



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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“LOVE IN THE CLOUDS.”

“And this is the fellow that wants to marry my daughter. A pretty fool I should be to give Annie to a coward like him.”

So shouted honest Master Joss, the sacristan of the Cathedral of Vienna, as he stood in the private room of the “Adam and Eve” inn, and looked after the angry retreating figure of Master Otkar, the head-mason.

As he spoke, an honest young gardener, named Gabriel, entered; and for a moment the young man's handsome face flushed high as he thought the sacristan's words were directed to him. For it was the old, old story. Gabriel and Annie had played together and loved each other before they knew the meaning of the word love; and when, a few months before, they had found it out, and Gabriel proposed to make Annie his wife, her father rejected him with scorn. The gardener had little to offer besides an honest heart and a pair of industrious hands, while Master Otkar, the mason, had both house and money. To him, then, sorely against her will, was the pretty Annie promised; and poor Gabriel kept away from the sacristan's peasant cottage, manfully endeavoring to root out his love, while exterminating the weeds in his garden. But somehow it happened that, although the docks and thistles withered and died, other pertinacious plants, clinging and twining like the wild convolvulus, grew and flourished, nurtured, perhaps, by an occasional distant glance of sweet Annie's pale cheek and drooping eyes.

So matters stood, when one day, as Gabriel was passing through a crowded street, a neighbor hailed him:

“Great news, my boy!—glorious news! Our Leopold has been chosen Emperor at Frankfort. Long live the House of Austria! He is to make his triumphal entry here in a day or two. Come with me to the ‘Adam and Eve,’ and we will drink his health and hear all about it.”

In spite of his dejection, Gabriel would have been no true son of Vienna if he had refused this invitation; and waving his cap in sympathy with his comrade's enthusiasm, he hastened with him to the inn.

We have already seen how the unexpected appearance and more unexpected words of Master Joss met him on his entrance. In the height of his indignation, the sacristan did not observe Gabriel, and continued in the same tone:

“I declare, I'd give this moment full and free permission to woo and win my daughter to any young and honest fellow who would wave the banner in my stead—aye, and think her well rid of that cowardly mason.”

From time immemorial it had been the custom in Vienna, whenever the Emperor made a triumphal entry, for the sacristan of the cathedral to stand on the very pinnacle of the highest tower and wave a banner while the procession passed. But Master Joss was old, stiff and rheumatic, and such an exploit would have been as much out of his line as dancing on a tight rope. It was therefore needful for him to procure a substitute; and it never occurred to him that his intended son-in-law, who professed such devotion to his interests, and whose daily occupation obliged him to climb dizzy heights and stand on slender scaffolding, could possibly object to take his place.

What, then, was his chagrin and indignation when, on broaching the matter that afternoon to Master Otkar, he was met by a flat and not over courteous refusal! The old man made a hasty retreat; words ran high, and the parting volley levelled at the retreating mason we have already reported.

“Would you, dear Master Joss, would you indeed, do so? Then, with the help of Providence, I'll wave the banner for you as long as you please from the top of St. Stephen's tower.”

“You, Gabriel?” said the old man, looking at him kindly, as he was wont to do in former days. “My poor boy, you never could do it; you, a gardener, who never had any practice in climbing?”

“Ah, now you want to draw back from your word!” exclaimed the youth, reddening. “My head is steady enough; and if my heart is heavy, why, it was you who made it so. But never mind, Master Joss. Only promise me, on the word of an honest man, that you will not interfere any more with Annie's free choice, and you may depend on seeing the banner of the Emperor, whom Heaven long preserve, wave gloriously on the old pinnacle!”

“I will, my brave lad; I do promise, in the presence of all these honest folks, that Annie shall be yours!” said the sacristan, grasping Gabriel's hand with one of his, while he wiped his eyes with the back of the other.

“One thing I have to ask you,” said the young man, “that you will keep this matter a secret from Annie. She'd never consent; she'd say I was tempting Providence; and who knows whether the thought of her displeasure might not make my head turn giddy just when I want to be most firm and collected.”

“No fear of her knowing it, for I have sent her on a visit to her aunt, two or three miles in the country.”

“And why did you send her from home, Master Joss?”

“Because the sight of her pale face and weeping eyes troubled me; because I was vexed with her; because, to tell you the truth, I was vexed with myself. Gabriel, I was a hard-hearted old fool; I see it now. And I was very near destroying the happiness of my only remaining child; for my poor boy Arnold, your old friend and school-fellow, Gabriel, has been for years in foreign parts, and we don't know what has become of him. But now, please God, Annie will at least be happy, and you shall marry her, my lad, as soon after the day of the procession as you and she please. There's my hand upon it.”

There was not a happier man that evening within the precincts of Vienna, than Gabriel, the gardener, although he well knew that he was attempting a most perilous enterprise, and one as likely to result in his death. He made all necessary arrangements in case of that event, especially in reference to the comfort of an only sister who lived with him, and whom he was careful to keep in ignorance of his intended venture. This done, he resigned himself to dream all night of tumbling from terrific heights, and all day of his approaching happiness. In the meanwhile, Otkar swallowed his chagrin as best he might, and kept aloof from Master Joss; but he might have been seen holding frequent and secret communications with Lawrence, a man who assisted the sacristan in the care of the church.

The day of the young Emperor's triumphal entry arrived. He was not expected to reach Vienna before evening; and at the appointed hour the sacristan embraced Gabriel, and giving him the banner of the House of Austria, gorgeously embroidered, said:

“Now, my boy, up, in God's name! Follow Lawrence; he'll guide you safely to the top of the spire, and afterwards assist you in coming down.”

Five hundred and fifty steps to the top of the tower! Mere child's play—the young gardener flew up to them with a joyous step. Then came two hundred wooden stairs over the clock-tower and belfry; then five steep ladders up the narrow pinnacle. Courage! A few more narrow steps—half an hour of peril—then triumph, reward, the priest's blessing, and the joyful “Yes” before the altar. Ah, how heavy was the banner to drag upward—how dark the straight stony shaft!—Hold! there is the trap-door. Lawrence and his assistant pushed Gabriel through.

“That's it,” cried Lawrence; “you'll see the iron steps and clamps to hold on by outside—only keep your head steady. When 'tis your time to come down, hail us, and we'll throw you a rope-ladder and looks. Farewell!” As he said these words, Gabriel had passed up through the trap-door, and with feet and hands clinging to the slender iron projections, felt himself hanging over a tremendous precipice, while the cold evening breeze ruffled his hair. He had still, burdened as he was with the banner, to steady himself on a part of the spire sculptured in the similitude of a rose, and then, after two or three daring steps still higher, to bestride the very pinnacle and wave his gay gold flag.

“May God be merciful to me!” sighed the poor lad, as glancing downward on the busy streets, lying so far beneath, the whole extent of his danger flew upon him. He felt so lonely, so utterly forsaken in that desert of the upper air, and the cruel wind strove with him, and struggled to wrest the heavy banner from his hand.

“Annie, Annie, 'tis for thee,” he murmured, and his sound of that sweet name nerved him to endurance. He wound his left arm firmly round the iron bar which supported the golden star, surmounted by a crescent, that served as a weathercock, and with the right waved the flag, which flapped and rustled like the wing of a mighty bird of prey. The sky—how near it seemed—grew dark above his head, and the lights and bonfires glanced upward from the city below. But the cries of rejoicing came faintly on his ear, until one long-continued shout, mingled with the sound of drums and trumpets, announced the approach of Leopold.

“Huzza, huzza, long live the Emperor,” shouted Gabriel, and waved his banner proudly. But the deepening twilight and the dizzy height rendered him unseen and unheard by the busy crowd below.

The deep voice of the cathedral bell tolled the hour.

“Now my task is ended,” said Gabriel, drawing a deep sigh of relief, and shivering in the chilly breeze. “Now I have only to get down and give the signal.”

More heedfully and slowly than he had ascended, he began his descent. Only once he looked upward to look colorless against the dark sky.

“Ha,” he exclaimed, “doesn't it look now as if that heathenish Turk of a crescent were nod-

ding and wishing me an evil ‘good night?’ Be quiet, Mahommed.”

A few courageous steps landed him once more amidst the petals of the gigantic-sculptured rose, which offered the best, indeed the only engine of vantage for his feet to rest on.

He furled his banner tightly together, and shouted, “Halloa, Lawrence! Albert! here, throw me up the ladder and the hooks.”

No answer.

More loudly and shrilly did Gabriel reiterate the call.

Not a word, not a stir below.

“Holy Virgin! can they have forgotten me? Or have they fallen asleep?” cried the poor fellow aloud, and the sighing wind seemed to answer like a mocking demon.

“What shall I do? What will become of me?”

Now enveloped in darkness, he dared not stir one hair-breadth to the right or to the left. A painful sensation of tightness came across his chest, and his soul grew bitter within him.

“They have left me here of set purpose,” he muttered, through his clenched teeth.

“The torches below will shine on my crushed body.”

Then, after a moment:

“No, no; the sacristan could not find it in his heart; man born of woman could not do it. They will come, they must come.”

But when they did not come, and the pitiless darkness thickened around him, so that he could not see his hand, in death-anguish grew to the pitch of his sanity.

“God,” he cried, “the Emperor will not suffer such barbarity. Noble Leopold, help! One word from you would save me.”

But the cold night wind, blowing ominously around the tower, seemed to answer:

“Here, I alone am emperor, and this is my domain.”

While this was passing, two men stood conversing together at the corner of the street, aloof from the rejoicing crowd.

“Haven't I managed it well?” asked one.

“Yes; he'll never reach the ground alive, unless the sacristan—”

“Oh, no; the old man is too busy with his son, who came home unexpectedly an hour ago. He'll never think of that fool Gabriel, until—”

“Until 'tis too late. How did you get rid of Albert?”

“By telling him that Master Joss had undertaken to go himself and fetch the gardener down. The trap-door is fast, and no one within call.—But I think, Master Otkar, you and I may as well keep out of the way till the fellow has dropped down like a ripe apple from the stem.”

And so the two villains took their way down a narrow street, and appeared no more that night.

Meantime, a dark shadowy fiend sat on one of the leaves of the sculptured rose, and hissed in Gabriel's ear—“Renounce thy salvation, and I will bring thee down in safety.”

“May God preserve me from such a snare,” cried the poor lad, shuddering.

“Or only give me your Annie, and I'll save you.”

“Will you hold your tongue, you wicked spirit?”

“Or just say you'll make me a present of your first-born child, and I'll bear you away as softly as if you were floating down.”

“Avant, Satan! I'll have nothing to do with gentlemen who wear four horns and a tail,” replied Gabriel, manfully.

The clock tolled again, and the gardener, aroused by the sound, perceived that he had been asleep, that he had actually slumbered standing on that dizzy point, suspended over that abyss.

A cold shudder ran through his frame, followed by a burning heat, and he grasped the pinnacle with a convulsive tightness. A voice seemed to whisper in his ear:

“Fool! this is death, that unknown anguish which no man can escape. Anticipate the moment, and throw thyself down.”

“Must I then die?” muttered Gabriel, while the cold sweat started from his brow; “must I die while life is so pleasant? Oh, Annie, Annie! pray for me; the world is so beautiful, and life is so sweet.”

Then it seemed as if soft white wings floated around him, while a gentle voice whispered:

“I am longing to see Annie, father, I dare say she is grown a fine girl. How is my friend, Gabriel, who used to be so fond of her when we were children together?”

The sacristan sprang from his seat.

“Gabriel! Holy Virgin! I had quite forgotten him.”

A rapid explanation followed. Master Joss and his son hastened towards the cathedral, and met Albert on their way.

“Where is Gabriel?” cried the sacristan.

“I don't know; I have not seen him since he climbed through the trap-door.”

“But who helped him down?”

“Why yourself, of course,” replied Albert, with a look of astonishment. “Lawrence told me when we came down that you had undertaken to do it.”

“Oh the villains, the double-dyed scoundrels! Now I understand it all,” groaned the old man.

“Quick! Arnold! Albert! For the love of God look up to the spire!”

Arnold rushed towards the square, and his keen eye, accustomed to look out at great distances at sea, discerning through the gray, uncertain twilight, something fluttering on the spire.

“'Tis he? It must be he, still living!”

“Oh, God!” cried Master Joss, “where are my eyes? Oh! that we may not be too late.”

The keys were found in the old man's pocket, and all three, rushing through the cathedral yard, darted up the stairs, the sacristan in the excitement of the moment moving as swiftly as his young companions.

Albert, knowing the trick of the trap-door, went through it first.

“Call call out to him, lad,” exclaimed Master Joss.

A breathless pause.

“I hear nothing stirring,” said Albert; “nor can I see anything from here. I'll go over the rose.”

Bravely did he surmount the perilous projection, and after a few moments of intense anxiety, he reappeared at the trap-door.

“There certainly is a figure standing on the rose, but 'tisn't Gabriel 'tis a ghost!”

“A ghost! you dreaming dunder-head,” shouted Arnold; “let me up.” And he began to climb with the agility of a cat.

Presently he cried out, “Come on, come on, as far as you can. I have him, thank God. Be quick—time is precious.”

Speedily and gently they gave him aid, and at length a half-unconscious figure, still wrapped in the banner, was brought down in safety.

They bore him into the “Adam and Eve,” laid him in a warm bed, and poured, by gentle degrees, a little wine down his throat. Under this treatment, he soon recovered his consciousness, and began to thank his deliverers. Suddenly, his eyes fell upon a mirror hanging on the wall opposite the bed, and he exclaimed:

“Wipe the hoar frost off my hair—that yellow dust off my cheeks.”

In truth, his locks were white, his rosy cheeks yellow and wrinkled, and his bright eyes dim and sunken; but neither dust nor hoar frost were there to wipe away—that one night of horror had added forty years to his age.

In the course of that day, many who had heard of Gabriel's adventure, crowded to the inn and sought to see him, but none were admitted save the three who sat continually by him—his weeping young sister, the brave Arnold, and Master Joss, for his conscience never ceased to say, in a voice that could be heard, “You alone are the cause of all this.” By way of a little self-comfort, the sacristan used to say at intervals, “If I only had hold of that Lawrence.—If I only had that Otkar by the throat.” But these worthies wisely kept out of the way, nor were they ever seen again at Vienna.

“'Tis all over between me and Annie. She would shudder at the sight of an old, wrinkled, gray-haired fellow.”

No one answered. His sister hid her face on the pillow, while her bright ringlets mingled with his poor, white locks; and Arnold's handsome face grew very sad as he thought—“The poor fellow is right; there are few things that young girls dislike more than gray hair and yellow wrinkles.”

“I have one request to make of you all,” said Gabriel, raising himself up on his couch; “do not let Annie know a word of this. Write to her that I am dead;—she'll mind it less, I think; then I'll go to the forest, and let the wolves eat me, if they will. I want to save her from pain.”

“A fine way to save Annie from pain,” cried a well-known voice, while a light figure rushed towards the bed, and clasped the poor sufferer in a long embrace.

“My own true love! you were never more beautiful in my eyes than now. And to pretend you were dead! A likely story, while every child in Vienna is talking of nothing but my poor boy's adventure. And let yourself be eaten by wolves. No, no, Gabriel, you wouldn't treat your poor Annie so cruelly as that.”

Love and hope proved wonderful physicians; for although Gabriel's hair, to the end of his life, remained as white as snow, his cheeks and eyes, ere the wedding day arrived, had resumed their former tint and brightness. A nappy man was Master Joss on the day that he gave his blessing to the young couple—the day when Gabriel's sore-tried love found its reward in the hand of his Annie.

REV. DR. CAHILL, ON THE DUCHIES AND THE POPE. (From the Dublin Catholic Telegraph.)

In the present Italian difficulty Sardinia is employing her last efforts to extend her dominion through all Central Italy. Not content with having acquired the sovereignty of the rich province of Lombardy, she seeks the further annexation of the Duchies and of the Roman legations. Looking at this part of the question there is no policy more hurtful to the feelings of Austria than these presumptuous claims or expectations of Victor Emmanuel. Austria has long been the protector of the Dukes, and she has been in all cases of emergency the support and the powerful final resource of the Pope; hence the defeat at Solferino, the loss of Lombardy, the transfer of Venetia, are evils most painfully heightened by the mortification of hearing her deadly enemy making further advances on the domain of Austria's former power and prerogative; and setting up Sardinian rule through all Central Italy. It is a clear case that Victor Emmanuel could never enter on this course of threatened annexation from his own resources or individual policy. He could no more hope to make these annexations through the sole power of Savoy, than he could challenge Austria to battle, relying on the sole military strength of Sardinia. No, the world knows that these new designs of his must rest on the support of Napoleon either expressed or expected. Central Italy thus interprets this conduct of Victor Emmanuel; and hence all the discontent in these distracted petty states give him cheerfully their ready support and allegiance. Napoleon is, therefore, implicitly identified up to this period with Victor Emmanuel in all the late proceedings of “deputations, proclamations, enlistments, provisional governments, &c., &c.,” which have been carried on since last July in these disturbed districts.

The two classes aggrieved in these revolutionary movements are the Dukes and their friends on the one hand, and the Pope and his adherents on the other. The case of the Dukes is merely local, and wounds only their loyal subjects at home with their partisans in Austria. Not so, however, with the Pope; the Catholic Church of all Europe is insulted and robbed in the person of the Pope. If Napoleon should, therefore, permit for the present Victor Emmanuel to use his name, or to hint his consent in the premises referred, he has little to fear from the resentment of the Royal adherents of the Duchies; but if his Imperial Majesty should unite with the Sardinian King in his attack on the Legations, his tenure of the French diadem would be brief indeed. This statement of mine will appear rather well sustained before I shall have concluded this Article. His French Catholic subjects and his French Catholic armies, and his French Catholic Marshals would hurl him from his throne with a higher courage, and with a more dashing assault (if necessary) than they won his victories at Magenta and Solferino, if he touched one hair in the Pope's head, or robbed him of one inch of his patrimony. No man in Europe knows these certain results better than the French Emperor; and therefore, calculating, firstly, on the well-known friendly feelings of Napoleon for Pio Nono, independently of the sure menacing consequences that would necessarily follow, the writer of this letter has maintained from the commencement of the Italian revolution, that Napoleon, for his life, would not permit the Papal prerogative to be diminished; or the Papal temporal power to be modelled or wrested in the territories under his consideration.

In the position which Sardinia assumes in thus encouraging the annexation of the Romagna and the Duchies, she is sustained ostensibly by the published declaration of Napoleon, who has more than once stated, “that in the case of a national ruler he would respect the popular voice in selecting a monarch of the nation's free choice;” and again, “that he would never employ force to establish a throne against the free will of the people.” When Napoleon uttered these sentiments mankind believed that he had in view—firstly, an argument to prove the justice and the legality of his own claim, to the French Crown; and secondly, to prepare the public mind for the selection of his cousin for a new Italian dynasty. Since these words were spoken and written much change has taken place in Sardinian policy, and in the public Italian mind. Central Italy abhors the name of a Bonaparte for a Ruler; Sardinia entertains more enlarged ideas of her own future domination; professes less dependence on French