

## THE LITTLE OLD SECRETARY

(CONTINUED.)

Mr. Everard sighed deeply and seemed lost in thought. After a moment, however, he recovered himself and resumed his story.

"The order had been given at morning parade for the whole division to be in readiness to march early the next day, and towards mid day Captain Cochrane was hurrying here and there to see that his troops were getting well forward in its preparations. Unfortunately, he was not altogether pleased with his inspection, having found some marks of carelessness, pointing to very decided neglect on the part of one or other of his subalterns.

"Returning towards his own quarters in a naturally irritated state of mind, he came suddenly upon one of his defaulting young cadets. He was a young fellow of the name of Macdonald, who had not long joined the regiment, and with whom unluckily my nephew's imperious temper had already brought him into collision. The young cadet was sitting on a log, his sword lying across his knee, so absorbed in gazing at a miniature he held in his hand that the quick, light step of his captain fell unheeded on his ear. The youth's face was drawn with a look of agony, and a low, gasping cry escaped his lips: 'Too late! too late!' These circumstances came back to Captain Cochrane's remembrance afterward; but, at the moment, the feelings uppermost in his mind were angry contempt for the home-sick stripling, who at the first prospect of going into active service displayed so little of a soldier's ardor, and displeasure at the fighting way in which he had performed his duty."

"Halloo! Macdonald, is that you?" he exclaimed. "I have been seeking for you everywhere. Is that your notion of duty? Instead of looking after your men, sitting idling here with your sword on your knee and your hands folded? You have not earned the best name in the regiment as it is, sir. Take care, lest you get reported as a coward to add to your good qualities. The captain laid a rough hand on the young man's shoulder as he spoke. 'A woman's picture, too,' he went on, with a derisive laugh.

"Stung by the contemptuous words, and still more by the jeering tone in which they were uttered, the youth started to his feet, and as he did so the miniature of his mother fell to the ground.

"Look you here, young sir," continued Captain Cochrane, sneeringly: "England wants men, not mother's darlings. Go and do the duty you have left me perform and throw that rubbish into the river." And as he spoke he sprang the miniature with his foot.

"Fashed to fury by this act, which Macdonald looked upon as a personal outrage to his mother, the young man sprang at his captain, and struck him sharply on the offending leg with the flat of the sword he held in his hand, while with the other hand he picked up the insulted portrait.

"By Heaven, sir, what do you mean by this shamefully contumacious conduct?" demanded Captain Cochrane, his face darkening with anger. "Give me that foolish picture which has made you so forget your duty, or I shall report your headquarters, and you will lose your commission." He laid his hand upon the miniature.

"Take that upon your glib lips," exclaimed the young subaltern, maddened with rage; and, wrenching the picture from his captain's grasp, he hit him a violent blow on the

mouth with the back of his hand.

Then he stood still. The violence of his momentary passion had spent itself, and he knew what he had done. He had struck his superior officer, and to make his offense worse, the blows had been given when on active service, and in face of the whole camp. He knew that through his passionate act he had, by military law, justly forfeited his life.

"You will go to your quarters and consider yourself under arrest," said Captain Cochrane in his haughtiest, hardest tones. His anger was thoroughly aroused, and he turned away without a thought of the misery of the unhappy youth who was standing like a statue before him.

The court-martial sat that evening.

Poor Macdonald! he was a soldier and a gentleman every inch of him; and when his passion had passed, his regret for his unsoldierly act and the mad violence of his behavior seemed to put the provocation he had received quite out of his mind. He made no defence.

When asked if he had any excuse to offer in extenuation of his outrageous breach of military discipline, he answered, "I have none." No case could be plainer, more incapable of defence. Several soldiers, though they gave their evidence with reluctance, for the young officer was a great favorite among the men, bore clear witness to the violence of the assault, while none of them had been near enough to hear the words that had passed.

Then Captain Cochrane, horror-struck at the result of his own intemperate conduct, came forward, and with perfect candor related his share of the transaction. It was of no avail. In the eyes of the stern soldiers who judged the prisoner, such a provocation appeared as a mere trifle, utterly insufficient to excuse a crime so flagrant against military discipline, and an example so dangerous to an army.

The deliberations of the Court were soon over—the prisoner was sentenced to death.

There was not a man in the regiment who was not struck to the heart with sorrow at the doom of one so young, so promising. For though he had entered the regiment with the character for being a little wild, and had once before resented his captain's domineering tone by a disrespectful reply that had drawn down upon him a severe reprimand from the Colonel of the regiment, he had never up to this time shown any tendency to rebel against authority, while his brave, open, sunny nature had made him a favorite both with officers and men. By the loss of his own troop he was especially beloved, his frank gentleness towards them contrasting greatly to his advantage with Captain Cochrane's rough, overbearing manner.

General Lyttelton was deeply grieved. But when Captain Cochrane in a private interview pressed him with passionate earnestness to interfere for a mitigation of the sentence, on account of the provocation the prisoner had received, which now caused the captain the bitterest remorse, the General only shook his head.

"I do not wonder at your sorrow, Captain Cochrane," he said. "Your young officer had in him the making of an honorable man and a good soldier, and I am not surprised at your grief that all this promise should be cut off in early youth, through conduct in yourself, inconsiderate and unbecoming a superior officer. But this is not a time when clemency can be shown to any soldier for failure in his duty. The tendency to insubordination in the native

army has been of late too marked and too serious to permit of the least relaxation in military discipline. Once allowed disrespect to superior officers, or disobedience to their orders, to go unpunished, and the safety of the whole army would be imperilled. The prisoner has committed the heaviest crime a soldier can commit. Grieved as I am at the circumstances, I cannot interfere. The sentence of the court must be carried out."

Macdonald was summoned to hear his sentence. He was to be shot at five o'clock the next morning, before the troops started on their march. He was very pale, but perfectly calm. When asked if he wished to say anything, he answered, "Yes—now that my fate is irrevocably sealed, I desire to be forgiven—and forgive." He spoke in a quiet but very earnest tone. Raising his eyes towards General Lyttelton, he continued: "General, I ask your forgiveness as my commanding officer. I hoped to have redeemed the errors of my youth, and adorned my profession by obedience and courage, and, instead, I have disgraced it by passion. My death is a just retribution for this, and other breaches of a duty yet more sacred."

His voice sank very low as he uttered the last words, and those around him observed that his thoughts seemed for the moment far away. When aroused to recollection by the question—if there was anything else he desired to say? he turned his head towards Captain Cochrane, who was standing behind General Lyttelton's chair, looking far more wretched than the doomed man himself. Macdonald gazed full into Captain Cochrane's eyes, and his own gathered a great softness as he observed the signs of deep emotion on the captain's face, which he was utterly unable to conceal.

"I entreat your forgiveness, Captain Cochrane, for the blows I struck you in my passion," said Macdonald gently. "Do not let my death distress you, nor the thought that you have caused it trouble you. I acknowledge the justice of my sentence; I have merited my punishment even more than you know of."

Turning again towards General Lyttelton, Macdonald continued: "I have only one wish more to express. I thank you, General, and the court for permitting me to express my wishes, and I entreat you now, as my last, most earnest request, to allow me the assistance of a priest. For I am a Catholic and desire to obtain the forgiveness of my God through the Sacraments of the Holy Catholic Church."

The General's voice was hoarse with emotion as he replied: "You shall have the priest immediately"—while through the court there ran in stifled murmurs, "what a noble fellow—"

### CHAPTER XIII.

"Come weep with me: Past hope, past care, past help!  
Hold, daughter; I do find a kind of hope."  
—Romeo and Juliet.

Mr. Everard had been so wrapped up in his sad story that he had almost forgotten Kathleen's presence, till he was startled by a long gasping sob. He looked up quickly. Her face was deadly pale, and working with a woful struggle to keep down a rising agony. Very much alarmed, Mr. Everard rose hastily, and moved towards the bell to ring for help; but Kathleen stretched out her hands with such an imploring gesture, that he turned back to her without effecting his purpose. She pointed to a jug of fresh water which stood on the table for painting. Mr. Everard poured her out a glass and held

it up to her lips. With a great effort she swallowed a portion, still struggling to get breath to speak. The young life within her, too strong to lose consciousness, seemed writhing in the grasp of an over-mastering grief. Any attempt to call for help appeared so greatly to increase her distress that, though still much alarmed and perplexed, Mr. Everard thought it better to stay quietly by her side till she should have somewhat recovered her composure.

At last he ventured to say: "Are you ill, or has anything that I have said distressed you?"

Kathleen's white lips gasped out: "Ewan, my brother Ewan."

"Ewan!" repeated Mr. Everard, in utter bewilderment. Then catching her meaning—

"Macdonald was the name of the young man, not McDermot. What can have suggested such an idea to you? It is utterly wild; impossible."

Kathleen shook her head. She leant back in her chair, making repeated signs of the cross in her desperate efforts to quell the agitation which was choking her. At last, in a voice so changed as to startle Mr. Everard, she managed to say at broken intervals:

"It is his picture line by line—exactly what he would have said, when he came back to his true self. These were my mother's teachings, in which we were reared from childhood. Oh! my brother! my only brother!" she moaned.

Mr. Everard was almost angry.

"I thought, Kathleen, you had too strong sense and reason to allow yourself to be the prey of such groundless imaginations. I bitterly regret having told you this history, if it is to make you miserable for nothing."

Kathleen held out her cold hand to him with a smile, so sad, it went to his heart.

"Go on," she said faintly, "go on, and tell me all, I shall be able to explain everything to you, when you have finished."

To be continued.

### Some Roads to Rome in America.)

Edited by Georgina Pell Curtis.

By special permission of the publishers we have published in this paper a series of autobiographies of men and women in which they gave their reasons why they left the church in which they had grown up in order to become members of the Catholic Church. "Over many different roads, through doubt and struggles and difficulties innumerable," the writers have reached the one world-wide Church, which, in these days of diversity and unrest in religion, and unbelief and social anarchy, is coming to be recognized as the Rock, which in the time of the great water flood will remain firm and unshaken.

The records in the book "Some Roads to Rome in America," therefore, present the ultimate and final conclusions of men and women of intelligence and education who, having sounded the height and depth of religious doubt, and even agnostic unbelief, have found their safety in the Catholic Church. How they reached their final conclusions the pages of this book tell—in language clear, logical, insistent.

The book is recommended by Cardinal Gibbons. It should be read by Catholics in order to strengthen themselves in their faith. It should be read by Non Catholics in order to see what induced these men and women to leave the church of their parents to join the Catholic Church.

We published in this paper only one-fifth of those records. The others are just as interesting and convincing—but you can only satisfy your curiosity by purchasing this book of 532 pages from the publishers (B. Heider Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.). The price of the book is One Dollar, plus 15 cts. postage.

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