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THE LIMERICK VETERAN : OR THE FOSTER SISTERS. BY THE AUTHOR OF "FLORENCE O'NEILL." (From the Ballimore Catholic Mirror.) CHAPTER I .--- PASSING AWAY. "Draw aside the curtains, my faithful Jessy, so that the beams of the rising sun may stream into the room, and bring to me my unconscious babe that I may kiss and bless her ere I die."

"Dinna say sic a thing, my dear young leddy, wha could sic a puir body as me do wi the bonny bairn ?"

"You will leave your home, Jessy, and

eagerly she peruses a letter her feeble hand hus traced, to be delivered after her death to the person she has named; and then taking a miniature from a table beside her, representing herself in happier days, with the name of Margaret Graham engraved on the back, she sccured it to a picce of ribbon, which she drew

through a small gold ring set in the frame. In a few moments the wail of an infant sounded in her ear, and Jessy reappeared, in bearing in her arms the unconscious offspring of one too early wed, and whose eighteen brief years had comprised the several states of maid, wife, and widow.

A faint gleam of pleasure lighted up the wan countenance of the girl mother as she 1 25gazed on the infant whose short span of life numbered but three months, and she bade Jessy lay the child beside her.

Long she remained silently gazing on the child, who had fallen asleep, at first with that 1 50 rapturous delight with which a mother regards her first born, then with a sentiment of the keenest sorrow, as she thought how, in the first days of its helpless infancy, it would be thrown 00 wholly on the care of the simple but well-intentioned old nurse, at whose bosom, when under her father's roof, she had herself drawn the first nurture of infancy, and then followed a flood of tears at the remembrance that she was leaving her child thus forlorn and desolate.

Unfortunate Margaret, she had not a mother's fostering care in her helpless childhood, and had grown up with none to teach her needful self-discipline and control. For a very few years of her short life, however, when her father suddenly awakened to the consciousness that the beautiful young girl whom he had consigned wholly to the care of Jessy McLaren, her nurse and foster mother, even allowing her to dwell with her in her widowed home in Perthshire, was growing up wholly unedu-cated, the wealthy Edinburgh trader placed her in a boarding school, and then considered a not inconsiderable sum in money which, he had done his duty by his motherless child, first for having allowed the old nurse to have the charge of his child so long, and then in sending her for five years to a boarding school, had no right to command her to marry against from which, when emancipated at the age of her will, he had a right at her inexperienced seventeen, well grafted in a few frivolous age to forbid her marriage with a mere soldier accomplishments, she was yet sadly devoid of fortune like Lindsey, she departed on a

ever and again a crimson stream rose to her the wife of Lindsey; her father was pushing lips as a hard cough shook her delicate frame : on the overtures of the rich corn-factor, and she must tell the truth now or never. I have forgotten to tell you that both by

word and by letter, Lindsey had sought to obtain the consent of Graham to his nuptials with his daughter, but had he been better off in this world's goods than he really was, he might as well have tried to draw water from a rock as to change the mind of David Graham when it was once made up.

Now he lays aside his ledger and prepares to descend into the counting-house, pausing for one moment, however, just as Margaret is about to summon courage to detain him, he said :

"My friend, Donald Miller, will be wi us again e'en, mak yoursell as bonny as possible in the braw claithes I has ordered for you." "Father, dear father, I must speak to you, indeed, I must," said Margaret, starting up to intercept his progress to the door. "I cannot

be the wife of Donald Miller." "Hout na, you dour limmer, haud a care or you shall dree a sair weird ye are no bairn o' mine, suld ye refuse, I gie ye nae tosher if ye wed that papist gaberteen zio. Robert Lindsey."

"Oh, father, father, I have married him; he is my husband," replied Margaret, throw-ing herself on her knees, and endeavoring to prevent him from leaving the room.

"Wha was that ye said ?" and David stood like one spell-bound as he asked the question. "Dear father, forgive us both, I have married Robert," was the simple reply.

"Thin my ban rest upon ye, nane o' my gear will I gie ye, he is a Jacobite and a gaberlemzee to boot, I winna set een on ye agin, I charge ye leave me for him whom you have taen.

As David Graham spoke these words he wrenched himself from the grasp of his child; she fell on the ground in a heavy swoon, but on her recovery she hastened to her room, packed up the few things she possessed, together with given to her for her own use, she had carefully economized, and with a heart smarting under the injustice of her father, forgetting that if he of all that was more substantial, her mind journey to her foster mother's home in Perthaving first nosted a letter to her hus

tized in the faith I first learned from your lips, and let her bear my name. This letter you will give to Mrs. Lindsey should my father refuse to see my child, and be careful to hang my father to Scotland." my miniature around her neck before you resign her to the care of others. And now, good nurse and foster mother, let me lay my head were already being made for a descent into upon your bosom, for I am faint even unto Scotland." death.

Not without many pauses and much difficulty had Margaret spoken thus, and Jessy was alarmed at beholding a sudden change pass over her features.

For a few moments she reclined in the arms of her nurse, gasping for breath, Jessy's tears falling in torrents down her rugged countenance as she wiped the heavy dews from Margaret's face. She had hoped against hope, and it was only now when her foster-daughter lay in the arms of death that she became aware the lust moment was drawing nigh.

The consolation, however, for which Margaret's heart had yearned was not denied her. The aged pricest, who occasionally brought the ministrations of religion by stealth to those dwellers amidst the mountains who yet kept | them true to the Catholic faith, had that morning turned his steps to the valley in which Jessy's cottage stood, wishful to see if she were still there.

The door of the hut stood open, but no one was visible, but from an inner room he heard sounds of grief mingled with the moans of one in mortal anguish.

Very gently, on hearing the strange footfall without, did Jessy remove the arm which had supported the dying girl, and hastened to see who was the intruder.

"Gude guide us, and is it you, Father Luthbert," said she, "come in to my puir bairn, the sweet winsome young leddy; it is nearly all over wi her."

A flash of joy illumined poor Margaret's features as the aged priest approached her bed. The faults she had committed were occasioned by her indiscreet bringing up, but her heart pany had yearned for other words than those of poor W simple Jessy.

Broken sontences gasped out painfully, and whatever had troubled the conscience of the dying girl burthened it no longer. The Bread of Life, too, was hers, brought, as it were, miraculously to strengthen her spirit in its flight, Jumes the Second. As now, so it was at the yet when all should have been calmness and time of which I write, and will be till the end

man, "do you not know that the king is expected here hourly, and that, perhaps, even in two short days I may have to accompany

"So soon, so soon, I could scarcely believe them when I heard them say that preparations

"Cheer up, my dear Cecile, Walter will come back to you, rest assured, and when next he leaves you, you will be more courageous."

"Fill my heart with somewhat of your own coursge, dear madam. I have heard you suffered much in your youth, and bore your trials bravely.

"A captive in the court of Queen Mary, Cecile, threatened with a union my very soul abhorred, I was for a long while ignorant whether one whom I truly loved and to whom I was betrothed was living or dead. I am a prey to natural fear full often, but proud to be the wife of a one who draws his sword in a rightful cause. Loving both ardently, I see my hus. band and my son go forth to the field; all that renders life dear to me would be lost in losing

" Courageous descendant of the O'Neils, dear Lady St. John," said Cecile, forcing back her tears, "I will try to learn courage and heroism of you."

"And when our king has his own again, Cecile," said Walter, "you will rejoice in the thought that my good right arm has struck a blow in his cause; but let us return to the saloon, it will not be well for us to be missed for long.

The Baron de Breteul's Mansion was the resort of all the ardent and disaffected spirits that were averse to the Hanovarian rule, and as the time fixed for the marriage of the son of the Marshal and Lady St. John with the daughter of an old friend happened to coincide with that of the rising in November, 1715, in favor of the claims of the Chevalier St. George, the Hotel de Bretcul was thronged with com-

When the three re-entered the salon, they beheld amongst the gay group forming, indeed, the centre, a handsoms young man apparently about six and twenty years of uge. He wore the dress of a French Abbe, but every one present knew him to be the son of the late king, preise, a sudden thought disturbed her. She of the world, if monarchy endures so long. each fair dame and maiden in the salon pushed forward, anxious to get a word or even a smile from the scion of an ill-fated race, whom the English Court and its upholders termed the Pretender. Perhaps this obivalrous feeling too was born out of the very misfortunes of the House of Stuart, which for so many centuries had given sovereigns either to England or Scotland. Any way, happy were the maids and matrons that night, whatever their country, and the loyal Irish who had fought and bled at Limerick, and English, Scotch, and French alike were there, who eagerly treasured up every word that fell from the lips of the Chevalier. Nor were the two or three gentlemen who alone accompanied him in his hasty and private visit to his friends forgotten. Unfortunately for the Chevalier, the bright eyes of a young kinswoman of the Baron's attracted the attention of Lord Keith, one of the Prince's gentle men in waiting. A sore thing it must be to the self-love and vanity of woman when superceded by another of her sex, supposing she has given away her heart before she dreamed it was no longer in her keeping. Adele de Breteul was still unmarried ; her heart, her hand, her large fortune, might have been Lord Keith's for the asking ; if she lacked the freshness of eighteen, she possessed what is more worthy of admiration in the minds of many, namely, the matured charms of twenty. four; what she had lost of the simplicity of youth she had gained in the self-possession and grace of womanhood; and yet she beheld her. self put aside by "a miss in her teens," a mere visitor in her brother's house ; she monopolized the attentions of Lord Keith, and as plainly as she dared she let Mademoiselle de Breteul know that she gloried in the conquest she had made. Vainly had Emilie endeavored to lure away Lord Keith from that silly prattler; her stratagems were useless; he had no eyes, no ears for any one but Angelique. Not only had Emilie felt keenly the overtures for marriage made to her nicce by Walter St. John, simply because she was herself unmarried, but she was to feel the pangs of jealousy as well, and she stole away to an adjoining apartment to give free vent to her emotion, lest she should betray herself before others. "To be set aside for her, a vapid, silly girl, with no attraction but her doll-like face, had "Tell me, Walter, that you, will not leave she my own intalligence or wit; I might have me for at least a month after our auptials; tell borne that another should compete with my she my own intelligence or wit, I might have self; she sees too what I suffer, and glories in

take my child to my father's house in the Canongate," replied the dying woman, " and beseech him to show that mercy to my child which he denied to its mether.'

"But his honour will bid me gang awa wi mony a hard word, sic as he gaid you, my leddy, when he drove you frae his door."

"Nevertheless, my dear Jessy, you will run the risk for love of me, and if he refuse to grant my dying prayer, then convey my child to my late husband's aunt, Mrs. Lindsey, of Dundee, and beseech her to be a mother to my babe. You know where my little stock of gold is placed, Jossy; there is enough to pay your expenses and bring you back to your home."

The nurse moved across the room, and drawing aside a curtain revealed a scene of indescribable beauty. The cottage in which Margaret Lindsey had taken refuge when expelled from her father's house in Edinburgh, on account of her marriage with a penniless young. Jacobite, was a shade above the class generally inhabited by persons in the position of her foster-mother, and on account of her former connection with the family of David Graham, she had many little comforts even for her use. It was situated on the summit of a hill, overlooking a beautiful valley, the sides of which were clothed with hazels, the silvery birch, and gigantic oaks; yet higher other eminences arose, some dotted with purple heath, others bare and craggy, whilst in the distance towered the lofty mountains, veiled in the blue mist of early morning; which gradually melting away under the influence of the sun revealed them clearly as they stood forth in huge un-

wieldly masses filling up the back ground. The silence of this picturesque spot was broken only by the babbling waters of a brook in the valley beneath, which, formed by the mountain torrent, wended its way through many a flowery maze till it reached the vale.

The belongings of the cottage or hut, for, notwithstanding what I have said, in English eyes it would be but little more in accordance with the wildness of the spot. The floor of the outer room was but of elay with the usual peat fire in the centre, but within were two rooms with boarded floors, and a very few articles of furniture of the plainest kind; but, the soft bed hung around with curtains, the whiteness of which was scarcely surpassed by the pallid face of the dying girl, and carefully arranged so as to screen her from the draughts, together with various necessary articles for domestio use, were to be seen in no other cottage in that wild spot.

Margaret was propped up by pillows, and lution did. She had been

little better than a blank, and singularly unfitted to cope with the snares and dangers of | band. the world at this most critical moment for her future well-being, he considered that he further discharged himself of his duties towards her by placing her under the control of a second wife, a young woman whom he had raised from the post of a domestic in his household to

#### that of its mistress.

Margaret had not seen her father's second wife till her boarding school days were at an end. When she returned to her paternal home, it was to feel herself a stranger in every sense of the word. She was repulsed by the homeliness and vulgarity of the woman who had long occupied the place she had herself hoped to fill, whilst her father's neglect stung her to the quick. Her home was widely different from that which, in her early school days, she had loved to picture to herself, and she soon realized the fact that her somewhat wild life in her foster mother's cottage was infinitely happier than that she was doomed to live in Edinburgh.

Her lovely face, however, soon won for her an offer of marriage, and as her stepmother had now a little girl, Margaret, who had ever been more or less an outcast from her father's home and his affections, was voted in the way, and arrangements for her marriage with a suitor well advanced in life pushed on with indecorous haste.

But young as she was, her will was as inflexible as that of her father. Her affections were already given to a young cavalier, by name, Robert Lindsey. Landless and almost penniless, he had yet ventured to raise his eyes to Margaret, and whilst yet her father's friend waged his suit with an obstinate pertinacity, dreading the finale which would inevitably ensue, fair. Margaret gave her hand for better for worse to the gallant young soldier who, a few weeks later, was expected to join the forces of the Chevalier de St. George, at Preston, in first, had avowed his belief that the young lady Lancashire.

A very few weeks after this ill-starred union sufficed to show Margaret that she had reckoned without her host in supposing she would soften her father after she had boldly defied his authority, and she discovered her mistake in denly she called her to her bedside. the way I shall narrate.

The father and daughter were one morning seated together, he busy with his account books, she at an embroidery frame, with her heart far away, and a tiny circlet of gold secreted in her bosom.

But time would not linger, though her resome months

Late one evening after Jessy had retired to rest, she was awakened by a knocking at the door of her cottage.

When fully aroused, she left her bed and, without opening the door, called from within: "Wha makes sic a din at a puir body's door at this time o' necht ?"

"Jessy, Jessy, for the love of God, open to your foster child," was the reply, followed by 1 long wailing cry.

"Whisht, now, is it my bonny leddy ?" said the old woman, as hastily opening the door she beheld Margaret shivering without. Pale, exhausted, and feeble, she staggered within the cottage, and exclaiming : "Oh, my foster mother. I have traveled all this way to feel your loving arms around me," she fell senseless on the floor.

After using a few simple restoratives, the good Jessy succeeded in restoring her to consciousness; then, when she had fairly revived. she hastily threw on a few clothes, and speedily returning she said, while making preparations for refreshment for Margaret :

"I am unco glad that I has still some o' the gude wine my bairn sent me from Auld Reekie; I hae part o' a muir cock, too, and eggs, and white bread; and whiles you eat, I winna let you talk."

Then Jessy exerted herself to perform all the duties of a hospitable hostess, and with no small pleasure beheld Margaret make a good meal, though before it was over the latter had insisted on telling her of her expulsion from her father's home.

She had not dwelt at Jessy's cottage more than a couple of months when the news of her husband's death reached her. Under the pressure of grief and anxiety, her health visibly declined, and after the birth of her child the efforts of the village Esculapius, who, from the had but a short time to live, were of no avail.

To return from my long digression. Margaret had remained some time buried in her sad thoughts after Jessy had, as she had requested, laid the child beside her, when sud-

"Could you try again to bring to me the priest, dear nurse, whom I used to see before I went to Edinburgh?"

"I ken use where he may be found, my. bairn ; these are sair times for priests ; awhiles which she had far better not have possessed he hides amang the mountains, and gladsome are we whin we see him, but I ken nothing of him noo."

"Listen to me, Jessy. See my babe bap-

could not speak, but by a sign she made Jessy understand that her care was for her child. A little water water from the brook without, when her foster mother made known to the priest that the babe was unbaptized, was brought hastily in, and by the side of the dying mother the sacred rite of haptism was administered and the child christened by the name of Margaret.

A smile of unspeakable delight had flitted over its mother's face as Jessy received the infant in her arms when the ceremony was over. Then the priest again turned to speak words of hope and consolation to the mother, but her spirit had already passed to a better world.

### CHAPTER II .--- THE MARRIAGE AT THE HOTEL DE BRETEUL.

Softly steals the sunlight through the stained windows of an elegant spartment in the Hotel de Breteul. The buzz of many voices of persons assembled in the adjoining room strikes upon the ear, but those of whom I am going to speak to you have stolen away from the busy throng for a quiet half hour to themselves.

The elder of the party is a lady of some forty-five years old. Her features are still beautiful; she was brilliant in her youth, and she is a lovely woman still.

Beside her stands a youth and a maiden .--Each are in the spring-time of life. The features of the young man strinkingly resemble those of the elder lady, with, perhaps, the only difference being that his are masculine; but the arched eyebrows, lustrous violet blue eyes, the somewhat haughty curve of the short upper lip, the small, smooth and straight nose, are strikingly alike in both.

The maiden has not passed the years of girlhood, and her clean, dark complexion, black eyes, and raven tresses, have won for her the reputation of a beauty.

But a deep sigh escapes the girl, and two large tears fell on the hand of the elder lady which she holds within her own.

"Nay, Cecile; what, in tears at the very thought that Walter has shortly to leave us, said she; "remember, my child, that you are about to become the bride of a soldier, and should rather rejoice that he is soon to draw his maiden sword from its scabbard. You must take courage, and like the wife of a true soldier, yourself gird on your husband's sword for the battle."

The girl visibly shuddered as the lady spoke: me this, and I will try and be at rest." "My beloved Ceale," replied the young, my mortification.