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# THE DRUID'S TOWER;

OR,

## THE FATE OF THE DANE.

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### CHAPTER I.

“ Let Erin remember the days of old,  
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her,  
When Malachy wore the collar of gold  
That he won from her proud invader ;  
When her kings with standard of green unfurled  
Led the Red-Branch knights to danger—  
Ere the emerald gem of the western world  
Was set in the crown of the stranger.”

MOORE.

THERE is not, we venture to assert, a man, woman, or child in Ireland, who has not heard, and who cannot tell by the evening fireside some wild legend of the Danes which has come down to them through departed generations. They will tell you in the most graphic style, and if you happen to understand the old language of Erin, so rich in all that expresses emotion or passion, you will hear wild, poetical, and thrilling words concerning the rude marauders who swept up like a hurricane from the shores of the Baltic,

and laid waste, year after year, their beautiful isle.

They will point to the gray ruins of the Danish strongholds, and with kindling eye, tell you of the victories of Nial, of Malachy, and Congloch, of the great rout and slaughter at *Ard-Bracen*—the terrific battle near Eausrudth, and the famous fight at *Glass-Glean*, where seventeen hundred of the barbarians, together with Saxbold, their general, were left dead on the field. They might have forgotten these things along with their oppressors; the tides of successive generations and successive sorrows might have swept them away from the memory of the living, if the Danish ruins, the old mounds which the usurper reared in his pride, and the gray Towers—now silent, and as full of mystery as the Sphynx—which overlook the wild and rugged sea-coast, from whose summits the Dane used to signal his fleets by day and warn them by beacon fires at night, were not there to keep undimmed and unbroken their traditions.

And those ruins of Danish castles and mounds, so rich in tradition and legend, so picturesque in their gray decay, where the wild rose and ivy cling together, and where grotesque old trees of ash and oak overshadow all with a hoary twilight, are regarded as accursed places. In their midst the Fairy Rath is found, and in the damp stone vaults below, the Banshee has her haunt. Strange stories are told of ghastly lights flitting here and

there through the ruins, at midnight, and phantom armies that are seen defiling through the crumbling arches which ages ago echoed with the death cry of slaughtered Danes; nor could you get the bravest peasant in the barony, when the east wind pipes over the sea and dashes the salt spray up over the rocks, and the mad blasts groan and shriek along the shore, to go under the lee of one of those mounds, or in the neighborhood of one of their ruined castles.

Yes! the people of Ireland knew the Danes, and loved them about as well as in later times they love the Saxon, and good reason they have to swear by St. Patrick's staff, that there's not a pin's choice between them.

In the spring of 18— a stranger, evidently a foreigner and a gentleman, and a man clad in the rough attire of a boatman, stood together beneath one of the cliffs which line the shores of the estuary at the mouth of the Shannon. The sky looked stormy and threatening. Red gleams of sunlight shot out between the gray cloud rifts, and the waves rolled in with a heavy, tumultuous sound, making a froth and din which sent the sea-birds whirling and shrieking like mad around the cliffs. Off seaward lay the picturesque Isle of Inniscathy, with its ruined abbey and churches, erected in the fourth century by St. Senanus, and the Druid's Tower, built fifteen hundred years before the holy chaunts of hermits and monks echoed amidst its solitudes.

Toward Inniscathy the stranger looked with an anxious eye, then he gazed abroad on the sea, and up at the threatening sky. "I think I shall go, Owen," he said, in a quiet voice.

"And surely now yer honor won't be afther crossing to Inniscathy in such *briculeagh* as this? *Der chorp agus manim!* \* but there'll be wild work presently," said Owen.

"You are not afraid of rough weather, eh?" said the stranger, looking with an artist's eye at the fine, brawny figure of the boatman, as he stood against the wind, which dashed back the coarse black hair from his face, revealing an ample breadth of forehead, and a bold, bright, mischief-loving eye.

"It's your honor that 'ud have rayson to be afear'd—as to myself, I am no *pittiogue*," † replied Owen, while the red deepened in his cheeks, and he busied himself with a twist of tobacco, which he brought up from the depths of the pocket of his pea-jacket. "Anyway, I'm not thankful to anybody alive for being onaisy concerning me—it breeds ill luck as much as mud puddles breed sickness. I've rowed over to Inniscathy in wilder weather than this."

"I don't doubt your courage an instant, Owen. You have been a safe and fearless guide during my journey, and I shall not fear to trust you

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\* By my body and soul.

† An effeminate man.

now. We will go. Get out your oars—lend me one, and with Heaven's help we'll soon land at Inniscathy."

"Hould, sir," exclaimed the man, starting back with a terrified countenance, while he pointed to Inniscathy. "The *Pundit* is there—I dare not go. Does not your honor see the smoke sailing up from the Druid's Tower?"

"Well, Owny, a Pundit, according to my understanding of the word, is not the devil," laughed the gentleman.

"He may be, your honor, or his grandfather, maybe. Anywise he's an ould necromancer, that plays wild works in the iliments when he kindles a fire in that Pagan Tower," said Owny, gravely.

"Did you know, Owny, that we Americans don't care much for the devil, and if you're afraid I'll venture alone," said the gentleman with a pleasant and determined air.

"People must be first cousins to saints, or close kin to the divil, *not* to feel afraid of him," murmured Owen. "Anywise, divil or Pundit, I'm not one to put yer honor at a *deshort*,\* if you're bent on goin'. Thanks to the priest, God bless him, and my mother—may her bed be aisy in Heaven—I can say some prayers at a venture," he said, more good-humoredly, as he

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\* At loss.

stepped into the boat, followed by the stranger, and unfastened her tackling.

“Now, Owen,” said the traveller, after a few hearty tugs at the oar, which showed him to be no stranger to such exercise, “we are getting along finely; and I wish to hear more of this Pundit; where is he from? Asia?”

“Whirra, yer honor, it's more than I can tell. Some says he's a wise man from the North—some that he's one of the unfortunates that used to tache the *patchee boght* \* their letthers, when it was worth a man's life to do it, and being detected by the spies that was set on to watch the country-side he was dragged off and trated in such divilish style that he got crazy. Some say one thing, some another, but it's not considered the most lucky affair on airth to fall in with him. I can't make your honor *incense* it, but it's as true as the gospil, that whenever he comes to Inniscathy there's wild work on the sea.”

“His spells are beginning to work now,” replied the stranger. “Here comes a cat's-paw—luff your oar—ho! ha! we went over that roller like a wild duck.”

Owen did not share in the enthusiastic mood of his companion, but bending to his oar, with his gaze fixed either on the white smoke drifting away from the Druid's Tower, or the huge billows which were tumbling and thundering landward,

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\* Poor children.

he seemed to be counting odd chances and praying alternately.

After a wild, whirling dance over the billows, their short but perilous voyage was over, and they landed at Inniscathy. It was after sundown, and the gray ruins of the churches of St. Senanus looked weird and ghost-like. As the shadows gathered over the sea, the light in the Druid's Tower brightened and gleamed like the red glare of the full moon when she rises from behind the Reek; the wind raged from the north-east, and sent the huge, frothing billows defiantly up beyond their usual limits. Owen, with the assistance of the traveller, with difficulty stranded his boat, for the frail cockle-shell of a thing would soon have been dashed to pieces on the rugged shore if it had been moored in the ordinary way.

“Our fut is in it now, yer honor. It's neck or nothing—stay or drown, with that divil of a Pundit to the fore, like an evil spirit, ready to pounce down upon us like a kite on a hen-roost. Where will your honor spend the night?”

“I shall pay the Pundit a visit, Owny; he seems to be comfortable up there beside a nice fire, and I am shivering with cold and wet to the skin,” said the gentleman, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. “Come with me.”

“If I was sure, sir, he was flesh and blood, I'd do it—anyhow, yer honor's not to be brow-beat, and, *der chorp agus manim!* I'm not sich a

*pettiogue* as to let you go alone, and you a stranger in Ireland, at that. I shouldn't like, yer honor, for my friends in Ameriky to hear I'd demaned myself to an American gintleman on sich an occasion, bedad. I'm ready to go wher-ever yer honor leads the way."

"Thank you, Owen," said the gentleman, grasping his hand, "you're a true man and a faithful friend; but you had better remain here and watch the boat. Take this pistol, and if you hear the report of mine come to my assistance. Nay, I insist on your remaining."

"You may go," said Owen, watching the stranger as he bounded over the broken pillars and arches strewed around in every direction, until his form was lost in the darkness; "but you're not going to outwit me in that fashion, bedad. I shall go after ye in a jiffy, and if there's to be a skrimmage, and that divil to the fore, I'll be there, without wasting ball and powder, in time to lind a hand." And Owen Daily dragged the boat out of harm's reach, hid the oars beneath the long, rank grass among the ruins, and saying a Pater or Ave at every step, found his way to the Druid's Tower, where he mounted guard with his pistol cocked, at the entrance. We will not assert that he felt as bravely as he assumed, or that he did not wish the stranger had staid in America, or that he had selected some other guide. We only know that he acted like a brave and generous fellow in sacrificing his supersti-

tious fears to the safety and protection of one who was a stranger in a strange land. Owen felt responsible, in a measure, for the national honor. He would not individually have brought a reproach on the hospitality and respectability of his country, for the world ; so with the best and most chivalrous intentions, he kept guard until the rain, now falling heavily, drove him in for shelter. All was dark and silent within and comfortably warm ; and as he leaned against the rough stone wall he fell into a profound sleep, the natural effect of repose after excessive fatigue and a cold wetting.

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## CHAPTER II.

When Mr. Wilmot left his *compagnon de voyage* he supposed there must be a pathway leading to the Ruined Tower, but he concluded not to waste the few minutes of daylight he had left in searching for it, but to make a bold dash across the ruins in a direct line toward it. This he accomplished at the expense of some ignoble tumbles over the broken arches and pillars which lay concealed under the high tangled grass and rank weeds, and a few scratches, which only had the effect of spurring him on to greater exertions. And when at last he found himself standing alone under the low-vaulted stone arch which led into the Druid's Tower, with the shadows of night gathering thick over the scene, and not a living being in sight, he jumped to the conclusion that he had been guilty of a decidedly foolish thing in venturing so far into the power of—he knew not what. He was no stranger to the manner in which smugglers conducted their affairs; this might be one of their haunts, and the Pundit a scarecrow to keep off the Excise men and Coast-guard. It might be a nest of Orangemen he was about to stir up; or a *rendezvous* for desperate Ribbonmen, who there schemed and

plotted Agrarian outrages against landlords and middle men, whose oppressions resulted in so many legal murders. He wondered where his wits were that these ideas did not suggest themselves to him before he "put his foot into it." Had he been a coward he would have retraced his steps, and postponed his antiquarian investigations until morning; but Mr. Wilmot possessed one of those firm, calm natures, which, instead of being deterred by difficulties, are only incited to greater success by them, until the pursuit of an adventure assumes an earnest and business-like aspect.

Perhaps the innate curiosity peculiar to his countrymen may have given an additional impetus to his determination to explore the Druid's Tower, and visit the Pundit. "But," suggested Caution, "suppose instead of a Pundit, you should find a gang of smugglers?" "I would salute them very civilly and tell them that so far from being an Excise man, or one of the Coast-guard, I was an American, and would offer to pay them handsomely to take me to France." "Very good as far as it goes," replies Caution—"but suppose instead of smugglers and Ribbon-men, you find really one who, having made over his soul to the devil, practises magic?" "Better still. A Colt's revolver will be quite equal to him, so let me pass. Here are the steps—narrow, rugged and winding—up—whew! what a tug, and how close and oppressive the air—still

up—*E pluribus unum!* is there no end to this flight?” Thus muttering and stumbling, and, we must admit, swearing a little, Mr. Wilmot scaled the steep, narrow stairway, until just as he felt perfectly exhausted, he saw a gleam of light shining above him. “Eureka!” he exclaimed, and cautiously climbed a few steps further—then paused to listen, but all was silent, and he went on until his progress was impeded by a low, narrow door. It was slightly open, and a bright gleam stole out on the gloomy stairway, presenting a fine opportunity for Mr. Wilmot to make a quiet survey of what was within before he introduced himself; but unfortunately for his plans, as he leaned forward, his nose, which was of good and prominent dimensions, saluted the door and it swung open as if by the touch of enchantment, revealing a ruinous-looking, stone-roofed apartment, on the hearth-stone of which blazed a ruddy fire. Near it, beside a low, stone table sat an aged man arrayed in tattered and tarnished Oriental attire. A turban wrapped his head, and his long, white beard flowed down almost to his girdle. As the intruder entered he lifted his head, and from underneath his white, shaggy eyebrows surveyed him from head to foot. He showed no emotion of any kind, unless the kindling of his small, gray eyes, set far back in their sockets, might have indicated some; but in a quiet way, and with a weak, quavering voice he

said, as he waved his hand, "Thou hast come in good time. I have been expecting thee."

"I noticed your signal," said Mr. Wilmot, not knowing what else to say.

"Yes; it has been lit up four times a year for a century past. I have been waiting patiently for thee. Hitherto no one has answered it. Now I know the time is at hand," he replied solemnly.

"I am sorry I could not come before!" replied Mr. Wilmot, now firmly convinced that he was confronted by the Wandering Jew; "but I hope I am not too late." Then he suddenly be-thought himself that Owny's suggestion about the Evil One might, by a bare possibility, be correct; and he made a resolution that, whatever he might say, he would at least sign nothing; for he was addicted to some old superstitious ideas about his soul which he valued.

"No; not too late by four hours. I am very old now—very old. I have been for the last ten centuries passing through the transmigrations necessary for my purification.\* To-night my probation ends, and I shall find my reward. In the Temples of Egypt I learnt the mysteries of Isis and Osiris. In Phœnicia I was a prince and high priest of my tribe; with my countrymen, who discovered this island, I came hither, since which I have passed through every grade of humanity. As king I ruled the fair Province of

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\* Metempsychosis was a belief of the ancient Irish.

Ulster, but not having administered impartial justice, I was condemned to inhabit the body of a Druid, whose soul passed away at midnight in his cell. He had committed sacrilege, and if Fate had not released him in time, he would have received the punishment due to his crimes. As it was I expiated them in chains and darkness. When justice was satisfied I was released and banished hither, where it was my business to use the sacrificial knife when human victims were offered to our deities. But I passed from that existence and became a peasant—then a soldier—then a monarch. Under my reign the kingdom flourished and prospered. It was a common boast that,

*' Quid sit jus cleri, satrapæ, vaticque fabrique,  
Necnon agricolæ, liber iste docebit abunde ;'*

but I sinned in secret, and when I again left the body I had inhabited tenantless I found myself the poor teacher of poor children—I, the companion and friend of Sadi, the Persian—the confident of Michael Scott—the associate of Albert Magnus, to fall so low! But I fell lower still and became mad—yes, stranger of Fate, a raving madman—then a beggar—then a Christian—then a victim of Saxon fury—then—but you will know all anon. I am now a Pundit; one of high caste, and held in high repute in India. Time flies—times flies," he said sadly; then his head sunk on his breast and he was silent. Mr.

Wilmot knew that the unfortunate old man was hopelessly mad ; and having once heard that it is the safest way to address insane people as if they were quite rational, he inquired :

“ How can I serve you, learned Pundit ? ”

“ Thus,” he replied, thrusting his hand in his bosom under the thick folds of his Oriental robe. Mr. Wilmot kept his eye fixed steadily on him, and shied a little to the right, as the Pundit jerked something dark from his bosom. He thought it might possibly be a pistol, but it was only a roll of discolored parchment.

“ Ahem,” said the Yankee taking his finger off of the trigger of his revolver.

“ When Turgesius, the Dane, defiled the land I was chief Bard of Malachy, the Wise. When he was imprisoned by the dastardly Dane, the robber, the sea-wolf, the archives of his kingdom were destroyed. But the Psalter was safe. Afraid of his Vandal outrages, I concealed it about my person, and journeying at midnight came to Inniscathy, and concealed it in a niche in this apartment, which I walled up. This night I unsealed it and found my Psalter in the very spot I had laid it centuries ago. Thou art young, and more active than I ; climb up those abutments and in the loop-hole above there is a ball of twisted silver thread—hand it to me to secure this roll of parchment.

Mr. Wilmot, anxious to humor the peculiar fancy of the daft old man, proceeded to do as he

was directed. He found the loop-hole but nothing more; he dashed away the thick cobwebs that clustered over it, and found only the carcass of a bat. While engaged in his "aerial lookout," searching for the silver cord, he thought he heard a low, mocking laugh, then the trailing of garments, and the closing of a door; he came down as rapidly as the rough stone projections allowed him, being obliged to descend backward; and leaping from the last one, he glanced around and discovered that he was alone. The Pundit had fled. There lay the Psalter of Malachy, but the Pundit—whither had he flown? Wilmot fancied there was a smell of brimstone around him. Had the Evil One claimed him, body and all, while he was perched overhead looking for the silver cord? He could not tell. He only knew that he was alone—the "monarch of all he surveyed," and he half-staggered into the belief that he had been holding converse with a creature of supernatural existence, whether evil or good he could not determine; the sardonic laugh he had heard, and the smell of brimstone did not incline him to the opinion that it was anything heavenly. Just then he heard a terrific outcry—a yell—and the successive reports of a pistol, which reverberated up the narrow, sinuous stairway, like an earthquake walking upstairs. This was followed by the sound of footsteps plunging upward, and in another moment Owen the brave

dashed wildly into the room staring around him like a wounded owl.

“What in the world is the matter, Owny, my man,” asked Mr. Wilmot with a smile he could not suppress.

“An’ what is it all, yer honor? I’d like to be knowing myself,” he replied, running his fingers through his hair in a distracted manner. “Thanks be to God and the saints your honor’s safe an’ well; as to myself, bedad! I like to been kilt outright by that murthering villain of a Pundit.”

“How? Have you seen the Pundit?” asked Mr. Wilmot.

“Why, you see, your honor, after you left me beyant there at the fishing-house, I didn’t know what you might be runnin’ your head into, and I thought it was best for me to be on the spot. So up I come, scared out of my life, to the Tower; an’ there I was standin’ as quite as a lamb,\* keeping guard below, when all at wunst there came a blaze and a spring down, and over I wint like a cricket ball, in a hard wrastle with who, but that divil of a Pundit; and your honor, as sure as life, there came a flash of lightning, and I seen him fly off on it, wid a flutterin’ of wings. By St. Patrick’s staff, I didn’t like the company I was in at all, at all, an’ hopin’ I

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\* Sound asleep.

might find your honor sound an' well, I made bould to come up."

"You have made a wonderful escape, Owny," said Mr. Wilmot, with quiet humor in his eyes. "Did you let your pistol off before or after the Pundit's flight?"

"Afterward, sir, I couldn't get at it before, he had me clinched so fast," replied Owen; "but what shall we do, sir? The storm is at its height now. Bedad, but I shouldn't wonder if my boat is dashed to flinders, for the waves is batin' up further than I ever saw 'em come afore."

"We'll spend the night here!" replied Mr. Wilmot. "It is as comfortable a place as we could wish or expect under the circumstances. Here is a pile of turf; throw some on, then open the wallet, and let us have something to cheer us in the shape of food and drink. Owen obeyed with alacrity; the fire was replenished, the flask produced, and the wallet opened; but alas! its contents had been reduced by the unfortunate wrestling-match, between the Pundit and Owen, to a shapeless mass, an *Olla Podrida* without sauce, but still eatable. Their keen appetite did ample justice to the ridiculous looking feast, nor did the flask lie idle long before them. It inspired Owen, after his fatiguing venture, with a most luxurious feeling of repose. His voice gradually grew fainter and fainter, until at last his head fell on his breast, and he was sound asleep. Mr. Wilmot, excited to wake-

fulness by the strange events of the night, and not knowing how soon the insane old man might return, thought he would open and examine the Psalter of Malachy. No doubt the crazed creature had found the precious document under some of the monastic ruins, and his disordered imagination had woven it in with the fantastic creatures of his distracted mind.

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## CHAPTER III.

WITH his head leaning forward on his arm which rested on the old stone table, Owen, oblivious of all mundane things was sleeping soundly. Mr. Wilmot trimmed the lamp—replenished the fire, and examined the priming of his pistols, which he laid on the table before him. There was nothing else left for him to do, but wait patiently for day-dawn while he listened to the deep-toned snoring of Owen, and the wailing of the tempest. A feeling of sadness and loneliness gradually stole over him; an oppression and drowsiness, which were the precursors of sleep. Not feeling sufficient confidence, however, in the safety of his position to yield to those influences, he roused himself, and drawing the Pundit's roll of parchment towards him, determined to examine it, for, although it promised him dry entertainment, he felt sure it would keep him awake. But it was merely a collection of antique manuscripts, chronological tables and historical data—some fragments from the archives of one of the Inniscathy monasteries. He unrolled and glanced over one and another, and threw them aside—then yawned, whistled a few bars of “Hail Columbia” and went on with his researches.”

“It is Hobson’s choice, now,” he said, slowly unrolling the last one—“this, or nothing. Ha! Fairly written—good Latin—THE FATE OF THE DANE, it is called. This will do finely”—saying which, he settled himself in a more comfortable position and began to read.

It was over;—the manuscript began—the struggle of a people battling for their sacred rights, for the vitality of their nationality, their altars and homes—was over, the death throes were hushed, and we were the slaves of the Dane. It is true that in several later engagements their armies were vanquished with great slaughter; but what availed these transitory successes against an enemy whose numbers never seemed to diminish; and whose losses were constantly repaired by troops from the grim shores of the Baltic, who swarmed over the land like the locusts of Egypt, and daily landed fresh hordes on our coasts, armed and equipped for our destruction. It had been a long contested, a cruel, but hopeless struggle from the beginning. In vain the best blood of Iran was poured out in her defence—in vain the flower of the land fell like the leaves of autumn before the winter’s blast—we became a vanquished people. County after county; district after district fell into the possession of our ruthless and barbarian conquerors, after rivers of blood had been shed to defend them. The will of the oppressor became our Law. Soon every district in the Land, in

which an Irish Chieftain resided, was obliged to entertain a Danish Chief to whom he was to submit and from whom he was to receive orders for the government of his people, for we were yet too proud to receive commands from any, except our own chiefs. But this was a mere mock of freedom, and rivetted more completely the chains which Turgesius had laid on our necks. Every town, besides its own Magistrate, was superintended by a Danish Captain with his company; every village had a sergeant, and in every farm house was billeted a Danish soldier. Nothing that the citizen or farmer possessed could he call his own. The cattle, the corn, and provisions were at the disposal of a rapacious soldiery. The inhabitants dared not partake of their meals, until these Banditti were first satisfied. Universities and schools which were famed throughout Europe were filled with soldiers; churches and monasteries were destroyed, or when permitted to stand, filled up with Pagan priests. Some of the clergy and learned men who were dispersed by these calamities, after narrowly escaping the sword, quitted the country for Gaul, or fled to the wilderness, and there died of starvation and cold. Religion and letters were interdicted; the nobility and gentry were forbidden the use of arms, and ladies were not allowed to receive the education proper for their state. Reading and every kind of Literary instruction were forbidden to the common peo-

ple. But it did not end here.—The master of every homestead was obliged to pay annually to the receivers of Turgesius, *one ounce of gold*, and this was exacted with such rigor and cruelty, that such as could not comply, were to suffer the loss of their nose, or become bond slaves. This tax was called nose money. Such were the hard terms of these pillagers—our taskmasters.\*

The best blood of Iran had flowed in its defence, and its inhabitants, exhausted and circumvented at every step by their lawless oppressors, submitted for awhile to this degradation. But the worst was not until these barbarians invaded their homes, and regardless of the virtue of their daughters, or the sacredness of the nuptial tie, tore wives and daughters away from their protection and love, leaving madness and broken hearts around the desolate hearth-stone. Then a mighty spirit moved over the souls of the oppressed people, like a wind which passeth over the face of the great deep, and beneath the leaden waves of their apparent apathy a terrific storm was brewing, which was only heard in low, ground-swell murmurs. The fires of their wrath spread far and wide, smouldering and gathering strength, until a propitious hour dawned for their deliverance.

Our monarch Malachy, was the prisoner of Turgesius, who, under pretence of consulting him,

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\* Historic.

and associating him with himself in the government of the country, but in reality to watch his movements, and insult his misfortunes, had caused a palace to be erected for his own habitation, so near to that of the unfortunate monarch, that the same moat and fortifications enclosed both.

One evening, Turgesius, weary of affairs of state, and disgusted with the complaints of his rapacious captains, and rumors of a growing discontent amongst his soldiery, suddenly adjourned the council, and determined to visit the captive king, and indemnify himself for the mortifications of the day, by gazing on his dejected and sorrowful face.

The king was sitting alone in his favorite chamber, a large irregular apartment, high up in the western turret of the palace. From its lofty windows his view of the surrounding country and the distant sea was unobstructed. As the crimson and golden beams of the setting sun shot in a rich sheaf of radiance through a casement into that silent room, King Malachy roused himself from his dejected reverie and approached it and gazed out. His eyes followed the free flight of the birds, as they darted and floated through the serene air—anon the graceful forms of the red deer, bounding from the hill-sides towards their forest lairs, arrested his attention. Over all the waning day shed an indescribable glory, and the blue shadows crept softly after its lumi-

nous track ; the trees tossed their branches in the free, strong winds that swept up from the sea ; but a haunting shade stalked through it all, and from its pale lips issued a sound of woe—“ Enslaved — enslaved — enslaved ! ” were the words that the phantom wailed out. King Malachy would have beaten back the bitter emotions of his soul, but a strong angel wrestled with him now ; his heart beat in throbs of wild indignation, and the hot blood, purple with shame at the degradation of his royal house, and the helplessness of his faithful people dyed his pale face with a dark and eloquent glow—the veins in his forehead stood out like knotted cords, and his breath struggled up hoarsely from his oppressed bosom. Nature could not endure such a conflict long—the angel of mercy touched the fountain of his soul, and slowly a few large tears stole over his sunken cheeks ; then faster fell the bitter drops, and bowing his head on his breast, he wept like a child. Those tears, which thy jailers would have mocked, O captive king, and which would have been despised as signs of weakness, were not lost ! No ! every drop was gathered up in the hollow of that Almighty hand, which meeteth out the vengeance He repays to those who oppress and wound his people.

At this moment a door was softly opened, and a maiden glided timidly in, and looked anxiously around. She advanced a few steps with an uncertain air ; but observing no one, was turning

away to leave the apartment, when a half stifled sigh, which seemed to proceed from the deep embrasure of a distant window, arrested her attention. She approached noiselessly, and found the object of her search—but those tears and that mighty sorrow awed her; and folding her hands, she awaited the passing away of the storm, that seemed to be rending the heart of the king.

A pale green tunic of silk, over which was thrown a loose flowing robe of the same color, bordered with pearls, and clasped at the throat with a large emerald, formed her attire. From her noble and beautiful face the golden hair rippled back as bright as the mountain rill when the morning sunlight gleams on it, and was all gathered up, except a few stray ringlets which floated in unstudied grace over her throat of snow, into a net-work of pearls at the back of her head.

As she stood there, a spectator of her royal father's grief, she well knew why his great heart struggled like a chained eagle. She knew that the woes of his people were crushing him; while his own impotence to aid them filled his soul with a bitterness like unto death. "Can all hope of deliverance have perished?" she whispered softly, while a deep and inexpressible tenderness softened the lustre of her large brown eyes, and the eloquent blood, impelled by the indignation of a noble and unconquered will, crimsoned her cheeks and brow. "Lord, not while Thou livest, shall I cease to hope, for Thou art mighty and strong to

deliver. Deliver us from our enemies, my Father—God. Behold, I offer thee myself a victim and peace-offering for my country.” Was it the brightness of the fading sunlight on that beautiful and uplifted face, that made it so radiant, or was it the reflex of that glorious prayer, flowing-back from God in light upon her?

Then she crept silently towards the king, and winding her arms around him, rested her cheek against his breast.

“Leatha!”

“My father!”

“Better thou had'st never been born,” said the king, caressing her beautiful face, and tenderly kissing her broad white forehead.

“My father! who else would have comforted thee?”

“And yet Heaven, our refuge, were a safer place than this. But hast thou seen Ingomar to-day?”

“No; he is not yet returned. God forbid any harm should befall Ingomar!” said Leatha.

“Forbid it, indeed. At the risk of his life he almost daily brings me tidings and messages from without. He is the only medium I have, through which I correspond with friends beyond these walls. Perhaps the subterranean passage has been discovered,” exclaimed the king, while a thousand fears took possession of his mind.

“The Danish king, Turgesius comes!” cried a herald, throwing open the door. In another moment, ere Leatha could escape, ere she could fly

to a remote corner of the room, or conceal herself behind the draperies of the window, the Danish Chieftain was beside them. His was a fair and stalwart figure. His eyes were blue and glittering, his forehead was well moulded, but defaced by more than one malignant line, as were the fair proportions of his mouth by a sinister expression. Leatha, with one arm about her father's neck, gazed with an expression half-frightened half-defiant, at the intruder. She looked like a frightened young fawn, ready to spring away at the sound of the hunter's footsteps; while Turgesius, amazed at the sudden apparition of such loveliness, saluted her with a gesture of mingled courtesy and mockery, then bowed carelessly to King Malachy, and threw himself half reclining, on the cushions of a divan, which occupied the centre of the room.

"So, King Malachy's solitude is cheered by the smiles of the fair. Truly, it is no wonder thou art so patient," said Turgesius, with an insolent leer at Leatha.

"This maiden is my daughter, Chieftain, the princess Leatha," replied the king with dignity.

"Thy daughter! So! Thy daughter! I am glad thou hast so fair a comforter. How fares it otherwise with thee? Well, I hope," he said with a curling lip.

"Captivity and a free soul agree but ill together, my lord. Leatha, retire;" said King Malachy.

“It is one of thy prerogatives to complain ; but fly not, fair maiden, I knew not, on my honor, that anything so lovely, had e'er birth in this bleak isle, or that such a gem flashed under the shadows of this fortress,” he replied, gazing rudely on Leatha.

“Pardon me, sir, my fealty is due to my father and king. I will no longer interrupt the interview thou hast sought,” she replied with an air of womanly dignity, while her eyes involuntarily flashed out the meaning of all she dared not say. Turgesius would have detained her. He grasped at her hand, but folding them together over her bosom, she glided past him like a shadow, so swift and graceful were her motions ; and in another instant she was gone.

“Thou hast been like a miser with thy jewel, King Malachy. By my sword, my eyes never rested on aught so fair.”

“She has been well guarded, Chieftain, because she is like my soul and honor, a dear and sacred gift from Heaven. I love her as did the Roman, who slew his daughter in the Forum, to save her honor,” said the king, lifting his gray head proudly up.

“Henceforth I will share thy cares for her safety,” said Turgesius, while a baleful expression shot from his half closed eyes.

The King was silent. He well knew the misery that these signs boded. But what cared this robber chieftain for the sacred ties which

united father and child; what valued he the virginal innocence or noble birth of that fair maiden? "But in this instance"—thought the troubled king, "I must not be precipitate—I must conciliate this fiend if possible, and if there be a spark of honor left, I will appeal to it, by a seeming trust in his intentions. It will at least postpone the evil day—a day which, if it comes, will be the blackest and direst the earth ever knew." At last he said: "If I have been tardy in my thanks for thy sudden interest in my child, impute it to no especial distrust in thyself, but to the bitter lessons which experience has taught me."

"Nay—nay—trust me—the maiden shall fare bravely. But how is this fair bird lodged? Have my people, who I confess are rude in their manners, molested her, or deprived her of a single luxury? If so, I will punish with death whomsoever has been guilty of this or any other offence against one who hath found favor in my eyes," asked Turgesius.

"She is well lodged, and has everything befitting her state—except Freedom!" replied the king bitterly.

"The fortunes of war are inevitable—but this bright-plumaged bird which our destiny has snared—her cage will be so fine and gilded—so large and beautiful, and such fond devotion shall wait on her, that she will *forget* Freedom."

"Then will she be recreant to her blood—"

muttered King Malachy in a low tone. "It is true," he said aloud, "that women are often beguiled by gew-gaws, and the like—but it is only the jewel of an honorable love, that could win response from the daughter of the line of Heremon—we are thy captives, sir chief—thy honor be our safeguard."

"Fear no harm, my Lord Malachy—" replied Turgesius, with a sinister smile—"Salute thy beautiful daughter for me and tell her I will offer my homage to-morrow." Then with a light inclination of his head he left the apartment, elated, and full of dark schemes.

As the Danish Chieftain went out, and when his receding footsteps sent back no echo, an oak panel in the wall slid noiselessly aside revealing an arched aperture in which stood a man, in the prime of manhood, whose swarthy complexion, dark hair, dark eyes and dark brows, together with the *fallung* \* drooping from his shoulder, and his folded arms, gave him the appearance of a bronze statue, only the eyes glowed brighter and more flashing, and a crimson spot burned like coals of fire on his cheeks. Otherwise he was perfectly immobile in his statuesque posture. He stepped down from the niche—the slight rustle of his *fallung* startled the king, who, turning quickly, uttered an expres-

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\* Cloak.

sion of welcome, and held out his hands towards him.

“Ingomar, I am glad thou art here—I have strange and sorrowful tidings for thee.” Then he told him all that had just passed, and breathed into his ear the fears and anxieties which beset him. The other sat with his head bowed, and as motionless as stone. His was one of those natures, which, calm on the surface, hide in their depths whirlpools which, when roused, rage and wreck the most valued and cherished emotions. The captive king was his benefactor, his all. A pirate’s vessel had been cast away on the coast of his territory, and the only living creature that was found on the wreck was a dark-haired boy, of some four summers. He said his name was Ingomar, but could tell nothing more. Cherished and educated by the king, he enjoyed all the privilege of the court, yet bore his honors so modestly, as to escape the enmity of those who might otherwise have injured him. But he had a secret. He had worshipped Leatha from her early girlhood, distantly and silently—never hoping to win, yet still loving her in his loneliness, none the less. The news which he now heard came on him like a death-blow—bitter and horrible was the thought that Turgesius, the base and detestable Robber, who had laid waste the land, and made desolate its altars and homesteads, should dare entertain sentiments of lust

against the fair blossom of the House of Here-mon. But he was still silent.

“Hast thou no word for me, Ingomar? In this frightful strait; why are thy counsels for the first time silent?” asked the king.

“I dared not speak—what should I say? Although I swear by my life and soul that Turgesius shall never accomplish his miserable and unholy ends, I cannot at once see *how* it is to be prevented. But there is a *how*, and may our God, whom we have faithfully served, enlighten us. There is a remedy for a sudden emergency—one escape,” he exclaimed, plucking a small arabesque sheath from his bosom, from which he drew a slender dagger, of such highly tempered steel, that it flashed like a sunbeam as it caught the light on its polished point—“Give this to Leatha, and read then to her, in the Records of the Hebrews, the story of Judith. The point of the dagger is poisoned with a something so subtle and deadly, that the slightest puncture made with it causes instant death. Let her not unsheathe it, unless all else fails to protect her.”

“I am cheered by thee, Ingomar—this is an hour of deep gloom—yet how know we but that this darkness may not prelude the dawn. There is a flash of strange hope vibrating through my being—what meaneth it?”

“Perchance one of the strong angels of God stands by to aid us—may the God of Hosts

deliver us. Meanwhile, my royal master, our plans must be matured, as the dark schemes of Turgesius develop themselves. The whole country is ready for a decisive blow, let who will strike first. I narrowly escaped the pickets of the Dane beyond the Moat. I had barely plunged into the ravine into which the subterraneous passage opens, ere they were in hot pursuit after me—I heard the trampling of their horses' feet over my head, and the blare of their trumpets, and in my dark and silent path, laughed them to scorn. The Chief of Inveray is now in the hands of Turgesius."

"Ha—Maurice, of Inveray! Keep this I beseech thee from Leatha—the poor child hath enough to bear, without this news of her lover's disaster."

"Aye," replied Ingomar—"no breath of mine shall ever waft a cloud towards her—I only beg the privilege of guarding and saving her—then let the Chief of Inveray see that no rude storm smites the blossom which I have guarded and sheltered for his bosom." Ingomar's voice trembled for an instant—and a single pang wrung his features—but it passed away, and he strode with a firm and steady step from the presence of the King.

## CHAPTER IV.

DAILY did Turgesius seek the presence of the beautiful Leatha, and offend her chaste ears with the protestations of a love which she scorned. His air of mock deference, his bold and insolent admiration, and his offensive freedoms, authorized only by the arrogance of his assumed power, filled her mind with disgust and bitter resentment; but neither her cold dignity nor her quiet hauteur deterred him, while the single eloquent appeal she made to his honor was met by a levity so coarse as to humble the proud and noble spirit which had exposed its best emotions to so rude a repulse. Ingomar, from his niche, watched unseen, and listened, the guardian of that royal maiden whom he had worshipped in silence and without hope since her childhood. The king occupied by half-formed schemes for the deliverance of his child, appeared indifferent and abstracted, but it was the coldness which covers the volcano; his mental perceptions and his anxiety were sharpened by anger; he could trust only in God—he saw no other deliverer—but even his faith was often clouded and darkened by the wild and terrible fears that like tempests swept over his soul. And Turgesius felt himself secure in his unlawful

power. The revelations of his base designs had stung to the core the heart of Malachy, the king and father, who, shorn of his dignity and stripped of his royal honors in the presence of his family and court, thought that the cup of his humiliation was full, until the insulting proposals of Turgesius added the last drop to its bitterness. But, advised by Ingomar, he with consummate policy disguised his indignation, and affected to receive the Danish chieftain's offer as an honor, and assured him that he only required a short period to consider the matter and triumph over old prejudices which were the greatest barriers to the accomplishment of his wishes. Secure in his position of power, Turgesius was satisfied, and thought everything was propitious except the maid's coldness. As to the delay, that should continue not an hour beyond what was agreeable to his own inclinations: these were his captives, his vassals; how dare they thwart his pleasure?

One evening, having sought Leatha and found her with her father, in the same apartment where he first saw them, he accosted them with rudeness and levity. It was evident that there was a new mood ruling his mind. Leatha's heart sank within her; a throb of fierce indignation wrung the soul of the king, but preserving his calm exterior, he returned his salutation courteously and awaited in silence the bursting of the storm which he felt was coming.

“Fair lady,” said the Dane, “thy coyness has been humored long enough methinks. My lord Malachy, I am a rude warrior, and unused to dangle after the footsteps of dainty maidens. I am weary of it, so weary that it must cease. When wilt thou give me thy daughter? Say, maiden, when shall I call thee mine?”

“Never,” replied a deep, sepulchral voice near them.

Turgesius started and glanced around him. He knew it was not Leatha; he saw that it was not the king, and the word was too distinctly uttered for him to suppose for a moment that it was a chance sound which had drifted up from the courts below.

“Do thy sentiments echo the word, Lord Malachy?” said Turgesius, scowling darkly.

“Age is cautious, my lord. My daughter is my sole comfort; deem it not strange, then, that I am slow to pronounce a sentence of separation between us, even for the honor of associating her with thee in thy power and riches,” said the old king, whose head was bowed on his breast, as if a heavy blow had fallen on it.

“What sayest *thou*, Leatha? When wilt thou be mine?”

“Never, Chief—never on the terms thou seekest me”—she replied in a firm, unshaken voice, while her clear, lustrous eyes, filled with truth and purity, smote his guilty soul.

“There are terms, then. Name them,” he

replied eagerly; "if thou dost not require too much, I would rather win thee by fair means than foul."

"The terms on which I will consent to link my fortune with thine in marriage, O, Dane! are these: Restore the freedom of my country; lead back to their bleak homes near the sea the monsters who swarm over and lay waste the land, that its oppressed inhabitants may breathe in peace. Restore my father to his throne and crown; then, when these conditions are complied with, I am ready to become thy bride, to wander away where'er thou wilt—a willing victim, but faithful to my vows and thee, so that which I love is saved."

A storm gathered with every word on the brow of Turgesius; his eyes kindled with fierce rage, and his lips trembled and grew pallid; but he replied in a low voice, which was full of calm, concentrated passion:

"Thy words, captive maiden, are as lofty as the flight of a free eagle. Methinks thou art dreaming. I cannot argue with one so filled with heroic visions. But as I have won this base isle to subjection by force and the skill of war, so shall I keep possession of it—and *thee*. We seakings scorn priestly rites, and mummeries; therefore trouble not thyself about useless ceremonies, I will none of them. Forget not that *I rule here*; my will is the law of all who are subject to me; therefore, exasperate me no longer by fresh

delay, or, by Thor! I will tear this dove from thy eyrie by force, my lord Malachy, and separate ye forever. To-morrow, then, I demand her—to-morrow. Forget it not!”

“Dane, thou hast robbed me of my kingdom and crown; thou hast stripped me of dignities and honors; thou hast reduced me to the mean condition of thy vassal; was not this enough, that thou should'st come to rob me of my virtuous daughter?” asked the king.

“To-morrow I demand her!” was the inflexible reply.

“Consider, great Chief, consider,” said the king, while every limb trembled, “there are others as noble and more beautiful in my kingdom than my daughter, who would suit thee better. Seek them, therefore, my lord, and leave an old and royal captive in peace.”

“Thy daughter or none, Malachy. Baffle me no longer,” was the angry reply.

“I throw myself and my griefs on thy honor, Turgesius,” plead the king.

“My honor shall not harm thee, old man, rest assured,” replied Turgesius with a scoffing laugh. “To-morrow, be prepared.”

“We will be prepared, Turgesius,” said Leatha, with a lofty look, while she toyed with what seemed to be a jewelled bauble in her girdle. “And be thou prepared, tyrant and oppressor, for the servants of God never call on him in vain.”

"It is well," he replied surlily. "As to thy God, I fear him not."

"Turgesius, I implore one day's delay," said the king, who had sunk back exhausted in his seat.

"In vain; I will not brook the delay of another day. By Thor! dost thou take me for a fool? Be ready, beautiful one, to return with me to thy new home to-morrow eve."

"Nay, Turgesius, I implore also for a single day's freedom. Consider how many thousand things a maiden has to attend to on the eve of her bridal," said Leatha with assumed cheerfulness.

"I yield to *thy* entreaties, maiden, and thy wishes, king, but on these conditions: At this moment there are fifteen of my bravest and noblest captains, who, having achieved prodigies of valor in these wars, come to me for well-earned rewards. Honors and riches I shall heap on them, but, methinks, all will be incomplete unless I provide for them a happiness equalling my own. They are my guests; and I charge thee, King Malachy, to provide fifteen maidens as beautiful as Leatha to mate with them. Let them come as her ladies of honor; thus, her attendants will be of her own choice."

A loud, harsh laugh, half of triumph, half of rage, rang through the lofty chamber. Each one started and gazed around, pale and confounded. Turgesius, alarmed and angry, drew his sword and

stood in an attitude of defence, but ere he could give expression to his indignation, these words; spoken shrilly and distinctly, smote on their ears: "Thy behests shall be done; fifteen of the fairest of Erin's maids shall attend her."

"Where is the hiding-place of thy spy," demanded the Dane of King Malachy.

"Thy own spy, perchance, Turgesius—we are too hemmed in by thy bold barbarians and fierce sentinels to have a hiding-place left for a spy; however, this one seemeth friendly to thy interests," replied the king.

"True, true," said Turgesius, turning toward Leatha. His arm was outstretched to gather her graceful form to his bosom in a rude embrace, but she was not there, she had flitted out during the panic which the strange interruption to this painful interview had caused, unseen and unnoticed in the twilight.

That night Ingomar and the king spent the hours in low and earnest converse, and ere day dawn he had departed out through the subterranean passage into the open country beyond the Castle moat. The next day a strange joy filled the countenance of Leatha. Esther might have looked so when she left the presence of her royal spouse, with the charter of her people's deliverance! Iphigenia, in the calm triumph of her sacrifice, might have worn that expression of quiet exultation; or Miriam, when she went with timbrel and song to meet Jephtha and his hosts.

Once more her harp was heard, and her sweet voice ringing in wild cadences through the vaulted passages. The king was restless and flushed ; he neither ate nor rested, yet his step was firmer, and there was a brighter light in his eye than it had worn for many a weary day. All this was reported to Turgesius, who saw in them only signs of a willing submission to his power ; yet cautious and distrustful, he ordered double guards, and an increase of military force.

It was evening. In the apartments of the Danish chief a magnificent banquet was prepared. Lights, flowers, silken cushions, and gold and silver were mingled in such magnificent masses together as to dazzle and bewilder the eye. Turgesius, superbly arrayed, was seated on a *dais* of ivory and gold, over which hung gold-colored draperies, flashing with gems and embroidery. In groups of two and three, the other Danish chiefs were standing or sitting in various parts of the spacious and lofty chamber, "fighting their battles o'er again," or telling of events which had occurred in the quiet hamlets and villages they had sacked ; laughing vociferously, as demons might laugh, over the wild and terrible devastation they had wrought.

Thus for a little while we leave them to revisit the palace of Malachy. He sat silent in his usual place, near the turret casement, while a dark, middle-aged woman, with eyes like an Egyptian, was frequently seen passing to and fro, from an

apartment beyond this, where the royal robes were kept, to a suite of rooms on the other side, which Leatha occupied with her maids. Sometimes she held a pile of rich and splendid robes in her outstretched arms; anon, she bore caskets of valuable jewels in her hands—none brighter or fiercer than her own eyes—then she carried in a willow basket a number of white silken veils, softly piled together, covered with silver embroidery and fringed with pearls, and after a little while she came back and returned with an open case filled with—*what?* They might have been jewelled ornaments, but they looked like poignards—those small, sharp, deadly poignards, which even then had been brought from Oriental lands and were highly prized by the nobles and chiefs who were rich enough to wear them. But her task is finished at last—and throwing open a wide-folding door, a train of veiled and white-robed maidens came in, and with slow and stately steps advanced toward King Malachy. They were tall, graceful, and dignified in their aspect. The dark woman flitted from one to another, whispering some sharp, fierce word into the ear of each. They were as silent as phantoms. Was it the stillness of despair, or indifference to their fate? The king started from his chair when he saw them grouped around him. He had not seen them enter. He tried to speak, but his voice faltered, and overcome by the terrible emotions which rent his heart, he could only murmur “my chil-

dren," and fell back almost senseless on his chair. But these were women of strong souls; some mighty and terrible purpose gave them strength; they uttered not a cry, not a sob escaped their lips; they only went and knelt at his feet, and bowed their heads on his hand, while he blessed them. "My father and king," murmured the dark woman, as they filed away toward the door, "fear not, ere another sun rises o'er the blue wave Erin will have burst her chains, and all will be well!" Her voice sounded strangely like the voice of Ingomar; then she sped away to conduct the princess Leatha and her attendants to the palace of Turgesius, who impatiently awaited their coming. Triumphant music welcomed them, and the wild, lawless soldiers of the haughty Dane paid them homage as they passed into the inner courts. Still not a word did they utter. At the arched door of the ante-chamber, Turgesius and his officers met them, and conducted them, with words of soft welcome, to the throne-room. Softly streamed down the light through wreaths and festoons of flowers, while the perfumed lamps diffused light clouds of incense and a delicious odor throughout the apartment. Here the dark woman paused, and leading one of the veiled maidens to Turgesius, said grimly and rudely: "Receive from her foster-mother, Leatha, the chaste daughter of our captive king, and mayest thou rue the day thou first saw her."

"We can allow thee a little spite, mother; it

must be hard to be reft of one so peerless as Leatha. But lift the envious veil which conceals the fairest face on earth from my eyes," said Turgesius, drawing aside the long veil. But the fair face drooped covered with blushes, the long, bright curls, shining like gold over her cheeks and brow, half concealed it. Turgesius passed his arm around the shrinking form, and telling his companions to select each a maiden without the ceremony of unveiling, to prevent jealousy and rivalry, led the way toward the sumptuous banquet, where rich, red wines sparkled brighter than the gold and silver with which the table was loaded. As they were preparing to seat themselves at the board, a shrill whistle was heard, a confusion and sudden outcry followed, and every Dane fell prostrate to the ground with a sharp Saracen blade in each guilty heart, and the death-throe on their white, shivering lips.\* And Leatha—the young maidens—where was she? where were they, those fair and beautiful ones? What means the sudden metamorphosis? Robes were torn off, veils were dashed aside, and instead of fragile women, fifteen young chiefs, in the beauty and glory of manhood, stood exultant over their fallen foes. But hark! a stifled moan, an outcry is heard, and Turgesius, scarcely wounded, springs to his feet. But his star had set; he was in an instant bound and powerless.

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\* Historic.

The signal was given, and King Malachy, with his guards and soldiers, who had been concealed in the subterranean passage, rushed into the palace of the Dane, sword in hand, and giving no quarter, Danish officers and soldiers fell promiscuously in the carnage that ensued, except Turgesius, who was reserved for another fate.

Thus the hour which had seemed the darkest, was the hour which ushered in the bright day of Erin's deliverance. No sooner—continued the old *Sheancus*—was the event which insured the success of Malachy over Turgesius and his chiefs, made known outside the castle walls than it spread as swift as light over the land, reviving the drooping hearts of the oppressed, and inspiring with strength those who had almost despaired of freedom. The time had come to throw off the yoke, and every Irish heart, inspired by hope and strong resolution, united in a successful effort to free their beautiful land and their hereditary homes from the tyranny of the oppressor. The Danes, knowing that their chief was in irons, and many of their commanders killed, became panic-stricken and dispirited. Their courage forsook them; they were routed with scarcely an effort on the part of the Irish, who found themselves once more victorious and the masters of their own soil. Such of the Danes as occupied homes along the coast betook themselves to their ships, hotly pursued by their lately oppressed foes, who, after the barbarous custom of the times, put them to

indiscriminate slaughter as they captured them. Those of the invaders who lived inland betook themselves to fortified places, but were hunted down by their infuriated enemies, whom revenge and freedom excited to extraordinary deeds of prowess and valor.

Malachy now took the reins of government into his hands, and called the Estates of Tara together near the ancient seat of legislation, and submitted to them various measures for the future defence and prosperity of Ireland. In a short time the country became cleared of hostile ships along her coasts; the swarming vessels of light draught that the Danes had built for their incursions up and along the inland rivers suddenly disappeared from their waters; sunk, burnt, or captured by the Irish; and there was not an armed Dane to be found in all the land. Liberty was proclaimed; the remnant of the clergy and *literati* came out of the dens and caves where they had been hiding, and many who had fled to France returned; colleges and universities were again opened; and such books, works, and writings as could be found after the battles, or had escaped the conflagration of the Danes, were carefully collected. Many of the Danes had settled in the maritime towns and cities, who sued the Irish monarch for pardon and offered to swear fidelity to his crown. Their petition was considered favorably, and they were permitted to remain for the purpose of traffic, a general amnesty passed,

and they became incorporated, apparently, in interest and sentiment, with the nation. The next care of Malachy was to send ambassadors to foreign sovereigns announcing the happy change in his own kingdom. To Charles the Bold, of France, he sent rich presents of gold ornaments, Irish horses, and wolf-dogs, and received an invitation to visit the Court of France, which he purposed doing."

There was one joyous interruption to all these grave and pressing affairs of State—the nuptials of the princess Leatha, who had been the cause, under Providence, of the liberation of her country; for had not Malachy been stung to desperation by the insult offered her by Turgesius he would have acquiesced longer in the bondage of the Dane. It was a brave wedding; none so splendid was ever recorded in the royal Psalters of the four provinces. Attended by a band of the loveliest of the high-born maids of Munster arrayed in silks, gauzes, and jewels from the East, surrounded by princes, bards, nobles, and chieftains, with the blessings of the Church by the hands of bishop and priests, the royal princess plighted her vows to the young Lord of Inveray, to whom she had been betrothed two years.

Ingomar was there watching and waiting, his swarthy face pallid and the fierce light of his piercing eyes dimmed as by a mortal wound in some vital part. As twilight came on, purple and jewelled with stars, and musical with the song of

the nightingale in the hawthorn coppice below, Leatha stole away from her gay companions to think over her great happiness and calm her emotions by gazing from the deep embrasure of a window out on the peaceful scene. Ingomar, with noiseless, swift steps, approached, and kneeling before her raised the hem of her bridal veil to his lips, then in a broken voice he wished her joy in life and happiness in the life to come. She would have replied in sweet, friendly words, for Ingomar had been more than a brother to her in his fidelity and care of her ever since she could remember, but as like a shadow he came, so like a shadow he flitted none could tell whither. \* \* \*

Then came a terrible retribution. King Malachy proclaimed a triumphal procession to celebrate the deliverance of his country and the hour of vengeance on Turgesius, the merciless despoiler of Ireland, and the would-be destroyer of his daughter's honor. He assembled his court, his great chieftains, and the princes of his royal Sept, with the flower of the chivalry of the land, to witness and take part in all that was to be done. Then when the noble assemblage collected he ordered the Dane to be brought from the dungeon, where he had been chained ever since the night of his intended crime and sudden downfall. Loaded with heavy chains, whose harsh clanking heralded his approach, Turgesius, surrounded by guards, entered the royal presence, haughty and

defiant, and stood scowling at his judge while he upbraided him for all the frightful crimes he had committed against an unoffending people, the rapine, murder, destruction and violence of his reign, which had strewed the land with blackened ruins and dishonored graves. After which he condemned him to be dragged along in the procession to Lough Neagh, and thrown, ironed as he was, into the depths of the lake. The sentence was approved and executed with all the barbaric pomp and merciless rigor of the times; and the bones of the cruel Dane were left to bleach beneath the bright waters of Lough Neagh! \*

“Lough Neagh,” said Mr. Wilmot closing the manuscript, the same Lough

—“where the fisherman strays  
When the clear, cold eve's declining,  
And sees the round towers of other days  
In the wave beneath him shining.”

MOORE.

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\* Historic.

## CHAPTER V.

MR. WILMOT rolled the yellow, stained parchment on which the narrative was written carefully together, and thrust it into the breast pocket of his coat, then he poked up the turf fire with his cane, and walked over to the narrow slit in the wall to see what the outlook might be. To his joy the sun was rising clear and the last angry vestiges of the storm were drifting away seaward.

“I wouldn't have missed this adventure for the world, or the possession of this ancient manuscript, which will prove that I am not drawing on my imagination when I relate it,” said Mr. Wilmot, gazing down on the crisp, foaming waves, gilded and crimsoned with the glory of the morning, as they rolled landward with a low, pleasant murmur. “But I must go to Lough Neagh. Come, Owny, it's time to get up.”

But Owen was sound asleep, and it required a shake to bring him to his feet; but not yet fully awake, he looked with a bewildered gaze around him, wondering how he got there.

“Come, rouse up, my friend, I want to get to the mainland as quickly as possible; I'm going to Lough Neagh.”

Then Owen remembered everything, and his

first act was to cross himself devoutly with, a "God be thanked for all his mercies;" his second, to turn to Mr. Wilmot, pull his forelock, and, with a merry smile, wish him "the top of the mornin'," which salutation was heartily returned.

"And did your honor say it was Lough Neagh you are going to?"

"Is it very far from the place we're booked for?"

"Faith, no; it's aisy sailin'; the coach goes forenent it by a mile or two, and a purtier place your honor's two eyes never looked at."

"I'm going to look for the city that is to be seen under the waves."

"It's there, your honor. They do say, that has a right to know, that wunst there was a fountain where Lough Neagh is, and the fountain got a fresh in it one day and overflowed all the country round, cities and all. I've heard the ould fishermen swear on the cross that they've seen the towers and roofs under the wather whin the weather's altogether clear."

"I hope it will be clear weather while we are there, Owen. I should be glad to see those old cities. I wonder if we mightn't be able to see the chained skeleton of the Danish king by looking hard?"

"It might be, your honor; there's many ghosts of them divils of Danes haunting the mounds and cairns; and it's not safe to go anigh

the morasses after nightfall, for 'em," said Owen, spreading the best breakfast he could, out of the fragments left from their midnight meal, which had the effect of whetting without satisfying their hunger. But there was no help for it, and Owny, pretending that his late supper had taken away his appetite, gathered Mr. Wilmot's traps together, making merry at the same time over their late adventure, as if determined to remove any ill impression of Ireland that it might have left upon his mind. But that gentleman's epigastric regions were not comforted by Owny's fictions, nor was he disposed to forego the exploration of the ancient ruins of the Abbey, and Churches of St. Senanus, because he was hungry: and he left the old Tower, followed by his trusty squire, carrying knapsack and gun, to examine them.

Mr. Wilmot's antiquarian tastes were highly gratified. Every step he had taken in Ireland had increased his sympathy for her present sufferings, and his veneration for her past glories. He had visited Greece and Rome, but in this desolate land of beauty, which sat like a chained captive by the sea, he had seen objects of a more remote antiquity than Greece or Rome could boast. He had witnessed also a phenomenon which is not recorded by any other nation the world ever knew—that of a people *unsubdued* by the conquests of centuries—who never did, and never will, fraternize with those who have robbed them of the rights and sacred privileges of

Fatherland. As he had travelled he had perused with curious and attentive mind the history of the land he was sojourning in—he did not know until then that she *had* a history. He had thought, in common with his countrymen, that she was a mere troublesome and degraded dependency of England; but he now regarded the two “sister Isles” pretty much as he would have done one of the old ruined Condes of Spain, whose proud heart was broken, but not bending, under his fallen fortunes, and a rich and vulgar coal merchant of Albion, who complacently gorges himself with roast beef and plum pudding, and while he quaffs ale and sings snatches of “God save the Queen,” thinks with contempt of Heaven itself.

About noon Mr. Wilmot and Owen turned their faces shoreward, to embark for the mainland, Mr. Wilmot with reluctance, Owen with delight, for the athletic boatman had enough of fasting during Lent to do voluntary penance on such a bright, bracing “meat day as this, and tomorrow Friday, too.” Mr. Wilmot would have remained later, but he was booked for a seat in a stage going north, and had already sent on a portion of his baggage.

What then was their dismay when they arrived at the landing-place to find the *boat gone!*

“It has been washed out,” said Mr. Wilmot, “and, I fear, Owny, dashed to pieces, but you shall not want for means to purchase another.”

“Thank your honor, but by the token of the fut prints and the mark of her keel in the sands I know she has not drifted; she’s been dragged to the water’s edge by some plundarin’ thief that had no other way of getting to the mainland; an’ I’ll tell your honor what,” said Owen, taking off his hat and scratching his head, “it’s no use denying it, that devil of a Pundit’s at the bottom of it.”

“Of the boat, Owny?” said Mr. Wilmot, laughing at his comical looks, in which rage and mirth were pretty well blended.

“No, sir, of staling off the boat, musha; but I wouldn’t bebridge if it had gone to the bottom with him. But there’s no getting off, sir, until some stray fisherman comes over, or some travellers like your honor, unless your honor can swim.”

“I *can* swim, Owen; but I don’t think I can swim as far as that; at any rate I prefer waiting for a good chance to get off, rather than risk my life on such odds,” said Mr. Wilmot.

“Bedad, sir, but what is that coming over toward us?” exclaimed Owen, after a long pause, during which he had been gazing homeward; “it’s a boat; an’ by this an’ by that she’s trimmed with a cutter like my own; an’ there’s no other betune this and the Pigeon House like it. See, your honor, how she springs like a wild fowl over the waves; an’ troth, sir, I’m sure

it is my own 'Colleen Bawn' that's comin' for us."

Very soon a hearty, cheerful halloo from the still distant skiff hailed them, which was returned between Owen's fists with a shrill, prolonged cry that rivalled a steam-whistle. In a short time the boat was moored, and Owen's hand was clasped in his brother's, who had come to search for his body, believing firmly that he had been murdered by some wretch who had escaped from Inniscathy in the boat.

"But where did you find the boat?" asked Mr. Wilmot.

"Where, sir, but at the ould place, as *quite*, sir, as a stray lamb that had found its way home. We felt onaisy, Ally and I, but then we thought the storm had drifted it off from Inniscathy, until Michael Riorden came in an' tould us that he seen an outlandish ould man, like a furriner, get out of the boat before the sun was up."

"The Pundit," shouted Owen.

"Then, your honor, I was well nigh crazy, for I was sure yer honor and Owen there had been murdered; so without a word I springs into the boat, and pushes off for Inniscathy, an' thanks be to God, you're both safe an' sound. But, look there, sir," said the man pointing toward the coast. They turned, and saw some fifteen or twenty fishing-boats coming toward them; the oars pulled by strong and vigorous arms, which would have as readily avenged the death

of the stranger as of their own kinsman. It was a joyous and noisy greeting between them all, when they found the stranger and Owen safe, and their short voyage homeward was more like a triumphal procession than anything else. Mr. Wilmot rewarded them handsomely, engaged Owen on liberal terms to travel northward with him, partook of a plain but plentiful dinner, and was standing at the door of Owen's cottage when the stage coach stopped at the public-house of the hamlet to take up its passenger.

A place was found for Owen on the top, and Mr. Wilmot springing in, the horses started, and the lumbering coach dashed through the poor village with a flourish of the French horn, which was almost drowned by the "huzzahs" of their late companions, on whom Mr. Wilmot's frank and hearty manners as well as his generosity had left a warm and lasting impression.

Owen came to the United States with his friend, and in a few years he had succeeded in removing all his family thither, and if our readers are enough interested to know more of them we will give them letters of introduction to Messrs. Owen & Co., who are the most extensive and wealthy produce dealers in New York. Their children are being educated at the best schools; and the two brothers are not only providing ease and luxury for their old age and for those whom God has given them, but by their example and precept guide them in the paths of virtue and

religion, and while they command the respect of all good citizens, their devotion to the distant isle of their birth and their open-hearted kindness to their distressed countrymen continue undiminished. "Never be ye ashamed of your native land," says Owen to his sons and daughters; "it is a glorious and beautiful land, as our best friend, Mr. Wilmot, can tell ye; but see, one and all of ye, that no conduct of yours ever brings scandal and disgrace to her sorrowful heart. It is her own children that too often bring the scorn of the stranger on her, by forgetting the faith of her saints, and being ashamed of the ould mother earth that the bones of their fathers rest in. The day of her deliverance will come, boys, and we who have loved her in her desolation may then hold up our heads rejoicing in her glory."

# THE STORY OF A BRAVE GIRL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PRISONER AND HER CHILD.

GOLDEN sunlight, beautiful foliage glittering with dew, and the flitting shadows of clouds adown the distant slopes and over the nearer meadow-lands, almost concealed the scars left by the wanton cruelties of the Reign of Terror, and the no less ruinous results of the tramping armies of Napoleon the First, along the route between Strasburg and Paris. The sound of church bells from the village steeple now and then floated upon the air this peaceful Sunday morning, and groups of peasant women and their children, dressed in their mixed French and German attire, might be seen in the distance wending their way to the early Masses, but the holiday aspect of happier times was wanting; and, had one been near enough, a dull and weary look would have been noticed on their faces, and the question, "Where are the young men?" been naturally

suggested, not only by observing their absence, but by the desolate aspect of the fields ridged over with last year's furrows, and strewn with down-trampled stubble. It all told the sad story of frequent conscriptions made to swell the hosts of the great Emperor. Wide-branching trees hid the desolate-looking, half-ruined homes of the peasantry, and vines already clambered in rank luxuriance over the blackened walls of cottages that had stood in the fiery track of the demons who held rule in fair France before the Empire. The conscript law rigidly enforced had more than decimated the male population of the rural provinces, and perpetuated the miseries begun by the ruthless fury of *the* Revolution, for the great Emperor must continue at every cost to sustain his *parvenu* Empire against the ancient royal dynasties that sneered at the man who held them uneasy on their thrones.

Our story opens on Sunday morning, June 10, 1804, and while the village church bells, softened by their distance from the highway, and the warbling of innumerable birds from every leafy covert, filled the air with sounds of indescribable sweetness, a carriage drawn by four horses, its curtains closely buttoned down and a guard of *gendarmes* on each side, rolled swiftly along the road towards Paris. It was not difficult to conjecture, from the number of the armed guard, and the vigilant watch that they kept on the carriage, that it contained prisoners of importance, who

must be held safe at the peril of their lives. A conspiracy had been discovered whose object was the downfall of the Emperor, and some of the noblest names in France were implicated; even those who suspected its existence without the remotest association in the plans of their friends who originated it, had cause to tremble, for the whole thing had been ferreted out by the secret police, and arrests were being made right and left, which involved the innocent with the guilty.

“Some poor fellows,” muttered an old man in the coarse threadbare dress of a peasant, who hid behind a clump of alders as the carriage and soldiers swept past with a loud clatter of hoofs and clanging of sabres, “some poor fellows that loved France too well! There’ll be short shrift for them, and their heads won’t ache to-morrow; the guillotine and sawdust cure headache and heartache together.”

This old fellow had been the school-master of the village nestling back there among the trees, and knew a thing or two. The *sans-culottes* had given one of his sons to be murdered by the guillotine; Bonaparte had conscripted the other, who perished at Austerlitz; and he hated both equally, for between them his house had been left desolate.

“It is probably some brave, heroic young fellow, just old enough to serve France; maybe it is a man of white hairs, who thought he could work out her deliverance by one blow, and per-

illed and lost all ; but it makes no odds, they'll be butchered all the same ; if the Christ Himself stood in the way of their evil counsels, they'd put HIM to death."

This man's heart was full of bitter curses which cried for vengeance on crimes that he was impotent to avenge ; he represented thousands of others in the same case, who in their weakness and anguish waited in dumb sorrow for the turning of that mill which measures out God's justice, "grinding slowly but exceeding small."

On rolled the curtained, closely-guarded carriage, almost hidden by clouds of dust, until at length the weary horses entered Paris, and the *cortège* proceeded along the most obscure and unfrequented streets, to avoid observation, towards the *Barrière d'Italie*, where they turned into the old Fontainebleau road, and directed their course towards a massive, gloomy building that was situated on a high elevation a short distance from the highway. This gloomy enclosure had within its walls a vast prison where all persons condemned to the galleys or to death awaited their punishment, and over its iron-plated gates might have been written, "Let him who enters here leave hope behind him." It was the Bicêtre, which had served its turn as military hospital for invalid soldiers, a lunatic asylum, and a prison whose cells in the Reign of Terror were crowded with the noblest and best of the men and women of France, whose only crime was their

being high-born, or, as the *sans-culottes* called them, "aristocrats."

The *cortège* drew up with a great clatter before the gloomy iron-ribbed portals of the Bicêtre, the official who had accompanied the prisoners—never losing sight of them—all the way from Strasburg, dismounted, and handed a paper to the officer on duty, who, having examined it closely, gave orders for the ponderous gates to be thrown open. The carriage, still guarded by the *gendarmes*, entered, and they swung to again with harsh, grating sounds resembling hoarse groans of despair. The prison court was crowded with groups of soldiers, who, on the *qui vive* for any incident that would break the monotony of their existence in this dismal place, turned their observation toward the carriage and awaited the egress of its inmates with a grim look of curiosity. The jailer was in attendance, with a huge bunch of keys suspended from the leathern belt about his waist; and back in the shadow there stood a man of cadaverous and sinister aspect, whose services were in requisition when orders came for a secret execution in the vaulted chamber at the Bicêtre set apart for that and similar purposes. He was wondering who the men might be who were brought here so closely guarded,—if they had been sentenced already, or condemned to wait loaded with chains in the gloomy cells underground until the order for their execution came. But while he was speculating thus, the command

was given for the prisoners to leave the carriage, and to the astonishment of every one two females a woman of noble presence and a young girl, descended and stood trembling on the rough stones of the court. Their clothing was rich but covered with dust, and it was evident that their arrest and departure from home had been too sudden to allow them time to clothe themselves properly for the journey. They were in dinner dress, their heads, necks and arms bare, while a large crimson cashmere shawl—a rare article of luxury in those days—thrown hurriedly around their shoulders, enveloped them both in its folds. Only their heads were visible; one, covered with heavy tresses of black silky hair partially dishevelled; the other, with long loose curls that looked like tangled gold, so blonde and bright were they. The face of the elder was concealed by a handkerchief she held to her eyes; while that of the young girl, placed close to the other's breast, was veiled from the rude gaze of the soldiers by the shawl. She trembled with terror, and clung with both hands to the arm that was thrown around her.

“Here are two,—we expected only one. Lift up your head, young one, and let me see who you are,” said the lieutenant of the prison guards, a gruff, pompous fellow who had risen with much other scum from the gutters of Paris during the Reign of Terror. “Come, I must see that all's

right before I turn you over to our hospital *concierge* here."

The young girl, obeying a whisper of her companion, lifted her pale, terrified face from its hiding-place, and shunning as swiftly as possible the rude gaze of the repulsive-looking men around them, cast a glance upward at the high gloomy walls that enclosed the prison—at the black frowning building whose windows were all barred with heavy iron gratings—then threw herself, with a frightened cry, into the arms of the lady.

"You must come with me, madame," said the jailer, touching her on the shoulder.

Without a word they moved forward together, but the jailer stopped them, and giving the young girl a slight push backward, he said:

"Not you. You are free. I have no business with you."

"I will not leave my mother," cried the young girl, in frightened but decisive accents, as she drew the large shawl, that covered them both, more closely together.

"I think you will. I have no orders to imprison you."

"Oh, do not separate me and my daughter!" pleaded the distressed woman, who pressed her child convulsively to her breast, as she turned a face whose beauty was disfigured by grief towards the jailer.

"I must obey orders, madame," interrupted the man rudely.

“It is impossible that you should have orders to separate mother and child,” she exclaimed, bursting into a passion of tears.

“Impossible! What nonsense! We have no kinships in the prison of the Bicêtre,” growled the man. “It is possible; and I tell you that I have orders; so follow me without the girl.”

“You shall kill me before I let you separate me from my mamma!” cried the young girl, clinging to her mother.

The jailer grasped the round white arm of the agonized girl in his rough brown hand, and said angrily:

“Do you know that in this place we have a way to compel people to obey by force, if they refuse to obey quietly?”

“But if you take her from me where will she go?” asked the distressed mother, in tones of bitter anguish, while she resisted the attempts of the jailer—who now stood between herself and child, to separate them—with all the energy of despair.

“That’s none of my business,” he answered gruffly, “and I have enough to do without troubling myself with what don’t concern me. You didn’t ask my opinion about assassinating the Emperor, did you?”

“My mother is innocent,” exclaimed the young girl, whose pallid face crimsoned with indignation at the imputation of such a crime against her mother,—a pure and noble lady, whose life,

unstained by an evil thought, had sought its greatest happiness in the good of others.

“Your mother is innocent, is she? It may be so, but it does not concern me; that is a question for the tribunal of justice to decide. What a man does his wife is apt to have a hand in; and that your father is guilty is proved by the fact that eight days ago he, Georges Cadoudal and the other conspirators, were sentenced.”

Both mother and daughter started and turned pale. It was the first tidings they had received of Gen. Lajolais since his arrest, and the shock was so great that neither of them had voice to ask what the sentence was; the jailer’s manner led them to fear the worst, and a weakness and shivering agitated them to such a degree that they thought the horrible news must be killing them.

“Come,” said the jailer, a little less roughly, touched by some thought disconnected with his odious occupation, “have courage, madame, and obey with a good grace. I do not wish to use violence, but I must obey orders—which are to place in solitary confinement the wife of General Lajolais.”

“Oh, my mamma! how can I, how can I leave you?” murmured the young girl, as her head drooped on her mother’s shoulder.

“My poor Marie!” said Madame Lajolais, as she pressed her white lips to the round, fair forehead of her child. “Oh, Mother, to whom I

consecrated her at birth, protect her in this dark and bitter hour," she breathed in a low whisper. "Help of Christians, pity us!"

"But *only* the wife of Gen. Lajolais," continued the jailer: "so you see it is as plain as day, mademoiselle, that you must go."

"Take your prisoner and be done with it, Chorian. My breakfast is waiting, and there's been nonsense enough," said the lieutenant of the prison guards.

"Oh, one moment!—just one moment!" sobbed the distressed mother and daughter, as they stood clasped in each other's arms.

"Not another one," roared the brutal officer. "Guards, do your duty."

Several *gendarmes* came forward to enforce the order. Marie, seeing the soldiers closing around them, clung to her mother's breast.

"Oh, mercy! have mercy, messieurs, do not take my mamma from me. I have nowhere to go in this strange city,—I am only a poor child without friends! Oh, please let me go into the same cell with my mamma; who will know it? who will see it? For the love of Christ's Blessed Mother, messieurs *gendarmes*, let me stay!"

"Go, my poor child; there is One above who is the help of the desolate," whispered Madame Lajolais, who knew how useless such appeals, and wished for her child's sake to end the painful scene. She gently unwound the arms that encircled her neck, and with a long, lingering look at

Marie's agonized face, she said : " A prison cell is no fit place for you, my child ; go now ; indeed you could not breathe there, it is so close and gloomy."

" But *you*—*you* will be there, and yet you tell me to go ; oh, I cannot, I will not !" she sobbed distractedly.

The *gendarmes* were touched at the spectacle of such grief. Had the prisoners been men, bah ! what would they have cared ? But here the case was a mother and child, whose sorrow would have touched the heart of a stone. But military orders are inexorable ; and one of them, even while he dashed off a tear that wet his bronzed cheek, obeying a signal from his officer, said : " This is folly ; come, come, let us end it," and seizing the slight form of the young girl in his brawny arms, tore her struggling and screaming from her mother's embrace.

" Mamma ! mamma !" she shrieked, in the wildest despair. " Oh, my mamma !" But she could bear no more—her muscles relaxed, her cries grew fainter and fainter, and she lay unconscious in the arms of the *gendarme*, who took advantage of her swoon to convey her outside the prison gates.

Presentation convent  
Dungarwan.

Presentation Convent.  
Dunbar van  
Library.

CHAPTER II.

AN ANGEL WHISPER.

WHEN Marie recovered her consciousness and opened her eyes, the first thing she thought of and looked for was her mother; then she remembered all that had passed, and rising from the stone bench on which the *gendarme* had laid her, she rushed to the prison gate, and clinging to the heavy iron bars that guarded it, she made the air ring with her cries:

“Mamma! mamma! Oh, give me my mamma! It is frightful to keep us apart! Where is my poor mamma? Oh, take me to her,—then you may kill me! Mamma! where are you that you do not answer when I call?”

“Mademoiselle,” said a gentle voice behind her, “do not scream so, or they will drive you farther away.”

“I don’t care. I’m not afraid of them. I’m only calling my mother whom they have got shut up in that horrid place. I want her to know that I am here near her,” said Marie, whom grief had almost deprived of reason, and whose delicate hands were lacerated and bleeding from her efforts to shake the bars of the iron-plated prison

gates. "I want her, I tell you, and I will make so much noise that they will shut me up too in the prison."

"Yes, but not with your mother," answered the kind voice, in cautious tones.

As if by magic, these few words calmed Marie; and turning quickly she saw a young girl about her own age standing near her, who had on a coarse, brown serge dress, a white linen apron with pockets, and a straw hat, trimmed with a band of brown velvet into which she had stuck a few field flowers and pretty grasses. The broad rim of the hat shaded a round, pleasant face, lit up by a pair of brown eyes from which tears were streaming one after another.

"Are you, too, in trouble?" asked Marie, touched by the sight of those tears.

"No. But I am sorry for you," answered the girl, with quivering lips.

"Ah, you do not know how much I am to be pitied," said Marie, turning away from the prison gates and going towards the friendly stranger. "Those cruel men in there have just torn me away from my mother. But that is not all: there's something more horrible still that makes me almost drop dead to think of it."

"Ah, it must be hard to have such sorrows, and you so young! The good God will surely pity you. But tell me, what is the other grief?"

"I have a father, and those cruel men in there told us that he is sentenced to die." Then, as if

the very utterance of this crowning sorrow revived her anguish, she wept piteously, and called in distracted words on the dear parents for whom her heart was breaking. The kind young stranger was so shocked by Marie's words and her wild grief that she was speechless. Inexperienced as she was, she knew that she could offer no consolation for such sorrow as this, nor did she attempt to do so; but as she looked at the unfortunate girl with tender pity in her eyes, and an expression of genuine sympathy in her round fresh face, she suddenly checked her sobs to ask her if "she had a mother?" The young girl nodded affirmatively.

"And a father also?" She answered by the same sign.

"And you are not separated from them,—you can see them whenever you please, embrace them morning and evening. Oh, how happy you must be!"

The thought of happiness that until lately had been her own, made the poor child's desolation seem more complete by the contrast, and again she wept bitterly.

"Tell me your name?" she presently asked.

"Susette, at your service."

"What is your father,---is he a merchant?"

"No, mademoiselle, he is not a merchant; he is the *concierge* of the prison," answered Susette, in a low voice.

"*Concierge* of the prison!" exclaimed Marie,

with sudden hope. "Then he must see my mamma every day; he can speak to her; he can bring me news of her, and tell her of all the tears I have shed for her,—but no! he must not tell her that; it would grieve her too much."

Susette shook her head sadly; she had never felt so sorry for any one in her life before, for it was the first time she had ever seen a young girl in distress from a grief which her own affectionate heart could so well take home to itself.

"Why do you shake your head so sadly, Susette?"

"Because no one is to be allowed to see madame,—I heard my father say so,—nor even to speak to her. But it is not his fault, mademoiselle; indeed my father is not a bad man."

At this moment the sound of a large bell was heard from the prison enclosure. Marie started and trembled.

"That rings for the prisoners to have their dinner," Susette hastened to explain, seeing Marie's frightened look.

"And my mother too?" she asked, dreading to hear that she would be denied even the comfort of food.

"Oh, do not be uneasy! be sure they will not forget her."

"My poor mamma! she is so delicate! Where are her servants, her table so well served, and her little Marie at her side to persuade her to eat! Oh, holy Virgin! see and help my mamma; she

belongs to thy Confraternity, and out of love for thee always kept thy shrine beautiful with flowers."

"I will offer my *Aves* for her this evening," whispered the kind Susette. "But you have eaten nothing all day; you look very pale and weak; let me run and bring you some soup."

"I am not hungry. Oh, I could not eat if I tried; but I thank you," said Marie, in so truthful an accent that Susette could not doubt her.

"I believe you; but then you ought to try and eat just a few mouthfuls of soup."

"Eat!" answered Marie, weeping passionately, "when my dear mamma is in prison,—when, perhaps, I shall never see my good papa again! Oh, no, no!"

"But, mademoiselle, if you do not eat you will die."

"And do you think I could live with such grief in my heart, even if I do eat? Oh, you are very good, but you don't know what a dreadful thing it is—"

There was a confused ringing of horses' hoofs on the stone pavement and the clanking of sabres; in a few seconds the mounted guard galloped up to relieve that of the day before, and the two girls ceased talking. The password and countersign were whispered; another officer and fresh guards were on duty in place of those who had been there all night, who were glad enough to be relieved. After they went away,

and everything fell into its usual leaden quiet, a young lieutenant who was waiting for the daily report to take to the Bureau of the Minister of Justice, came out, and after hailing his comrade asked him what was the latest news in Paris. One or two other officers belonging to the garrison at Bicêtre, who were waiting orders to various points in the city, now sauntered up, and after saluting each other and passing some rough camp jokes which raised a laugh, they also asked if there was anything new going on in Paris.

"Of course there is. Something wonderful has happened, and all Paris talks of nothing else."

"Why can't you tell us, then?"

"This is the first chance you have given me," he retorted, lighting his cigar in the most leisurely manner.

"Come now, Prevost, out with your news; in another minute we may be galloping to the four quarters of the world and miss it entirely. Or do you jest?"

"Jest! yes. I jest in calling it news, when what has happened is a miracle," answered the young officer, irritated by their chaffing.

"What has happened?" "Out with it," "Come, don't be ill-natured." "We are perishing to hear the news." "It can't be that the Seine is on fire," they all clamored, gathering around him, as he stood leaning against a sentry-box calmly smoking.

“If you will be quiet one minute I will tell you something that will surprise you for my own relief, for I’m so full of it it’s choking me. The Emperor has pardoned Polignac. Isn’t that a piece of news?”

“Bast! Give us the story. You may well call it a miracle!” said they, forgetting everything in their eagerness to hear the particulars of so startling an event.

“It is a romance and miracle together, and as I happened to see everything with my own eyes and hear everything with my own ears, you may take what I tell you without salt,” said Lieutenant Prevost, seating himself on the stone bench near which Marie and Susette were standing, while his comrades grouped themselves around him in the attitude of attentive listeners. The situation was awkward for the two girls, who, although sheltered from observation by an abutment of the prison wall, would have been glad, at first, to have been farther off, but as they could not get away without attracting attention, they unwillingly remained. Unwillingly at first; but Marie no sooner heard the words “pardoned by the Emperor,” than her sobs ceased, and she listened with strained ears and almost breathless attention to what followed.

“You must know,” began Lieutenant Prevost, with all the importance of one who has something of startling interest to impart, “that yesterday I was on guard at St. Cloud; and having

nothing to amuse me in the little green pavilion I had gone into after my tour of inspection was over, to rest myself, I thought I'd look through the lattice-work to see if anything was passing that would divert my *ennui*. I had smoked; I had read the paper, which was full of the late attempt on the Emperor's life, the same thing over and over again, as if every soul in Paris had not already heard all the ins and outs of the affair. My resources were exhausted, so I ground my teeth together, which you know, comrades, serves in the place of breaking somebody else's head sometimes, and then I put my phiz against the lattice-work; I peeped through the vines, and the very first object I saw was the Princess Louis \* flitting about her mother's flower-garden watering the plants. It was a sight worth seeing; she looked so beautiful in her white muslin dress and delicate green ribbons, with her blonde hair twisted together at the back of her head and falling in loose curls over her shoulders. While I was watching her, thinking what a happy man Prince Louis ought to be, a quick footstep sounded on the smooth gravel walk; the Princess lifted her head from a bunch of carnations she was bending over, and there stood the Emperor, who had entered without being announced, as usual.

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\* Hortense, the daughter of Josephine, who married Prince Louis Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon.

“‘What are you doing here, Hortense?’ he inquired, abruptly.

“‘You see here, sire,’ said Madame Louis, into whose cheeks the sudden surprise had sent a vivid bloom, as she held the watering-pot, yet half full of water, towards him.

“‘What are they doing in your mother’s apartments?’ the Emperor then asked, in his quick way.

“‘They are weeping there,’ said Madame Louis, her own beautiful eyes brimming over with tears.

“‘They are weeping!’ repeated the Emperor; then, without waiting to enquire the cause of what seemed to him a tragic amusement, he hastened away to the apartments of the Empress.

“I was as curious as the Emperor, and being a member of the Empress’ household while on duty at St. Cloud, my duties giving me admittance to all parts of the palace, I was not slow in following him there, where, mixing with other people who were passing up and down, in and out, I arrived at the door of the Empress’ *boudoir* just an instant after the Emperor had entered, leaving it open behind him. He was standing near the centre of the room and a woman was kneeling at his feet, weeping bitterly and making a vain effort to articulate her griefs. It was Madame Polignac pleading for her husband, who was sentenced to death the other day for com-

plicity in that assassination affair, you know. The Emperor must have been taken by surprise,—no doubt it was one of those merciful little plots for which the good Empress is famous,—for he stood, looking down on the sorrowful face lifted to his and streaming with tears, just where she had thrown herself at his feet when he entered the apartment. There was an inscrutable expression on his countenance—half sorrowful, half angry, and altogether stern, while the other ladies present, including the Empress, leaned forward, their hands folded in mute appeal, and their tears pleading for mercy towards the unfortunate woman.

“ ‘But what amazes me, Madame,’ at last said the Emperor, with an air of coldness that his voice belied, ‘is to find your husband mixed up in so odious an affair. Did he entirely forget that we were classmates at the military school?’

“I could not hear what Madame Polignac said, because her voice was choked with sobs and tears. I think, though, from a word or two that I caught, she was trying to convince the Emperor that her husband, so far from knowing of anything connected with this conspiracy against his life, was in utter ignorance of it up to the time the attempt was made; and although her sentences were disconnected and interrupted by sobs, the reality of her grief made it eloquent and lent force to what she said.

“Every eye was fixed on the Emperor’s countenance, and it became evident, from a certain

relaxation of its stern lines, that his heart was touched by the unfortunate woman's appeal, and the imploring faces around him that were in themselves so many prayers for mercy.

“ ‘ Enough,—enough, madame,’ at last said the Emperor, raising her from his feet. ‘ As your husband did not wish to destroy my life, I can forgive him the rest. Hasten to him, madame, and tell him that his old comrade pardons him.’ ”

“ That was grand on the part of the Emperor ! ” exclaimed one of the officers. “ Come, gentlemen, let us go and drink his health.”

“ Done,” they answered, with one accord. “ Long live the Emperor ! ” and they marched off together to break the necks of some wine bottles that were kept in a secret cupboard of the guard-room.

Marie had not lost one word that had passed, —they had gone away, but everything she had heard seemed to be yet ringing in her ears. There were deep thoughts revolving in her young heart, which formed themselves into a bold resolve.

“ Susette,” she said, suddenly rousing herself, “ a little while ago you offered me a plate of soup.”

“ And will you have some now if I bring it ? ” said Susette, who had been wondering and felt a little frightened at her strange apathetic silence.

“ Yes, *ma chère*, and a piece of bread, if you please.”

“ And some meat, too. I will bring you all

my dinner," she replied, joyfully, as she knocked at the side-door in the prison wall used by the jailer's family. It was opened instantly by the sentinel who kept guard within, and Susette having disappeared, returned in a few minutes holding in one hand a bowl of smoking soup, and in the other a plate of bread and meat and a glass of wine. Entirely absorbed by the project she meditated, Marie scarcely thanked the kind girl, but ate the soup and drank the wine; then taking a thick slice of brown bread from the plate, she wrapped it carefully up in her pocket-handkerchief.

"I wish I could reward your kindness to an unfortunate girl," said Marie, feeling to see if the valuable ornaments she generally wore in her ears were there, but alas! in the hurry and grief of that dreadful night at Strasburg they had been forgotten.

"Mademoiselle," said Susette, her honest face crimsoning, "to give food to the hungry is not a thing that seeks reward."

"You are right," answered Marie, who had found a chased gold ring upon her finger, which she tried to slip on one of Susette's. "It is not your soup or your bread and wine that I want to pay for, but your tears, your care, your kind, gentle words. Ah, how can one pay for such things! Ah, now I know what it is when one in great sorrow finds a soul to pity their misfortunes! This is my first grief, Susette. I did not know

a few days ago what sorrow meant. I thought it was only bodily pain that could make one weep, but I know now that a trouble of the heart is the worst of all sufferings. As long as I live, Susette, I shall never see any one in distress without trying, as you have done, to console them; and they will bless me as I bless you, *mon amie*. Now take this ring to remember me by, and wear it for my sake."

At this moment the two girls were interrupted by a loud harsh voice calling "Susette!" the sound of which made Marie turn pale and tremble, for she recognized it as that of the *concierge*.

"I am coming, father!" answered Susette, who, still refusing the ring, arose to go.

"You might not refuse it," said Marie in tones so sad that Susette came back, and with a sudden motion raised her hand to her lips and kissed it, saying;

"I do not refuse it because I wish to, or to give you pain, mademoiselle, but I dare not, indeed I dare not accept it."

"I willingly ate your soup and bread and drank your wine."

"That is different. They were to eat, given and taken as they were; it was a different thing from this."

Again the voice of the *concierge* calling "Susette!" was heard, this time more loudly and in angry tones, and without another word she has-

tened away, throwing a kiss towards Marie as she disappeared in the door of the Bicêtre. The closing of the heavy door and the grating of the lock as the huge key turned in its rusty wards smote like blows upon Marie's heart, and she sank down pale and trembling on the stone bench. Until this moment the presence of the kind-hearted Susette and her caressing voice kept up her courage; but now that she was gone, when she found herself alone on the deserted road, a stranger in a strange place, she felt as if she were losing her senses. But the idea suggested by the conversation of the officers about the Emperor and Madame Polignac had taken possession of her mind, and the thought that there was no time to lose in carrying her plan into execution reanimated her courage and stimulated her strength. She got up and tried to walk away, but her heart beat wildly and her limbs trembled so that it was impossible for her to advance. A great fear and dread took possession of her; it was the first time in her life that the poor child had been left unprotected or separated from her mother's love and presence; the tenderest care and the most loving watchfulness had ever surrounded her, anticipating every want since her earliest recollection. She had been the idol of her brave father, and in her elegant home there was nothing left to be wished for. But now what a change! Alone in the streets of a great wicked city without friend or shelter, what should

she do! how should she ever be able unaided to find the place she had it in her mind to go to?

“God sees!” she whispered, and our blessed Lady of Loreto will surely pity me. Mamma has always taught me that SHE never turns away from any who seek HER protection. Behold me then, O most holy Virgin! how desolate and miserable I am! Help me, and turn the heart of the powerful to mercy. I am a poor child, and do not know how to say all I wish in the way it should be said, but THOU dost see and know my case better than I can tell THEE. THOU dost know I have no friend to succor me; help me then from thy throne in heaven.

How naturally does the soul assert its existence and dependence when all exterior supports and comforts are withdrawn! Like a ship from beneath which the builders knock away the props and supports, that glides out buoyantly upon the tide, so the soul deprived of all earthly support finds only in the mercy of God its true element. Grief teaches to even a little child more than the wisdom of sages.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ST. CLOUD.

“ST. CLOUD! It was at St. Cloud that the Emperor pardoned Polignac, but where is St. Cloud? I am a stranger in Paris; how shall I ever find it?” said Marie Lajolais, as she turned to leave the gloomy Bicêtre with a whispered *Ave Maria* on her lips and a noble pious purpose in her heart.

While she, through many difficulties which alternately terrify, weary and dishearten, but never turn her from her object, goes as she is directed by one and another towards St. Cloud, I will tell you something about it as it was in ancient times, and as it stood in its grandeur and beauty on that fair June day of 1804. The palace of St. Cloud, then, overlooks the old town of St. Cloud, which is built on the side of a steep hill near the Seine, and is about two leagues distant from Paris. Its foundation is very ancient, and it derived its name from St. Clodoald, a grandson of Clovis, who having escaped when his brothers were murdered by their uncle Clotaire, found a safe refuge here in the forests that then covered the slopes and hills above the Seine,

where he lived as a hermit, and devoted the rest of his life to devout meditation and prayer. There was even then a little town on the banks of the river, called Novigentum, but after his death and canonization the name was altered to St. Clodoald, from which by degrees it was changed to St. Cloud. There is no spot in France more encrusted with historic facts and associations than St. Cloud, or one more worthy the attention of the curious, the intelligent, the antiquarian, and the æsthetic. The town was burnt by the English in 1358 and again destroyed early in the 14th century by the party of the Armagnacs. It was here that Henri III. was assassinated by Jacques Clement in 1589; here the consort of Charles I. of England, the gay and beautiful Henrietta, died, it was rumored of poison, in 1670, and here the *coup d'etat* of the 18th Brumaire, 1799, that placed Napoleon Bonaparte at the head of the French government was effected. Subsequently, in 1815, the capitulation of Paris was signed here, and here also in 1830 Charles X. signed the famous decree that caused the revolution of July, and it was here that he received the first tidings of it.

The palace consists of a grand court with three piles of buildings, and other spacious wings connected irregularly with them. The centre presents a grand façade one hundred and forty feet in length by seventy in height, which is ornamented with fine sculptures, and its cornice supported

by Corinthian pillars. The original château was built by Jerome de Gondy, a rich banker; after his death it became the property of four Archbishops of Paris of the same family, and was renowned for the extent and beauty of its gardens. In 1658 Louis XIV. purchased the estate and presented it to his brother, the Duke of Orleans, who spared no expense in improving and adorning it. Lepaute, Gerard, and Mansard superintended the repairs, which were on a magnificent scale; and Le Notre, celebrated for his skill in landscape gardening, was commissioned to lay out the park, which was considered his *chef-d'œuvre*. This splendid residence of the Dukes of Orleans continued in their family until 1782, when it was purchased by Louis XVI. for the beautiful and unfortunate Marie Antoinette, who took the greatest delight in it, added several buildings, and frequently visited it accompanied by the king. It was Napoleon's favorite residence, it being the scene of his first elevation. It was in the *Salle de l'Orangerie* that the scenes of the 18th Brumaire took place, and subsequently he transacted the affairs of the Empire more frequently at St. Cloud than at Paris.

It would take up half the space of my little narrative to describe the magnificent interior of this royal palace, its invaluable treasures of art, and the splendid *salons*, that are most remarkable and interesting from the events that transpired in them. There is only one I will refer to particu-

larly, the *Galerie d'Apollon*, a spacious and elegant apartment, where, in 1805, the captive Pope Pius VII. baptized the nephew of Napoleon, the eldest son of Louis Bonaparte, king of Holland, and his wife Hortense, the daughter of Josephine; and where, five years later, the civil marriage of Napoleon with Marie Louise of Austria was celebrated, while Josephine's noble heart was breaking at Malmaison. The lofty ceiling, decorated by Mignard in his best style, represents mythological histories of Apollo and his birth, of Diana and her nymphs, the Seasons, the Muses, and allegorical designs, while the profusion of rich gilding displayed everywhere gives one an idea of the splendor of the epoch when it was erected. The walls are covered with a number of fine pictures, —Canalettis, Mignards, Van Oels, Van Spaendonks, and others of the best school of French painting. Rare and curious cabinets of tortoiseshell and *buhl*, some unrivalled specimens of Sèvres porcelain, small groups of exquisite statuary, carved massive furniture of an antique date and richly upholstered in gobelins and rare stuffs, mosaic tables and Egyptian vases, with other curious and elegant things, complete its furnishing.

Spacious *salons*, and *galeries en suite*, all richly and royally furnished and ornamented by the best artists of the times, terminate in the "*petits appartements* of the king," which at the time my story opens were occupied by Josephine, the noble and humane consort of the imperial Napoleon.

These apartments were richly furnished in keeping with the magnificence of the rest of the palace, only they were smaller, more homelike in their appointments, with a woman's refined taste visible everywhere. It was here, Napoleon used to say in the earlier and happier days of his power, that he found the only refuge and solace he knew on earth. A magnificent chapel connected with the royal apartments by galleries, and enriched by fine sculptures and paintings delineating sacred subjects, offered facilities for devotion to such of the household as were piously inclined; and as it was understood that the Emperor, who had restored religion as well as order to France, had a whim—so they called it—to see religious observances respected, the chapel was generally well filled at the high Masses on Sundays and *fête* days. There was one beautiful head, one pure, noble heart that sometimes bowed here in the twilight and in the early morning, when only the priest was at the altar and only the painted hues of the windows and the fragrance of incense filled the holy place—the Empress Josephine, whose greatness made her afraid, and drove her to seek help from the King of kings, for there used to come a shadow into her heart sometimes that made her tremble and caused her to see in every unfortunate her own probable fate. This provision, or whatever it might be, fostered in her noble heart the virtues of mercy and benevolence already planted there by nature.

The palace of St. Cloud is surrounded by extensive and magnificent parks, one of which, the *Parc Reserve*, begins at the palace and reaches to the summit of the hill, its whole extent covered with flower-gardens, plantations of native and foreign trees, pieces of ornamental water in fountains and lakes, and statues by the most celebrated artists of the time of Louis XIV. The *Grand Parc* stretches from the Seine to St. Cloud and is four leagues in circumference. There is an entrance from the bridge to the *Parc*, between two Doric pavilions, into a wide avenue of chestnut and lime trees that runs parallel with the river. To the right there is a grand cascade, surrounded by plantations of chestnuts and limes, but separated from the *Parc* by a fosse lined with masonry. Nothing could surpass the beautiful and diversified scenes of the place at that period, whatever the fortunes of war may have done since to scar and despoil them. All that nature and art, combined with the aid of trees, rockwork, cascades, picturesque acclivities, level swards, ornamental shrubbery, vistas of fairylike loveliness, vine-covered pavilions, Chinese temples with minarets and bells of gilded sheen, could do to make it bewilderingly beautiful, had been done and done well. On one of the finest and most commanding localities of the *Parc* Napoleon had caused his "Lantern of Diogenes" to be erected, on the model of Lysicrates' at Athens—a tall square tower crowned with a cupola supported

by six fluted Corinthian columns. He took great delight in going there sometimes with his friends to enjoy the splendid view it commanded of Paris, the Seine, and the surrounding country; and it was whispered that he used to spend the nights there occasionally with an astrologer who pretended to read the stars and cast horoscopes.

But now I have done with St. Cloud as far as description goes, for the sun is dropping low in the west, trailing his golden garments along the velvety swards, leaving long shadows where he has passed, and touching every salient point with the glory of his departure until the trees are fringed with gold, and the sparkling cascades and fountains are transmuted into rainbows that glitter as with diamonds. There has been a reception at St. Cloud, and the grand avenue is crowded with distinguished, richly apparelled guests, who are returning to Paris in their fine equipages. Everywhere guards are stationed to preserve order and outside the entrance a picked guard consisting of a number of the Emperor's own veterans is stationed—brave, bronzed fellows, proud of his fame, who wore upon their breasts the Cross of the Legion of Honor, and who since the discovery of the conspiracy for his overthrow and destruction gave a double look at every one who passed them by on their way to his presence.

There had been a fine show to-day,—the Emperor's magnanimity in pardoning Polignac had

brought Paris literally to his feet, and many of the old *noblesse* who had held proudly aloof from him before, and some of the legitimists, thought the act so kindly a one that they came out of their retreats in all the state of their old-fashioned rusty court dresses of the time of Marie Antoinette to make their stately bows and courtesies to the "Corsican soldier and his creole wife," as they usually termed the Emperor and Empress. And they had gone away thinking in their hearts that the imperial dignity did not belong alone as a divine right to kings—awed in spite of themselves by the commanding manner of Napoleon, even while won by the grace and sweetness of Josephine.

But they are all going—the handsome carriages filled with fair dames richly dressed and glittering with diamonds, the wives and daughters of the new nobility of the Empire; dashing young officers, who won their spurs under the Emperor's own eyes, in some of his later battles; veteran generals, whose breasts were covered with orders; Cabinet ministers, diplomats, and distinguished citizens; they were all hurrying back to Paris; and presently the broad avenue was empty and silent, except where the guard marched up and down, hoping for the hour when they would be relieved from duty.

Opposite the gate of the *Parc*, near the sentry-boxes, several soldiers but lately returned from Egypt chatted and smoked.

“Conspiracies still!” said one, striking his flint to relight his pipe.

“Bast! they bring happiness to our Emperor, these conspiracies,” replied his neighbor, puffing out great clouds of smoke.

“Pretty happiness, *ma foi!*” answered the first; “never to know the minute when you may be blown up or have a stiletto thrust under your left ribs! In the field of battle one knows what to expect, and keeps his front to the enemy that he may fall like a man if a bullet strikes; but in peace, in a man’s own house! that goes beyond limits!”

“However, comrade, when Brugaud said that it brought our Emperor happiness, he was not wrong,” said another soldier who had been listening to the two; “the conspiracy of the infernal machine made him Consul for life; that which they have just discovered has made him Emperor of the French! That’s a pretty high grade, by my faith!”

“What’s all this?” inquired another soldier who joined the group.

“He’s a smart fellow, this conscript!” answered Brugaud; “where are you from last,—from Congo?”

“If Egypt in French means Congo, I am from that country of sand, where Bonaparte shook the pyramids,” answered the young conscript, with an air at once ironical and simple.

“In that case you are not expected to know

what has been going on in your absence," replied Brugaud good-humoredly; "but as a good comrade should, I'm going to tell you a thing or two. Understand then that Pichegru, Georges Cadoudal, Moreau—Bast! but it's a pity for him, brave fellow that he is! I shall never forget him at Hohenlinden—well! they do say that jealousy of his old comrade in arms brought him to it. But to go on. These three made a plan to land an English army on the coasts of France, and while one assassinated Bonaparte the other two were to make themselves masters of Paris and the Provinces; and they do say there were plenty ready to help them besides the royalists and republicans who were in the plot. It was a grand scheme, they thought; but had the blow been struck when their plans were ripe, and been successful, these two, the royalists and republicans, would have fought over a division of the prize and raised a civil war in France."

"It's lucky the conspiracy was discovered in time," said an old scarred veteran, resting on his musket. "And to think he pardoned Polignac, and Rivière!"

"Stop!" exclaimed the neighbor of Brugaud; "that is without doubt another trick of Madame Josephine!"

"Yes, it was she who solicited pardon for the guilty, and promised the aunt and sister of Rivière to facilitate their getting access to the Emperor, although he had strictly forbidden it

the day before. I was on guard there, and heard him promise these ladies to pardon their relative, and heard him, too, repeat to himself with an air of burning indignation: 'The miserable wretches! to wish to assassinate me! what baseness! what cowardice!'

A sound, half sob, half sigh, followed Brugaud's words, and turning quickly in the direction from which the sounds proceeded, he saw to his intense astonishment a young and beautiful girl, whose rich dress was covered with dust and whose fair neck and arms were reddened by the sun, standing a little way off, her pale face wearing an expression of grief and sadness.

"What do you wish, my pretty child?" he asked kindly.

"To know the right way to get to the palace of St. Cloud, monsieur," she replied, with such a modest, timid air, and in so sweet a voice that not one of the soldiers thought of addressing a light word to her.

"You are on the road there, mademoiselle," they answered.

"Oh, my God, I thank Thee!" she exclaimed, as, almost overcome with fatigue, she leaned for a moment against a sentry-box. "But tell me, monsieur, can one get to speak with the Emperor?"

"Certes, it is not forbidden, mademoiselle," replied an old veteran whose forehead was ornamented with a huge scar; "everyone can speak

to him ; but the better to know his convenience you must go and ask the *concierge*. Enter into the court-yard at the end of this avenue, *ma petite* ; cross at the right and you will see a glass door where you must knock and some one will come, to whom you must make known your wishes. Go now, and dry your tears, my child. . . . It is a bad thing to see a young pretty girl crying," added the scarred soldier, looking after the stranger, who, after thanking him with a look only, for her heart was too full to speak, walked tremblingly and with uncertain steps towards the place he had described.

Following the directions of the old soldier, Marie Lajolais—for it was she—came to the glass door, where she knocked timidly. It was opened by an imposing-looking functionary, whose large person was clothed in a suit of blue, faced with scarlet.

"What is your business?" he inquired, lifting his eyebrows in astonishment, when he saw that his visitor, who evidently belonged to the higher classes, was in such a sorrowful plight. Had she been older and come there looking so, he would have given her in charge of the *gendarmes* as an improper character : but this was a mere child, her beautiful face as full of innocence as of sorrow, and he conjectured that she came to beg,—an idea which was contradicted, however, by the richness of her soiled apparel. He was puzzled beyond expression.

“Monsieur,” she replied, in a low, timid voice,  
“I wish to speak to the Emperor.”

“Have you a letter of audience, mademoiselle?”

“No, monsieur.”

“Then I am sorry to tell you that it will be impossible for you to speak with the Emperor.”

“Will you please to tell me, monsieur, how I am to get a letter of audience?” she asked, with an aching heart, restraining her tears with difficulty.

But without bestowing any further notice on her, the liveried official turned his back and was about going in; but before closing the inner door of the vestibule he turned, and seeing that she was still there he told her to go away as once; that it was against the rules for strangers to loiter in the court-yard.

“But I must see the Emperor; I must speak to him, monsieur. Do not send me back, I implore you!” pleaded the poor child.

“Bast! If I let everybody remain here who wishes to see and speak to the Emperor, the court would be crowded from morning until night; so you must go, and quickly too!” answered the man impatiently.

“Oh, monsieur, for pity’s sake—”

“We have orders that we are forced to execute, mademoiselle; go away at once I tell you, or I shall be obliged to have you driven out.”

“Driven out!” repeated Marie; and she would

perhaps have obeyed, for all her courage gave way at the humiliating idea of being driven away, when she saw an usher of the palace passing by—and, made desperate by the situation, she ran to him and exclaimed: “Oh, monsieur! monsieur! grant me a favor. Oh, for pity’s sake listen to me!” Her accents so full of pathos and her voice so expressive of the suffering that wrung her poor young heart touched the man and arrested his attention.

“What can I do for you, mademoiselle?” he asked kindly.

“Let me speak to the Emperor, monsieur. Oh, do not refuse me!”

“The Emperor has been engaged in a grand court reception to-day, mademoiselle, and has just retired to his cabinet, where he may possibly remain all night. But tell me, why do you wish so much to see him?”

“Oh, my God!” cried the poor child, astonished that the anguish of her soul so plainly expressed in her face and her tears did not reveal the sad cause of her grief; “what do I want to see him for, you ask? Why should I wish to see him but to get the pardon of my father, General Lajolais, condemned to death by him!”

There was such an *abandon* of grief in her manner and words that the usher was touched with a strange pity.

“Poor child!” he said, scarcely knowing what answer to give her.

“So you see now,” added Marie, with childish *naïveté*, “that you cannot refuse to let me speak to the Emperor.”

“No one would dare disturb the Emperor when he shuts himself up in his cabinet—”

“Well then let me see the Empress or Madame Louis,” pleaded Marie, recalling to mind the praises she had heard accorded to the goodness of Josephine’s daughter.

“I will do the best I can for you, mademoiselle. Follow me,” said the usher, deeply moved.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### MADAME LOUIS AND THE EMPRESS.

MARIE kept very close to her conductor; she did not know what might happen; in some of those long corridors he might disappear, he might get to the Empress' apartments before her, or, worse than all, he might retract the promise of protection that he had given her; so, almost clinging to his skirts, she kept as near him as possible. Her tired, blistered feet scarcely touched the ground; the almost fainting look of weariness that had pervaded her appearance from head to foot disappeared as by some spell of enchantment, and she was animated by such high hopes that the least check now would have completely crushed her.

The usher at length stopped at the door of a small richly-furnished *salon* with hangings of sea-green, where the cabinets and tables were inlaid with mother-of-pearl; and the sofas and chair-cushions were of green damask, with beautiful flowers embroidered over them. There was an embroidery-frame near an open window, and a harp pushed back, with sheets of music scattered around, as if some one had just left off playing,

and there were books upon the tables and lovely pictures hanging against the walls; but Marie noticed none of these things; her attention was fixed on the figure of the only occupant of the apartment—a young lady whose back was towards her, as she bent over a basket full of rare, glowing, fragrant flowers that had just been brought to her from the palace gardens.

“That is the Princess Hortense,” whispered the usher; “have courage, mademoiselle, do not be afraid to tell your griefs; she is very good, and will be kind to you even if she can do nothing.”

After the usher withdrew, leaving Marie just within the door of the green *salon*, she stood as if rooted to the spot; her heart beat to suffocation as the dread of a cold haughty look, an evasive answer, a harsh word from the Princess Hortense took possession of her mind. She trembled and felt that her strength was spent, and if a gentle word did not soon encourage her she must die, for her father's life was her's; alternate waves of parching heat and icy coldness swept over her whenever she made an effort to speak and announce her presence.

Hortense still remained bending over the flowers and inhaling their perfume with childish delight; her back was toward the door, and Marie could only see her beautiful blonde hair gathered up in a turquoise comb *à la Grecque*, and her tall graceful figure simply dressed in fine transparent white muslin, over skirts of delicate blue.

Some moments elapsed, when, finding that the Princess remained absorbed in the delights of her flowers, Marie, desperate by the fleeting of so much precious time which might be fatal to her purpose, found voice to speak.

“Madame!” she ventured to say.

At the sound of this trembling, plaintive voice Hortense lifted her beautiful head, and turning around, was surprised beyond measure to see a young girl in tears standing there.

“What do you want?” she gently inquired. But receiving no answer, she asked in kindly tones: “Who are you?”

“I am the daughter of Gen. Lajolais, madame,” said Marie, with a convulsive sob.

The charming face of Hortense instantly evinced the liveliest compassion. “Poor child, what can I do for you?”

“Let me have an audience with the Emperor, madame.”

“Impossible, my poor child,” said the Princess endeavoring to soften, by the kindness of her manner, the bitterness of the refusal.

“Oh, do not say that, madame,” cried Marie, who saw no other hope of deliverance for her father than this; “do not say impossible. If you only knew how I have suffered in trying to reach you you would pity me, and not crush me with that dreadful word.”

“The Emperor, my child, is justly incensed against the authors of this conspiracy, and de-

clares he will pardon no more of them," said Hortense, in the kindest tones. "It would only expose you to new pain were you to see him."

"Oh, my God!—I—no—I will not believe my dear father guilty; if I did my courage would abandon me,—I should die," said Marie, in piteous accents.

The beautiful Hortense, touched by the deepest commiseration, led Marie to a sofa, where she fell, overcome by her agitation and fatigue, and taking her hand with a friendly pressure, seated herself beside her. Emboldened by this evidence of interest, Marie continued :

"Imagine, madame, the grief of my mamma and myself when we heard of this conspiracy and learned that my father was accused of being mixed up in it. No, you cannot realize our sorrow! Then when we heard he was condemned to die! Oh, madame, I do not know why I did not die myself at the frightful news! I should have given up if I had not had my mamma to console. Finally, one day—oh, that dreadful day!—we were just dressing for dinner—mamma was curling my hair around her fingers—when a great noise was heard in the hall of our hotel; suddenly our door was burst open, our room filled with *gendarmes*, and one of them said to mamma: 'You must come with us, madame.' And without listening to a word, without giving us time to get our hats or gloves, they made us go down and get into a carriage and drove off with us, never stopping

until it reached the prison gates. My poor mamma! we were together, and that was a comfort," said Marie, whose tears flowed unceasingly. "But the cruel men at the prison said we must be separated, and in spite of my cries and tears and prayers, they tore me away from my mother's arms, and while they carried her away to a prison cell a soldier bore me, all unconscious—for I swooned—outside the gates, where he left me lying on a stone bench. I thought the grief of it all would kill me, madame, when I recovered my consciousness. I found myself suddenly all alone in the world, without help, without protection, a poor, weak child without courage! Ah, madame, my heart felt frozen like ice, and everything was dark before me! I thought at first that it must be a frightful dream; but no, alas! it was all true. Then I thought of the good God and prayed; I asked the help of our Blessed Lady, who always succors the unhappy; but something happened that caused me, instead of praying any longer for ourselves, to ask of Heaven the favor of strength and courage to reach you or the Empress. I knew that if I could see one or the other of you my father would be saved,—and now that I am here you tell me it is impossible! Oh, then all is lost—all is lost."

The Princess Hortense could not restrain her tears at the simple and touching recital of the sorrows of a child so innocent and lovely as Marie, and smoothing back the disordered golden

curls from her throbbing temples with her soft cool hand, she said :

“ Well, we will see what can be done. But be calm, my child, and tell me when you left your mother ? ”

“ This morning, madame. ”

“ And, doubtless, you have eaten nothing ? ”

“ Yes, madame, a plate of soup that the jailer’s daughter gave me ; she also gave me a piece of bread. without this food I don’t know what I should have done. ”

“ But you must need food ; and if you walked here, you must also be very tired ? ”

“ Ah, madame, I feel neither hunger nor fatigue ; I think of but two things, which are that my mamma is in a dungeon and my father sentenced to death. ”

There was such a volume of grief and utter distress in Marie’s accents that the Princess Hortense, quite overcome, arose and said : “ Remain here ; I will go to my mother’s apartments and we will consult together to see if it be possible to contrive an audience with the Emperor for you. ”

“ Why an audience with the Emperor ? ” inquired a gentle voice, which caused both Hortense and Marie to turn their heads.

“ Mamma ! ” said Hortense, running toward the Empress, and leading her towards Marie, who had also risen, “ this is Mademoiselle Lajolais. ”

“ The daughter of him who wished to assassi-

nate Bonaparte?" Josephine almost involuntarily asked.

"Is this poor child responsible, mamma?" said Hortense, putting her arm around the neck of the Empress and tenderly embracing her. "If you only knew how much she has suffered! how greatly she is to be pitied!"

"God alone can know that," said Marie, with an accent of such earnest truth and pathos that the Empress looked attentively at her.

"Who accompanied you here, mademoiselle?" asked Josephine.

"No one, mamma," Hortense hastened to say; "she came alone."

"Alone, and so young!" said the Empress approaching Marie with an expression of growing interest in her lovely, regular features.

"Yes, alone," said Marie with a fresh burst of grief; "and, madame, if you refuse to help me, if through you I cannot get an audience with the Emperor, if I cannot soften his heart, I shall soon be forever alone in the world."

"Indeed, my child, I promise to do the best I can for you," said Josephine, kindly and earnestly.

"And I also," added Hortense.

"Oh, I trust the goodness of you both, mesdames; I know that you pity me, but my mother's love and care!—who, oh, my God, can restore that to me?" said the half-distracted child.

“Mamma, you will manage it so she can speak to the Emperor, will you not?” asked Hortense eagerly.

“I am extremely sorry, my child,” answered Josephine, “but Bonaparte has commanded me so emphatically to spare him these scenes that I really fear— Then he is closeted with the Minister of Finance. This young girl must come again.”

“When, mamma, when?” asked Hortense eagerly.

“To-morrow or the day after. I must at least try to prepare Bonaparte for this new application for pardon,” answered Josephine.

“But, mamma, consider ; her father in the mean time may be executed.”

The Empress reflected a moment,—she hesitated ; then observing the anxiety that wrung the lines of Marie’s face with agony, she said to her daughter : “Keep her here in your own apartments, Hortense, conceal her presence from every one, for if Bonaparte should hear she is here all would fail. Then to-morrow—to-morrow we will try what we can do.” Then Josephine went away, her gentle, womanly heart busy devising plans for the relief of the young girl, whose sorrows had deeply impressed her.

Meanwhile Hortense led Marie into her own more private apartments, where she arranged everything for her concealment, and not only brought her meals to her, but used her best en-

deavors to persuade her to eat of the delicate and savory food she placed before her; but the poor girl's heart was too heavily oppressed by anxiety and sorrow combined, and she could take nothing, although she tried. During the night Hortense heard unceasing sighs from Marie's apartment, which opened into her own, and when she arose she threw a *robe de chambre* around her and went in to inquire how it fared with the unfortunate girl, who, she perceived by a glance at her bed, had not laid down all night.

"But you should have gone to bed; how do you expect to have strength for what you have to do, without food and without sleep, little one?" said Hortense, in tones of gentle reproach.

Marie pointed to the place on the floor where she had knelt all night, and answered: "I meant to lie down, but while I was kneeling there the thought that the day which would dawn in a few hours would be perhaps the last of my father's life kept me chained to the spot. Oh, that God would lend to my words power to soften the heart of the Emperor!"

The princess turned away to conceal the tears that suffused her lovely blue eyes; then she laid her hand caressingly on Marie's head, and, stooping over, kissed her forehead.

"Remain here," she said, after a short pause, "I am going to my mother to find out if she has

spoken to the Emperor about you. Be patient, little one, and have courage."

"And I, I go again to pray to the good God and our Blessed Lady," answered Marie, whose pale, beautiful face was no longer agitated by uncontrollable emotions, but calmed and solemnized by a concentration of thought so elevated and purified by faith and sorrow, her countenance wore the aspect of a martyr when the crowning moment is at hand.

Presentation Concert,  
Bungarwan

CHAPTER V.

PARDON, SIRE!

THE *galerie* that the Emperor always passed through to reach the council chamber was extensive and spacious. The ceiling was lofty, and painted in graceful and richly tinted delineations, symbolizing the virtues of Truth, Justice and Mercy, painted by Antoine Coypel, one of the masters of decorative art of that period; the floor was of polished marble set in mosaic patterns, and the whole was lighted by windows on each side,—those on the right commanding a noble view of the picturesque grounds; those on the left looked down upon the great entrance court of the palace.

It was only nine o'clock, but every few moments persons, conducted by an imperial usher, entered, until each side of the long *galerie* showed a line of eager and expectant faces. Some came through curiosity, merely to look upon the great and world-renowned Napoleon; others had petitions to present; a few were there on matters of life and death; some came to solicit favors, and besides these there were groups of officers and people belonging to the imperial

household,—some of whom were present on duty while others were simply there on the *qui vive* for something new.

Two young officers stood in the shallow embrasure of one of the windows about midway the *galerie*, conversing gayly about the opera of the previous night, and discussing the merits of a new *prima donna*. They chaffed each other good-naturedly, and their *persiflage* was seasoned with some sparkles of wit that gave zest to a subject otherwise soon worn threadbare. They were sons of two of Napoleon's generals, had been his *aides-de-camp* in Italy and Egypt, and had been selected by the Empress as officers of her household. They could not agree in their opinions regarding the new singer, and their arguments began to grow a little personal, when a lady of commanding presence, holding the hand of a young girl who accompanied her, entered the *galerie* and stationed herself nearly opposite to where they were standing. This incident interrupted their conversation abruptly.

“Look, Lavalette! there is Madame Louis; how richly she is dressed, and how very lovely she looks to-day! *Ma foi!* I wonder what she can be up to? I'll bet you a hundred francs that it is something about people implicated with Cadoudal and the rest of that beautiful set. I tell you *sub rosa* though, if it should be so the Emperor will be furious.”

“He swore that he'd grant no more pardons

on that score, and gave strict orders that no more petitions be presented to him. But look, De Sainville, where that bit of sunlight rests on madame's magnificent hair! She is very beautiful, and even more good than beautiful! See how respectfully every one—high and low—salutes her, and how graciously she returns their homage! There's no *hauteur* in her noble soul,—she is like her mother, and uses her power only to do good. But who is that young girl with her? Notice, De Sainville,—there is something very singular in her appearance. Her face is like alabaster, her eyes are blue, large and shaded by a fringe darker than her golden hair; when she looks down her face wears the expression of Murillo's madonna that the Emperor sent the Empress from Spain; but when she lifts her eyelids—as now—there's a frightened as well as a sorrowful look in them. Notice her hair too,—its a different shade from that of Madame Louis', and nearly covers her bare shoulders with heavy golden tresses! There's no sign of life in her that I see except her eyes, and I don't believe she sees anything around her. Does it not strike you so?"

"Take breath, my friend, I advise. I did not know you could rave so poetically. The child is very pretty, and there *is* something odd, above the common, in her appearance; but mark my words there's some dramatic little trick in waiting for the Emperor when he appears! The

Empress is always springing a mine under his feet,—and, *ma foi!* doesn't he get furious!"

"But see how strangely she is dressed! She looks as if she had been hurried off before her *toilette* was completed,—her dress is stained and draggled," said Lavalette. "Notice, too, the symmetry of her arms and the unstudied grace of her attitude; and now, see, De Sainville, she raises her eyes, but it is plain she neither sees nor thinks of any one here. She must have had a great grief to make her look like that,—and she so young. But Madame Louis is looking towards us," added Lavalette, as both he and De Sainville bowed low in response to the kindly and graceful salutation of the beautiful Hortense.

"Come, little one," Hortense whispered to her charge; "courage is all that you need now."

"I know, madame. I shall not be afraid," answered Marie,—for it was she—whose tremulous whisper belied her words.

"Do not fear that I will leave you," said her friend, who, to give her more confidence, took Marie's cold hand and held it close in her warm clasp.

Marie did not speak, she could only raise her sad, expressive eyes, full of gratitude and sorrow, to those of the noble and beautiful woman beside her; then turned them again towards the closed door of the council chamber with a burning gaze that seemed as if it must penetrate to the Emperor's presence. She remained thus, so perfectly

motionless that it appeared as if all the powers of her being and mind were concentrated in her vigilant eyes.

Madame Louis had also need of courage, for the Emperor would not allow Josephine to utter a word in favor of General Lajolais the evening before, and commanded her, under pain of his serious displeasure, not to name the subject to him again, adding "He deserves his fate."

It is true that Hortense had made great sacrifices in complying with the Emperor's desire for her to marry his brother, and he was well aware of the extent of those sacrifices; but even so, there might be such a thing as going too far with him, as he had already plainly intimated when he told them that he had "acted contrary to his better judgment in having yielded to their entreaties for the pardon of Polignac and De Rivière, and would not be cajoled into showing clemency to another one of the traitors and assassins. Enough of such dramatic sentiment; he would have no more of it, and wished the fact to be remembered." This is what Josephine had told Hortense that morning when the latter left Marie to seek her mother, hoping to hear something that would give the poor child a hope.

"Very well, mamma," said the beautiful and spirited woman, "Gen. Bonaparte owes me something for marrying his brother, and he will not, at least, beat the prospective Queen of Holland, however he may choose to storm at her; so I

shall make a grand *toilette*—it will remind him of a thing or two—and go with the poor child to the *galerie* and let her plead her own case.”

“Oh, my dear Hortense, you are a noble soul; but take care! Bonaparte is very vindictive when thwarted. But I cannot, I will not forbid your plan! Go then; I will kneel here and pray the Queen of Angels to touch Bonaparte’s heart.”

“Thank you, good mamma!” said Hortense, embracing her mother and pressing her lips upon her cheek. “You give me courage.”

“It must be some weighty affair that keeps Madame Louis standing so long,” whispered Lieutenant de Sainville.

“I intend to see it out, whatever it may be; aye and find out, too, who that lovely young girl may be,” answered Capt. Lavalette, in the same low tone.

“I don’t believe they have moved for two mortal hours. See with what breathless eagerness she watches the door of the council chamber, while madame’s eyes are bent on her with the tenderest pity. It is as good as a romance, Lavalette.”

By this time people had grown weary of waiting, and having time to look into the face of affairs and weigh their chances of success, their hopes were dampened; no one smiled; no one felt in the least like speaking; the low buzz of conversation died away, and there was a profound

silence, broken only now and then by an involuntary sigh from some anxious bosom.

Finally, eleven o'clock struck; the folding doors of the council chamber were thrown open, and a gold-laced usher announced "The Emperor." The next moment the Emperor, followed by the Minister of War and several members of his Privy Council, entered the *galerie*.

"Which is he?" asked Marie, in quick, nervous tones.

"The only one whose head is covered," answered Hortense, quickly, for the Emperor was approaching them.

Marie waited to hear no more; she had eyes and thought but for one person in the crowd around her, and, darting from the side of Hortense, seized the hand of the Emperor as she threw herself at his feet, exclaiming in tones of the most piercing entreaty: "Pardon! pardon!"

At this unexpected scene the Emperor suddenly halted. "What! again!" he exclaimed, in an angry voice as he turned a frowning, stern countenance upon her. "I have said that I would have no more such scenes as this!" Then, folding his arms, he tried to pass on.

"Oh, sire!" cried Marie, inspired by the thought of her father's peril with a daring and energy beyond her years, "I conjure you to listen to me; by the memory of your own father, sire, grant me the pardon of mine! It is my father, sire, he must have been led away by others; par-

don him, pardon him! Oh, sire, his life is in your hands; pity an unhappy child who asks for nothing but the life of her father! Sire,—grace! pity! pardon!”

“Let me pass, mademoiselle,” said the Emperor, apparently unmoved, as he rudely pushed her aside.

But this did not intimidate her; she had no thought of self; she thought only of the life so dear to her that was in such deadly peril, and she dragged herself along the marble floor after him.

“Oh, pity, pity, sire! pardon for my father!” she cried, in tones of anguish. “Oh, just turn one look upon me, sire! Do not, do not leave me or I shall die.”

There was something so heart-rending in the sound of this childish voice pleading for the life of a father that the Emperor could no longer steel his heart against it, but paused and regarded the young girl, who so persistently importuned him, with a keen glance.

Marie was extremely beautiful, but at this moment she looked angelic. As white as snow, grief imparted to her features an expression of deep anguish; her rich golden hair fell in a thousand disordered tresses over her bare shoulders; her dimpled hand, burning with fever, again seized the Emperor's, who almost shrunk from its feverish heat. Still kneeling, her face bathed in tears, she raised her great blue eyes to

his, and thus seemed to await the issues of life and death, while in the terrible pause—oh, so long to her!—she had neither power to speak, weep, nor breathe.

“Are you Mademoiselle Lajolais?” asked the Emperor sternly.

Marie could only press his hand in the affirmative.

“Do you know,” he said, in severe accents, “that this is the second time your father has been guilty of crimes against the state?”

“I know!” she found voice to say, now that her case forced her to speak. “But, sire, the first time he was innocent.”

“But this time he is not, you admit?” said Bonaparte, harshly.

“And so I implore you to pardon him, sire! Oh, sire, grant me my father’s life or I shall die here at your feet,” she pleaded.

It was evident to all who watched the Emperor’s countenance that he was touched; and no longer resisting the impulses of mercy, he leaned over her and said: “Very well, mademoiselle, be comforted. I pardon your father. But arise now,” he added, lifting her from her knees; then, with a look of kindness and encouragement, he disengaged his hand and walked rapidly away. The sudden shock of joy was more dangerous to Marie than her grief had been; she staggered forward a few steps, and would have fallen heavily to the marble floor had not an officer of the

household, who was standing quite near, caught her in his arms before Hortense could reach her.

"Thanks, Captain Lavalette; follow me quickly, the poor child has fainted," said Madame Louis, who had kept herself discreetly in the background and felt happy in not having been seen by the Emperor—as she thought.

That evening when Hortense met the Emperor with a little bouquet of violets from her mother's flower-garden in her hand, which she offered him with a bewitching smile, he pinched her ear, saying:

"You thought I did not see you to-day, Madame Louis!"

Then she knew he was not angry, and with audacious sweetness, said: "There is one more favor, sire."

"I will hear no more. Remember, Hortense, I forbid it."

"The mother of the young girl whose father you pardoned to-day is in solitary confinement in the Bicêtre," she said, daring all.

"Let her stay there; it is but just that one of a family of traitors should suffer," answered the Emperor, with a frown, as he threw the violets away and walked towards the private sitting-room of Josephine.

*to*  
*resentation Convent*

*Bungarvan*

## CHAPTER VI.

### SUNSHINE AFTER THE STORM.

WHEN Madame Lajolais was released from the Bicêtre the surly officials told her nothing except that she was free to go, by order of the Emperor, and there was a possibility that she would meet her husband and daughter in Paris. They would answer no questions, whether from ignorance or malice she could not comprehend, but hurried her away with all possible speed. Should she find them at their home in Strasbourg? for she saw that they were on the road thither; if not, when would they meet? how and where? What could she do in this bitter uncertainty but, like one blind in the wilderness, confide all to the guidance of Divine Providence, even while she humanly suffered?

The house was closed when she arrived; only the old butler, who had served two generations of the family of Lajolais, was there, pale, trembling and afraid.

“Have they come?” she asked, almost breathless, when he opened the hall door.

“They! *mon Dieu*, madame! are they not with you?” he answered, bursting into tears when he saw they were not there.

The suspense and anxiety of Madame Lajolais were insupportable; why did they send her away like this, and where were her husband and child? Of the fate of her husband she dared not think. Tortured by a thousand cruel surmises, she could not rest, but walked from room to room, listening and starting at the sound of her own footsteps; she could not lie down, nor could she eat; every nerve, every faculty were possessed of such an unrest that she felt an irresistible desire to run—run until she dropped dead.

But suddenly there was a bustle—an unclosing and closing of doors, the sound of voices and footsteps, and then all at once she was clasped in their arms, almost swooning with joy. After the first transports,—of this family, who had come together again as from the very jaws of death,—General Lajolais presented Captain Lavalette, who by the Empress' order had accompanied himself and daughter from Paris, lest some over-vigilant official should attempt to give them trouble on the road, to his wife, and informed her in a few brief sentences how kind and friendly he had been to them.

“My heart is too full to thank you as I desire, monsieur,” said Madame Lajolais, gracefully extending her hand; “but you see what those two are to me: measure, then, the extent of my gratitude by my love for them. I can never thank you in words.”

“I am repaid ten thousand times, madame, by

witnessing the joy of your reunion with your family, and ask nothing but a continuance of your friendship," he answered, deeply touched.

"From this sacred hour, monsieur, allow us to consider you as a favored and dear friend. My husband! Marie! your hands on this compact, in the good old German fashion."

If Captain Lavalette had thought Marie beautiful in her grief, how much more so now, when, with face irradiated by happiness, she placed her hand in his with a shy, modest air.

After dinner, to which they did justice after their long and bitter fast, they returned to the drawing-room, which was cheerfully lighted with wax-candles and decorated with fresh flowers hastily gathered by the old butler, who knew how dearly Madame Lajolais and Marie loved their beauty and fragrance. Here Marie, questioned by her parents, related everything that had passed after she left the Bicêtre, omitting nothing that she could remember until her first interview with Madame Louis, after which all had become as a dream—confused, troubled, and full of sighs, strange faces and tears, with a burning pain in her heart, all through. After she retired, Captain Lavalette related how she had got access first to Madame Louis, of the deep interest taken by her and the Empress in her misfortunes, how they had braved the Emperor's displeasure in assisting her in her labor of love; and finally described the scene between Bona-

parte and Marie in the hall of audience, as well as his emotion would allow, while Gen. Lajolais and his wife, unable to restrain their tears, thanked heaven for the blessing of a child so brave and good.

The brave and amiable soldier made his reluctant adieus the next morning, having orders to return to St. Cloud and report to the Empress if everything had turned out successfully; but ere he left he asked a private interview with Gen. Lajolais, the result of which was a permission to visit them, whenever his military duties allowed him to come to Strasburg, as something of a relation nearer than that of a friend.

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Have you forgotten Susette at the Bicêtre, who was so kind to Marie that dreadful day when, torn from her mother, she was laid fainting and unconscious on the stone bench outside the gates? Nearly five years have passed since then, and Susette is now a comely, blooming girl of nineteen, who, full of life and cheerful spirits, has to bewail daily being obliged to live in so gloomy a place, where the presence of so many saucy soldiers, always ready to be familiar, with or without encouragement, imposed a still greater restraint upon her, as to avoid them she had to remain indoors much more than was pleasant.

She is sitting with her mother busily engaged in assisting her to cut out and make some coarse

winter clothing for the family. Susette is evidently excited, and argues with her mother, who is a sensible woman and knows best what is good for her welfare.

“They were sent to *me*, mamma; you admit that much,” she was saying, “and yet they are locked up, and I am hardly allowed to look at them, much less wear them,” and she snipped the cloth she was cutting with her scissors in a way that proved she resented her grievance, whatever it was.

“But who sends them, I ask? That’s the question! Where I came from, up in Bretagne, a girl’s character would be ruined should she be seen wearing things above her station. And then if it leaked out—things always *do* leak out somehow—that somebody, none can tell who, had sent them, that girl might as well go to St. Lazare at once, for any good her reputation will ever do her again,” answered Dame Chorion.

“I’m thankful I was not born in Bretagne if they cry down innocent folk that way, then,” answered Susette, tossing her head. “I don’t see what harm there can be in a nice merino dress and a pair of plain gold ear-rings.”

“Nor in all the other things: a fur collar, ribbons, and a whole set of trimmed undergarments, only fit for aristocrats to wear—What now, Pierre?”

“There’s some fine quality outside a-wanting Susette,” replied the door-keeper.

“Susette! What sort of fine quality? Man, woman or child is it?”

“A gentleman and lady, Mother Chorion, in an open carriage, with driver and footman in livery,” answered Pierre.

“Go, Susette; and, mind you, no nonsense. Recollect we are honest folk, and never had a rogue or disgrace in our family since the Deluge. If any presents are offered, I forbid you to take them. Now go.”

Susette smoothed her soft brown hair with her hands, shook the threads and scraps from her dark serge dress, pulled down her little white apron, snatched a glimpse of herself in the glass, and went out to see who might be there inquiring for her. She saw a low open carriage, in which sat a gentleman in the uniform of a colonel of the French Guards with a richly dressed and beautiful lady beside him. She nodded pleasantly to Susette, who came forward, wondering why they should offer her their hands as if they were old acquaintances, when she never saw them in her life before. But when the lady got out of the carriage and stood by her, she was quite embarrassed, and began to lose her head.

“Come, sit here with me a moment,” said the lady, seating herself on the stone bench near the prison gate; “sit down, and look in my face now that I lift my veil.”

Susette was bewildered; she had surely seen that face once long ago in a troubled dream; it

was and it was not one that she ought to know—now—could it be? Oh, no! impossible! this lady so radiantly lovely, in fine rich silks and costly jewels, could not be that broken-hearted child to whom she had given a plate of soup and tried to comfort four years before!

“I am Marie,” said the lady, who had been watching the varied expressions flitting over her countenance, and understood her thoughts; “and this gentleman, Col. Lavalette, is my husband. Without that plate of soup, dear Susette, I doubt if we should ever have met.”

“O madame, I am so glad!” was all that Susette could say to express her joy. “I heard about your going to the Emperor; it was in everybody’s mouth; and when the order came for madame your mamma’s release, I was so glad that I danced for joy. I was afraid I should never see you again.”

“Madame has often spoken of your kindness, Susette, and she has come to see if you cannot go with us to be our housekeeper in Paris.”

“Yes; that is what brought me here to-day. But I should have come to see you long ago, only we went travelling; then when we got back to Strasburg I was married, and I have a beautiful house in Paris that I don’t in the least know how to take care of, and I thought you’d be willing to come and help me, seeing how good you were to me once before.”

“I will come most gladly, madame, if my father

and mother will consent," replied Susette, joyfully; "but stop—something strikes me! Was it you, madame, who sent—"

"Yes; I know what you mean, Susette, and remembering how proud you were about taking the poor little ring I offered you here on this very spot, I did not send my name with my presents for fear you would send them back to me," said Marie.

"O madame! pardon me, if you please. I am so happy! Will you please walk in, you and Monsieur le Colonel, to see my mother, who often grieves because I have to be in this gloomy place all the time, with only soldiers and prison walls and crazy people around me."

It was not difficult to persuade the parents of Susette to allow her to enter the service of Madame Lavalette, especially since Mother Chorian's mind was made easy about the mysterious bundles that used to come now and then to Susette. In a few days Marie—a happy wife of six months—came in her carriage and took Susette to her elegant home, where she lived faithful and contented, receiving from her grateful employers more the consideration and affectionate treatment of a friend than a domestic.

Col. Lavalette was one of the great Emperor's favorite officers, and when he gave his consent to his marriage with Marie Lajolais, he promoted him to a colonelcy in the French Guards. Josephine never lost sight of her favorites. Madame

Louis, until she went away to be Queen of Holland, interested herself personally in their affairs, declaring that she could not be happy unless her romance ended with a marriage. The wedding was hastened that she might be present at it, and the bride wore a magnificent veil of point-lace that she brought and arranged on her head with her own hands—a costly and elegant bridal gift. After the divorce of Josephine from Napoleon, Lavalette was appointed to the rank of general, and named by the imperial order chief of the household at Malmaison ; for Napoleon, who had so cruelly outraged his own heart, and sacrificed the only being he loved on earth to his ambition, still desired to surround her with his most trusted and faithful servants.

Presentation Convent.

Dunbar  
Library.

## THE STORY OF MANUEL.

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### CHAPTER I.

*What woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends, and neighbors saying: Rejoice with me because I have found the groat which was lost.—St. Luke, xv., 8, 9.*

GRIEF does not count by years, nor can it be measured by time. It seems like a century ago when something befell me which withered my youth in a single hour, as a delicate blossom brought in contact with fire or ice perishes and grows unsightly even to those who were charmed by its loveliness and fragrance. It seems like a century ago, although two decades of years have scarcely slipped by since it all happened, and I should not unveil my dead sorrow now but to explain my intimate associations with Manuel and his family, in the hope that some stricken soul may, like myself, find the consolation of being guided to a knowledge of the true faith, and that some weary, sorrowful, despairing heart may be rescued at the very last, as Manuel was, through a strange and ceaseless love he had for the

Blessed Mother of God—which, through all the sins and wanderings and gloom of his life, shone over his way like a pale, fair star, which never went down below the stormy horizon.

I was just seventeen when I went abroad with my mother and only brother. We were accompanied by Paul Jeniffer, my betrothed lover, the college friend and classmate of my brother. We travelled about leisurely for some months, and finally settled for a little while near a picturesque village on the south coast of France. We were very happy. My mother, on account of whose health we were travelling, was stronger and better than I had seen her for five years. We had no cares. We basked in the genial sunshine, and drank in like a cordial the delicious breezes from the sea. There was nothing wanting to our happiness; we were in accord with the beautiful and picturesque around us, and all who have ever experienced it, know the exquisite transport of being *en rapport* with nature. We were surely *too* happy, we had not a desire beyond our daily life,—in fact we were people who had never given a serious thought to the solemn realities of another life than this; the very idea of death terrified us, and like the ancient Greeks we never said of our departed friends: “He is dead,” but spoke of them as “having lived.” It was a sweet, pagan, sensuous sort of existence we led there among the vines, beside the glorious sea!

One evening my mother and I walked down to the beach, and strolled slowly about on the sands, watching in the distance for the first gleam of the sail of the little skiff in which my brother and Paul Jeniffer had gone out early that bright balmy morning, when all nature was so full of brightness and harmony, that it was a sort of ecstasy to inhale the pure sun-tinted air. It was time for them to be in sight ; and I thought how gayly I'd dance along the edge of the surf, waving my handkerchief to them as they sailed in. I did not notice a dark violet haze on the edge of the horizon. I saw the fishermen hauling their boats higher up on the sands, and standing in little groups together, talking and pointing seaward. But these signs had no significance to me in my ignorance.

There she came at last, careering over the slightly-roughened waves, tacking about to catch the wind, her tiny sails wing and wing, the evening sun gleaming gold upon them ; and I remember laughing as she dipped and courtesied, like a lady in her ball-dress dancing a minuet—now half hidden in the foam, now rising stately and fair upon the crest of a tall wave. I saw one of them, I thought it was Paul sitting upon the taffrail, hauling hard at the ropes ; it was just like him to think of no peril for himself ; and while I watched, full of glee and full of pride in the gallant skiff and her precious argosy, I saw a dark flurry come over the waters like a shudder, then

there was a sudden whistling and screaming sound out of the violet mists along the horizon—there was a scudding of spray, a heavy rolling of waves, and the skiff was capsized before our very eyes.

I ran to the fishermen; I pursued them to their huts, where they were flying for shelter; I threw myself on my knees before them, and offered them large rewards to go out to the assistance of the drowning men. But they dared not, they said, trust their boats out in a white squall; they were not built for it, and would go to pieces in five minutes if they ventured.

I would have gone myself. In my mad terror and grief I would have launched out into the boiling waves without oar or help, but they would not trust their boats out. Mademoiselle would only lose her life,—that would not help; and if their boats were swamped and dashed to pieces against the leeward rocks their children would starve.

“Let mademoiselle wait,” said an old fisherman pityingly. “It never lasts very long; they’ll hold to their boat, and when the squall is over we’ll go out and fetch them. They’re brave, strong lads, and can swim like fish. Never fear for them.”

I was somewhat comforted, and went to my mother, who leaned almost lifeless against the gray rocks, incapable of speech or motion. I

gathered her dear head to my breast, and trying to be brave, gave her hope. \* \* \* \*

The tempest died away, the full moon shone out, the treacherous sea grew calm, and the fishermen launched their boats and rowed out towards the black speck that we could just see beating up and down on the white capped waves. The little skiff that went out so gayly that morning with the sunlight gleaming on her white sails, bearing such a freight of life, hope and love, and guided by two joyous, noble spirits, went sailing out to the jocund sound of laughter and merry songs and gay farewells. What they found was not the fair, swift "Sea Bird," but a sodden thing empty of life. There was nothing lost of spars or rigging; even the gay little silken flags of France and the United States fluttered in the moonshine from her topmast; there was nothing lost of senseless planks, or canvass,—everything was safe—except the two dear lives worth all the treasures of the world to us, which were dashed out so suddenly; they had gone down while we looked on, sunk in sight of land, drowning in their young, healthful manhood, powerless, helpless. That is all we ever knew, all that we shall ever know until the "sea gives up its dead." \* \* \* \*

The shock was too much for my mother. She said her heart was broken, and I believe it was. Her grief was not violent, and she shed no tears but grew more feeble day by day as she lay

propped up by pillows watching the sea where the two perished ; and one night, with the full moon shining upon her wan face and silvering over the quiet smiling sea, she died without sign or sound. I thought she slept, and threw a light shawl over her breast and arms, thankful for the peaceful rest that had at last fallen upon her weary heart, and hoping much from it, for she was my only, my nearest and dearest, my *all* upon earth now. I fell asleep beside her, and was awakened by the shrill song of a bird in the vines over our window ; I started up, the sun was shining brightly, and I wondered if my mother still slept. I turned round very gently, fearing to awaken her. Her head leaned back against the pillows, the broad rosy sunshine lay athwart her white face, making it very radiant, and there was such a *rested* look upon her countenance, a rested look that naught but death can give, and I knew without touching her marble fingers or frozen brow that " life's fitful fever " was over for evermore. \* \* \* \*

I lived like one in a dream. I moved about like an automaton ; I had life and motion, but everything else seemed dead. My hair, since that day on the sands, had grown as white as snow ; my face was colorless. I was old in my eighteenth year ; I was older than the oldest person living. I buried my mother in the Strangers' Cemetery, which lay upon a hillside overlooking the sea. I was careful in selecting her burial-place where the evening sun might shed his last

beams upon it, and cast the shadow of the marble cross, bearing her name and age, upon her resting place. I knew that she would have chosen a spot in sight of the sea; then, not very distant was the Catholic chapel, whose silvery bell floated out on the air morning and evening; and the sound of hymns and litanies, accompanied by the soft, swelling music of the organ, stole through the open windows and passed like the benediction of an angel above the quiet dead. It seemed not so lonely near those sacred sounds, and I felt as if something holy had her dust in its keeping when I came away. I gathered up the sad relics of my lost life, and without an object beyond a restless impulse, started homewards, only remembering that I had no home. People were very kind to me in my journeys and voyages; everyone who came near me and spoke to me did so with a softened voice and manner. I have seen women look at me and weep; I was quick to see all this, but *I* could not weep; they would have offered their sympathies and talked over my sad story with me—for somehow every one seemed to know it—but my grief was in the centre of my being, no exterior influences could reach it, nor could I drag it into the daylight. Like a savage beast or wounded bird which flies to the solitudes of the desert to hide its wounds, it had become the sole living instinct of my being to be alone with my sorrows, to veil them as something too sacred to be spoken of.

I arrived at Baltimore in the afternoon. A clean report from the health officer released us speedily from quarantine, and as our ship had made an unusually quick voyage, arriving two or three days in advance of her usual time, there was no one to meet me, at which I was not sorry, for I had a great dread of meeting friends and relatives who would, by right, talk over the past with me, and to whom I should be obliged to talk in return. I was sick of the ship, and its motion and smells. I had an irresistible desire to feel the solid earth under my feet again; and ordering my trunks to be sent to the house of the relatives who expected me, I determined to walk from the dock. It was like a new sensation to me, having a desire to do anything; and walking briskly with the fresh land breeze gently fanning my dead face, I felt something like life stirring in my veins, but not my heart—*that* was locked in leaden heaviness; it beat, but no motion ever stirred its pulses to quicker action. I soon found myself in the upper portion of the city, I scarcely knew where, there were so many changes,—new streets, new buildings, an increase of wealth and splendor; all around me there were marvels of architecture, very grand no doubt, but to an eye which had been cultivated somewhat by the architecture of Europe, these piles looked huge, grotesque and vulgar. Everything looked dreadfully new until my eye rested on the gray parsonage of St. Paul's, half hidden by its century-

old catalpa trees. It looked like the familiar face of a friend, and had I obeyed my impulse I should have gone up the stone steps and sat down under one of the old trees to rest ; but it was growing late ; besides, no one knew me there, and if any one saw me—a white-haired stranger—making so free, they might think me crazy, or at least a trespasser where I had no right ; then I walked on. A red glow from the setting sun burnished everything around me—the gilded crosses upon the steeples, the windows of happy homes, the marble monuments, the red shot-towers, and golden vanes upon the distant roofs ; there was a hum of busy life everywhere ; the sound of quick feet hurrying homewards, and beautiful faces and forms full of life and happiness flitted past me. Oh my God ! how desolate I felt ! All that I loved sleeping far off beneath the waves and vines of France ! What brought me back ? Why did I not remain there near them ? I seemed to be awakening out of a dull dream, and stopped in the midst of this stream of life to consider *what* it was that brought me away from my dead, when the sudden clangor of a great bell over my head made me start round ! What was it I saw ? I almost shrieked with terror ; my overstrung nerves yielded for the moment to the impression that the awful sight was real. I was close beside the open door of the church of the Redemptorists, and in the darkened vestibule, suffused with the blood-red glow of the

setting sun was a life-sized image of the CRUCIFIED, extended upon the cross. The thorn-crowned head seemed bowed towards me; the extended nail-pierced hands invited me; the wounded feet besought me! Oh God! here was a sorrow, an anguish, an abandonment far exceeding mine, all borne for me, the guilty! I was overcome; my soul cast off her fetters and with a strange rush of tears I swiftly entered the door and threw myself at the foot of the cross. Twilight had stolen in; the stone flags on which I knelt were cold and hard, but I did not feel them; I was not aware of the deepening shadows; I had found a refuge at last, a sanctuary, a rest, and had no desire to move; but some one touched me on the shoulder, saying with slightly foreign accent: "My child! it is time you should go. The church door must be closed."

"Let me stay, sir," I pleaded; "I will not hurt anything."

"Impossible," said the priest gently; "go, my poor child, and return to-morrow. These doors are ever open from dawn until night."

"Oh, sir, do not send me away. I shall die if you do. Oh it is such a comfort to be near Him; and do you know I have not had a grain of comfort for two years—two long years. I have been *dead*."

"Are you a Catholic, my poor child?" he asked pityingly.

"No. I am nothing. I know nothing of

creeds. I care nothing. My griefs have made me an outcast from my kind ; I feel only a numb despair ; I tell you I was dead until just now I saw through the open door this broad pitying Humanity inviting to the refuge which His sufferings won for me. Let me stay."

Then the good priest fell to talking with me ; and, strange to say, with my arms embracing the wounded feet of JESUS, he won all my sad story from me. I had never breathed it before ; I had never referred to it in speaking or writing ; I left the sad task to others when it was necessary to answer the inquiries of absent friends, but now I told this strange man, upon whose face I had never looked before, all the woful history without reserve, and it was like letting the sunlight and air into a long-closed, haunted room ; the heavy weight fell from off my heart, and I wept until the sacred feet against which I leaned were wetted with my tears. Then I saw that it was growing dark ; and when the good Father told me I might come again on the morrow, I went away.

This was the beginning of my Catholic life. It was truly a resurrection to a new life ; for up to that time, I repeat, I was morally dead.

To my great astonishment I discovered that my relatives Mr. and Mrs. H—— had both become converts to the Catholic Church. They received me warmly, took me lovingly into their pleasant home and made much of me ; the little ones called me " Aunt," and it was a happiness to have

them constantly about me, especially Manuel, the eldest child, just six years old. He was the holiest child I ever knew, and there was a rare, noble beauty in his face, unlike the tender prettiness of a child, yet so full of innocence and seriousness, that it touched one as with sacred memories to sit and watch his countenance when in repose; or when he was listening to the story of the childhood of Jesus. \* \* \*

I daily visited the church of the Redemptorists, and at last found courage to seek an interview with Father R——, who in time literally and figuratively led me from the vestibule and sculptured image of Jesus into the fold of faith, through baptism and confession into the real presence of the Lord, and the communion of His precious body and blood. My dead self had buried my dead, and I lived as new and strange a life, in contrast with my old life, as is the life beyond the grave to those who are led through much tribulation into the calm abodes of eternal rest.

Pardon my egotism. I had it in mind to describe certain scenes in another life than mine, to illustrate how faithfully the sweet Mother of Jesus stands by her children and rescues them when all help and hope seem lost; but I could not relate the circumstances without telling how it was that I came to be so intimately associated with them; then I thought perhaps that some sorrow-stricken, despairing soul might be led by my experience to seek, voluntarily, the solace

which by an accident—it might be better to say providence—I discovered, and which led me into the one true fold.

# *Presentation Concert*

*Bungarwan*

## CHAPTER II.

### SCENES AND TRAITS.

A FAIR September afternoon! How well I remember the scene! The rich autumnal flowers bordering the walks; the long, arched trellises covered with vines, which were loaded with great clusters of purple and wine-colored grapes; the golden light flashing upon the glass of the conservatory, from the open doors of which stole faint, delicious odors! How quiet everything was! Not a sound except the droning of dowager bees around the Chinese honeysuckle, gossiping over the latest news from their hives; and the hum of countless flies luxuriating on the fragrance and the sweet nectar of the grapes.

Under the shade of an apricot tree, a picture of rest and enjoyment, sat a plump, comely negro woman sewing, her ebon face wearing that unmistakable expression of pride and self-esteem common to the petted slaves of her class. A turban of scarlet and yellow plaid—a real Madras—was arranged tastefully on her head, leaving a glossy tuft of crinkled wool puffed carefully over each eyebrow; another of blue and pink was folded around her neck, crossed in front and left open

just enough to show a string of large gold-colored beads flashing upon her dark bosom; a flowered chintz dress and a white muslin apron bordered with red, completed her attire; and surely the Queen of Sheba never felt a more profound content in the gorgeous splendors of her royal robes, than did this old servant of the house in the rich colors and sweet cleanliness of her dress. It was her hour of rest, when, as surely as her tasks were over, if it did not rain, she sallied out with her sewing or knitting to her seat under the apricot tree. It would have disturbed the whole household not to see her there at the usual hour, for they knew that nothing but wet weather ever kept her away unless she might happen to be sick, and as she never had been sick in the memory of any of the family, an excited committee of the whole would have gone forthwith to see what was the matter.

Now and then she dropped her work upon her lap and cast a satisfied glance into the open door of her kitchen, evidently proud of its neatness and delighted with the glitter of her long rows of tin and copper utensils, scoured and burnished until they looked like silver and gold.

Then a great whirring overhead made her look up. The pigeons were coming home with a loud *frou-frou* of wings; the "pouters," the "fantails," the "topknots," and the less aristocratic farm pigeons, with nothing to distinguish them except their dovelike forms and the ever-shifting prismatic

lights and shades of their plumage. She looked up sideways, chuckled, shook her head, and said as she watched them pushing, crowding, and fluttering into their cotes: "Outlandish and good-for-nuthin' 'cept to eat your heads off; I'd fix you if I had my say with you. Sich pot-pies and frigasees as I could make out of you if Marster wa'nt so soft-hearted!" Then something else caught her eye—something that she ever loved to look upon—her young mistress, who threw her a nod and a smile as she flitted down the garden walk, gathering white and crimson chrysanthemums and geranium leaves. Having gathered enough, she hastened back to the dining-room, whose windows and doors opened into the garden, and began to decorate a basket of grapes in the centre of the tea-table with the rich blooms and velvety leaves. It was a pretty picture, as she stood in her simple white robes, which floated in full diaphanous folds, slightly bending over her task, placing here a white flower beside the red grapes, there a deep crimson one against a purple cluster, with geranium leaves plentifully interspersed between, until all were arranged with true artistic harmony. The clear golden lights of the waning day shone about her, flickering through the vine leaves, lighting her thoughtful face and warming the whiteness of her delicate features with such a spiritual glow that one to have seen her then would have supposed that the first life-storm that

surged around her would sweep her away like a fallen leaf, so fragile and fair was she. She was well satisfied with the effect produced by the fruit and flowers, and was thinking of the pleasure of her husband, who dearly loved all these refinements of taste, and had so great a passion for flowers that he liked to see them everywhere, especially on the table, that he might feast his eyes upon their beauty while he ate. He would come in to tea, and say, "How beautiful!" Then he would daintily touch the fragrant things; then he would lean over and inhale their sweetness, then turn and fold his arm about her and kiss her. She knew exactly how it would all happen,—it had happened so often before;—and she smiled as she turned away to go into the drawing-room to wait for him, when she heard a quick little footstep, then a voice saying "Come in; my mamma is somewhere here. I'll find her." Then she saw her boy Manuel leading by the hand a strange, foreign-looking person, up the garden-walk, under the vines, towards the house. It was all in keeping with the rest of the picture, the beautiful, noble boy of six summers, in his dark, picturesque dress and white plaited frills; the man, whose hand he held, in velvet-reen jacket, blue and white striped trousers ending at the knee, and peaked hat, the Neapolitan peasant's dress!

"There she is! Here, mamma!" cried the boy, throwing himself down, all heated and tired,

upon the door-mat, and flinging off his cap, while the strange man stood looking at the lady, who wondered where Manuel had picked him up, and who he was and what he wanted, while she scanned the singular beauty of his face. He said a few words in Italian, which she could not understand; his air was humble and gentle, and the red blood flowed softly through the clear olive of his cheeks. She could not help observing the remarkable beauty of his large dark-blue eyes; his straight, chiseled nose, his flowing brown hair and beard. "His face," she thought, "is exactly like an old picture of our Lord that I once saw; and no doubt the painters of Italy have lost one of their best models."

"Manuel, where did you meet this man?" she asked.

"Found him, mamma," said the boy, looking up lovingly into her face; "he's hungry, I reckon."

"Perhaps he is, my child. Take a chair into the garden and let him rest himself, then come to me,—I will give you some supper for him." Manuel did as he was ordered, and led his guest away with a triumphant air, then ran back into the dining-room. Mrs. H—— placed a bountiful supply of bread and butter, some bunches of grapes and a mug of milk on a small tray, and gave it to the child, which he, walking slowly for fear of upsetting something, carried to the man, who sat looking around him at the beautiful

flowers, the rare plants and loaded vines all tinted by the rich red and golden lights of the setting sun, with a sad far-away expression upon his countenance which made Mrs. H—— imagine that his thoughts were not there but in his own fair land. He smiled and laid his hand caressingly on the child's head, as he took the tray and placed it upon his knees. Manuel, with instinctive delicacy, turned away that he might not watch him while he ate; then he pitched a few pebbles at the pigeons, and finally ran, and threw his arms around the neck of the negro woman under the apricot tree, who had been watching him, nodding her head towards him and shaking her fist at him ever since she saw him come in with the stranger.

“You think, chile, Missus got nuthin' to do but to feed tramps! Dey knows you, honey; and dey's always puttin' deirself right into your way. I 'clare!—if you and your beggars don't keep de house stripped!” All this was said in an indignant undertone, while the boy clung about her.

“I don't at all, Nannie! anyhow, mamma don't say so,—and you're just horrid. *I hear you shooing* them out sometimes, just like chickens—when they only come to ask just for a little piece of bread; and it's a shame. Mamma says we must always be kind to beggars, if we *can't* give them anything. There now!”

“You g'long, Mannel. I aint gwine to have all de ragged trash in town comin' round me. I

got other fish to fry, honey; sides dat, dey steal; you know dey do, Mannel! Didn't dat woman you fotch in de udder day—for all she made 'tence she couldn't talk, and stood prayin' over me 'till I gin her a silver quarter. Didn't she steal my best head-hankercher and my new stockings, right under my nose? G'long, chile!—can't fool me no more. I 'spect dat fellow dar'll walk off wid Missus' silver spoon ef you don't watch him."

"Nannie, you are just a horrid old thing, and you won't go to heaven because you don't love the poor," exclaimed the boy, with indignant tears in his handsome black eyes.

"No, I don't like poor white trash, nohow. A nigger's a nigger—but *them!*—eugh! G'long, chile, and watch dat ar spoon," said Nannie, with a supreme air.

The stranger, happily unconscious of these remarks, had finished his meal, so like the repasts offered to wayfarers during the Golden Age, so like many he had enjoyed under his own sunlit vines in Italy. Mrs. H——, who had an artist's eye, stood at the window enjoying the whole scene; the now red and golden light, the vines, the fruit, the flowers, the beautiful boy, the picturesque costume of the man,—and the no less picturesque costume of black Nannie under the tree!—and thought of the fair Arcadian scenes painted by classic poets; then, above all, arose a deep thankfulness to Almighty God for having implanted in her child's nature those generous

and humane traits which she was endeavoring earnestly to direct aright. She watched his eager face full of sensibility, and an expression of tender pity and tears filled her eyes, thinking of the world and its rough places over which his sensitive heart must pass, for the boy had one of those finely organized natures which have alike a deep capacity for enjoyment and suffering, one of those ductile minds easily influenced and led astray by the semblance of anything noble or good. She was growing sad over her thoughts when the stranger came towards her and handed her a folded paper. She opened but could not understand it—it was written in Italian; but having some knowledge of Latin, she makes out a word here and there and learns that Tito Gola's little farm was entirely destroyed and burned by the last terrible eruption of Mount Vesuvius,—and full of pity she empties her purse into Tito's open palm, who utters benedictions in delicious Italian and with a humble obeisance turns away, stopping just to kiss Manuel on his head and hands. Then he went out into the streets and was seen no more. Manuel conducted him to the gate, and returning, stood watching the beautiful rose-tinted clouds, and the pigeons whirling round and round in the effulgent light; he was very silent, and his mother saw a strange dreamy look in his large black eyes, which convinced her that his thoughts were beyond what he was gazing at.

“Manuel, my child!” she said gently.

He came and threw himself in her open arms, never so happy as when there; and looking into her eyes with a deep, earnest look, he said:

“Mamma, might not that be Jesus that you fed?”

“To you, my child—to you, yes,” she replied, with full heart, as she pressed him closer to her. “What we do to the poor for the love of Him, we do unto our Lord.”

Some may think these sentiments were too deep to have been understood by so young a child; ordinarily it might be so, but Manuel was unlike other children in many respects. From his earliest infancy he had been the companion of his mother, and surrounded by everything that was beautiful in religion and art. Pictures representing some of the joyful and some of the sorrowful mysteries of the lives of Jesus and Mary; statues, in alabaster and marble, of guardian angels, of the Magdalen, of the “dead Christ”; rare old crucifixes, and one picture of the “Mater Dolorosa,” hung around the walls, and stood upon brackets in the drawing-room, in the oratory and the library. Wherever the child went he saw something of this sort to arrest his attention; then there was no rest until his mother—no one else would do—came and sat down and took him upon her knee and told him all about it from beginning to end. From his earliest infancy he was never so happy or quiet as when in his mother’s arms looking at the pictures of her

prayer-book, or hearing her talk of the white-winged angels who watch over little children. He was thoughtful beyond his years, and had keenly delicate perceptions, with a great and singularly developed love for the beautiful. But more strange was the magnetic sympathy between mother and child. If she was sad or indisposed, he grew dull and silent without knowing why, and he frequently asked questions which by some mysterious affinity were connected with her unspoken thoughts. When he was two years old, a Christmas-tree was made for him. Above it was suspended an angel, and a large star made of spangles. Under it was a beautifully arranged Bethlehem, representing a cave in which the scene of the Nativity was portrayed by groups of carved figures. A lamp was placed outside, which threw a strong light through a piece of gold-colored glass concealed in the folds of the marbled paper that represented the rocky walls, and fell like a glory around the Virgin and Child, illuminating the grotto as if the light emanated from them. The effect was lovely, and made a strong impression upon Manuel, which he never forgot to his dying day. Of course he had hundreds of questions to ask; he talked about it for a year, and nothing could exceed his joy when the following Christmas he saw conspicuous under the lighted tree his Bethlehem. He had heard much of the childhood of Jesus, and His Holy Mother, and had got to think and talk of Him as

of a precious playmate and comrade, and of her as one who would be kind to him because he loved her Son. He never got a new toy, or *bon-bon* or fruit, that he did not immediately become anxious to share his treasures with Him: and often his mother would find a portion of them left on the steps of the oratory. Then she told him, and he began to understand, the true merit of giving alms to the poor, and thenceforward it was his aim to give part of all he had to the beggars who came to the house, or whom he met in the streets when out with his mother or nurse, because he knew that it was giving to the dear Son of Mary.

Mrs. H—— was probably too anxious about the child. His father used to chide her, and tell her to “let the boy grow, that she’d make a molly of him;” but she felt a deep responsibility for the little white souls committed to her care; she tried to guard them from the least speck or stain, and endeavored in every way to direct their thoughts towards holy things. It was not long before Manuel and his little sisters knew from the big Spanish crucifix in the oratory all that our Lord suffered for us, and why; and often, while talking the sorrowful story over there with their mother, tears wetted their cheeks; the crown of thorns, the cruel nails, the spear, were literal facts to these little Catholic children, and they used to say: “If *I* had been there, I would pull them out, and *I* would *div* Him a drink of water and

wipe His face." So that these children, Manuel especially, were full of a tender love for our Lord, and he was always on the look-out to do something for Him. If a lame or blind man or a distressed woman or child met him on the street, he would stop and take them by the hand and send them to "Mamma"; when on the pavement playing about the front door, he would leave everything to lead in a hungry, ragged beggar to be fed or clothed, until it really became quite a tax, at which however nobody grumbled except Nannie.

It would only be necessary to remind Manuel of the obedience of our Lord to His holy Mother for him to give up his own will immediately; and when sick and impatient he rebelled against taking the prescribed remedies, he would grow quiet and gentle as soon as his mother, whispering, bade him remember the bitter sufferings of Jesus; then, suddenly patient and docile, he would swallow the nauseous dose without another word.

She used to hope that he would grow up like St. Aloysius Gonzaga; certainly she spared neither care or prayers—poor mother—to this end; but she forgot that a time must come when the spell of these holy influences would be broken by the boy's own knowledge of good and evil, when the latent evil in his nature would spring into life and begin the warfare in the soul which ends only with life. She saw no signs of this yet, he was so guarded round about by her watchful

care ; the sanctuary of his soul was kept so pure by her ceaseless vigilance that because no bad passions had developed themselves she fondly thought there could be no germs of evil in his lovely nature.

But her labor of love did not go for nothing.

## CHAPTER III.

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### NOT THY WILL, BUT MINE.

ANOTHER fair September evening ; nothing appeared changed. The pigeons still crooned and whirled in short fantastic flights over the garden, the sun tinting their snowy wings with red, or burnishing with purple and gold their swelling throats. There were the rich autumnal flowers throwing out their spicy odors on the evening air ; there were the purple clusters of luscious grapes hanging heavily upon the vines ; and pervading all was the indescribable fragrance from the rare tropical plants in the conservatory. But everything was strangely silent ! Except the pigeons, there was no sound or sign of life in the beautiful garden. It was a silence that boded something—the sort of silence that has stolen sometime or other, like a noiseless ghost, into every one's life. Presently a beggar child came to the gate and knocked timidly, and Nannie emerged from some deep recess in the kitchen, and came forward, treading very softly on the gravel, to see who sought admittance. When she caught sight of the poor forlorn little figure through the open

ironwork of the gate, she stopped and scowled angrily at it—and resting a hand upon each hip, with her elbows at sharp angles, she said in a gruff undertone:

“G’long you! It’s all ’long of such dat Mannel is dyin’. Somethin’ or other he’s cotch from you poor white trash. G’long I say!”

“Please, ’m gimme a piece of bread,” whimpered the child.

Nannie stood irresolute a few seconds; all of her arrogant negro instincts against the poorer class of whites were rampant within her; nothing would have pleased her better than to have shaken the child until her rags dropped from her—and tossing her head, she said:

“You wait dar! I’ll fotch you a hunk of bread; but its ’caze I knows what Mannel ’d do. *He* wouldn’t drive you off empty, nuther will I.” So saying she trudged into the kitchen and began to cut a thick slice of bread from a large fresh loaf; but before she got the knife half through, memories of the little boy who lay dying—as they all thought—upstairs were too much for her, and she burst into a fit of weeping and sat down, still holding on to the bread and knife, while the great tears rolling over her black cheeks fell on the half-cut slice. Sobbing and crying, and rocking herself to and fro as is the custom of her race in great grief, she forgot the persistent beggar, until a loud knocking roused her; then she wiped her eyes, put on her angriest look, cut off

the "hunk" of bread, much wetted with her tears, and thrust it through the iron bars of the gate into the child's wallet; then she went back, walking slowly, stopped at the kitchen door and looked abroad at the brightness around her, shook her head, went in, and throwing her apron over her head sat down and again wept bitterly.

It was so. Manuel was dying. The afternoon of the day before, his mother lay down to rest herself. She had been preserving; and, not being very strong, was so overcome with fatigue that she was obliged to leave her quince jelly in Nannie's care and go up to her room to lie down. She had not seen much of Manuel that day. He had flitted around her now and then, and flung his arms about her neck two or three times and kissed her; but she was afraid that in his restless skipping about whenever he came near her, he might trip and fall into the boiling syrup, and she had sent him away over and over again. So with his wooden horse and gun he played from one end of the garden to the other, much of the time under the long grape arbor. Soon after his mother went up to her room he followed her, and crept up on the bed where she lay, and nestling beside her very gently he drew one of her hands up to his cheek and fell asleep. When she awoke, late in the evening, he was still in a deep sleep, breathing heavily, and she saw that he was very white. She called him, then tried to rouse him—and now, greatly alarmed, she even lifted

him up—but he fell against her, motionless and in a deep stupor. Terrified almost to death, she alarmed the family and sent for Dr. B——, who came without delay. All stood around the bed in speechless anxiety while he felt the boy's pulse, and examined his eyes by lifting the lids and flashing the light of a candle in them, asking quiet questions all the time.

“Congestion of the brain,” he whispered to Mr. H——, as he turned from the bedside and sat down to write a prescription and directions.

“Is there hope, doctor?” asked Mr. H——.

“I fear not. But while there's life, you know, we must hope and do our best.”

“My God!” was all that Mr. H——, in a low voice, could utter; it was so sudden and terrible.

To the mother the doctor was more merciful. He told her—for she would know—that the child had congestion of the brain—but it was not always fatal; she must hope for the best—he really thought they could pull him through. All said cheerily, for the doctor knew how every fibre of that young mother's heart was knit in the life of her first-born—and, not entirely despairing of his safety, he thought it best to give her hope.

He lay upon the white pillow like a marble image—not a movement or sign to indicate life except the heavy breathing and the motion of his thin, dilated nostrils. Like a silent tide the sorrowful silence of that darkened room flowed out

into every part of the house, which only a few short hours ago resounded with the glee of children's voices, kindly words, and happy laughter.

A long night of anxious vigils passed, but brought no change. The boy's long silken eyelashes lay like a dark shadow upon the white cheeks, and his beautiful finely-cut features looked even more like chiselled marble. No change. Another night and day of ceaseless attention and watchfulness, of care and tender suggestions, of tears and prayers, and the mother's overstrained heart was almost broken.

"I cannot be comforted, my Father," she said to her confessor, "It is no use—I cannot be comforted. I cannot be resigned. I *cannot* give up my child."

"But, my dear child, suppose it should be the will of Almighty God to take him from the evils to come, is it not better to submit like an obedient child than to have to bear it like a scourged slave? Make a generous act of contrition now. Say: 'My God! Thou hast given; if it is Thy will to take him, blessed be Thy name: though Thou slay me, yet will I trust Thee!'"

"I can't do it, Father; oh, I can't—I can't!" she cried, throwing herself down beside the child's couch and pressing her cheek upon the motionless little feet, which she embraced. "Oh, Father Regis!—think!—he is my first-born; so docile and so holy! what shall I do, oh, what shall I do?" Then she wept bitterly.

“Yes, my child, you may well say holy,” replied the good old priest, now mingling his tears with hers.

Manuel had always been a great pet with Father Regis, who had baptized him and watched with unusual interest the development of the boy's noble and generous nature.

“I never saw,” he continued, “such obedience, docility and sweetness in my whole life. And yet he was sprightly, merry, and enjoyed play. I have sometimes tested him when he came to see me, by offering him fruit or *bon-bons*, which he always refused, though longing for them, saying: ‘I must ask mamma first.’ It was only this morning, my dear child, after the four o'clock Mass, that I learned of my poor little Manuel's illness and danger. My heart was deeply touched, and my memory grew so full of his lovely traits that I spoke of him in my class of theology as an example, a perfect model of obedience, innocence, simple faith and docility, good to imitate. Oh, my child! think of what a pure blossom you have reared for the garden of God!”

“Oh, no, no!—I cannot, cannot give him up!” was still the mother's sad refrain.

“Your little girls—think of them!” said the venerable white-haired priest, holding her cold hands and smoothing them with a very great pity and sorrow.

“Yes—I know; I do; but *this*, this is my boy, my first-born. *Why should* God take him from

me? Oh, Father!" she whispered, with her white face lifted to his, "if he dies it will be *cruel*, cruel!"

Father Regis could say nothing to comfort her; she was simply wild with grief, and unreasonable; she mourned for her stricken child as might a wild beast of the jungle over its young pierced by the fatal shaft of the hunter; she was insensible to all except the pangs of nature, which almost rent her heart. Father Regis saw all this and wisely forbore further counsels; he knew how this earth-storm would expend itself, and how, helpless and humbled and longing for heavenly consolations, the poor wearied heart would seek them where alone they were to be found; so going to the *bénitier*, he dipped his fingers into the holy-water and sprinkled the sacred drops and his benediction together over the dying child and stricken mother, and stooping over he kissed the boy's fair forehead, signing it with the sign of the cross, then went back to his Seminary to go into his private chapel, and in the presence of Him who dwelleth in the Tabernacle, pray for the afflicted mother and family.

There was a change in the child that night. It became apparent about ten o'clock, and the doctor said it was death! Then a deep, white, bitter stillness settled upon the sorrowful mother. She grew so calm that it was like an unutterable despair.

"Do not speak to me," she said to her hus-

band, who sought to comfort her. "I wish to be perfectly quiet," she said to her mother as she slipped from their embraces. "Leave me alone with him a little while. I will not stay long."

They all left the room, and she knelt down beside the child and gazed upon his silent face as if the feverish glow that burned in her eyes could warm him back to life. Then she gathered up his fair alabaster hands in her burning clasp; they were deathly cold, and with a smothered groan she leaned over and kissed his half-parted lips; they were like ice, his very breath was cold.

"Yes," she said slowly, "he is dying, and I—his mother—can neither help or go with him. Oh, God! oh, God!—how cruel! Would that I might die for him!"

I went into the room to prepare the medicine ordered by the doctor. They had told me not to go in—that she wished to be alone; but the doctor had ordered the nauseous dose to be administered at a certain time; it was, he said, our last hope; and I knew there was no time to spare. Almighty God might bless the means to our little boy's recovery, and I determined to do my part and give it to him as ordered. His mother saw me, and as I approached the bed with the table-spoon containing the medicine in my hand, she said:

"Don't give him that. See how useless it will be to torture him now. It will soon be over."

"While there's life we must do what we can,

Don't hinder me, Miriam ; it may save him," I replied.

" Good-by, my little boy ; good-by," said Mrs. H——, calmly kissing the ice-cold lips again. " I did not think we should be so soon parted."

Then she went away into another room and lay down, feeling, as she afterwards told me, as if her heart were frozen.

They went in and out to her during the night, reporting no change but to comfort her by the news that Manuel still lived. She was outwardly very calm, but her soul agonized with God for her child's life. *For his life.* Do not forget this. Her wild prayers had no reference to the will of God ; she offered no price or conditions, offered no sacrifice for the boon she sought. She simply and passionately asked that his life might be spared. Ah, with what bitter agony she was forced to remember this in after years !

" Do with *me* as Thou wilt, O awful and mighty God, but spare my child ! You created, You can restore him from the very jaws of death ; You can raise him even from the dead. Hear me, and answer me, for Thy Son's sake."

The chill and darkness that precedes day-dawn was over the earth. Not a sound disturbed the stillness of the hour, except the watchman's \* cry announcing " Four o'clock and a star-light morn-

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\* The hours of the night and the state of the weather were cried by watchmen at this period. Some forty years ago.

ing!" There was nothing to do in the child's room but to watch and wait until his little life, like the morning star, faded into a "brighter dawn than ours;" and they sat quietly around until the supreme moment arrived. Mr. H—— was in the next room, sitting near his wife, his head leaning upon his hand, full of a stern grief which he was doing his best to bear with resignation.

"Mamma!" suddenly rang out the voice of Manuel; "Mamma! where are you?"

Mrs. H—— sprang up, but her husband retained her.

"Do not go," he cried. "It is only the last flash-up of life. Spare yourself, Miriam; it will soon be over!"

But the child called his mother again, in clearer, stronger tones, and in another instant she was beside him, whispering:

"Manuel, my precious one, do you know me? Oh, my child, do you know me?"

He looked wonderingly at her out of his great black eyes, as if to ask *why* he should not know her, and said,

"You are mamma!"

"Kiss me," she said, almost wild with hope and dread. She put her lips to his, and he kissed her. His lips and breath were warm.

"Oh, my child, what do you want?" she asked, as he looked wistfully around.

"I want my tea, mamma! I'm hungry. I

didn't have my supper last night, you know," he answered.

Not for three nights, she knew. The rest of us thought still that death was approaching; they had seen this sudden awakening and flickering, then the dying out of life's flame before. But *she*,—she knew that it was life, and not death; she felt that her wild prayers had been answered, and that her child was given back to her.

The doctor thanked me for my perseverance in obeying his directions, and said the medicine had undoubtedly saved the boy's life; but I don't know. *She* always thought it was her prayers; and as the years rolled on, and I began to see how Almighty God answers prayers made without reference to His holy will, I believed with her.

Manuel's recovery was slow. His delicately organized nervous system had received a severe shock, and during the six or seven weeks of his convalescence his mother never left his sight. She would allow no one else to enter the room or come near him; he could not even bear to hear another voice than hers; and such was the irritability of his nerves that he had to be indulged. On the toy-strewed floor with him, building up miniature houses and towers—holding him in her arms, singing the sweet little songs he loved—lying beside him on the bed when he was tired—she never left him; and when it was safe, during the delicious Indian Summer, to take him into

the garden, she carried him, although his actual weight and his wraps together made her burthen almost too heavy for her. She clung to him as he clung to her; she watched him as if she feared that what she had so nearly lost might be snatched from her again at any moment. One day, Nannie—not daring to do otherwise in his presence—received a beggar boy with a subdued and resigned air which actually wore the semblance of kindness; and thinking to please Manuel, she called the boy “honey,” when she gave him a hot ginger-cake and a slice of bread and butter. It did please him, and he left his mother’s arms to go with her to see the pigeons.

*Presentation Concert,*

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*Bumpass,*

## CHAPTER IV.

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“—Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.”

—*Longfellow.*

I LOVE to remember Manuel's noble traits, especially his tender pity for the destitute and suffering, and his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which had deep root in his heart and constantly budded forth in a thousand simple and touching ways. This sentiment was not an artificial formula with the child, but a something which had grown to be an integral part of his being, which kept the thought of his Blessed Mother ever present; in his sports, in his quiet little reveries, in his gusts of passion, in his intercourse with his playfellows—sleeping or waking, a sense of whether she were pleased or displeased was never absent.

Every surrounding of his young life tended to foster his pious disposition, and, as I have said, so carefully was he guarded from all contaminating influences that the dormant evils inherent in his nature were undeveloped and scarcely suspected. Father Regis would sometimes, with a grave and

anxious look, say : “ Be careful of the boy. He is a child of many graces ; but I see in his sensitive, excitable temperàment a great capacity for good or evil. Ask the assistance of Jesus and Mary, guard and direct him to the best of your ability, and leave the rest to Divine Providence. I am his godfather, and as long as I live shall never cease to remember him in the Holy Sacrifice and pray for his eternal safety.”

I wondered *then* how Father Regis, who loved the child as Heli loved Samuel, could speak of Manuel with even the shadow of a doubt for his future ; for it seemed impossible that anything should ever have the power to tarnish the unsullied fairness of his soul.

A great trial befell us all about this time. Father Regis, who had spent the best years of his life in the Community of which he was the Superior,—who was looked up to by all sects and classes in the city with respect and veneration— who was regarded by his penitents and friends as one nearer than all others, consoler, adviser, and safe guide in spiritual things,—was ordered by his Superiors to return to France. It was a great blow to the H—— family, whom he had instructed and received into the Church ; whose children he had baptized, and into whose heads the idea of losing him had never entered ; but it was inevitable,—he went, followed by the tears and regrets of a whole city ; and, in one sense, his place was never supplied to them.

Then a day came, all too soon for one so young and so sensitively organized, when Manuel was withdrawn in a manner from the tender and vigilant care of his mother, who had now two other children who claimed her tenderness and attention. It was doubtless done for the best. It was thought that the boy was too effeminate and shy, and growing unfit for the work-day world into whose rough battles he must inevitably enter if he lived, and it was deemed wiser to place him where these propensities would be counteracted by new and more vigorous influences which would gradually wear the fine edge from his shrinking, sensitive temperament. It was done; and his keenly sensitive perceptions and mobile temperament were subjected to an ordeal whose evil influences marred his entire life. A training in every way antagonistic to his nature and its idiosyncrasies, exposure to temptation and stern discipline, although they did not radically change the essential good traits of his lovely character, warped and misdirected them, and gradually gave him that which of all things in the world is most to be dreaded, a false conscience, which, leaving all other ill results out of the question, made him distrust himself, and lessened in a great degree his power of discriminating between good and evil principles, and, as a natural result, weakened his spirit of responsibility. All this was not the work of a day, or even of a year, but the gradual growth of days and years. And the years rolled

on, bringing their mixture of bitter and sweet, their tears, their crosses. Who can escape them? They may not come to-day, but who can answer for the morrow? that future as little known to us as is the unseen world. We may have sunshine overhead and flowers beneath our feet to-day, and the vista before us may be crowned with dazzling brightness, but we are marching all the same towards the black shadows, the crucifixions and the thorns which inevitably await us. And how then? Let us think—how then? Whose “rod and staff shall comfort us”? Shall we have strength to fly for refuge where alone it may be found? Perhaps we have wandered too far astray for safety, and will go down with our wrecks to perish without succor or hope! \* \* \* \*

The H—— family, who had all along been so prosperous, now experienced sudden and great misfortunes which seemed to sweep the world from under their feet. There was nothing left of their affluence—all was lost; there was nothing for them to rest upon or cling to, save the heavy cross of their adversity, which, however unendurable at first, they learned through the lessons of their holy faith and by the strength imparted by the divine sacraments, to bear at last with patient submission to the will of God. There were many anxious and embittering cares: there were struggles, difficulties, humiliations, and the needs of poverty,—all so new, and hard to be borne,—which became part and parcel of their daily life.

Under this cloud of adversity Manuel grew up towards manhood, grew up filled with noble but crude and impracticable ideas of good, which caused him to fall an easy prey to many of the fallacies of the times. Anything wearing the guise of benevolence or liberality, or professing a humane purpose, touched the key-note of his being, and led him to overlook underlying principles, which, more frequently than not, were opposed to his faith ; but, won by their ostensible intention, he had the temerity to believe he could work in what seemed to him a good cause, without compromising the integrity of his faith. For some time the sacraments were his safeguard and he measured things by the standard of what his faith taught, religiously and morally ; but alas ! the insidious poison little by little entered his soul, and we discovered in time, from his conversations, that our boy was being led astray by false principles embodied in certain political questions, which seemed to appeal fairly to the American mind, but which in fact were aimed with deadly purpose against the Catholic religion. Manuel adopted their theories, which inoculated him with a spirit of revolt so insidious and dangerous against the supreme authority of the Head of the Church, that at last he did not hesitate to cavil at and finally deny it. Besides these spiritual perils, there were others no less grave. Manuel had the genius without the resolution of a social reformer. He would have liked to break

down all established social rules and distinctions, and made honesty, worth and excellence the only true criterions of superiority. This was a noble but impracticable idea, which can only exist in Utopian theories, but he could not see the fallacy of it, and our discussions on the subject generally ended in senseless heat, he declaring that we—his mother and I—were “aristocrats, and unfit to be American citizens,” and I telling him that he was nothing better than a “Jacobin”—neither of us convinced, and both angered. And so he went on, poor boy! until, unconscious of his own weakness, he was often dragged into the mire by the very ones he essayed most to help and elevate. His falls at first shocked and fairly terrified him, but then the thought would come: “One or two failures should not dishearten me. I must take better care of myself, though. Men ought to enjoy life without making beasts of themselves, and so these fools ought to know; but, poor fellows! I’ll not give them up for a few slips; only I’ll take care they don’t trip me up again.” And thus in pursuance of his crude, impracticable ideas Manuel was led into associations morally bad, which separated him farther and farther from his family and friends—although his love for them, and their love and interest in him, never ceased. He clung to his mother with the love of old; he never shook off entirely her influence, and yielded much to her that he would concede to no other, and patiently listened to whatever she

might say in opposition to his favorite theories ; and she did not spare them—you may believe that. He was now a bearded man, and, like most American youth, he asserted his manhood by a libertinism of sentiment which he mistook for manly independence ; and at length—alas !—he dropped one after another the practices of his faith ; and, falling into the spirit of modern progress, railed openly against the Pope and what was styled the illiberality of the Church. But he was frank in his errors, because he was blind to their dangers ; he thought they meant progress, and the consequent elevation of mankind, and confided every new discovery and change of sentiment to his mother, who though grieved beyond expression, sometimes almost shocked into utter silence, patiently and ceaselessly argued with him, but apparently without result, for he was drifting along with a resistless current which it was impossible to stay or turn,—and she could do nothing but tell him the truth without compromise, and protest against his course with all the force and eloquence of her nature. There were many prayers and Masses offered for Manuel's conversion ; there were many friends of the clergy who would have counselled and pleaded with him but he avoided them whenever he could do so without being offensively rude, so that humanly speaking nothing could be done to check his dangerous career. Farther and farther he strayed from the safe fold, staining his soul with sin, and plunging into new

errors until at length every vestige of his Christian character disappeared, and he held on to no fragment of his faith except a remarkable devotion to the Blessed Virgin ; and of his virtues he still retained a tender and infinite compassion for the destitute and suffering. I say *infinite*, without misapplying the term—because it is a divine quality, the exercise of which in Manuel's case was restricted only by his limited means. He always wore a medal of our Blessed Lady, and whenever by accident he lost it he would come to his mother for another one. I have often heard him say to her: "Don't be uneasy about me, mother. I never run into any danger without saying a 'Hail Mary.'"

"And yet, Manuel, you abandon your faith!"

"Not quite. I don't like some things. I don't like the Pope and his temporalities, for instance ; but I'm a Catholic for all that. You should hear me defending my religion sometimes. I always do that, mother, whatever I may be myself."

"I am glad to hear that ; but to be a Catholic and live like a heathen is a bad thing, my child ; it is the most dangerous experiment a human being can attempt," she answered gravely. Then he would throw his arm about her and kiss her, and hurry away to some meeting or association, or perhaps some wild revel, self-reliant and determined to go so far and no farther.

And now, to add to our trials about him, Man-

uel's health began to decline; he was subject to the most alarming attacks of illness, which for days together held him unconscious, and sometimes racked his frame with terrible convulsions which seriously threatened his life. What could we do at such times, when he was in continual danger of a sudden and unprovided death, but ask the intercession of the Mother of God that he might be spared for repentance and restoration to his faith? What a respite and relief to our aching hearts whenever he showed signs of recovery, and we would straightway begin to hope that before another illness came on he would by some miracle of the grace of God be prepared to meet the peril.

About this time Mr. H—— was offered employment in a neighboring city, to which he removed his family. The change was beneficial to all of us, and something like the old happy days came back to us. Manuel also received an appointment under Government, much to his satisfaction and ours, for we hoped that his new and grave responsibilities would divert him from his erratic way of thinking and living, and gradually give him more true and healthy views of life. And for a while our expectations were fully answered. But having mastered the routine of his official duties, which soon lost the charm of novelty, the old fever broke out again; there were kindred spirits around him, full of the same wild undisciplined ideas, and he formed the acquaintance of

others, congenial in taste, opinions and habits, who won him to their companionship and led him still farther from any lingering desire he might have towards his religion. His mother, over-wearied with sorrowful anxieties about him, began to fail in health ; and as if to crown her trials, Mr. H—— was taken ill, and after suffering a few weeks, died in hope, fortified by the sacraments and prayers of the Church, leaving an example of patience, resignation and holy dying which formed the only consolation of his afflicted family. Manuel felt his father's death keenly, and vowed to supply his place to his mother and sisters, which he set earnestly to work to do. His love for his mother was deep and trusting, and in a manner her influence over him never ceased. He had the most implicit faith in her word, and respect for her principles ; and while he asserted his own independence of thought and action, he always listened with respect to her opinions, and accepted her reproofs with extraordinary patience. She never compromised the truth by the most remote admission that his fallacious opinions might be this or that ; she never qualified the right by an "if" or a "but," but smote his principles in order, as he advanced them, by applying to them the tests of the Catholic faith and history ; but alas ! it seemed so useless *then*, so utterly useless, to contend with him in this way, that heart-broken and weary, she used to say : " It is

a waste of breath to argue with Manuel. I declare, sometimes I think he must be possessed."

But, then, we would take heart again. Little things that we heard from others now and then renewed our hopes. We heard that Manuel, not unfrequently, after office hours, would sit up night after night tenderly aiding some suffering, forlorn creature without friends. Nothing could ever deter him from these divine offices of charity, which seemed so incongruous and anomalous when contrasted with the general tenor of his life. He often went himself to bring a priest to some forlorn, destitute sufferer who had no other messenger; for, as strange as it may seem, he thought it a dreadful thing for one to die without spiritual assistance, and if they did not ask for a clergyman, he not only advised to send for one, but volunteered to go fetch him. Father R——, speaking of Manuel's peculiarities, said one day to Miriam: "Don't be too much cast down about him. There is much that is good and acceptable to Heaven underlying all that makes you so unhappy; Almighty God will take Manuel's good works into account, depend upon that; and in a day when you least expect it, perhaps, your son will become a changed man and a good Catholic. Meanwhile I will remember him daily in the Holy Sacrifice."

Once his mother said to him: "Manuel, I learn that you sit up at night with a poor man who has small-pox. Father R—— told me, and I am

very uneasy about you. Suppose you should take the disease?"

"Suppose I should, mother? is the man to die without help? he has nobody to give him even a drink of water. The brutes he lived with went off, bag and baggage, and left him there. I want some jelly for him, and you can say a 'Hail Mary' for me."

Sometimes we heard of his carrying an armful of wood at night to some freezing family; a bundle of half-worn but comfortable garments that he would make a raid on the family chest for, to other destitute ones; sometimes he would collect money, adding his own last penny, to pay the rent for a poor family, who were threatened by a cruel landlord with being turned out homeless in the bitter, inclement weather, unless it was settled to the last farthing. I have known him to beg supplies of all sorts for the relief of the hungry and naked. He was the strangest anomaly I ever knew. He could never, through all of his strange career, resist an appeal for charity. If the needed help was beyond his own limited means, he found among his friends some who were ready and willing to contribute towards so good an object, and he was satisfied.

I don't wish to give the impression that Manuel devoted his entire leisure to good works: they were the episodes of his erratic life, alternating with his reckless and often perilous enjoyments, but somehow they comforted us; we could not

forget who said: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." And we thought of Aglae and Boniface, who through many years of sin and disregard of their Christian duties, gave alms constantly and always treated the destitute and woe-stricken with great humanity and tender charity, and were in the end rewarded beyond all price by a true conversion and holy death.

Manuel's health continued to give us alarm. There were symptoms of heart disease, which augmented beyond expression his poor mother's anxieties: the fear of his dying suddenly and without preparation haunted her day and night; in vain she pleaded with and counselled him to be careful, but he seemed reckless of life, unconcerned about the future, and intent only on the excitements of the present, and so he drifted farther and farther down the current, away from every sacred association and divine hope. His way of life was a continual grief and trial to us; he grew extravagantly profane, and finally excommunicated himself from the Church by joining the Masonic order. He told us what he had done, and the grief of his mother can be more easily imagined than described; but one had to forbear. It would have been an evil thing to have snapped the tie that bound him to us by too harsh and stern a course, for there were lower deeps still into which he might fall; drunkenness and gaming did not enter on his list of sins; he still loved his family with a clinging and deep

affection, and faithfully and generously divided his means with them. Ah, there were many virtues in our poor boy; there was much pure gold under the "hay and stubble" of his nature; and although he tried us to the utmost, we loved him, and bore with him, hoping all the time and trusting that a day would come—as it did—when he would return, like the prodigal of old, to his Father's House.

He conversed frequently with his mother on the subject of Masonry; he brought his Masonic paper to her regularly, which she read to acquaint herself, as far as practicable, with the principles of Masonry, that she might meet him on his own grounds; and for hours they used to talk together on the subject—but without definite results *then*.

"It is making me a better man, mother," he would say.

"Your religion was all-sufficient for that, my son. There is no need of the mind, no need of the soul, no help fallen nature can crave, that the Catholic religion does not supply in 'full measure, pressed together and running over.'"

"But Masonry has such a grand system of benevolence and morality."

"Not greater than that of the Church. Where will you find benevolence and charity so universally practiced as in the Church? where a code of morality so divinely established? Look, for instance, at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Young Catholic's Friend Society, who con-

stantly succor the poor and destitute in the most generous and unselfish manner, for the love of God—”

“They’re very good institutions, but don’t suit me so well as Masonry. All my requirements are satisfied by Masonry.”

“Ah, Manuel, you think so now! It makes small difference to a Protestant to join the Masonic Order, because the act does not interfere with his religious obligations or principles, or deprive him of Church membership—however much it may tend, as a secret and monopolizing organization, to bad citizenship; but for a Catholic to become a Mason is a terrible thing, for it cuts him entirely off from his Church, through disobedience. Some day you’ll be glad to renounce it.”

“Never—so help me God. *That* I’ll never do, come what may. But don’t fret, mother; here’s my medal, and if it will make you happy I’ll say a ‘Hail Mary’ every time I go to the Lodge. Good night.”

She sat silent for some time after he left the room, her eyes fixed on the fire, pale and weary-looking. These discussions, in which nothing seemed to be gained as far as we could see *then*, fairly exhausted her. Her thoughts were more than usually painful—I could see that; at last she moaned, “My God! my God!”

“What is it, Miriam?”

“Do you remember that night long ago, when

my little boy was raised as it were from the dead in answer to my wild prayers? Oh, if he had died then, if he had only died then and escaped all these perils!" she exclaimed.

"Let us hope on, Miriam. All is not lost while he clings to the Blessed Virgin."

"Yes, that is my sole hope," she sighed—"my last and only hope."

"It is much to have this hope, for when did she ever abandon a soul who asked her assistance? Manuel frequently does this, and I do not believe she will ever abandon him, but pursue him with her love until she leads him back to the feet of her Divine Son." And so we talked, comforting each other in our sorrow until late in the night, when the usual "Hail Marys" were offered for his conversion.

Manuel grew more reckless of his life than ever. His peculiar ideas of humanity, combined with a love for adventure, led him about this time into the wildest enthusiasm about the good that might be done by a well-organized fire department. He entered heart and soul into the matter, and was present as an active fireman at every conflagration that occurred, and now his mother's constant dread when she heard the alarm-bell was that before morning he would be brought home mangled or dead. How his life was preserved through all the scenes of peril to which he recklessly exposed himself on these occasions, seems almost miraculous.

“I am constantly expecting something dreadful, Manuel. Promise me not to go to another fire. Indeed you are not strong enough for such violent exercise,” Miriam would say.

He used to laugh at her fears, saying: “Don’t be uneasy, mother, I never go near a burning building without saying a ‘Hail Mary.’ So when you hear the fire-bell and think I am going to be buried under a tumbling wall, comfort yourself. Good night.”

One evening he spent an hour or two with us, a rare thing for him to do nowadays, and the conversation drifted towards confession—for somehow, as strange as it may seem, he always led the way to such subjects; and he answered some observation made by one of us in this wise: “I saw my old college mate, Will Carey, to-day, and he’s preparing for the priesthood; but what in the world do you think that he made me promise him?”

“Something good, I’m very sure.”

“Well, I don’t know about that; but I really did promise to go to confession to him when he’s ordained,” answered Manuel.

“I’m glad to hear that, Manuel—”

“Well, don’t be glad, mother, for there are a great many things to be considered before that time comes. *He’s* going to be a great and shining light in the Church though, whatever I may be. He’s good; there’s no flummery or nonsense about him; he’s good in the grain, and means all

that he says," said Manuel, fixing his beautiful black eyes, now full of a dreamy expression, on the fire.

"I have not seen him since he was a mere lad. I'm so glad you met him, my child." We had to be careful when Manuel was in one of those rare moods, lest we said too much or pushed him too closely, for it threw him into a passion and us into despair.

"I was mighty glad to see the old fellow. He came to the office, and we had a real hearty chat over old times. He used to be full of mischief in those days. I declare I was very glad to see him. Well, somehow, he got round me; and before I knew where I was he had me about confession, and promised to say no end of prayers for me, and beads enough to reach from here to San Francisco."

Miriam's heart sang for joy. She could scarcely restrain herself; but she only said: "I suppose that you will return his visit, Manuel?"

"Oh, yes; I suppose so. I'm only afraid he'll begin to hammer away at me about Masonry; that's a rock we shall be sure to split on. Now I must be off. Good night." This came down like a douche of ice into her glowing heart; for a moment she had forgotten the lion that lay in his path, and when so suddenly reminded of it, the old, dreary, careworn expression settled down once more on her countenance. \* \* \*

I find entered in my journal of that year:

“\* \* \* Care upon care. Manuel has had another severe attack of illness, worse than any preceding it. In his short intervals of consciousness Miriam spoke tenderly and solemnly to him about seeing a priest, but it threw him into such a state of excitement and passion that we thought he would die. \* \* \* Oh, the weary days and nights—the hopes and fears! Suppose he should die? The doctor has but small hope of his recovery. Suppose he should pass into eternity as he is? \* \* \* Through the mercy of God Manuel is spared. He is now convalescent, and has forbidden his mother to allude to the subject of religion to him again. \* \* \*

“But we hope in spite of all, and never cease commending him to the sweet care of MARY. We are thankful for his life, for ‘while there’s life there’s hope.’ \* \* \* Manuel has left us. He received an appointment in an exploring expedition to the Territories beyond the Rocky Mountains, to a region heretofore unvisited by the white man, and peopled by hostile tribes of savages. They have a military escort, but the perils are great. Miriam is half distracted. She has had Masses offered for him. Like a true knight, he wears his Lady’s image on his breast. May it be a shield of safety to him! Then came the sad refrain, ‘Suppose he should die out there in the wilderness with no one near to help his poor soul! Suppose he should die without even a desire to be restored to his faith; without

even a thought of repentance! Oh, that he had died in his sinless childhood!’ \* \* \*

“Manuel returned safe; after escaping the treacherous ambush of the Indians, dangers by flood and mountain and the deadly diseases peculiar to the country; and once the whole party nearly perished in a dreadful snow-storm on the plains. \* \* \*”

And again, “\* \* \* Oh this fearful desolating war! Could it not pass us, who have had such heavy sorrows, without wounding and scathing us? \* \* \* Manuel has given up his office and enlisted as a private soldier. His regiment is now before Petersburg. General F—— would have given him a staff appointment a year ago, but he was dissuaded from joining the army on account of his feeble health, which unfitted him entirely for field duty or hardships of any sort. He gave it up, and we heard no more about it until last week, when it was too late to do anything, for the regiment was marching when the news came, and we could do nothing but try to still the anguished sorrow of our weary, weary hearts.

“The laws governing the perils and chances of war are inevitable. Why should he escape the rebel shot and shell more than another? No woman can say: ‘That is my son, harm him not;’ or, ‘That is my lover, touch him not;’ they all share an equal danger there, almost under the rebel ramparts; there is nothing to turn aside the hurtling, death-dealing missiles;—noth-

ing but the protecting care of Him who seeth the sparrow fall and counteth the hairs of our head. And he—our poor Manuel—with all his sins upon him,—we dreamed of him mangled and dead; we had such thoughts about the peril he was exposed to—the eternal perils that threatened him—that we ceased even the kind fraud of trying to comfort each other. Oh, these days and nights of suspense! that winter of freezing cold! Oh, the constant brooding thought of sudden death, and everlasting loss to our erring but dearly loved one! \* \* \* He still wears his medal! His letters come faithfully, but as each one comes we wonder if there will ever be another.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Saved through all, and at home! Yesterday an ambulance stopped before the house, and Manuel was lifted out. He was brought home ill with wounds, and with typhoid pneumonia.\* \* \*”

Oh, how thankful we were to have him once more, to know that he was alive, and within reach of our watchful and tender care; to feel still the dear hope that all might be well with him at last. He had much to tell us when he grew better, but we waited in vain for that which, above all, we yearned to hear. He wore his medal; that was all. There was no sign of change in his thoughts or habits. But he was a strange being, reticent of everything except his faults; sedulous to conceal his good acts, and now more than ever opposed to religious discussion.

The President wrote his discharge,—for at that stage of the war it was impossible to get a soldier's discharge through the regular channels; not only wrote his discharge, but a recommendation for him to be reinstated in office, which was done; and then we went on as usual.

Looking back and weighing one thing after another, I almost believe that Manuel's life was miraculously preserved!

Oh, the infinite patience of God! Oh, the deathless love of Mary! She will lose no groat. She lights the lamp of her love when one is missing, and looks for it, never giving over the search until it is found!

*Presentation Convent.*

*Leungarvan  
Library.*

## CHAPTER V.

“SHE TRIMS THE LAMP OF HER LOVE AND  
SEARCHETH DILIGENTLY FOR THE LOST  
GROAT.”

“THIS is lovely!” said Mrs H—— one afternoon, looking from her window at the romantic view spread out for miles around. Beautiful slopes crowned with the ruins of dismantled forts, fair meadow lands, groves of cedar, pine and oak, with the distant outline of wooded hills against the sky made a fair scene to behold, bathed as it now was in the softened glory of autumnal sunshine. “This is lovely, and but for the thought of my poor boy, there in the city, I should enjoy it thoroughly.”

The thought of Manuel, and a great dread of his dying suddenly, haunt her continually.

“I wish you could see your ‘poor boy’s’ quarters, Miriam,” I answered cheerfully; “you never saw a more cosy spot. His sisters have left nothing unthought of for his comfort. The last thing they did was to get a statue of our Blessed Lady for his mantle-piece. He came in from the office, which is quite near, just as they finished laying a new bright spread on his bed. He

looked around his pleasant room, and I saw his eyes rest on our Lady's image, but he did not refer to it in any way. He was very still, but I could see that he was full of emotion, too full to trust himself to speak.

“‘We welcome you home, Manuel!’ said the girls, kissing him. ‘Isn't it a jolly den for an old bachelor?’

“‘It is too much, too much,’ he said quietly. ‘I don't deserve it.’

“But they, seeing how he felt, chatted away like two magpies, and presently he grew more cheerful, and began to talk over some pictures he was going to have framed to decorate the walls of his room, and some other little plans he had for the winter. He is to come out often to see us for one thing; and I do not see the use, Miriam, in your looking backwards, and sighing, and anticipating all manner of evil as you do. I protest against it. It is wrong.”

“I suppose you are right, Bettine,”—this is what they all call me;—“I might be happy; I ought to be; I will try, try all the more, because I think—maybe *you* have noticed too—think there is a change in Manuel?” she said, looking eager for a confirmation of her hope.

“Yes, Miriam, we have all noticed that Manuel is more grave and thoughtful. He has given over, too, that carelessness and neglect of his personal appearance, which I always knew was one of his odd affectations. Why, he's getting

fastidious, I tell you, about his looks ; his health seems good ; altogether there's much to comfort us," I answered cheerfully.

" I have noticed all that too ; but he looks very delicate I think. He declares that he is well ; but he cannot be well, looking so—" she said thoughtfully.

" Oh nonsense," I said petulantly ; " for mercy's sake don't be forever borrowing trouble ! Manuel was never in better health, and every one remarks the improvement."

" I am foolish perhaps, but I should like to see more color in his face. But I *will* take comfort, Bettine. You know General S—— was here yesterday and made me very proud by praising Manuel ; he said that he was one of the most attentive and efficient clerks in his Bureau. That was very nice, wasn't it ? Then you know that he has made arrangements to meet all of his little difficulties by turning over so much of his salary to his brother-in-law every month to cancel them. That is a good sign. Do you know I dreamed last night that he was a little boy again. I saw him as plain as I ever did in his life looking fair and innocent and lovely, just as he used to. I was very happy living that old time over, but when I awoke the dream made me sad somehow."

" It's a sign that he's going to become what he was then. I tell you, Miriam, there's pure gold under the ' hay and stubble ' of Manuel's nature.

He'll come out all right, I have faith to believe. Let us trust in God who gives great promises to such as regard the miseries of the poor; and in our Blessed Lady who never abandons those who ask her assistance." Then we fell to talking of other things.

We were spending the winter in the country with Miriam's oldest daughter, who was happily married to a Catholic gentleman of great excellence and noble traits of character. They did not return to the city as usual that autumn; we were all so in love with "Moss-Hill," that, one sunny, glorious day in October, it was decided in family council to stay during the winter. Everyone was enthusiastic over the plan, and the only drawback to our happiness was the thought of Manuel; but Mr. R——, whose untiring goodness and strong help did so much for our poor boy, who looked upon him as a model of all that was good, reminded us that we could see Manuel whenever he felt disposed to take the vacant seat in the carriage that brought him out every evening.

Yes, a change had certainly come over Manuel. He was very thoughtful and often very sad. I did not know what it meant, and sometimes feared that he was in some trouble. There were but rare episodes now of the old reckless life, and he had in a measure broken off the associations which gave us so much pain. But the change brought him no nearer to his faith. He was still

a member of the secret society he joined some years ago, and more than ever enthusiastic in its defence. He declared that no power in heaven or on earth should make him renounce it. There were times—rare now—when he had long, grave conversations with his mother, but they always ended in pain and discomfort. His habit of profanity seemed to grow upon him. His mother shrank as from heavy blows, when often forgetting himself he broke out in language terrible to hear; and left his presence. He was always sorry, and said he could not help it; and, without excusing it, I believe the *habit* of swearing had so grown upon him that he was unaware of the dreadful force of his expressions. He said he was,—and tried hard to avoid it; but if suppressed one minute, it cropped out the next.

Miriam received a short note from Manuel one day. He had been quite sick, he wrote, and wished some of us to come in. The weather was bitterly cold; snow and ice covered the ground; the roads were miserable, and his mother was too ill to take the long drive. We persuaded her that there was not much the matter, and I went. I found him sitting up, but looking pallid and feeble.

“I’m glad to see you. I thought it was all up with me last night, Bettine! How’s mother?” he said, shaking hands and trying to be cheerful.

“Suffering badly with neuralgia, and we wouldn’t let her come.”

"That's right. I hope she is not frightened about me."

"She wouldn't be, Manuel," I blurted out, "if you would only give up all your nonsense, and come back to your religion. As it is——"

"Enough of that," he said, flushing angrily. "Don't worry me with talk now. I won't have it. It is a waste of breath because it is impossible, and you know it."

"I know no such thing. The grace of God, and *her* pleading," I said, pointing to the fair image of Our Lady on the mantle-piece, "cover much; aye! much more than you dream of, Manuel. But what has been the matter?"

"God only knows; the doctor don't. I never had anything like it before. Two doctors were with me all night. Look at my feet, Bettine," he said, uncovering his feet, over which a shawl was thrown. I was dreadfully shocked to see them swollen out of all shape.

"Do they pain you, dear?"

"Like the very old——, like the mischief——!"

"It must be rheumatism, Manuel," I suggested in my ignorance. "You know it always swells your feet."

"Yes, but not like this. Heigh-ho! I don't know what it is, but I thought I was gone last night."

"How were you affected?"

"I couldn't get my breath, and such a mortal pain here," he said, pointing to his heart. "I

never felt anything like it ; but I believe I am all right now. I believe this pulled me through," he added, drawing out his medal, which was suspended by a string around his neck.

"Hold on to it, Manuel, and don't forget to ask her help." I was afraid to say anything more than that. Then I asked him if he felt able to go back with me to "Moss-Hill."

"No, no, not to-day. I think it safer not to. I am near the doctor; and some of you can come in every day. I expect to be out in two or three days; so don't make mother uneasy." He then talked over some affairs he wished me to attend to, and I went away to see to them, bought him some delicacies, and engaged one of the former servants of the family to attend to his wants. Then I went to see the doctor, who was, fortunately, at home, to learn what he thought of Manuel's condition. He told me that he never witnessed such a scene, or had such a case in all his long practice. He thought Manuel dying when he got there, and was unable to decide whether his disease was dropsy of the chest, heart disease, or congestion of the lungs. He never saw such agony and such a struggle for life, and such a determined will. He could not lie down, or even recline; but with the pallor and coldness of death upon him, and gasping for breath, he stood leaning against the mantle-piece—close by the image of Mary—until the paroxysm somewhat subsided; then he would go to

his desk, turn over his papers, burn some, write a little, and tie up into bundles letters and other things until the paroxysm returned, when he would stagger back to the mantle-piece, which seemed to afford him the best place to lean on. "I expected every instant to see him drop dead at my feet," continued the doctor. "I knew that his family were Catholics, and I proposed to him to send for a priest, but he declined seeing one. I told him that he was in danger of death; but he still declined, saying that a priest could do nothing for him. Then he told me he was a Mason, and I said no more about it, knowing how the Church stands in that matter. I left him about ten o'clock; there was another physician with him, and, I assure you, madam, that I never was so surprised in my life as I was to find him alive when I returned, about eleven o'clock. But I really think he should be with his friends."

"Do you think him in danger still?" I asked.

"I do. His system is broken down. I'll be frank with you: I don't think there's a possibility of his being a well man again. He had better be with his friends."

"What is the trouble, doctor?" I asked, inexpressibly shocked and grieved.

"He has a complication of diseases, either one of which may prove suddenly fatal. I am sorry to pain you, madam, but I never deceive in such cases," said the doctor, kindly.

"I am shocked and pained, indeed!" I replied,

scarcely knowing what I said. How should I ever go back to "Moss-Hill" with such news! "Will it be safe to take him to the country this afternoon?"

"I think you'd better defer it for a day or two. He *may* rally enough to get about again, but I fear not." I bade the doctor good-day, and came away. On my way back I found myself near the parish church, and, obeying a sudden impulse, went in to speak to Father T—— about Manuel. He was just going into the confessional, but kindly waited to hear what I told him and promised to go that evening and pay Manuel a friendly visit. He knew our poor boy, and had met him now and then in the abodes of poverty and by the bedside of the dying, and felt a deep interest in his singular character. Then I went back to Manuel, whom I found sitting before a bright fire, laughing and talking with an acquaintance who had happened in to see him.

"I am all right, old lady, you see. Tell some of them to come in to-morrow," he said, holding out his hand. I was deceived. I had seen him so often ill when his life hung, as it were, on a thread; when there seemed not the smallest hope of his living on; how could I believe, seeing him sitting there, his eyes bright and his voice strong and cheerful, that this was more than a passing illness, the worst already over? My spirits rose, and I straightway concluded that the doctor was

a regular croaker, and our boy out of danger. Ah, if I had only *known!*—known how swiftly he neared the Dark River! If I had known this, I should have understood, *then*, how wonderful was the mercy which spared him, all unprepared as he was, through that long night of agony and peril;—I should have known that she whose image he always wore on his breast, was his shield and succor.

But I did not know it; happily for us, sometimes, we cannot see beyond the present; and I only rejoiced in the hope that Manuel would recover from this illness as he had from others. Then the thought of his swollen feet, and the impressive words of the doctor, came to distress and make me afraid; but by the time I got in sight of the bright lights of Moss-Hill, I shook off my fears and gloomy anticipations, and settled myself into the hope that they were groundless. So I made none of them miserable by telling all that had happened. I told Miriam and the rest that Manuel had been ill for a night, but was better, and sent all kinds of loving messages. I told them of what I had done for his comfort, about Father T——'s intended visit, and how well and cheerful he looked in his cosy room, where I left him.

Manuel seemed to improve. He was no worse, but was unwilling to go into the country. Some of us were with him every day, and brought back cheering accounts to his mother, who was too

much of an invalid to venture on the long, cold drive to see him. She was less uneasy than usual about him. I was full of hope until I looked at his poor, swollen feet! but I kept my fears to myself. Oh, our dear, noble-hearted, erring boy! how very near he grew to us in those days of sickness! He was cheerful, but he told me once when there was no one present except ourselves, that his nights were spent in a sort of half delirium, and he was much troubled with spectral illusions. "I know," he said, "that it is owing to the condition of my system; I have read all about such things, and don't expect to get rid of them until I begin to grow stronger. I shall soon be all right, Bettine; and don't tell mother; it would make her uneasy." And I did not tell her.

Manuel laughed over Father T——'s visit. His sister asked him how he had received him.

"Oh, very well; but I'm afraid he found me a tough one to deal with. He pitched into Masonry, but found that it was no use," he replied.

"I hope, dear, you treated Father T—— with respect," observed his sister.

"Indeed I did. I like him. I suppose I swore a little, but he didn't mind that, and he's coming to see me again." \* \* \*

I met Father T—— the next day. He says that Manuel is the most singular character he ever met with; that there seems to be an antithetical duality in him, which is engaged in a

perpetual struggle for supremacy. "My visit," he continued, "was extremely painful to me, for it left me with scarcely a hope that he will ever be restored to his Church. He concealed nothing from me; he expressed a grave, solid sorrow for the errors of his life; he declared himself to be a Catholic; nay, swore that he would be willing to *die* for the faith; and as for his devotion to the Holy Mother of God, there is something remarkable in it. But, my child, all those graces will, I fear, prove fruitless to him, because he declares most positively that he will never renounce the only obstacle that deprives him of the help and consolation of the sacraments. I plead with him, I urged him by every sacred consideration, to renounce and put aside *everything* that hindered his salvation; but he said: 'Father T——, do you see those two andirons upon the hearth! You might as well try to demonstrate to me that those two objects which I see with my eyes, and know to be two, are one, and expect me to believe such an absurdity, as to endeavor to make me renounce Masonry. It is useless; I shall never do it.' He is dreadfully in earnest; he meant what he said, and I felt that it was useless to go again. I am praying for him all the same though."

"Oh yes, Father T——, don't fail to pray for him, and engage others to do so," I said. My heart was very heavy. For although Manuel appeared to be convalescing, there was something all

the time whispering: "The end is near." And I prayed:

"Mother of God! thou wilt not abandon the search for thy lost treasure; thou wilt pity and help the stray one of thy Son's flock far away in the tangled wilderness!"

It was the 23d of December. A sudden warmth and brightness had fallen upon the earth. The heavens were without a cloud, and the south wind blew softly among the firs and cedars, which, like censers, swung lazily to and fro, sending forth a fragrance like frankincense and myrrh. There was a low murmur soughing through the pines, which sounded like the distant moan of the sea. The late roses glowed like crimson flames upon their stems; the chrysanthemums, with their bitter-sweet odor,—like memory,—nodded in the sunshine beside the radiant phloxes, all aglow as if summer had come again. The swallows swarmed from their nest in the chimneys, and chattered in the air, as they darted to and fro, rejoicing in the warmth and brightness; the old oaks rustled their gay leaves like whispering oracles; the hum of insects made a drowsy monotone; and far stretching around us lay the beautiful hills clothed in silvery haze. The tranquillity and loveliness of the scene was something indescribable, and I think it all over to-night because it seems so associated with Manuel.

The beauty and mildness of the day brought Miriam from her room, out under the oaks which

had not yet cast their richly-tinted foliage. We had had good news from Manuel the evening before ; he wrote that he was better, and would spend Christmas with us ; so there was nothing to shadow our enjoyment of the balmy weather and the fair scenes around us. But presently the silence was invaded by the most discordant din I ever heard. It dropped out of the air over and about us, like a tempest ; and, looking for the cause, we saw thousands of crows, flying in two long processions, all shouting and cawing for dear life, as they pitched and tumbled themselves, with "many a flirt and flutter," into the cedar trees, until the velvety foliage was hidden by their black wings. In such numbers did they alight that the boughs of the trees were bent by their weight ; sometimes a weak branch would break under them, when the whole of them would fly upwards with an angry shout and clattering of wings, darkening the air. It was a grotesque sight to watch them crowding back, scuffling and fighting to secure a place on the cedar boughs, and flying to and fro over the whole pine belt, as if carrying and bringing the news. The din was so noisy that we stopped talking, confounded by the strange uproar.

"What in the world does it mean, Bettine?" asked Miriam, looking amused. The old negro gardener, who was raking away the dead leaves, deliberately stopped his work, and, leaning upon the handle of his rake, stood watching the crows

with an amused grin. "Dey seems to be enjoyin' deirselves," he observed presently.

"The crows seem to be in trouble, Uncle Jeff. I'm afraid they intend moving their colony to Moss-Hill," said Miriam.

"Lord bless you, no," he answered, with a look of superior wisdom, as he condescended to our ignorance. "When you see crows do dat 'ar way it's a sartain sign of fallin' weather an' a hard freeze. Dey knows! Dey got sense enough, dey has!"

"But what do they come for?" I inquired.

"To stuff deir crops, Missis, wid de cedar berries, an' wild grapes, an' de poke-berries dat's left hangin'. Nothin' comes amiss to deir craws. Dey knows fast enough when de rime's done froze everything up dey can't get nothin' den. I 'speck dey's tried it sometime or other, an' found 'twouldn't do. You know 'sperience is de best teacher. Ole Missus always told me dat," he answered sagely.

"But it is so very mild, uncle Jeff; surely the weather will not change for two or three days," said miriam anxiously; she was thinking of her boy.

"'Fore to-morrow mornin', sure; dis time to-morrow dere will be a heavy fall of snow—'pend upon dat; den a stiff freeze. Don't want no truer sign dan dat 'ar," he said; then went on with his work.

Just then Mr. R——'s manager came along

with some garden utensils and packages of seed in his arms; and, as he bowed and passed on, nodding to the crows he said: "We're going to have falling weather, I reckon. Snow likely. There's no more certain sign than the crows, when they go on like that."

Then came the nurse with the two little ones, who were laughing and shouting at the crows, delighted at the din and flutter. She is an Old-Country woman, and very weatherwise. She stopped and said: "That's the way the rooks do at home before a storm. It makes me feel almost as if I was in Ireland to see them."

"I'm just from the kitchen," said Mrs. R——, joining us; "and Aunt Prue says there's going to be an awful snow-storm, and sent me out to watch the crows. How absurd such a prediction sounds in the midst of all this warmth and brightness; but, mamma, instinct comes very near reason, if the crows are prophets."

"Yes," said her mother absently. "It must be true. This sort of people know so much from observation, and understand the signs of the weather better than we do. I think you and Bettine had better drive in and bring Manuel out. If it storms to-morrow he can't come."

"That's very true, mamma; at any rate it is better for him to come to-day; the drive will do him good; it is so pleasant," replied Mrs. R——. "Uncle Jeff, go and tell them to get the carriage as quickly as they can. The crows may be true

prophets, and it is best to be upon the safe side."

We found Manuel up and dressed, sitting at his table writing letters. He was rejoiced to see us, and expressed his readiness to return with us.

"But before I go," he said, "I want you to do something for me, Bettine. I've got Christmas in my bones generally, and I want you to go down town and buy a dress for the little imp of a Topsy who waits on me sometimes. She steals my towels and sucks my oranges; but never mind that. Get her a blazing bright dress; and I want two boxes of toys for some little children I know, whose mother is a widow. Then get some collars and things—I don't know what you call them—for the other woman who attends to my meals; she has been very good to me, and has made nice things without end."

(Oh, my poor Manuel! How my heart is moved when I think over the generous, grateful traits of his nature!)

I did all that he asked, and he distributed his little offerings, then he came away with us. He said to the servants: "Keep my room in order: I shall be back in a few days." He was as delighted as a little child, to be out once more; he talked a great deal, and seemed to be in a real boyish, cheerful mood. "I am half wild," he said. "Christmas is my only festival, and I feel it in all my bones. It makes me feel like old times, when I was good and happy."

“As you will be again,” I remarked.

“I don’t know, old lady. You know that I’m outcast; but I enjoy Christmas for all that. I really don’t know what would happen to me if I hadn’t my Christmas-tree every year.”

“Bettine, it seems to me that it has grown colder,” said Mrs. R——, drawing her shawl up around her. “Hadn’t you better pull the window up beside you. Manuel will take cold.”

“Nonsense,” he laughed, “Mabel thinks she’s got her baby here. The air feels good, and gives me breath.” So the window remained open, but by the time we got to Moss-Hill, the weather had changed very decidedly, and Manuel was shivering. His mother did not hear the carriage; but he went straight up to the room, and when he opened the door, she went to meet him, and putting her arms tenderly about him said: “My child, you have been very sick, I fear!”

“Yes,” he whispered, “very sick.” Then he dropped into a chair near the fire, and burst into tears, his face covered with his hands. She stood over him and drew his head to her bosom, smoothing his rich, brown hair tenderly.

They were alone, and I learned this, and much else that I shall relate, from her afterwards. Presently he grew calm and said:

“It is very pleasant to be here, mother.”

“And we are so glad to have you here, my child. It has been so cold that they would not let me come to you; but now we have you, we

shall keep you until you are nursed back to health."

"I don't think I shall ever be well again, mother," he said gravely.

"Oh yes, I am sure that you will. You only need rest and quiet," she said, believing that it was all he needed, as we all did.

"I hope so," he replied with a wistful, sad look; "I hope so. I can only stay a few days however; I must get back to my office in four or five days."

"General S—— says that you must not show your face at the office until you are well enough. Now be patient, my dear son, and get well slowly. It's the safest plan," she said, stooping over to kiss his pale cheeks.

"I'll try," he answered. "It is very pleasant here. Your bright, open wood fire always revives me, mother. I believe that I feel better already."

"Of course you do, Manuel," she said, drawing her chair close to him; "but tell me now about your feet; are they still swollen?"

"Never mind my feet, mother. So long as I can walk upon them I am satisfied. I don't want to talk about my aches or pains now, and believe I'll go around and see everybody, including the cook and the cat. I suppose the children are crazy about the Christmas-tree."

"Almost. And such loads of toys from uncles, aunts, cousins and friends! I believe

there's to be a general unpacking with closed doors to-night."

"I shall enjoy it all and fancy that I'm a boy again," he said as he went out. Miriam watched him and saw that he walked with difficulty; but even that did not alarm her; she had so often seen his feet swollen with rheumatic pains, which disappeared in the course of a week or two, that she was sure it was something of the same character now. He became so cheerful, and looked so much better during the evening, that we felt assured he was convalescing, and needed only rest and time to recover fully.

That night after the little ones went to sleep, the Christmas boxes were unpacked, and the music room strewed with their contents. He enjoyed it all like a child, laughing over the quaint things and admiring the pretty ones as he helped to assort and arrange them. Once he was very quiet, and I noticed him as he removed the soft German mosses from some figures and busied himself in forming them into groups upon the end of the piano. I looked over his shoulder, and saw that it was a Bethlehem! There was a sad smile upon his countenance as he placed—with tender and almost reverent touches—the figures in proper groupings around the Virgin Mother; and presently having got them arranged to suit, he said: "See here, mother! Look at that! It takes me back so many years ago! Do you remember

my little Bethlehem?" Then he turned away, lest we should see the tears that filled his eyes, saying: "I am getting childish, I believe, and shall go to bed. I feel rather tired."

This little incident touched us all.

Mr. R—— came home late that night, and to our surprise told us that snow was falling heavily. So the crows were wise, and knew their own business better than we imagined. All night I heard Manuel coughing; a short, hard, dry, ominous cough. I went in to him early, and found him sitting in a large cushioned chair, his bed untouched. He was pale and exhausted, and told me that his nights were all passed in this manner. His poor feet were dreadfully swollen. I reported his condition to Mr. R——, who sent out the doctor.

The doctor gave us no hopes of Manuel's recovery. He said, "He may possibly get over this attack, and live a year or two—and I think that he will; but he is threatened with an effusion of water, which may occur at any moment. It is one of those cases in which it is impossible to speak with certainty."

"And how, if this effusion takes place?" I ask with aching heart.

"He could not live, of course. But I hope better things. I've so often seen Manuel so desperately ill that I wouldn't have given a jack-straw for his chances of living, and yet he has recovered in spite of everything, so I don't despair.

I don't like that dropsical swelling in his feet, but it may disappear as the remedies take effect." Strange to say, his mother did not and could not realize his danger. She hoped for the best, and indeed believed that he was convalescing.

He spent Christmas day with the family, and enjoyed the happiness of the children, whom he dearly loved. He was evidently suffering, but would not admit it. Over our cheerfulness there was a shadow, an anxious, uneasy dread of something sorrowful!

Manuel was sitting with his mother a few days later, and after being silent some time, suddenly asked her: "Mother, should anything happen to me, where will you bury me?"

"Why do you ask such a question as that, Manuel?" she replied, greatly shocked.

"Because I want to know. Please answer me."

What answer *could* she make him? If "anything happened," and he not be restored to his Church, he would be laid in unconsecrated ground. A sharp pain wrung her heart; there seemed to come with the question a crushing, oppressive weight of fears for his future; she trembled and longed to tell him all that was in her mind about it; but she feared to do so lest the old angry spirit should be roused in him. At length she said: "I have two burial lots, Manuel; one of them at Oakneath, the Protestant cemetery, where my father is buried."

"Oh, yes. I had forgotten all about that. I

suppose I shall be laid beside my grandfather. That's all right," he replied.

"I hope not, my child. I loved my father with a deep affection; but when the time comes, which I trust is far distant, I hope that I shall be able to lay you in consecrated ground by your father's side."

He changed the subject immediately, and walked to the window, where he stood watching the falling snow. "Such a storm!" he said, speaking to himself; "the roads must be blocked up."

His mother and I listened to his hard, incessant cough through the night, and knew that he slept but little. He would have no one with him, and we could only talk and grieve over him, wondering all the time what we should do. His bad symptoms increased; and his mother, perceiving his danger, wrote to Father Carey, begging him to come out to see and talk with him. "I'm afraid he'll be furious, Bettine; but I cannot stand by and do nothing," she said. "He loves and respects Father Carey, and if any one can do my poor child good he is the one." We did not know how Manuel would receive him, but we felt that so eternally much depended on his visit we were willing to risk and brave everything. We were to let him suppose that Father Carey came voluntarily to pay him a friendly visit, and we were in a state of feverish anxiety as to the result.

The good young clergyman came; his heart

filled with zeal and tender compassion for his friend, and anxious to do all that he could for his soul. Manuel was touched by his coming through the inclement weather such a distance to see him. They had a long interview. We had come out, and left them alone, and betaken ourselves to the feet of MARY for succor. Alas! nothing but the old results followed. Father Carey told us that he had scarcely a hope that Manuel would ever renounce Masonry, which was the *only* obstacle to his being restored to his faith. "He assured me," added he, "in the most positive language that he would never, under any circumstances, concede this point. I talked plainly to him about his condition, of which he seems to be fully aware; but nothing moves him from his determination. I am sorry, Mrs. H——, that I have to go now. I will come again in a day or two."

"Do so, my dear Father Carey. Do so, I beg of you!" she replied.

"How did Manuel receive you, Father?" I asked him at the door.

"Very kindly. He was glad to see me, but very much excited during our conversation. I will offer the Holy Sacrifice for him to-morrow, and get Father T—— to do so too." Then he left us.

Manuel was not so well that evening. He spoke of Father Carey's visit, to his mother; and

remarked that it was kind of him to come so far to see him.

“Should you be glad to see him again, Manuel?” she inquired.

“Well, yes. Seeing him excited me a good deal. You know, mother, I don’t like to be meddled with, or preached to, and I hope he won’t do it when he comes again. I’ll be glad to see him as a friend, of course; but as for anything else, it is out of the question.”

“It is good to have such a friend, my child,” she answered.

“Yes,” he said, shortly. Then he dropped into silence; a sorrowful silence, I know, for I heard him sigh deeply two or three times.

The weather was bitterly cold. Even beside a warm, bright fire I could hardly guide my pen, my fingers felt so frozen. But the cramped half illegible writing on the pages I turn tells faithfully the story of those sorrowful days.

“It is midnight, and I hear my darling coughing, and moving restlessly about his room. My heart is full of him, and it is a relief to jot down at night whatever happens during the day. I go to his door and ask if he will have anything. ‘Nothing,’ he answers; ‘go to bed, Bettine.’ If he would only let me watch with him! But he will have no one.”

Friday. This morning Manuel came down, dressed, ready to drive into town with his brother-in-law, who having great influence over him dis-

suaded him from going, thinking him too ill. His disappointment excited him greatly. He remains in his room, and a deep gloom has settled on him, broken now and then by a passionate outbreak. His mother is miserable and ill. He wishes to get back to the city. We offer to send for his friends, but he has no wish to see anyone, not even old associates with whom he has been intimate for years. \* \* \* What can we do? To see him suffer those dreadful paroxysms of coughing and pain; to hear his wild expressions of profanity and despair: to look at his poor swollen feet, and think that at any moment he may die suddenly, is almost more than we can bear. Oh, God! bring peace to our darling! We cease, his mother and I, to think of his body in our overwhelming anxiety for his soul. So far the powers of evil have triumphed, and God's strong angels must fight for us, or all will be lost. The Blessed Mother of our Redeemer cannot, oh! she will not cease interceding for one who, whatever else his sins, has never ceased loving her and asking her aid!

Saturday. We prevailed on Manuel to move into another room; one into which the sun shines all day. It has a very bright and picturesque outlook from the windows on both sides. He was more like himself to-day, more calm and tranquil, with many of his pleasant, affectionate ways.

After breakfast his mother was sitting by him.

He was near the window, talking to her, and looking out now and then. The sun shone brightly, flooding the room with cheerful light. He was telling her of certain optical illusions which troubled him, "curious phenomena," as he said, "attributable solely to a diseased physique."

"Of course, my child, you have too much intelligence to attach any superstitious meaning to them?" said his mother.

"Certainly, I know they are the effect of purely physical causes; they are not agreeable, however. You remember the articles we read several years ago in *Chambers' Miscellanies*, mother, on optical illusions?"

"Yes, indeed. Do you remember how, in each case, the phantoms faded gradually, and finally disappeared altogether, as the patient grew stronger?"

"Now, mother," he said, fixing his beautiful eyes on a distant part of the room; "I see—more distinctly than I see you—a child standing upon that table, a little creature with golden curls, and rose-colored ribbons in her hair. She has on a pink dress and a white ruffled apron." It was a pleasant vision, as she could see by his countenance! His mother went over to the table, above which hung a miniature of Mabel's little daughter who had passed away to heaven a few years before; and moved the things standing upon it, then passed her arms to and fro over it, and asked him if he still saw the child."

“Yes. I see her distinctly.”

“How pleasant, my child, to have so fair a visitant,” she said smiling, as he got up and came towards her, as if for a nearer view of the beautiful phantom, but when he got half way, he suddenly stopped, leaned forward, and fixing his eyes with a keen concentrated gaze upon the spot, said: “It is a dead child,” turned back and went to his seat. Miriam felt a thrill pass through her heart, but only said: “It would be very sweet to think, Manuel, that an angel visitant had come to us this morning.”

“I don’t think that,” he said. “But say nothing to Mabel about it. it might make her unhappy. It was one of those strange illusions, but the pleasantest to see of them all.”

We could not tell. It may have been an optical illusion; or it might have been—for a moment visible—one of those fair, strong messengers of heaven which we afterwards knew were thronging about him to defend and shield his soul, and keep back the almost triumphant powers of evil that were now pressing closer and nearer around him, until the supreme moment arrived when by God’s grace he voluntarily yielded his will to the requisitions of the Divine Law. Something happened very soon, which makes me love to think so.”

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## CONCLUSION.

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“AND HAVING SEARCHED DILIGENTLY SHE FIND-  
ETH THE GOAT AND REJOICETH.”

“JAN. 5th. Apparently Manuel's condition is no worse; on the contrary he is quite cheerful, and has long intervals of freedom from pain. The doctor thinks him improving, and hopes now that he will get over this attack. But there is something I cannot define ever haunting me; a something like a voice, only I cannot hear it, although it shapes itself into words, which forbids all hopes. It tells me, in its mysterious way, that he is surely passing away, and my soul is filled with a tender and inexpressible anxiety about his future. His mother and I talk it over, and beg the assistance of the Blessed Virgin; we endeavor to impart hope and consolation to each other; but alas! this dear object of our affection seems to have drifted entirely beyond our reach. All her desire, poor soul! is for her child's eternal safety; everything else seems swallowed up in this absorbing thought.

Father Carey drove out to see him to-day, but stayed only a short time. He asked Manuel if he

had anything to say to him; who replied: "Nothing more than I have already said."

"Then I must go. My classes will be waiting for me. Good-by, Manuel; if you want me at any time, day or night, send for me and I'll come."

"Thank you, Will; I shall always be glad to see you," said our poor boy, with a slight agitation of manner. Then shaking hands they parted. Manuel and his mother were left alone together. I heard them in earnest conversation for some time, and hoped that he had at last given her the long-desired opportunity to say all that was in her heart about his spiritual affairs, and plead with him to make some preparations, whether for life or death, for the future. But no; he was talking over his temporal affairs and certain events of the past; I could not clearly understand it all, for Miriam was more reticent than usual that night when we were conversing about the occurrences of the day. I only know that since then, mother and son seem more closely drawn together; he cannot bear her out of his sight a moment; and at night, when she was leaving him, he kissed her with such tenderness in his eyes and voice that it carried me back at once to the sinless days of his childhood. "I declare, Bettine, it was so much like old times," she said afterwards, "that I felt exactly as I did the night I dreamed he was a child again." It did indeed seem to fill her with a sad but serene

emotion, which I hoped would so tranquillize her that she would get a night's sleep; but it did not, on the contrary she was more restless than usual, and went back to his room to see if he slept. But no, he was awake; oppressed and restless, every nerve in his body was tortured with an indescribable pain, which excited him nearly to frenzy. At length the remedies began to soothe him, and he fell asleep; then we both saw, as we stood—fearing to breathe lest we should rouse him—how he was failing, by the pallor of his face, his half-closed eyes, the white lips fallen apart from utter weakness, and his bloodless tongue, which trembled with every short panting breath! We feared that he would sink and die in that uneasy, troubled sleep. But the infinite mercy of God spared him.

A little after daylight Manuel awoke, half suffocated. He sat on the bedside until the paroxysm passed off, then lifting his sad eyes looked through the window towards the east, which was pulsing with veins of red and glowing with pale flashes of gold, with an expression of countenance that I shall never forget, as uttering a deep sigh he said: "Another day!" Oh the volume of thought contained in those words and that look! I thought I understood their meaning then; but since, how eloquent, how plain they became to my understanding! He *felt* that another day had been spared to him for repentance.

"Yes, my child, 'another day,'" said his

mother, as she smoothed his dark hair, and kissed his pale cheek; "God has spared us 'another day.'" He made no reply, but lay back on the piled up pillows with a look of exhaustion. Then she stirred around to make him comfortable, brightened the fire, and gave him a cup of hot tea which revived him. He began to talk of the possibilities of his getting back to town in a day or two, and made some quaint remarks about hobbling around his office on crutches, for his feet were now more swollen than ever. He made light of his pains, declaring that he was not nearly so sick as he had been fifty times before; and talked of getting well, and what he would do when he got about; until we forgot, his mother and I, the terrors of the night, and began to think that we were two foolish nervous old women.

The day passed much as others preceding it. Manuel's room was the family *rendezvous*, where every one came solicitous to do something to cheer or comfort him, and full of tender anxiety about him. But he was happiest with the little children around him, who hung about his chair, and leaned against his feeble knees, listening to the marvellous stories he told *them*; or imparting to *him* the last wonderful exploits of the terriers; or how old "Tawny," the dog, had caught two rabbits; and how many hundred birds came every day to be fed; or how the colts broke away. There was no dearth of news; they

were always full of it, and nothing delighted him more than to sit and listen to it all. The children had been in with their budget, and gone; and the wintry day was fading like a wraith. Twilight was creeping on, and an easterly wind drove sheets of mist over the hills and meadows, and the dark cedars and pines shivered and bowed their soft plumes as the cold blasts swept over them. It was a dreary, desolate scene, in sad harmony with the gloom which gathered around the young life fleeting away, and the heart of the patient, sorrowful mother, who watched and waited. Twilight had ever been a favorite hour with Miriam; it was held sacred to her by all of us, and we were careful never to disturb her enjoyment of it by an insistence of early lights. Even the little children of the house understood this, and used to say: "We'll wait. Don't you know dis is dran-ma's hour." And now she was sitting alone with Manuel in the twilight, little dreaming how swiftly it was to be consecrated by the rising of hope's fair star, and the fulfilment of her dearest wishes! Manuel reclined in his large chair by the fire; she was near the window, watching the gray mists drifting by, assuming strange, weird shapes as the wind blew in fitful gusts, until to her sad fancy they looked like sorrowful spirits hurrying along on errands of woe. The firelight flickered on the wall, and everything was still. Her heart was overwhelmed with a sense of sorrow and woe.

some forebodings which almost stilled its beating; Manuel, with his eyes closed, leaned back against his pillow, so motionless and silent that she imagined he slept.

"Mother," he suddenly asked, "do you believe the soul, after death, accompanies the body into the grave?"

"No," she answered quickly. "It's the soul which gives life to the body. While the soul remains there is no death. It is the separation of the soul and body which makes death."

"I thought so!" he said, then was quiet again, while she waited with quick, throbbing heart, wondering to what his strange questions would lead; but he made no further remark, and she turned sorrowfully back to look out at the blurred landscape, over which the night gloom was fast stealing, and was almost lost in sad reverie again, when Manuel exclaimed, as he brought his hand down heavily on the arm of his chair: "I wish to God I had never heard of Masonry."

Miriam started. She must speak now, but she must speak wisely for his was a strange, erratic nature to deal with, and she must deal with it only as God inspired her. She knew that Masonry had been to him as precious as his right eye or his right hand or foot, and if he would cut it off that he might enter eternal life, it must be of his own free will, but she must help him the best she could; she did not know exactly how, but the critical moment had arrived, when out of the

depths of his soul he cried for aid, and trusting in God she said :

“It is an easy thing, Manuel, to relinquish Masonry. I have read in your papers that many distinguished men have done so, not by a public renunciation of it, but by quietly dropping off from the lodges. To renounce Masonry does not necessitate a betrayal of its secrets, whatever they may be. It only requires an effort of will, and some moral courage to break away altogether from it.”

“My God! mother, how you talk! What can you know about it?” he exclaimed passionately.

“I only know this, my beloved,” she answered drawing near and sitting down by him—  
“I only know that Masonry is a human invention that will crumble away beneath your feet at the approach of death, as the sands upon the sea-shore crumble beneath the advancing tides, leaving you without shelter or hope. There is nothing in it to lean upon in that dread hour, nothing that can go with you beyond the grave to plead with or console you. Contrast this human institution with your divine faith and all the help it affords the soul in its holy sacraments which strengthen the soul for its last conflict, which give her courage, consolation, and light in the very gloom of death’s shadow, and plead for it whither it goes. Ah! my child, don’t you see the difference?”

“Yes. I see the difference,” he replied dejectedly.

“Promise me, Manuel, to approach these soul-healing, life-giving sacraments when Father Carey comes again,” she implored.

“I can make no promises, mother. I’ll see though. I don’t think, somehow, that I shall live very long. I don’t feel so very ill—I’ve often felt a hundred times worse—but there’s something, I don’t know what, that *won’t* let me feel as if I should ever be well again. It is very strange.”

“Let us then do quickly all that we can, Manuel. These presentiments are sometimes true. We shall not be long separated, my child, if they should be,” she said.

“No, we shall not be long separated, mother. I’ve given you great trouble, mother, but you forgive me?” he said, almost whispering.

“A thousand times, yes, my darling; and if I, through motherly duty, have been sometimes stern, and either hurt or hindered you, forgive me, for my love never wavered.”

“Mother! don’t! don’t! This is too much,” he said, in a choked voice, as he held out his hand towards her. She knelt down beside him; his arm folded her close to his breast, and she felt his tears drop, drop heavy and warm upon her forehead. In that almost sacramental hour the bond between the hearts of mother and child

were made stronger than death, and as endless as eternity.

One by one, they came in to see and chat with the dear invalid; the lamp was lit, and Manuel listened with grave composure to the cheerful conversation bubbling around him. "I am listening, Mabel. I like to hear you all talk, but don't mind me, I'm in a quiet mood to-night," he said, in reply to his sister, who asked if they were too noisy for him. And they talked over the city news, the latest sensations, and new books, thinking that he was interested, and amused, never dreaming of the supernatural hope that had but a little while before made the spot bright with a new dawn, and almost as sacred as the vestibule of heaven.

"I think, my child," Miriam said, just before leaving him that night, to lie down for a short time, "that to-morrow, if you are strong enough, you had better change your quarters to my room where there is an open wood-fire. I feel that this coal heat oppresses you."

"Thank you, mother. I'll be glad to do so. This heat does play the mischief with me, and you know we all like your room best when we're sick."

"You shall come in bright and early," she said, kissing him.

"Bettine," he said, about a half hour afterwards, "go and ask mother if I can come in to-night?"

“Certainly, Bettine ; I shall feel far better satisfied to have him here,” answered Miriam, as soon as she heard the message. “Tell him to come right in.”

Manuel heard her, for the doors were open, and in another minute he was sitting in front of the bright wood fire, his hands spread open to the cheery blaze. “This is the only sort of fire fit for a man to sit by,” he said, in a well-satisfied tone. “I feel better already, mother, and believe I could walk three miles !” He did seem wonderfully stronger and better ; he enjoyed the change ; and to be lying there once more in her bed, his head resting upon her pillow, brought back to both of them happy memories of the days long ago. She longed to renew the twilight conversation ; her heart was full of it ; but she feared to excite or agitate him, he was in such a tranquil mood ; so commending her cause to Almighty God, she took up a book, thinking to read, as Manuel, now quiet, seemed disposed to sleep. Opening the book at random, her eyes fell upon the following verses :

“—But God gives patience, Love learns strength,  
And Faith remembers promise,  
And Hope itself can smile at length  
On other hopes gone from us.

Love, strong as Death, shall conquer Death,  
Through struggle made more glorious,  
This mother stills her sobbing breath,  
Renouncing yet victorious.”

“Was it a promise?” she thought. How strange to open a book at random, and under such circumstances light upon words so prophetic and full of hope! Must she renounce and give up all right in her child to win the victory for him? She thought it would not be difficult, for in the depths of her soul she felt that if Almighty God would save him she could give him up without a murmur.

“What book is that, mother?” asked Manuel, who had been watching her.

“It’s a book of Elizabeth Browning’s poetry. Shall I read some of it aloud?”

“Not to-night,” he replied. Then she took up her pen and marked the verses, and set the dates of month and year upon the margin of the page. The words kept repeating themselves in her head all night, and somehow she felt comforted by them.

\* \* \*

Jan. 7th. This has been a day of days! Such joy! But I will not anticipate. Contrary to our hopes, Manuel passed a miserable, suffering night, and his extremities are more than ever swollen.

His mother took a scapular which had been sent her by the Prioress of V—— a short time before, a scapular of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel, and holding it up, said to him: “My child, will you let me put this about your neck?”

“If you wish to do so,” he most unexpectedly

replied. She fixed it on, and missing his medal, asked where it was.

“I must have lost it the night I was so sick in town, or about that time; I don't know, though, what has become of it,” he answered.

About 12 o'clock Father Carey came. Manuel seemed slightly agitated, but was glad to see him and they were alone for two hours. So prolonged an interview raised high hopes of a happy result, and we felt almost sure that Manuel had at length overcome every obstacle in the way of his reconciliation with God. The family, except Miriam, went down to dinner; she waited to see Father Carey, who before long came out of Manuel's room with a dejected countenance. Noting her anxious, eager look, he took her hand and said: “I am sorry to tell you, Mrs H——, that I can do nothing for Manuel. He absolutely refuses to renounce Masonry, which is the only obstacle to his receiving the sacraments. I have used every argument; plead, prayed and talked without effect. I am grieved, Mrs. H——; I assure you that you have my heartfelt sympathy. God bless and help you.”

“Oh, Father Carey, you are not going to give up my poor boy in this way?” she cried.

“What more *can* I do, my child? What *can* I do?”

“Try once more,” she plead. “Come up after dinner, and speak to him again before you go back to town.”

“ I fear I shall not have time ; indeed I think it will be useless to do so.”

“ Oh no ; don't say that. I understand Manuel's 'no,' better than you do. Only think of his devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and his kindness to the poor ! Oh, Father Carey, do you think Almighty God will not take these things into account ? ” she exclaimed, wringing her poor hands.

“ Yes,” said Father Carey after a short silence . “ I believe that He will. Here is a medal of our Blessed Lady,” continued the good priest, taking a medal from his side-pocket and blessing it, “ get Manuel to put this on. I will come up again before I go.”

She went in to Manuel, who lay back, white and exhausted, on his pillow. She got out a strip of narrow white ribbon and strung the medal upon it, he watching every movement ; then she said : “ Here is a medal, my child , should you like to have it on ? ”

“ Yes, indeed,” he answered earnestly. Then, very tenderly, while she mentally implored the sinless Mother of Jesus, by her love for Him, to succor her dying son, she put it about his neck. Ah ! how much was she spared by not knowing how close he was to the dark shadow of the silent land ! Her heart was full of a longing, irrepressible desire to say something of such force and power as would decide him to cast aside the obstacles placed in his way by the enemy of his

soul—which would break the dark spell which enthralled him like a snared bird, and give him liberty to seek the true end of his creation; but what could she do, knowing his peculiar temperament and idiosyncrasies as she did? She stood at the window, looking listlessly out at the desolate wintry scene, while her heart throbbed almost to bursting with its prisoned yearnings for her child's safety.

“Manuel, my child,” she said at last, daring all in her anxiety, and speaking tenderly and solemnly as she went towards him: “Don't, I implore you, let Father Carey go away without hearing your confession. I have had many bitter trials, as you know; but if you will only make your peace with God I shall feel more than recompensed for all that I have suffered.”

He said nothing, only closed his large beautiful eyes, with a sad, weary expression. God's angel, standing by, drew nearer the struggling soul—drew nearer to the rescue; and his Mother in heaven watched tenderly while she plead his cause with her Divine Son.

Presently he was seized with difficulty of breathing, and the old suffocating cough, which obliged him to sit erect on his bedside until it passed off. His mother sat on a low cushion, holding his purple, swollen feet in her lap, as in a tender embrace. She felt like dropping her face upon them, to kiss them and water them with her tears—the poor feet whose journey was so near

its end ; but they both hated anything like a scene ; both mother and son had an almost morbid dislike to a display of emotion of any sort, and she restrained the tender impulse, and forced back her tears.

“Mother!” he said, as the paroxysms passed off. She looked up and met his eyes fixed upon hers with a gaze as if he wished to read her very soul.

“What is it, Manuel?”

“It is all up with me, I expect!”

“Do you think so, my child,” she replied, while his eyes still held hers in that keen, penetrating glance.

“I want to know what *you* think about it.”

Good God! how could she tell him? What should she say? He never moved his eyes from hers. He seemed to hang for very life on what she would say. He was sure of hearing the truth, whatever it might be, for she had never deceived him, even in the smallest affair, in all his life. And how much depended on what she might tell him now!

“Tell me, mother,” he persisted.

“Manuel, my darling, I shall have to account to Almighty God for the answer I make you. I must tell you the truth. Your condition is most critical, and there are little or no hopes of your recovery,” she forced herself to say.

“Is that so?” he murmured, as he lay down.

“That settles the matter,” he whispered, so low that she could scarcely hear him.

“Ah, my child! God alone knows what is best for us. He sometimes blesses with recovery those who receive Extreme Unction; but when such is not His good pleasure, He gives them the far more exceeding great reward of eternal life.”

Just at this moment Father Carey entered the room, said a few kind words to Miriam, then went to Manuel, and, leaning over, spoke to him in a low tone. She left them together, and came into my chamber, her hands folded like one in a dream; she stood an instant without seeing me, then fell upon her knees and agonized in fervid prayer for her child's soul. I did not stir except to kneel where I was sitting, and recite the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary for the same intention. An hour passed; my little clock struck the half hour; then another; two hours! She rose up, and, crossing the hall, looked into the room communicating with Manuel's. The middle door was closed. She flew back, saying: “Oh, Bettine, are you here? Father Carey has been with Manuel an hour or two; he is still with him; and *the door is closed!*” She was nearly beside herself with joy. In a short time Father Carey opened the door, and, crossing the hall to my room, said: “Rejoice! Manuel has renounced Masonry; he has made his confession, and I am going to give him Extreme Unction, and the Holy Viaticum.” The good priest was much af-

fect. He had evidently mingled his tears with the contrite tears of Manuel; his eyes were red and swollen, and his face yet stained with them.

These words, which so frequently fill the hearts of the friends of the sick with bitter grief, as a sentence of final separation with their loved ones, filled this poor mother's waiting, weary heart with such a supreme joy, a joy so elevated that had she not been in the habit of keeping a strict discipline over her emotions she would have rejoiced aloud. She told me that the words of the *Te Deum* arose to her lips, and that all thoughts of death, grief and separation were lost, as in a sacred ecstasy. But she only said, as we folded each other for an instant in a warm embrace: "Oh, Bettine! I now realize, in a degree, the joy that is felt in heaven over a repentant soul." The glad news soon flew through the household, and from the looks of joy in every countenance one might have thought that a bridal was about being celebrated, so filled was every heart with a happiness unalloyed by earthly emotions. But Manuel never could bear anything like scenes, and we were very quiet and calm in his presence. We knew that he would prefer being alone during the solemn rites, so I only went in and out to arrange a temporary altar, light the candles, and assist Father Carey. My darling lay with his hand shading his face, but I saw that a ceaseless stream of tears was dripping over his white cheeks, sweet balms giving refreshment and strength to

his soul, washing it purer of its earthly stains. The rest knelt outside, near the open door, and assisted with heartfelt devotion and thankfulness in the soul-touching rites.

It was all over ; and after awhile, when she had perfectly recovered her composure, his mother went in, and kissing him tenderly, whispered : “ My little boy once more ! ”

“ I hope so,” he answered. “ Are you satisfied, mother ? ”

“ Ten thousand times over,” she said, folding his hand in both of hers to her breast. “ But keep very quiet, my child.” No need to tell him that. The dark tempest had rolled away, the struggle was over, the powers of evil vanquished by the divine strength of the Church. He was calm with a solemn, sweet gravity, free from even natural, nervous excitement, and he, “ possessed his soul in peace.”

Father Carey told me how it came about. He said : “ When I came up to see Manuel again, it was without the slightest hope of prevailing with him ; and when I asked him, as I thought for the last time, if he would go to confession, and he answered without the least hesitation, and in an emphatic manner, that he would, I really felt as if I should faint, it was so sudden, so entirely unexpected. Then I thought perhaps that he was jesting, or something of that sort, and asked him if he was in earnest. Again he said ‘ yes.’ ‘ Are you willing to renounce Masonry ? ’ I

asked. 'I renounce it,' he replied. 'Do you do so voluntarily?' I inquired. 'I should never renounce it otherwise,' he answered. And then he made his confession with every evidence of true contrition and genuine humility. I declare, it seems perfectly miraculous to me, and I can hardly realize it. God's ways are truly wonderful, and 'His mercy endureth forever.'"

A deep peace has settled upon Manuel. I love to think that it was through the powerful intercession of MARY, that here, at the very last, when his will appeared so unsubdued, and all seemed so utterly hopeless, he was saved; that he found, like a poor mariner buffeted by storms, shipwrecked, and almost lost, a safe and abiding port. He did not speak of what had passed; he was only very quiet and patient. No profane word, or defiant blasphemous expression ever stained his tongue again, even in his worst paroxysms of pain. He would only lift his eyes to the crucifix above his bed, and, although shivering with agony, murmur no complaint.

That night he was so oppressed that he got up and sat in a cushioned arm-chair by the fire. His mother, close beside him, held his hand, and did what she could to soothe his sufferings. It was past midnight. Everything was silent except the shrill whistling of the wind through the ice-covered trees. The fire sparkled brightly, and a cricket chirped merrily from its warm crevice in the hearth.

“I think a warm foot-bath might relieve your breathing, Manuel,” said his mother, no longer able to bear the sight of his suffering in silence. “I’ll go down and get Uncle Jeff to fetch up the water.”

“No, not to-night, mother. I’ve gone through a great deal to-day,” he answered.

“Yes, my child, you’ve done a great work to-day,” she said, folding his hand in a closer clasp.

“Yes, and it is a work that I mean to stand by, mother,” he said with grave emphasis. “With God’s help I mean to live a new life, if He spare me.”

“Oh, my child, He will surely help you!”

“I believe that He will, mother. I shall try to be a true servant of MARY after this. How strongly she stood by me through all. I often wondered at it in my wicked course, when I used to say a ‘Hail Mary’ in scenes in which it seemed like desecration to utter her name.”

“You were dedicated to her before your birth, Manuel, and offered to her afterwards, when placed under her special protection; and being her child, how could she let you perish in the wilderness? Like the woman who lost her goat, she searches diligently until she finds it, and puts it among the treasures which she offers to her Divine Son.”

“It seems so, indeed,” he whispered; he could only speak in whispers now. Presently he added: “Mother, I shall have a dreadful time if I ever get

back to the office. Every other man there is a Mason ; but it will make no difference to me ; I shall stand by what I have done to-day, God helping me."

This was his confession of the faith and hope that was in him, calm, deliberate and earnest ; spoken not as if what he had done had been done through a slavish fear of death, but as one who yet had hope of living to enter into the conflict again, and "fight the good fight" unto the end. But Almighty God willed it otherwise ; He spared him the perils of defeat, by shortening the term of his exile, and taking him to Himself when his soul was "white as snow" and crowned with the glistening diadem of contrition. Three days longer he lingered, uttering no murmur, making no complaint ; he approached his end, so to speak, with the grave decorum, the recollectedness and humility befitting one about entering into the presence of his Lord and Judge ; patient and gentle, he accepted with gratitude all that loving hands and hearts did for his comfort. Father Carey came daily, laden with the spiritual gifts of the Church to lavish on the returned prodigal. New garments had clothed him ; the Royal Banquet had been served, then came the Papal Benediction, the last absolution, and the plenary indulgence for the hour of death. At this time, a pious nun sent Miriam a picture of "the Holy Face of the Passion," a copy from the handkerchief of St. Veronica ; that face haggard with

sufferings, stained with blood and dust, and full of a mortal sadness which no language can describe. As Manuel sat, bowed with weakness, on the bedside, his eyes closed with utter weariness, the lids swollen and purple, the beautiful features disfigured by suffering and covered with beaded drops of cold sweat, his cheeks pallid and sunken, there was the same unutterably sad and patient look upon his countenance as in the picture! We all noticed it, and I shall never forget it, and I love to believe that MARY looked with tender pity on him who bore in his dying face the suffering image of her Son. \* \* \*

The sun was slowly sinking, and threw beams of tremulous effulgence on the walls above where our darling lay; the crucifix was surrounded by a corona of golden light, fit emblem of the peace which at last crowned the passion of the young life slowly sinking into the unseen, relentless tide of death. Father Carey, who arrived just at this moment, made haste and gave him the plenary indulgence for the hour of death; Manuel was perfectly calm and conscious, and made an effort to recite the act of contrition, but fell into his agony. It lasted for a moment only; his glorious eyes, brightened into strange effulgence by the fierce pangs of dissolution, rolled wildly; a single spasm wrung his features—then came rest. All was over. \* \* \*

His mother, who came to the door at this supreme moment, having been told that he was

awake, went swiftly back to her room, and flinging herself upon her knees, prayed for him as he passed through the valley of the shadow of death and still prayed, not knowing how it was, when Father Carey came in, and told her that her child had entered eternal rest. \* \* \*

Then the good priest and our dear R——, who had been more than brother to him, performed the last sad offices for our darling. They composed his limbs, and folded his hands—his delicate, tapering hands—the fingers interlaced around a crucifix upon his breast. When an hour afterwards I went in to arrange the lights and spread a few flowers around him, I never saw anything half so fair and beautiful. The disfigurement of his suffering was gone forever. His classic head, his high delicate features, the long, black lashes sweeping the marble cheeks, the soft brown beard, flowing in waves around his still, smiling mouth, made an image more perfect and beautiful than Phidias ever chiselled. The rare beauty of his early life was perfectly restored, and when his mother came in that night to look at him, as he lay so white and calm in the radiance of the blessed candles, her face grew serene, almost a smile lit up her face scarcely less white than his; she kissed his forehead, his lips; his hands, his feet, and murmured: “ ‘ He giveth sleep to His beloved.’ Good night, my child, my darling, good night.” \* \* \*

That night I watched with others. It was one

of those perishing cold nights, when it is almost painful to breathe the air, of even a warm\*dwelling; and we were startled by hearing the most mournful sounds outside the house that I ever listened to, a succession of plaintive moans, as of some one stricken with woe. Search was made, and just outside the window where our darling lay, a dove, driven by the weather from some sheltered haunt among the cedars, or lost astray from some distant household, of which it was the pet, clung to the bare branches of a tree. They tried to capture it, that its life might be saved; but with a frightened cry it fluttered an instant on the bough, then we saw its white wings flash out, and it was lost in the darkness. This little incident touched us deeply. It was a strange, mournful requiem to sound on the midnight over our dead. \* \* \*"

\* \* \* \* \*

And so our beloved one passed away, saved by the infinite compassion of Almighty God; and the intercession of JESUS and MARY.

Then let none despair, who have the grace to seek her aid; cherish the smallest thought of her, the faintest suggestion that may visit the soul; for when all seems lost, and the heart bows down and sinks under a sense of its utter unfitness and unworthiness to invoke even the name of God, she, jealous of the honor of her Son, and remembering the infinite price He paid for the salvation of souls, is ever ready to lift it up, and lead it gently,

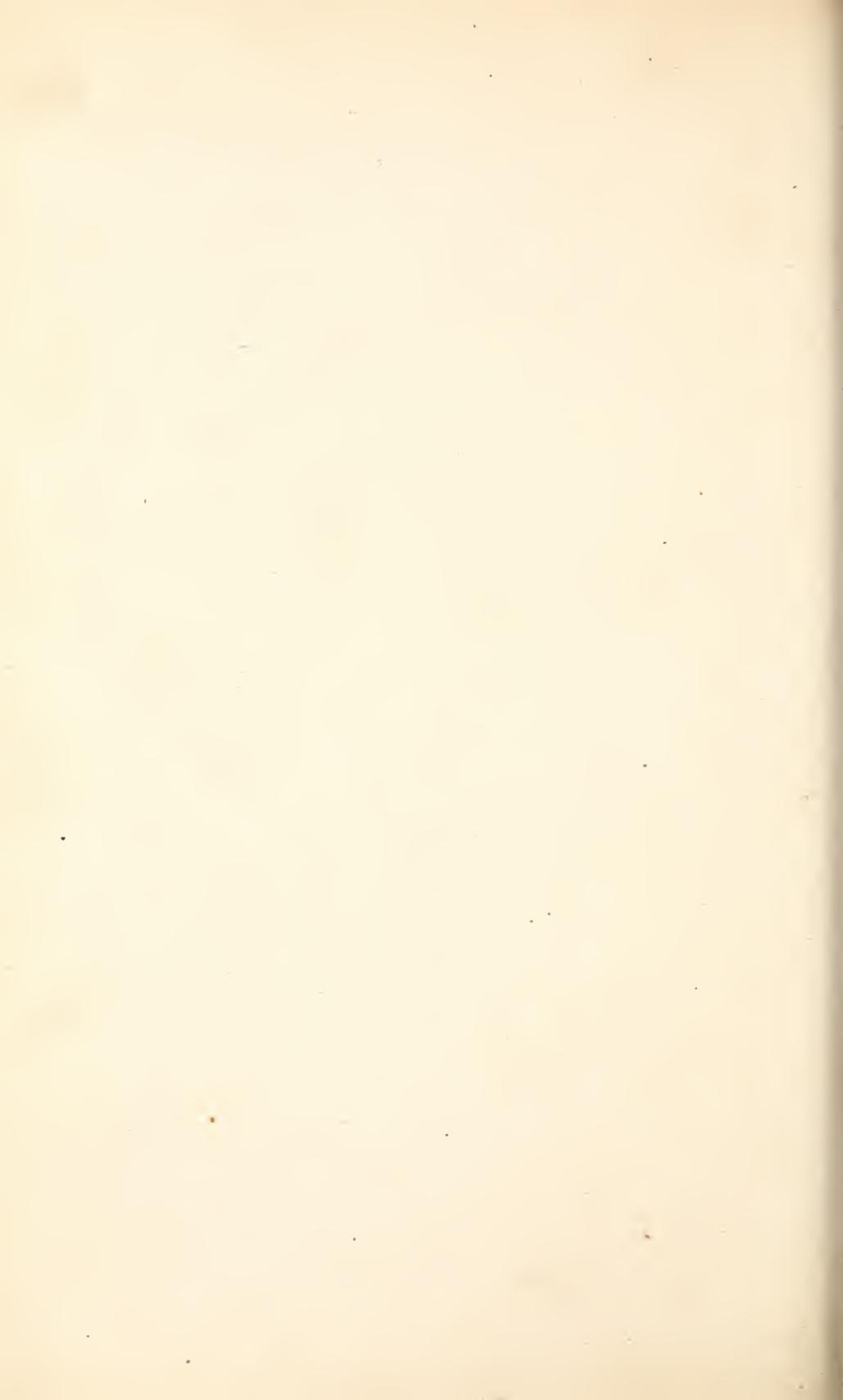
and with motherly tenderness, to Him who can alone wash away the scarlet of its stains and make it "as white as wool."

The Story of Manuel is no fiction; and the stray leaves of my poor journal, my personal reminiscences and little homely sketches of domestic scenes and surroundings, and the perhaps wearying outline of the devious ways by which our darling was brought back to God, would never have been given to the world but for a promise made to a saintly friend who was acquainted with the circumstances I have related, and who thought it was my duty to do so, for the encouragement and edification of others, and for the honor of the Blessed Virgin, through whose powerful intercession he was preserved and saved.

Pray for the soul of Manuel.

8

*Presentation Convent  
Dungarwan.*



# THE MAD PENITENT OF TODI.

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## CHAPTER I.

IT is near sunset as two men stand talking on one of the lower terraces of the public garden of an old Umbrian town, which, perched on the mountain side, looks down, with its time-worn walls and turrets, like a grim warden over the beautiful valley below, where the Tiber and the Naga unite their waters and flow peacefully through fertile meadows and shadowy solitudes, lending brightness to the scene and musical echoes to the air ; where, in more shallow places, the stream, made impetuous by obstructions, dashes in wild eddies and wreaths of foam over the grotesque rocks which by some freak of nature pave its bed. The glow of sunset is over all : a tint of rose-color here, flashes of gold there ; and farther away, on the sides of the rugged mountains, soft purple shadows that creep slowly up, to throw a twilight mantle over the white shining mists that like bridal veils crown their summits. The faint perfume of roses and jessamine rise in sweet breaths of incense, making the air drowsy with fragrance, and the first trills

of the nightingale are heard in snatches from the leafy coverts. Here a poet's soul might dream out his idyls undisturbed, and here even the troubled heart find surcease from its bitter memories.

And now, as if to make perfect the restful and delicious sense of peace imparted by the hour and scene, the silvery chime of a convent bell, higher up the mountain than the old city, floats out on the hushed air, repeating to heaven and earth the oft-told story of the Incarnation and the glory of Mary: then the deep-throated bell of the Cathedral, and that of St. Francis Assisi, strike in, the air trembling and pulsing with their notes as the *Angelus* sweeps heavenward, while a solemn stillness falls upon the city, upon the gay pleasure-seekers in the gardens, upon the groups chattering and laughing around the fountains; upon little children, and proud cavaliers, noble dames, peasants, and the toil-worn sons of labor; and all, as if with one accord, kneel in reverent homage, saint and sinner alike, in honor of that supreme moment which announced to the world a Saviour.

The two men, who with bared heads had knelt and reverently whispered the *Angelus*, now turn to ascend the broad marble steps leading to the gardens. They are near the top; but, as if reluctant to leave a view so beautiful, pause, and turn again towards the valley. We see that one of them is past middle age, a man of grave, ab-

stracted, but gentle countenance; the other, in the first glow of early manhood, with dark, soul-lit eyes, finely chiselled aquiline features, and a dreamy expression which harmonizes well with his pale complexion,—not pale with the languor of disease, but of that rich creamy tint sometimes seen in Southern Italy. The elder man had spent his life in endeavoring to master the science of the stars—astrology, as it was called in those days,—spending his days in deep calculations, and his nights watching the heavens, grudging to his body both sleep and food, and regarding all indulgence as base, compared with the sublime object of his enthusiastic studies. His companion was, judging from his dress, a Florentine, and was already pluming his poet-wings for sublime flights which would one day fill the world with his fame. Both stand silent, the astrologer thinking of the hour which would triumphantly verify his calculations, the poet steeping his soul in the glowing loveliness outspread before him, when suddenly wild shrieks fill the air, people rush wildly hither and thither, as if seeking safety; some, flying in such blind haste that they get too near the edge of the terrace, lose their footing and roll, spinning over and over, to the bottom: but there is no one to laugh at them, the panic is too universal.

The two friends hasten forward, and have scarcely reached the last step when two spirited Andalusian horses, harnessed to a light magnifi-

cent chariot of a new fashion, dash towards them, their driver, a handsome young man in richly embroidered garments of garnet velvet, with heavy chains of gold about his neck, his long dark hair flying backwards on the wind, trying in vain to curb them. His companion—a female—whose jewels and superb attire glitter and flash in the last level rays of the sun, with white agonized face clings shrieking to his arm, impeding his efforts to rein in the frightened animals, whose course leads direct towards a narrow belt of olives and ilex which grow on the very borders of a precipice overlooking the valley a hundred feet below.

With one impulse the friends spring forward, and at the risk of their lives seize the horses, heads, and the Florentine with a quick motion throws his cloak over their wild, fiery eyes: the sudden movement, the sudden darkness checks their mad flight, and they fall back upon their haunches, their silken coats covered with foam, their limbs trembling and convulsed; then he passes his long soft hand gently over their faces, speaking caressingly to the frightened creatures, smooths and pats them on shoulder and flank, until at last they stand quiet. Many persons—their dread of danger past—now press round with zealous offers of assistance, and the gentleman having descended from the chariot and led his companion to a grassy bank near the road, directs some workmen, who stand by, to lead the horses

to his stables, throwing them several broad gold pieces to ensure the safe conduct of his equipage. They had no need to inquire the way to his stables,—he was too well known as the only son of the richest man in Umbria, whose prodigality and *escapades* kept the town generally in a fever of excitement. Having seen that his horses step off quietly, led slowly by the men having them in charge, he turns—not to attend to the frightened woman, who reclines, trembling and sobbing hysterically, on the spot to which he had conducted her, and from whom other women stand aloof—but to find and thank his preservers, who are moving away from the spot and are just turning into a shaded alley which leads by a short cut to the street. Walking swiftly forward, he overtakes them, and, saluting them courteously, holds out his hand to grasp theirs, and thanks them in earnest language for saving his companion and himself from a certain and terrible death. But the outstretched hand is unnoticed, perhaps unseen, and the older of the two men replies in coldly courteous words that they deserve no thanks for obeying a humane impulse.

Evidently chagrined at the repulse, the young cavalier, with the blood rising hotly to his face, hands them his card, saying: “If I can in any manner ever requite the service done me to-day, it will be only necessary to present or send this to my address;” then turning on his heel, with

haughty mien and head thrown back he walks away.

“I see by the flush upon thy cheek, Alighieri that thou art shocked by my rudeness!”

“I must confess to the fact, Maestro; but we Florentines are emotional, and yield more readily to sensation than others. But that is as handsome and fair-spoken a cavalier as I ever saw.”

“Yes, he’s handsome, and he’s fair-spoken, more’s the pity; and he’s not only of gentle birth, but the only son of the richest man in Umbria, more’s the pity again.”

“Why, may I ask?”

“Because his position and gold give him great power to do evil, for which he has a large capacity, and he loses no opportunity to follow the impulse.”

“Dear Maestro, art thou not severe on the follies of youth? Who knows what Heaven may have in reserve for even one like him?”

“Towards the *follies* of youth I am lenient, but I must judge a man by his virtues or vices,” was the reply. “Listen, Alighieri: that man whose life we have just saved is Jacques dei Benedetti, the greatest profligate of the age; he is breaking his old father’s heart by his wasteful profusion and his shameless pleasures—”

“And the lady, is she—”

“Faugh! do not name her: her very breath pollutes the air. She is lost to virtue, to shame, and to all womanliness, and yet he dares to

flaunt her, arrayed in jewels and rich raiment, which are the price of sin, before the eyes of the fair dames and virgins of Todi. It had been better, perhaps, had we turned our backs and let them be dashed to pieces."

"If God, the All-seeing, were not over all!" said Alighieri, making the Sign of the Cross. "The future, which He knows, is a sealed book to us."

"Well, if Jacques dei Benedetti is preserved this day for any good end, it will be a miracle," said the older man, laughing. "Don't understand, because I am incredulous, that I am not willing that it should be so; for the Church hath saints whose beginning was no whit better than his, but such things are hard to realize."

"The man hath touched me strangely, and I will offer a decade of *Ave Marias* daily for him," said Alighieri, in low tones. Men in those ages of faith were not ashamed of talking in this strain; religion entered into their daily life, as part of it; devotion was an acknowledged primary obligation; and the bravest, the most exalted in rank and the noblest did not deem it weakness or cant to speak reverently of sacred things, and acknowledge their obedience to the Divine law as revealed to the Church.

"Our Blessed Lady loves to win such triumphs for her son; may thy *Aves* be so blessed!" said the Maestro, lifting his velvet cap, and glancing upwards for an instant; but in that one glance he

saw, pillowed on a fold of purple cloud, the evening star just risen from behind the mountain. "I would have thee come with me to my eyrie, Alighieri, but the stars are beginning to come out, and I must be vigilant lest I lose the first appearance of the new planet."

"Thou hast yet faith?"

"Yes, unless the heavens fall," said the astrologer, throwing back his head and fixing a look of rapt belief on the blue depths above, as far as his eyes could pierce.

This man, Bartolomeo Tasti, had spent the best years of his life in studying the movements of the heavenly bodies, and it was said that he was master of the more occult science of astrology. It is certain that many of his predictions had been verified, and the common mind regarded him with awe, as one whose knowledge of hidden things was indisputable; some looked upon him as a mad enthusiast, others as a magician, but nothing of all this disturbed him; he pursued the even tenor of his way, and waited only for the appearance of the new planet, which by his deep calculations and observations he was sure was approaching, and would be visible ere long, to crown his labors with triumph.

"I would fain go with thee to thy quiet eyrie, Maestro, if only to read the poetry of the heavens, but I have an engagement at the house of one of thy citizens, to whom I brought letters."

“Keep watch and ward over thy heart, Alighieri; for if I mistake not there’s a beautiful maiden in that house, the house of Gondolfo the banker.”

“I do not know; but even so, that would be small attraction for me,” said Alighieri, thinking of his gentle Beatrice away in Florence, whom he had loved since her childhood. “But how didst thou divine so truly?”

“No divination in the matter. I met Gondolfo to-day, and he told me that he had invited thee to a *fiesta* at his house this evening; but I had forgotten it until thou didst speak of thy engagement.”

With a warm grasp of the hand the friends separated. The young Florentine had heard much of the beautiful Julia from a cousin of his, who knew her, and also from Father Giovanni, a monk of St. Francis Assisi, whose monastery crowned one of the hills back of the town. The one, enthused over her strange dreamy loveliness, her gentle manners, her low, sweet voice, and her grace, in terms which idealized her at once in the poetic mind of Alighieri; the other spoke of her as one unsoiled by the world, who had never known earthly love, and whose highest happiness was to be in the Adorable Presence that dwelt on the altar, and in communion with the Virgin without stain. “She will devote herself to heaven,” the good monk said, folding his hands with a smile of complacency; “such a soul is

indeed a true daughter of our blessed St. Francis."

Alighieri had heard no exaggerated descriptions of Julia Gondolfo's loveliness and the charm of her manner; and he thought, as he saw her an hour afterwards moving among her guests with winning smiles and graceful mien, clothed in the rich attire befitting her station, and decorated with the old jewels of her house, that she far surpassed the ideal he had formed of her, and could but give a sigh of regret to the thought that so radiant a creature should seclude herself in the cell of a convent: such perfection, his poetic mind imagined, would win more souls to Heaven in the world than she could hope to do by austerities and prayers in the cloister. The Italians even then had a saying that "a beautiful woman is the thought of God"; why then, he reasoned, should she not, like a bright particular star, be willing to let her light shine before men, that He might be extolled and honored in the perfection of His work? So, as one set apart for heaven, Alighieri gazed upon her until her fair image was imprinted on his imagination so vividly, that in later years, clothing Beatrice in her beauty, the world saw her in the "Divine Comedy."

But the beautiful maiden was not destined to the cloister. Heaven had other work for her to do, which in the beginning made Father Giovanni vow never again to trust to appearances.

Alighieri lingered some days longer in Todi, studying the marvellous paintings and sculptures of Guido of Sienna, of Cimabue and Giotto, and seeking out in the monastery and convent chapels the numerous paintings of scenes in the life of the beloved St. Francis which kindled to a warmer glow the piety of the simple peasants of the mountains when they came thither to pray in the holy places dedicated in his honor. And here, wandering among the delicious scenery, the young poet pored over St. Bonaventura's "Legend of St. Francis," feeling his heart moved with strange emotion by the pathos of the account of the Saint's last hours, "when the swallows, those little birds that love the light, and hate darkness, though the night was falling when he breathed his last, came in a great multitude, filling the windows and roof." Likewise did St. Francis find immortal honor in the "Divine Comedy," which seems part of the glory with which he is crowned in heaven, and that was first dreamed of amidst these fair Umbrian scenes.

Several times after the evening spent at her house, Alighieri saw the beautiful maiden at the early Masses; sometimes when, coming from Holy Communion—her eyes downcast, her bared,\* perfect hands folded, her countenance clothed in such peace as the world cannot give, unseeing

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\* In Catholic countries it is a custom for ladies to unglve during Mass.

and unthinking of all except the heavenly Guest who abode in her heart—she passed him, and he felt as often he had felt when, in a devotional mood, the blessed drops of the "*Asperges*" sprinkled him. It was thus that the fair Julia entered into his ideal world, which was peopled by angels and images of spiritual beauty never dreamed of by man before. He had seen other women famed for their beauty, but never one who produced upon him an impression like this; their charms had stirred the sensuous in his nature, but her loveliness was something set apart, and as far above all earthly passion as the image of saint or Madonna.

Occasionally, in these few last days in Todi, Alighieri met, either driving in his gilded chariot or on the promenade, the handsome cavalier Jacques dei Benedetti, always conspicuous wherever he appeared, for his perfect physique, the bold audacious beauty of his face, his rich attire, and the good nature which threw bows and smiles to his friends or a handful of silver to the beggars, with the same careless, reckless, winning grace. The poet's heart was strangely drawn towards him, why he could not define, nor did he seek to analyze the sentiment, knowing how impossible of growth a friendship would be between them; but he never failed to whisper the *Ave Marias* he had vowed for his conversion. When they met in public places Alighieri walked on as if unobservant, acknowledging by no look or sign

that he had ever seen him before ; how could he, when in outrage of all decency he rarely appeared except in company with the woman who was a scandal to her sex, and who by her confident, audacious demeanor defied the community she insulted by her presence ?

Every day he spent an hour with his old friend the astrologer, whose long-predicted star had not yet appeared, and whose heart was growing faint with deferred hope, but whose faith became stronger the more remote seemed the realization of his dreams.

At length the day of his departure dawned ; the Maestro—as he loved to call him—embraced and blessed him ; he spent an hour in the Cathedral, gazing upon the last creation of Cimabue ; snatched a glimpse of his favorite views as if he would have been glad to have folded them in his arms and borne them away, then with lingering steps he turned his face towards Florence, where after his arrival he began to transfer some of the poetic visions that had bewitched him at Todi into verse : while the old astrologer, high up in his lonely tower still worked over his problems and calculations by day, and watched the spangled heavens by night, for the first ray of the glorious stranger that he felt assured was rolling through space towards him ; for had not all his computations of the solar year pointed to its return ?

## CHAPTER II.

IT is early summer, and in the three years that have glided by the world appeared to have moved on without change in the old city perched on the mountain side. The groves of orange and citron, loaded with blossoms and fruit, blended their pungent fragrance with that of lilacs and roses and other sweet-smelling blooms, which, wafted sometimes singly by the wind, sometimes mingled, reminded one of a harmony of delicious odors played by aerial fingers. The united rivers of the fair Umbrian valley sang their song, reflected back the sunshine and starlight and clouds; the holy solitaries in the monastery of St. Francis, and in the convent cloisters far up the mountain, prayed when the world slept, and the sweet bells rang out the hours of Matins, Prime, Lauds, Vespers and Nones as of old, while morning and evening they reminded the faithful on mountain and valley to remember the Incarnation, and honor the Virgin without stain through whom Redemption was brought to man. In the busy marts of traffic, and in the haunts of pleasure, the same crowds jostled each other, while in the silent, shadowy churches, kneeling before altars and shrines, were always found groups of devout

souls holding communion with Heaven. Now and then the public games kept the community in a ferment of excitement; while they continued, the amphitheatre was the centre of attraction, some going to gaze delightedly on the wrestling and other feats of the athletes, the chariot-races, and the daring gladiatorial contests; others to hear the reading of new comedies; still others to see the voluptuous dances of Egyptian girls. The games over, everything would settle down once more to the dull routine of everyday life. But it was very quiet now; every one was complaining of the dullness, and wishing for something to amuse them; even Jacques dei Benedetti was away at his villa on the other side of the valley. Had he been at home, some of his wild pranks would no doubt have furnished them a sensation; as it was, there was danger of stagnation.

But it is always a deathlike stillness which precedes the earthquake, and one day when all Todi was growing weary to death of the condition of affairs, a sensation came. A strange rumor suddenly shook the old city that made men turn pale and hold their breath; it was that, at last, as long predicted, Jacques dei Benedetti had ruined his father by his lavish and prodigal extravagance, by gaming and other expensive vices, and that there was nothing left of their former prosperity except the house that sheltered them, and that only because it had been inalienably

settled upon him and his descendants by his grandfather. One morning, shortly after their ruin was made public, the older Benedetti, crushed and heart-broken by his misfortunes, was found seated at his desk, his account books open before him, with pen in hand, stone dead, the lamp, not yet burnt out, reflected in his wide-open glazed eyes. His son was instantly summoned. He had avoided his father's presence ever since the crash came—the silent anguish of the old man hurting him more than the most violent reproaches would have done, for did he not see in that pale, deeply-lined visage, so marked with grief, *his work*? He hastily obeyed the summons, not knowing what to expect; for the servant who called him was incoherent from terror. He entered the library, walked towards his father, and lifting his eyes he saw what it was; he stood still, arrested by the shock, as if turned to stone. His eyes, starting almost from his head, gazed upon the glazed, staring eyes of the dead; his face grew white and drawn, while the veins in his temples and neck stood out like whipcords. No tear relieved the remorse that stung him, no passionate outcry of grief relieved his pent-up emotions, no whispered prayer escaped his lips as he stood there motionless before the cold, silent figure upon whose wide-open eyes the expiring lamp sent strange, fitful gleams, imparting to them a lifelike expression of wrath and reproach which made him tremble. Suddenly the flame

shot up and expired, and the stricken man beheld only the sad, pathetic expression left upon the dead face by the last throb of a broken heart. With a cry of anguish he threw himself upon his knees, and lifting up the cold, stiff hand, pressed it to his burning forehead, and registered a vow, known only to God, a vow which he fulfilled to the letter, but in what spirit we shall see. Replacing the hand whence he had lifted it, he stooped and kissed the dead man's feet; he dared not desecrate that poor, sorrowful face by a caress, he who had brought such bitterness, even death itself, to him who had never reproached or pained him by a harsh word.

Jacques dei Benedetti arose, and left the apartment a changed man—all his energies, hitherto misspent, concentrated into an iron will, which turned the whole current of his life. He secluded himself in his own apartment, leaving to the good monks of St. Francis, to whom his father had been a generous benefactor, and a few of the most trusted servants of the house, all the necessary arrangements for the last rites. Masses were daily offered for the repose of the departed soul, and a grand Requiem Mass was celebrated in the Cathedral, on the magnificent altar which was his gift; the Office of the Dead was devoutly chanted in the Franciscan choir and in the Convent of St. Agnese; all that the faithful could do, all that the Church could do, through the communion of saints, was done, to win for it

a place of "refreshment, light and peace." The funeral, as was customary in Italy, took place at night, by torchlight. One figure wrapped in a black cloak walked by the bier, and stood, with white face, and quite motionless, while the body was deposited in its last resting-place. The priests and monks chanted the solemn service of the dead, the *Miserere* and *De Profundis* sounded upon his ears, but no tear, no sign of emotion was visible in his face; he was as still and white as the image of the marble saint near which he stood. People touched each other to notice him, and wondered at his heartlessness; "he is either turned to stone," they said, "or he is dead to all natural feeling." But they did not know—in fact we are all blind to the mystery of God's ways, and cry out wildly, "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" when His grand designs are ripening slowly but surely, through human means.

But there was one present, closely veiled, at the sepulture who watched Jacques dei Benedetti with the deepest pity, from whose eyes tears flowed, and from whose heart pure prayers ascended for his conversion and consolation. This was Julia Gondolfo, who attended the funeral with her father—between whom and the deceased a lifelong friendship had existed. She beheld under the still calm of those white chiselled features a stern, remorseful grief too deep for expression, and she would fain have whispered words of sympathy; but that being impossible,

she could only pray, and oh ! how earnestly she prayed for him, offering her very life, if need be, a sacrifice for him. And why ? She could not tell, except that she knew he had sinned deeply, and her heart was filled with a great compassion for him, lest without consolation or Divine help he might despair and end his own life. Then, every one was against him ; all blamed him ; but he had been her playmate once, and she remembered the gentle traits of his character, especially his kindness to beggars, and his merry companionship ; how then could she be indifferent, and turn coldly from him in his hour of trouble ? She knew that his life had been profligate, and that he had lived in open defiance of the precepts of religion and morality, but was not this more reason why she should pity him, and was not the grace of God sufficient even for such as he, else why did the Man-God give to us the lesson of the prodigal son ! And, without ever seeing him as time passed on, she prayed, she besieged Heaven in his behalf, and engaged for her intention the prayers of all the holy souls she knew.

But the gentle maiden need have had no dread on one point. Jacques dei Benedetti had no thought of self-destruction ; on the contrary he meant to live and repair the fortune he had wasted, and the honor of his house ; this was what he had vowed that awful day-dawn while kneeling at the feet of his dead father, and this was to be henceforth the *motif* of his existence.

He would live only for this, and accomplish it, or die in the attempt. Thus we see that the blow he had received had not yet reached his soul, or struck the rock whence would flow the waters of penitence; it had only touched his honor, filled him with bitter remorse, and inspired him to repair, so far as he could, the evils he had wrought, that he might thereby clear away every stain from his father's name, believing, like a pagan, that it would appease his spirit and win his forgiveness.

Jacques dei Benedetti disappeared from men's eyes; the gay resorts of pleasure saw him no longer; his splendid horses, equipages, and jewels were sold; those who had ministered to his sinful pleasures were peremptorily, and without appeal, dismissed, and of the small remnant of a fortune inherited from his grandfather, and the result of his sales, he formed the nucleus of a new business. None so attentive to his affairs, none so exact as he, and none so frugal! To Venice, to Florence, to Marseilles and other marts of the world, he journeyed, and one or two fortunate speculations brought him immense gains. The speculations were questionable, and would not have borne investigation, but money began to flow into his coffers. As all stratagems are fair in war, Benedetti saw no harm in stratagems in business; if they were allowable in one case, he thought they were so in the other; and, then, his object! he thought only of that; it was his car of juggler-

naut, in which he meant to override all obstacles, whatever they might be. Grave and quiet in his demeanor, he was never seen in public except at Mass, or sometimes in the evening wandering alone in the more retired parts of the public gardens, his avoidance of all sympathy and companionship keeping aloof his former friends. Indeed we fear that Todi rather grieved over the loss of her gay sinner, who used to afford her pleasure loving citizens so much to talk over and enjoy.

Prosperity crowned his energetic efforts, and in two or three years, what with his lucky speculations, good investments, and his untiring attentions to his affairs, he had nearly retrieved his losses and the honor of his old house, which still carried on its business in his father's name. He began now to relax somewhat the severity of his self-imposed isolation from the society of his old friends, and one day, to the extreme astonishment of Count Gondolfo, he accepted his invitation to dine with his daughter and himself—with Julia, who yet told her beads and offered her Communions for him. Living so long apart from all social intercourse, and the charms of refined female companionship, it is not strange that he should have been at once attracted, fascinated by the exquisite loveliness and gentle grace of his young hostess; he felt as if under the influence of a mysterious spell, not only while in her presence, but afterwards; thoughts and feelings heretofore strangers took possession of his mind, and

again seeking her, drawn by an irresistible impulse, he found himself even more bewildered and fascinated than at first ; he could not define his sensations, or recognize the fact that it was the dawning of the first virtuous love he had ever known. What higher and holier influences moved these two human hearts—apparently so far apart—towards each other, was veiled in the future, but a day came in which all seemed made plain. How one so fair and saintly in her life could ever consent to become the bride of a man whose record was stained with sins and vices which had broken his father's heart, became the topic of the day in Todi ; for Jacques dei Benedetti, having, after a few more visits to Julia's home, determined at all hazards to woo and win her. had with his accustomed energy, and led by his imperious will, made known his sentiments to her father, to whom he furnished proofs that he had more than retrieved his fortunes, and had put aside forever the vices of his earlier life, which he declared were more the result of an undisciplined youth than of a malicious preference for sin ; it had been the only way he knew, and, finding it pleasant, had run therein until his father's sudden death had roused him from his mad career ; and now, having fulfilled the vow he then made to restore the honor and prosperity of his name and house, he wanted a wife like Julia, who, like an angel by his side, would lead him to a better and higher life. This conversation lasted until far into

the night ; Count Gondolfo probed deeply the past history of his daughter's suitor, and, with stern insistence to know clearly and frankly much that had been only half revealed by rumors and gossip, questioned him without mercy. But he was equal to the ordeal ; he frankly acknowledged his guilty peccadilloes, but defied the strictest investigation of his life since he had turned his back on the follies and sins of the past. The old Count, at length satisfied of his sincerity, felt that he might trust his daughter's happiness to his keeping, and consented to her receiving his addresses, saying : " Thy cause must stand upon thy own merits, Benedetti. I shall not interfere either for or against. My daughter is old enough to judge for herself, and is too precious for me to want to be separated from her even by a marriage of her own choice ; therefore do not count in the least upon me."

" Never fear, Count Gondolfo," said the other, proudly ; " I must have a willing bride or none. Julia is my first love ; if she in turn loves me I shall be the happiest man living. Good-night."

Julia did not reject her lover's suit, neither did she give him an affirmative answer ; she only asked in shy, broken words, for time to consider his proposal. The delay would have chafed his proud spirit beyond endurance, had not the soft blushes that mantled her cheeks, and the quickened throbbings of her heart which stirred the rich lace upon her bodice, assured him ; and he

yielded with tender deference to her request, hopeful and confident as to what the final answer would be. Meantime the gentle maiden did not propose to settle this momentous question by her own unaided judgment; her ideas of marriage were too exalted, and its responsibilities too grave; her lover, she knew, was not a devout man; although he was observant of the outward forms of religion, he was a worldling, proud, ambitious, and had a will of iron, alike powerful for good or evil; would it not then be risking her earthly happiness, perhaps her very salvation, to yield? How could she ever assimilate her principles, her opinions and ideas with one whose life from first to last had been spent as his had been? But she loved him; and it was no new-born sentiment, but the growth of months and years; like a bird caught under the meshes of a net, she could not escape that fact, reason as she might; and, helpless to decide for herself, she determined to submit her doubts and fears to Heaven, for guidance. She sought her spiritual director, to whom she confided all; and he, being a discreet man, well versed in human nature, did not seek by a single word to influence her decision in the case; he only advised her to have recourse to prayer, and the Divine Sacraments, and invoke the aid of Mary conceived without sin, who never refused her assistance to those who sought it in a right spirit. She procured Masses to be offered for her, commenced a *novena* to St. Francis, and

asked the prayers of the saintly religious of St. Agnese and of the monks of St. Francis, and of many faithful souls among her poor, for her intention. A rumor by this time was in the air that she was betrothed to Jacques dei Benedetti; it penetrated convent and cloister, and although none questioned her, they understood what her "intention" was,—and, truth to say, the holy souls were opposed to it, for had they not always believed that Julia Gondolfo was a virgin too fair and pure for any earthly love, and that she was surely destined to become the bride of Heaven? And now to hear that she was going to mate herself with one whose life had been a scandal to religion, to morality and to his native city, was like an earthquake to their gentle souls, and disturbed in an unprecedented manner the serenity of their lives; but alas! what could they do except to offer their prayers as requested, that the will of the dear Lord might be made manifest in the case, and that if He did not see fit in His good pleasure to avert it, He would at least vouchsafe the grace of a true conversion to Jacques dei Benedetti. The Virgin without stain, the sweet Mother of Jesus, was besieged by the devotion of all who best loved Julia, and feared that she was about rushing to the destruction of her earthly happiness; and the day on which the *novena* ended, never except on a Saint's *fiesta* had so many, old and young, thronged the sanctuary to receive and offer Holy Communion, that all

danger and evil be averted from the innocent being upon whom many of them looked as a victim to the wicked designs of an unprincipled man,—notwithstanding which they prayed ardently for his conversion, for (as they said) if any one ever needed such prayers and the saving grace of God, Jacques dei Benedetti did ; by which we see, that his townspeople had but small faith in him ; in fact they suspected that he had only exchanged one form of wickedness for another, so prone are the best of persons to regard with suspicion the motives of those who have once erred and given scandal.

But there was no miraculous interposition—no sign vouchsafed to show either the approval or the displeasure of Heaven ; or how God's work was to be accomplished, or how His glory was to be served by designs hidden from mortal eyes.

The betrothal of Julia Gondolfo and Jacques dei Benedetti was duly announced, and celebrated with great splendor by a superb entertainment, at which their friends offered them congratulations, and expressed many sincere hopes for their future happiness. The nuptials followed shortly after, and never had so lovely and magnificently dressed a bride been seen in Todi ; and despite their prejudices, never a bridegroom so noble in appearance, so perfect in manly beauty ; indeed they almost found it in their hearts to forgive and trust him. But as the grand nuptial Mass went on, amidst rolling music and clouds of in-

cense, and the golden embroideries and rich gems upon the vestments of the celebrants glistened in the light of countless wax tapers as the sacred words were intoned from the altar, and the time approached for the newly wedded pair to receive the Bread of Life, every one felt a sensation of thankfulness, and drew as it were a long breath of relief when they saw the Sacred Host laid upon the bridegroom's tongue; and the remarks of an old woman at the church door, after the bridal party had passed out, represents the sentiment which had generally prevailed at the moment.

"Thanks to our Blessed Lady, he's not given over body and soul to Satan, or he'd have dropped dead when he received," said she to a friend.

"They don't always," mumbled the other old crone. "Let them wait as cares to, to see the end of it. God has His ways, and we have ours, and they are as far apart as the East from the West!"

That was a grand truth, too little pondered on then or now: "God's ways are not as our ways"; and of all the gossip and talk that day, there was nothing came so near the truth as the saying of that toothless old woman, whose head shook with age, and who tottered as she walked, a simple, ignorant creature, whose dull mind had never ventured beyond the most commonplace affairs of life, a few simple prayers and the bare animal wants of her condition.

"God's ways are not as our ways," it will be well to remember.

### CHAPTER III.

The marriage was, notwithstanding all predictions to the contrary, a happy one. Jacques dei Beneditti idolized his wife, and revered in her the Christian virtues which made her life more beautiful than that of other women. Piety, he thought, suited her style of loveliness so perfectly that it enhanced her dignity and grace.

It was his pride to think that everything belonging to him was the best of its kind; the simple fact of possession was enough to give it a pre-eminent value in his estimation; but however he might have been mistaken in other things, he was not in the case of his fair young wife, who enjoyed a felicity in his devotion and his tender regard for her slightest wishes, which would have been too perfect but for one thing. It was not long before she discovered that although his life was morally changed he never approached the Sacraments, and whenever he alluded to religion, it was, if not with a covert sneer, in light, careless terms, which pained and saddened her.

Benedetti was now Jurisconsult of Umbria, a dignity conferred upon him by the reigning prince in reward for some successful achievement in finance which had greatly benefitted the royal

treasury, and he felt it to be due to his position as an honored officer of the crown and a wealthy citizen to live and entertain magnificently, to patronize the arts and literature, and to take the lead which was universally conceded to him. With all his pride, Benedetti was never haughty or arrogant, either in his official or civic intercourse with his fellow-townsmen; the same good nature and generosity characterized him now as in the past, and he dealt even justice in all cases over which he had jurisdiction. Upon his wife he lavished the most profuse and magnificent gifts: the richest stuffs from Genoa, from Persia and Lyons; the most cunning embroideries from India, the most rare and costly laces from Venice and Flanders; opals, pearls and diamonds set in rare devices in gold, he offered as love-gifts to her; the most costly equipages and the finest of Arabian horses were imported at great cost for her use, and it was his pleasure and will that she should appear in magnificent attire at the entertainments, the games, and the public gardens, her peerless beauty set off in all the splendor he so profusely heaped upon her that none might outshine her, and she be the cynosure of every eye. And not only was he generous and proud in this prodigal fashion to her, but, sinner as he was, he won the hearts of the good religious on every side by his generous *largesse* to their charities and his ungrudging alms to the poor. If a new altar was to be erected in the

Cathedral or elsewhere, or new mosaics needed to decorate the wall over a shrine, another wing to be added to the monastery of St. Francis, or an orphanage established, or stained glass from Venice for an abbot's memorial, his was the unsparing hand that responded to every appeal, partly because he knew that it would please his wife, but chiefly because he was by nature lavish, and fond of giving; and he was blessed and prayed for as no other sinner in Todi had ever been before. And these prayers! do we not read in St. John's Vision of golden vials in which were the prayers of the saints,—why should one then ever faint with despondency, after even years of unanswered prayers? for are they not gathered in these golden vials, and does not faith teach us that the time will come when the All-Father will accept the incense, and answer in full fruition?

Benedetti accompanied his wife to High Mass on Sundays and on the great festival days of the Church, because he desired to make her happy; and then he loved to see her there in her rich attire, more beautiful than any pictured saint upon the walls; while she, her heart filled with the deepest humility, giving place to no emotion of vainglory or pride, offered herself—aye, even her life—for his conversion. All the splendor, and pomp, and luxury which he lavished upon her and surrounded her with, irked her sorely, and burdened her gentle spirit; but all must suf-

fer something, and so long as he gave freely, and allowed her to bestow generous alms on the needy and suffering, why should she not accept her gilded but heavy, wearisome cross, if it made him happier? Was it not her duty to try and win him to higher and better things?

Within a year of her marriage, Julia's father, the old Count Gondolfo, died, leaving his daughter a large fortune; he blessed his children, for he loved Benedetti as his own son, and besought him with his dying breath, to watch over and guard his daughter's happiness; then, fortified and consoled by all the solemn rights of the Church, he passed away in hope. In Julia's heart, hope mingled with grief; it was her sweet privilege, she knew, to help him whither he had gone, by her prayers and more solemn devotions; that although separated for a season, her intercourse with him would remain unbroken. But Benedetti gazing sadly, it is true, upon the white, drawn features of the old patrician as the flicker of the blessed tapers trembled over their motionless calm, thought: "And is this the end? Death, the grave, and forgetfulness! Rather let us, then, enjoy life while it lasts; let us eat, drink, and be merry! Faugh! the thought of becoming a carcass sickens me"; and he left the death-chamber to go out into the sunshine and scented air of his garden, his only grief being the tears which he knew that her loss would cause to flow from the eyes of his wife, and the shadow

that death would throw across his home. He hated gloom; he breathed freely only when in an atmosphere of gay, stirring life, and surrounded by everything that could charm the senses or delight the taste. But the death of the old Count, and the necessary observances, and the period of mourning, were inevitable; he would be obliged to submit; it was one of the penalties of his rank and station to conform to the proper usages of events such as this, and although he was afraid it would make him insane before it was all over, he determined to go through it with the best grace he might, and as far as he could; then if he found that the restraint became unbearable he would make business which would necessitate a trip to Venice.

One year of intolerable weariness to Benedetti passed by; several times he determined to leave home for a month or two, but he could not bear to absent himself from his gentle wife, more beautiful in her sadness than even in the sunshine of happiness, and her efforts to be cheerful for his sake were so full of pathos that he would rather have seen her weep. No, he would not go just yet, but he would hunt up some of his former companions there in Todi, and talk over the old joyous times; there could be no harm in that, or in strolling through the gardens, and listening to the music. And while he was thus inwardly fretting under the restraints imposed by custom, and a desire to show his wife to what lengths he

would go through affliction for her, she spent the season of mourning in seclusion and quiet, in tranquil devotion which had for its object the repose of her father's soul and the conversion of her husband. In simple mourning robes, the gauds, splendors and distractions of their high estate laid aside, and blessed in the tender sympathy and companionship of the one being whom she best loved, Julia was almost happy, and often secretly wished that they might thus always live apart from the pomps and vanities of the world. A few friends were admitted during these days of mourning, whose aims and aspirations, being like her own, cheered and consoled her; and her drives, usually terminated at the Convent of St. Agnese, or the monastery of St. Francis, where in sweet converse with the saintly men and women who had devoted themselves by heroic vows, body and soul, to Heaven, the hours passed swiftly and happily by. Every morning found her humbly kneeling before the altar of St. Stephen the Martyr, offering her Communion and devotions as ever for the repose of her father's soul and the conversion of her husband. Nor were her poor forgotten: in seeking to alleviate their sufferings, visiting them in their poor hovels, and supplying their needs, in literal accordance with the precepts of St. James, and in other works of mercy, her time was well and profitably occupied.

But as the days passed on, Benedetti, who had nothing to console him beyond the perishable

things of earth, which under certain circumstances become the veriest husks, began to grow restive. The silence and gloom of his house grew more and more intolerable to him; he longed to see the sunshine streaming through the windows again, and flowers, of which he was passionately fond, garlanded and grouped everywhere; he longed for the sounds of music, revelry and dancing which formerly echoed through his halls and used to gladden his heart; his patience had been rare, but it was now nearly worn out, and he began to absent himself from home, frequently not returning until far in the night, and sometimes not until daydawn. Julia observed these signs with sad surprise; he was not less kind or affectionate in his manner towards her, but it was evident that he was seeking pleasures outside his own home, pleasures in which she had no participation. Soon she observed that under some slight pretext or other, often without any, he would hurry from her presence, leaving her lonely, and saddened by vague apprehensions. One evening he came in with reddened face, his speech thick, and his gait unsteady, doing his best in a fond, maudlin way to conceal his real condition. With a frightened, aching heart she seemed to take no notice of anything unusual: she had never given him a reproachful word or look, or in the slightest manner intimated by question or remark that she dreaded all might not be going well with him. She was very pale, and was gentle towards

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him, nay, tender in her great pity; and when, under pretext of not feeling well, he retired, she was thankful.

She spent the hours of that sorrowful night in taking counsel with herself, questioning her own heart severely, and praying earnestly for guidance. "I have been selfish!" was the result of her self-examination; "I have expected too much of my husband, who finds his greatest happiness in the pleasures of the world, and flies from solitude and devotion as something fit only for priests and nuns. This is no way to win an influence over him which will lead him to better and higher things. I will henceforth forget myself, and bury my griefs for his sake; and, oh! Blessed Lady of Sorrows, help me by thy intercession; pray for my husband, that the fruit of thy Son's Passion and thine own unspeakable sorrows, may not be lost on him. I vow, O holy Mother, to devote my life to thy service and to an imitation of thy sacred humility, and to do penance for him if so by thy intercession his salvation is secured. Ay, sweet Mother of Dolors, I offer myself, with all I have, even life itself, for his conversion!"

Never in all her life had Julia felt a sorrow so poignant as this, and when, through faintness, far in the night she sought her couch, it was not to sleep, but to lie watching with wide open eyes and listening for the slightest movement from the next apartment whence the sound of her husband's stertorous, heavy breathing filled her with alarm.

Two or three days after this, when Benedetti had quite recovered from the fumes of the strong foreign wines he had drunk that night, and to the use of which he was unaccustomed,—for with all his faults, he was temperate in the use of liquors,—he drove out, and after his return appeared on the promenade of the gardens in his usual way, elegantly attired, dignified as became a juriconsult, and affable to all. When he returned home, towards his dinner hour, with a sort of chill at the thought of what would meet him there, what was his surprise to find his house brilliantly lighted, and to hear the sound of music stealing through the half closed *jalousies* ! He hastily entered : the fragrance of flowers welcomed him ; the sight of their glowing hues, grouped with dark greens, and heavy odorous blossoms of white and pale rose-color, decorating the vases, and garlanded about the pillars, filled his sensuous nature with a thrill of ecstasy. He saw no one, and ran up to his wife's dressing-room, where he found her in rich attire, decked with his favorite gems, and looking more beautiful than ever, as she came forward with smiles to greet him. He was overjoyed ; never had she looked so lovely, so regal ; never had such brightness and fragrance pervaded his home.

“I am thankful that at last thy penance is ended,” he said, embracing her. “How beautiful thou art, *bella sposa* ! and what an enchanting surprise thou hast prepared for me ! Ah,” he said,

gazing fondly upon her, "how much more suitable to thy years than so much praying, and fasting and penance."

"Penance! dear Jacques, dost thou ever think of penance?" she asked, with a smile, smoothing the hand which still clasped hers.

"Think? of course I think of it! how can I help it with such a devout little wife! But it is not my way; I have no time; in fact I am extremely well satisfied to be rid of so disagreeable a thing. My father's death gave me penance enough for a lifetime," he said, with a sad inflection in his voice.

"True, that was a great sorrow," she said, raising his hand and leaning her fair cheek upon it.

"It was, and will be to my dying day, a bitter remorse. What more penance wouldst thou have the heart to ask for me, *bella sposa*, than this?"

"Dear Jacques, my husband, let me do penance for thee. I will gladly, and mayhap our dear Lord will accept it."

"What a little enthusiast!" he said, laughing, and kissing her hand as he folded her to his breast, "How glad I am that thou didst not live in the days of Santa Agnese! thou wouldst surely have won the palm of martyrdom. Do penance for me, *cara mia*, if it will make thee happier; only don't flog thy fair flesh, or torture it with sackcloth. I would rather not have such vicarious penance, my nightingale."

She smiled, but made no reply; for at that very

moment under her rich jewelled robes Julia wore that which goaded and fretted her tender flesh, reminding her every moment of the aim she had in view, and she offered all the pain she suffered from it, in union with the sufferings of her Divine Lord, for her husband's conversion.

"It is time for thee, dear one, to change thy dress; a party of friends are to join us at dinner, and even now I must hasten down to receive them," she said sweetly, as she left the dressing room.

"Company to dinner!" he exclaimed; "how delicious!" and she could but smile at his almost boyish delight.

Another year passed by after this, and the Jurisconsult Jacques dei Benedetti, although not a devout man, led a life which completely filled out his ideal of happiness. The most beautiful woman in Italy—had not the artists and poets so crowned her?—was his wife; she satisfied his pride; she filled his heart, for she was gentle and yielding; and did they not love each other entirely? There seemed to him to be nothing to cloud his felicity. He had retrieved himself in the opinion of his fellow-citizens, who now thought leniently of his former life, and smiling said to each other: "Aha! our Jurisconsult sowed all his wild oats then! See what a good and beautiful wife can do for a man."

As we said before, he was devoted to art, and was ever ready to assist young and struggling

artists ; and he had the honor of entertaining Alighieri, whose acquaintance he had made in Florence, and who was then writing his " Divine Comedy," in the bastard Latin tongue of Italy, instead of the more classic and severe Latin, as was his first intention. From him he heard ill news of the astrologer, Tasti, who had once so rudely repulsed his thanks after having saved his life. The old star-gazer had gone blind, and his heart was broken by disappointment, his star had not yet appeared, and now he could never behold it ; he was living in poverty and actual want, without a friend to see to his needs.

" My God ! " exclaimed Benedetti, " to think I am rolling in wealth and luxury while the man who saved my life is without bread ! Alighieri, pledge thyself to do me a favor," he said, grasping the poet's hand.

" If I may, most gladly," answered the poet, gravely.

" Thou mayest if thou wilt ; I ask nothing that could hurt the most sensitive scruples of a saint, said Benedetti, flushing.

" What wouldst thou have, friend ? " said the sweet-voiced Florentine.

" I would have thee be my almoner ; not really to give alms, but to repay a debt I owe to Tasti by all the laws of honor and gratitude."

" Ah, I see ! " said Alighieri, a divine smile brightening his countenance.

" I would settle an annuity upon him for life ;

let him think it is a long-delayed debt due his family, of which he is sole representative, and that tardy justice has at length been done. Make up any harmless romance thou mayest about it, keeping in view that the annuity is in payment of a debt due his family. I must not appear, or even be suspected of having a hand in it; if he found it out he'd throw the money into the fire, and me after it if he could lay hands upon me. Say, wilt thou manage this?"

"I must think it over, and see how best it is to be done."

"How best? It does not require a moment's thought. So many thousand ducats are placed in thy hands by me, which thou, Alighieri, wilt place in custody of the safest banker in Todi, to whom I will give thee a letter. Deposit the money in thy own name to the credit of Giovanni Tasti. What can be more plain?"

"I will, and with a thankful heart that our Blessed Lady has inspired thee to so help the friendless and destitute," said the Florentine, grasping the other's hand.

"It is a debt, remember, and it is my religion to pay my debts," replied Benedetti, dryly, "When wilt thy cursed pride let me pay that which I owe thyself?"

"Should need overtake me, friend, I will not fail then to call upon thee, rest assured of that," answered Alighieri.

"I trust to thy word: and now to business, for

I will not sleep until it is all settled." And so it was done without delay, and a divine rest filled Alighieri's compassionate heart, which had been torn and grieved beyond measure by the condition in which he had found his old friend, whom he had come all the way from Florence to see, but whose necessities he had no power to relieve, his own means being barely sufficient to procure him the necessaries of life. Now he would be able to leave him in comfort, with a faithful hired attendant to care for him, and enough over to provide clothing and any little luxury he might crave; and all owing to the noble generosity of a man he had once despised, and refused to know. Such was Jacques dei Benedetti, the natural man, full of generous, noble instincts, which were unconsecrated by the grace of God, and whose works were all of the earth, earthy; but a day was approaching when the incense from the golden vials "which are the prayers of the saints" would be accepted by "Him who sits on the great white throne" in his behalf, whose good works now being without faith were as dead as the fruit that grows beside the waters that flow over Sodom and Gomorrah.

## CHAPTER IV.

ONE bright day, at an hour when he was rarely there, Benedetti came home in a gay mood, the more remarkable from the fact that he had been for some short time preoccupied, and almost moody, over some affair or other which he did not care to discuss. He went with quick steps towards an apartment which opened on the garden, where his wife usually spent her mornings, fully expecting to find her there. The light air he was humming died upon his lips, as, looking around, he saw no signs of her except her empty chair, and a coarse woollen garment that her fair hands had been fashioning for one of her poor, lying upon it.

“Where is your lady?” he asked her favorite maid, who was seated in a window busied over a piece of embroidery evidently intended for the altar.

“My lady has gone to the Cathedral, signor, to offer prayers,” she answered, with downcast eyes and gentle tones, as she rose up and stood in her master’s presence. She was a Moorish maiden, purchased by Benedetti for his wife, and held by her in bondage only as a hostage, to be returned to her own country when an oppor-

tunity offered, in exchange for a Christian captive. But she steadily refused to be a Christian.

“The fiend fly off with so much praying!” he exclaimed, hotly. “Are you sure it is the Cathedral she is gone to?”

“Yes, signor, because she took flowers to lay on the old Count’s tomb.”

“How long has she been away?”

“About a half hour, signor.”

“There is some chance then of my finding her there?”

“I think so, signor.”

Chafing with impatience Benedetti rushed off to the Cathedral, where, just as he was crossing the marble pavement of the wide portico with hasty steps, he heard the voice that always fell upon his ear like a strain of music say: “Here! Shall we turn back?” and turning his head he saw her standing beside him, wondering with deep emotion if he had come thither for some pious purpose.

“Aha, runaway! is it thou? Turn back? Not for the world. I only came to bring thee away, for I have great news for thee, *bella sposa*.”

“Good, I trust?”

“Splendid! but I will hold thee in suspense until we get home,” he answered, gaily.

The distance was short between the Cathedral and their house, and they were soon there; and after Julia had thrown aside her veil and mantle, and seated herself in a chair near a jasmine-cov-

ered window whose fragrant blossoms and clustering leaves excluded the warm glare of the sun, she said :

“ Now I am ready for the great news.”

“ Great news indeed !” he exclaimed, throwing himself upon the pillow of an ivory couch that stood near her ; “ something which I have worn myself out to obtain, and I don't know which is the sweetest, my triumph or the gratification it will bring me. Thou knowest, *bella sposa*, that we have not had the games at Todi for five years, and the theatre is overgrown with moss and weeds, the arena a haunt for swine ; but next month they are to be celebrated, by the royal order, which I obtained, in honor of the birth of a son to the king. He is so devout, and keeps so many monks around him, that I had great difficulty in obtaining his consent, for he is persuaded that such amusements are bad for the morals of the people—a belief which his spiritual advisers are at great pains to confirm him in ; but I prevailed this time, which I have a presentiment will be the last ; hence I am determined that the games of 1268 shall be celebrated with a splendor and magnificence never seen before. What sayest thou ?”

“ They will make our old town very gay,” she answered, with a sinking heart.

“ Gay ! It will be like paradise ! I have ordered a new gallery to be built for a chosen few, among whom the wife of the Jurisconsult will

shine the fairest of them all. The Prince and Princess Doria from Rome, who will be present, the great Minister, Count Taverno, and one or two other distinguished persons of the Court, I have invited to occupy the gallery with thee. It will be a splendid affair, hung with cloth of gold, and canopied and cushioned with Lyons silk of rose color and blue, spangled with gold. I have already sent a hundred or more men to clear the amphitheatre, and I shall be so occupied in planning the other arrangements for days to come that I scarcely hope to catch more than a glimpse of thee, *bella sposa*," he said fondly, toying with a tress of her soft silky hair. "Aha! how proud I shall be to have the world see and acknowledge thy beauty!"

"Oh, Jacques! why so vain of me? It pains me!" she said, with quivering lip.

"Pains thee! How can I help being proud of thee, sweet love? The very thought of possessing such a treasure—a treasure such as no monarch, if he searched the world, could hope to find—makes me supremely happy!" he replied, folding her hand to his heart.

"Such love is very sweet, but it is too much for the creature; we must remember that our God is a jealous God, and will have none preferred before Him."

He dropped her hand, and turned from her with a cloud upon his brow, and did not speak immediately; when he did, it was not unkindly:

“We hear those sayings in the Cathedral,” he said; “leave them to the monks, and don’t throw cold water, albeit it be holy water, into my face when my heart runs over with love for thee. I will be good, one of these days, *bella sposa*: in fact I am not so bad a Christian as some others. Look at old Sacchi, for instance, who has prayed his knee-pans off, and goes to Communion every Sunday! does he ever give a scudi to the poor? Did he not turn his own son into the street to want and beggary, because he could not pay a debt that he owed him?”

“No, thank our dear Lord, thou art not like that!” she said, laying her long fair hand upon his head. “But we must not judge.”

“What! not when a fig-tree brings forth thorns? Why, my gardener, a poor ignorant peasant, would root it up and burn it with the weeds.”

“Our dear Lord is patient—oh, how patient! He alone, who beholds the secrets of hearts, can judge righteously,” she said, sweetly.

“If the devil don’t get old Sacchi, what is the use of being pious? Here am I always giving to the poor and to the Church. I love to give. I am never happier than when I am giving. It is my nature. Have I not just sent a piece of Venetian lace to the Cathedral for the *baldachino* of our Lady; and did I not only yesterday send a beautiful picture, *Santa Agnese before the Proconsul*, to the convent, for their new altar?”

“Our dear Lord will requite all that is done for the love of Him,” she said, smoothing back the hair from his forehead, and smiling brightly. “Yes, thou art good, my love, according to thy mind ; by and by our Lord will show thee His way.”

“Wilt thou go to the games?” he said, abruptly, almost as if he feared she would refuse.

“Yes, as thou dost wish it so much. What is to be done?”

“I can scarcely tell thee in order yet. There will be comedies, wrestling, dancing, music, comic recitations, races, chariot-races, a tragedy, and mimic fights between the athletes, and what more I cannot tell ; but thou wilt enjoy it, my Julia ; I know thou wilt.”

She said no more, and Benedetti, wooed by the indolent fragrant breeze that stole through the jasmine, fell asleep.

“Enjoy it,” he said. Alas ! her splendors, and all that her husband imagined ought to make her the happiest woman on earth, were simply wearying and irksome trials ; for his sake she suffered them, bearing them as cheerfully as she might any other cross, but she had only one wish upon earth, and that was for his conversion ; for that she endured all things ; for that she did penance ; for that she offered her very life to Almighty God, if need be—her very life.

It must not be supposed that conversations

like the one just related were of frequent occurrence between Benedetti and his wife: it was only when his mood presented the opportunity that she ventured to utter gentle reproofs, to chide with loving words his worldliness, and try to lead his mind to graver considerations than those which usually occupied it, and then only so long as he appeared willing to listen; the moment a shadow darkened his face, or a sneer, or an expression of disgust escaped his lips, she would change the subject for something more congenial with his gay temperament—silenced but not vanquished, as he knew in his heart of hearts; even when she talked with glowing cheeks and brightened eyes of poetry, and art, and other æsthetic themes, he knew that under it all there was an unspoken prayer for him. Her purpose was to win him,—and not, by harping with sad countenance, on themes which he considered gloomy and destructive of all human enjoyment, drive him yet further away from a saving practice of his Faith, for she was persuaded he was only putting it off to a more convenient season. Keen in his perceptions, the proud pleasure-loving man was not slow to notice this exercise of charity; he made no remarks, however, but it softened his heart yet more tenderly towards her, and made more holy and beautiful in his eyes the example of her virtues. Nor did she know that now and then her words, like winged seeds, dropped into his heart—taking root, but showing no vitality

by which he could know there was a new life upspringing within him. She always met him with smiles ; and, banishing every appearance of sadness from their home, made it the most attractive and beautiful spot on earth to him ; while he, in turn, was careful never to bring within its sacred precincts anything, either in painting, sculpture or books, that would shock her virtuous instincts or pain her devout spirit. And in those days it required care and thought, and subjected one to no little ridicule, to show distaste for such things ; for many of the best artists sought their subjects from Pagan fables, and the poets yet wrote in praise of Venus and Diana, of Bacchus and Apollo, reviving in their verses all the sensuous traditions concerning them, which had better have perished when their altars were overthrown. It was true that Jacques dei Benedetti had a noble nature, but there was a nobler life within him that only the voice of God could bring out of its sealed sepulchre.

Days and weeks passed by. Todi was full of strangers,—the princely, the noble, and wealthy citizens from other parts ; poets, philosophers, comedians, dancers, and wrestlers thronged thither, some to witness, others to take part in the games. Nothing else was thought of, nothing else was talked of ; in short, every one was nearly wild with excitement.

There were those who criticized, and others who praised the arrangements : but all were

pleased notwithstanding, because each one cherished and stood by his own opinions, always sure of an audience who listened open-mouthed to the *pros* and *cons* ; many made themselves happy by betting on this, that or the other, while there were not a few who predicted failure on points which ran counter to their advice. There were whispers too about certain repairs at the amphitheatre having been made too hastily for safety ; among them the Jurisconsult's gallery, which was built upon the old beams of the original one, which had been blackening there in the sun and rains of a century. It had been examined by competent persons, and pronounced safe, and it was nobody's business ; but people have a natural faculty for predicting misfortunes and accidents, and take a ghoulish sort of pleasure in doing it ; then, if something dreadful does happen, their "I told you so !" has a ring of triumph in it, and they feel that ever after their oracular sayings will be held in high respect—which, by the way, they are sure not to be. Who cared for the old beams under the new gallery, which was being painted and gilded by artists from Rome, and was to be draped with cloth of gold, trimmed with heavy golden fringe, and the canopy above it hung with spangled Lyons silk of rose-color and blue ? There was not one who would not have been glad to be seated in the midst of such magnificence, with every eye upon them, even if they had been certain the gallery would give way ; and in com-

parison with things of more general interest, the gallery was forgotten for a little while.

There was a soft luminous radiance behind the mountains, about whose shadowy sides the blue mists still lingered ; jets of glittering light shot up towards the violet-tinted and rose-colored clouds as if from a sea of gold ; the nightingales sang sweet fitful songs in their leafy coverts ; the river swept through the valley like a whispered prayer ; the dew spangled leaf and flower. Oh how brightly dawned the day upon the old Umbrian city ! how glad the sunshine would make every heart, for it was the opening day of the games. The croakers had predicted rain, but now all was propitious, only waiting for every one to waken up to enjoy it.

From the side door of a lofty and elegant dwelling, beautiful in architecture and rich in carving and sculpture, a lady closely wrapped in mantle and veil, came out. The shadows lay yet dark upon the street, and she was the only living thing to be seen in the long narrow vista between the tall gray houses on either side. It was plain to see by her carriage and graceful mien that she was a patrician. With swift light steps she approached the Cathedral just as one of the Fathers of St. Francis ascended the altar to begin the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. Devoutly she knelt with a group of peasants and poor women, and was soon rapt in contemplation of the Divine Mysteries, her sweet and serene countenance

aglow with the fervor of faith and of supreme joy in the Presence of Him whom her soul adored. It was Julia dei Benedetti, and those who saw her that morning, even the celebrant himself, when she received the Sacred Host under whose veil was concealed the actual Presence of the Lord, noticed and never forgot the radiant expression of her face, a radiance so solemn and angelic that had it been the Viaticum she had just received they might have been pardoned for believing that light from the half-opened portals of heaven was shining upon her.

The Jurisconsult wished his beautiful wife to appear on this the opening day of the games in her most magnificent apparel, in her rarest jewels; not that he expected her to overload herself with an ostentatious *toilette*, selected only with regard to its costliness: his tastes were too artistic, hers too refined for mere vulgar display of that sort; and in obedience to his request, so emphatically made that it savored of command, she arrayed herself in robes fashioned out of rare and costly silk of pale delicate colors; films of Venice lace shaded her bosom and arms, and fell draped about her in misty folds; pearls and opals from India, each one with a spark of fire like an imprisoned soul glowing in its depths, gleamed in her hair, around her throat and arms, and in her ears. Never had she looked so lovely, and when Benedetti presently ran up to her dressing-room to speak to her, she happened to be standing just

where a ray of sunshine slanted over her, imparting to her appearance an ethereal effect. He paused an instant in mute admiration and astonishment: even he, with all his passionate idolatry, had never imagined she could look like this; but she held out her hand with a smile of welcome, he clasped it a moment, then bending his knee kissed it, saying:

“Nay! hast thou just stepped out of Paradise? I can scarcely dare more than offer homage to an angel.”

“Oh, Jacques! why so foolish? Wouldst thou turn my head with thy flatteries?” she answered, with a little laugh, making him rise. “I am only I; all these beautiful things in which I am arrayed are thy gifts, and worn for love of thee. Ah! why should I be vain?”

“If thou wert clad in sackcloth, would it change thy beauty, thy grace, thy perfect form, *bella sposa*? No! I *will* then be proud and vain of thee, enough for thee and for myself.”

“If she were clad in sackcloth,” he had said. How little did he suspect!

“How soon are we to go?” she asked.

“I just ran up, *bella sposa*, to say that it is utterly impossible for me to accompany thee to the amphitheatre. I have been appointed to receive the members of the royal family, who are here; but thy cousin, the Count Pelchioni, and his wife, are coming presently to go with thee.”

“Ah! I am sorry to lose thy attendance: but

the Prince and Princess Doria—who will receive them?”

“I forgot to mention yesterday that they have been recalled to Rome by the illness of their only son.”

“Ah, how unfortunate! Our Blessed Lady grant they may find him out of danger. But thou wilt join us after thy official duties are over?” she said.

“Yes, yes. The Count knows our gallery, and I have stationed a guard there to prevent those who have no right from crowding upon our party, for at a time like this people push their way wherever they can find standing room. Farewell, sweet one, until we meet again.”

He kissed her as if he had been kissing the carven image of a saint, and after one fond lingering look hurried away.

It was a glorious day, clear and balmy, and the awning which formed the temporary roof of the amphitheatre tempered the glare of the sun to a pleasant light, and surely there was never assembled a gayer or more light-hearted crowd than that which filled the circular tiers of seats, from the arena to the roof. It was one wavering, beautiful mass of color, from which shone out thousands of faces and eyes bright with excitement and expectation. The richly decorated gallery of the Jurisconsult, with its draperies of cloth of gold and its spangled canopy, was a centre of attraction; but when his beautiful wife

entered its splendors were forgotten, and every heart paid willing homage to one who wore her honors and bore herself with so modest a grace, seemingly unconscious of her unequalled charms and rich attire.

The comedy was a great success ; the plaudits of the people and strains of music thundered together, and only subsided when a troupe of Egyptian dancing-girls floated out to perform a measure to the sound of weird, wild harmonies, a measure full of wonderful and intricate movement which excited the enthusiasm of the audience to the highest pitch. Benedetti had not yet appeared ; he was evidently detained by something imperative, for the royal seats were all filled ; and it was not until a chariot race began that Julia's eyes, which had been restlessly watching for him, caught a glimpse of him forcing his way through the surging crowd towards her. There was a proud smile upon his lips as he saw how conspicuously her beauty shone in that great assemblage, and how well the splendor of her surroundings became her. But just as he, having caught her eye, lifted his jewelled cap from his head, there came a sudden, crackling sound, shrieks filled the air, and that richly decorated structure, that gallery on which he had in his vainglory and love of display expended so much thought and money, with its freight of life and beauty fell, a wild, heaped-up ruin into the arena. He saw it all, and with a piercing cry,

and half paralyzed with horror, he sprang to the rescue of his wife over the heads and shoulders of the crowd that thronged the arena; and no man stayed his mad progress, for all knew him, and understood the awful blow which, it was to be feared, had fallen upon him. At length he reached the spot, and on the edge of the mutilated, shrieking heap, some of whom were quite dead, others maimed, crushed and benumbed, he found her who was all the world to him, and lifting her tenderly he conveyed her to a place of safety, the crowd making way and giving what assistance they could. She was not dead; she breathed, and, unclosing her eyes, fixed a tender gaze upon his agonized face. He laid her down, her head still reposing upon his breast, and began to cut open her boddice, but with a gesture and a blush that crimsoned even her neck she whispered, "Not here! not here!" and indicated by a gesture that he should take her away further from the crowd. Again raising her in his arms, which cradled her as tenderly as a mother might her new-born babe, and forbidding any to follow him, he bore her to a green, shaded spot where only a low murmur from the din in the amphitheatre could reach them, and laying her upon the grass and flowers that spangled it, he cut open the pearl-embroidered tissues of her festial robe, and the fine silk and linen of her under garments, tearing them open that her heart might have no pressure upon it, that the air of heaven could blow

freely upon her ; but what did he see? Not the fair ivory skin that covered the faultless symmetry of her form, but a rough hair-shirt under which the tender flesh showed many a fretted scar. A cry of grief escaped his lips, of such bitter anguish that it recalled her from the bright mysteries which were already dawning upon her ; there was a tremulous movement of her white, dying lips, and bending down his ear, he heard her whisper : “It was for thee ! O Christ, make him Thine own !” That was all. Her pure soul passed as the prayer escaped her lips. Then he knew how she had done penance for him, knew that for his sins and follies this rough garment was worn, and that by the suffering of her tender flesh she had hoped to win mercy for him. Many drew near and offered assistance, but he motioned them away, and gathering the dead form to his bosom, he bore her back to their desolated home, where with speechless agony and a dumb wonder, mingled with a strange sense of humility which made him feel helpless under the mighty Hand of God, he watched, shedding no tear, uttering no moan, until those who were to perform the last sad offices for the dead led him away. He only touched the hair-shirt with his finger, as he stood for an instant gazing down upon the matchless beauty of the still white face, and said : “Leave that as it is,” then went out of the apartment, where the sunshine stealing in through the fragrant jessamine, and the wild sweet warbling of birds out-

side, seemed to mock his grief. Not that he noticed them; but to those tender, sorrowful hearts, who wept as they looked upon the beautiful dead form which they had come to prepare for the grave, it so seemed, and they were thankful when the door closed upon him.

## CHAPTER V.

THUS desolate in his grief, what was left for Jacques dei Benedetti except the darkness of despair, or the beginning of a new life? Sympathy, condolence, and religious help were offered, but he would none of it. The conflict was his, and he would fight it out alone. For what earthly power could give him help? who could understand the bitter strait he was in? Had not all that the world had given him crumbled in his grasp like a rope of sand? of what good then were words, for was not all nothingness and bitterness of spirit? He staggered under the dreadful blow that had wounded the natural man unto death; it was as a sword that had "divided the bones and the marrow"; and looking back upon his past he beheld all the dark record of his sins, until there echoed through heart and brain one only word: Penance! Penance! Penance! Was this the solemn whisper of a new life struggling with his half-awakened conscience, or was it but a gloomy reflex of his grief? Not so; for this one thought absorbed his grief; and the memory of the pure being he had lost—that stood out above all else, was the penance and prayers she had offered for his guilty soul. Why should he not,

henceforth, continue the good work? he asked himself. "Aye!" mocked the tempter, "a pretty saint wouldst thou make! What would the world say, coward, but that thou hast gone mad?" Then his pride, his ambition, his love of ease and luxury, his devotion to the beautiful in art and nature, his epicurean appetites, his impatience of discipline and self-denial, came like "an army with banners," to vanquish and lead him captive once more; but nature was giving place to a new-born, supernatural principle within, not yet revealed to him, and only known by the strength it gave him to resist the old familiar voices which had lapped his senses, ever since he could remember, in their syren songs. In solitude, almost in darkness, the days went on; he refused admittance to all, except when obliged to answer questions about the funeral arrangements; and when a friend would have led him to look upon the saintly beauty of his dead wife as she reposed among lilies and pale sweet roses, none fairer or purer than she, he simply uttered a stern "No," and closing his door flung himself prostrate and lifted up his soul in a strong cry to God that her penance and prayers might avail for him. It was his first prayer, and a strange peace fell upon him, and a sentiment of humility so profound that he felt himself to be worthy only of stripes and contempt.

Need we describe the magnificent funeral, or the pale tearless mourner who walked alone near

the dead, his hair grown nearly white, and his stately form so bowed within a few days, that people questioned whether it could really be the proud, handsome Jurisconsult? Or the solemn grand Requiem Mass, or the wailing music of Palestrina's *Requiem*, the soul-thrilling *Dies Iræ*, and the prayers for the repose of the saintly dead?—The blazing splendor of waxlights among the flowers upon the altar, the curling clouds of fragrant incense that rolled up and almost veiled the holy place, reminding one of the angel in John's vision, who stood before the altar, having a golden censer, to whom was given much incense that he should offer of the prayers of all the saints. . . \* Or how the silent form under its velvet pall and garlands of lilies, was laid in its last resting-place amidst chanting which mingled with the sound of weeping, and how at the last Asperges the blessed drops fell like a shower of gems over pall and coffin? All this can be well imagined.

But when the world, weary of a week's mourning and seclusion—and even the priests, worn out with their long vigils, fasting, and the wearying ceremonies which had occupied them so many days, hastened from the Cathedral, when all were gone their way, and the last sound of retreating footsteps made a dismal echo under the vaulted

\* "The smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints which ascended before God from the hand of the angel." Apocalypse, v. 3, 4.

roof, Jacques dei Benedetti remained in the crypt with his dead ; and with his head bowed upon the coffin-lid of her whom he had so loved in life, he made another and holier vow than the one made years before at the feet of his dead father. After this no more grieving ; here they would separate until the judgment day ; she was Heaven's own, and he then made a renunciation of tender, fruitless memories ; of his sorrow, which he offered with the sufferings of the Crucified ; of all the beautiful idyls of the past ; of every earthly hope and desire, of everything that could hold his spirit in thrall ; and thus stripped of self he offered himself humbly to Almighty God, to be moulded and fashioned as He willed. His next step was to resign his civic dignities, and to the almost dumb amazement of the community to whom his ambition, his prodigality, his love of splendor and his greed of wealth had been known from his earliest youth, he sold his goods and distributed his possessions to the poor ; and then, dressed in rags, like one distraught, he haunted the churches. At the early Masses, at the Offices of the day, at Vespers, he was always present, assisting with devout attention, looking neither to the right nor left, his head bowed upon his breast, and floods of tears streaming from his eyes. He walked the streets bareheaded, his countenance pale and penitential, his eyes cast down, his garments old and coarse and ragged, and his bare feet often bleeding from the flints

and sharp, uneven stones of the street. At first people were awed, and wondered at such abnegation; their former respect for the great man of Todi withheld them from anything outspoken. Some of them thought he would get over it and come out in renewed splendor; in fact most of the people were displeased, for had not the accident at the amphitheatre put off the games for a year? And it would never have happened but for his foolishness in putting up that gallery on rotten beams; but what was the use of his making an ass of himself? Thus they talked, and when they found that he did not mend his ways they said he was mad, and nicknamed him "Jacopone"—mad Jacques. The boys shouted after him in the streets, pelted him with stones, and the people saluted him with derisive shouts; but he, as if not hearing, went his way in silence, unheeding their insults. One day, like the prophet Jeremias who appeared in the public places of Jerusalem with a yoke about his neck, a symbol of her approaching captivity, the poor penitent showed himself on the public promenade half naked, with a saddle and bridle on his back, walking on his hands and knees like a beast of burden. Some wept; there were a few who shouted in derision; and many were touched and saddened as they beheld the miserable state to which his envied destiny had fallen. "He is mad! He is mad!" was all they could say.

“He is not mad,” said a holy man who knew ;  
“he is doing penance.”

No, he was not mad, but so overwhelmed with a sense of the guilt and impenitence of his past life that he was willing to be as a fool and abject before men, here in this city where, forgetting God, and setting holy things aside, he had sinned before heaven and earth ; where he had cared only to wrap himself in the purple and fine linen of luxury and sensual ease ; where with the pride of Lucifer he had exalted himself in pomp and state ;—here he would humiliate himself, and make such poor reparation as he could for his sins and the scandals he had given.

But they could not discern the supernatural under such a guise ; they only stared and laughed at the strange spectacle, and still said : “Poor Jacopone ! his vagaries are harmless ; but Todi misses him sorely ; what with the loss of his money, which he spent profusely, and the stir of gay life that he kept us perpetually in, one way or another, the place has grown as dull as a graveyard.”

His palace, which he could not alienate or dispose of as he had his other property, he bestowed the use of on a branch of the Order of Mercy founded by a saintly knight of Languedoc, Peter Nolasco, which required of its members to give themselves, if need were, for the liberty of their brethren held in bondage by the Moors. “Another evidence,” whispered some, “of his

insanity; for when he recovers, as he certainly will, he will not have a shelter for his head.”

But none knew of Jacopone's hidden life, of how he went to the sick and destitute poor in the uplying hovels above the town, ministering to their necessities and performing the meanest offices for them, none knowing under the cowl he wore pulled down over his face who he was, some of them even believing that the dear Lord had sent St. Francis to their aid; none knew of his nightly vigils in the churches, where, hidden behind a pillar or tomb, his forehead pressed against the stone floor, he meditated on the Passion of Jesus and the Dolors of Mary until the marble flags were wet with his tears. News of the madness of Jacques dei Benedetti went abroad, and strangers, many of whom had witnessed his former splendor, came to look upon and wonder at the low estate to which he had brought himself. His case was reported to and discussed at Rome, but when those were sent having authority—three men of holy lives—to note his eccentricities and question him, his answers, breathing a spirit of deep humility and penitence, briefly and simply made, convinced them that he was moved to perform his heroic acts of penance by a purely supernatural motive.

A period of ten years passed by, but “Jacopone” showed no signs of recovering from his blessed insanity; his austerities were rather increased than diminished, and he had come to be

looked upon by his townspeople as the very refuse of the earth. Nothing moved him, either of mockery, or blows, or derision; he inwardly rejoiced in them, feeling that for his sins and the time wasted in folly he deserved it all.

One morning the porter of the Franciscan Monastery approached the Prior and told him that "Jacopone" was at the gate and asked to be admitted to the Abbot's presence. The Prior frowned, and ran his hands into his loose sleeves. He was a man of holy, ascetic life, but looked upon all novelties as a delusion and a snare of the devil; therefore he was not pleased to learn that poor "Jacopone" desired admission, nor did he believe that the Abbot would allow himself to be disturbed by such a visitor.

"Didst thou tell him, brother, that the Abbot is rarely interrupted at this hour?"

"I did, Reverend Father; but he said he would wait, and went and sat down upon the roadside with the beggars," answered the porter.

"Very well. I will let him hear the Abbot's pleasure when I know it. Tell him so, Brother Tomaso."

The porter went away to do his bidding, and the Prior thought: "Our Abbot does strange things sometimes; he may choose to see this mad beggar, for whom we pray as one of our benefactors. At any rate, by our rules, I must report his coming, and may our Blessed Lady deliver us from evil. I have read in some of the old

Latin manuscripts in our library that the enemy of souls has been known to counterfeit a penitent ; didn't he so appear once to Fra Juan Garin, at Montserrat, and come near dragging his soul to hell ! ”

By this time the Prior had got to the Abbot's door, where he rapped, and was bid to enter. The Abbot was seated at a table, writing ; he was a tall, dark man, with a strong face in which every line told a history of conflict, and of a determined will, and of a nature held in check as with bit and bridle. He looked up from under his heavy brows, his pen suspended over an unfinished sentence, his glance inquiring why he was interrupted at this unwonted hour.

“ One is at the gate, Reverend Father, who craves admission to thy presence ; but as his visit will only prove a distraction I will dismiss him if thou sayest so ? ”

“ Name him,” he said briefly.

“ Jacopone,” answered the Prior.

“ Jacopone ! Bring him hither, my good Prior. Jacopone must never be kept waiting on the roadside ; he comes so rarely that it were a shame to us, whose house and church he so beautified in time past ; and let me tell thee what I fear : that when Christ comes, some of us will be cast out of the ‘ Kingdom ’ while the mad penitent, as he is known, will be received and crowned among the saints.”

The Prior bowed ; there was a spot of color

on his pale cheeks, but he made no reply, and withdrew to do the bidding of his Superior, believing in his inmost heart that he was placing himself on dangerous ground in granting an interview with a man of whose eccentricities he had heard so many marvels.

The Abbot arose from his chair, and stood waiting, while strange emotions agitated his heart. He had known Jacopone in the days of his pride and prosperity; he had noted—as did all who saw him—the rare perfection of his form and features, which the artists declared came nearer the beauty of the ideal classic type than any they had ever seen, and he had met him once upon the public promenade, where he had formerly moved in splendor and triumph, followed by a hooting crowd, accoutred and moving upon his hands and feet like a beast of burden, and the sight of such utter humiliation had so moved him that he added yet greater rigors to his own penance. He had never until now, since the beginning of his penitential days, come to the monastery. What could bring him now?

The door opened, and “Jacopone”—with folded hands and bowed head, clad in the frayed garments of poverty, his broad forehead pale, his temples and cheeks sunken, his beard almost white—entered and knelt before the Abbot, who blessed and welcomed him in a voice that trembled with suppressed emotion, for who could look on a figure of such utter humility unmoved?

“Rise, my son, and be seated!” he said.

“If thou wilt, I will remain so; it is more fitting, as I have come to beg a great boon at thy hands, lord Abbot,” he replied, in low, gentle tones.

“Do as it best pleases thee, my son; but what wouldst thou of me in God’s holy name?”

“Having fulfilled a vow, I now wish to enter the Order of St. Francis as a brother servant,” he said humbly, never raising his eyes.

The Abbot did not reply immediately, for in an instant a thousand obstacles to this request presented themselves; but with his usual self-restraint he preserved the golden mean of silence, until the unseen monitor of his soul swiftly weighed the matter and gave him speech.

“My son, dost thou understand that all who enter here have to learn the holy science of obedience?” he asked, his voice steady now, and almost stern.

“That I know right well, lord Abbot; it is a science. I most desire to be taught,” was the humble answer.

“And dost thou know that our rule permits no singularities in devotion—no novelties in dress or manner?”

“Aye, that also I know. I seek to enter the Order of the Blessed St. Francis as a servant,—that here, under holy obedience, and doing penance for my sins, I may work out my salvation. Pity me, my lord Abbot, for my unworthiness is

even greater than thou canst conceive; but by the grace of our dear Lord, whose mercy is infinite, I hope to be moulded like wax by the blessed rule of St. Francis, until—until—at last—I may be found worthy of reconciliation with Him,” he faltered, while great tears rolled over his wan cheeks, and glistened like jewels on his gray, tangled beard. The good Abbot’s impulse was to kneel beside the poor suppliant, fold his arms about him and welcome him with a thousand welcomes to the Order, so well convinced was he not only of the perfect sanity but also of the supernatural virtues of the man. But he only said :

“Be comforted, my son; for whether in the Order of St. Francis or out of it, such penitence as thine will in the end win heaven for thee. I will consider thy application, and lay it, as I am bound to do, before the brethren. Come hither again on next Monday and I will make known the decision to thee. Now, my son, go in peace, and pray for me, and may the Most Adorable Trinity bless and strengthen thee.”

“Jacopone” arose, bowed his head upon his breast, and without raising his eyes left the room. Wrapping his tattered cloak about him, and pulling the cowl over his head, he followed a mountain path which led to a lonely chapel built up among the gray cliffs, dedicated to the Mother of Sorrows, and there, prostrated before her shrine, above which hung a picture of her painted by

Cimabue, upon which none could look unmoved, he meditated upon her dolors, filled with divine grief and bitter compunction for his sins which had caused them. When daylight was fading out of the sky he was recalled to himself by the peasant who had care of the sacred spot touching him upon the shoulder and telling him that he must go away, as he was about to close the chapel. He went, but the dolors of the Virgin Mother still abode in his heart; neither time nor place ever drew the veil of forgetfulness over them; in all these years of penance this was his cherished devotion, and how she rewarded her servant at last the world knows, and will continue to know until the sublime chants of the Church militant blend forever with those of the Church celestial.

*Representation, Cassevent*

*Bungarwan*

## CHAPTER VI.

### (CONCLUSION.)

FIRST of all, as may be imagined, the good Abbot laid his perplexities before Heaven, and made them the subject of much prayer. That he should sympathize with Jacopone, whom he had formerly known as a rich man, a civil dignitary, and as a generous benefactor to the monastery, was natural, but might not this very personal sentiment mislead him? How did he know but that the strong intuitive certainty he felt regarding the supernatural character of Jacopone's penitence was a delusion and a snare? How deeply he felt his responsibility and the need of Divine assistance it was plain to see; for should he be mistaken, how terrible a thing it would be to bring one into the Order who by mad eccentricities of devotion, and other singularities, would disturb the peace and regularity of the community, and bring scandal perhaps upon it! In offering the Divine Sacrifice he besought enlightenment; he fasted and prayed that grace might be vouchsafed to him whereby the holy will of God would be made manifest, and finally he laid the burden of his cares at the feet of the Mother

of Sorrows, towards whom he had a special devotion, knowing the tenderness of her compassion for penitent souls. The Abbot did not expect a miracle, but he had faith, and knew that his prayers would be answered in God's own time and way, for had He not promised to give whatsoever should be asked in His Son's Name?

On Sunday, after Vespers, he requested the professed monks to meet him, before going to the refectory, in the chapter-room and when they were gathered together, and had taken their seats around the table in the centre, the Abbot, who sat at the upper end, arose and simply informed them that Jacopone, of whom they all knew, had applied for admission to the Order, and the case being a peculiar one he desired to hear what they might have to say on the subject.

The Prior was the first to speak, and he gave strong reasons, from his standpoint, why the application should be denied: his objections were offered clearly and calmly, and not to gratify any prejudice of his own, but solely for the good and well-being of the community; and as he was a man whose life was without guile, and whose piety and austerities made him a living example to them all, his words had great weight. Then one and another discussed the question, and the arguments for and against the measure proposed by the Abbot weighed equally. And finally, when each one had given an opinion, without

any unanimity having been arrived at, an aged monk who had received the habit from the Blessed Francis himself, who had often listened to his sweet words and had beheld with his own eyes the holy stigmata on his hands and feet, arose, and leaning on his staff for support, asked to be heard. Every breath was hushed, fearing to lose a word that the feeble voice might utter, and almost awed that one so aged should seek to address them.

“Brethren,” he said, in quivering tones, “beware how ye drive back from your gates this penitent soul whose madness, if madness ye think it, is closely akin to that of our holy founder, of whom men used to say, ‘He is crazed!’ because he did works of penance, and walked with God; but does the world think now that he was mad? Beware, I say, of giving this penitent man a stone when in all humility he asks for bread; this man whose repentance is only equalled by that of the hermit of Montserrat, Fray Juan Garin, who fasted and prayed and expiated his sins in the desert, until he grew to look like a wild animal, and was taken by hunters one day, and led by a rope around his neck, to the king’s stables, where he lived among the beasts of the stall, never uttering a word to make known his state, but accepting it all with dumb humility as due to his sins, until by a miraculous and divine manifestation it was discovered! Alas! and alas! my brethren, is it any wonder that we who

do so little penance should look on as mad the few who by a supernatural light behold what sin really is, and try to expiate theirs by works of mortification and discipline, and feel that if they tried to all eternity they could never do it unaided by the merits of Him whom their sins pierced unto death upon the Cross? My lord Abbot, in Christ's name shut not the door upon this penitent soul, who seeks to complete here that which he has with heroic courage begun. He is such an one as the blessed Francis would have taken to his bosom, and I beg thee also, in his name, to receive him."

The aged monk dropped into his chair, trembling and exhausted with the effort he had made; for more than a hundred years had gone over his head, and he generally moved among them silently, rarely speaking; but his words had fallen upon every heart present almost as if they had sounded from the other world. Silence reigned, broken presently by the Abbot:

"Brother Fidelis, thy words are good; now let all who oppose lift up the right hand."

Every hand remained folded under the brown serge sleeves except the Prior's—which, long, thin, and white, gleamed steady for a moment in the lamplight, then fell. No word was spoken, no one moved, until the Abbot, rising from his chair said:

"It is the holy will of God that Jacques dei Benedetti, known as Jacopone, be admitted to

the Order of Saint Francis, as a brother servant, by his own request. Thanks be to our Lord, and to our Blessed Lady of Sorrows! Now, brethren, go in peace.”

On Monday morning, after the first early Mass, Jacopone, kneeling near the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows, occupied in his devotions until the second Mass should begin, felt some one touch him upon the shoulder, and turning he saw one of the servants of the monastery, who placed a letter in his hand, whispering, “From the Abbot,” and withdrew. He broke the seal and found in the Abbot’s handwriting a confirmation of his hopes; he was to enter on his novitiate that very day. After a fervent thanksgiving he arose, and drawing his cloak about him he proceeded without delay to the monastery. By the Abbot’s request the Prior received him, and as Jacopone with bowed head and folded hands knelt before him, meekly awaiting his blessing, the good monk could but think: “So our Divine Lord must have appeared in the prophetic vision of Isaias: ‘Despised, and the most abject of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised; whereupon we esteemed Him not.’ But I must remember the duty laid upon me by my Superiors; I must try this man’s spirit by the rules of holy obedience, and to begin, will see if he be ready to put aside the singularities so dear to him.”

The Prior, we see, had not the gift to discern spirits; he was nevertheless a true servant of God, zealous for His glory, and for that of his Order. He blessed the kneeling penitent, then in his usual cold, even tones bade him rise and follow the monk who stood by, who would conduct him to the bath, and provide him with new garments, which he was to put on, after which he would submit to having his beard shaved. "Oh, livery of penance!" thought Jacopone, "you are dearer to me than royal robes; but this is my first lesson in obedience, and I accept it with joy." As he went from the Prior's presence, following the monk as directed, he looked after him, thinking: "He will not look so crazy when he gets on the habit, and has that wild, tangled beard taken off"; then he retired to his cell, to work an hour on an illuminated manuscript of the third century, which he was copying. Ah, good Prior! hadst thou known of the floods of penitent tears that had drenched that poor beard for many years, and listened to the soul-touching prayers that had breathed through it, thou wouldst certainly not have despised it!

He had but one request to make when he entered his novitiate, which was permission to retain the name of Jacopone, as the one best suited to him, and it was granted. He accepted all humiliations, was sweetly obedient to authority, holy in life, and willing if need be to give that life if his brother might be served thereby;

and as time went on he, without self-seeking, won from the brotherhood a strange, reverential pity. After a certain time, when his vocation had been proved by the usual tests, and found to be like pure gold that has been tried in the furnace, his Superiors urged him to prepare himself for the priesthood, but filled with a sense of his unworthiness, he shrank trembling from so great an honor, and made his vows as a brother-servant, performing the most laborious and servile offices of the monastery, until at length he obtained such mastery over his senses that it seemed as if he had gained the sacred heights of perfection and that the warfare and struggle were well nigh over. But Jacopone was destined to greater trials than any he had yet known, from strange sources, which seemed as far removed in one sense from the poor monk of St. Francis as the East is from the West. How Almighty God saw fit to try His servant, the records of those days tell us.

News came to the monastery one day that the Pope was dead, and that the Conclave had been in session over a fortnight. It was rumored, the messenger said, that there were four or five candidates for the tiara proposed, and that each one had powerful support, within the Conclave and out of it, among the crowned heads, each of whom desired from one motive or another to have his choice elected. But there was nothing known with certainty; the air was full of rumors,

the people of Rome filled the streets day and night, wild with excitement, and all eyes and hearts were turned towards the Eternal City. The Abbot called the community together, gave them the news, and directed certain devotions to be daily recited, and Masses to be offered every morning to obtain the blessing of God upon the deliberations of the Conclave and to inspire the members thereof to a choice well pleasing to Him of a Chief Bishop of Christendom and the visible head of the Church upon earth. The monks were all excited and moved to unwonted devotion by the news, but none gave themselves to it with such ardor as Jacopone—interiorly, of course—for outwardly he only did what was prescribed, as the rest did. The subject took possession of his mind, so that every breath was a prayer, and through the night strong cries went up from his soul that Almighty God would come to the deliverance of his Church. But how could the choice of a Pope affect a poor monk of St. Francis? What had he to do with it, except to unite his prayers with those of the faithful for a happy termination of the suspense which held all Christendom in pain? We shall see.

At last, after a prolonged and stormy Conclave, tidings reached the monastery that a Pope was elected, the choice having fallen upon a cenobite who was called from his desert cell—Pierre de Morvane—to sit in the Chair of Peter and wear the triple crown. With reluctance, and in dread

of the terrible responsibilities that awaited him, he obeyed the call, and leaving his beloved solitude was crowned Pope with the title of Celestine V., with great pomp and rejoicing, "for," said the people, "so holy a man must be the choice of Heaven!"

But Jacopone did not rejoice; his very soul was stricken with sadness that a holy solitary of the desert, of whose sanctity he had heard, should be placed in a position so full of trial, so full of distractions and difficulties; whose mind, solely accustomed to spiritual things, would fail to grasp and control the temporal dangers that surrounded him. Jacopone kept his own counsel, striving with himself to overcome this strange anxiety that so beset him, praying the more, and performing greater acts of humiliation and penance to that end. But all in vain until, having written a letter in secret, he prevailed on the messenger—whom he served during the few days he remained at the monastery—to convey it to Rome, after which his usual calm was restored; but fearing, after a little while, that he had transgressed the spirit or rule of the Order, he sought the Abbot and confessed.

"What shouldst thou do, a poor monk of St. Francis, to be writing to his Holiness? Where is thy humility? Alas! I fear thou wilt be Jacopone to the end! Henceforth send no more letters without permission," said the Abbot, in severe tones.

“I feared for his soul, lord Abbot, and my heart was moved to warn him,” he replied, humbly. “But I will obey thee henceforth.”

The abbot gave him absolution; but he was sorely perplexed. What displeasure might not this ill-advised act bring upon them? Then remembering Jacopone's holy life, he bethought him of the prophets of old sent by the Almighty to the princes of the earth—aye! to the high-priests, to warn and counsel them—and he rested the matter in the hands of God, praying that no evil would come of it.

Pope Celestine's heart constantly wandered back to his desert cell! The pomp, the ceremonial surrounding him, the crowds of petitioners that beset him, the audiences with the great and mighty ones of the earth, the heavy responsibilities of the temporal power, the perplexing questions of the spiritual, the corruption and intrigue daily brought to his notice, with other untold and wearisome duties, made his heart grow faint within him; he felt as if he must die or go mad under the heavy burden, so utterly was he unfitted to cope with the difficulties of his exalted position. He felt weak to contend against the enemies of the Church, who were already moving against her in temporal affairs, hoping to prevail by their wicked intrigues, and if need be, by military force. The odds against him were fearful: how should he escape the snares set for him by the ungodly—he, a simple cenobite, who had spent

the years in solitude, meditation, and prayer? Now, when he prayed, such distractions beset him that his soul was tempest-tossed, and his mind confused; so with his meditations. Alas! alas! would not Almighty God vouchsafe to him some sign by which he might know whether for his soul's sake he might not lay down his heavy cross, or whether it was His holy will that he should bear it to the end?

One afternoon, when the audiences, the weary ceremonials, and the business of the day, were finished, the Pope retired to his own apartment—as simple as that of the poorest monk—for an hour's rest and meditation, an hour sacred to the Pontiff, upon which none ever ventured to intrude. He threw himself upon his knees on the bare brick floor, before his crucifix, to pour out his griefs at the feet of Him whose image hung thereon, when his attention was arrested by a letter so placed against it that he could not fail to see it.

“Alas!” sighed the Pontiff, “am I to find no rest even here? Well did he who placed it at Thy feet, dear Lord, plead for attention, and for Thy sake I will see what message it brings.”

He broke the seal; his pale face flushed, his brow contracted as he read, then every vestige of color faded from his countenance; he trembled, and floods of tears streamed from his eyes. The letter was the one written by Jacopone, that Jacopone of whose heroic penitence he had heard in

the desert from time to time, and in eloquent and burning words it reminded him of the terrible exchange he had made in leaving the holy and contemplative seclusion of his cell for the government of Christendom, and bade him remember that if he failed the curse of Christendom would be upon him. "I felt," he added, "a great bitterness of pity for thee in my heart, when there came forth from thy mouth that word, *I will*, that word which on thy neck laid a yoke heavy enough to make one dread thy damnation. . . . Beware of incumbents. . . . Beware of those who embezzle the public money: if thou canst not defend thyself against them thou wilt sing a sorry song." \*

The Pontiff read and re-read the letter. Was this the sign he had asked? Wrestling in prayer, with his crucifix pressed to his breast, while the sharp points on the leather girdle he wore under his garments pierced his flesh, the hours passed by. Terrified beyond measure by the picture Jacopone drew of the perils of the Pontificate, and the tempest of human passions he was called upon to control,—overcome by a sense of his own weakness, and the magnitude of the dangers threatening his soul, he determined to fly without delay from Rome, leaving the Fisherman's Ring, the tiara and the Chair of Peter to some one bet-

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\* These extracts from that remarkable letter are authentic, and literal.

ter qualified to cope with the tremendous responsibilities they involved. He summoned to his presence a faithful priest, his confessor, whom he had brought with him to Rome, laid bare his heart to him, and directed him to make secret arrangements for his immediate flight. He left the Vatican by a private way, and midnight found him far from Rome, burdened with nothing except the crucifix which he had brought with him from the desert, and without a companion, having left his confessor to make known and explain his flight. As rapidly as such a journey could be then accomplished he reached the desert in safety, where, once more clothed in sackcloth, he took possession of his old cell, which he could never be induced to leave again. Great consternation prevailed when it was known that the Pope had abdicated his high dignities and gone back to the desert. Some pronounced his flight ignominious; others called him a "drivelling idiot"; those who, having discerned his weakness, hoped to prevail over him and gain their own wicked ends, were filled with consternation; while there were some who thought he had saved the Church great troubles by laying down a burden which he was too weak to bear. It was not generally known what had determined him so suddenly to take the step he did; there were rumors of a mysterious and threatening letter he had received, but none could tell whence or from whom it came, except the confessor, who had

read it, but who kept his own counsel, and the Abbot and his poor monk down there at the monastery of St. Francis near Todi.

“See,” said the Abbot, “what thou hast helped to bring upon the Church.”

“Not I, my lord Abbot, but the holy will of God,” answered Jacopone, humbly.

“Do penance, do penance, until the Lord restores peace to Christendom by sending us a head after His own heart; and remember that thou art only a poor monk, who has no right to meddle with high matters, either matters great or small, outside the rule of thy life. Go in peace,” replied the Abbot.

Jacopone never shrank from penance; it was the delight of his soul, in which he found peace. Yes, he would do penance joyfully, but not for grief in having penned that letter, which, it was said, had sent the holy cenobite back to his solitude. The public commotion presently subsided in view of the necessity of electing another Pope, and after the usual preliminaries, and delays from various causes, Benedict Gaetani was elected with the title of Boniface VIII. Two of the Cardinals, Giacomo and Pietro Colonna, protested against the election, and drew up a deed summoning him to appear at the bar of the Universal Council. The poor lay-brother of St. Francis through whose zeal for the salvation of Celestine this storm which tossed the bark of Peter was raised, had the evil fortune (how, or why, we are

not told), to figure in this deed as a witness, and was thus included in the excommunication which fell upon the two rebellious Cardinals. Here was penance for Jacopone which required all the humility and patience of his soul to bear, and although hungering and thirsting for the Divine Sacraments which the sentence of excommunication deprived him of, imprisoned, and suffering all the miseries of a dungeon, the zealous monk accepted the situation bravely, willing to bear all, and suffer even death itself, submissive to the holy will of God, and even accepting with joy his pains and humiliations. His imprisonment continued until the accession of Benedict XI. to the Papal throne, when the interdict was removed and Jacopone was liberated from his dungeon, which had become to him a holy spot, where in solitude, in penance, in prayer, and meditation on the Passion of Christ, on the Dolors of Mary, and in bitterly bewailing the sins of his past life, he found such peace and consolation as he had never known before. He did not return to the monastery at Todi, but went to end his days in peaceful exile at Collazone. Here the "old athlete of penance," as he is called, spent the remainder of his life in prayer, mortifications and humility, meditating, and writing many quaint poems full of a burning love of God and a tender, compassionate love for mankind. It is recorded that Alighieri, when sent as ambassador to Philip le Bel, recited some of his old friend's verses,

where the latter stigmatizes the policy of Pope Boniface, a boldness which excited such resentment against the daring satirist that he was destined to expiate it in years of captivity or rather exile, or perhaps both, in the cloisters of Collazzone, which would explain why he did not return to his old monastery.

He was now an old man, but his ardor and fervor and his spirit of penance were unchanged, and it was here that not long before his death he composed that wonderful hymn to the Mother of Sorrows, the *STABAT MATER*, which had he done nothing else worthy of note in his long career would have made his name immortal. Who that reads it does not feel the burning love and indescribable penitence that pervades it! Who can read it without tears of compassion for the Sorrows of *MARY* as related by this penitent soul, the best part of whose life was spent in meditating upon them? Who, until the end of time, can listen to the sublime hymn without bitter compunction for the sins that caused her dolors?

The author \* from whose pen we have gleaned the outline of the life of *Jacopone da Todi* admits that he did not enter without some hesitation on the life of this extraordinary man, who passed from the cloister to the prison and from the prison to the altar to be venerated as a saint. "But," he continues, "as painful as it is to de-

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\* Frederick Ozanam; Professor at the Sorbonne

scribe a period when the Church was passing through fiery trials in a religious war with the Pope, it is impossible in a notice of the poets of the age to pass by the author of the STABAT MATER."

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