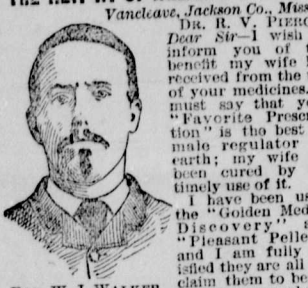


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My Queen.

Victors in tourney for love and duty.

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FLORENCE O'NEILL,

The Rose of St. Germain's;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF LIMERICK.

BY AGNES M. STEWART.

Author of "Life in the Cloister," "Grace O'Halloran," etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

Shuddering at the thought of incarceration at the Tower, to which she knew many had been consigned by the queen for lighter suspicion that might rest on herself, Florence then busied herself in the difficult task of schooling her features into calmness, and bathing her eyes, strove to look her misfortunes in the face and bear them as bravely as possible.

DETECTION.

The hands of Queen Mary's watch pointed to the hour of 12; she had noted the progress of the last half hour very anxiously, as people do when they are expecting an interview with a person on important business.

Mary, however, knew well how to ingratiate herself with the people, and putting on a smiling countenance, she said:

"I understand you have begged an audience of me, Mrs. Pratt, desiring to speak to me of one Mr. Ashton, who has hired a vessel of some friend of yours, for purposes against the Government, though you are told that it is required to carry bales of silk to France; what has led you to disbelieve what you have heard?"

Here the queen paused and fixed her full dark eyes on the woman's face as if she would search the inmost recesses of her heart.

Martha Pratt, while the queen was speaking, had time to overcome her fears, and did not blench beneath the queen's gaze. She replied:

"In the first place, Your Majesty, our Ashton was too anxious about the vessel, for he called on me, who have the letting of it, three times; secondly, he offered me £500 to get my friend Pasely to let him have it at once; and thirdly, because I found from the king's page, that this Mr. Ashton used to be one of the members of the household of the late Popish queen; so when he had gone, after calling the third time, for Pasely had refused him his smack, wanting to send her to Hull, then said I, 'there's another Popish plot at work, and if Pasely doesn't think so, but after all let him have the vessel, then by all means don't take his money, Martha Pratt, but let the queen's Majesty know all about it.'"

"I commend your prudence, my good woman," said the queen, "meanwhile, I beg you to keep perfectly silent in this matter, and if it really be as you suspect, I will not fail to more than recompense you for what you will have sacrificed by your loyalty to the king and myself: now leave me, I will send for you again when I have seen further into this business."

Again alone, Queen Mary walked up and down her chamber, as one whose mind is ill at ease. Nearly six months since, she had consigned two of her uncles, the brothers of her late mother,

to the Tower, along with a large number of the discontented nobility. As to the imprisonment of her own kindred, she talked as pleasantly over this "clapping up," as she did when she robbed her father of his crown.

The queen's position was beset with difficulties, she never possessed a real friend, whilst she was surrounded by enemies in disguise. Of partisans serving her for interest she had an abundance: she had a sister, it is true, a sister who shamefully conspired with herself to expel her father from his throne, and who had even given up her own place in succession to the Dutch Prince, but even-handed justice had brought the poisoned chalice to the lips of the Princess Anne for the way in which she was treated by her sister and brother-in-law; so that with divided interest between the queen and the princess, there was no bond of sisterly affection on which she could lean when apart, as she so often was, from her uncouth and boorish husband.

"And he absent now," she says to herself, as she wanders up and down her spacious chamber, "on his way to the Boyne at the time that another plot is on foot for the subversion of our Government. That woman Pratt shall be richly rewarded—one of the humbler classes she, but possessing a fund of shrewd penetration rarely to be met with; but now let me call a council without delay," she continued, "nip this plot in the bud, if possible, and prevent this glorious departure to St. Germain's, for that, and no other is the spot whither these traitors are bound." A very few hours later, the agents of the queen's Government were on the track of Ashton, Lord Preston, and others connected with the plot for which the young Jacobite, Neville Payne, had been so mercilessly tortured some months previous.

Throughout the whole of that day the enraged queen did not summon Florence to her presence. It was passed partly in the company of her advisers, discussing the manner in which the ringleaders of this new plot, in favor of the restoration of her unfortunate father, should be captured, and in filling the Tower and other prisons with captives who were under suspicion, upon the queen's signature alone.

Slowly the hours passed away, but no summons came to Florence, who had expected to be in attendance on the queen that evening, but suspecting, from her conversation with Mrs. Pratt, that even now the conspirators might have made good their retreat, the queen had weightier matters to engage her attention than passing an evening at the theatre.

"The 31st of December," said she to herself, as the winter afternoon drew in, shutting out from her view the spacious gardens of the palace, and the then small village of Kensington in the distance. The snow had fallen heavily throughout the day, and the wind swept in hollow gusts around that wing of the palace in which her chamber was situated, and turning, with a shiver, from the window, she continued: "Ashton must surely have returned to St. Germain's, or be on his way thither, and I am here—here, and know not how to escape, for to leave without permission will be to own that I have cause for fearing I am detained in the light of a prisoner."

Now thinking of Sir Reginald, then of those she loved at St. Germain's, and a weary feeling at her heart on account of the queen's enquiries respecting Ashton, coupled with surprise at not having been summoned to attend her, she became full of apprehension of coming evil. She knew how tyrannical the sway of Mary had been since she had plucked the crown from her father's brow, to place it on her own; that there was not a warm spot in her cold, selfish heart, save for her Dutch husband; that she had trodden under foot every tender emotion, where the dearest ties were concerned, so that small mercy would be granted to herself should the queen surmise that she had in any way mixed herself up with this new rising.

One after another the hours sped slowly on. She had dismissed her maid, telling her she should dispense with her attendance; and, stirring the fire into a blaze, she threw herself on her knees, seeking to strengthen and fortify herself by prayer, and also by the remembrance of the courage and resignation of the saintly Mary Beatrice, when, suddenly, the dead silence of the night was broken by the sound of some soft substance thrown against the window.

She started rose from her seat, and listened attentively, when the noise was again repeated, this time some what more loudly. Shading her lamp, she advanced with faltering steps to the window, and partially drawing aside the curtain, fancied she could discern the figure of a woman leaning against a tree in the garden beneath.

A moment passed in breathless suspense, then she became aware she was recognized, and advancing from the friendly shadow of the tree, the person beneath again raised her arm as if again about to attract attention.

Cautiously and very gently, for Florence had recognised, by the pale moon-beams which fell on the white waste around, the form of Mrs. Ashton, she opened the casement, and with true, unerring aim, a small substance, soft, and round as a ball, was flung into her room, and the next moment she had hastily glided away amidst the shadow of the thicket of evergreens. Gently Florence closed the window, and drew her curtain, and, afraid, for a few moments, to open the little packet, she fastened her door, waited still a few moments, in case she should be molested, and full of a

deadly fear that her courageous visitor should have been watched.

Not a sound, however, broke the dead stillness of the night, and she proceeded to unfold the little parcel, which consisted of several rolls of wool, compressed together. At last, within the centre of the last roll, her eye fell on a small piece of paper. It had one word written on it, and that was "Danger."

Florence flung it into the fire, and crouching down by the dying embers, buried her face in her hands. Her worst apprehensions seemed about to be verified. She went to bed, but could not sleep, and when at last she sunk into slumber it was disturbed by frightful visions and distressing dreams, the reflection of her waking thoughts.

When the dawn of the winter morning broke at last, it found her with a raging headache, feverish, and utterly unable to rise. She had thought over several plans, and had cast them all aside as impracticable. The most feasible was to make a request to visit Sir Charles, but she feared being the means of drawing him into trouble, as she should inevitably do, did she obtain permission to visit him and fail to return.

Thus it was that the queen was told that indisposition confined Florence to her room.

Danger, in what form would it present itself? Incarceration, such as the queen's tender mercies had inflicted on her own uncle; torture, such as Neville Payne had undergone; or death itself, which this ungrateful daughter and her Dutch husband had unsparingly inflicted on the unfortunate Jacobites who had attempted to procure the restoration of the exiled James.

CHAPTER XV.

CHATELAIN—THE EXILES.

In a spacious apartment with oaken wainscot and flooring, a few uncushioned chairs of the same, a long table in the wide casements buried in deep recesses in the wall, looking out on the wide expanse of country beyond, the leafless boughs of trees covered with hoar frost, for it is mid-winter, two ladies are seated: one is still in the prime of life, the other is middle-aged. The younger of these ladies is tall and elegant in form, her complexion is fair, her hair as black as the raven's wing, the arched eye brows and long silken lashes that veiled the fine dark eyes were of the same hue, the contour of the face was of a delicate oval, the expression sweet and winning.

The companion of this lady is robed in the garb of a nun. She has not her charm of personal beauty, but the frank, open countenance is pleasing, her figure is upright as when thirty, since she made the vows that bound her to religion. She is the abbess of Cheliot, and the other lady is the beautiful and hapless ex-queen of England, Mary Beatrice of Modena.

A great consolation in her very sorrowful life must have been her affectionate intercourse with the nuns of Cheliot.

"Is Your Majesty well assured that your information comes from a correct source?" asked the abbess, after a pause in their conversation. The calm resignation with which the queen generally bore her great trials had on this occasion given way to the indulgence of a burst of uncontrollable grief.

"May we not hope," she continued, "that there may be some mistake in the assertion that your favorite, Florence O'Neill, is really detained at the court of Queen Mary?"

"Alas, no; the news of my informant may be too well relied upon: there can be no doubt of that," was the reply. "Our greatest grief arises from the fact that those most devoted to our interests are, through that devotion, visited with penalties, imprisonment, and death; but when I suffered Florence to leave me to make a short visit in England, I certainly had not the faintest idea that she would ever approach the court, but the misgiving we have received tells us that not only is she detained there, to all appearances merely as one of the queen's ladies, but that she, in fact, feels herself a kind of prisoner; whilst immediately after Ashton had sailed from London with papers of the utmost importance for the king, the whole plot was discovered, it is suspected, through the instrumentality of the humble persons from whom he hired the vessel. These tidings, in fact, have reached us through my friend, Lady Bulkeley, whose husband writes her that Ashton's wife has adopted some means to make my poor Florence aware that she is surrounded by danger; nay, she must herself be aware that should Mary's suspicions be excited, there is but one step from her presence, and that may be either to the Tower or the grave."

"But," replied the abbess, "with regard to Ashton, it does appear that he had really left London. Then let me beg Your Majesty to hope the best."

"The poor queen shook her head sadly, saying: "Alas, my good Mother, I cannot divest myself of the idea that I shall never more see my brave, good Ashton. I fear that the fury of Mary may be the means of stopping him before he has made way sufficiently to escape the emissaries doubtless on his track. If so, death for himself, Lord Preston, and others concerned in this rising must pay the penalty of their loyalty. It does, indeed, seem as if the will of God were against us. That Florence, too, should have fallen into the power of the queen fills my heart with fear. How little did I think when I suffered her to leave me

she would ever incur such a risk."

"That young lady has committed an act of imprudence, no doubt," said the abbess. "I wonder was she aware that Sir Reginald had become one of the king's adherents at the time she placed herself in Mary's power?"

"Certainly not. That knowledge, if, indeed, she be acquainted with it, will of itself increase what she must now be suffering."

"Was not Sir Reginald one of William's favorites; will not his property suffer for his defection?"

"Yes undoubtedly, with all whose loyalty leads them to follow our fortunes," replied the queen: "his property will be confiscated to the crown. Many have followed us to France, and William has, in every instance, outlawed them and confiscated their property. Yet they have preferred exile rather than tears for their allegiance to William and Mary, while amongst those who have remained in England many have rendered proofs of their friendship by refuting the slanders heaped upon my name."

The vile calumnies disseminated by the king's worthless daughters respecting the legitimacy of her son, the Prince of Wales, filled the thoughts of the queen, and those full dark eyes, which Madame de Maintenon described as being always tearful, overflowed as she alluded to this scandal.

"There are times," she added, after a pause, "when we have very little hope for such is the temper of the nation, my good mother, that it was impossible for the king to do anything in favor of religion and fail to give disgust. The time was ripe for the invasion of William; the aspersions cast on the birth of the prince by his half-sisters were all means to the same end, and those who call the king a weak man, because that he abdicated the throne—if that were his only proof of weakness—do forget that it wanted some courage to go to rest as calmly as he did that night at Whitehall, with the Dutch guards of his traitor son-in-law and nephew about him. It is but a step for kings from the palace to an untimely end. Had he not the fate of his own father present to him, who shall dare say," said the queen, "for a time carried away by her feelings, 'who shall dare say that private assassination, or imprisonment for life, in one of William's Dutch castles, might not have been his fate? But my dear mother, I have rambled on without fully replying to your question. Sir Reginald's property will all be confiscated. At present Florence has nothing to lose, but she is the heiress of her uncle, the Sir Charles de Grey of whom you have heard me speak. He is far advanced in years, and it appears he also has managed to get introduced at court. She is also the heiress of the O'Neill's, so that one way or another, should she give offence, no small sum will fall into the hands of William and Mary, as well as landed property to bestow on their parasites. But, hark; there is the bell for Vespers. I will follow you," she added, as the nun rose. "I beg you, in your orisons, not to forget to offer up your prayers for the success of the king's arms at Limerick, and for the welfare of all my family."

"That is an unnecessary injunction, your majesty," and the abbess pressed the queen's hand to her lips as she spoke. "Nowhere are more fervent prayers offered for your prosperity and welfare than by our humble Community of Cheliot. It is growing dark: I will hasten and send a Sister with lights for your Majesty."

For a few moments after the nun had departed, the queen still lingered, lost in melancholy thought. The embers of the wood fire had burned low in the ample stove, leaving the further end of the apartment enveloped in obscurity, save whenever and again a ruddy glow broke forth, playing for awhile on the dark oaken wainscot and flooring, and then fading away, leaving the obscurity deeper than before.

She walked to the casement and looked out on the scenery beyond the abbey. The whole earth was covered with a snowy garment, the evening wind and stormy, the boughs of the trees around the abbey bent beneath the weight of the snow, which was drifted from their leafless branches by the wind, the sullen sigh of which was audible between each peal of the Vesper bell.

The wintry scene was gloomy in the extreme, and the queen, whose heart was sorely oppressed at the news she had received from England, turned away with a weary sigh, and almost, in her present depression of spirits, experienced a feeling akin to fear, as she again seated herself in the large dimly-lighted room, the further extent of which she could not distinguish in the fast increasing darkness.

It was with a feeling of intense relief that, a few moments later, she heard the footstep of the Sister Mary Augustine, who had come with lights. She replenished the fire, and bearing a lamp in her hand, conducted the queen to her own apartments, before she went to the abbey chapel, for she was a constant attendant at the devotional exercises of the nuns when at Cheliot.

TO BE CONTINUED.

FAITH AND LIBERTY.

An Ideal Condition of Relationship Between Spiritual and Civil Authorities.

In a thoughtful article contributed in current *Ave Maria* on "A Free Church in a Free State," Rev. Reuben Parsons, D. D., says:

This formula, so pre-eminently elastic that it readily lends itself to purposes of deception, is generally ascribed to Count Cavour by those who are pleased with the relations now subsisting in Italy between Church and State, and, so far as any political formula—vague as all such must almost necessarily be—can signify anything with precision, it epitomizes the nature which, with the aid of Mazzini and Napoleon III., the Sardinian premier consummated. But the now famous formula was not invented by Cavour. Cezare Cantu tells us that he has heard "several of his colleagues boasting that they suggested it to Cavour." And it is certain that the Sardinian statesman never claimed the saying as a creation of his own scheming brain; nay, he admitted in open parliament that "in a lucid interval, an illustrious writer" had first used the phrase in convincing Europe how liberty had contributed much toward

AN AWAKENING OF THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT.

Let us pardon Cavour for the insinuation that the lucidity of Montalembert was only intermittently manifested. It is true that the great French publicist invented the formula, although the sentiment which it served to illustrate was not quite so radical as one would be led to suppose by the Cavourian dexterously-twisted quotation of his words. In fact, Montalembert complained that a highly-placed delinquent had stolen the phrase from his writings; it was, he said, "dérivée et mise en circulation par un grand coupable." But very soon the Catholic polemic failed to recognize the verbal scintillation which he had emitted in thorough good faith, with no suspicion of its possible acceptance in a sense very different from that which he attached to it. The *Italianissimo* minister completely travestied the bonum; and its new significance did not appear remarkably clear to his own colleagues. A member of his cabinet declared: "I have heard this formula enounced by many, and I have given not a little study to it; but as yet I have not been able to apprehend its meaning."

In the original sense of the words, THE FALSELY-STYLED CAVOURIAN FORMULA is entirely Catholic in sentiment and it is also thoroughly American. But if understood in accordance with the interpretation given to them by the Italian unitarians, these words present a significance very un-Catholic and un-American. The original sentiment is about as much like the trinitarianism as the average American Republican is like the average Italian Liberal. Indeed were the formula really indicative of a state of affairs in which the Church is allowed to exercise her moral and social activity without any guardianship on the part of the State, the Catholics of Italy would willingly adopt it as their own motto. They, like all other Catholics, would gladly see the relations between Rome and their Bishops unimpeded by any need of a royal *exequatur*, and unprotected by concordats, which but too frequently

REQUIRE TOO MANY CONCESSIONS

on the part of the Holy See. However, it was not intended to bring about such a condition of things, when sky-reaching acclamations hailed the newly-born "freedom" of the Spouse of Christ in every State which was invaded by that revolution which entered on its fateful march after the war, 1859. One of the first measures enacted by the Piedmontese "liberators" was the abrogation of the concordat which each invaded State had made with the Roman Pontiff; and this outrage was perpetrated in the face of the fact that the public law of the Sardinian kingdom avowed the sacred and binding force of such agreements. The property of the Church was immediately sequestered, although the Piedmontese *statuto* of Charles Albert proclaims the inviolability of all property, of whatever nature; and although the mania for appropriate ecclesiastical revenues was never actuated, in one solitary instance, in the case of Protestants and the Jews.

IN EACH OF THE USURPED TERRITORIES, a new and iniquitous oath was required of the Bishops; and when it was indignantly rejected, the prison cell or exile became the lot of the recusants. Thus the Cardinal-Archbishop of Naples was twice exiled; and the same fate befell the Cardinal-Archbishop of Pisa. Cardinal Baluffi, Archbishop of Imola, was dragged before the tribunals. The Cardinal de Angelis, Archbishop of Fermo, was placed in the midst of a troop of carabinieri, taken to Turin, and there incarcerated for six years. Proceedings were also instituted against the Cardinal-Archbishop of Benevento, the Cardinal Bishop of Camerino, and other prelates. Nearly all the Bishops of the usurped kingdom of the Two Sicilies were banished; and the few who remained were

SUBJECTED TO DANGERS AND INSULTS,

which might have been expected from the olden Huns rather than from the sons of that Italy of which St. Ambrose once wrote that there were no unfaithful Christians within her limits. The Bishop of Fanzia was condemned to three years of imprisonment and a fine of 6,000 lire; his *confrere* of Spoleto

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