

ON CAPITAL SINS.

CATHOLIC ANECDOTES

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CAPITAL SINS.

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I. - ON PRIDE AND HUMILITY.

439. *A God Eaten by Worms!* -

Pride cast the angels down from heaven. It is a vice so misplaced in man, - who is 'but a compound of miseries', as some of the spiritual writers have said, - that the Lord cannot endure it. And yet, dear friends, there have been men impious enough, audacious enough, coolly to let themselves be saluted by the name of God. Of this number was Herod Agrippa. As he was preparing to make war on the Tyrians and Sidonians, the latter went to him, and having gained over Blastus, who was his chamberlain, they sued for peace, because their country drew its whole subsistence from the lands of this prince. Herod, who was then celebrating public games for the health of the Emperor Claudius, having appointed a day to speak to them, appeared in the theatre the second day of the public sports; he was clad in a royal robe of silver, the dazzling splendour of which was increased by the rays of the sun. Being seated, he publicly harangued the countless multitude present. The flatterers, availing themselves of the opportunity,

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raised their voices and cried. "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" That very moment an angel of the Lord struck that impious prince, because, instead of referring the glory to God, he had proudly taken it to himself. He died some days after, eaten by worms. "Woe to me!" he cried in his last moments; "you considered me as a god, and behold I must die! The divine power under which I am obliged to bend confounds all your words, vile flatterers! Alas! why did I listen to you?"

- See *Acts* chapter 12, and Josephus

440. *King Canute's Foot-Bath.* -

There is a separate race of men, children, whose words are always dangerous, whose judgements always false, for they call that which is evil good, and that which is good evil; they are called flatterers. The more elevated any one's dignity is, the more he is exposed to become their victim. Hear what is related of Canute, King of England. The piety of that prince preserved him always from the poison of flattery, so fatal to a great many others. One day he happened to be on the sea-shore; one of his courtiers, hoping to ingratiate himself with him, affected to give him the title of King of kings, adding that he ruled the land and the sea. Canute, making no answer, folded his cloak, laid it as near the waves as he could, then sat down upon it. After which, seeing the sea rising little by little because of the tide, he addressed it in a tone of authority: "Know that you are subject to my orders; I, therefore, command you to respect your master and come no nearer to him."

Every one

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was in a state of expectation. The waves soon flowed over the king's feet, giving him a slight salt-water bath. Turning then to these flatterers, he told them with much wisdom and good sense: "You see how I am master of the sea! Learn by this the limits of kingly power; God who created the sea, and the land and all the elements, can alone control them!

- FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 109.

441. *A Shepherd Becomes Pope.* -

It is not rare to see celebrated men who came from the lowest ranks of society; but what is sometimes seen, too, dear friends, is that those men when so elevated have the foolish vanity of denying their origin. Nothing is more contemptible in the eyes of every one. Sixtus the Fifth, who from a simple shepherd became a Pope, did not act thus, he never forgot the meanness of his former state, and more than once he humbled the pride of certain courtiers. A good Franciscan friar one day begged that his family might have the honour of being allied to his. "I willingly consent," answered Sixtus V., "provided we observed some proportion between your family and mine. Tell me first what is your origin?" -- "Oh! most Holy Father," replied the monk, "my house is, thank God, one of the richest and most ancient in the kingdom of Naples." -- "So much the worse for your purpose," the Pope immediately answered, "for how could an alliance be made between a rich and powerful noble like you and a poor swineherd such as I? However, if you will have me, at any cost, consent to what you ask, lay aside your

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religious habit, give up to an hospital the good pension you receive from your family, and go keep the animals I have mentioned in the country, for five or six months, as I did myself in my youth." You see, my young friends, that an answer so humble and so modest closed the mouth of the poor religious, at the same time that it filled him still more with admiration for the Sovereign Pontiff.

- NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez* IV., 27.

442. *The Relics of a Living Saint.* -

If ever you wish to know a prelate at once learned, pious, charitable and modest, read, dear friends, the life of M. d'Orleans de la Mothe, bishop of Amiens, who lived a little before the great French Revolution. The inhabitants of a parish which he had evangelized before being a bishop, saw him depart with regret; they accompanied him to Aix, in Provence, whither he went to render an account of his mission to the Archbishop.

That prelate, apprised of the happy fruits he had obtained, began to give him the praises due to his zeal and to felicitate him on the good he had effected.

The holy missionary interrupted him then with these words: "Say as you will, my lord, I have not made your diocesans all I should; I have not even been able to teach them not to strip the passers-by. See in what a state they have put me!" He spoke thus because, through veneration for him, the people had cut up his cloak and soutane, as it were to make relics of them. "You jest, my lord," he added, "in saying that they regard me as a Saint; you

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must observe that whereas offerings are made to Saints, people here strip them of what they have. It is an abuse of which your lordship ought to correct these people of yours." Thus it was that by some adroit jesting he warded off the praises that were being given him. He used the same address in answering some one who spoke to him of the people's eagerness to have pieces of his garments: "I know not," said he, "what these good people propose to themselves in doing so; all I know is that this devotion keeps me rather chilly."

- REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 312.

443. *A Pious Queen's Examination of Conscience.* -

France, you know, children, has had few queens as sincerely virtuous as Mary Leczinska, wife of Louis XV. One evening, before going to bed, she began to accuse herself, as was her custom, of some imperfections which she resisted, she said, but very feebly, since she had not yet corrected herself. She reproached herself especially with often wanting charity towards her neighbour, and speaking of persons a little too disparagingly. Three of her women were with her at the moment. Two of these ladies assured her that they had never heard her say anything that was not according to the exact rules of Christian charity. "As for me," said the youngest, "I think the Queen is right, and has more than one reason to reproach herself in this respect." The others loudly protested against an accusation which appeared to them as unjust as it was impertinent. But the pious Mary Leczinska taking, up the defence of her on whom they

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would have imposed silence, said to her in the most cheerful and engaging tone: "Courage, courage, my daughter; do not mind them, but tell me frankly all you think." -- "Since your Majesty will give me leave," continued the young maid of honour, "I must say that you are often wanting in justice." -- "Alas! I feared as much," replied the good princess; "in spite of us we are made to do wrong." The lady, addressing herself then to her companions, said in a confidential way: "Will you not admit, ladies, that what the Queen so often tells us of herself, for example she has just been telling us now, is absolutely untrue? The Queen is, then, wanting in justice." At these words, I leave you to imagine the surprise of the Queen and the other ladies; this pious princess could not help blushing at a reproach so singular, and permitted no further conversation.

- REYRE, *Anec. Chret.*, 339.

II. - AVARICE AND GENEROSITY.

444. *Your Money Perish with You!* -

Cupidity, or the love of money, my friends, is the source of such a great number of other sins, that we cannot take too much care to preserve ourselves from it. The first Christians, and afterwards the monks and solitaries avoided it most carefully. I have read several examples of this in the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*.

Thus, St. Jerome relates that, amongst the solitaries who lived in the deserts of Nitria, not far from

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Alexandria, in Egypt, and who supported themselves by manual labour, there was one who had a desire to amass some money. He began, then, to work unremittingly at spinning flax; as he eat very little, he succeeded in saving up a hundred crowns, and at last he died. When they went into his cell to take his body out for interment, they found this money, and immediately all the solitaries, nearly five thousand in number, some of them living a long way off, assembled to see what had best be done in such a contingency, and to what use they would apply this money, which appeared to them accursed, because it had been acquired through a sentiment of cupidity. Some were of opinion that it should be distributed amongst the poor, others that it should be given to the Church, others that it should be sent to the relatives of the deceased, who were, perhaps, in need of it. But the great St. Macarius, the holy Abbot Pambo, the holy Abbot Isidore, and some others of the elders, were of none of these opinions. Inspired by the Holy Ghost, they said that the money should be buried with the dead, and at the same time these words, which St. Peter said of old to Simon the Magician, be pronounced over the body: *Your money perish with you!* Their advice was followed, and this example struck a salutary terror into every mind.

- Pere MARIN, *Vies des Peres des Deserts.* (*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*)

445. *St. Melania's 300 Pounds of Silver.* -

Alms should be entirely disinterested, my friends! if possible it should be known to God alone. It is not a

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good custom then to have people's names and address inscribed on subscription lists, as is too often seen. The blessed Melania having heard the great virtues of the holy Abbot Pambo much spoken of, brought him three hundred pounds of silver plate, and besought him, that receiving it, he might share with her the great riches God had given him. The holy abbot was then occupied in making cords of palm branches. "Generous soul," said he, continuing his labour and without raising his eyes, "may God reward your charity!" Then turning to his steward, he added: "Take this offering and distribute it amongst the poorest monasteries of Libya and the islands." Meanwhile St. Melania waited till St. Pambo should give her his blessing, and pay her some compliment in return for so rich a present. But seeing, nothing of all that, she made bold to say: "Father I am very glad to tell you, for, perhaps, you may not know it, that what I have given you amounts to 300 pounds of silver." The holy abbot, without making the least sign, or so much as casting his eyes on the baskets which contained those precious vessels, answered: "My daughter, He to whom you have made this present does not need to be told how much it is worth, since He who weighs even the mountains and the stars in His divine balance cannot be ignorant of the weight of your silver. If it were to me you gave it, it would be right for you to make me acquainted with its value; but as you have offered it to God, who did not disdain to accept two oboles or farthings from

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the hands of the widow in the Gospel, and held them as of more account than the richest gifts, speak no more of it, my daughter; He will reward you."

- Pere MARIN, *Vies des Peres des Deserts. (Lives of the Fathers of the Deserts.)*

416. *The Old Doublet of a Saint.* -

As you have often been told, children, we must be severe to our selves and indulgent to others. Christian charity goes farther yet; it deprives itself of many things in order to give to those who are in need. In this connection it is related that St. Thomas of Villanova, a Spanish archbishop, one day sent his old doublet to a pious seamstress to mend the sleeves which were quite worn out. She made to him the remark that his doublet was so old, so bad, that it was not worth even the trouble of mending, and that it would be better to make a new one. "I am not of your opinion," replied the archbishop; "if there are new sleeves put in it, it will do me a while longer; with the money a new one would cost me, I can assist at least some poor persons." He accordingly sent for a tailor and asked him how much a new pair of sleeves would cost. The tailor takes his measure, chooses his stuff, and names his price. "It is too dear," said St. Thomas, "you must take something off it." The tailor agreed, but went away dissatisfied, and did not scruple to tell every one that the archbishop was a niggard and a miser. It so happened that this poor tailor had three daughters to marry, and not much to give any of them. His confessor advised him to go and see St. Thomas, whose generosity he praised.

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"Catch me going to him!" cried the penitent. Immediately he told the story of the doublet. With much persuasion the worthy priest induced him to go. The archbishop recognized him at once, heard him kindly, took the names of his daughters, and made inquiries as to their conduct. Hearing only what was good of them, he sent for the tailor and told him: "My friend, are not you the tailor who put sleeves in my doublet? I know you were not pleased with me on that occasion; you thought I was too niggardly. Well! it is by saving a little here and a little there that I am enabled to do some little charity. Here are three purses, each containing fifty pieces of silver, to help you to settle your daughters decently." I leave you to think, dear friends whether the tailor did not change his opinion in regard to St. Thomas of Villanova.

- SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, III., 444.

447. *I Cannot! I Cannot!* -

The Holy Scripture somewhere says, my dear friends, that there is no thing more wicked than an avaricious man, because he is ready to sell his soul for money. Alas! Judas the traitor is a proof of this. But here is another example that will also strike you, and convince you how much the avaricious man imperils his own salvation. A priest was one day requested by the relatives of a miser, whose recovery was despaired of, to go and exhort him to make his confession, which he had not done for at least thirty years. The zealous minister of God went accordingly, and did all he possibly could

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to persuade him; but the miser, instead of hearing him with the attention which a thing so important deserved, continually interrupted him with silly questions such as these concerning his business: "Tell me now, reverend sir, you that come from the city, how is pepper selling to-day? Is wool going up, or down? Where is prime sugar to be got? Are provisions plenty in the market?" Thus it was that the questions followed each other in quick succession, notwithstanding the efforts of the priest, who urged him to apply himself to more serious thoughts. At last, seeing his efforts of no avail, he was forced to tell him plainly that his salvation was in extreme danger, and that, far from busying himself with colonial, imported, or other produce, he would do much better to think of making a good confession. When the miser heard these words, he began to cry out -- "Let me alone, father, I cannot! I cannot! I cannot!" and in a few moments after, he died, in a fit of the deepest despair.

- SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 81.

448. *The Miser Buried Alive.* -

Almost all stories of misers are tragical stories, my very dear friends! - Here is one that you will never forget. It is related that a man, I do not now remember in what city, being possessed of the demon of avarice thought only of heaping up goods on goods, wealth on wealth. As he feared that his treasures might be taken from him, he had a subterranean place made under his cellar with an iron door, concealed so artfully that no one could perceive it. There, as soon as he had received

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any money, he went to hide it away, and contemplated at leisure his gold and silver, of which he made his god. One day when he had brought a considerable sum of money to this gloomy den, he forgot to take his key and keep it by him; he closed the door on himself and began to count his heaped up treasures. When he had counted them over and over, he would have gone away; but the door could not be opened from within, so he found himself shut in and unable to get out; you may imagine the horrible situation in which he found himself at that fatal moment. It would seem that he shouted, and knocked a long time; but who could hear him, or who would have thought of looking for him in such a place? Meanwhile the man having disappeared, his family, as may be supposed, were terribly alarmed. They searched, and had others search on every side, without being able to hear any tidings of him; he was supposed to have made away with himself, or been murdered, in a word, that he had perished by some fatal accident. In this interval of time, a locksmith, hearing of the event, remembered that this miser had once ordered him to make secretly an iron door with a spring lock, and began to think that it might have happened, by some mistake, that he had shut himself in. He made the thing known, and led the way to the spot where he had secretly placed this door. It was broken in.

What was the astonishment, horror and fright of all beholders when they saw the body of this man all putrefied and eaten by

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worms! It was all plain then; the place was searched, and immense sums were found accumulated, real treasures of wrath and malediction, to appear before the dread tribunal of God.

- BAUDRAND, *Histoires Edifiantes*.

III. - ON LUST AND CHASTITY.

449. *The Devil's Secret.* -

Speaking of bad thoughts, let me tell you, my dear friends, a very curious circumstance which occurred to a good solitary of the sixth century, I think. He lived on the very Mount of Olives, and had no other ornament in his humble cell than a little image of the Blessed Virgin. Full of devotion for that good Mother, he passed the greater part of the day in reciting his Office, or other prayers, at her feet. Notwithstanding that, he had the grief of seeing himself tormented by a multitude of bad thoughts and unchaste images, which scarcely left him any rest, either night or day. He was the more astonished at this, that he never had anything to reproach himself with, and that his age, already advanced, as well as his austerities and daily prayers, ought to have placed him beyond the reach of such assaults. One day, after having prayed and wept much before his little statue of Mary, he took it into his head to address the fiend himself and say to him "Impure spirit, why is it that you do not leave me a moment quiet?" -- "Be assured," said the devil, who appeared to him at the same moment, "be assured

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the torments I cause you are nothing to those which you make me endure. Now I if you swear to keep my secret, I will tell you what you must do if you would have me leave you at rest." The good solitary without suspecting anything, and in the great desire which he had to be delivered from those bad thoughts, gave the devil the promise he demanded. Then that infernal spirit told him: "*If you want me to let you alone, you have only to look no more at that image you have in your cell.*" Imagine the astonishment of this poor religious!

His troubled conscience immediately reproached him with the imprudent promise he had made, and the sad consequences it must have. To reassure himself, he went to the Abbot Theodore, who was the Superior of all the Solitaries of Mount Olivet, and simply told him his business. The pious abbot made him understand that an oath of that kind made to the devil did not bind him, and that all he had to do was to go on praying to the Blessed Virgin as she was the one who would crush the serpent's head. Moreover, the devil was the father of lies and, by removing the statue of Mary, the solitary would only make himself the victim of greater temptations from the evil one. Full of joy at this consoling answer, the solitary returned to his cell, and continued his exercises of piety as before. Astonishing to relate, at the end of a few days, overcome by his perseverance and his pious devotion to Mary, the devil left off tormenting him with bad thoughts, and the solitary lived happily to a good old age.

- NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, VI. 182.

450. *A Duke of Champagne Killed by a Young Girl.* -

Chastity is a good so precious to the heart, dear friends, that God has sometimes inspired weak

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women with the courage of the lion, to help them to preserve their honour. We have a fine example of this in the history of Judith, which you know by heart from your Old Testament Bible History. Here is another which you do not know. Amalon, Duke of Champagne, having carried off a maiden of noble family, as remarkable for virtue as for other fine qualities, strove to seduce her and lead her to evil. This generous girl at first resisted him only by her prayers and tears; but seeing that all was in vain, she throws herself on Amalon, seizes his sword and inflicts upon him a wound that must necessarily prove mortal, though her intention had only been to drive him back from his lustful assault on her person. The duke did not die immediately; he called his people, and before he breathed his last, found strength to say: "Harm not this courageous girl; it was I that sinned, seeking to deprive her of her honour and virtue; what she did deserves respect rather than punishment." The noble damsel, retaining all her presence of mind, escapes amid the confusion which she had caused, travels many miles on foot, and goes to ask pardon of King Goutran, who was then at Chalon-sur-Saone. That prince received her with much kindness, took her under his protection, and forbade the duke's family to seek to avenge a death which his odious attempt had but too well deserved.

- FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 506.

451. *The Power of the "Hail Mary."* -

Of all the virtues for which we can implore the assistance of the Most Holy Virgin, there is none, dear friends, that pleases her more than chastity. Hence we are sure

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that she will always hear the prayers which we address to her with that intention. One *Hail Mary* will do more than the best resolutions. A young man, who had often to reproach himself with great sins against the holy virtue, but who wished sincerely to correct himself, went to Rome to go to confession. He applied to Father Segneri, a Jesuit, and declared to him that this habit had become almost insurmountable to him. But the learned religious exhorted him to take refuge in the heart of Mary, and simply gave him for penance to recite a Hail Mary every morning till his next confession. The young man faithfully followed this advice ; he recited that short prayer very punctually every day, and ceased not to address himself confidently to the Blessed Virgin. Soon after he was obliged to undertake a long voyage. On his return, he went to see Father Segneri, his confessor, and the latter had the satisfaction of seeing that he was completely cured of his evil habit. "How did you manage, my dear child, to correct yourself as you have done?" -- "Father, I am indebted for it to the Blessed Virgin; she had regard to the little prayer I said every day in her honour, and that simple *Hail, Mary*, which I never missed saying, merited for me of her Divine Son the precious grace for which I will eternally thank Him."

- SCHMID et BELET, *Cat. Hist.*, II., 109

452. *Napoleon's Statue.* -

I never saw the Emperor Napoleon the First more indignant than on the occasion of which I am going to speak. It will show you, my young friends, how far that great man carried the

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love of decency. The celebrated sculptor, Canova, had been employed to make his statue; he unluckily represented him in the form of a heathen deity, the god Mars, holding in his hand a little statue of victory. The whole was of white marble, somewhat more than life size, and of admirable workmanship. As soon as it was finished, it was sent to Paris, and was placed in one of the lower halls of the Louvre, awaiting the Emperor's inspection. The better to bring out the whiteness of the marble, and to give it a warm flesh-like hue, care had been taken to hang the hall with red drapery. These preparations finished, the Emperor hastened to go and see Canova's new masterpiece. But scarcely had he entered when he almost started back with horror:

"What insolence is this?" cried he, addressing M. Denon, the Director of the Imperial Museum; "how had any one the impudence to represent me in such a way as that? I will never allow that statue to be exposed to public view. What would any decent family say, seeing the rules of decency and propriety so violated? Canova is mistaken; the beauty of his work is effaced by its indignity. I do not want to have this vile thing destroyed, but you shall hide it under a veil, and I forbid it to be shown to any one whatever, and for the future I will not have a word said of it in the papers."

Do you not admire with me, my friends, this just indignation of the Emperor? Never forget that the eternal laws of God must never yield to the egotistical considerations of art, interest, or human respect.

- REYRE, page 436.

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IV. - ON ENVY AND CHARITY.

453. *The Two Rival Painters Without Jealousy.* -

It is very rare, my friends, to see two men of equal talent who are not jealous one of the other. I have, however, found an example of the contrary in the history of Greece. Protogenes, a famous painter, lived at Rhodes, on one of its majestic mountainsides; he was only known to the celebrated Apelles, likewise a painter, by reputation and by the fame of his pictures. Apelles, wishing at last to assure himself of the beauty of his works, went on purpose to Rhodes. Arrived at the house of Protogenes, he found there only an old woman who kept her master's studio, and a picture on the easel, on which there was as yet nothing of paint.

The old woman asked his name. "I am going to put it here," replied Apelles; and taking a pencil with colour, he sketched something with extreme delicacy. Protogenes, on his return, having learned what had passed, and regarding the sketch with admiration, was not long in divining the author. "It must be Apelles!" he cried; "no one else could draw a sketch so fine and so light!" Then, seizing himself another pencil with a different colour, he drew on the same features a contour more correct and more delicate, and told his old servant that if the stranger returned she had only to show him what he had just done, telling him at the same time that it was the work of the man he came to seek. It was done as he said; but Apelles, ashamed of seeing himself outdone by his competitor, took a third colour, and amongst the lines that had been

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drawn, he traced others with such marvellous skill that he exhausted all the subtlety of his art. Protogenes having distinguished these last lines: "I am conquered," said he, "and I must hasten to embrace my rival and my conqueror." So he flew to the port and harbour of Rhodes, and having there found Apelles at one of the harbour-side inns, he formed with him a close friendship, which was never after interrupted. - A rare example, children, especially between two persons of the same merit, and running the same career. It were to be wished, for the honour of the fine arts, that artists would oftener renew it.

- FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, I., 102.

454. *How MichaelAngelo Confounded His Enemies.* -

The best answer that can be made to the jealous and the envious, children, is to confound them, whether by always doing what is right, or putting it out of their power to do better. Here is a very curious example of this. MichaelAngelo, that celebrated painter and sculptor of Florence, having remarked, during his stay in Rome, the jealousy he had inspired in Raphael and several other artists, composed privately a *Bacchus playing with a Satyr*. He had spared nothing to make this piece of sculpture worthy of his well-known skill; but he took care to conceal his name at the bottom and to break off an arm of his statue; after these precautions he blackened it with soot and buried it in a vineyard where he knew the foundations of a house were soon to be dug out. Nearly a year after, the workmen employed on these foundations, having actually discovered

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this unknown statue, carried it to the Pope. The artists all praised the magnificence of this work, and immediately agreed on its high antiquity. MichaelAngelo alone seemed to be of a contrary opinion; he even began to point out numerous defects in this masterpiece. The question gave rise to warm discussion. Raphael maintained that the statue was perfection itself, and that it was impossible to estimate its price; "only," he added, "it is a great pity that its arm is broken off and lost." Then, in order to confound this jealous rival, MichaelAngelo went in search of the arm he had kept, showed his name engraved on the base of the statue, and related its origin. His enemies went away quite confused for having fallen so completely into the snare so adroitly laid for them by MichaelAngelo. Those poor artists drew only shame from a fact which sheds imperishable glory on their rival.

- SCHMID et BELET. *Cat. Hist.*, III., 334.

455. *Two Envious Soldiers Reconciled.* -

People may sometimes forget themselves, dear friends, and have little difficulties with their neighbour; but religion does not permit us to remain in that sad state, and obliges us to be reconciled as soon as possible. At the siege of Namur, in 1695, there were in the army of William III., King of England, two men of Hamilton's regiment, one a sub-officer, named Union, the other a private soldier, called Valentine. They became irreconcilable enemies. Union, who was Valentine's officer, took every opportunity of annoying

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him, and showing his aversion. The soldier bore all without complaining; or, at least, if he did sometimes groan under this tyranny, he never forgot the blind obedience prescribed by military laws. Several months had passed in this way, when one day they were both ordered out for the attack on the Castle of Namur.

The French made a sally, in which the officer Union received a shot in the thigh. He fell, and as the French were pressing the allied troops on every side, he expected to be trampled under foot. At this moment he had recourse to his enemy: "Ah! Valentine! Valentine!" cried he, "can you desert me?"

Hearing his voice, Valentine ran hastily to him, and in the midst of the French fire, he raised the officer on his shoulders, and carried him courageously through every danger: they became friends. Arrived at the Abbey of Salsine, a cannon ball, without touching the wounded officer, killed poor Valentine, who fell under the body of his enemy. The latter then forgetting his wound, gets up, tearing his hair, and throwing himself on the disfigured corpse of his deliverer:

"Ah! Valentine," cried he, "dear Valentine, was it, then, for me you died? for me, who treated you with so much barbarity? Generous man! I cannot and will not survive you! No!" It was impossible to separate him from the mangled body. At last he was taken away, still holding fast by his dear benefactor, and whilst both were thus carried into the ranks, their comrades, who all knew their former relations, wept at once with admiration

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and sorrow. When Union was brought back to his tent, his wound was dressed by force; but the following day the unhappy man, still calling on Valentine, died overwhelmed with regret and full of gratitude. Behold, dear friends, what Christian charity can do: it forgives and devotes itself.

- FILASSIER, *Dict. d'Educ.*, II., 452.

456. *A Merchant's Good Fortune.* -

Our Lord has said, my very dear children, that we must not only forget the injuries our neighbour may have done us, but even do good to those who have done evil to us. It is evidently religion alone that could make that sublime law. Two merchants of Marseilles, who were neighbours and jealous of each other's prosperity lived in scandalous enmity. At the end of some months, one of the two, entering at last into himself, heard the voice of religion, which condemned his conduct, and wished to be reconciled. For that he consulted a person of piety in whom he had full confidence, as to what he should do in order to bring about this reconciliation.

"The best means," answered this prudent adviser, "is that which I am going to point out to you. When people come to buy of you if you do not happen to have what suits them, instead of letting them go without saying anything, direct them to your neighbour's store." He did so for some time. And what was the consequence?

The other merchant, apprised of where all these buyers came from, was struck with the good offices of the man whom he considered as his enemy. He went to

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thank him, begged him with tears in his eyes to forgive him for the hatred he had borne him, and entreated him to receive him into the number of his best friends. You may easily imagine, my dear children, that his request was granted; those two neighbours, who were sworn enemies but a few weeks before, became the model of sincere and cordial friendship. The whole neighbourhood was edified.

- NOEL, *Cat. de Rodez*, IV., 93.