AMBITION'S CONTEST

BY CHRISTINE FABER CHAPTER IV-CONTINUED

THE FIRST OUTWARD TOKEN OF A WAVERING FAITH

That is a wonderfully precocious boy," said the stately nobleman to his wife, as, sitting in the latter's dressing room, he listened to the lady's glowing account of some place had visited with children during the day, and where Howard's intelligent and manly remarks had attracted the surprised attention of several distinguished gentlemen.

'Indeed he is," she replied enthusiastically, "a boy of whom any mother might be proud. I wish Mal-

verton were like him. Lord Stanwix bent from his chair to the low seat which his wife occupied, put his hands affectionately about her shoulders, and said softly: 'Repine not, little woman. Mal-

verton Grosvenor will never wring his mother's heart, as I fear Howard Courtney will do." What do you mean?" The bright, eager eyes wore a pained

He drew her closer to him.

'You have often spoken to me of Mrs. Courtney, whom you loved so well when she was Miss Ashland—of her piety, her strict adherence to every form of the Catholic relig-

ion—"
"Yes," she interrupted glowingly, "her religion seemed to form part of Mary's very being."

Well, then," resumed his lordship, "it is to be presumed that she has reared her children as absolutely in the tenets of her faith as she herself was raised therein."

His wife replied: 'Have you not sufficient proof in the pious practices of Howard and Ellen since they have been with us?"

"Sufficient proof to show that their mother has carefully instilled into the minds of both the principles of her faith, but her teachings have taken root in only one of these young Howard Courtney's mind is one which will dive deeply into His ambition will stop knowledge. at nothing, and ere long he will fling religion itself aside as an unworthy fetter on the freedom of his thoughts. How will his mother feel then?"

Lady Grosvenor paled.
"As I would feel did Malverton forsake his early teachings."

Your son will never do that. His pride will prevent him from doing aught which would tarnish the lustre of the Grosvenor name; and his religious convictions, I am confident, are strong as those which exist in my heart. But should he act

Lady Grosvenor placed her hand playfully over his mouth, saying, with an assumed lightness of tone: "Pass no sentence yet. And tell me, is his sister likely to be tainted

with his unbelief?" "His sister, fragile as her appearance is, possesses a character like to that of the early Christian martyrs. Was the persecution of the Roman Catholics resumed today, you would find her going to death—even death at the stake-with the same angelic face which she now wears. No, Ellen Courtney is a rare type of poetical Catholicity; and the blow which snaps her brother's life, will also rend

Poor Mary Ashland!" sighed Lady Grosvenor, as she rose to serve her husband with the coffee which a pleasant custom had rendered neces-

sary before retiring. The next evening, as they were all assembled in Lady Grosvenor's private reception room—an apartment to which, from its cosey, home-comfort look, the family loved to resort-Howard and Malverton engaged in a skillful play of words, to which the ladies, and even Lord Stanwix, were delighted listeners. The latter had put aside his book for the present, and Lady Grosvenor and Ellen had suspended their embroid-ery. But at length the conversation the lads drifted into a foreign channel-turned upon a book which both had recently read; a book which, pretending to advocate no form of religion, yet contained, in attractive garb, ideas which were seductive to the Catholic soul—a seduction all the more hurtful because it worked unconsciously to the reader. Howard quoted a sentence from the work, in confirmation of his argument. Lord Stanwix looked up with a significant glance, for that sentence contained the germ of the non-Catholic feelings with which Howard Courtney's mind was Malverton, in his already tinged. grave way, combatted Howard's idea, that everything should yield to intellect, and the latter again launched forth into a vehement expression of his own thoughts on the subject. His words, which embodied all the fitful feeling of the past months, told how the desire for fame was eating into his very vitals, and, alas! told also how unsparingly he would sweep away even religion in order to reach his destined end; told it in language so unmistakably plain, that Ellen, dropping her embroidery frame, rose suddenly, and crossed hurriedly to where her brother sat. Placing a hand on his arm, she said, with a "I staked mixture of sorrow and sternness in her tones, that would have done credit to maturer years :

"You forget, Howard! What are

His face crimsoned angrily, and despite the presence of others he would have broken forth into a passionate retort, but Malverton, the condition of affairs, hastened to interpose with:

"Then you do not agree with him, Miss Courtney?"
She replied warmly, while the

blush which had suffused her cheeks mantled her brow and neck: "I should be false to my faith if I did, and Howard has done wrong in

mean it. Ere Howard could speak the reply which trembled on his lips, Lord Stanwix addressed her—questioning her on some point relative to her She answered modestly, but firmly.

The nobleman continued his inquiries; inquiries calculated to draw out the girl's mind, and develop the salient points of her character-a fact which was evident to every one the room but herself. answered, not suspecting that the questions were plied for any other bject than a desire for information, and her replies displayed to her courtly interrogator the existence of a rare intelligence combined with a purity of thought which of itself just render her womanhood beautiful-a firmness, and yet a modesty of character which was well-nigh extraordinary in one so young-and lastly, a simple and clinging fervor of faith almost touching to behold.

Lord Stanwix rose on the conclusion of his inquiries, bowed low to graceful girl, and confronting Howard, said, with a biting sarcasm

running through his tones: "I congratulate you, Master Howard, on the possession of a sister whose faith is so much stronger than your own."

The lad started to his feet, the vivid color alarmingly flashing into his cheeks and brow. He was goaded to the quick by the taunt his sensitive nature fancied Lord Grosvenor had implied; but ere he could utter the hot reply on his lips, the nobleman, with a hasty "good-night," had gone from the room.

the first time in his life, Howard was positively harsh to his sister—peremptorily refusing the little affectionate attentions which the she was wont to render him every evening when they retired to their own elegant suite of apartments. He sank into a moody study from which even old O'Connor's halfdictatorial remonstrances were vain years to arouse him, and at last he angrily shook off the affectionate grasp with which Ellen endeavored to seize his

hand, saying crossly: "Pray, allow me a rest from your

esence sometime." She looked, for a moment, as if but, subduing it by a painful effort, she replied, tremulously;

company tired you. Good night!"

Something impelled him to look had slowly disappeared through the open doorway of an adjoining apartment. Then his better nature re-He bowed his head on the arm of the easy chair, and wept tears of passionate remorse. But, in a moment they were dashed aside as unmanly; and he rose to pace the room and dream of the future, when even haughty Lord Grosvenor would be compelled to bow to the superiority of a master intellect. O'Connor, furtively watching the excited boy, shook his head ominously, and muttered:

landish capers as these."

In her own apartment Ellen was might accomplish in the very life of on her knees, beseeching of the Blessed Virgin, for whom her mother picture her over anxious mind had had taught her to cultivate a peculiar drawn, and wished the children were obtain for her the strength and patience necessary for the firm endurance of all the griefs ship for Mrs. Courtney forbade the devotion, to which should shade her young life; and while the tears coursed down her cheeks, she lifted her clasped hands, and prayed in so touching a manner for Howard's wavering faith to be strengthened, that Anne Flanagan, who had suddenly and silently entered, burst into involuntary tears. Ellen started at the unexpected sound, and stared, almost spellbound at the weeping woman—it was so strange to see the usually stiff old maid betray any emotion; but the gentle girl immediately inquired the cause of the unwonted feeling.

"It's only a strange humor that's on me," was the somewhat incoherently spoken reply. "I'll go to my own room awhile.

"Certainly, Anne; I shall not need you tonight," and Ellen Courtney, in the midst of her own grief, vainly conjectured why Miss Flanagan

should have been so affected. Miss Flanagan, on reaching her room, seated herself before the toilet glass which surmounted her table, placed the light so that its glare shone fully upon the mirror, and, resting her elbows on the table supported her face in her hands while she bent forward to make a close survey of her features. saffron-hued complexion looked more withered and yellow in the ghostly light, and her eyes had a bold. flaunting stare; the wrinkles in her face seemed to stand out more prominently than usual, and the worn expression in her countenance had a half malignant look as well. and earnestly she gazed, muttering

"I staked and lost-she won. Well, she was fair and young, and—O God! that I have become what I am! That child, with her prayers, brings back what I ought to be—but too late! too late!"

CHAPTER V

man of the world; a man whose powerful intellect held in abeyance men of better natures than his own; whose finished education impressed every one with whom he came in contact, and whose suave, polished nanners made his name a quoted speaking so; but I know he did not thing in aristocratic households. His speeches were articles with which the press teemed as emana tions of a master mind, and his influ ence was derived from the very court itself. His private virtues were thought to be exemplary, and certainly his wife's idolatrous affection for him testified to the truth of public opinion. But only she knew of the one terrible defect in his character: a merciless infliction of vengeance on any who might chance to incur his hatred; a pursuit of the hapless offender which ceased not till the latter was crushed beyond hope of resurrection; but the pursuit was always conducted in a manner calculated to lull rather than arouse suspicion, for he inflicted his deadly stabs under the very guise of cour tesy. The knowledge gave her gentle heart pain, but it was so rarely this terrible disposition had been aroused since her marriage that she was wont to think him one of the best and noblest of heroes. Now, however, since that eventful night in which Lord Grosvenor had hurt Howard to the quick by contrasting the latter's adherence to his faith with that evinced by Ellen, Lady Grosvenor's watchful eyes saw an antagonism springing up between her husband and their guest which past experience told her would culminate in no gentle way. Possessing keener penetration and wiser judgment than are vouch safed to many of her sex, she saw that Howard Courtney would one day be her husband's rival in point of intellect and masterly eloquence that her husband's jealousy aroused toward him as though latter were already a man, and likely to interfere with him in his political path; that the laudations upon Ellen's faith, bestowed by Lord Grosvenor in Howard's hearing, were simply spurs to excite angry, mortified feelings in the latter, and that Howard himself by his caustic remarks was daily increasing the feud. It did not seem to be such an unequal war; five more and Howard Courtney would be a man, with wealth and influence second to none possessed even by the peerage-for though no title had been in his mother's family for a generation past, yet there had been a title supported by vast estates, a genealogy whose records attested the emotion which was struggling to have vent would overwhelm her; ages, who, though Irish born and ages, who, though Irish born and while Anne Flanagan loyal to their country, had been a the case, and moaned: power in the English court, and "Certainly, dear Howard. You authentic accounts of a favor should have stated before that my rendered by a member of the As rendered by a member of the Ashland family to some English sovereign, which of itself might be sufficient to up, to watch the slight form till it guarantee a return of kindness any of the present descendants of the family. Should Howard adopt English life, which he seemed so much to like, enter the political arena, which with his superior mind he would be admiringly fitted when a man, her husband, who would then have hardly reached the prime of life, would regard him as a deadly foe. What amount of injury he foe. might be able to do Howard Courtney she was unable to foresee, but she knew that the desire for vengeance in her husband's heart would cause him to ferret out the hopes most No good ever came of such out- dear to his adversary's heart, and, crushing them, exult in the ruin he

> was yet to cause, she would hardly have written such affectionate epis tles to Mrs. Courtney, urging the latter to allow the children to long their absence, and to trust them entirely to her own and Lord Stanwix's care. Ellen - simple, prayerful, Ellen-marvelled at the manner in | tion of the bovish members of "Mal which Lord Grosvenor and her brother so frequently spoke to each other, but she understood it not; while Malverton, with his father's elegant grace of manner and grave reserve, was a half-amused spectator -but neither did he quite understand it. For Lord Grosvenor himself it was a piquant skirmish just -something which, from the inequality in point of years between the two combatants, possessed for him a novel and charming interest; but the iron hand was under the velvet glove, the bitter heart beneath the courtly smile, and the implacable hatred ready to flame in dire veneration. Howard Courtney argued geance the moment Howard Court-

her desire for the return of the

young people. She strove to allay

her fears by thinking that in a few months at most Mrs. Courtney would

recall her children, and that never

again, perchance, would Howard

Could she have seen the bitter con-

two, the unhappiness, the well-nigh

wreck of hearts which that conflict

flict that was yet to rage between the

Courtney cross her husband's path.

ney should cross his path in public On Howard's mind this contest of intellects was having a strengthening of thought and judgment which lent maturity even to his appearance;

the amusement of their guests, and sufficient variety was not afforded by heard the announcement with a glow Howard with a sparkle of delight in expressive and cleverly mimicked French shrug of the shoulders.

O'Connor and Anne Flanagan, between whom-for appearance sake -a slight show of friendliness was at last maintained, received the news malicious, but he applauded loudly with equal pleasure. Their Irish proclivities were daily assailed, and sometimes almost insulted by the force of grip, while he said: English prejudice of the servants of the courtly household with whom they came in contact; while O'Connor's sturdy defence of his land, with Anne Flanagan's dignified retorts, afforded considerable mirth in the servant's hall, a circumstance which aroused the indignation of the

loyal pair.

'Now," O'Connor said, as if speaking to himself, though Anne Flanagan was assisting him to repack Howard's trunk, "it's very fine, this going ing the strange words that had passed, abroad, as they call it; but it's my resumed at once their mith; only humble opinion that if Mrs. Courtney kept her children home, or came wid them herself, as she ought to do, things 'd be better in every way. I like the looks of me lord, as they call the masther, an' I'm afeerd quare way, wid neither father nor mother to look afther them."

Miss Flanagan replied without looking up: Mrs. Courtney couldn't help her-

self-she was obliged to let the children come without her." Oh, you know something about

it, then ?" and the old man, in his astonishment, suspended his work. The prim, stiff maid raised her an expression in her face which in an instant conveyed to her companion that Mrs. Courtney's mys. terious actions were not inexplicable to Mrs. Courtney's maid. Old O'Connor rose, paced the floor slowly and meditatively for a few moments, then tion through his old frame. But on nor rose, paced the floor slowly and pausing, said, with his wonted dole-

ful shake of the head : I have served the family faithfully for thirty years, while she has been with them only eighteen, an' yet they trust her!—they trust the old man whither the current of the old man whither the current or the old man whithe

He left the room abruptly, as if his feelings were too great to master, while Anne Flanagan bent low over

Oh, bitter trust that had to be !" Gay, bright, charming Paris — it was such a novel and delightful sensation which the brother and sister experienced the first morning that they woke up in the beautiful capital; such keen delight to visit the scenes about which they had so frequently talked and read with Mrs. Courtney, who had spent a portion of her girlhood in the same city; and such exquisite enjoyment to mingle with the lively French society, whose sparkle and humor pleased Ellen better than the staid manners of the English people. There were numerous friends of Mrs. Courtney still residents of the city-friends to whom Mary Ashland, in her beautiful girl hood, had rendered herself dear, and for whom, widely separated as they were by time and distance, they still retained a warm affection. They marvelled upon learning of her widowhood from Howard and Ellen that she should permit her children safely on the other side of the Atlanto travel so far unattended by her care but comments were rarely passed, ship for Mrs. Courtney forbade the slightest hint which would betray

and never in the children's hearing. Thus at once, Howard and Ellen Courtney found themselves the centre of a charming circle of loving friends, and their letters were so fraught with the happiness they were enjoying, that their mother wept glad tears over the precious missives, and said, lifting her clasped hands to Heaven:

O, my God! Thou art so goodperhaps, perhaps my hope will be realized—my wish granted."

Malverton Grosvenor gathered friends, and into this charmed circle he immediately introduced his friend Howard: the latter, with that usual wonderful something in his character which won most hearts to him, gained at once the enthusiastic affec verton Grosvenor's club," as Lord Grosvenor himself playfully styled the half-score of young fellows who met nightly. Even in those meetings, where boyish conviviality ruled the hour, the wonderful superiority of intellect unconsciously displayed itself, and, while his young companions admired and lauded his genius there were few ungenerous enough to envy him.

One night, when debate ran high on some fancied object of discussion
—an artifice to which the "club" often resorted as a means of affordfor the side which he had been appointed to defend with his wonted boyish eloquence; but that elo-quence had all the brevity and force of far more mature years, and the though bitter effect. There was being rapidly developed a manliness advanced a few moments before advanced a few moments before were mercilessely crushed. But he launched into a broader and a dangerbut while, in a measure, he felt how ous field — approached the bounds strong was the antagonistic feeling where the Catholic Church draws strong was the antagonistic feeling where the Catholic Church draws which Lord Grosvenor entertained rigid lines between her teachings for him, he hardly comprehended its and certain portions of the cause source, though he returned it with which he advocated. Would he cross THE FIRST STEP IN APOSTACY

Lord Stanwix Grosvenor was a man of superior parts, and a thorough

Lord Stanwix is drosvenor was a man of superior parts, and a thorough

Source, though he returned it with those lines, would he step beyond the haughty nobleman cooperated with his wife in all her efforts for which agitated the mind of Lord silence.—B. Franklin.

Grosverfor, who frequently attended insisted upon beginning the proposed tour through France and Italy earlier others breathlessly listening. The than had been at first planned, lest speaker's heart realized the treachery it was about to commit, but passtheir English mode of life. Ellen ing those bounds would afford him a finer field for the masterly display of of pleasure mantling her fair face; his intellect, and alas! for the pious hopes so wreathed about him the his fine eyes; and Malverton, who fatal step was taken, the eloquent had been to the gay capital some and startling speech made, and Howhalf dozen times before, with an ard Courtney resumed his seat amid bursts of applause, it is true, but as an avowed non-Catholic from the very statements which had issued from his own lips. The sparkle in Lord Grosvenor's eyes gr as the others were doing, and ever

force of grip, while he said:
"Splendidly done, my dear boy!
The future—" he stopped suddenly for the sarcasm in his tones was be coming too manifest.
"Yes, the future," said Howard,

with equal sarcasm, "will show to whom the victory will be awarded." Lord Grosvenor bowed, and turned hastily away, lest he might forget the courtesy which, as a host, owed to his young guest; while the Howard sat silent and apart. having been entirely freed from the could not immediately stifle the remorse which was beginning to make itself felt for the dastardly things won't come right, sending thing he had done. But there was ing brilliantly. childher away from home in this one invisible listener to Howard's speech, whose old, faithful heart it

wounded as sharply as a dagger thrust

would have done. It had been the custom of some of the male servants of the establish spreading branches of a tall ment to gather on those juvenile opened from the main assembly room, from whence, though not able to see, they could distinctly hear the amusing debates. O'Connor, fond and that ran alongside the path. proud of his young master as though man was resting on his elbow the latter was kin of his own, invariably made one of the silent little group collected in the nook, and listened delightedly to the loved voice this night by what were his old ears greeted! The language—the debates were always conducted in English-Howard's speech was drifting, and breathlessly he listened, hoping against hope that his young master would never approach the dreaded ings.

roint, till the unmistakable, the The eyes of the tramp plainly dis point, till the unmistakable, the

Oh, what will his mother and with life. Miss Ellen say?"

comfort to the charming apartment; but now he moved mechani-

muttering

made him.' Ellen had just entered her own kissed this red mark. evening custom, the old man strove to put out of his face that look of Prese She came smilingly in, with the dress of some white, soft material enhanc-

once to the old man's side. "I have spent such a happy even-ing," she said, "I am impatient till Howard comes to tell him about it."

O'Connor's heart gave another throb of pain, and he averted his face

for he could not bear to look on the bright countenance beside him. She continued, in her charming way : Every one seems to love me so much that I scarcely miss mamma's

to her entirely restored to health.' "Yes," thought O'Connor, "his body restored but his soul ruined."
The fanciful little timepiece on the

mantel chimed the hour, and, with the simple, natural piety which seemed to be part of her very nature, the fair girl blessed herself, and bowed her head for a moment to murmur, as O'Connor knew, a mental prayer. His eyes grew misty, and he bowed his own head, that he might bless her, and pray heaven to keep her steadfast in the faith.

Howard entered as both prayers whilst his eyes sparkled with vigor were completed — entered with a moody, dissatisfied expression in his face, and a discontented air in his very gait. Without noticing Ellen, he threw himself wearily into the velvet-lined chair before the glowing grate, and, burying his face in his hands, yielded himself to his unhappy thoughts. Ellen knelt beside him, pressed her cheeks to the thick curls resting on the crimson lining, and at length timidly said:

You are ill, dear Howard. You have been exerting yourself too much.'

TO BE CONTINUED

THE FACE ON THE STONE

Lord Hydethorpe had said said more than once—to Father Clement, that on conscientious grounds he regretted he could not accept the good priest's offer to pur chase from him a strip of land in the manor of Hydethorpe for building upon it a proposed Catholic

"Every Christian is a fellow of mine," he wrote to the good priest, "but whilst I have the greatest admiration and respect for all the good work that is done in various ways by the members of your excellent communion, yet I must crave your pardon if on pure grounds of conscience I find I must decline to accede to your request. Pray, let this be final."

And having penned these lines and sent the letter to the priest of the new mission which had only just been erected by the Catholic Bishop of the diocese, the nobleman went out into the grounds of Hydethorpe Hall for a stroll and a quiet read. He had quite made up his mind that he could not do it-sell that bit of

waste land to a Catholic priest. Having arrived at his favorite spot in a corner of the beautiful influence of his early teachings he grounds, he went inside the tiny summer house, sat down in a cosy chair and started to read, though was very sleepy. The sun was shin-

A tramp, travel stained and tired and foot sore, was resting at full length on the sidepath of a dusty yellow country road, and was half buried in the green grass. The outshaded him from the heat of the meeting nights, in a recess, which exposed sun, and the scene all around was a picture of quiet repose broken only by the twittering of and the murmuring of the brooklet man was resting on his elbow with his hat in his hand, and his eyes

were open Presently, he bowed his head and closed his eyes-not in sleep, but as one does in fervent prayer or deep thought. Then he slowly opened them as though his mind was following some train of thought that was stretching away into the next world a mental operation over which he seemed to have no control. His gaze was riveted on a stone lying close to his elbow—a flat stone with a smooth He had called himself back surface. from the other world of dreams. was only angling, as it were, and and was again alive to his surround-

startling avowal came; then he put cerned upon the face of the stone the his hands before his face and groaned. His fellow servants were too absorbed ginning to wiggle and dance itself to heed it, and he went out slowly into form and shape-first the chin and sadly, muttering on his way to and mouth, then the staring eyes, Howard's room:

"Little I thought I'd live to see the day, whin my ould masther's son would deny the faith he was raised in the day while the day while the day while the faith he was raised that seemed to be animated with life.

The man was not at all perturbed He had been wont, on other evenings, to put little finishing touches on the stone. On the contrary, he on the stone. On the contrary, he became quaintly curious, and thrust his reclining head forward a little to cally about, sitting down at last, and scrutinize the object more and as he did so, what seemed to him Shure, the same love can't be in a red spot appeared in the middle of my heart for him any more-an' he the forehead of the phantom head. such a fine, clever lad; but betther Compelled by a force of character for him if he wasn't so clever; may and origin of which he could not be he'd be thruer to the God that clearly divine, he bent his head down still further and reverently room, adjoining, and knowing she sort of way he thought he recognized would pass into Howard's, as was her the face and knew what the red spot

Presently, whilst his mind was in dejection and distress he felt was a state of blank amazement, the face obtrusive service. Twelve stories of there, that the little guileless heart on the stone faded away into noth might be longer spared the trial ing, and the stone assumed its ordin-which, he feared, was in store for it. tramp passed his fingers over it to assure himself that he was not dream ing her delicate beauty, and tripped at | ing, and he was quite satisfied that it just felt like any other slab of stone. but with this difference: it was very smooth-indeed, to the touch it was like velvet.

He began to argue the matter to himself. What was it? optical delusion produced by an overwrought nervous system? that he was not only physically overcome with pain and disease, but that he was also carrying a mental buraffection—and it is such happiness to think we will bring Howard back depressed, but try as he might he could not quite make out what his troubles were. He felt the conviction, however, that he had failed to do something which he ought to have done.

Where are you going?" inquired a kindly voice, the sound of aroused him from his semi stupor.

The tramp turned round wi eagerness and beheld standing close to him the figure of an aged man plainly clad in long flowing robes he wore a short grizzled beard, and his white hair was curly and crispy and earnestness. The face was beautiful even for an old man, for

The tramp was not put out in the least by the appearance of the strange visitor; he welcomed him with a

there was not a wrinkle or ridge

of time or nature marking his fea

I want to see Valhalla at the end of this long and weary road, and was just resting here for a little while," he said. "I have been tramping many days. This is the right way, isn't it?" he went on, slowly rising to his feet.

'You are on the right road, but you want someone to support you, so as to save you from faltering on the way. "I have no home—I had one, but my heirs turned me out because I

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