

IN THE Clutch of Rome.

(COPYRIGHTED) BY "GONZALES"

CHAPTER III. ROME IN THE NEW WORLD.

In the vast hall of the vatican, had assembled the sacred college; a hall whose lofty ceiling had been frescoed centuries ago by a master hand.

The pope, in rich pontifical robes with the triple coronet flashing and gleaming like a jeweled rainbow on his weary head, was seated on the papal throne.

The minor formalities of the convention over, the pontiff arose and slowly advanced a few paces forward; his hands, clasped tightly together, rested on the velvet folds of his robe.

"My enemies," he said, extending his arm in the direction of the quirinal, "have the affront to cry with impious mouth, that I am an enemy to the prosperity of Italy."

A month later found him one Sabbath morning conducting the services of high mass at the central altar of the magnificent cathedral which he found awaiting him in Washington.

"Before this new home can be prepared, many difficulties will present themselves, and obstacles more fierce than the dragons who guarded the fabled treasures of old, will have to be trampled out of life."

For over two hours the iron will of the pontiff sustained his aged frame as he spoke with a firm, low voice to his priestly audience.

gotten that the sacred college had assembled to discuss, and Cardinal Pizani was assigned the position of American cardinal, with instructions to leave Rome at once.

At his farewell interview with the pope, a small atom of human emotion came to the surface. What little knowledge he possessed of the feeling called "friendship," he had learned by years of close intercourse with the man whose robes he one day hoped to fold around himself.

"I have celebrated my last mass upon your holy altars, O, you Queen of Temples," he muttered aloud.

This critical congregation found nothing lacking. Pizani fitted perfectly into the space left vacant by the death of Ximenes, so perfect is the mechanism of the church.

The months rolled on; and Cardinal Pizani ever wove around him the intricate web, into which his Jesuit subtlety would draw the human flies.

He had proceeded down the principal thoroughfare of the city of Washington preceded by his own band and drum corps, while beside his elegant, open carriage, rode his mounted body-guard of pontifical troops uniformed in red and white, with red Uhlan helmets on their heads, and armed with sabres and lances, from which floated red and white pennons.

CHAPTER IV. TWO DEADLY SINS. The abbess of the convent of St. Ignatius, Spain, lay dying; the midnight bell was striking as her confessor hurried through the dimly lit corridors, which never again would give forth the echo of the footsteps of her who had gilded so many years on various missions along their gloomy lengths.

The memories of two deadly sins were clutching with ghastly fingers the heartstrings of the dying woman. The

idolatrious love of her life that had lain like a dormant snake in her bosom, ever warming into life by a chance sunbeam of memory, and the escape from the convent to a sacrilegious marriage of the girl entrusted to her care.

The nun's voice was growing very weak and her words were scarcely distinguishable as her confession ended. During the short pause which followed, and while the priest was making ready to bestow upon her the last rite of the church, she took something from beneath her pillow, and motioning to the priest to come nearer, placed it in his hand, murmuring:

"Destroy it, Father, 'tis the last letter which binds me to earth."

Ere the ceremony of "extreme unction" was fairly ended, the abbess was dead. As soon as possible, the priest examined the object which the abbess had entrusted to him; it proved to be a fragile chain, on which was suspended a gold oval. Opened, it revealed on either side, a portrait. One, encircled by minute rubies, was that of a young woman, whose dark beauty the flame-like setting seemed part and parcel of; the face opposite, was that of a man, also young and handsome, but betokening a nature calculating and colder than its companion.

"Madre de Dios," he murmured; "can it be possible?" He placed the relic in a fold of his robe, summoned the nuns, and sped quickly away; pondering, as he went, on certain passages of the confession he had received. As he came to a bridge spanning a narrow, though deep turbulent stream, he stopped, drew forth the locket, and gazed on the faces before him, which the vivid moonlight seemed to endow with life; the sorrowful tale he had listened to had touched a tender chord in his heart, but the teaching of the Jesuit was strong and deep-rooted. He had promised the penitent to destroy the emblem of her weakness, but would its preservation be of future use to the church? Certain knowledge, he had gained to-night, might be, but this bauble—No, he could keep faith with the dead woman and not injure Rome. So he cast the trinket into the water.

A week after the death of the abbess of St. Ignatius, a Spanish bishop sought and obtained audience of the pope of Rome. The purpose of that audience was known to Cardinal Pizani, in Washington as soon as practicable. Cardinal Pizani was taking his daily walk in the most secluded portion of the Episcopal palace grounds, the events which constituted the gain and losses of the ten years of his American life revolving in his mind, to the swift rhythm of his footsteps on the brick walk, when a packet, bearing a foreign postmark, was brought in.

It was a letter from the papal secretary acquainting him with the death of the Spanish abbess. It also told him that the abbess, in "Extremis," had confessed to having aided the escape of a girl from her convent that she might be united to her Protestant American lover; that the girl had married her lover according to the rites of the Protestant church; that they were living in San Francisco, and the husband was one of the wealthiest and most influential statesmen on the Pacific coast. The papal communication was brief and contained few instructions.

Like the pressing of an electric button, which sets the innumerable wheels of some gigantic machinery in motion, is a dark hint to the followers of Loyola.

About a month after Cardinal Pizani had been advised of the death of the Spanish abbess, a woman of decent appearance and of fair intelligence, and who occupied the position of chambermaid in the family of Senator Maxwell, of California, entered a confessional in one of the largest and wealthiest Catholic churches in San Francisco. When she emerged from the church, her face portrayed varied emotions, which soon settled into a general air of resignation as she reached the home of her employer.

Walking slowly over the grounds towards the servant's entrance to the palatial residence, where she had been a trusted servant for several years, her glance rested in a peculiar manner on a group gathered together on the lawn under a scarlet flowered shrub. She waved her hand in response to a salutation from the children, who were taking their afternoon recreation, in charge of a governess, and who had chosen the gorgeous tree as a resting place for her charges, a precocious girl of nine years, and a girl and boy younger.

In a short space of time after Mary Rooney, chambermaid in the family of Senator Maxwell, had confessed her sins to the priest of St. Mary's, Alice Ayers, nursery governess in the same family, left her situation.

With the art known only to woman, Mary Rooney had contrived to inspire Mrs. Senator Maxwell with the idea that Alice Ayers was no fit person to be entrusted with her children.

sank into the velvet depths of the nearest chair that seemed to say, "I have come to stay." The pale tan color of her dress, and her bronze colored hair harmonized well with the delicate blue of the chair. Soon, Mrs. Maxwell, with a silken rustle, came into the room. A lovely woman, of the pure Castilian type, whose great blue eyes were held in a fixed gaze by the dark yellowish orbs of the woman who rose at her entrance and saluted her.

Dora Dillon, with quiet grace, handed Mrs. Maxwell a written recommendation; the signature was that of a wealthy society lady of her acquaintance, a staunch Catholic. After a few commonplace questions, Mrs. Maxwell asked: "Your religion please?"

"Roman Catholic, by education," answered Miss Dillon in an indifferent tone. Then, quickly—"Of course, my religion, if I take charge of your children, will be a thing apart. General christian principles and moral training will be my prerogative only."

"Oh, certainly; that is all that is required, and we are not bigoted to any particular faith. My husband is a Presbyterian, and Jean, my eldest girl, attends Sunday school at Dr. McBride's church. We have a pew there, and occasionally my husband and I attend. I was once a Roman Catholic too."

"You have renounced it?" said Miss Dillon, with a smile.

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Maxwell lightly, "my religion has been a matter of so much indifference to me of late years, that I have not taken the trouble to renounce it, as regards one particular form, or as a whole."

"Oh," said Dora Dillon, with a little shrug of the shoulders, "religion is a good thing in the abstract, but let us talk of those embryo men and women I saw in the grounds with their nurse, as I came in."

When Dora Dillon left the home of Senator Maxwell, it was as the governess elect to his children. Her duties to begin as soon as possible. Her first move on leaving the mansion, by way of preparing herself for her new position, was to visit the residence of the rector of St. Mary's.

"Perform this mission as faithfully and as well as you have others entrusted to you, my daughter, and the blessed protection of the holy church will shadow you always," were the parting words of the silken voiced priest.

CHAPTER V. A PRIESTLY GAME.

Cardinal Pizani read, with grim satisfaction, the letter from Archbishop O'Connor of San Francisco, apprising him that the outlines of another churchy scheme were drawn. Handling the letter to his secretary, he betook himself to the garden to take his accustomed walk. His step was quick, and his glowing eyes saw nothing tangible around him, but were looking as ever, into the future.

Brilliant leaves, red from the kisses of Autumn, were falling around him as he walked, but the dying year had given unto him more brilliant and more lasting offerings, which he had dropped into the lap of his adored and insatiate mistress. The chief magistrate of the land had delighted to honor him; in a country where all religions were respected and equally protected, he, a prince of the Roman Catholic church, had officiated as chaplain when the great republic had celebrated the one hundredth year of the birth of its cherished constitution. What but policy had dictated the honor? The tyrant demands the bestowal of most honors in her name. He was growing to love this fascinating goddess of liberty who presided over the great nation he had come among. "Ah! if only he could succeed in casting around her the chains of the church."

One of his wealthiest parishioners dying, had appointed him guardian of his only child, a woman, young and with her natural beauty of person enhanced by the rosy back ground of an immense fortune. Pizani's young ward, a devout member of the church, though loving the world and its pleasures, had, by a gift of several hundred thousand dollars, been the foundress of the great Roman Catholic university which was rising stone upon stone and fast nearing completion.

Thousands upon thousands of dollars had poured in from the parishes of the largest cities of the union. The spirit which had haunted the Catholic clergy of America for long weary years, was fast materializing into a grand, imposing presence.

In a small Pompeian room in a large mansion in New York City, a wealthy, young, unmarried lady and her guests were assembled. It was the lounging hour which preceds that daily and important epoch in a fashionable lady's life, "dressing for dinner." The young ladies, in the most dainty and comfortable of tea gowns, with the luxurious abandon which characterizes a gathering of women when the male element is absent, were reclining in various graceful attitudes.

A large screen of Persian embroidery was drawn up within easy distance of the fire-place, forming a little snuggerly for these young dames who wore the purple and fed on the honey of life, to repose in.

"Tell us, O, white lily, what are you going to wear at my lady secretary's ball next week?" This from a dark,

young girl, still in her teens, who draped in old rose, lay curled up on a great black fur rug, directly in front of the fire. She addressed her hostess, a tall white lily of a woman who had just entered her twentieth year. She was the center of the group, and clothed in white from head to foot; her yellow hair brushed straight back from her temples and gathered in a great crown-like coil on the top of her head. Her delicate appearance indicated the name her companion bestowed upon her.

"I am not going," she said, placing her fingers upon a large cross of white onyx which lay upon her breast, and resting her head with a little defiant movement against the blood-red silk back of her chair.

"Not going to Washington, to the greatest ball of the season?" was the refrain in various tones.

Then, after a pause, the dark beauty nesting among the fur sprang into a sitting posture, and with her bold, black eyes looking full into the blue ones above her, said:

"Surely, Agness Allison, the vague rumors that have been floating around us, that you, so young and beautiful, and with your immense wealth, contemplate burying yourself in a convent, have no truth in them?"

"To what better cause could I devote my vast wealth than that of the holy church? And my buried youth and beauty will have a glorious resurrection. Besides, I shall not be a cloistered nun, but a minister of relief to trouble and want."

"I'm glad no such sacrifices are required among the Methodist persuasion, but if there were, I am too poor in this world's goods to be selected for an offering. But, O, my dear Agness, you are too bright a light to be hidden under a bushel; let pale, tallow dips go under, and you remain in the world. With the millions at your command, you will shed your light not only among the mighty of the land, but among the poor and lowly."

"My path of duty is clearly lighted for me, and nothing can obstruct my footsteps," said Miss Allison, still toying with the onyx cross.

"Well," said a large, voluptuous-looking girl, no longer very young, whose handsome face, framed in glittering reddish hair, indicated a nature strongly impregnated with the world, the flesh, and, it might be a dash of

the devil, "I am a fairly good church woman of the Roman faith, but I think the saints I have never felt a predilection for their convents. The Creator intended we should live out in the world, I think, else why are we here? Time enough to say good-bye to the world when death says 'Come,' though the virgin forbid I should influence those whose choice differently. By the way, Archbishop Dooley dines here tonight, does he not?"

"Yes," replied Miss Allison, "and several other guests."

"Other guests? clerical or otherwise?" said a voice from the mass of rose-hued cashmere on the black fur.

"Otherwise," said the young nun-elect, rising, as did the others, as the ringing of a bell warned them that it was time to dress and resume the formalities of life.

(To be Continued.)

"IN THE CLUTCH OF ROME," is published in book form, paper cover, and can be had by sending 25 cents in cash to the AMERICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY.

How is this? Chiquiquy's "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome," \$2.50; THE AMERICAN one year, \$2.00; Both for \$2.50.

The Catholic World, in one of its editorials, says: "Education must be controlled by Romish authorities, even to war and to bloodshed." And yet there are those who tell us that Rome is not a menace to our free American institutions. They who make such assertions must be blind indeed.—Messiah Herald.

158 VARIETIES FLOWER SEEDS FREE. A Grand Prize Collection of 11 Choice Annuals every body is desirous, and you can have them for 10 cents. Also, 100 choice seeds of the most popular flowers, including: Pinks, 10 colors; Sweet Peas, 10 colors; Zinnias, 10 colors; Marigolds, 10 colors; Petunias, 10 colors; Phloxes, 10 colors; Verbena, 10 colors; Fuchsias, 10 colors; Sweet Alyssum, 10 colors; Snapdragons, 10 colors; Nasturtiums, 10 colors; Ranunculus, 10 colors; and Sweet William, 10 colors. All seeds guaranteed pure and fresh. Send for your free catalogue, and you will receive it with seeds and samples. Address: L. S. CUSHMAN, Publisher, 7 Water St., Boston, Mass.

FREE HEAT! The Lamp that Lights your Room with HEAT if you use a FALLS HEATER. Takes the place of stoves in medium-sized rooms. In successful use in New England 2 years. Highest awards. Best of references. Sample Heater \$1. Agents everywhere. BOSTON ENTERPRISE MFG. CO. 17 Milk St., Boston, Mass.

READ OUR NEW SERIAL STORY "In the Clutch of Rome"

Which Began Feb. 1, 1895, Entitled, "In the Clutch of Rome" By "GONZALES," This story is published in serial form for the first time, and is one of thrilling interest, dealing with the machinations of the bishops, priests and other emissaries of the Church of Rome in the politics of the United States. This Story will appear in weekly installments in

THE AMERICAN,

beginning with the issue of February 1st, which can be obtained of all newsdealers at FIVE CENTS per copy, or, by sending your orders direct to this office you can secure THE AMERICAN and any one of the following list of good books by paying up ALL ARREARAGES and a year's Subscription in advance:

- LIST OF BOOKS. The Priest, The Woman, and The Confessional, \$2.00 including "The American" one year. Fifty Years in the Church of Rome, \$2.50 including "The American" one Year. MARIA MONK, cloth, - \$2.00 including "The American" one Year. Convent Life Unveiled, cloth, \$2.00 including "The American" one Year. DEEDS OF DARKNES - \$2.00 including "The American" one Year. THE BLACK POPE, cloth, - \$2.00 including "The American" one Year.

All of these books are printed on good book paper and are well bound in cloth, suitable for anybody's Library. If these books are to be sent by mail add 15 cents extra for postage. CASH must invariably accompany the order. Address,

AMERICAN PUBLISHING CO, 124 East Randolph St., CHICAGO, ILL. P. S.—"THE AMERICAN" is \$2.00 a Year in Advance.