

THE NUN.

An Episode of Convent Life.

Translated from the French by Rev. M. J. P. ...

CHAPTER II.

THE PROFESSION.—Continued.

"Now commences the mysterious part of my story. Annunciata and Clarisse were, before the profession of the latter, friends so intimate and beloved of the superior that it was always said, 'See Madame with— or rise in one hand and her lily in the other.' But there has been a strange rumor of a note that came to Annunciata in a bon bon; I do not know what to make of it. Clarisse having been accused of betraying her friend to the superior, Annunciata became her implacable enemy. The hatred is each day more evident, and heaven only knows when it will end. For Annunciata has such an influence over Madame that she has turned completely against Clarisse. It is impossible to comprehend the aversion that the superior seems to have towards the poor girl. But Sister Clarisse has often declared that she was innocent in the matter of the billet. The affair of the bonbon could provoke the coldness between the two friends, but there ought to be another reason for the treatment to which Clarisse had been subjected, for the history dates back two years. When I came here, there had been in the house a certain widow, a Madame Barthelmy, who came with the desire of taking the veil. She was very ill, and Sister Clarisse was with her almost constantly. Before her health was completely restored, a letter came telling her of the death of a friend who had willed her a large part of her fortune. This letter modified all her plans. She no longer praised the charms of cloistered life; she was possessed solely with the desire to return to the world where she could appear with eclat. Madame was extremely displeased with the widow, and the coldness that she showed Clarisse after the departure of Madame Barthelmy was attributed by the sisters to the affection that the young girl had always shown to the lady. But it is four months since the lady went away, and the disgrace of Clarisse becomes each day more evident. Today, when she came to the table, Annunciata and Mother Ursula removed themselves from her, as though her touch was contagious. We had already observed that they held themselves aloof from her, but we had not yet seen them so openly hostile as today. I believe they have imposed many secret penitences upon her during these last weeks; she has become exceedingly emaciated, and there is not a trace of color in her cheeks or in her hands."

well and creosoted behind the back and whispered. "If anyone enters, say that I have gone!" In the noise of your life, never repeat that which I have said to you. We waited in quiet until the steps died away. Pauline then arose and said: "Do not follow me; it is best that when they see me, they see me at the other side of the garden." she left the grotto leaving me more sad than when she loved me.

The occupations were varied; some made buttons, some made artificial flowers, and others considered purses, bags, and ornamental book-covers with pearls. These articles were sent to Paris, and sold for the benefit of the convent. Some of these hours passed tranquilly in my cell with Pauline, my amiable and affectionate Pauline, were the happiest of all those that I spent in the convent, and I hope they were not all lost. But I continue: At nine o'clock we returned to the choir to adore the host; at ten o'clock we breakfasted together in the refectory, one of our number reading some book approved by the church; after this we were left to ourselves, though under strict surveillance, until noon. Then came a new service called seats, at the close of which each one of us read a book put into our hands by the abbess. At two o'clock we were reunited for a light lunch; then came the service called news. Then the entire family assembled to give an account of the readings of the afternoon. On the day of which I speak, at the hour of vespers we were all called around Madame. We were ushered into a large gothic hall, ornamented with pictures representing different scenes in the life of the virgin. The floor was covered with fine matting. Madame was seated upon a dais at the extremity of the hall; such was the pompous solemnity of the time, and all of the members of the family arranged themselves according to their rank around Madame. Pauline was by my side. I wish to remark here that I had not yet seen Clarisse; it was natural that I should look around to see her. During this time, the abbess, after having made a prayer, addressed us in these words: "My daughters, be reminded that you have— A God to adore. A Jesus Christ to imitate. All the angels to honor. The holy virgins and saints to invoke. A soul to save. Sins to expiate. A paradise to gain. An eternity to contemplate. Demons to fear. Passions to conquer. The judgment to undergo." This formula was always used in these reunions. When the superior had finished, she told us that she did not have the time to question us about our readings as she must bring before us a very important matter. She dwelt at length upon the place that had been assigned her by the church; that to her had been confided the care of the souls of many children; she spoke of the cares and anxieties of such a charge; she expressed her desire of seeing her children obedient to the church, and her anguish in seeing her beloved daughters doing otherwise; then opening a book, she read: "The universal church has and always will have enemies upon enemies to contend with, but she has always triumphed. The infernal powers make each day new efforts, but they never conquer. The holy church upon earth has enemies within and without, but without enumerating the trials that she has endured at the hands of Jews, infidels, heretics, schismatics, and excommunicated persons, she suffers at the hands of malign spirits who attempt the destruction of her members, not only by making them fall into corruption and worldliness, but using still further a thousand artifices whose purpose is the destruction of those whom they entangle. Who has not heard tell of St. Anthony, the blessed solitary father, who was so tormented by the demons that he did not dare to fall asleep? "We have numerous examples of holy persons assailed in this manner," she continued, closing the book, "and I believe that even in our days many Christians are held by the demons, and that the number of those who live firm is very small." She ceased speaking. Many of the older nuns, having been encouraged to talk, recounted histories which confirmed what the abbess had said; such recital was a little more marvelous than the preceding. The young religious trembled and crossed themselves, and one asked by what means they could repel the attacks of the demons. "We ought to work and pray without ceasing," responded the superior; "to die to ourselves, and to keep ourselves in the narrow way; we ought to beseech the assistance of the church, which groans like a dove over her children in peril; to submit ourselves to her spiritual authority, and not only ourselves, but to make others whom we love pliable in order that they may be rebuked, exhorted and corrected like those who may be snatched like burning brands from the snares of evil." A sort of a murmur of approval followed this discourse; but I observed that Sister Annunciata did not say a word nor lift her eyes. I felt Pauline tremble violently at my side. What is going to happen? I thought; what will it be? I perceived that my anxiety was shared by many.

(To be Continued.) Piety, Purity and Priestcraft. A pitiful and appalling tale of perfidy has been unearthed in Aurora, Ill. It appears that a Roman Catholic priest, named Thomas F. Laydon, pastor of the richest diocese in the entire State of Illinois, took upon himself the guardianship of an orphan, the daughter of a man who was his friend and who on his death-bed bequeathed the care of his child to the priest. Prior to this event the priest had effected the young woman's ruin, but it was a waste, and, further to conceal himself, bribed a young man named English to shoulder the infancy by promising him the girl's fortune. The story outlines Balzac in all his narratives concerning the infancy of priests, and is almost beyond the bounds of human belief in the depravity with which it is burdened. The priest is 45 years old, lives in sumptuous style, and had a reputation above reproach. Like all others of his ilk, he was entrusted with the private affairs of his parishioners. Pearce Cummings was one of them, and he freely gave his children into the care of the man who had already ruined one of them, and who acted the part of a cur when the facts leaked out. If Laydon had renounced his priestly office and married his victim instead of denouncing her and getting somebody else to father his crime, there would be some indications of honor left in him. The priest was denounced at his altar by the mother of the girl, and great consternation wrought amongst the entire community of Aurora. The priest has been arrested and the denunciation is yet to be. Thus the sanctity of the home has been shattered, the trust of a fond father misplaced, and a widowed mother's heart wrung in despair, and all because the office of priestcraft, perforce, rule the affairs of a people. This case is only one of thousands of a similar nature which are unrecognized because unknown. Were the depravities to which the priesthood is addicted by reason of the celibate provision of their lives known to the world a tale harrowing beyond all horrors of the Inquisition would be forthcoming. Society dislikes to be disturbed. Like theology, nothing is so unpleasant to it as the knowledge that its secret sins are understood. Crimes like the one perpetrated against Cummings, may go on and nothing is thought about them until their discovery shocks the community. Then the "better than thou" element draws its skirts of immaculateness a hitch higher, and damns the victims. Like the thief, society is always happy until it gets caught. Since a Cummings ought to receive the care and solicitude of society. Will she get it? The priest will, at least from that portion of it which constitutes his dupes, no matter how it may go with the girl.—Light of Truth. Letter of Pope Pius IX. to Jeff Davis in 1863. Perfect copy and perfect translation of this famous letter—Latin and English, in parallel columns—sent on receipt of 10 cents. Photograph copy of the pope's handwriting. A full explanation of letter and its effects on despatches in the federal army accompanied each copy. Excellent document for general circulation. 10 copies for 50c.; 100 copies, \$2.00; 500 copies, \$6.00. Larger quantities at lower rates. Address, CHASE BROS, 631 F St., N. W., Washington, D. C. High Five or Euchre Parties should send at once to JOHN SEBASTIAN G. T. A., C. R. L. & P. R. R., Chicago. TEN CENTS, in stamps, per pack for the slickest cards you ever shuffled. For \$1.00 you will receive free by express ten packs. Engravings Give an advertisement an attractive appearance, and it is sure to catch the eye of the reader. THE AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO. will furnish for Newspapers. Illustrations quicker than you can write the article on suggesting your idea. Call and see us at 1615 Howard street, Omaha. If you cannot call, we will send our Engraver to see you, if you will Telephone 911. If you live out of town, just write your idea as brief as possible, and send it in. We'll give you a pencil drawing; and don't forget to send Stamps for return answer. Write all names and addresses plainly. AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO., 1615 Howard Street, OMAHA, NEB. Men Wanted To take Orders. No delivering or collecting. Experience not necessary. Steady employment. Best terms. Write at once and secure choice of territory. ALLEN NURSERY CO., Rochester, N. Y.

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