

CHAPTER XIII - FATHER BENWELL'S CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

Arthur Penrose to Father Benwell.

REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER--When I last had the honor of seeing you, I received your instructions to report, by letter, the result of my conversations on religion with Mr. Romaine.

As events have turned out, it is needless to occupy your time by dwelling at any length on this subject, in writing. Mr. Romaine has been strongly impressed by the excellent books which I have introduced to his notice. He raises certain objections, which I have done my best to meet; and he promises to consider my arguments with his closest attention, in the time to come. I am happier in the hope of restoring his mental tranquillity--in other and worthier words, of effecting his conversion--than I can tell you in any words of mine. I respect and admire, I may almost say I love, Mr. Romaine.

The details which are wanting in this brief report of progress I shall have the privilege of personally relating to you. Mr. Romaine no longer desires to conceal himself from his friends. He received a letter this morning which has changed all his plans, and has decided him on immediately returning to London. I am not acquainted with the contents of the letter, or with the name of the writer; but I am pleased, for Mr. Romaine's sake, to see that the reading of it has made him happy.

By to-morrow evening I hope to present my respects to you.

II.

Mr. Bitrake to Father Benwell.

SIR--The inquiries which I have instituted at your request have proved successful in one respect.

I am in a position to tell you that events in Mr. Winterfield's life have unquestionably connected him with the young lady named Miss Stella Eyrecourt.

The attendant circumstances, however, are not so easy to discover. Judging by the careful report of the person whom I employ, there must have been serious reasons, in this case, for keeping facts secret and witnesses out of the way. I mention this, not to discourage you, but to prepare you for delays that may occur on our way to discovery.

Be pleased to preserve your confidence in me, and to give me time--and I answer for the result.