

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART.

WRITTEN BY MRS. J. W. WALKER FOR THE THE AMERICAN.

CHAPTER III.

"You work ought to please papa. I am sure it cannot fail to do so, fastidious as he is."

As she spoke, Zaida passed in one side, that she might have the best light on the canvas. The scene was in the studio of Mr. Kensett, the rising young artist, who had recently been brought to notice by his paintings of scenes in the heart of the Sierras. He had just passed his twenty-first year, but was much older in appearance, for he had not been reared in the lap of opulence, but had been obliged to hew his way along rugged paths, which he had done with patience and untiring efforts. These struggles had written themselves on his countenance in strong lines. His was a Grecian face, a prominent nose, a broad forehead, large eyes, in which his thoughts might be read before they were spoken, a firm mouth, with lips delicate as a woman's, yet strongly outlined. He was tall, rather slender, and the sinews of an athlete, and every motion had the grace of conscious strength, decision and self-control. He was standing by the canvas, on which a full-length portrait of Zaida appeared, a perfect reflection of herself in her most charming mood. He touched his brush to her lips on the canvass with a tenderness and delicacy which changed the color imperceptibly, and stepped back, with the rapt expression of a devotee, replied in a low and modulated voice, as though dreaming:

"It is my best work, in which my whole soul and being has entered, but, Miss Joslyn, it falls far short of my ideal; far short, even, of the real."

"You flatter," responded Zaida, the faintest blush coming to her cheeks. "You have idealized me, and painted my expression rather than my poor face."

"You have given me, Miss Joslyn, the highest praise an artist can receive. To represent the soul, not the dead form; the spirit, the very thought, that is art; that is the office of the true artist, the genuine poet. It is not difficult to paint the external. A kitchen scene may be finished exquisitely, with the glint of light on every tin cup and pan, and yet not be a work of art. The camera can do better. The transference of the subtle spirit to canvas, that is true art. But I should not lecture you. It is my weakness," he continued, with a faint laugh; as though in reproach of himself.

"I thank you for your lecture, yet my criticism is not worthy of it," she replied. "I would not sit for the portrait only to please papa. Having one's picture in a work of art. What think you, would become of the photographers, were it not for vanity?"

"I ask your pardon for differing from you as to the motives of sitters. Really, are you not too severe, Miss Joslyn? It is not only our vanity, but we are conferring a favor on our friends to leave them our shadow. Next to having them, is to have their pictures. I hope the days you have spent in my humble studio have not been altogether irksome."

"On the contrary, they have been among the most pleasant. I am sure, after all you have done to amuse me while waiting, it would be ungrateful for me to feel otherwise."

"You remember the first lesson I gave you; it was two years ago today?"

"Ha, ha," she laughed. "Remember? Shall I ever forget? It was a poor cow, and after my sketch I asked you what we should call it, and you said we would have to invent a name, for it was a new animal, unlike anything before created."

"That was villainous!" replied Kensett. "I ought to have been ashamed of such rudeness. You would not be subject to such criticism now."

"Oh! no, I do not have to write under my drawings to tell people what they are intended for."

"I deeply regret," he hesitated, and with forced composure he continued, "your choice of schools. I ought not to mention it, for my opinions are nothing to you; but I must speak as I think, and the school you propose to attend is not of my choice."

"Ah! you too are prejudiced? You have the feelings educated into the Protestant? Well, so have I! I feel a horror for Catholics, and only the persuasion of our warm friend, Mrs. LaFarge, has overcome it. She says her daughter is delighted and that the society is refined."

"This all may be true, but my prejudice, as you please to call them, are unconquerable. When I think of your becoming an inmate of that seminary, a sensation of danger comes over me." As he spoke he approached Zaida, transferred the brush from his right hand to the left, which held the palette, and taking her hand, said slowly: "We have been near to each other these two years. You were then a schoolgirl; I your teacher. Now, you are on the threshold of womanhood. That I have taken the deepest interest in you, I need not tell you; that I am your friend, and you give me your confidence, I am proud to know. Now, our destinies are drifting us apart, into shadows, into clouds. I tremble for fear! I ought not to speak, but this may be an opportunity, which lost, may never return. I know the

public and great expectations of your father for you. I know you are supported in me in every way; I, who have fought the wall of poverty since a child, who never knew the meaning of affection, of being loved. I do not ask, I do not expect—nay, I do not want you to answer me. I desire you to give to your father what you have planned, but I must reveal my secret to you. I must tell you that I give you all the affection of my heart, its deepest love, and whatever bottle, I am yours until—death."

He began slowly, but finished in a rapid manner, as though fearing he would fall before he reached the end. He paused. She looked up into his eyes; there was the least flush on her cheeks as she calmly replied: "I honor you, Mr. Kensett, and admire your sobriety of sentiment. You ask for no reply. I will not give it. In a year you shall have my answer. It is September, the first day of the autumn."

circumstances, keeping you from your father for you. I will go."

"If you will allow me, I will escort you." There was the eloquent consent of silence, and they passed out into the busy street. As they walked side by side for would fall to remark their distinguished appearance. Kensett erect, quick and brilliant of step, with a mien that not only leaved but courted opposition, and Zaida, impersonative of the exquisite lines and graces, and a face expressing thoughtfulness, confidence and an affection so profound that, like a deep lake, its calmness reflected every light and shadow.

For a long time they walked in silence, for those who are in such deep sympathy have no need of the cold forms of speech. The magnetic tides of life flow from one to the other, and in a manner the spirit understands.

Presently they saw a carriage approaching drawn by beautiful horses,

and in regarded as the shining light of the Pacific Slope."

"You have met him then?" There was surprise and questioning in the tone.

"He was pointed out to me at the ball which I attended with Mrs. LaFarge, and afterwards had the satisfaction of being introduced to him."

"You are right, it is a unfortunate to meet or know such a man." Out of the dream-land of silent communion they were thus recalled, and the harmony disturbed; it was not again recovered. Life put on its rude everyday aspect. The very sky grew grey, and there was chilliness in the air as in their hearts.

The home was reached, and with a good-by differing only from that given by passing friends by a momentary lingering of hands which touched each other, they parted oblivious of the waves of sorrow which would roll be-

opened to those who gave the proper signal. From this gate a broad walk extended, dividing into two branches, one leading to the sanctuary, on the right, and the other leading to the convent. The latter was much the larger building, and of more imposing appearance. The buildings were connected by a subterranean passage.

The walks were bordered with flowers and the open spaces set with shrubbery. There were arbors, seats, and every nook, with fountains which made the grounds enchanting. At the wide door the signal was given and it was opened by an attendant. Passing through a low archway, the school-rooms were entered by doors on either side. On the floors above was the dormitory. At the end of the passage was the room of the superior, a sumptuously-furnished apartment. Everything was arranged to exclude observation from the world, and throw the glamour of mystery and secrecy over the mind.

On the right was the refectory with the reception room for visitors, the most elegant and attractive room in the building. On the left were the recreation rooms. The front one was devoted to the young ladies of the world and more wealthy Catholics, for although perfect equality was inculcated, the distinction was made to attract the patronage of Protestants. It had become fashionable for wealthy parents to send their daughters to the convent school. It is so now to an alarming extent in cities. The idea prevails that within the walls of such a school the young girl is safe from temptation and will, under the instruction of holy nuns, become a model of sweet womanly grace. It is also a prevalent idea that the course of instruction is more thorough and complete, and that more attention is bestowed on manners and deportment. The young lady thus "finished" at the convent academy, when she enters society has the advantage over others who have been educated with the common people at the public school. A more deplorable mistake could not be made by Protestant parents, one fraught with more destructive influences to all they hold right and true. Seclusion, in the first place, is not the correct method to guard against temptation. The graduate from the convent school goes out into the world ignorant of its temptations and weak as a child to resist them.

The course of instruction is superficial. The needle-work is incomparable, and is the one art that is taught with the most assiduity and ability. As matter of French and Italian, reading, music, drawing and painting, such was the course at the time our narrative begins, and Catholic forms do not change.

For special reasons, Zaida saw little of the arbitrary and exacting rules. She had been brought there for the purpose of conversion, and the path must be cleared of thorns and strewn with roses. Her teachers were selected with care, and they were the best such an institution could furnish.

The superior had received orders from the bishop to retain Zaida if every rule were set aside, and threatened with dire consequences if she did not. Zaida was fond of painting, and a teacher gave her instructions, widely known by the works of her brush in Europe. She was fond of languages, and French and Italian were taught her by conversation, which made their study delightful. Her harp was not neglected, and her voice was cultivated, and all these studies were not pursued with the energy that made them tasks, but with that ease and negligence which made them play-spells. Needlework was the recreation of all hours.

She became so engaged that she did not feel homesick, nor the anxiety to go home that she anticipated. It was an inflexible rule of the institution that the pupils must remain within its walls. They could not visit their homes except at the conclusion of the term. The reason assigned was that the studies were interrupted and mind diverted. While in the school every effort should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge. The home life grew dim. Another force was silently influencing her which she did not recognize. There at first was no direct appeal to her, on account of religion. There were a few forms to be complied with, which the superior told her were at her option, but that if not repugnant, she wished she would conform to, as a uniform behavior of the pupils was desirable. One of them was to dip the fingers in a basin of holy water standing by the door of the schoolroom, and make the sign of the cross, and she was to kneel at prayers. At first Zaida did not conform, but as she was the only one who did not, and it was a harmless form, she at length grew as punctual as the others. Of course her companions would talk, and as they were nearly all Catholics, they paraded continually that religion, and related stories of its long line of heroes, martyrs and saints. What at first was repulsive from prejudice became tolerated, and at length interesting. The stories of the saints who had given their lives for the good of others appealed to the ardent imagination of Zaida, and her ambition became fixed to be like them in dispensing charity and kindness; not in their austere way, for the way of martyrdom had passed, but in the way marked out by the needs of the present. She would have wealth, and would use it in assisting the poor

and the needy. This was her first dream, and as she reposed on her pillow at night, vision after vision would visit each other, of plans she would execute when she again entered the life of the world.

The solitary life she had led; the seclusion, the atmosphere that, as it were, breathed one thought, had wrought a change in the fine and sensitive temperament of Zaida. She could not analyze it herself, for she was acted on by influences which were strange to her, and beyond her control. This sensitiveness had become a morbid condition, which would have been overcome by a few days in the open air, and under home influences. How it was constantly intensified. It was the chronic state of all other members of the school, from the superior to the youngest child. In them, it was assisted by early training and hereditary bias, and was recognized as indicative of piety. To Zaida it was an unathomatic feeling, which seemed to grasp and hold her in restraint, which she could not divest herself of for a moment. After all, was her old idea, that soulless indifference about the conduct of life and the fate awaiting the spirit after death, right? If life is so short, and eternity so long, what is its moment, compared with immortal welfare? She thought and thought, and grew wretched with the doubts that beset her, turn which way she would. The old landmarks failed, and the ground which had appeared so solid became a yielding marshland.

At this critical moment it was announced that the bishop would preach in the chapel, and on that Sunday morning every member of the school was in attendance. The bishop, Lopez, after the long ceremonies, which it is useless to describe, which are intended to impress the mind and hold the attention of the young, began his discourse. Directly behind him, on a high panel, was painted with lifelike coloring the crucifixion. On the face of the dying Christ was a look of unutterable agony and forgiveness. The bishop stood in front and lower, and the light streaming from above made the living man and dying God as one scene. The light in the chapel was toned by the colored glass windows, and the air was heavy with incense. Lopez as a preacher and as a man was two distinct beings. This may be said of many preachers; but most pronounced was it true of him. He had been trained by the best instructors of Europe in the arts of rhetoric, and his ardent, fiery nature gave him the gift of eloquence. He also had in a large measure what has been called, for want of a better term, magnetism, to chain and hold his hearers' attention and compel them to accept his conclusions. Such eloquence is an outgrowth of, and appeals to and influences the passions. It is the child of feeling, appeals to feeling, and not to the intellect and reason, unless these are first made helpless slaves by the dominant and excited passions.

In the sacred desk he was as one inspired with the sacredness of the place and theme. His voice was low, soft and winsome. He spoke of the sins of humanity. How weak the strongest were; how little able to support ourselves. He proved this to the impressive, from premises he assumed: Then turning to the Jesus suspended on the cross, the blood dripping from his wounds, he cried in tones of rejoicing, "Eureka! we have found it!"

"Behold the man! Behold the God! who by mortal agonies has redeemed the world!" The effect was wonderful; the Catholics wept for joy, and a strange thrill ran through the nerves of Zaida. When she first saw the dying Christ, the blood flowing from his side and the nails which pierced his hands, it was too terrible to look upon. Now it glowed with warm light, and a smile played over the features. Preacher and Christ were as one, and the bold assertion of his redeeming power and love, and the necessity of salvation through him, was accepted without question.

At length the bishop directed his attention to her. His eyes seemed to transfix her, and look into her very soul. She could not avert her gaze, or take her eyes away from him and the dead Christ behind him. He preached directly to her, and appealed to the crucifix for her salvation. She was the one lost lamb, more cared for by the heavenly Master than all the flock within the fold. What rejoicing with the angel host when she had made her redemption sure.

There was no threat, no persuasion, no denunciation. It was a fervent appeal of love, charity, of disinterested kindness to promote the welfare of one in great danger. The services closed as usual, but the audience, so though dazed or charmed by some magic power, lingered and reluctantly departed.

After dinner Zaida received an invitation to attend the mother superior in her room. It was the first time she had thus been invited, and it was the more grateful to her because she felt the need of advice, and some one in whom she could confide. The superior advanced to meet her as she entered the room, and taking her by the hand bade her welcome with the affection of a mother. She led her to a sofa, and sat by her side.

"You are surprised at my asking your attention, and I will tell you why. I have a mother's care over those under (To be Continued.)"

UNCLE SAM ASLEEP.



ROME, April 3.—New York Herald Cable—Special to The Bee.—"Shall education in the United States concern the church or the state?" On that point Rome is now divided into two great camps. The first say it is wrong to take taxes from Roman Catholics, which religion is not taught; that the state has no right, considered merely as a state, to compel parents to send their children to schools; that the matter of education is one that concerns the parents alone; that the indiscriminate association of Roman Catholic children in the public school with atheists, infidels and Protestants destroys the foundation of their faith, the reasons wherefore include 26,000,000 Catholics; in the states in which emigration from Catholic countries, and the natural in-

crease would seem to warrant the maintenance of separate schools, there are but ten.

That the children in American schools are compelled to learn their lessons in English is another grievance. When the child forgets its language it is apt to forget its faith. They urge the appointments of Italian, French and German prelates as bishops in American dioceses, when their nationalities are strongly represented. This view is supported here by powerful personages. The Jesuits are its friends, the German wing its advocate, and some of the best known diplomatists accredited here favor it. Deputies of the German reichstag have been here in its interests, and the powerful propagandist association of San Raphael proposed

that each branch of a Catholic community in the states should be counted. In parishes, whenever numbers admit, each division is to have a school of its own, where both religious and secular instruction will be given the children in their own language.

The society of San Raphael was founded for the protection of emigrants to North and South America, and is eminently Catholic.

The holy father, however, takes a modern and liberal view of the question. Cardinal Rampolla and all inclined to think take the same view, as do the largest portion of the American clergy, that the Roman Catholic church in America is an American institution and would benefit the church at large by so remaining. GRUND.

How impressive she appeared, meeting that tide of glowing sentiment; and Kensett felt chilled, as though a cold and moveless rock had interposed. Had he known the true nature of woman; that their deepest feelings are often concealed by a calm and passionless exterior, her words would have been received as the most perfect response he could have received.

He raised her hand to his lips and said: "By this pledge, if I learn that you are in trouble, and need assistance, I have the right to give it, even to death, if it be required of me."

"Oh! speak not thus! Why, you frighten me! You speak and look as though a terrible calamity was at my door. Let us not borrow trouble. Let us laugh while we may, and forget there are clouds in the sunshine of today. Really, Mr. Kensett, I must go. A long sitting, and a too long and wearisome

It came slowly and almost halted. It contained two men in the garb of priests. One of them gazed admiringly at Zaida and uttered an audible exclamation to the other, who now directed his attention in the same direction. His smile was the hyena's, and his sinister eyes devoured what they beheld. The carriage passed so suddenly that the hot words of wrath hurled at the rude occupants by Kensett was not overheard by them.

"Brutes!" he exclaimed. "There is your priest! One moment more and I would have hurled him from his seat and taught him a lesson in decency."

"Do you know them?" asked Zaida. "I know no priest in the city, and least of all wish I to know such as these, who are not even gentlemen."

"Ah, Mr. Kensett, have respect for the sacred cloth," she said laughingly. "That brute was the new bishop, Lopez,

tween them before they again met, if ever they should meet.

CHAPTER IV.

The seminary of the Sacred Heart was located in one of the most attractive and fashionable quarters of the city. It was an adjunct to the convent, a still larger and more imposing building. You may travel from New York to San Francisco, north and south to all the great towns and cities, and you will find without exception that the Catholic church, cathedral, convent and school are in the most conspicuous and desirable location. With far-seeing tact, the holy fathers have taken the lots while the towns were new, and retained possession until the sites were wanted by the church for its uses. The wide grounds were surrounded with a massive wall, concealing the view from the outside. There was a heavy iron gate, at which a watchman stood and