

LINKED LIVES.

By Lady Gertrude Douglas.

CHAPTER VII.

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.

"We ask thy peace, O Lord! To light and guide us on Through a long struggling life: While no success or gain Shall cheer the deeper fight, Or nerve, what the world calls, Our wasted might: Yet pressing through the darkness to the light."

—Legends and Lyrics.

Mabel always takes her breakfast at the Vicarage on Sunday morning, so that Hugh, on the first Sunday after his arrival, finds himself alone with Miss Mackenzie.

"I suppose you drive, Aunt Helen," he says, when the old lady, having finished her morning meal, is preparing to leave the room.

"Yes," she answers, hesitating. "But I won't ask you to come with me to-day: I think you should see for yourself what the doings are in the parish church: I daresay another Sunday you will prefer to accompany me."

"What do you mean? Do you not go to Elvanlee?"

"No, I gave up that two or three years ago, for really I was so put about with the innovations of Mr. Vaughan introduced, that my peace was just destroyed with them. It's all very well for the English, but I am too much of an old Scotchwoman to stand these savories of Popery! So I just drive quiet down to Sarsely; it is so much farther, but it does not seem so."

"Yes, I know; but many of them—the English ones, if they had lived in our days—would have belonged to our branch of the Church Catholic—don't you think so?"

"No, I do not," answers Hugh decidedly. "They were Roman Catholics, and would not have had anything to do with us; and you may be sure if they had, their own Church would not have canonized them."

"But we are Catholics. Surely, surely, Hugh, we are a branch of the same Church, only we are Anglicans—not Roman."

"No, Mabel, that is all nonsense. The foundation of the Catholic religion is allegiance to the chair of St. Peter. Until the Reformation, Rome overruled all; consequently, from the moment you rebel against what a Catholic considers infallible authority, you are nothing more or less in his eyes than a heretic, no matter what name you go by. It is folly to imagine that all this aping of the Roman Ritual—all this assumption of scraps of Roman doctrine—can bring you into a sort of semi-union with the Catholic Church, which seems to be what you are all aiming at. Remember we are Protestants, and it is our glory that we are so."

"Our shame rather," says Mabel, in a low voice.

"Child, if you really think so, you will have to be a Roman Catholic, for the English Church is essentially Protestant."

Mabel looks unutterable things, but has no time to continue the discussion, for they have already reached the Vicarage, where Genevieve is waiting to receive them. Mr. Vaughan having not yet returned from the church.

Hugh has not been inside the Vicarage since Blanche's death. Sad, therefore, are the associations connected with it in his mind. Genevieve's ever ready tact sees at a glance how painful this first visit must be to him, so, after a few words of kind, perfectly unaffected welcome to his own home, she makes some easy excuse for diverting Mabel's attention, thus leaving him some time alone to get over the trying moment.

"This is the most delicious room I know," says Mabel presently, when she and Genevieve, returning from a short visit to the conservatory, rejoin Hugh in the Vicarage drawing room, the glass doors of which are open, and a soft green light shed over it through Venetian blinds.

"More delicious than The Hermitage, or Elvanlee drawing-rooms?" asks Genevieve, laughing.

"Yes, for you have such a view of the sea, and the sea is worth all the woods and lawns and gardens put together," says Mabel, sitting down on one of the low sofa-chairs and gazing with wistful affection at the clear expanse of blue ocean which glitters through a broad vista of lime-avenue.

"What makes you so fond of the sea, Mabel?" inquires Hugh.

"I don't know; it's like home to me. I should not like to be on it, though," answers Mabel, with a quick shudder.

"You wouldn't do for a long sea voyage, then," he says, laughing. "What would you do if you had to go to Australia and back?"

"I wouldn't go," is the quick reply—"not for any consideration whatever—that is—unless—" breaking off suddenly and coloring.

"Oh, never mind—nonsense!" "Tell me, he urges; and Genevieve laughingly chimes in—

"No, I won't tell you—at least, not now. You would not understand my ideas; you would not believe how much I love, yet hate—dread the sea!"

She speaks with a degree of excitement which the occasion scarcely requires. Hugh is surprised—so is Genevieve; but in after-years both remember that speech only too well.

"Tell us something about Australia, do while we are waiting for Mr. Vaughan. How late he is, Veva!"

who has been sitting by his side, leans towards him and whispers, "Mr. Vaughan will be glad to see you at lunch; will you come with me to the Vicarage?"

Hugh assents, and as they walk down the cemetery together Mabel asks eagerly, "Was it not a beautiful sermon?"

"Hugh is very grave. The expression of his face fills Mabel with misgiving even before he answers. "The language was beautiful—the eloquence, the earnestness of the preacher beyond all praise; but, Mabel, those are not the doctrines of the Church of England."

"How?—what do you mean?" she inquires, in a bitterly disappointed tone. "You do not surely wish to make me believe that there is no power of Absolution in the Church?"

"I wish you to believe, Mabel, that the Vicar, who (God forbid I should deny it!) a very good man, preaches, nevertheless, downright Popish doctrine; and as he seems to be earnest and honest, I can but warn you that he will not remain much longer in our Communion. Do not look so pained—forgive me," he says, very gently, very kindly, laying his hand on Mabel's arm with a look that thrills through her. "I must speak the truth to you. Mr. Vaughan is a good man, but—"

"Stay! Don't call him good—only good—he is a saint! If you only knew him!"

Then Hugh answers reverently: "Perhaps—I do not deny it; but there are good men who are, as we believe, mistaken ones. There have been plenty of saints in the Romish Church—at least, so its members think."

"Yes, I know; but many of them—the English ones, if they had lived in our days—would have belonged to our branch of the Church Catholic—don't you think so?"

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What can he be doing?" begins Mabel, after a short silence. "He won't be long now. Yes, do, Mr. Fortescue. Is not the voyage out very wearisome?"

"I rather like it," he answers. "It is always a time of rest; one sees so much that is grand and sublime. If it were only to see the Southern Cross I think it would be worth while going to the other hemisphere."

"But the storms are they not terrible?" objects Mabel with a shiver. "I have never been in a dangerous one—only just boisterous enough to be pleasant. I must say I quite enjoy the majestic grandeur of thundering elements. Then, when you get out there, it is indeed a new world. New South Wales especially is so very beautiful. Ah, Mabel, how I should like to put you down in Sydney! If you like sea views, you would have them there, and no mistake. She is the Queen of the Pacific, and has the bluest waters and loveliest harbor that any city in the world can boast of."

"But you have not lived in Sydney, have you, Hugh? Your mission is in Tasmania?"

"Yes, in Tasmania—old Van Diemen's Land. But I know Sydney well, and have many friends both there and in Melbourne. My mission is near Hobart Town, and I have been at Port Arthur several times. Once I took the duty for the chaplain for a whole year while he went to England."

"Among the convicts? Did you like that?" asks Mabel.

"Yes, best of all. I am thinking of applying for the appointment, if there should be a vacancy some day. Poor creatures, they are very interesting to my mind."

"I am so, so glad to hear you say so. I think that must be a noble work," says Mabel eagerly.

Mr. Vaughan's entrance here puts a stop to Hugh's description of his home in the far-away southern world. Luncheon immediately follows upon the Vicar's return, after which Mr. Vaughan retires with Hugh into his study, where they remain together until the bells are ringing for afternoon service.

During the short walk to the afternoon school, Mabel asks Genevieve—"What do you think of him, Veva?"

"I like him, Mabel. And you, dear?"

"If he would only not say such dreadful things about our Church I should like him very much. I think I do like him, even in spite of all he said this morning."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, lots. He thinks anything is a mere 'aping' of Romanism. And I am afraid, Veva, if Mr. Vaughan goes, we shall have Elvanlee—dear, dear St. Dunstan's—turned into such another as Sarsely."

Genevieve's color varies—she is nervously biting her lips.

Mabel does not see it, for her eyes are cast down; so she presently adds—"Is it quite, quite certain that Mr. Vaughan will go?"

"Quite, I think." The answer is low and firm. "He will speak of it to-day to Mr. Fortescue, and then, you know, Mabel, the Bishop comes on Thursday. If he is displeased, as many seem to think he will be—very hesitatingly,—" my father will have no choice—he must resign. Don't you see it?"

"But think, Veva—what will become of the parish? We shall fall back into real Protestantism again."

"Oh, Mabel! But if it were more honest, more straightforward, will it then not perhaps be better so? Hush! not another word. Let us pray—let us trust, darling."

The arrival at the school-house puts an end to the discussion, and there occurs no further opportunity for renewing it that day. The Vicar always dines early, and on Sundays tea is got over before evening service, so that on their return home from the church Genevieve knows she will have this evening free for an undisturbed conversation with her father. She has her seat of late so rarely rested in, close to the open windows, into which the new moon, just risen above the tall limes, is peeping, casting right across the expanse of ocean beyond a long silver line.

Mr. Vaughan does not on this occasion push the chair aside, declaring it to be useless luxury, but sinks into it at once, with the air of a man who is utterly fatigued, who has sustained some grievous disappointment. Genevieve takes a low stool at his feet, and lays her head carelessly on his two hands, which are clasped in an attitude of profound dejection over his knees.

For some moments nothing is said. The moon rises higher in the heavens, the silver pathway across the ocean grows broader, and every tree and every flower seems bathed in ghostly light.

At last the Vicar, rousing himself as from a dream, says softly, "Genevieve!"

She lifts her head, and faces him steadily, with her fearless, honest eyes.

"Yes, father. Speak, I am ready."

"Are you ready to leave Elvanlee, my child?"

"Yes, father."

"And St. Dunstan's, Genevieve? your school? your choir boys?"

A slight, almost imperceptible shiver, but firm as ever the response. "Yes, father."

"And, my child, can you hear something yet more sad than all I have told you?"

"Father," she answers bravely, with a clear voice, "do not fear to tell me the truth. I can bear anything; but I know what you would say now."

I will tell you. Listen. Our Church has been weighed in the balance, and has been found wanting."

"The Vicar sighs deeply; then there is another long silence, till Genevieve resumes: "Don't you think I know it all, father? Don't you think I know how the ground has been for many months past trembling beneath our feet? Do you think I cannot see that it is all a delusion; that we are in an utterly false position; that our Church, as we would represent her, is a pure ideal, and that in our profession of Catholicism there is no reality? Father, we are hypocrites, if we remain where we are! Father, poor dear, dear father, that is what you have to tell me!"

"Genevieve!" the tone is almost stern, and the Vicar's face is deadly pale. "What do you mean by all this? Do you know what you have been saying?"

"Yes, I do know, father, and you too know. Ah! I do not try to hide the truth from me any longer. I know you better than you know me, dear father. I am no child now. Are not your sorrows my sorrows? Talk freely to me then—you can surely trust me, father?"

"God help me! I take Heaven to witness I had no fear that my child's faith was lost as well as my own. Where have you learnt these ideas?—not from me."

"From Heaven, perhaps."

"Genevieve, tell me truthfully, what have you been reading?"

"Nothing but what you gave me, father, until quite lately, when I saw that book of Ward's on your table—'The Ideal of a Christian Church'; I did dip into it a little, but it has told me nothing I did not know before. I have felt all this year that our position is a false one—we are playing fast and loose with all that is holy, we have no authority to rely on, and the authority that is over us we despise. Father, you cannot deny it!"

"Child—child, stop! Where—where has this led you?"

"To the border-land of Scepticism!" is the reply, given with a starting *saufroid* that makes Mr. Vaughan positively tremble. "Father," she adds, after a short pause, during which he is trying to think what his duty will compel him to say, "I sometimes believe in no revealed religion. I sometimes think it is safer to believe in nothing, save in that one true God, who cannot deceive us with a lie."

"You do not then, Genevieve, feel drawn towards the Roman communion?"

"No, no," shaking her head very decidedly, "not that—not yet; would to God that I could grasp even that! But I am in the dark, father, I cannot see. O God, give us light!" she burst forth with almost agonizing earnestness, clasping her hands together. "Nothing but smoke and illusion behind—before me a precipice down which I dare not leap!"

The moon is high up now in the heavens; the silver track has become a silver sheet of quivering light. A little boat has just crossed the glistening border, and its white sails have caught the bright reflection, which changes it suddenly from a dark, uninteresting object to a thing of life and beauty.

"God give us light!" re-echoes Mr. Vaughan, whose eyes have been fixed on the little ship making its way through the darkness to the line of light. "My poor, poor child! I who should help you, cannot! I too am in the dark. You are right in all you have said. We are in a false position, and one I am bound, in conscience, to get out of as soon as I can. Do you think we can be ready to leave Elvanlee by the end of next week?"

"Yes—oh, yes; earlier if you will."

"No, not earlier; the confirmation is put off until to-morrow week. I must see the Bishop. And then it would be hard to leave our poor children who we are religiously bound for no one must guess the cause—remember that, Genevieve; put it all on my health—say I need rest and quiet; it will be true. We will go abroad together; there we will study the question thoroughly."

"Another fortnight!"

"Does it cost you then so little, Genevieve, to leave St. Dunstan's?"

"Not so much as it cost you, dear father. You know I am not so sensitive by nature as you or Mabel. I shall feel it, of course; but oh! these last few months have been so wretched. I have felt myself such a hypocrite; and I cannot live in untruth. I am longing to get out of it, and shall sorely feel the pain of going."

"Ah, you are happy, my child," says the Vicar, with a sigh. "By him the sacrifice will be most bitterly felt. His daughter knows it, and her grief is for his sorrow. She continues gently—

"Father, I know what it will be to you. I know how every fibre of your heart is wound round St. Dunstan's. I won't say more; you know how I sympathize with you. Oh, father, tell me—what must we say to Mabel?"

"I had almost forgotten. She of all others, must not know one word of this. I promised."

"You promised, father? Whom?"

"Hugh Fortescue," answers the Vicar. "He laid it upon my conscience to-day not to upset her faith. What could I do but promise?"

"Did you tell Mr. Fortescue how things are?"

"Yes, Genevieve—it all came out before I knew it. He was shocked, he told me, to see that Popish ceremonies and doctrines were taught in the parish. That is how it began."

"And you told him—what, father?"

"What could I tell him? I tried to lay before him the difficulties of our

position, and our obligations as Catholics; but there it is, Genevieve—he spoke so very strongly against it all, urged upon me that I was playing a hypocritical part by retaining my position in the Church of England. I do not, I think, go quite so far as you, my child. I have not quite given up all hope of seeing our ideal becoming a reality; but, any rate, for a time I need rest, peace, quiet, and I promised not to disturb Mabel."

"Was that a right promise, father?"

"Yes, yes," he replies with decision—"for the present, at least; for what right have we to upset another's faith when we can point out no path to her—no path that is certain, at least? Mabel is happy in her religion—I do not believe a single doubt has ever crossed her mind. Remember, Genevieve, I forbid you to raise a doubt in that pure heart of hers."

"You shall be obeyed, father. Yes, I believe you are right. Poor darling! our going will be sad trouble to her. I cannot think how she will reconcile herself to see St. Dunstan's pass into new hands."

"God will have care of her, Genevieve," exclaims the Vicar, with sudden energy. "Look at that little boat—do you see her sailing away from us to the distant horizon?—we shall lose sight of her directly; but she is sailing in the light, and she is in God's keeping. There we are all safe, my child."

"Amen," answers Genevieve, in a low tone.

"From darkness into light," dear father, is the lesson that little boat has been teaching us this evening. I did not know you were watching it. I have been looking at it since it came first out of the dark corner of the bay. Oh, God grant that, like it, we may all be pressing onwards 'through the darkness to the light.' Light, light! God give us light!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

CARMELITE MARTYRS.

Sixteen Nuns Who Were Put to Death During the French Revolution.

Shortly before the first French revolution an instrument of capital punishment was invented by a Dr. Guillotin, and took its name from its inventor. It was primarily erected for the execution of King Louis XVI. (Jan. 21, 1793), on the Place Louis XV., called in the reign of terror, Place de la Concorde. The gibbet stood on the spot where, for fifty years past, says the *Age Maria*, the Egyptian obelisk has towered. It was subsequently transferred to the Place de la Bastille, and was raised on the site of the old fortress demolished by a mob on the 14th of July, 1793. The place of the scaffold was again changed in June, 1794, being brought to the Place du Trône, now Place de la Nation. There, in the space of two months, June and July, 1850 persons of all classes—workingmen and priests—were summarily slain. Some hundred yards distant from the guillotine an immense grave was permanently left gaping open, where the victims were heaped, without coffin or shroud, in horrible confusion. This Place du Trône was frequently the scene of admirable and heroic deaths, but none were more edifying than the martyrdom of sixteen Carmelite nuns from the town of Compiègne.

Brutally hunted out of their cloister on Sept. 14, 1792, they resolved to persevere religiously in the observance of their holy rule; and, being unable to live in community on account of the arbitrary laws of the times, they separated and hired rooms in four different houses of the town. Two years after, in June, 1794, they were all arrested and thrown into prison. The municipal council of Compiègne tried to save the lives of the nuns by bringing forward a declaration which they had signed in 1792, without well understanding all that it implied.

When the Carmelites heard of the mayor's kind interference in their favor, they immediately wrote an emphatic disavowal of the document in question; and proclaimed they had no fear of death, but only feared a reproach of conscience. Some friends of the community tried to dissuade them from signing what was equivalent to their own death warrant. "Life would be irksome to us," they replied, "if our consciences were not at rest; death is preferable." Their confidence was excited and upheld by an old and pious tradition preserved in the Convent of Compiègne—a tradition to the effect that a fervent and favored religious, by a supernatural light, had seen members of the sisterhood of Compiègne ascending to heaven, holding the palm of martyrdom.

The daughters of St. Teresa were dragged to Paris for trial, and appeared before the revolutionary tribunal. Among the chief articles of accusation, the prosecutors laid particular stress upon having found in the monastery pictures of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and copies of a hymn imploring the Sacred Heart to restore liberty to the King, happiness to the people and peace to France.

The President charged the Carmelites with having concealed in their convent arms for the use of the emigrants; whereupon the prioress, Mother Sidonia, held up her crucifix. "This," she answered, "are the only arms we have ever had in our convent. Their attachment to the King and royal family was imputed to them as a crime. 'If this be a crime, we are guilty,'" answered the brave prioress. Another accusation was in regard to their epistolary correspondence with some emigrants. "We never corresponded with any one but our former superior," replied the

prioress; "and on spiritual matters only. If it be a crime, I alone am responsible, for no member of the community can write even to her nearest relative without my permission. If you require a victim, here I am; but I conjure you to spare my Sisters; they are innocent."

The sanguinary judges were deaf to the truth, and the sixteen Carmelites were condemned to death. The mother prioress made another effort to save at least two lay Sisters, merely accused of having done the commissions and posted the letters of the community. "But," urged Mother Sidonia, "they did not even know the contents of the letters they posted; besides by their position they were bound to obey."

"Silence!" cried out the president, angrily. "Their duty was to be informers for the nation!" In this manner the two lay Sisters were sentenced to share the lot of the fourteen choir nuns.

On their return to prison after their cruel condemnation, the religious thought only of preparing for death, and devoutly recited together the prayers for the dying. One of the other prisoners, himself a good Catholic, overhearing their devotions, begged to be remembered in their prayers. "Pray for us yourself this morning," replied the nuns; "this evening we shall pray for you in heaven."

On that day they received no allowance of food; so the prioress, fearing that some might faint from exhaustion and that it would be attributed to moral weakness hastily sold a cloak to procure a cup of chocolate for each of the Sisters. They proceeded to the scaffold on foot, chanting the while the "*Salve Regina*" and the "*Te Deum*." As soon as they reached the steps of the guillotine, they intoned the "*Veni Creator*," which the executioner allowed them to finish. Finally, they renewed their religious vows in a firm and distinctive voice. One of them exclaimed aloud, as if inspired: "O my God, I should be too happy if by the slight sacrifice of my own life, which I offer Thee, I could appease Thy just wrath and lessen the number of doomed victims."

Mother Sidonia asked and obtained the privilege of dying last. All practised the virtue of obedience to the end. Each nun, according as her name was called out, kneeling before the prioress, said: "Your leave, mother, to go to death." She each time answered: "Go forth, dear sister."

Very few weeks after the martyrdom of the Carmelite nuns a providential reaction took place. Instead of honest, peaceable citizens arbitrarily arrested and speedily executed, it became the turn of the blood-thirsty tyrants themselves to experience the same cruel ordeal at the hands of their own partisans. Robespierre, the principal instigator of wholesale executions, was himself guillotined on July 12, 1794.

It was within the walls of this convent of Compiègne, the once happy abode of the fifty martyrs of the Sacred Heart, that some fifty years previously the exemplary Queen, Marie Leczkinka, often prayed and made spiritual retreats. There, too, her saintly daughter, Mme. Louise de France, in religion Marie Theresese de St. Augustin, first heard the call to perfect life; although she chose for her seclusion the Monastery of St. Denis, beside the tombs of her royal ancestors.

Spiritual reading is the vestibule of prayer. When the temptation comes to the overwrought laborer in our Lord's vineyard to seek recreation in the world or worldly news, and to fall back upon creatures for support and for repose, how often do the lives of the saints step in and keep him quietly to God and holy thoughts.—*F. W. Faber.*

Be sure and put a box of Ayer's Pills in your satchel before travelling, either by land or sea. You will find them convenient, efficacious, and safe. The best remedy for costiveness, indigestion, and sick headache, and adapted to any climate.

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AMOS BECKETT, Morrisburg, Ont., writes: "I have been afflicted for some time with Kidney and Liver complaint, and find Parmentier's Pills the best medicine for these diseases. These Pills do not cause pain or griping, and should be used when a cathartic is required. They are Gelatine Coated, and rolled in the Flour of Licorice to preserve their purity, and give them a pleasant, agreeable taste."

Vigilance is necessary against unexpected attacks of summer complaints. No remedy is so well known or so successful in this class of diseases as Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry. Keep it in the house as a safeguard.

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Mr. John Anderson, Grassmere, Ont., writes: "The Vegetable Discovery you sent me is all gone, and I am glad to say that it has greatly benefited those who have used it. One man in particular says it has made him a new man, and he cannot say too much for its cleansing and curative qualities."

Thos. Sabin, of Edlington, says: "I have removed ten corns from my feet with Holloway's Corn Cure." Reader, go thou and do likewise.

You would not have had that throbbing headache had you taken a Burdock Pill last night.

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