks to establish herself, she recognizes, in matters of civil government, that the form which has been adopted there is the legitimate one.

Nowhere is this more clearly seen to be true than in the United States. Here, the Roman Catholic Church is on her trial as she has never been since that moment when she first roared her temples amid the palaces and glories of Imperial Rome. Here for the first time in the history of the world, and with a sharpness of contrast hitherto unseen, the old and the new are confronted with one another. Here, face to face, they stand—the Grand Old Church, the Glorious Youthful Republic; and meanwhile the world looks breathlessly on. For a crisis is at hand. This is a tide in the affairs of Rome, which, if she take it at the flood, will lead her on to such fortune as even she has never before experienced.

I make three suggestions concerning the work, both present and future, of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, and the position she can make for herself in the great Republic.

In the first place, she must exist in the people, for the people, by the people. She must set herself, if she is to do any good at all, or if she is to obtain any firm or lasting establishment whatever, to the bettering of humanity. In the persons of her priests and Bishops American Rome must show to the world that, what Mr. Stead has well termed a humanized Papacy, is not only possible, but an absolute warm, living, pulsating, energizing fact.

Secondly, and this follows the first as the night the day, she must show herself not only abreast of the times, but in advance of the times. And if she keep herself abreast of the times as they are in the United States, then she is abreast of the whole world.

And, thirdly, she will probably—nay, almost certainly—prove herself a political factor of the highest importance in the preservation—or, indeed, in the very building up—of the unity of the mighty Republic.

That the Roman Catholic Church in the Republic is acting upon the first two of these suggestions, there is no difficulty in proving. And if these suggestions are persistently carried out, it goes without saying that the

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Roman Catholic Church will speedily become an important, if not the most important, political factor in the Republic. That Church in the Republic will be not the Church of Mediævalism, or of the Imperial City, or even of the Vatican of to-day. Rome in the Republic will be American Rome; it will be Puritan Rome; it will be emancipated Rome. It will not be Rome, as we have hitherto known it, hampered and fettered by ancient and rules centuries old, and altogether and hopelessly incompatible, and out of touch with the spirit of to-day. It will be Rome Americanized—in other words, frankly Democratic. And American Rome will find it her duty, and even now finds it her duty, to modify or abolish those canons and laws which are absurd and ridiculous in the vast, new republic. I believe the day will come when, if Rome will but act up to her loftiest ideals, and in accordance with her noblest traditions, Republican Rome, Puritan Rome, will dominate not the United States alone, but the whole English-speaking world.—Condensed in the *Literary Digest* from an article by Raymond Blandway in *Pall Mall Magazine*, London.

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