THE TRAGEDY OF COUNTESS CATHERINE

(By Elizabeth Seton.)

in the course of a rather lengthened stay in a German capital, it was my fortune to become acquainted with a most interesting person; such a character as we seldom meet with in our every-day world, and yet 'doubtless others such, in hidden places, live and die unknown.

The study of faces and the striving to guess soul-secrets from outward expression and feature, has a charm for many; and I must confess that in the case of which I am about to speak my curiosity was excited in no small

In the same house as myself there dwelt a woman, seemingly of means,

The apartment which Countess X. occupied was the one below mine; her name was not on the door, and were not for the customary exchange of cards at the New Year, we might long have remained in ignorance one twelvemouth elapsed before anything but a bowing acquaintance existed

My neighbor may have been forty and was quite handsome without possessing any marked regularity of feature; it was perhaps a certain nobleness of carriage and a pair of large eyes that made people look a second time.

Her expression was one of placid contentment, or conceit—I could not tell which; a perpetual smile widened the naturally small mouth, and her head, carried a trifle to one side, lent to her whole appearance a look of

child-like inquiry.
Countess X. kept but one servant, a very old person, whose doleful look was in stern contrast to the cheerful expression of her mistress. I subsequently learned that she had been nurse to the lady, and was retained in her service as much out of necessity as in consideration of a life-long attachment.

This good creature was the most sient person I ever met. A basket on her arm, she would noiselessly pass up and down the long flight of steps without so much as a sigh; that she had a voice at all came to my ears from below through the medium of the chimney, whence lively altercations would occasionally seach me.

Late one evening, as I was returning up the common stairway, I met the Countess hurrying downward, a worried look in her eyes; she had passed me with a little nod of recognition when she suddenly stopped. glanced back, and seeing her stand there so undecided, her right hand on the rail, her left pressed against her cheek, and she too looking at me, that I asked if I could be of any ser-

How kind of Fraulein: Janet is very ill, and I was going for doctor; but if-".

'Yes, to be sure," I answered, anticipating the rest of her sentence. 'let me fetch the doctor for you. You want L-, do you not? He is the nearest anyway. 'No," she said in a low tone, "I

could not afford to have him. Please to call in H; he is but a few doors

We had changed positions whilst speaking, as I had turned to go down again, while she now stood in her own doorway.

You mean H-, the veterinaran?" I asked in a surprised tone. "Yes. He is an excellent physician esides." And I saw the face of the Countess flush, and her brow contract as she bowed to me before entering her apartment.

Certainly it was no business of mine to question further, so I hasten- first I could not speak; but recovered on my mission, and soon returned with Dr. H-, a burly, good-natured my friendship has certainly not deman, who upon my accosting him had asked in a careless way, with either hand on a medicine chest, "Am I needed for four feet or two?" I found out the man really did have considerable practice, but mostly

among the lower ranks. That night the sound of a quiet sobbing came up to me, exciting all my sympathy for a fellow-creature in dis- a sad smile played on her lips.

tress; and the following morning, feeling that my first little service might warrant another, I descended be waiting. Good-bye! Judge me to my neighbor's rooms, bearing a kindly." steaming cup of coffee, thinking she might not have had time to prepare me in her arms, and then hastened any herself.

awhile I stood hesitating to disturb astonishment. my friend; again I raised my hand to pull the bell, when slow steps ap-

so changed Countess X. that had we bag, and in the other (the gas in the net on the street I scarcely should public stairway having been turned have known her. Her great eyes off) she carried a wax light, such as seemed set into a strange, desperate we use abroad to read by at early look; and the pleasant mouth was Mass. She turned her face towards so pinched and drawn that the lips me, but her sight could not penetrate ere but thin lines. I was startled. the darkness, and as I stood motion-Janet is worse?" I whispered. "Dead," was the answer.

It was not this word that meets us about my friend a great, luminous circle which gave to her black figure an unearthly appearance.

Something she murmured which I

ad an instinct this woman needed in the steps when I conquered my elp; and as if broken into submis- feelings enough to call out: "God bless p; and as if broken into submis-feelings enough t a, Countess X. closed the door, you, Catherina."

the tables and curiously carved courtyard and was for ever lost to oned silver was, as I thought, rath-

ostentatiously displayed.

In the corners of the room several absorbed any curiosity to know her

Heavy damask curtains swung from who seemed to have rejected my friendship, and certainly doubted my light and air, for the apartment had discretion; and my first impulse inmusty odor more befitting an anti-deed was to destroy the papers which stry's shop than the salon of a suntess, Several stiff old-time family extraits looked down at me, as if to

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chide my thoughts, which were called to the present by Countess X. motioning me to a seat; then she threw herself into another in an attitude so full of despair that all my curiosity fled.

There are some sorrows that awe even sympathy into silence; and alto judge by the way she was clad and though I knew my neighbor had only the fine folks that at intervals called lost an aged servant, yet I felt the grief I witnessed must have some ment I could not break. At last the arms, my own sister, to die! Countess spoke:

> wishing to say too much; and now and again her eyes would close tightly, almost spasmodically, as if to drive away some painful vision.

nature of woman to look upon distress without wishing to lessen it; therefore, urged by this sentiment, I went up to the Countess, and putting my hands upon her shoulders, I press-ed my cheek down upon her head and

whispered: "Dear soul! you have a great sorrow and need some one to help you bear it. I am a stranger; but if you have no one near to bring comfort, you must make use of me," and I sealed my little speech with a kiss.

A moment's silence; then the sad

words: "In the wide, wide worldI have no one to care for me or love me now.' And prompted to it by my sympathy this poor, solitary creature clung to me and cried like a child.

I it was who made the arrangements for the burial of old Janet, and we two were the only mourners that As was natural, considering the circumstances that brought us to-

gether, we got to be fast friends. Countess X., being like myself a Catholic, I discovered in her a piety deep and unaffected, with a wealth of self-sacrifice which showed itself in many ways during the course of our daily I beg God to bless you for the er Catherina had flown for peace, too short acquaintance.

One thing rather surprised me in her character; so charitably outspok- and grateful sister, en in her views and comments upon others, she herself, to the end, remained a sealed book.

Although I had confided to her the trials and consolations, she never vol- as unteered to disclose to me anything out her. You will not know how to of her own past.

One evening, as she rose to bid me good night (we had been working together in my rooms, for since the onel for leave of absence, so I can get managed that I could find no excuse can give me all your valuables to for going to her apartment), she gave my hand a rather more than wonted and good old blood cannot be expressure as she slowly said:

'Elizabeth, we will not meet tomorrow. It is not likely that we shall ever see each other again. God will bless you for what you have been to me in my trouble; but I feel before we part that I owe it to our friendship to let you know a little more about myself. This you will read when I am gone." And as she spoke she drew from her pocket a small parcel, which she placed in my hand. Her words so dazed me that at ing myself, I answered; "Catherina, served this mystery. Am I not know why, and where you go?"

"The papers will tell you all." "But surely, Catherina, you are not parting from me now?" I asked, feeling truly hurt at the strange conduct of my friend. "I leave on the midnight express, she replied, her eyes cast down, while

"To-night!" I ejaculated. "Yes. The carriage may even now

down to her lodging, whilst I re-My ring was unanswered; quite mained at my door speechless with

Before very long I heard the Countess come out of her apartment, and roached and the door was opened by looking over the banisters I saw that he Countess.

The few hours of the past night had In one hand she held her traveling was Mass. She turned her face towards less, she doubtless thought I had gone in; whereas the taper she held made

could not catch; then she descended. held must drop.
"Let us go in," was all I said. I Countess X. had reached the last turn

and led the way into what was eviently the drawing-room.

The furniture was all antique, and

The void I felt at this parting with my friend and daily companion quite cient chests, with lids thrown back, story. Besides, I was conscious of a sclosed a quantity of brocade and feeling of irritation with myself for having got to like a person so much who seemed to have rejected my

About this time much had elapsed ince the departure of Catherina when one day I saw her rooms invaded by a party of men, headed by a youth of some eighteen years. This young man looked so like my friend that I could not help giving

him a rather long stare, which was fully returned. His eyes were large and soft like hers, only that he looked through them half closed, which gave the youth a treacherous, cat-like expre-

As I closed the door to my apartment I remembered the papers which Countess X, had given me, and determined to read them on the spot. Upon opening the parcel I found, to my surprise, that it consisted of but three letters, each in a different hand-

I read them in the order in which they lay.

The first was dated some ten years back, from Madeira, and was in the fine, uncertain hand of a woman:

"Dearest Catherina: Lately I have been suffering very much and feel as if the end must be near. What would I not give to have you beside me, or silent tragedy! undercurrent into which for the mo- to have money enough to go to your "But fate, or, as you would say

You must think it very singular in God, has willed it otherwise. Had me to receive you thus, after your but heeded our dear mother's advice

It is impossible to the impulsive ful, just as was Conrad! And yet with all his faults, I believe my son Curt. must have some good in him, for he looks so very like you. When I am Miss S-?" he said, giving a slight gone, Catherina, you must be his mo- bow with the military salute.

"Curt is the last of our race, even if he has not the family name; and you must promise to be a mother to him; do so now, Catherina dear, as you read these lines; they may be my last; promise to let no sacrifice be too great to make him worthy of our past. As I write he is playing soldier on the veranda, and making a frightful racket: he does not know drew forth a small packet.

"My aunt, Countess X., before entering the convent, desired me to present you with this little keepsake;" handing me the packet.

To my acknowledgement of thanks I added: "I trust, sir, your aunt, my good friend, will have a happy life in the convent."

"No doubt of it, madam. A nun-"Curt is the last of our race, even drew forth a small packet. frightful racket; he does not know how ailing I am. O sister, how I love nery is always the best place for an nery is alwa my boy! Promise me you will do the old maid! I am your servant!" And same. I believe that from my grave I with profound, almost mocking obeisshall envy you his caresses!

"Your last remittance, which you to bury me decently, and send Curt gone, and in my hand lay only spoken to him about it, and have his valuable. many sacrifices you have always made had the curiosity to call on her.

"MARGARET."

The second letter ran as follows: "Dear Aunt-So old Janet is dead dispose of your work, or even to sell

your curiosities to advantage. "I am going to apply to the Colfuneral, six weeks ago, she had so down to see you next week; and you sell. A young fellow of my position pected to live on the pay of an ensign. I want now a good round sum -not the mean driblets you have been doling to me since I left school. At any rate, I should have quite as much right to the things as you have, I suppose; and then, you do not need money as I do; you know how to economize; I cannot. Your lovely foreign Masonry that has yet apfancywork should be sufficient sup- peared in the English language port. But my advice is, go into a is sold for the small sum of convent; lots of your name be so. Only if you do, please enter a convent where the nuns don't write, don Tablet of September, 1895, by D. as I am pretty weary of your sermons. And remember, like a good taining very grave charges, has up old aunt, to have the things I all ready for me. There is a man here who just went wild when I told him of grandmother's jewels; seems they were quite celebrated. think I shall bring him with me.

"Good-by for the present.
"Your affectionate

"CURT." This, I made no doubt, was from the youth whom I had just seen entering her apartment.

Poor Catherina, I thought to myself, how little did I know you, and The third paper was much shorter

"My dear Madam - Your favor of turn, from our Reverend Mother Su-Mount Carmel, which has already given to so many of your name shelter and peace. Our Reverend Mother Superior desires me furthermore to add, that with your education and

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talents no dowry will be necessary. "I have the honor to be, madam, your very humble and obedient servant in Xt..

'Sister John of the Cross So this, then, was the end of that A long time I sat with those let-

ters in my hand, thinking of my friend and striving to analyze the motives which had driven her to seek the calm shelter of a convent. Was had she sought peace and rest in "O Catherina! this boy, my darling boy, is growing so wild, I dread the startled me to my feet, and upon opening the door I was surprised to see before me the young ensign,

"Have I the honor of addressing I bent my head in response, and he

ance the young man withdrew. The package contained a miniature tell me is the proceeds of the sale of "Ecce Homo," which Catherina had our father's shooting box in the Ty- constantly worn as a medallion. It rol, I have not yet touched. If I do had then been set in an antique followed this "good and faithful not last long it will be quite enough frame of chased gold; this was now servant" to her last resting place. to bury me decently, and send Curt gone, and in my hand lay only the home to you. The same captain who vellum on which the picture was brought us out to the island will painted. Curt had evidently found take my boy back; I have already the golden part of the keepsake too

> promise. Dearest Catherina, I am A couple of years after these events too weary now to write any more; I happening to be in H—m, in which may be able to write again soon; but city I knew the convent to be whithfor me. Pray for your ever loving As I did not know her name in re ligion, I asked for the Countess X.

and gave the date of her entrance. The sister-portress smiled a heavenly smile as she answered: "Sister Mary Theresa of Jesus was imple story of my life, with its at last! Well, I am sorry for you, called for whilst in the beginning of colloquial, but not more so than the

her novitiate." "Has she left?" I stupidly inquired. With an upward glance, and a tremulous sigh, "For Home," sister-portress replied, and closed the grating.

NEW BOOKS

FOREIGN FREEMASONRY

This pamphlet, just issued by the International Catholic Truth Society, Brooklyn, N.Y., should appeal with more than ordinary interest to Catholics in this country, from the fact that it is the best resume of lone cents. The pamphlet is made up of Moncrieff O'Connor, and while conneed to the present day remained unan-

swered Fom the fact that Freemasonry in this country is not of the virulent I type of the Europen brand, it is sometimes agreed that its condemnation by the Catholic Church

is unwarranted. Those who take such a view bear in mind that the Mason's common boast is that Freemasonry is a universal society, indeed, its unity has frequently been compared to that of the Catholic Church. Consequently the organization is justly blamed for what sacrifices you were making for the tenets and practices af its chiefs in one country so long as those are not repudiated by other equally authan the others, and penned in a thoritative individuals or lodges. The clear, stereotyped hand. It read thus: quotations given in this pamphlet are has been duly considered, and I the written or spoken views not of have the honor to inform you in re- tive leaders and authorized Masonic perior, of your acceptance. Any member of your esteemed family will phis" (!) character of this Society ever be welcome to the holy order of condemned by the Church may be seen from a few of the many quotations given in the pamphlet. page 53, in a permanent instruction adopted as a code and guide by the more advanced Italian Masons we read: "Our final aim is that of Voltaire and the French Revolution, the

> Again, oh page 45, in the Masonic publication. The Voice of the Orient, we read: "Why is the name of Christ never once pronounced in the oaths, nor in the payers? Why do Masons date their era not from the birth of Christ, but, like the Jews, from the creation of the world? But supposing we could or would forget for an instant that a Christian Mason would be a flat contradiction, a square cir-cle," etc. The Belgian Masonic authority, "History of Freemasonry," by Goffin, says: "We have an enemy, the priesthood. Destroy it and the world will instantly be radiated with and snow. And wherever it has gone is compounded from several herbs, the splendor of universal fraternity. In and 'out of the lodges fight the ney Pills and Dodd's Dyspepsia Tabpriesthood and religion." (Page 49). lets.

annihilation for ever and ever Catholicism and even of the Christian ANOTHER DELIGHTFUL BOOK

"St. Cuthbert's" is the title of new book by the author of "Harry Russell, a Rockland College Boy, which will be published in November. The phenomenal sales of Father Copus' first book is an evidence that he has caught the fancy of the young readers of the country.

The second book for our young people by this gifted author is intended ards at the New Year, we might one have remained in ignorance one in the other. As it was, more than any one knows!" She sat with him rest in peace. I, myself, am too her lips, as one not near death to raise my voice against had she sought near and rest in lege. The story of the forthcoming lege. The story of the forthcoming book is inspiriting and contains many an uplift which will make the readers not only happier but better boys. There is no preaching-fancy Father Copus preaching!-in the book, but it abounds in adventure. For those who revel in the mysterious there is scarcely anything in all boy literature more thrilling then the ghost story. The pages flow rapidly and one comes to the end of the tale all too soon. In the relation of Howard Hunter's experiences, and the peculiar happenings to Rob Jones, and the results. we are sure that our young readers will be intensely interested.

Father Copus knows the workings of a boy's mind as few authors know it, and he gives the reader his experience. There are no long disquisitions on character and character-building, yet the reader is unconsciously imbibing correct ideas in this regard while at the same time he is absorbingly interested.

"St. Cuthbert's" will certainly prove to be a book after a boy's own heart. While there is nothing stilted or stupid in it, there is ample fun-and humor in the pages. We have read nothing more enjoyable than the midnight attack on the island by Ambrose Bracebridge and his companions and its sequel. Pathos and humor go hand in hand. While reading the pages of "St. Cuthbert's" one himself frequently laughing heartily while the eyes are yet moist.

This writer makes you live with his hoys, and feel as they feel. The London, Can., Daily Free Press in reviewing "Harry Russell," among many other good things, says:

"Father Copus has a vivid imagination and a facile pen; his English is subject requires. But above and yond these gifts the writer has evident love for whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, and a desire that if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, his readers shall think on these things and learn of them more surely than by contemplating their antitheses, to avoid the pitfalls of life, and to arrive at an established principle with regard to

conduct." The Ave Maria, in writing of "Harry Russell," speaks in the same

strain: "Such a book is better for boys than a barrelful of sermons.' If the first book of Father Copus can elicit such encomiums what may we not expect of the second. three articles published in The Lon- Cuthbert's," which is now in the press and will be issued next month, is equal in every respect to "Harry Russell," and is destined to be as popular. Mothers and fathers should thank Father Copus for these two books, copies of which will, undoubtedly, be found on thousands of breakfast tables next Christmas morning. The book is published by Benziger Brothers, New York, Cincinnati and Chicago, and will be sent postpaid on receipt of 85 cents.

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