

THE ROMANCE OF A JESUIT.

From the French of *Do Bengny d'Hagerne*.

CHAPTER IV. (continued.)

After a poor repast, Marguerite again asked whether his decision was made and he told her that he was going to accept the mission. He explained to her that he would have to be away in the provinces for some little time, but that she herself would stay in her beloved *Convent des Oiseaux*, where she would be very happy. This news about herself gave her great satisfaction for she desired to finish her studies in order to be in a position to gain her own living and thus come to her brother's aid, instead of being a charge to him.

The next day, then, Charles presented himself at Mous. Meynaudier's.

"I have thought over everything, and, for my sister's sake, I accept your offer."

"I am delighted. Yesterday evening I saw the Minister and told him of your hesitation, which he quite understood and appreciated. When I told him that I felt certain you would decide on accepting, he begged me to tell you that he would undertake to recompense you liberally. When will you be ready to start?"

"Not till my examination is over. I have but a few days to wait and when once that is over I shall be at the Minister's disposal."

The examination took place and Charles was most successful.

The next day he presented himself at the deputy's, who told him that it would be necessary to make himself acquainted with the imputations made against the Company, and then he would be better able to know where to turn his attention.

"Do you know '*les Provinciales*,' by Pascal?"

"Yes."

"Have you read any other books on the subject?"

"Not any."

"Well, then, here are some books I have got ready for you, '*Memoire de la Chalotais*,' '*L'Histoire d'Ollendorf*,' '*Extrait des assertions*,' '*Monita Secreta*,' &c. Read them carefully and come to see me again for your final instructions."

Three days afterwards, everything being arranged, Marguerite returned to "*les Oiseaux*." Charles having carefully studied the history of the Jesuits in the writings of their bitterest enemies, had been informed in minutest detail of what was required of him.

The ministerial deputy gave him a roll of 500 francs for his expenses, and an instalment of the salary allotted to him. Lastly, he gave him a letter addressed to the Father Rector of St. Acheul.

"We thought that perhaps you would not be admitted," he said in explanation, "without a letter of recommendation. For a moment we feared we should have great difficulty in procuring one, but I remembered that one of my friends had had some literary business with an old Jesuit. I placed myself in communication with the Father and represented you as a new Paul, struck down on the road to Damascus. Since, according to their own axiom, the end justifies the means, I told him that not only did you desire to live henceforth as a good Christian, but that you even aspired to the honour of one day belonging to the Company. The good old man was completely taken in, and here is his letter to me enclosing the one I have given you."

"Dear Sir, — It is with the greatest pleasure that I send you the letter of introduction which you have asked for. I thank Heaven for having allowed me to co-operate in assisting in the salvation of a soul which seeks to escape from the temptations of the devil and the seductions of the world by giving its whole self to Jesus Christ.

God will reward you, honoured sir, for lending your aid to this good work. I pray Him to bestow His choicest favours and blessings on you, in this world and in the next.

I have the honour to remain, &c.,

VERMONT S. J."

CHAPTER V.

Charles Durand having arrived at Amiens early in the day, employed a few hours in visiting the beautiful cathedral and

the other sights of the town. At about five o'clock in the evening he knocked at the door of the Jesuits residence of St. Acheul.

He delivered to the porter the letter addressed to the Father Rector, of which he was the bearer, and was shown into a spacious wainscoted room, the whole furniture of which consisted of a large table and a dozen chairs ranged against the wall. All around the room were hung framed engravings representing a crucifixion, a Madonna and various Jesuit saints.

He was in the old college parlour.

After having glanced round the room he approached the windows, which looked out on a tolerably large, paved courtyard, at the end of which stood a large building having wings at right angles to itself. Before the Revolution this fine structure, in the Louis XV. style, had been an Abbey of the Canons Regular of St. Genevieve. To the left this building and the one from which Charles was gazing were connected by a third structure, which was dull looking and built of plain red brick.

To the right there stretched a second yard planted with lime trees and in this yard stood a fourth building, quite detached, and as inelegant as the one to the left already mentioned. Calm and silence reigned supreme; no living being was to be seen! no noise to be heard! Charles experienced a strange sensation of torpor mingled with fear and for a moment almost thought of taking to flight. But he had gone too far to recede and must now continue. Besides, he felt an intense desire to penetrate into this mysterious and unknown region. Everything was new to him and he wanted to find out what these men were doing shut up, as they were, night and day in this lugubrious monastery.

Were they passing their time in utter idleness? in secret debauchery? in never-ending conspiracies? or, as they themselves pretended, did they divide their time between study and prayer?

He would solve these problems by living in their midst, but was there no danger in so doing? If he were found out to be a spy would they simply shew him the door? His reading had taught him to look on these men as capable of any crime, as making little of assassinating kings, emperors or anyone else who attempted to counteract their plans; would then these Jesuits, who for three centuries had been the instigators of every political crime, hesitate at the destruction of a foolishly young man, whom they had detected in attempting to fathom their secrets? In imagination he beheld all the horrors with which Eugene Sue's romances had familiarized the world.

His romantic ideas were put to flight, however, by the sight of an old priest, with an open letter in his hand, who was crossing the courtyard and coming towards him. Hardly had he time to compose his countenance when the Jesuit entered, and, saluting him, said:

"I believe you are Mons. Charles Durand?"

"Yes, Father."

"The Father Rector is occupied just now and has sent me in his place, begging you to excuse him. Father Vermont's letter mentions that you have some thoughts of entering our Society."

"Such is my most ardent desire."

"Have you already been acquainted with any of our Fathers?"

"I have never had that good fortune."

"You know nothing then concerning the formalities necessary to be gone through before entering the novitiate?"

"No, Father, but I am ready to go through with whatever you may deem necessary."

"The old Father replied smiling. I hope you do not imagine that we submit our neophytes to anything like what the free-masons are said to impose on their aspirants."

"I know nothing, imagine nothing. I have come here prepared to comply with whatever you may require of me."

"My dear son, your dispositions are all that could be desired. Our rule requires that an eight days retreat should be made by aspirants to the novitiate. Have you ever made one?"

"Never."

"Then the one you are about to make will have all the