

AMBITION'S CONTEST

BY CHRISTINE FABER

CHAPTER XVII

AMBITION'S FRUIT AGAIN

The elite of Dublin were assembled at a banquet given by one of the proud magnates who fluttered about Lord Grosvenor's shrine, and beauty and fashion, wealth and title filled the spacious rooms. Perhaps no one in the company, save those whose high official position always rendered them prominent objects of notice, attracted more attention than did Howard Courtney and his sister. The former, already generally known as a young man of more than ordinary ability, was likely to win observation by his striking appearance; the pale face with its singular expression of firmness, the dark, flashing eyes, the expansive forehead, the way, jet black hair, the tall, straight, slender form, with its too stately carriage for so young a man, all were calculated to attract notice and excite remark in any throng; while his sister, remarkable for equal beauty of person, was an object of interest from the fact that she was the sister of such a brother, and because of the rare and peculiar modesty and gentleness which characterized her demeanor.

On their entrance to the drawing-room, failing to perceive Malverton, Howard had resigned Ellen to one of his numerous gentlemen friends, and the brother and sister were separated for a time. There was a shade of disappointment on Ellen's fair face; she had hoped, almost expected to meet Malverton, and to be compelled to accept the escort of another was scarcely likely to yield her pleasure, or even satisfaction; but she permitted none of her feelings to betray themselves, and she was apparently as interested and happy as any of the fair ones present.

Howard had found his own congenial spirits. Ere long he was shining as it was his wont to do, and the titled representatives of power envying and reluctantly did him homage. Lord Grosvenor himself, bland and smiling, with the lady of his host on his arm, listened and deferred to the brilliant speaker — but the iron hand under the velvet glove was waiting to strike. Bland and smiling still, the nobleman deigned to pass a remark aimed directly at young Courtney; it seemed to violate none of the rules of good breeding, but to him for whom it was meant it was bitterly ironical, and provocative of all the revengeful feelings he had ever entertained for the peer. At once his power of irony was in full play. Defiant of the dangerous character of the foe he assailed, he spoke as the dictates of his passion prompted. Few of the listeners suspected the bitter underplot of the scene, while they marvelled at the apparently uncalled for sarcasm of young Courtney's tones; still they deemed it a part of his clever skirmish with the nobleman, till, at length, with one turn of his subtle argument he compelled Lord Grosvenor to a remark, the reply to which won for Howard a silent, but so far as faces were concerned, an expressive applause. The young man was satisfied; patry as the triumph was, it was a triumph — he had outshone the brilliant mind of the peer, and his revenge for the time was taken.

The grand exterior of the nobleman had lost nothing of its calm dignity, its smiling graciousness, but there was a cold glitter in his eyes. As if he courted further defeat, he continued the strain of remarks, adroitly turning them at last into observations calculated to draw Howard out on the question of loyalty to the crown. The snare succeeded; too full of his own personal feelings to heed the dangerous ground on which he stood, the young man answered nobly but unguardedly. Faces about him paled, for every word that he uttered was fraught with dire danger to himself. Unwittingly he supplied clues for which Lord Grosvenor had long sought — the latter knew at last that the writer of the seditions and treasonable articles, which were going like firebrands through the country, and Howard Courtney were one and the same person. The nobleman's revenge was attained; his youthful enemy had entered the trap prepared for him, and his utter annihilation was henceforth to be only the work of time. The graciousness of the peer increased; his desire to obliterate, as it were, any unpleasantness that might have grown out of the encounter became very apparent, and then, with tender gallantry, he turned to the bejeweled lady on his arm, and in a moment the pair were moving gracefully away. But, as speedily as was consistent with courtesy, Lord Grosvenor resigned his fair charge, and found an interval in which to accomplish the first act in his drama of revenge. It was a strange time and place in which to transact state business, but a few minutes of quiet and secret work, known only to those who were necessary to his plan, accomplished it all, and the peer resumed his place in the fashionable throng with a more bland appearance than ever.

Howard had grown slightly pale on the close of his tilt with the nobleman, for one of his secret associates had whispered in his ear, and for the moment he seemed disconcerted and even somewhat daunted; but soon the courage, which rarely forsook him, the ambition which was never more ardent than when danger menaced, and the triumph which still swelled his heart, reassured

their power, and the young man was as fearless and as calm as the haughty peer himself.

Ellen, leaning on her escort's arm, had heard part of the tilt between her brother and the nobleman. She did not understand it, but her unfailing instinct told her that it contained more of an important and perhaps alarming character than had appeared on the surface, and she felt relieved when it seemed to be amicably concluded.

Malverton had at last arrived, and immediately sought Ellen's side. She reminded all that she herself had heard of the remarks which had passed between Lord Grosvenor and her brother. Malverton started, and grew slightly pale.

"Where is Howard?" he hurriedly asked; but his eager eyes already rested on young Courtney's form, and whispering to Ellen that he would soon return, he resigned her to the charge of a friend, and went rapidly to join Howard. Drawing the latter apart, the two young men, arm-in-arm, repaired to a comparatively retired portion of one of the rooms. But Malverton feared even there to speak; his sharp eyes had detected that of which Howard had been utterly unconscious, that the latter was watched—a spy's eyes looked upon them even now. It was difficult to convince young Courtney that such was the fact, and even when he appeared to believe it, his manner lost nothing of his fearlessness, its defiance.

The interview was brief and meagre, owing to Malverton's caution but it was sufficient to enlighten the latter about the danger in which Howard has placed himself, and when he returned to anxious Ellen it was to tell her that while her brother had certainly placed himself in jeopardy by his rash and untimely remarks, still there might not be an action taken upon them alone. She appeared satisfied—at least she asked for no further explanations.

The revelry continued till past midnight, and then Malverton, a little to Ellen's surprise, accompanied herself and her brother home.

The little party saw unusual lights in Ashland Manor as they drove up the avenue leading to the house, and beheld flitting shadows of strange forms through the windows.

"Hold!" said Malverton, attempting to restrain Howard, as the latter, hardly waiting for the vehicle to stop, prepared to spring forth in order to ascertain the cause of the unwonted appearance. But the grasp was too feeble to hold the impetuous young man; he broke from it and dashed up the steps. The hall door was partly open; he flung it back and hurried in, and when Malverton, who, in his haste to overtake Howard, carried rather than assisted Ellen from the vehicle, arrived in the hall, he found his friend wildly struggling in the grasp of the myrmidons of the law.

With a scream so full of agony that it seemed as if the heart from which it issued must have broken in the cry, his sister broke from Malverton's hold and threw herself amid the struggling forms. The covering which shrouded her party dress became unfastened; it slipped from her shoulders, and she seemed like some pale but lovely vision, as, having reached her brother, she clasped him with all the desperation of a heart-breaking woe. He ceased to resist the strong arms of those who had sought to hold him when he felt her grasp, while the men themselves, somewhat awed by this unexpected interference, drew back, and left for a moment the brother free to his sister's embrace. Perchance her cry had smote him, or the expression of her face, revealing at once the depth of her devotion, and her wild, unutterable anguish had touched him, as no sacrifice to which she had consented, no appeal she had yet made to him had ever been able to do—as for a moment he vividly realized all that she was suffering, and was keenly alive to the fact of how much more worth and beauty were contained in the gem of her devotion to himself—he, who was so little worthy of a world's esteem and honor. He strained her to him long and passionately, and tears, which at any other time he would imagine a disgrace to his manhood, rapidly filled his eyes and fell upon her face.

Few in the group—hardened men as most of them were that had surrounded the pair—but were in some degree affected. Malverton averted his head—the scene was far too painful for him. But the stern measures of the law were not to be evaded. Even Malverton's presence, known as he was to be the son of Ireland's highest dignitary, could not abate in the least the rigor which the officers had been ordered to enforce. The latter had been sent to Ashland Manor a couple of hours before, with strict injunctions to search the house carefully for papers of any description which might tend to show young Courtney's connection with any seditious movement now in agitation; and they had been further ordered, whether they found such proof or not, to remain and effect the capture of Howard himself. But they had found such proofs; in the secret drawer of Howard's own escritoire, which latter the officers broke in order to ascertain its mechanism, they had found sufficient to fully criminate the unhappy young man.

At that statement Malverton started, and let his hands drop, as if to express the utter futility of hope in the face of such circumstances. Now he knew the object of the spy on Howard at the banquet—it was to dog the latter's steps, lest, suspecting danger, he might make any attempt

to escape ere his arrest could be effected. Malverton had not dreamed of Ashland Manor being searched, and from what Howard has said to him during their few minutes' intercourse in the earlier part of the evening, it was evident that Howard himself had not apprehended such a search, at least not so immediately. Now as the young man comprehended his difficulty, and how completely he was in the power of his enemy, he grew ghastly, and his clasp about his sobbing sister seemed to lose its strength; but only for a moment—then he nerved himself anew, and, resigning Ellen to Malverton, he announced himself ready to accompany his captors.

Ellen begged permission to accompany her brother, to see at least the exterior of the prison. But Malverton promised to bear him company to the jail, and to bring her speedy word; so she was fain to be satisfied, and to endeavor to be calm.

One more passionate embrace of his sister, and the prisoner was hurried by the officers into a vehicle—which, owing to its having waited in the shadow, had not been perceived by the little party on their return from the banquet—driven off; while Malverton, entering the carriage in which he with Howard and Ellen had come from Dublin, and that had remained to convey him back, was rapidly driven in the same direction.

Dick Monahan and Anne Flanagan, during the time of the search, had been placed under strict guard. Both had sought to impede the work of the law—the one, when his powers of badgering failed, going so far as to avail himself of the aid of his fists; and the other, using her tongue with all the asperity with which nature had supplied her, and interposing her person between the officers and the objects of their search; so that in order to facilitate their work the men were obliged to secure the belligerent pair. They had been released, however, when the party had been ready to leave, and they hastened to poor, distracted, heart-broken Ellen.

She dimly understood it all—how Howard was connected with some reasonable movement, the proofs of which connection had that night been found. And then her mind reverted to that portion of the conversation which she had heard between her brother and Lord Grosvenor—the expression of the former's face, the unguarded admissions of the latter; she realized at last the personal rancor, the pitiless revenge from which her brother would be well-nigh powerless to escape.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHATTERING OF "LOVE'S YOUNG YOUNG DREAM"

When Malverton returned to Ellen he brought but meagre news. Even his rank had not been sufficient to procure for him the privilege of entering the prison, and he had been obliged to say his farewell to Howard at the jail gate.

He seemed reluctant to speak of the bitter part his father had taken in the unhappy affair, and Ellen—racked though her own soul was by suffering, yet forbore to give him pain by approaching the subject.

"It was unlucky for Howard to have kept any of his manuscripts here," he said. "Had they but been where the rest of his articles were, no proofs would have been found."

"The rest of his articles—where were they?" she asked in a tone of intense surprise.

"I can scarcely add to your anxiety now," he replied, "to know the whole of this sad affair. The fears you mentioned to me sometime since were only too well founded. Your brother identified himself with those who were in secret rebellion against the English Government. Through his influence a paper was established, printed in secret. It was distributed to willing and trusty hands, who gave it a wide circulation. I need scarcely say what was the character of its contents—the articles in which you fancied you recognized your brother's style of writing, and which caused you such alarm, are a type. They inflamed the jealousy and ire of those high in power, and measures were taken to ascertain and arrest the parties, but the publication still continued to be issued, under the patronage of fictitious names. Even before you spoke to me concerning your own apprehensions, I had mine, that Howard might be connected with this movement. He did not seem to care to impart his confidence, and I would not seek it; and the secret was kept so well that I could learn nothing more than the bare, palpable facts, which were apparent to the public. Tonight, when you mentioned the remarks which had passed between Howard and my father—his voice trembled slightly, and his face flushed as if it had cost him a painful effort to approach the subject of Lord Grosvenor—I knew at once that he had unconsciously supplied clues for which search had long been made. I sought your brother, only to discover that a spy had been already set upon his motions, and to learn from his own lips all that I had feared in regard to his connection with this movement. He told me that one of his secret associates had whispered to him the danger in which he had placed himself, and had exhorted him to speedy flight from the country, though at the same time advising him not to retire before the conclusion of the festivities, lest so doing should excite suspicion. I concurred in the plan, and only waited to arrive here when you would inform you, and immedi-

ately proceed to arrange for a secret trip to the continent again. That was why, Miss Courtney, I accompanied yourself and your brother home last night, or, rather, this morning."

Ellen had wept till tears refused to come longer, so that now she could only lift her dry and burning eyes to Malverton's sorrowful face. Her desperate desire to render some aid to her brother was impelling her to ask a question which she knew the young man would shrink from replying, but she had nerved herself at last, and she faltered:

"Is it in Lord Grosvenor's power to save my brother, should he choose to do so?"

An expression of anguish, as keen as that which shone in her own face, shadowed Malverton's countenance. Not trusting himself to speak, he bowed an assent.

Ellen seemed to desire to say more, yet she strangely hesitated; the sympathetic eyes above her read in her face the unuttered wish.

"Miss Courtney, is it possible?" she inquired to reply—"that you deem it necessary to appeal to me to use my influence with my father—can you imagine that I have not already endeavored to do so? When the prison gate closed on Howard I hurried home, but my father, suspecting my errand, refused to see me. He knows my friendship for your brother, and he has determined that that friendship shall be powerless now."

He had not meant to tell her so much, but the swell of bitter feelings aroused by the course Lord Grosvenor had pursued had impelled him to the statement. He regretted it when he saw the effect it produced on her already weakened frame, and he hastened to reassure her by promises of efforts yet to be made in Howard's behalf.

She rose totteringly from her seat.

"Do you think that Lord Grosvenor would refuse to see me? A sister's tears—a sister's plea—she could say no more for the grief which choked her utterance."

"Enough, enough, Miss Courtney," Malverton interposed, his own voice tremulous from emotion; "ere you shall pass through such an ordeal, all my efforts must fail."

He supported her to a chair, and waited till she became somewhat calm.

"Trust me," he then said, in tones so eager that they seemed like those of passion. "Howard's interests are mine, and I shall not permit myself to look upon your face again till I have been in some measure successful." He wrung her hand, summoned Anne Flanagan to attend her, and rapidly departed.

Never had the sufferings of the devoted sister been as sharp as they were now; suspend even for a moment the torture of her already overburdened mind, and grief preyed upon her soul till its ravages were visible to the most casual eye. In the circles in which she had mingled the utmost sympathy for her prevailed, and even where voices were raised in condemnation of her brother, they were heard the moment after in expressions of condolence for her unhappy self. There was but one gleam of light in the bleak, desolate prospect which stretched out before her—Malverton's promise to accomplish something in Howard's behalf, and day after day she waited with a sickening sense of "hope deferred." Could she but have seen her brother, or even have heard from him, she could nerve herself to better endurance, but the intolerable suspense was stretching her on a worse rack than the most unhappy certainty would have done, despite the fact that Malverton sent frequently to assure her of his continued and earnest efforts in Howard's behalf.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE CHILD THAT LEADS

By a Teresian, in The Field Arter

Had any one told Father Frederick as he stretched his weary limbs to rest after a day of toil and trial, that the morrow was to bring forth what it did, he would have smiled skeptically. Fifteen years of unquenching labor in a remote corner of Kwang-tung—years filled with experiences of every kind—had led him to believe that he had run the whole category of unusual happenings, and he could sleep now with the feeling that he was prepared to meet whatever might come with each day.

So on this night Fr. Frederick rested well and in the freshness of the early morning he rose to spend before Mass an all too brief half-hour in close communion with his Lord. It was the one period of the day that seemed his own, and as he walked briskly from his little house to the church near by, he felt God everywhere about him in the beauty and sweetness of May.

The church, dedicated to Our Saviour, was simple and small, but dear to the zealous priest's heart, for it held His All. Over its entrance, in rough letters, were the words: "Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes" (Praise the Lord, all ye nations). It was to help make this command obeyed that he had left home and country to sow and reap in a pagan land.

Hardly had the missionary knelt on his prie-dieu, the work of his own hands, when he noticed a small package lying on the altar step.

"Some little offering from one of my flock," he said to himself. "Such things had occurred before, and smiling joyfully at the faith

which had prompted the act, he went on with his meditation until he heard the Chinese gong announce the hour for Mass.

Fr. Frederick picked up the package and opened it, that he might make a memento in the Holy Sacrifice if an intention was requested. He found a box enclosing a folded paper, which read, "Jesus Christian God, give me back my son." Underneath this paper was a jewel.

Surprised as the priest was, he could not stop to examine the treasure further till his Mass and thanksgiving were over. Then he saw that the note was well written and the gem an exquisitely cut stone, green like the depths of the sea. Its value he was almost afraid to guess.

But where had it come from? Evidently from some rich pagan whose son had become a Christian. But Fr. Frederick was perplexed, for he knew the lives of his people intimately and was conscious that not one of them had a history which tallied with these circumstances. It was a mystery.

The good missionary made inquiries on all sides, even of the mandarin, but in vain. Then he put the treasure by and offered daily a prayer for the perseverance of the son and the conversion of the father, whoever and wherever they might be.

July and October brought, in the same mysterious way, two other jewels, even more beautiful than the first. Fr. Frederick was still further bewildered.

On the other side of the city quite removed from the poverty which characterized Fr. Frederick's district lived Mr. Yong-Fu. The finely wrought gate opening into a lovely garden, and the richly carved decorations of the great house indicated his wealth and suggested the sumptuousness of the interior. But in spite of the brilliantly colored hangings and rugs and the costly furnishings, the chill of the late November day seemed to pervade the whole dwelling.

In one of the rooms sat Mr. Yong-Fu, a fine type of Chinaman, tall, well built, intelligent and kind. In his arms he held his one great treasure, Tower of Strength, his only child. And how ill suited the name was! The poor little fellow was dwarfed; only the pinched, precocious face and the long arms betrayed his seven years, for the lower limbs were shrunken and useless.

The father's face was inexpressibly sad and tender as he looked at the helpless burden—the hope of his house—and said, "Well, how is my little son to-day? Are you not soon going to be Father's real Tower of Strength?"

The child smiled and nestled closer in the strong arms. "You are big enough for both of us. Nurse says I shall always be a broken pillar."

The man's face clouded. "Nurse must not talk that way. You can get strong if you will. Think well before you answer me this time. Whom do you love best in all the world?"

There was a pause, and then the childish voice fearlessly replied, "Jesus, and after Him, you."

"Oh, little son of mine," pleaded the great man, "why will you persist in loving Him? Don't you know that it is He Who has taken the strength from your limbs and will not let you grow and walk like other boys? Stop loving Him and you will grow big like me. Then we will go all around the country and you may see everything I have told you about and everything your books show. And some day this whole house and all my treasures will be yours, and Tower of Strength will be needed to keep it safe from enemies. Say that you do not love Him! Already Li-hi has placed on His altar the three priceless gems your mother loved best, and still He will not let you go. He is a greedy God."

The child put his delicate fingers over the angry lips. "Please stop, Father. I am very tired. I must love Him."

The scene always ended thus. The distracted parent laid his precious burden on the couch, summoned the nurse, and went out, in his heart cursing earlier days of poverty that had brought this evil on him.

Mr. Yong-Fu had inherited from his father a massive fortune, but his last it, however, was a great political upheaval, shortly after his marriage with the beautiful Priceless Pearl, whom he loved with all the passion of his heart. The coming of the little one had cost the mother's life, and frantic with grief, Mr. Yong-Fu left him for eight years while the strife lasted, in the care of the Sisters who conducted the orphanage and of whose skill and kindness he had heard.

The child was always sickly and once when death seemed inevitable, he had been baptized. Christ had claimed him then and while the body remained weak and frail, the soul and mind grew sweet and big under the influence of the Sisters and the same unswerving love and faith which kept the father loyal to the memory of the dead mother, bound the heart of the son to God.

While Mr. Yong-Fu hated the Object of the boy's devotion, he secretly loved the unwavering fidelity which his son, so weak physically, maintained towards a despised deity. The child had frequently told him about Jesus and it was all harmless enough, even beautiful in part. The father would have looked into the matter more deeply himself had not the Buddhist priests persuaded him that Tower of Strength was bewitched by Jesus and that if once the spell could be broken the boy would grow.

This idea had become an obsession and to-day he had felt that he must have his son strong and well. His

friends, every one of them, had at least one sturdy son to carry on the family name. Truly his heart was bitter.

That God will not be outdone in generosity is proved in the daily life of every Christian, and at last the hour of grace, with its hundredfold blessing, came for the faithful child and for Fr. Frederick, the untiring priest whose prayers had daily mounted to the throne of mercy.

Mr. Yong-Fu had made a great resolve, a noble one worthy of his son. There was a happiness within him which he had not experienced since the baby was born and the mother left him forever.

"Come, my son!" he said, as he lifted up his boy. "We are going away for a little while, just you and I." And almost before the child knew what was happening, he was being carried along in a rickshaw that had been waiting outside the house.

Across the city they went, through the brightly lighted section and into the evening shadows of the poor quarters, till they stopped before the Church of Our Saviour. It was deserted, and only the sanctuary light and the little lamp before the Christmas crib pierced the darkness.

Mr. Yong-Fu walked straight to the Crib, which was the one shrine he saw, and placed his precious burden beside it. Little Tower, frightened and bewildered by the strange happenings, clung to his father at first, but realizing suddenly that he was at the Christmas Crib, he felt happy and at home.

The supreme moment had come. The big man loosed his son's hold from his fingers and offered him solemnly and simply to the Christ Child.

"He is yours at last, Master. I give him up. He is my joy. May he be Your Tower of Strength since he loves You best. Make him a man, for I love him better than myself."

And then out of the darkness appeared Fr. Frederick, who from the sacristy, which he was about to leave as the strangers entered, had watched the whole proceeding. Formalities were soon over. The boy, safe in the shelter of his father's strong arm was carried to the priest's house, where the tired parent's overstrained heart found relief in telling the story of his long struggle and surrender.

Fr. Frederick brought out the jewels and insisted that Mr. Yong-Fu should take them back. The jewel he had given to the Christ Child that night in the person of his son, was more prized than kingdoms in God's sight.

This was the pagan's first lesson in the value of the soul. He grew to know it well, however, in the course of the year, when he saw God healing his son and pouring into his own heart graces that made it possible for him to receive on the following Christmas Day the Body and Blood of the Saviour.

"MY JIMMIE"

CAREER OF AMERICA'S FOREMOST PRELATE ANOTHER PROOF OF DEMOCRACY OF THE CHURCH

About sixty years ago there could be seen, in a corn-chandler's shop in New Orleans, a boy employed in labeling sacks which had been filled with corn. Although poor and sickly in appearance, he was so well liked by his employer and fellow-workers as to be generally called "agreeable little Jimmie." He was the second son of an Irish family, and so poor were his parents that in order to increase the family income they were obliged to take him from school at an early age and send him to work. Jimmie grew and continued marking the sacks of corn, till one day his serious and pleasing manner attracted the attention of Father Duffo, a friend of his employer.

"How old are you, Jimmie?"

"Eighteen years, Father."

"What do you do here?"

"As you see, I mark those sacks of corn in order to earn some money to help my family along."

"You could not do better, my child, than help your parents, but could do it in some other way. Do you go to school? How do you pass your evenings?"

The thought of studying in the evening had never entered Jimmie's head; but after his conversation he began to continue his duties with Father Duffo, although he had almost forgotten even the little he had previously learned.

And what did he accomplish? After a while he became a self-made man, then Bachelor of Arts, then Priest, then Bishop, then Archbishop, and to-day he is Cardinal Gibbons, an American prelate who exercises considerable influence, particularly among the working classes, who are justly proud of this man who came from their ranks.

This prince of the Church has preserved the same agreeable manner which distinguished him in his youth, and although he dislikes public meetings he does not hesitate debating any question which might benefit humanity.

Some years ago an old man presented himself at the doors of the Cardinal at Baltimore, and with tears in his eyes asked to see his little employee.

"Do you wish to see Cardinal Gibbons?" he was asked.

"Call him Cardinal Gibbons as much as you will," he replied, "but to me he shall always be my Jimmie." His Eminence at once recognized his former employer, and both shed tears of emotion and joy.—The Tablet.

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