



# CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XVI.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1866.

No. 27.

## KATE ASHWOOD.

### CHAPTER XIV.

"These awful words, 'till death do part,'  
May well alarm the youthful heart;  
No after-thought when once a wife:  
The die is cast and cast for life."

Cotton.

While Sir George was thus trying to take in people in London, the day arrived for the wedding which he had endeavored to thwart. Mr. Merton's leg had progressed favorably. The marriage-settlements were soon arranged; and no impediment now remained to the celebration of the nuptials.

All was bustle and excitement, and joy and gaiety; so like, poor Kate thought, the time of her engagement. She liked Mr. Merton extremely, and respected him more and more, as she became intimate with him; and she rejoiced much in the happy contemplation of the fate which she deemed was in store for Fanny.

The ceremony was arranged to take place in the parish church. The bridesmaids included the two sisters of the bride, Miss Merton, and a cousin of the Ashwoods.

The church was decorated with evergreens, and a few flowers were also admitted; and, by the way, this subject of the admission of flowers into the sacred edifice had caused a tremendous controversy in the parish. Some of the parishioners deemed such innovations highly idolatrous and savoring of Popery, while others had defended their presence. The former clergyman would as soon have admitted a statue of the Blessed Virgin herself or a crucifix, while the new one stood up for the rights of the flowers, and had caused sundry other changes which greatly horrified the old inhabitants; for example, an altar-cloth on which was embroidered in mediæval style I.H.S.; besides which candles actually found their way into the church, and were lighted during morning as well as evening service. Many who had patiently stood the flowers could not pray with an easy conscience while candles were kept lighted; others again submitted to the candles, but protested against their being lit. This, however, is a digression.

Fanny entered the church leaning on her father's arm, looking happy, bright, and satisfied. There was in her countenance an expression of the calmest content. The bridesmaids looked well. Kate, though feeling intensely the difference in her situation as bridesmaid from the important one of bride she had been destined to fill, endeavored to keep a cheerful countenance; and succeeded so well, that few would have guessed that beneath a smiling exterior was a heart broken and weighed down by sorrow. Several friends of both bride and bridegroom assembled to do honor to the nuptials. The solemn words were at last pledged which bound Fanny Ashwood and Frederick Merton together. Somehow a wedding is always an awfully-solemn ceremony, notwithstanding all the glitter and gaiety around. The responsibility of the marriage-vow is so great, so awful, that it is surprising many don't shrink from the weighty charge, considering themselves unfit and unable for accomplishing the duties matrimony entails—duties so solemn, and on the proper fulfilment of which depends the well-being of generations.—Yet unfortunately few consider these in their proper light. How often are they entirely excluded. Many enter into the holy state from a wish to better their fortunes; others attracted by the desire of being free from maternal restraint; and how often do we see the most unfortunate results of those marriages—children badly brought up disgracing themselves and their families.

But enough of this sermonising. That philosopher spoke truly, who said we should all be perfect, if to do what was right were as easy as to know what was right to do; and there are few amongst us whose minds are not pretty well stocked with moral maxims on this and most other subjects, so that young ladies need not be appalled. All these fruits which look so fair and tempting are not of the Dead Sea, we can assure them.

The breakfast, or more properly speaking luncheon—for who breakfasts at one o'clock?—not you or I, my dear readers; at least I hope not—well, the *déjeuner*, then, to use the proper term, was most satisfactory.

The cake was gorgeous, covered with little doves, kissing each other most lovingly, and perched on shaking pieces of wire; Cupids aiming their sugary darts at the company; true lovers' knots and satin ribbons all attached to most snowy-white sugar, and mounted on the different steps of stairs that led the little sugar god and his satellite doves to the flag at the top, where waved the ermine bearings of the houses of Ashwood and Merton.

The requisite number of toasts was given and appropriate speeches made. The bridesmaids were applauded as usual; and the customary wish expressed, that the bridesmaids of to-day might be the brides of to-morrow; and they

were told, as they have been informed from time immemorial, that if they were not all married by that day twelvemonth it would be their own fault, &c.; and the bride and bridegroom were cheered and wished every happiness.

In short, the wedding was very much like every other wedding; and the happy couple drove away from Warrenstown, no end old of shoes being thrown after them. They went to a friend's house not far off, which had been lent to them for a short time; and they then started for a tour. Fanny wrote frequently very charming accounts of herself and her husband; she seemed to be thoroughly happy. And Kate rejoiced; she was one of those sympathising creatures to whom the happiness of others is important, and is in fact necessary to their own, and whose tears are more frequently

"Flowing in rills,  
For others' ills,"

than for their own misfortunes.

Charles had repeated invitations from Fitz-James to return to Shanganahab, and he made up his mind to do so. He had been some months at home; and perceived that though exteriorly Kate was gay, and as full of spirits as he had known her to be in days long gone by, she was at heart sad and sorrowful. He saw it was quite useless to attempt further remonstrance with his parents, as they had evidently made up their minds to remain firm. But still 'Time works wonders,' and Fitz-James might become rich, though there seemed but little prospect of it at present. He therefore answered an urgent appeal from his friend in the affirmative, and took his departure.

### CHAPTER XV.

Meantime Fitz-James was dragging on a stupid existence of Shanganahab. He was out of spirits, and meditating a visit to an uncle's house in Dublin, where he had an invitation to spend some time.

The Dublin season, never very gay, was that year, however, duller than usual. He cared little whether it was gay or otherwise, but went through a certain number of balls, dinner-parties, musical soirees, &c., without any great *gout* for them. He then accompanied one of his cousins to the north of Ireland, visited the Giant's Caul-way, and cut his and Kate's initials in the rocks, to perpetuate his love for her. And there still are to be seen F. J., and K., linked in each other monogram fashion, such as are often nowadays embossed on paper. He was delighted with the bold wild scenery, the curious caves, the extraordinary octagon-shaped pillars, seeming as if fashioned by the hand of man, so regular and exact are they, fitting one into the other, and much more resembling the labor of millions of workmen than the fantastic creation of *dame Nature*. He was greatly struck with the difference in the prosperity of the inhabitants of the north to those of any other parts of the country. 'Oh,' thought he, 'for manufacturers to occupy our idle hands, and bring prosperity to the country.' He visited several linen-factories, where hundreds and thousands of people earned their daily bread; and why, thought he again, 'are the other parts or Ireland shut out from such advantages? Why does a colony of distinct people enjoy an exceptional state of prosperity? Is the misery of the Connaught or Munster peasant a consequence of that recklessness and want of energy, which we are told is a characteristic of the Irish Celt? or are we to attribute it to the government of past times—the oppressive spirit of which happily no longer survives—when Irish manufactures were crushed by special enactment, and by thus strangling the growth of manufacturing industry, a fatal blow was inflicted on the country, from which it cannot recover?'

He did not remain long on his tour, but returned to Dublin, and soon afterwards home.—He there passed some time, writing frequently to Charles to return and cheer him in his loneliness; and his entreaties were at last rewarded by an acceptance of his oft repeated hospitality.

The two friends were glad to meet each other—and Fitz-James was gratified and saddened by the intelligence of Kate's constancy, which Charles communicated to him with all the delicacy of a brother and the sincerity of a friend.

Not long after his arrival, they were stopped one day, whilst out driving, by a highly respectable looking man, who, with no end of bows, requested a parley. He addressed them as follows:

"Gentlemen, my daughter is going to be married; and I should feel very proud if you would honor our humble board by your presence."

Fitz-James and Charles promised to go that evening, after the wedding-dinner was over, in time to lead out the bride for a dance. They were greatly amused, on entering, at the state of fuss old Hughes was in as they appeared. He made place for them next the bride. Our friends were heartily welcomed. The company were all seated round a table, on which were grapes,

melons, peaches, and apricots; port, sherry, and whisky-punches. Old Hughes was a tenant on the Boylan estates; and his landlord's greenhouses had been despoiled of some of their best productions for the occasion. At the appointed time, Fitz-James led off with the bride, and Charles selected a partner for himself. Reels, country dances, and jigs succeeded each other in rapid succession. One or two quadrilles also—which were looked upon with great admiration by the old folk, who had never seen in their days anything grander than their own national dances, which, for grace and spirit, bear no unfavorable contrast with the 'modern improvements.' Charles was greatly amused at finding himself *à tête à tête* with a rustic beauty.

At Warrenstown, where the atmosphere of aristocracy was pure and undiluted, such an idea as going to a farmer's wedding would have been scouted; and he meditated writing a description of it to his father, who would have shrugged his shoulders at the bare idea of mixing in the amusements of plebeians. Then again he considered it would be better not to provoke the displeasure of the paternals, as they might tease Kate by expressing their disapprobation of Fitz-James, and the company into which he was leading Charles.

The ball was conducted with the utmost decorum. Few would have imagined they were in the midst of those who, the next day, would be following ploughs, milking cows, and making butter. Certainly the white-kid gloves and satin shoes of the ladies, and the fine broadcloth and silk vests of the gentlemen, hardly suggested such an idea. They remained with the old farmer till daylight, who paid them every sort of attention. He was considered quite a character in the neighborhood. He was, in his way, a small Chesterfield, and prided himself on his grand bow and courteous conversation.

On their way back to Shanganahab, Charles asked Fitz-James if these marriages were entirely the result of affection, or had worldly prudence any share in the matter. Fitz-James informed him that the thought of marrying for love was as foreign to their ideas as it would be to a young lady in the highest French circles. Two farmers met at a fair,—the one has a son, the other a daughter,—and, while smoking a friendly pipe together, they suggest the advisability of bringing about a marriage between them. They then bargain about the respective fortunes as pedlars might do about their wares. Charles expressed great astonishment at hearing that Irishmen, who have the character of being so improvident, should have so decided an eye to the main chance. Fitz-James replied that at different times people had come to him to beg that he would assist them in bringing about desirable matches; and he often found the parties knew nothing of each other; and that the piece of land or a certain sum of money was really the desired possession, and not the owner, or rather tenant who held it. This, however, he added, applies entirely to the farming classes; love and romance reign paramount among laborers; they possess nothing themselves, and expect nothing in matrimony, but to gain the girl they are in love with; their marriages are, in general utterly reckless and improvident.

News came to Fitz-James one day that the Powers of Power Court were returning to their residence from the Continent, where they had gone to finish the education of their children.—Fitz-James was pleased at the intelligence, as promising some novelty and amusement for his friend. Mr. Power was very wealthy; he had inherited the property from his father twenty years previously. He was married to the daughter of a rich gentleman in Scotland; and she thought Ireland detestable, and contrived every ungrateful excuse for living as much as possible away from it. The education of the children formed a very reasonable pretext for going abroad. The family had not been in Ireland for many years, except Mr. Power, who had two or three times visited Power Court for a short time, to look after his property. During the short time that Mrs. Power had resided there, she was very gay; she saw a great deal of company at the place, and endeavored as much as possible to prevent *ennui*. She did not care much for Mr. Power, and had only married him as he suited—or rather his fortune and connexion were such as she, daughter of Mr. McPherson of Carnslort, had a right to expect. She was a lovely blooming girl of nineteen when she married—he some years her senior. There was no great disproportion in that way; but Mr. Power was cold and supercilious, and only sought in a wife one who would ornament his drawing room, look dignified at the head of his dinner table, and in fact do the honors of his house to perfection. For that purpose he could not have made a better or more appropriate selection. Mrs. Power was declared the *belle* of Dublin Castle the first winter she spent in the Irish metropolis, and all the neighborhood about Power Court were enthusiastic in their praises

of the beautiful Scotch lady. They had now several children, all ages from two to twenty-two; from the straggling hairs of babyhood to the whiskers and moustaches of more mature years. Ten brothers and two sisters—a considerable family, and rather an anxious care for pater- and mater-familias. Mr. Power was a proud haughty man, proud of his ancestry, his broad acres, and his high connections. He was a Protestant, and looked with contempt on the Catholics of the country. Few of them were ever admitted inside the mansion of Power Court.

Fitz-James had been left ward of Mr. Power, hence this intimacy with the family. Under ordinary circumstances his religion would have formed a complete barrier between them. Fitz-James and Charles went to pay a visit to Power Court immediately after the arrival of the family, and they were fortunate in finding Miss Power at home. Charles was quite bewitched with her; and if Fitz-James was not so, you may be sure it was solely because his heart was previously engaged. An intimacy soon sprang up between Fitz and his friend and the Powers; and there was a constant interchange of civilities passing between them. The girls were very fascinating; and Fitz-James was becoming alarmed for the safety of Charles's heart; for he always found reasons and excuses for visiting Power Court every second or third day.

One day the Powers asked the two gentlemen to assist them in getting-up charades. Charles had acted before in private theatricals; so he was quite at home in an amusement of that description. The word selected was 'donkey'—apparently not a very romantic word, and yet a good deal of romance came of it.

The little game was fixed for the following evening. A few friends were dining at Power Court; and after dinner the company, on reaching the drawing room, found a curtain fastened across from one side of the room to the other.—The girls soon disappeared; then a noise was heard behind the curtain; whispering, laughing, and moving furniture; by degrees this subsided, the curtain was slowly drawn aside, and Mary Power was discovered leaning on a chair, enveloped in a Spanish mantilla; apparently in expectation of the arrival of some one, as she occasionally glanced uneasily at the door. A moment after, Charles enters, dressed as a Spanish 'Don,' a cloak thrown loosely over his shoulders a sword by his side. He comes over to the lady and, bowing nearly to the ground, kisses her hand fervently. She puts her finger to her lips.

'Hush!' she said; 'no noise. If my father knew you could think of my hand, of asking me to bear your hated name, what would he say?—Hush! speak low.'

'My Catalina,' he replied, 'why must such hatred as this exist? Because my escutcheon is less noble than yours, am I to lose my precious treasure—my fondest love? Am I to suffer such treatment?' he said, angrily; and here he stamped his foot, as if in a passion. 'By my soul, I won't! By our Lady, I'll endure this no longer! and with his eyes flashing fire, he laid his hand on the hilt of his sword.'

'Calm yourself,' said Catalina (for by this name we shall at present designate Mary Power) 'for the love you say you bear me, respect my father. Patience! he loves me dearly; he will, perchance, relent. Perhaps by that time Don Pedro may have forgotten the Catalina he now loves.'

'Do you say this?' returned the Don; 'the sun must change its course, ere I could forget my worshipped, my adored one!'

'I hear my duenna,' said Catalina; 'you must hasten away. I dread her even more than my father's displeasure. Here is a ring; and if ever that ring is not forthcoming when I ask it, I shall know that Don Pedro loves another. But you must go; I hear steps approaching.' Exit Don Pedro; enter duenna.

'Senora Catalina, 'tis time to dress for the ball. What will you wear?'

'A domino,' returned the girl.

'But, senora, a domino is not the suitable dress for a young lady of your pretensions. Let me find some more appropriate costume.'

'No!' said Catalina, in a determined manner, 'I'll have no other.'

Mary is enveloped in a domino, takes the duenna's arm, and exits.

The next scene represents a ball-room.—Catalina enters, leaning on her father's arm; the duenna beside her. She spies in the distance Don Pedro, apparently in deep conversation with another lady. He does not recognise her on account of the disguise. She approaches him and watches him for some time without his being aware of her presence. She then advances alone to the front of the stage, and as if talking to herself, exclaims, 'Don Pedro faithless! 'tis too dreadful to think of! I have believed him all truth and honor. I suppose my father was right; 'seek not for noble sentiments where

there is not noble blood.' She seems in despair; looks at him again. He is still in earnest conversation. She now walks about, and dances with other cavaliers, and finally quits the ball-room.

Don Pedro suddenly leaves the balcony where he had been seated with the lady, and is apparently occupied searching for something which he cannot find. He tries under chairs and sofas.—The missing article cannot be discovered. 'The company are all gone; still he lingers till informed that the ball-room must be closed.'

Next scene. He is discovered entering Catalina's boudoir through a window. Catalina comes in, and indignantly refuses to speak to him. He asks for an explanation. She will give none. At last she suddenly asks for the ring. He looks abashed; he has it not; he has lost it.

'Lost it!' she exclaimed; 'how can you add insult to injury? No, Don Pedro; you are playing a double game. I saw you last night in deep conversation with a lady in a balcony of the ball room. Name the lady.'

'My married sister,' replied Don Pedro. 'We have not met for two years, and I was anxious to talk to her.'

Catalina in her turn looked consused.

'But what about the ring?' she said at last.—

'How do you explain that?'

'The ring was too small for all save my little finger, for which, however it was too loose,' said Don Pedro. 'I imagine, therefore, I must have dropped it while talking to my sister.'

A servant of Don Pedro enters at this moment with the ring, which had fallen into a boat moored on a lake under the balcony.

The curtain now dropped.

It rose again while Bluebeard was departing on his journey, and intrusting his wife with the 'key' of his treasures, and of his closet, which she was not to enter. The sequel of the story is, however, too well known to need repetition.

The *tout* was represented by two old women at a Petty-Sessious Court; the one accused the other of having stolen her 'donkey.' The charade was well got up and cleverly acted, and was received with great applause.

### CHAPTER XVI.

Charles was fast becoming desperately in love and Fitz-James used his utmost endeavors to dissuade him from visiting so often Power Court. Experience is the cheapest thing borrowed, but the dearest thing bought; and Fitz-James, having suffered much from being crossed in love, was anxious to hinder his friend from falling into a similar misfortune. Fitz-James would say sometimes before Charles that Mr. Power was a tough customer to deal with; that he would require large settlements, if his daughter were married; that Mr. Ashwood would also be on the look out for a large fortune for his son; but his hints were all in vain. Charles still continued to pay attentions to Mary Power; and really no one could find fault with his taste.

He, however, was induced by Fitz-James to remain silent on the subject of his wishes and intentions till his return to Warrenstown. He could then consult his family ere he committed himself; but the eyes are often times a great deal more eloquent in their language than the tongue, and Charles could not conceal his admiration.

A ball took place at Power Court, at which of course our friends were present. Charles danced so often with Mary that many people remarked his attentions. As they were seated together in a recess formed in a window, Charles mentioned his intention of leaving Shanganahab in a few days and returning to England. He looked at Mary to read in her countenance what effect such a communication produced on her.—She became crimson, and looked down, abashed at her own tell-tale blushes; and the more conscious she was of her confusion, the more confused she became.

As soon, however, as she was sufficiently composed, she looked at him in the most indifferent manner possible: hoped he had enjoyed his visit, would give a favorable account of Ireland to his friends, &c. She could not bear that he should guess the impression he had made upon her. She was apparently cold and indifferent, or at least she did her utmost to appear so.—She suffered interiorly. She had fancied he loved her, and now it was evident he had only flirted, or else why would he return to England without any declaration of his sentiments? She was hurt at having been, as she thought, trifled with. How often are we mistaken in our views and ideas! and indeed Mary Power deceived herself. How little did she guess that he would have given worlds to speak! that ought—but consideration for her prevented him from declaring his affection. He had prudence enough to reflect on Kate's misery, and take warning in time. He felt misgivings as to his parents' requirements. He thought that probably they would be even more exigent in regard to the fortune his wife should possess than in the selection