

THROUGH THORNY PATHS.

BY MARY ROWENA COTTER.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

"You are right, but it is our duty as women of a religious order who are criticized on every side to use the greatest prudence, especially in public and among strangers. I hope you do not think of approaching him."

making a thorough examination of the interior of the vast edifice and its beautiful works of art. Such things had no charm for him now. All that occupied his mind was a vivid remembrance that the church in the far West where he had once heard Cecilia Daton sing was much like this. Dropping into a seat near the door he sat gazing fixedly on the little lamp which, in the midst of a costly array of cut glass, burned like a bright star before the altar. Now and then a devout worshiper would enter the edifice, kneel a few minutes in prayer and go away but he heeded them not, and the car he had come in to wait for was entirely forgotten. To him the church was growing dark (though the sunlight was streaming through the stained windows) until only the sanctuary lamp was visible, then that too, faded, and he was asleep.

once to set his spiritual affairs aright. On learning that he had no religion, the good father did not mention the matter to him again until he was stronger. His rapidly increasing weakness caused his benefactors to fear that he would die, and while the inmates of the house took turns in caring for him, they daily besieged heaven with earnest prayers for his conversion. In even his weakest state the true nobility underlying his manly character had asserted itself, and the aged priest who had taken him in often declared that with the light of the true faith he would possess the power to do much good.

same clearness with which her would-be lover was to tell his story a few days later. "Poor child," he said, "this is a most unfortunate affair, and I am sorry for you. Do you feel that you could care enough for this young man to marry him if you were not here?"

Then when she was induced to go out in company, she knew that she was being stared at by many and pointed out to strangers as one who had left the convent, and she felt it keenly; but this humiliation was nothing compared to the remorse burning in her heart. After spending six months at home, during which she had kept up correspondence with the Sisters, she wrote and begged to be taken back, waiting patiently for the answer, which was long delayed, and when it did come, she was refused admission on the ground that she evidently had no vocation. The letter was kindly written, but very brief and to the point, which was not wholly pleasing to her.

"Now, Cecilia," he said in conclusion, "can you not give me the love for which I have waited so long and promise to become my wife?" "As a friend I have always esteemed and respected you, but I cannot marry you."

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Having been found in the church, it was supposed that he was a Catholic, and the priest, who saw that he was in all probability entering on a severe attack of illness, offered at

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