

# ON CHARITY.

## CATHOLIC ANECDOTES

### CHAPTER II.

## FIRST COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

*I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other  
gods  
before me.*

## III. - OF CHARITY TOWARDS GOD.

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211. *Peter, Love You Me?* -

We ought to love God, my dear friends, but we ought to love Him more than anything whatsoever. St. Peter furnishes a fine example of this. Our Lord had risen, and had

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appeared several times to His Apostles; to some of them He manifested Himself under very peculiar circumstances. One day, St. Peter, St. Thomas, and five other disciples (including St John) were assembled together; Peter said to them: "I wish to go fishing this evening." - "Well we shall go with you," and they all went into a bark but they took nothing all the night. Next morning when they had approached land on the shore of Lake Genesareth, Jesus stood amongst them without their knowing Him, doubtless because He appeared to them in the garb of a fisherman. He said to them: "Children, have you nothing to eat?" - "No, Lord, for we have taken nothing." - "Cast your net on the right side of the bark, and you shall catch some fish." They did so, and the net was filled so that they could scarcely haul it up. St. John, amazed at this prodigy, said in a low voice to St. Peter: "See you not that it is the Lord?" They all landed then, and found on the beach some lighted coals, and some little fish broiling.

Jesus then said to them: "Bring hither some of the fishes you have taken." They brought the net to land and counted about one hundred and fifty-three large fishes. When they had dined, no one dared to speak to Jesus. It was He himself who, turning to St. Peter, said: "Peter, love you Me?" - "Yea, Lord, I love You," - "Feed My lambs." He asked him a second time: "Peter, love you Me?" - "Yea, Lord, You know that I love You." - "Feed My lambs." Then, a little while after, He asked a third time: "Peter, love you Me?" St. Peter was touched

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and even grieved by this third question; he exclaimed with all the tenderness and all the energy of which he was capable: "Yea, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You." And Jesus said to him: "Feed My sheep." There is how we ought to love God, dear children; we ought to tell it to Him, and prove it to Him unceasingly by our actions.

- *St. John*, Chapter XXI.

212. *How St. Polycarp Loved God.* -

All the martyrs proved that they loved God well, since they gave their life for Him. Amongst those noble and generous defenders of religion, I love to quote St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had had the happiness of knowing St. John, the beloved disciple. He was arrested as a Christian in the year 167 and dragged before the city tribunals. They sought to make him renounce his holy religion, but he remained unshaken. "What harm is it, then," said his judges to him, "to call the Emperor your Spiritual Lord, and offer a sacrifice to save your life?" - "I will not do it." The populace thronging around him, began to cry out: "It is the teacher of Asia, it is the father of the Christians, it is the destroyer of our gods, it is he who has taught so many others to abjure the religion of the State."

- "Polycarp, I exhort you once more," said the proconsul, "to obey the Emperor's edicts. Come, swear, by the fortune of Caesar; speak some words against Jesus Christ!"

- "How!" indignantly cried the holy bishop, "fourscore years have I served Jesus Christ, and He has never done me any harm."

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"On the contrary, He has loaded me with favours, and you would have me speak against Him! Once more, I tell you, I am a Christian - that is my religion!" It is unnecessary to add, my dear friends, that St. Polycarp was martyred some days after. He was cast into a fire, but the flames scattered from about him and respected him; the governor, furious at this new miracle, caused him to be stabbed to the heart with a dagger.

- LASSAUSSE, *Explic. du Cat. de l'Empire, (Explanation of the Catechism of the Empire,)* 199.

213. *The Old Robe of St. Aphraates.* -

Speaking of the constant charity which we ought to have for God, I will tell you, dear children, the story of St. Aphraates' robe. He was born in Persia, but he became a solitary in the neighbourhood of Edessa, in Turkey in Syria and Asia. Anthemus, one of the most distinguished men of that period, being ambassador in the Kingdom of Persia, thought to please the saint by bringing him a robe from that country. He came to see him, and presenting him the robe said: "Father, people always love what comes from their own country; here is a robe that was made in your country, and I thought I would give you pleasure by bringing it to you." St. Aphraates took it, laid it aside and spoke of something else. After some time, he said to Anthemus: "My lord, there is one thing that gives me a great deal of trouble." - "What is it, father?" - "I have an old servant who has served me some sixteen years and to whom I am much attached; now there is another who urges me to take him in place

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of the other, under pretence that he is from my own country. It seems to me that it is too hard to dismiss the one without any fault on his part, but merely to take the other." - "You are very right, father; if I were in your place I would do as you do; why, indeed, should you discard him who has long served you faithfully, to take another whom you do not know, simply because he is from your own country?" - "That is all I wanted, my lord; take away, then, the robe you have given me, for I have one that has served me sixteen years and is still good, so I cannot leave it off to put on the other." Anthemus admired this witty answer, and confessed that he had nothing to say. This story is very much to our purpose, my young friends! The good God has loved us the first, and He has never done us anything but good, why, then, should we quit His service and depart from Him, to attach ourselves to creatures who are only able to do us harm?

- MICHEL-ANGE MARIN, *Vie des Peres des deserts*, IX., 220.

214. *Story of Brother Giles.* -

It is not hard to love God, my dear children; it suffices to act in all that we do solely to please Him and accomplish His holy will. I remember having read that St. Bonaventure, one of the most learned doctors of the church, had amongst his religious a worthy man named brother Giles, who had no instruction and was extremely simple. One day he said to St. Bonaventure, "My reverend Father, you are very happy, you learned theologians: you can love God much more than we

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can, and work out your salvation much more easily." - "You are mistaken, brother Giles, for, with the assistance of grace, every one can love God as much as he will." "What!" exclaimed the good monk, "poor ignorant creatures who can neither read nor write, can love God as perfectly as those who have made studies?" - "Why certainly; and, moreover, a poor peasant may sometimes love God more than a learned theologian." At these words good brother Giles feels himself transported with joy, and runs like mad to the garden, opens the door that leads to the street, and begins to cry out as loud as he can: "Hi! poor people, hi! good women who can neither read nor write, come and hear the good news: if you choose you can love the good God as much as a theologian, and even as much as our reverend Father Bonaventure!" This simple exclamation makes you laugh, my dear children, and yet nothing is more true; a wise child, a good pupil, may sometimes love God more than a great person, more even than a learned man, than a doctor of all degrees.

- RODRIGUEZ, *Practice of Christian Perfection.*

215. *How St. Vincent de Paul Loved God.* -

If we could understand the extent of God's love for us, my dear friends, we would have a little more for Him. One day, St. Vincent de Paul was told that a wretched sinner was giving himself up to despair, because of the multitude of his sins, and obstinately refused to make his confession. He ran to his bedside and told him with his usual zeal: "O my child, you know

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that Christ died for you, and do you doubt His mercy? If you only knew how you wrong Him!" - "Let me alone," the wretch replied, "I will die a reprobate just to vex Him." - "Well," said St. Vincent, in a tone of authority, "I will snatch you from eternal perdition just to please Him." Thereupon, turning to the witnesses of this struggle between the love of God and the hatred of the sinner, he requests them to say the Rosary. Their prayers were not in vain. The heart of the hardened sinner was all at once softened; he returned to better sentiments, was sincerely converted, confessed to St. Vincent de Paul himself, and died in great sentiments of compunction. It was thus that the love of God triumphed, at the moment when it was least expected.

- SCHMID et BELET, *Catechisme Historique*, I., 528.

## IV. - ON CHARITY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR.

216. *Story of a Robber Chief.* -

When, after the death of the Emperor Domitian, the Apostle St. John returned from the island of Patmos to Ephesus, he visited the adjoining provinces, at the prayer and request of the faithful, to establish bishops, regulate and form churches, and finally to admit to the clerical order those whom the spirit of God made known to him. Having come, then, to a small town which was not very distant, he established peace among the Christians there, and having cast his eyes on a young man, who was comely and well favoured, and by nature

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sprightly and animated, he turned to the bishop and said: "I recommend this young man to you, and I give him to you as a deposit, in presence of the Church of Jesus Christ." The bishop welcomed him kindly, and promised St. John he would take good care of him. He took this young man who had been confided to him, nourished him, kept him under his own guidance, and finally, after due preparation, he baptized him. He afterwards gave him confirmation, then began to not have so much care over him, and not to trouble himself so much about his preservation. So it happened that the youth having had too much of his own way, connected himself with some young fellows of his own age, who thought of nothing but diverting themselves, abandoned themselves to their pleasures and were addicted to all sorts of vices. They first attracted him by banquets, and then prevailed on him to go with them by night to steal some trifling articles; from that they easily led him on to be their accomplice in every crime. Thus he accustomed himself little by little to all sorts of excesses, and in the ardour of his nature, departing once from the right way, like the fiery horse that takes the bit in his teeth, he plunged madly into the abyss of crime. At length, despairing of salvation, he thought only of committing the greatest crimes and even to exceed all his companions in guilt. With that intention he took with him some men and formed a band of robbers; and as he was bold and fearless, he made himself their chief and became the most

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violent, the most cruel and the most intractable of all. Some time after, it happened that St. John was called to the same city, for the transaction of some business, The holy apostle having arranged the affairs that had brought him thither, said to the bishop: "Now give me back the deposit which Christ and I confided to you, in presence of the flock over which you preside." The bishop was at first much surprised, imagining that he was unjustly asked for some money which had not been given him in charge. Then St. John told him that he demanded of him that young man, and the soul of his brother which he had confided to him. But the bishop, casting his eyes down, told him with sighs and tears that he was dead. "How?" said St. John, "and of what death?" - "He is dead to God," answered the bishop, "for he has become a reprobate, a lost man, and, - to tell you the worst at once, - a robber; and now, instead of being in the church as formerly, he has taken possession of a mountain, where he dwells with people like himself." The holy apostle, having heard these words, rent his garments, and sighing deeply, he said to the bishop: "Alas! I left in your person a very bad guardian over the soul of your brother. Let me have, at once, a horse, and a guide." Immediately he leaves the church, mounts his horse, and goes in all haste to the place of which they had told him. Having arrived there, he was at once made prisoner by the robber sentinels; he neither attempted to escape, nor asked for mercy, but cried aloud: "I

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came hither to see your captain: take me to him!" They conducted him to their chief, who at first received him arms in hand; but as soon as he had recognized St. John, shame obliged him to fly. The holy apostle pursued him at full speed, forgetting the feebleness of his age and crying out: "My son, why do you shun me? Why fly from your father who is old and without arms? Have pity on me, my son! fear nothing, there is still hope of your salvation! I will answer for you to Jesus Christ; if need be, I will willingly suffer death for you,

as Christ suffered for us all; I will give my soul for yours! Stay, stay! it is Christ himself who has sent me to you!" The young man hearing St. John speak in such wise, at length stopped, keeping his eyes on the ground; then he broke his weapon, and filled with contrition, wept bitterly. As he saw that the holy old man was approaching, he went to embrace him; expiating his guilt, as far as might be, by his sighs, and finding as it were a second baptism in his tears; only he hid his right hand, which had been stained with so many crimes. The holy apostle then solemnly swore to him that he would obtain from the Saviour by his prayers the pardon of his sins, and kneeling before him, he kissed that same right hand, as having been purified by the tears of repentance, and led him back to the church. After that, he offered to God, for him, his pious prayers and continual fasts, and soothed his heart by divers words of Scripture, finally, he did not depart thence till he had seen him

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re-established in the Church. This story is related with full particulars by Eusebius of Cesarea, the great historian of the Church who recorded this in the 320's.

- TILLEMONT, *Hist. Eccles.*, I, 391.

217. *St. John's Last Sermon.* -

You are doubtless aware, my good friends, that the Apostle St. John was surnamed *the beloved disciple* because of the very particular affection which Our Divine Lord had for him. But he might also have been styled *the loving apostle*, so great was the charity of his heart. When he had reached the age of 98 or 99 years, he could no longer walk, and had to be carried in a sort of arm-chair to church, or to the assemblies of the faithful. Neither did his great age permit him to make long discourses. Nevertheless, the Christians, who were almost all his disciples, asked him each time to address to them some words of edification. The holy apostle then, mustering all his strength, said to them: "*My children, my little children, love one another!*" He repeated to them almost always the same words. At last, a little tired of hearing nothing else but the one sentence: *Love one another*, his disciples one day took the liberty of asking him why he always repeated the same words to them over and over: "My little children, I repeat always the same thing to you, because, if you love one another, you accomplish all the law of the Lord: all is in that."

- FILLASSIER, *Dict. Hist., d'Education*, I., p. 381.

218. *St. Martin's Cloak.* -

A well-known story, my friends, is that of St. Martin, bishop of Tours. Before being a Christian, he had been a soldier; but

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desiring to be baptized, he had himself enrolled in the number of the catechumens, and applied himself to practice as well as he could the virtues of the Christians. It is particularly remarked of him that he assisted all in his power those whom he saw in need, reserving to himself, of his pay, only just so much as enabled him to live from day to day, and practising thus the precept of Our Lord in the Gospel, not to be troubling ourselves about the morrow. One day, in the depth of a winter, so severe that year that many persons perished from cold, when there only remained to him his arms and his military uniform, to which belonged a sort of simple cloak, he met at the gate of Amiens a poor man half naked and abandoned by every one. St. Martin believed that Providence had left to him the care of this poor man, on whom no one had compassion. With his sword he cut his cloak in two, and gave the half to the miserable beggar, covering himself with the other half as best he could. This good action appeared so pleasing to Heaven, that, the following night, the charitable soldier had the consolation of seeing in a dream Jesus Christ himself clothed in the half cloak with which he had covered the poor man. He heard that Divine Saviour saying plainly to a multitude of angels who surrounded him: "*It was Martin, who is yet but a catechumen, that covered me with this cloak.*" This vision caused him inexpressible joy, and his sole desire thenceforward was to receive baptism without delay. He was then eighteen years old, and had been already three years enrolled in the

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cavalry.

- ST. SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Life of St. Martin*, Chapter V.

219. *Incredible Charity of St. Serapion.* -

Charity is ingenious, my friends; there is nothing that it will not do to attain its ends. I find a beautiful example of his in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*. Serapion, surnamed *the Sindonite*, touched by the unhappy state of a pagan comedian, made use, in order to procure his conversion, of a means which displayed on his part much zeal and charity : He sold himself to him as a slave, for the paltry sum of twenty pieces of silver, and carefully seized every opportunity he could find of instructing and edifying him. His discourse and his example at length produced the desired effect; the comedian was converted, with his family, and renounced the theatre. (In those days, the theatre was a major source of anti-Christian propaganda and outright obscene, lustful, and violent, so-called 'entertainment'.) Then he would no longer permit Serapion to be his slave; he set him free through gratitude; but he prevailed upon him to keep for his own use, or, at least for the poor, the twenty pieces of silver he had received on selling himself. Some time after, the Saint sold himself again, in order to put himself in a state to relieve an afflicted widow. His new master was so well pleased with his services that he liberated him too. He even made him a present of a tunic, a robe, and a book of Gospels. No sooner had Serapion gone on than he met a poor man, and gave him his robe. A little farther on, a second poor man, half dead with cold, received the tunic, and no clothing remained to the Saint but a wretched piece of stuff. Some one

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having asked him what had become of his clothes,

- "There," said he, showing the book of Gospels, "there is what has stripped me." The book itself was not long in his possession, for he sold it in its turn to relieve a destitute person. Thus it was that he carried to the highest degree the pure and beautiful charity which animated him towards his neighbour.

- ABBE REYRE, *Anecdotes Chretiennes*, 46.

220. *St. John the Almoner's Coverlet.* -

One of the bishops who have undoubtedly made themselves most famous by their charities, was St. John the Almoner, patriarch of Alexandria in the sixth century. He had so great a love for the poor, that, in order to be the better able to assist them, he reduced himself to live in extreme poverty. His bed was a wretched pallet, with a tattered woollen coverlet. One of the chief men of the city hearing this, gave him one that cost more than thirty-six pieces of silver or francs, and besought him to use it for his sake. He did use it, but the thought of the thirty-six pieces of silver expended for his sole use, whilst they might have relieved many poor persons, tormented him all the night. He kept turning over and over in his mind all the different kinds of wants which that money would have relieved, and he could not close his eyes a single moment. Next morning, he sent and sold the coverlet to give the price of it to the poor. The wealthy individual who had made him a present of it, bought it again and sent it back to him. The good bishop sold it a second time, and even a third time, and at last said smilingly to his generous benefactor who always

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had it brought back to him: "We shall see which of us will tire first." It would be very desirable that those who live in ease and comfort should know this fact. It might be that the secret disquietude of St. John the Almoner would excite some in their minds, and induce them to be, on their side, generous and charitable to those who are in need. And yourselves, dear children, when you want anything, bear it patiently, thinking that there are so many others who are still worse off than you are.

- REYRE, *Anecdotes Chretiennes*, 45.

221. *The Strada Pia, or Street of Charity, in Bologna.* -

If any of you should ever travel in Italy, my young friends, and that you should pass through Bologna, ask to be shown the street which has borne for many ages the name of *Strada Pia*, that is to say, Pious Street, the Street of Charity. That name recalls one of the most astounding prodigies of the love of one's neighbour. About six hundred years ago or more, in the thirteenth century, there lived in that neighbourhood a rich and noble lady, mother of an only son who was the delight of her heart. Whilst the child was playing about the steps of the door, a stranger passing by began to make game of him without any apparent reason. The boy answered this singular personage by a few hasty words. Enraged at this, the stranger drew his sword and pierced his weak and powerless adversary through and through. Scarcely was the murder perpetrated, when the wretch, seized with fear and terror, escaped though the first door he met, still brandishing in his

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hand the bloody sword. He ascended the staircase, and begged the mistress of the house to hide him somewhere, earnestly entreating her not to discover the place of his retreat. She granted his request and concealed him in a remote corner of her house, notwithstanding the horror with which he inspired her. Some minutes after, the officers of justice arrived in pursuit of the murderer. The lady, who wished to observe faithfully the promise she had given, not to betray the criminal, contented herself with saying: "You are at liberty to search for yourselves." Having searched the house without finding the object of their pursuit, they were about to retire, when one of them said: "How! madam, you look quite unconcerned! Know you not that he whom we seek has killed a child in the street, and that that child is your only son? Ha! here they come with his dead body!" - "God of heaven!" cried the unfortunate woman, who could not believe her eyes. Pale as death, and saying not a word more, she withdrew to her chamber, and there remained for several hours, during which time she was assailed by a thousand conflicting thoughts, that filled her soul with the most cruel anxiety. The night being come, she went to the place where she had concealed the murderer of her son, and brought him food and drink. When she thought that the hour of danger was past, she gave him a purse of gold, and said to him:

"Unhappy man, the child you killed was my son! Nevertheless, fear nothing, I will not harm you. God

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has given me strength to forgive you. Escape now for I cannot answer for your safety in this house." Would it not be impossible, my dear children, to carry the love of our neighbour farther than this?

- SCHMID et BELET, *Catechisme Historique*, II., 31.

222. *St. Francis de Sales' Enemy.* -

Nothing should extinguish charity in our hearts. Our Lord forgave his executioners, we, too, should, therefore, forgive our enemies. St. Francis de Sales, that angel of charity and meekness and Bishop of Geneva, one day met an advocate, who, without any known reason, had sworn implacable hatred to him, and never failed, meet him where he would, to assail him with taunts and imprecations. Many think the hatred was because St Francis was such a staunch defender of Catholic Truth against the attacks of the Calvinists. The holy bishop approached him kindly, took him by the hand and said with the most winning sweetness: "You are my enemy, I know; but be assured that were you even to tear out one of my eyes, I would not cease to look kindly on you with the other." How strange it is, my young friends, that such meekness and generosity as this made no impression on that hardened heart; he continued to hate the Saint, and even fired a pistol at him; though the shot took no effect on him, it did on the priest who accompanied him. Cast into prison for this crime, the advocate was soon condemned to death, when he found in the Bishop of Geneva, whom he had so grievously persecuted, his most zealous defender. St. Francis de Sales even obtained his pardon from the King, and went himself to his prison with the written order for his release. Alas! dear children, see what

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hardness of heart can do; the wretch spat in his liberator's face, and rudely pushed him away. The holy bishop, terrified at the sight of such atrocious wickedness, addressed him in these words: "My dear brother, I have saved you from the hands of human justice, but, if you be not sincerely converted, you shall fall into the hands of God's justice, and then no one will be able to save you."

- SCHMID et BELET, *Catechisme Historique*, II., 30.

223. *Bolder than a Fireman.* -

There is nothing more affecting than the devotion of Mgr. d'Apchon, Archbishop of Auch, whose story has been so often published. In 1781, a fire having broken out in his archiepiscopal city, this venerable prelate hastened to the scene of the disaster, to encourage by his presence those who were endeavouring to extinguish the flames. Two children had been forgotten in a house that was all on fire, and their mother, in the street without, was wildly calling for some one to save them. The Archbishop then cried aloud that he would give three thousand francs to any one that should save the children. No one would venture, for it seemed as though the house were every moment about to fall. "Well!" said the prelate, "if no one else will try to save them, I will." So saying, he took off his cloak, darted on a ladder and ascended to the first story, where he began courageously to search for the children. In a short time, he was seen in the midst of a dense black smoke, holding in his arms the two poor little infants. With difficulty he descended the

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ladder and scarcely had he reached the bottom, and placed the children in the arms of their mother, when the walls fell in with a tremendous crash. Every one clapped their hands in admiration, but what was still more affecting to behold, the venerable Archbishop, taking from his purse the three thousand francs he had offered as a reward, gave it to the woman whose children he had saved. There is Christian charity, my young friends, it is at once gracious and ingenious.

- SCHMID et BELET, *Catechisme Historique*, II, 370.

224. - *The Gardener who Keeps a Pear for Thirst.* -

People sometimes say, my dear children, when they would excuse themselves from giving alms, that one must keep a pear for thirst; they say wrong, as the following story proves: A gardener, who lived by the labour of his hands, was accustomed to give all his spare gains to the poor. he had already had this good habit a long time, when he began to be troubled with fears for the future. "What shall I do in my old age," said he to himself, "since, now that I am young, I save absolutely nothing?" These thoughts were ever in his mind, and at last he closed his heart entirely against the poor, and gave no more alms. He had soon reason to repent of this; one day, being at work, he cut his foot badly with his axe, and the wound was so long in healing that all the money he had saved with so much care was entirely spent; the foot could not even be cured, at all, and the doctor declared that nothing remained for him but to have it amputated. These words went to the heart of the

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unhappy gardener, and caused him some salutary reflections. "What good has my money done me?" said he to himself, the night before the terrible operation, "where is it all, now? Ah! Lord, forgive me my want of confidence; I now see my error, and will endeavour to correct it." He fell asleep towards morning, with this thought in his mind, and when the surgeon arrived he found the foot so much better that he could not restrain his surprise. The amputation was postponed. Only a few days passed when the gardener was almost completely cured. He resumed his work, and, faithful to his resolution, he managed to unite the economy that prudence requires with the charity of a good Christian.

- SCHMID et BELET, *Catechisme Historique*.



225. *Jews Lodged in a Priest's House.* -

We should love our neighbour as ourselves, and our neighbour means all men, without distinction, even strangers, and those who have not the happiness of being in the true religion. I have read that, not far from Verdun, in France, a priest who inhabited a somewhat lonely spot, chanced on one occasion to meet a family of Jews journeying along. The family consisted of the husband, the wife, and two children. They were half dead with cold, and had no means of warming themselves. Immediately, and without any hesitation, this worthy clergyman took them to his house, gave them something to eat, and had a good fire made up to comfort them. Meanwhile, the wife fell ill, and these poor people were forced to give up the idea of

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continuing their journey. The good priest kept them in his house for three weeks, doing everything that he possibly could to make them comfortable. At their departure he gave them some money to pay their expenses on the way. This poor family, on reaching Metz, where they intended to take up their abode, lost no time in telling the Jews of that city how kindly and generously they had been treated by a priest in the neighbourhood of Verdun. It was then resolved amongst them that as long as the good man lived, they would supply him, gratis, with coffee and sugar for his household. Moreover, they sent him a gold watch, whereon was inscribed the touching story we have just related. Imagine the good priest's surprise when he saw all this; he would have refused, but the grateful Jews insisted, and he was obliged to accept all.

- SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 53.

226. *The Notes of a Rare Creditor.* -

Amongst all the traits of charity which have come to my knowledge, there are few more interesting than the following, which was much talked of some years since: In a time of great distress, a wealthy proprietor in one of the Swiss Cantons invited all those who were indebted to him to go to his house. He took care to select for the meeting a day only a few days previous to that on which the rents all came due, and he pretended that he had some important business to transact with the tenants. The latter, who were nearly all farmers or labourers, arrived in great anxiety, expecting to hear from their landlord that they must be

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sure to have their money all ready for the day it fell due. The landlord received them all with a cheerful, smiling aspect, and contrived to make the conversation turn on the badness of the times; he testified much compassion for his poor tenants, and exhorted them to be of good heart, but never said a word of his own affairs. He merely told them that after dinner they would attend to business. The table was spread with abundance of everything, and the host himself presided with cordial hospitality. The guests appeared nowise deficient on the score of appetite, but it was remarked that they eat and drank very fast. The host was sorry to see it; he would rather have kept them longer in suspense, in order to make their joy the greater. Unable, however, to bear longer the cruel anxiety he saw painted on every face, he went out, and soon returned with a handful of papers. "I see plainly, my good friends," said he, "that you can neither eat nor drink, for fear of what I have to tell you about your rent. I am going to give each of you a note in which you will see my intentions; eat and drink now, for Providence will take care of the future." The tenants hastened to open the notes, and saw with astonishment that each had in his hand a discharge in full for his year's rent. At the sight, joy takes possession of their souls, they rise suddenly and gather round their benefactor loading him with blessings. Then they sit down again at table, eat with a right good will, and drink to the health of their generous landlord. The latter afterwards

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confessed that he had more joy in seeing these good people so happy, than if they had all paid the full amount of what they owed him.

- NOEL, *Explic. du Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 51. (See also HOEL.)

227. *Over a Workingman's Grave.* -

It is sometimes in the humblest classes of society that we find the most delicate sentiments of charity and generosity. The Paris papers gave an account some years ago of a touching scene that took place on the 19th of November, 1849, in the Cemetery of Belleville. A cooper, named Perrot, was being interred when a workingman who had attended the funeral, advances to the edge of the grave, and with tears and sobs thus speaks: "My friends, the worthy man whom you have just covered up never spoke to any one, during his life, of a good action he once did. Well! I am going to tell you all about it. Poor Perrot who now rests in this grave was, as you know, a hard-working man, living by his day's work, like all the rest of us. One evening, going home from his work, he met a friend who was going with a heavy heart the same way. Perrot accosts him, inquires into the cause of his trouble, and learns from him that next day his furniture is to be sold at auction, for the payment of a debt which he cannot meet. 'Come home with me,' said Perrot, 'I have got four hundred francs by me waiting for use, and it can't be put to a better one than paying your debt. Take it, and make no one the wiser, not even your wife or children.' The friend accepted the offer, and was so happy as to be

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able to pay back the loan, little by little. As for Perrot, he never spoke of it to any one. I am the friend for whom Perrot did that, and I tell it now over his half-closed grave, hoping that you'll all tell the story wherever you go, so that justice may be done to poor Perrot's memory." I need not tell you, my young friends, the impression which this recital made on all who heard it. Will not you, also, try to leave such secrets as that to be told of you?

- NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, 395.

228. *A Servant's 100 Francs.* -

Charity is fine in any one, dear children, but it would seem to be still more so when it shines in one who would himself need the assistance of others. Abbe Mullois relates that, in the beginning of the winter of 1855, a young man presents himself at the house of the pastor of Valence, in the Department of Drome, France, and offers him a sum of money for the poor. He was a simple servant, humbly clad, and looking as though he worked hard for his living. "Good day, reverend father! Here is a little alms I have brought you for the poor of the parish; it is only a hundred francs, for I am not rich, but, no matter, it will serve to buy bread for some of your poor." - "What, friend! a hundred francs, did you say? and you would give all that to the poor? Now, you being only a servant, and not rich, how would it be if you were to fall sick?" - "Oh! but you see, reverend father, I want for nothing; I have my board and lodging besides my wages. As to my clothes, they cost me little, for

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my master is very kind, and often gives me some of his. Then, once in a while, I get a little money from people coming to the house; so, you see, I get along very well." - "But would not your parents require some of that money?" - "No; although they are not rich, still they make out to live, whilst there are crowds of poor creatures famishing with cold and hunger; that money will relieve some of them." - "Still, my friend, I cannot accept your 100 francs, but I'll tell you what we will do; I will make two halves of it, you shall keep one, and I will take the other for the poor. And if ever you want anything, be sure you come to me." Thereupon, the good priest gave him 50 francs, and the poor young man goes off quite dejected. Some weeks after, he sent 25 francs more, and I am sure that before the winter was over he had distributed the remaining 25. Is it not a fine thing, children, to have such a generous heart for those who suffer?

- MULLOIS, *Mois de Marie de tout le monde*, 90.