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THE DOUBLE SACRIFICE; OR THE PONTIFICAL ZOUAVES. A TALE OF CASTELFIDARDO.

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CHAPTER XIX.—CONTINUED.

But I hear some one making an objection that he never has heard a word of this before. You marry your Joseph so suddenly, without even telling us the name of his wife, who never has once appeared in your story.

Very true. It did not fall in my way to mention her: and, in fact, Joseph himself, long after his return, knew as little of her as you do. Do you think it takes a great many years to find a good, pious wife? And you do not know her name? What does that matter? I have told you that he has married an excellent wife, and her name has nothing to do with the matter.

But we must not forget Martin. A few months after his return his mother, old Teresa, died. She called her son to her death-bed, and thus addressed him:—

'My boy, you have done your duty. You saved Joseph's life, and if Victor Morren is dead, it is no fault of yours that he is not alive. But what I have to say to you is this, that as soon as you have laid me under ground you are to go back to Rome. The first time you went, not for the Pope alone, but also to discharge your old mother's debt of gratitude. This time you must go for the Pope alone. I hope now that you will be able to find your way to Rome by yourself, without any one's help.'

Martin has fulfilled his mother's last command. Like a dutiful son, he prayed at her grave, and then returned to Italy to take his place in the ranks of the Zouaves.

His first visit, on his return to Rome, was to Stefano, who was still inhabiting the house in the Trastevere which witnessed his father's terrible end, but he dwells there now alone. His sister, whose piety became still more fervent after Victor's blessed end, has left this evil world, which had been so full of bitterness to her, to dedicate the remainder of her life to God in a cloister.

She has become an example to all her sisters of charity, humility, and self-devotion, and her fervent, unceasing prayers, rise daily to Heaven for the soul of the unhappy brother, for whose eternal rest she has devoted herself.

And so, in a few words, I have told the reader all that he desired to know.

But your story is false, says another objector, for in 1860 there was no one village in the Campine which numbered so many Zouaves as you have brought together. And then, Schrambeck? Where did you find that name? Nobody knows any place to which it can apply.

Not so fast, respected critic. Are you so very sure that there was no village in the Campine which numbered two Zouaves among its children. Have I not a right to change the names of places in my tale, lest I should betray my heroes? And because the names of places are changed must the events related be false?

Now, then, dear reader, I have come to the end of my story, which, as I have said already, has been to me, in its beginning, continuation, and end, a labor of love.

Our age is an age of dross, of selfishness, and cowardice: but, amidst all this dross, there gleams, thank God! many a pearl of innocence, of self-devotion, and of heroism.

I have sought, according to my poor ability, to make one of those pearls (a pearl of priceless cost) better known to the world.

Its spotless brightness had attracted my eye, and I wished to make it shine visibly in the eyes of others. We speak willingly of what we love.

More skillful pens, more eloquent tongues, have celebrated it. What matters this? Do we prize our friends less when we hear that others prize them too?

No, no. My voice may be weak, but even

my poor mouth shall speak your praise, shall proclaim your glory, champions of justice, champions of piety, champions of the Most High.

When masterful robbers sought to efface the name of justice from the page of history, and to banish it from the legislature of nature, you sprang manfully to arms. When godless infidels assailed the foundation of the Faith, you surrounded the Rock of Peter with your brave hearts as with an iron wall. When the worms of earth dared to declare war against the God of Heaven, you gave your lives and your blood as martyrs for God.

Eternal glory be to you, heroes and victims, in peace and in war.

Your victor's crown is twined of laurel and of olive!

Great and glorious were you when your blood streamed over the heights of Castelfidardo. As great and glorious have we beheld you in the days of peace.

A terrible sickness raged lately in Italy. Albano, especially, suffered fearfully from the plague; but the Zouaves were there, and martyrs of charity were added to the martyrs of war.

While the inhabitants left their nearest and dearest untended, and sought safety in flight, these brave young men laid aside their weapons, and hastened to the infected houses.

Their magnanimous charity transformed them into sick nurses, and grave diggers.

The heroism with which they faced the danger extorted an admiring homage from their adversaries.

Honor and glory then to you, O heroes of Christendom—honor and glory to you, even from the mouth of your enemies.

Many of you, it is true, fell victims to the pestilence: but before His Vicar had blessed the survivors upon earth, the Lord of Hosts had doubtless crowned the departed with everlasting blessedness in Heaven.

Rest, then, rest sweetly and gloriously, you who fell on the battle-field or in the midst of your labor of love. The palm of victory is yours, and history shall speak your praise.

You, too, who are still fighting the battles of the Lord against the brelings and accomplices of hell, forward! forward! Let not your arms fall from your hand so long as the enemy is lurking round the Rock of Peter. You are now alone. Be it so. God's help is but the nearer.

'Behold,' said the Prophet Isaias to the Jewish people, and so may it be said to you, 'Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from afar.—His wrath burneth, and is heavy to bear; His lips are filled with indignation, and His tongue as of a devouring fire.

His breath as a torrent overflowing even to the midst of the neck, to destroy the nation unto nothing, and the bride of error that was in the jaws of the people.'

Again:

'Like as the lion roareth, and the lion's whelps upon his prey; and when a multitude of shepherds come against him, he will not fear at their voice, nor be afraid of their multitude: so shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight upon Mount Sion, and upon the hill thereof.'

Meanwhile, watch; for the foe may seem to rest, but he slumbers not. Nay, his apparent repose is but the ominous mask of his secret design, his persevering cabals; and that very mask as if the revolution no longer feared to bring to light the new monsters which it has been hatching in the dark, that mask he is slowly laying aside.

Fresh cries of malediction and fury are rising from the abyss.

The danger is still urgent.

For seven long years and more the threatening clouds have hung over the horizon of the Church.

The moment is perhaps at hand when they shall burst in their full fury. That moment will reveal the scourge of God—a scourge for guilty Europe.

Crushing and annihilating, perhaps, will be its force. Peoples and lands shall, perchance, be given to it for a prey. Ruins upon ruins, it may be, shall mark the black path of its blast-

ing footsteps. They that shall live till then shall see it. But amid the fragments of shattered thrones, amid the splinters of broken swords, amid the shreds of riven parchments, amid the ruins of overturned institutions—still shall the Rock of Peter remain firm and immovable, lofty and unshaken, and gleaming with ever brightening glory; and upon the Rock shall the Vicar of Christ ever stand calm and majestic as now; and while his compassionate eye falls upon the bodies of his assailants lying lifeless at his feet, he will raise his hand in benediction over the true children who have defended his throne, and from that same throne have received protection and strength.

Then, as after a storm, shall the air be purified.

Meanwhile, how great and glorious is the feeble old man, calm amid the threatening dangers; bending, indeed, beneath the weight of years, but unbent by the might of his enemies. How great and glorious is he, as he stands, erect, alone, and resting simply upon his right and upon his faith in God!

Already the furious monsters are howling around him, grinding their teeth and stretching forth their claws to tear him to pieces. And he—

Calm and confident, he sends forth his summons to the whole Catholic world, and at a single word his children throng around him—hundreds of Bishops, thousands of Priests, tens of thousands of the faithful, hasten to Rome to proclaim the triumph of the Saints whom the Father of the Church has placed upon her altar.

The monsters give way, furious yet impotent, and let the army of pilgrims pass, who have no other weapons but their faith and their confidence in God.

The joyful acclamations of S. Peter's drown the curses of the synagogues of Satan.

Already kingdoms are shaking, the principles of human policy give way, princes shudder, and nations tremble, before the onward march of the revolution—and he—

Calm and confident, he once more sends forth his summons to the whole Catholic world, and his simple word shall once more be heard and obeyed. The magnificent spectacle of a General Council shall once more bear witness to the enduring life of Christendom, shall once more solemnize the triumph of the Church.

He, that wonderful Old Man, shall establish the peace of kingdoms and the principles of human civilization; and the princes of the earth shall once more owe their might, and the peoples their peace and their bond of association to the Fisherman of Galilee.

Who is he, then, this glorious Old Man, who thus combines the most utter weakness with the mightiest strength?

Who is he?

The Founder of Christendom told us eighteen hundred years ago, and the walls of S. Peter's; but now, on the centenary of the Holy Apostle, and at the canonization of the glorious Saints of Gorcum, re-echoed in heavenly accents His sacred words:—

'Thou at Peter, and on this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Tu es Petus, et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam, et portae inferi non prevalebunt adversus eam.'

THE END.

THE MOSS ROSE;

OR, THE FLOWER GIRL.

CHAPTER I.

'A rose, sir! Do, good gentleman, by a rose.'

The girl's tones were earnest, but musical.—He stopped under the gas-lamp, and looked down into her face, which was raised pleadingly to his. It was a pretty face, but pale. It was an honest face, too; not bold, but with a faint flush suffusing it, as her eyes met his inquiring gaze. She was sixteen or seventeen, and thinly clad. The hand holding the flower trembled, whilst the fingers of the other nervously clutched the frail

basket which held a number of fast-fading roses, which told that the purchasers had been few that day, or that other girls bolder than herself had gained them.

'And if I buy your roses,' asked the gentleman, kindly, 'what will you do with the money? Take it home for your father to drink away at the tavern?'

She hung her head, and replied, softly, 'Not father, sir. He was a good father. He is dead; but—'

'Well?' said the gentleman.

'It's mother, sir,' she said sorrowfully. 'Mother is in there, sir, with little Tommy.'

She pointed to a garish, brilliantly lighted gin-shop at the corner of the street, and shuddered.

The gentleman looked around hastily, and sighed. 'If you wish to be honest and respectable, I will help you,' he said, as he took out his purse. 'If you promise not to give any of this to your mother, but to get some more decent clothing for yourself, it is yours,' he added. He opened his purse, and held out a piece of money. It was gold.

'Oh, sir,' she said, gratefully, 'how can I thank you? It is too much.'

'Not too much,' he replied, 'if it help to keep you from sin. Let me look at you closer.'

He drew her under the light—for, although it was not quite dark, the street lamps had been lit—and looked once more into her face. A lock of hair fell from its brading, he placed it back tenderly, and putting his hand on her shoulder, said, kindly, 'Remember, my girl, always to be honest, always to be truthful; and if you have a truthful, honest sweetheart, use him well. Good night,' he added, stepping forward.

'Oh, take this rose, sir,' she said.

He took it, placed it in his bosom, and walked briskly away. The girl stood in astonishment, watching his tall form fade away as it receded in the darkening night, whither we will follow him. He crossed Ho-burn, thence through the Turistile into Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he slackened his pace.

'It shall be done,' he said aloud; 'I will tear her from my heart, and teach her that Francis Braine can live without her, and the fortune she is dowered with has no attraction for him.'

He crossed the road and leaned over the square railings. The moon was at the full, and its light tipped the long dark wall with a silver fringe, throwing the chapel into grim relief against the sky.

'Of what use to me are professional honors,' he said, passionately, 'if she, for whom I won them, share them not? After working as I have for her, planning as a have for her, what is my reward? A cold, "I congratulate you, Mr. Braine, on winning your silk gown," and no other word! But for that puppy dressed in a scarlet coat she has always a smile.'

He removed his hat. With the light upon it could be seen that he was bald; that he had a long, careworn face, iron-gray whiskers, and a large, decisive nose, for which gentlemen of the long robe are famous.

'Strange,' he said, musingly, 'how the child's voice haunts me.' He was silent a few moments; then he continued: 'And yet that were more preposterous than the other. But it shall be done. Let the world sneer—let my "learned brethren" send me to Coventry if they will: but as I stand here a living man, it shall be done.'

As he spoke rather energetically a flower fell at his feet; it was the moss rose.

'Ay,' said he, stooping and raising it, 'a fitting emblem! Edith Belmore shall give place to a woman, who can give what since my mother died I have yearned for, but which has been denied me—love!'

Fixing his hat firmly on his head, he hurried into New Square, where, entering one of its large, gloomy houses, he found himself at home.

CHAPTER II.

In an elegant Grosvenor Square drawing-room, seated on an ottoman, looking out on the fast falling twilight, is a lady whose maid is standing beside her.

'Now, Margaret, tell me again what he said. Now mind, the exact words,' said her mistress.

'Well, miss, I only caught the words as he went quickly by me,' she replied. 'He said, "Fool that I am! but the folly is past."'

'What could he mean?' said the lady. 'Are you sure those were the very words?'

'Oh, yes, miss,' was the ready reply. 'Thomas, who let him out, says he looked quite wild, and would have gone without his hat if he had not given it to him.'

'What strange creatures men are, to be sure,' muttered the young lady. 'Only last week he was all gladness and pride at his approaching advancement, which he said he only cared for for my sake; (here she picked a flower to pieces pettishly), and now he has gone away just because I did not cut De Lancey to talk to him. Defend me from a moody, jealous man!'

'And that he is, miss,' said the Abigail, in a low tone.

Edith Belmore started. She had forgotten the presence of her maid.

'Ah, yes,' she said, carelessly, 'he is odd, but very clever, Margaret. And, you know, clever men must always be humored. But it's a dreadful plague.'

'Then defend me from a clever man!' said Margaret, smartly. 'And how you, Miss Edith, can prefer such an "uppish" gentleman to the captain, I can't think.'

'Do you then think the captain handsome?' said the lady.

'On my! rather,' replied the maid.

'He takes me and mamma to the matinee,' continued the lady, 'to-morrow. What shall I wear?'

And so, forgetful of the true heart that had well nigh made itself bankrupt for her, and which was at that moment throbbing sadly at the strange resolve it had come to, Edith Belmore plunged into the mysteries of *Le Follet* with her maid.

CHAPTER III.

'Who is she?' said one gentleman to another.

'Don't know' was the reply.

'I never saw Braine look so well,' continued the first speaker.

'Darner was positively raving about her,' said the other.

'He saw her at Lady Belinda's ball, did he not?'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'and danced with her once.'

'Braine's a lucky dog. Some fellows are lucky.'

'Indeed they are,' assured his companion.

'I suppose you have heard that Bulmer is to be made attorney-general?'

'No,' was the prompt reply.

'Yes; and Braine is to be raised to the Bench.

'He deserves it,' says the other. 'I should have thought, however that his leading practice was better than a puerile judgeship.'

'So it is,' was the reply. 'But ever since Braine entered the House he has been a marked and an altered man. Then his wife, you know, would much rather that he were "Mr. Justice Braine."'

'His speech on Reform was masterly; but it is his Jamaica speeches which have won his elevation.'

'Hush!' said the other gentleman. 'Here he comes.'

Mr. Braine and his wife passed by on the outskirts of the throng, with a cordial recognition of the two speakers.

The lady was the admiration of the room; of middle height, slender, graceful, and fair, her silver coronet well becoming her pale face and melting blue eyes, which she ever and anon turned upon her husband with unspeakable expression.

'She certainly is a sweet-looking creature,' continued the speaker.

'Beauty and the beast,' said the other.

'Braine certainly is not a handsome man, but he would be a good catch for any woman, I suppose Thackeray was right: "Men look for beauty, women for love."'

'This is rather a curious affair; I suppose some folks would call it "romantic." You know how he met with her?'