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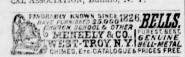
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lovely face had suddenly been in-MOTHER'S SACRIFICE:

By Christine Faber, Authoress of "Carroll O'Donoghue."

CHAPTER VII.

The day broke cold, but clear and oracing, on the night of which was to take place the grand ball that had been the topic of fashionable gossip for weeks.

Margaret leaned from an upper window, that the frosty air might cool the fever in her veins-a fever which had not abated since her last interview with her cousin. Contact with the sharp atmosphere seemed only to increase her wild emotion. Loving hopelessly, resigning her allegiance to the One who alone could strengthen and comfort her, for an idol that must sometime be shattered-living without the expectation of peace in this world or relief in a future one — Margaret Calvert continually suffered worse agonies than those of death. She hovered about her aunt almost all day, assuming the servant's duties, hoping thus to obtain at least a temporary repose for her agitated mind.

During lunch, of which she hardly tasted, she said to Hubert: You will not fail to come-to be at

Mrs. Delmar's before we start?' No," he answered, wearily; "but Plowden and I shall go to the club

first. " A club !" oh, Hubert ! have you oined a club?" in a tone half remon-

trance, half entreaty. He made a warning motion, for the waiter was busy about the table; and, dismissing the latter on some pretext,

"Why this fear? I thought you wished me to court society?"

"It is Roquelare which make me frightened," she answered. "With very new thing I learn about you I magine it has something to do He leaned across the table and whis-

Perhaps it has, Margaret. Struggle as I may, I cannot escape my fate. I feel assured of that now, and that every day brings it imminently near. - Would that it were here ; that the time had come for me to fling the wretched thing abroad. It burns so into my vitals. But I have not the

ourage yet - not yet. He shuddered and leaned back in his chair, while Margaret replied in a

passionate whisper: 'There is no danger, there can be no danger if only you will be firm, and if you will not listen to my weak woman's fears. Oh, Hubert ; you shall not, you must not die.

She rose to cross to his side, but the waiter was at the door. She resumed her seat and the repast

was finished in silence. Miss Calvert, attended by Annie Corbin, went in the carriage to the

Delmar mansion. On her arrival she found Miss Delmar delightfully excited over her own and Margaret's dress, both of which

had just arrived. She immediately began-at least so it eemed to the heart-sick girl -the torture of preparing for the fashionable assembly. Could she have dressed at home, a few minutes would have sufficed for the donning of her costly garb; but owing to Madame Bernot's lness Mrs. Delmar deemed it better

nade in their house, and she had pressed the matter so much that the re-ST. MARYS ACADEMY. pressed the matter so much that the luctant girl had at last consented.
Fashionable Mrs. Delmar her Fashionable Mrs. Delmar herself superintended Margaret's toilet. She as indefatigable in assisting to drape CHARGES MODERATE, LOCATION HEALTH- the misty lace which was to shroud the girl's fair neck and arms, and in arranging the superb pearls that Mar-

that Miss Calvert's toilot should be

garet brought in Madame Bernot's oldfashioned jewel-case. And, certainly, no lovelier sight ever greeted the worldly matron's view than Miss Calvert, when at last, her charming costume completed, she stood up to be surveyed. She was a trifle oo pale perhaps, but that only enhanced her spiritual expression, and when Miss Delmar, whose toilet was also completed, came rushing into the room looking like some gorgeous flower whose flaming hues surprise more than they please us, she exclaimed with in-

voluntary admiration :

' How lovely ! Miss Delmar did not envy Margare Calvert, for she deemed her beauty less attractive than her own showy style, and as rich admirers flocked more numerously to her shrine than to that of her pale lovely friend, she accepted it as sufficient proof that her beauty must be superior. She never imagined that the deficiency in the number o admirers was Margaret's own fault that many who poured insipid flattery into Miss Delmar's willing ears would have gladly transferred their attentions to Miss Calvert, would she have received them. But there was some-thing about the gentle, retired girl which repelled most effectually men who were only such in form and face. o Miss Delmar, understanding noth ing of this, could afford, as it were, to patronize Margaret-even to pity her that she could win so few suitors deemed the Bernots too strict Catholics or a marriage ever to take place be tween Margaret and Hubert.

After surveying Miss Calvert for a moment she crossed to her, kissed her and held her at arm's length, as if the

vested with some new charm OR, WHO WAS GUILTY? But Margaret turned paler still, for

to her distorted imagination, the flam-ing jewel in Miss Delmar's hair had assumed the appearance of a great quivering blood-stain, and Roquelare eemed dancing about it in fiery letters.

"You are not well," said the young lady in an alarmed tone, for it was un mistakable that Miss Calvert was suf-

fering.
"Yes, only a little dizzy," the latter gasped, and she shuddered as she turned her eyes away.

Annie Corbin, who had assisted in the preparation of the toilet, was a witness of Miss Calvert's sudden faintness, and she eagerly noted it that on return home she might relate it to her fellow servants.

Mrs. Delmar insisted on the application of sal-volatile, and she made hurried search for her own bottle, but Mar garet protested and declared she had quite recovered. There was a sudden bustle in the en-

trance hall. In a few minutes a servant

announced that the gentlemen waited. There was a hurried pinning of last bows, an excited taking of last surveys in the full length mirrors, and then the ladies descended to the parlor. Margaret had quite recovered, and she was able to hear calmly the toned and graceful compliments with

which she was met by Mr. Plowden,

who immediately constituted himself

her escort. Hubert had glanced at her as she entered, but after that one brief look he had turned his eyes away as if he had been stung to the quick. Alas! it was so hard for his poor, guilty heart to relinquish her. Courtesy demanded that he should escort Miss Delmar, and his bitter feelings found vent in the undercurrent of irony that pervaded

his talk with her. She half suspected his sarcasm, but as she was too much in awe of him, and as she lacked the ability to meet him on his own ground, she solaced herself by constantly remembering how eminently becoming was her cos tume, and how much envy she should

excite among the ladies of "her set. The Bernot carriage, which was equipage, carried the young ladies and their escorts; while the young scion of the house, Eugene Delmar, took the family carriage to call for a lady friend whom he had promised to attend to the

fashionable assembly. All that wealth with a lavish hand could bestow was visible in the splendid cooms of Madame Dupret, wherein already an aristocratic throng had gathered. Apartment opened into apartment with only a slight curve of fresco work to mark the division, and chandeliers with pendants whose briliant scintillations almost dazzled the eve, shed a bright and bewildering light over all, while immense mirrors at each end magnified the brilliant scene. Though not the first party for the Delmars had given two which Margaret had attended - i was the largest assembly of the kind a which she had ever been present, its brilliancy for the first hour or almost banished from her mind th

thought of Roquelare. Delmar, with his lady friend, had oined them, and the three couples apparently formed one of the happies ittle groups.

There were numberless introductions o Miss Calvert, and the gentlemen among themselves passed enthusiastic comments on her beauty, while the ladies with true feminine" charity" endeavored to discover some flaw in her courtesy took Mr. Plowden to another lady, for, knowing now the object of his attentions, and feeling how fruitless all his efforts would be, her womanheart could not but feel sorrow for vhat, must sooner or later, be a bitter disappointment to him. Yet how to avert, or, as in sheer pity she felt empted to do, to hasten the event, she knew not. Conscious of having treated him with no more warmth than she had done each one of Hubert's friends, she had nothing for which to reproach herself, but maidenly delicacy restrained her from showing any knowledge of his regard for her, while fear (lest in some way Hubert's safety might be affected) prevented her from being

nore reserved in her manner to him Miss Delmar (perfectly at home only n scenes of excitement' was brillian with a superficial gloss that dazzled shallow minds. In her exuberance of spirits she had somewhat ceased to feel per usual awe of Hubert Bernot's grave demeanor and conversation, and she boldly essayed with him sallies, which grosser and less able minds than his night have accepted as wit. deemed them worthy only of sarcastic eplies, and as she grew bolder, so did his sarcasm becomes more pointed and telling, till even her coarse nature winced beneath his repeated strokes and with a deep blush of mortification she threw herself on the divan beside

Margaret, and said pettishly: "Really, Mr. Bernot, you are the most uncavalier-like gentleman I have ever met. I am glad to be relieved from your attentions for a while.

Hubert bowed low and smiled sar astically for a second ; then he turned way with his hand to his heart.

He could have said bitter, cutting things to every one of the fashionabl company, for all night he had been contrasting their apparent pleasure with his hidden agony. He had been mentally picturing the horror with which the gay throng would shrink from him if his sin should be pro-claimed, and more than once he had felt a fierce, wild impulse to shout it

These were the times that he had

been most sarcastic to Miss Delmar, and these were the times that he had pressed his hand hardest on his heart, and turned excitedly to mingle with the crowd that he might force his guilty secret back.

Margaret's eyes followed him A wierd, dreamy waltz struck up from a score of musical intruments and numberless lithe forms began to whirl in a mazy way. He paused near a marble pillar as if to view the dancers, and his face was turned toward Margaret, who was answering Miss Delmar's remarks, but in a listess, abstracted manner which would have provoked that young lady had she not just then been claimed for the dance.

The friend whom young Delmar had brought was also claimed, and as Miss Calvert did not waltz, Plowden, at her earnest solicitation, had gone in search of another partner; so Margaret was alone and free to watch her cousin without comment. Perhaps it was wing to the fact of being surrounded by so many robust, stalwart young fellows, that he look more than usually pale and emaciated. His skin seemed almost transparent, and even at that distance Margaret fancied she could trace the veins in his forehead.

The waltz grew more dreamy, more weird: the light feet glided, and the lithe forms turned in a more bewilder ing way ; still Hubert looked, and still Margaret continued to see only his white face in all the gay concourse. Sometimes a form floated between them for an instant, and sometimes a portion of flying drapery intervened, but through form and drapery large dark eyes seemed still to shine, and his white face to look with its bitterly sarcastic expression.

Suddenly she became conscious that he was being watched as intently by another person-a man who slightly leaned against another marble pillar just in the rear of Hubert. She rose in her eagerness to scan the features of that face, and she beheld him who had given the warning of Roquelare The room swam about her; the whirling faces magnified themselves

into hundreds of grim countenances each bearing a likeness to this mys terious agent of a mysterious society the light grew dim and the music be came a dead march. Faint and dizzy she strove to make her way through the dancers to her cousin's side, but the whirling couples surrounded and

entangled her. Plowden, who had paused to give his dizzy partner breath, saw her embar-rassing position, and, hurriedly securing a seat for the young lady by his side, he came to Margaret's rescue.

"Take me to Hubert," she said faintly, but when they reached him the man who had been watching in his rear had gone. "Come home, Hubert-I am ill," she

said, excitedly, and relinquishing Piowden's arm, she took that of her cousin and leaned heavily against

Hubert did not reply. The cord of sympathy which was so strong between those two natures, made him at once divine the cause of her sudden illness He understood that something had hap pened to inspire her with new terro for his safety, and his own mind was so constantly possessed by fear that he could not spurn it as a woman's silly fancy. He longed to ask her for an explanation, but he was deterred by

Plowden's presence.
"Come home," she cried more excitedly than before.

"Go into the conservatory awhile, Miss Calvert, and you will feel better, said Plowden.

"There !" he continued, "the waltz has stopped; I shall excuse you to Miss Delmar. And with a puzzled expression in

his face he bowed and disappeared amid the couples now looking for seats after the dance. "Yes, come into the conservatory, whispered Hubert, and the two hurried to an apartment divided from one of the parlors by huge squares of translu cent glass and through which shone

faintly the color of the foliage within. Other couples seeking change from the heated dancing rooms were also there; but they were lovers, too intent on the recital of their own "sweet tales" to recital of their own heed the whispered conversation and excited manner of the cousins.

All night long had Hubert imagined if his fate overtook him he would not shrink from it; if his wretched secret should become known through som mysterious means, he would rejoice because it would free him of a burden which of himself he had not the strength to cast away; yet now, at the seeming approach of the doom he courted he was more a coward than ever, and the piteous cry with which he responded to Margaret's hurried narrative, betrayed his craven heart. Come home," she urged, "you will be safer there."

Safe nowhere, since Roquelare pursues me," he whispered, while his eyes shifted their glances in a wild,

unguarded way.
"Look, Margaret, and tell me if I am watched here." But the unsus-picious couples who promenaded in heir vicinity did not even glance in their direction, and no eye peered at Margaret from any other quarter. Hubert grew calmer and bolder.

To leave now," he said, " only bring a closer watch on me. No; I shall stay and brave it out. There has been nothing in my conduct to ex cite suspicion, has there?

" No ; but -She stopped suddenly, for Miss Delmar, escorted by Plowden, was ap proaching.

" Nerve yourself and remain," Hu

with a volley of anxious expressions about Margaret's sudden indisposition, and reiterated assurances that she knew Miss Calvert was not well since the symptons of illness which she had manifested when preparing for the

But Margaret declared herself quite recovered, and after a little they all re-

turned to the dancing room. That his demeanor might in all things conform to that of the gallants about him, Hubert solicited the hand some fair lady for every dance which succeeded until the announce ment of supper. He laughed and chatted just as he saw those about him doing, but all the time his eyes cease-

essly wandered in search of one face. Margaret fain would have withdraw from every dancing engagement, and on the plea of having felt slightly unwell, she might have done so with perfect propriety, but Hubert had

"Dance, Margaret ; you too may be

So Margaret also formed one of every set, and she forced herself to be smiling, and in a measure talkative, while her eyes roamed ceaselessly up and down, and across the room in search of one face.

Intermission came at last and the long procession of gay ladies with equally gay cavaliers filed into the elegantly decorated supper-room. Hubert, who was Miss Delmar's escort, was followed by Plowden and Margaret, after whom came Delmar and his friend. A smiling waiter met them on their entrance, and conducted them to tables which had been re served for them. Miss Delmar and Hubert were seated directly opposite Margaret and Plowden, while Delmar and his companion formed portion of

a party at another table.

They were among the first in their places and a laughing crowd surged and swayed about them in the effort to obtain desirable seats. Margaret, half reclining in her chair, was watching eagerly every face that passed her. She fain would have maintained a constant survey of the stream of people which flowed on both sides of her, but the rules of good breeding forbade

Hubert was talking with apparent gayety to his companion, but his dark eves never once withdrew themselves from the panorama of countenances shifting before him.

Mirth ran high ; the clangor of gay voices and loud laughter filled the room, and the busy waiters seemed to be in all directions at ouce. Margaret drew a long breath of relief, and for the first time turned her eyes on the tempting delicacy on her plate.

Suddenly she was thrilled by that mysterious feeling of being looked at, which most of us sometimes experi ence, and she raised her eyes to be hold the same mysterious agent of ROQUELARE.

He stood directly behind Hubert, not however looking at him but look-ing intently at her. His right hand was fumbling at his left wrist as if he were arranging the fastening of his cuff; but suddenly from his right hand there depended for an instant, full in Margaret's sight, a pair of steel The whole action was handcuffs. The whole action was done so quickly, and in such an adroit manner, that it attracted no attention save her own. It was an instant of horror to her who so well understood the mysterious transaction -an instan of voiceless horror, during which is seemed as if her heart was rent by housand pangs-as if she labored in an agony all the more dreadful because

of its very dumbness. But her white lips opened at last and one to his or her feet, startled, and well nigh as pale as was poor Mar-

garet herself. Immediately on its utterance she ost all consciousness, and but for Plowden's quick support she would have fallen from her chair.

Only two in that assemblage of white faces knew the cause of that startling shriek-the mysterious agent who was now nowhere to be seen, and Hubert, who intuitively felt that it must be owing to the reappearance of strange secret detective. looked in a scared way about him even before he hastened to Margaret's as sistance, but there was no vestige of

The first terrified astonishment of the company over, a score hastened the assistance of the unconscious girl. Madame Dupret herself bent diamond studded head over the white face and insisted that she should be borne immediately to her own private chamber. "No : home at once," said Hubert,

who feared that when consciousness returned some unguarded word might betray him. "You are mad, Mr. Bernot," replied stately Madame Dupret, "and unfeel-

ng as well. Your cousin may die on the way. " Nay, Madame," he replied court eously, but with an air of firmness

which could not be gainsayed;

will recover on the way, and her illness will be better treated at home. An order was despatched for a carriage, and some one having brought a soft shawl in which to wrap the unconscious girl, Plowden prepared to carry

her.
"Let me have her," said Hubert, almost savagely; and when Plowden, looking at Hubert strangely, resigned to him his light burden, Bernot darted through the surrounding forms as if the life of her he carried depended on his speed.

Ah! his haste was caused by the imaginary pursuit of a score of secret | Calvert nor Mr. Hubert are long for agents of Roquelare. | And the bur | this world; why, they're a wasting be den he bore - it was the first time it bert had barely time to whisper, beden he bore — it was the first time it fore Miss Delmar was down upon them lay so close to his panting heart; it

would probably be the last time, for his doom was coming between them with hurried, unfaltering strides. If he could but rush with it to some spot of the earth where his guilty secret would be safe! But there was no place; for, to his distorted imagination the very air gave birth to voices that had but one cry, and that cry was.

murderer." His passionate pressure contributed to restore consciousness to Margaret, and she opened her eyes and struggled faintly to free herself.

"Where am I? was it a dream?" she murmured. Hubert stooped to her and whisp

ered: Be silent for my sake."

And though her eyes showed the terror and anxiety under which she labored, she asked no more questions, but let him bear her away without resistance. Miss Delmar was vehement in her

desire to accompany Miss Calvert home.
'' She is too ill to be trusted entirely to you," she said to Hubert, but he firmly, yet without discourtesy, refused to gratify the young lady, Calvert herself asserted that there was no need of further attention than her cousin could bestow. She was sufficiently recovered to

walk through the entrance hall be-tween Hubert and Plowden to the carriage, and when she was comfortably seated, with her cousin beside her, the young lawyer extended his hand and said with a sadness in his voice utterly foreign to it: "Good night, or rather, good morn-

ing, Miss Calvert, and pressing her cold fingers for an instant he relinguished them to grasp Hubert's hand. Holding it tightly, he said with the same sadness in his voice :

"Ah, Hubert! we are both drink ing of a bitter cup."
And closing the carriage door he

turned hurriedly away.
"What did he mean?" gasped Mar garet: "surely he does not know?"
"No, no," interrupted Hubert, "unless he also is an agent of ' Roquelare.

man's hand is against me; but why did vou scream ?' She told him, with her hands tightly holding his, and her shivering form nestling close to his side. "Oh, God!" he groaned, and then he shrank away from her, and drew his

I suspect everybody now, for every

hands out of her clasp, and repulsed her when she would again have drawn near him. 'Is not your suffering mine?" she asked, passionately; "have you not promised to share your agony, when

t was sharpest, with me, and yet you repulse me?" "I dare not," he said, shuddering ly. "I must bear my suffering alone now. I have dragged you down too far already, and may have the destruc-

tion of two souls to account for instead of my own."
"You think by the little command I

evinced of my feelings to night that I have betrayed you?" she wailed. Nay, Margaret it is God's justice that is betraving me," and, requesting ilence, he leaned back in the carriage and spoke no more until they had arrived at home.

John McNamee had been ordered to return with the carriage for Hubert and Margaret three hours after mid night, and, as it yet wanted a couple of hours of that time, when it became necessary to take Miss Calvert home, Madame Dupret's own equipage had been placed at their disposal.

The servants of the Bernot house hold were wont to indulge in merry makings peculiar to themselves, being favored with an indulgent master in Hubert, and a kindly young mistress in Margaret. To-night, in order that the coachman might not hold his vigil alone, while he waited to return for the cousins, his fellow-servants had arranged a sort of impromptu party There was a sufficient number themselves to make it exceedingly pleasant; and, with doors, and hal windows, and entrances to flights of stairs that led above securely closed, not the faintest sound of their mirth could reach the sick room where the patient invalid alternately slumbered

and prayed. Cook had prepared delightfully steaming beverages, and had circu-lated goodly rounds of home-made cake, shedding over the pleasant cheer the light of her own smiling, good

natured countenance. Neither the little maid nor McNamee were at home for the first part of the mirth making, owing to their having accompanied Miss Calvert, but their share of the cheer was reserved and places were maintained for them, side by side, for it was understood that ome day not very far distant, Annie Corbin would become Mrs. McNamee.

Margaret, thoughtful for others. even in the midst of her own hidden agony, had desired the coachman after ne had set them down at the ball to return to Mrs. Delmar's for Annie, whom he was to convey home in the carriage, and the moment that the little maid was in the midst of her fellow servants she broke forth into an account of Miss Calvert's sudden faintness which had occurred immediately that she was

dressed. Everybody listened eagerly, but none more eagerly, or with such an expression of concern, as Hannah Moore. She shook her head with some thought peculiar to herself, and cast

her eyes down.
"Do you know what it is," said the head-waiter, a pompous man, with side whiskers, and a large, square head, ' I am of the opinion that neither Miss Calvert nor Mr. Hubert are long for

fore our very eyes."
"It's a fact," replied the under-

