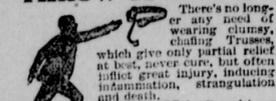


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I write you because I think that it should be generally known what B. B. B. can accomplish in cases of indigestion. Yours faithfully, GEORGE READ, Sherbrooke, Que.

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FLORENCE O'NEILL

The Rose of St. Germain; OR, THE SIEGE OF LIMERICK.

BY AGNES M. STEWART. Author of "Life in the Cloister," "Grace O'Halloran," etc.

CHAPTER XVI. WITHOUT HOPE.

The day following the indisposition of Florence, she was summoned to attend the queen; the latter had vainly endeavored to ascertain if she were at all acquainted with, or had taken part in, the conspiracy. Of one thing she felt assured, and that was, that Florence had really intended to return to France in the vessel hired by the conspirators; had she then been able to discover that she was mixed up with that fatal attempt, Her Majesty would have sacrificed her to her wrath with all imaginable calmness.

"I hear that Sir Charles is about to return to the country," she said, after expressing regret at the indisposition of Florence, "I have invited him to the palace in order to spare you, as you are still poorly, the trouble of going thither. The king has been much pleased with his loyal behaviour; he has given freely of his wealth towards defraying of the expenses brought upon our Government by these risings of foolish people who wish to overthrow our rule in these realms. How fortunate it is for you, young lady, you did not return to France under the conduct of John Ashton and his colleagues."

Florence started and her face turned pale. Mary divined her agitation and its cause. "Be thankful I have taken you under my protection," she said, "that the Lord, in His mercy, has spared you the sin of mixing yourself up with these evil-doers, and of bringing yourself, perhaps, to the fate which awaits them."

Here the queen paused, and Florence, too shocked, as well as too intimidated, made no reply. Well she knew that in some way the attempt of the brave Ashton had fallen through, that he was probably even now under arrest, with many others sharing his own fate.

The queen again spoke: "You will not be able to return to France for some time, perhaps never; were you still inclined to marry St. John, you would wed an outlaw and a beggar, whose estates are already confiscated to the crown. Here, under my patronage a better destiny awaits you; there must, however, be no ostentatious display of the principles in which you have been brought up. You will learn in time, I hope, to imitate the example of your aged relative, Sir Charles, who remembers that the Scriptures saith, 'The powers that be are ordained of God, wisely render them obedience.'"

"Time-server," thought Florence, the words almost trembling on her lips; but the consciousness of her own danger kept her silent, and the next moment she remembered that her uncle had not the power to resist William's demands. The moments passed on like so many hours, sorrow for her uncle, for herself, for Ashton, pressing like a weight of lead upon her heart. The queen was busy at her everlasting knotting of fringe, and Florence almost mechanically proceeded with her embroidery, her eyes blinded by the tears she vainly tried to force back, so that on laying down her work for a moment, the queen sharply called her attention to the fact that she had chosen the wrong shades of silk in a Forget-me-not she was embroidering in her scarf, saying, with a touch of irony in the tones of her voice, as she noticed the particular flower in which the mistake was made.

"The sooner you get rid of sentimental, maiden, the better; in this world

we are forgotten much sooner than we think for, or than one's self-love likes to admit: depend on it, the traitor St. John has forgotten you ere now, as well as others, whom your heart vainly aches to see."

Florence had not become a reluctant visitant at the queen's palace, and failed to discover that Mary was arbitrary, exacting and severe. She had first become aware of these points in her new mistress's character, by her treatment of the Princess Anne, which she did not care to disguise even before her ladies, for just at this time the former had given the queen mortal offence by her solicitations for a pension, so as to free her from being the mere dependent on the bounty of her sister, and the king, as also in her obstinately keeping her unworthy favorites, the Marlboroughs, about her person.

Impulsive and haughty as was the nature of Florence, the restraint imposed on her liberty was fast becoming insupportable, yet she was without hope, humanly speaking; unless Providence interposed in her behalf, she could see no help; to escape to France was out of the question, to seek an asylum with her friends in Ireland, equally impossible; to ask permission to return with her uncle to the country, to the last degree, impracticable; for, by so doing, she should be dragging him into trouble, even brought over as he now seemed to be to the interests of the Prince of Orange. Were he inclined to further her wishes, knowing as she did, that as the queen chose to be assumed that she kept Florence near her from kindly motives, the offence would be instantly taken, and her departure visited on herself, perhaps, by the incarceration the queen so often inflicted on those who offended her.

Meanwhile, to her astonishment, the morning passed over without that visit of the old baronet which Florence had been bidden to expect, and in lieu thereof, came a letter to the queen full of humble apologies, alleging as an excuse that by an attack of the gout, which would necessarily delay his return to the country. When at length she received her frame of mind were happier than her own. It was one of those days in which, as she remarked in one of her letters to William, "she must grin when her heart is breaking."

She was distressed at the news of the conspiracy which had broken out just as the absence of the king had left her at the helm of the government. The quarrel with the Princess Anne was at its height, and she felt an aversion to Florence, whom, nevertheless, she had determined on keeping at her own court, though under a species of surveillance, hoping later to extract from her tidings of the movements at St. Germain, and also enjoying the thought that she had separated her from the ex-queen as well as from Sir Reginald.

CHAPTER XVII. CONDEMNED.

The agreement concerning the hire of the vessel had been a successful one. The thirtieth of December was agreed upon as the day on which the little party would leave London, and as time went on, Ashton became extremely anxious at neither seeing nor hearing from the young lady whom he stood pledged to Mary Beatrice to chaperone safely back to St. Germain.

At length he decided on sending a note to Sir Charles, and then heard, to his surprise, that she was detained for an indefinite period at the Court of Queen Mary.

Meanwhile, the day drew nigh, and the perfect silence of Florence warranted the idea on Ashton's part that she was under a degree of surveillance which forbade her from holding any correspondence with him.

There was then no help but to leave Florence in England. At last the thirtieth day arrived, a murky, gloomy day, a yellow fog laden with smoke hanging over London.

They were to set sail in the evening, if possible, and many earnest prayers were offered that they might speedily arrive in safety on the coast of France. One thing excited the surprise of Lord Preston and Ashton: it was that Mrs. Pratt had never appeared to claim her reward for her instrumentality in securing them the hire of the vessel.

At last they bade farewell to all they held dear, and during the first hours of the early winter evening they went on board. The fog had cleared off, but there was an utter absence of wind, and as they paced the deck in company with a Mr. Elliott, a Jacobite gentleman, who had joined them, and counted the hour of 6 sound from the clocks of the city churches, they each invariably prayed that a strong wind might ere long waft them on their way. But, alas, there was not sufficient breeze to disturb the thick locks which clustered over Ashton's anxious brow.

After some time spent in earnest consultation, they decided that it would be best to drop the anchor, and after a while, snatch a few hours rest until a favorable wind should perchance arise, either during the night or on the following morning.

Lord Preston's slumbers were deep and heavy, but the sleep of Ashton was far otherwise, his imagination being disturbed by frightful visions; now, he was in the torture chamber a witness of the cruelties inflicted on his old friend Nevill Payne, then, he was himself writhing beneath the hands of the executioner; again the scene changed, and he beheld himself separated from his wife and children, and

on the point of being led out to suffer capital punishment.

The horror of his dream awakened him; his face was covered with a cold perspiration induced by the terror he had suffered, and it was with no small satisfaction that he beheld the first dawn of morning stealing through the cabin windows. He was also aware by the motion of the vessel that they were on their way from London. Unwilling any longer to risk encountering again the horrors by which his rest had been disturbed, by yielding to the drowsiness he felt, he arose, dressed himself, and going upon deck, perceived to his gratification that they were some way beyond Woolwich. He had not been long on deck before he was joined by Lord Preston and Mr. Elliott.

"And so you could not sleep, Ashton," said His Lordship in answer to Ashton's remarks; "as for myself, I rested right well. In case of any sudden surprise or mischance, I had before I left home tied a piece of lead to the package entrusted to my care, you know what I mean," he added significantly. "I put it under my head when I went to sleep, resolved that, on the first intimation of danger, I should throw it overboard; then I troubled myself no more about the matter and had a good night's rest."

"I wish I could say the same, my Lord," was Ashton's reply. "I know not why our natures should seem changed, but you now possess all the fearlessness which I thought you wanted in the earlier stage of this affair whilst I am depressed and anxious."

"Nay, Mr. Ashton," said Elliott, "pluck up some of your usual spirits. See, a fair wind has sprung up; we shall soon be out of the river. What say you both of our going below to breakfast?"

"Agreed," replied his lordship and Ashton, and they remained in the cabin in conversation for some time after they had made their morning meal.

When they returned on deck, they found that the mist of the early morning was gradually dispersing, a fine wind had risen, and everything looked well as far as the weather was concerned, and the cloud on Ashton's brow began to pass away.

"We shall soon be clear of the river," thought he, for they were nearing Gravesend. As he turned in his walk along the short deck of the little barque, so as to face London, he suddenly started. A vessel of good dimensions, and with several men on deck, appeared in sight. He had previously observed it in the distance, but as it gradually became more distinct it assumed the proportions of a large vessel.

It seemed to be following in their own track, and Lord Preston noticed the nervous restlessness with which Ashton regarded its movements.

A little longer and Gravesend was in sight. It was as fine a morning and as bright a sunshine as ever lighted up the blue waters of old Father Thames on a mid-winter day, and the white sails of the vessel fluttered gaily in the fresh, sharp breeze that wafted them on their way.

But Ashton heaved nothing but this vessel. He stands riveted, as it were, to the spot, leaning over the deck, and watching intently the movements of the larger craft. He now counts four men on deck, and he fancies he saw many more than these, and that they must have gone below. He is quite convinced, too, that in one of these men he recognizes a Captain Billop, one of the Government officers.

Nearer, yet nearer, in ten minutes, or less, they will pass Gravesend. Nearer, yet nearer, too, comes the stronger vessel. Still, unless it is a feint to deceive those who man the smaller craft, she does not appear as though she were in pursuit.

Seven, five, three minutes, and Gravesend will be reached. A motley group are on the shore watching the vessels as they steer proudly on their way, or stop, it may be to take up fresh passengers.

The larger vessel is now nearly alongside the smaller one, it is certainly following in her wake. A cold sweat breaks out on Ashton's forehead; Elliott and Lord Preston seem still cool and free from fear. Suddenly Ashton remembered the packet the latter had said he had placed beneath his pillow, and hastens to the cabin to see if he had secured it. There it still was, in the spot Lord Preston had named, and securing it in his breast-pocket, Ashton again went upon deck, and signed his friends to follow him to the further end of the vessel.

One short moment of intense suspense, the little barque has stopped, she has touched at Gravesend, in obedience to a peremptory command issued by the master of the larger vessel.

Its occupants confer a few moments together. The next moment they are on board of Ashton's little craft, and he knows his hour of trial has come.

Approaching the side of the ship, he thrusts his right hand within his breast-pocket, intending to drop over the edge of the vessel the dangerous papers he had unfortunately concealed on his person; but even as he nervously clutches the fatal packet, his arm is withheld by a powerful grasp, and he and his companions are commanded, in the name of King William and Queen Mary, to consider themselves under arrest.

Then came the search, and in Ashton's trunk, concealed amongst his clothes, were found papers containing evidence of the birth of the Prince of Wales.

The packet he had taken from Lord Preston's pillow included letters from the Bishop of Ely, Lord Clarendon, and

other persons of rank and consideration, with proposals to King James to reinstate him on the throne if he would undertake to provide for the security of the Church of England, bestow employments on Protestants preferably to Catholics, live a Catholic in religion, but reign a Protestant as to Government, and bring over with him only so much power as would be necessary for his defence, and to rid the country of the foreign power that had invaded it.

Under a strong guard the unfortunate Ashton and his friends were conveyed back to London as soon as the tide served, Lord Preston being sent to the Tower, Ashton and Elliott to a prison. An agonizing fortnight and two days elapsed, and then Lord Preston and John Ashton were tried at the Old Bailey, the indictment setting forth that they were compassing the deaths of their majesties, the king and queen.

In his defence Lord Preston urged that he had no hand in hiring the vessel, that no papers were found on him, that the whole proof against him rested on mere supposition. He was, however, declared guilty.

Ashton was confronted by Mrs. Pratt, she being the chief witness against him. Pale and care-worn, indeed, he appeared as he stood at the dock, hoping nothing that his life would be spared, when he found himself brow-beaten by the bench and the jury, and pretty confident, from the line of defence adopted by the craven-hearted nobleman, Lord Preston, that he was prepared to ensure his own acquittal, even if by so doing it procured Ashton's condemnation.

The counsel for the prosecution then set forth that as Ashton's body were found papers containing the whole gist of the conspiracy, being a design to alter the government by a French power and aid; that the letters would be found, when read, to contain a black and wicked conspiracy to introduce, and, by means of a Popish interest, settle our laws, liberties and properties by a French army; and if the plot had taken effect, of course we should have had all religion and laws the French king might be pleased to impose.

When the counsel had concluded, Mrs. Pratt and the other witness were called, and after they had given their evidence Ashton was asked if he had anything to say in his defence.

A breathless silence pervaded the whole court when he began to speak. He behaved with intrepidity and composure, though several times contemned by the bench. He solemnly declared that he was ignorant of the contents of the papers that had been found on his person, complained of having been denied time to prepare for his trial, and called several persons to prove him a Protestant of exemplary piety and irreproachable morals.

It was of no avail; the papers, it was insisted, had been found in his possession, and though it is an axiom of the boasted English law that no man shall be deemed guilty till he has been tried, the judges and the jury had, however, convicted him in their own minds from the first, and sentence of death was accordingly passed against him.

The reaction took place when poor Ashton was removed to the gaol, and received the visit of his distracted, heart-broken wife. Elliott was acquitted, without a trial, there being no evidence against him.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Hours are golden links, God's token, Reaching heaven; but one by one Take them, lest the chain be broken Ere thy pilgrimage be done.

—ABELLA E. PROCTOR.

Noble Catholic Women.

No more congenial soul exists where in every grace and virtue many live and bloom than the heart and mind of a good Catholic woman, whether she be wife, mother, daughter, or sister, says an exchange. She is the glory of the Church in every age and clime, and to her, above all others, has God given the command and exalted mission of redeeming the world. She has done it once, and we believe she can and will do it again. It may not be her place to stand on the pulpit to preach the beauty and the necessity of temperance to admiring, applauding multitudes, but in the recesses of her own household, at the fireside, and by the side of the simple grade, she will give expression to words that for grandeur of effect and durability are second only to the immutable judgments of God Himself. Yes, the greatest agents for good given by God to man are good Catholic mothers, daughters, wives and sisters. It is by them we must sink or swim, and who will say that, while battling for their own virtues, which are most threatened by the vice of intemperance, and for the redemption of their fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons, the holy cause of temperance will fail and go down before the powers of darkness?

Pulmonary consumption, in its early stages, may be checked by the use of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. It stops the distressing cough, soothes irritation of the throat and lungs, and induces much-needed repose. Hundreds have testified to the remarkable virtues of this preparation.

Colic and Kidney Difficulty.—Mr. J. W. Wilder, J. P., Lafargeville, N. Y., writes: "I am subject to severe attacks of Colic and Kidney Difficulty, and find Parlee's Pills afford me great relief, while all other remedies have failed. They are the best medicine I have ever used. In fact so great is the power of this medicine to cleanse and purify that diseases of almost every name and nature are driven from the body."

You cannot be happy while you have corns. Then do not delay in getting a bottle of Hallway's Corn Cure. It removes all kinds of corns without pain. Failure with it is unknown.

Minard's Liniment Cures Dandruff.

For the Record. AZILDA SYLVESTER.

A Story of The Vesper Hour.

By JOHN MAHONY.

The twilight of the November evening had not yet deepened into night. It was an hour for musing and dreaming and all things retrospective.

At a window in a house in the most fashionable quarter of the city, Montreal a young woman of two or three and twenty stood, with her hands clasped behind her, and her eyes cast upward at the great and gloomy twin towers of the church of Notre Dame. Her figure was superbly formed. Her hair and eyes were dark and lustrous. Her face and brow were pale, thoughtful and highly intellectual as became the most brilliant graduate of the celebrated Ursuline convent of Quebec. Her mouth was wonderfully sweet, sympathetic and expressive. Looking at her one unconsciously recalled the words of Mr. Gladstone: Remember that a woman is most perfect when most womanly.

The room in which she stood was most luxuriantly and yet most tastefully furnished. It was her father's library and her favorite haunt. She loved to be among books and pictures and all things that inspired her with the ideas and ideals of the true, the beautiful and the good. At her feet, on a rough bear-skin her great shaggy, noble St. Bernard dog, figured prominently. Her length of hair was not thinking of books, nor pictures, nor of the magnificent animal whose grandly proportioned head rested on her dainty shoes. Her thoughts were with the towers and the church of Notre Dame. She was picturing to her mind a scene that had occurred in her life in that church, fully ten years ago. She could recall it all so clearly, as if it were but a moment of time, that she felt as if she were there, in the church, with its finely decorated interior; the procession of priests and altar boys; the vast congregation and the delightful harmony of the deep-toned organ and the sweet voices of the great choir; the chanting and ascending and filling the mighty edifice with the classical music of the tongue of all ages. Then the service came to an end; the throng of worshippers dispersed; the lights on the altars were extinguished and the walls were extinguished and the sanctuary lamp alone threw its "dim, religious light" o'er the sacred place.

Silently she prayed and as she prayed and as she prayed she fancied that angel wings swept the locks from her childish brow and that the spirit of her Maker broke through the tabernacle and glorified the whole assembly of worshippers by her and entered the pew before the one in which she knelt. She looked up and saw that it was a man. He fell on his knees, placed his hands on his head and moaned aloud, and then cried out, "Oh God have pity on me, a sinner!"

The agony and remorse with which the words were uttered moved her heart and tears unbidden rose to her eyes. "Oh, Mary, mother of Hope," she softly murmured, "intercede for him!" Then she quietly arose and making her genuflection, silently walked down the aisle until she reached the main entrance, where she stood for a moment to bless herself at the holy water font. She had hardly done so when she heard a step behind her and turning she saw the man who, just a moment ago, had asked his God to take pity on him. She perceived that he was young; that he was tall and strong and handsome as a Greek god, but that his face was white and drawn and haggard and that his eyes were strained and bloodshot and full of unutterable misery. In a vague sort of way her childish mind grasped all this and then her little heart sent words of sympathy to her lips and she said, "Sir, are you hungry or sick?"

And the man turned and looked at her in wonder, and laughed, and then as he read her expression he became sad and grave and thoughtful, and said, "Why do you ask, my child?" She remembered her saying in answer to him that she had heard him moan in the church and ask God to pity him and that she had prayed that his petition might be granted. She did not forget how his lips quivered and he said brokenly, "You're the only one in all the world to pray for me, my child; pray for me always; I am a child of God, but I have been bad and foolish and almost insane, and I should not be talking to an angel of purity like you. Good-bye and God bless you." She turned at once, unfastened a small gold ring from his watch chain, and handed it to her saying, "Keep this, child, to remind you of your promise to pray for me."

She then asked him if he was going away over the sea, and he answered yes, and as the word fell from his lips she asked, "Have you a prayer book with you?" He replied, "No, I have a sorrowful half." "No, I have not," and murmured half to himself, "I have sent this little token to be the token of my love to you, the church and ask God to pity him and that she had prayed that his petition might be granted. She did not forget how his lips quivered and he said brokenly, "You're the only one in all the world to pray for me, my child; pray for me always; I am a child of God, but I have been bad and foolish and almost insane, and I should not be talking to an angel of purity like you. Good-bye and God bless you." She turned at once, unfastened a small gold ring from his watch chain, and handed it to her saying, "Keep this, child, to remind you of your promise to pray for me."

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II. The moon was beaming down on the dying and the dead. The work of carnage still went on. Two of the greatest of the South American Republics were at war. The smaller ones were attacked, as their sympathies or interests influenced them, to one or the other of the contending Republics. The cause of the war was a protest for the confederacy of all the South American Republics. The most powerful of the two, Argentina, insisted upon having the new federal capital within its domain. The rival Republic made a like claim, and out of the bitter controversies engendered, and of questions concerning the constitution, not yet completed, a long, a cruel and a most bloody war was precipitated. Happily it was nearing its end. The president of South America were to be brought under one supreme form of government or to remain as they were, unsettled, discontented, cutting their commerce by their squabbles, disturbing the peace of their people and presenting a most pitiable spectacle of unrest and impotence to all the nations of the world.

But everything mundane must come to an end. The turning point came. For first the night of the battle of the Plata. The day they would neither receive nor extend quarter.