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FATHER CLEVELAND; OR, THE JESUIT.

By the Authoress of "Life in the Cloister," "Grace O'Halloran," "The Two Marys," etc., etc.

From the Boston Pilot.

"Maid, matron, nay, the secrets of the grave This viperous slander enters."—Cymbeline.

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

She had sat for a long time gazing vacantly out upon the glowing landscape, bright with the beams of a gorgeous sunset; everything around was still, save the plaintive note of the snow bird, and the deep-drawn sighs which ever and anon burst from her lips.

Suddenly she heard the sound of wheels and bending forward saw a phaeton drive up to the house, and the next moment heard the voice of Bertha, the young lady who had ventured to raise her voice in her defence on the night of the *sortee musicale*.

With trembling limbs Aileen rose to meet her, exclaiming, "I thought you had deserted me, Bertha, like all my other summer friends."

"Why, what on earth is the matter with you, Miss Lascelles, you look so pale and ill, so unlike yourself? What has changed you so sadly during this short three weeks?" said Bertha, embracing her with real affection, for she was a warm-hearted person; and having heard of Aileen's illness, and also that meddling persons were talking about her, and doing her no small degree of mischief, had hastened to visit her in the spirit of real friendship.

"This was the case in the present instance. Aileen was impulsive, frank as the day: she was unconscious of guile, and, having nothing to conceal, poured out all her sorrows in the bosom of her warm, but imprudent friend."

"O, that I knew, that I did but know," she said, "to what cause I am to attribute all my misfortunes, I might perhaps find a remedy, or at least not endure these tortures of suspense; but to live on in such ignorance as this will surely drive me mad."

"And would you really like to know why you have become so unfortunate, dear Aileen?" said the imprudent Bertha; "if you did know, love, it would not alter the case."

"You are aware of that which is to me a hideous mystery, Bertha Ainslie—if you have any pity for me, I conjure you tell me," exclaimed Aileen, her large blue eyes gleaming with a preternatural light.

The silly Bertha was half-frightened by the excitement of Aileen, and passing her arm around her waist and affectionately kissing her, she said:

"Listen, my dearest Miss Lascelles, and I will tell you all I know. They say that you are passing under an assumed name, because—because—you—"

"Because what, quick, speak, or I shall die," said Aileen, her tall, slender form bent eagerly forward, her white hands clasped together, her lips parted, her face colorless, as if aware that Bertha's lips were about to pronounce the sentence of death in her regard.

"Helen, dearest, they say that you have lost that good character which should be dearer far to woman than her life; that this was why you left your country under another name than your own."

Aileen answered not, but a quick sharp cry burst from those vivid lips, a thin stream of blood oozed forth, dyeing the white robe she wore, and she sank senseless into the arms of her rash, imprudent friend.

Bitterly did Bertha blame herself for the indiscretion of which she had been guilty, for hours passed away and still she lay in that death-like swoon, whilst Bertha watched beside her couch. Bitterly, too, had she to pay herself for the consequences of her sin and folly—for sin it was, though not deliberate, rather proceeding from the weakness of the head, than from poor Bertha's heart; but, alas for her, two days later was the day appointed for that of her wedding, and in the depth of her sorrow she vowed not to leave the side of the unhappy girl whose approaching death seemed indirectly to lie at her own door, till some person, not engaged as a mere hireling, should relieve her of her self-imposed duty.

Expostulation was worse than useless, even a letter of fond entreaty from him to whom her virgin troth was so soon to have been given, all failed to wean her from her purpose; and the latter, after explaining the sad circumstances connected with Aileen, she added:

"It is quite right that I should suffer the consequences of my own guilt and folly, and the lesson I have now to learn will, perhaps, enable me to fulfill more worthily the duties which will devolve upon me later; at any rate, I shall surely at least discover the worth of discretion, and endeavor to reduce it to practice."

For several days Aileen hovered between life and death, her immediate danger considered so imminent that Bertha scrupled not to examine the contents of her writing-desk, in order to ascertain who it would be necessary to address in the event of her death.

How smitten with sorrow did she feel as she perused the rough draft of a letter Aileen had evidently penned to her parents, enclosing them a large remittance of money, and speaking in terms of innocent rapture of the happy days they should spend together, when at the expiration of another quarter, she should be able to send for those she so dearly loved.

But what were her feelings when she took up a letter evidently written in a moment of intense grief, and endorsed, "To be sent to my father, Mr. Gerald Desmond, in the event of my death."

"A heavy misfortune has befallen me," began this letter, "and I foresee that it will entirely preclude the sweet hope I have so long entertained of you, my dear parents, joining me at Toronto. In one short week I appear to have lost the support and countenance of my best friends and patrons; yet how, or why, I in vain ask myself. As far as I am concerned, I have been as assiduous to please as ever, and as careful in my instructions. So much for human applause for the friendship of man. It has taught me a bitter lesson on the instability of human friendship.—Should I not regain the good opinion of those summer friends, further trial or struggle would be useless. I might, indeed, return to Quebec, but the report of the ill-repute into which I have fallen would, undoubtedly follow me thither, so that I have nothing left but to trust to the mercy of God, and resign myself to His adorable will."

"Of one thing rest assured, my dearest parents, and that is, that whatever you may hear, your Aileen has done nothing to bring discredit, either on the honored name of Desmond, or on that which she assumed, when, young and friendless, she left the land of her nativity to seek a home amidst strangers."

"A spell seems breathed out upon me which I have not the power to repel, and I write to you whilst my feeble hand yet retains strength to guide the pen."

"Your devoted and affectionate AILEEN DESMOND"

The paper fell from Bertha's hands, literally blotted with her tears. This, then, was the pure and high-souled being who, like some hunted hare, had been done to the death by the malignant hints and insinuations of the infamous calumniator, Augusta Seton—the virtuous daughter, the refined lady, who must stoop to win a maintenance by her talents, because her father, once rich, was so no longer—who, to save the credit of her name, would bear another when she rose humbly before the stranger public to warble forth, in her sweet way, those strains which had entranced the hearts of many.

"This is the creature whom I have slain by repeating in her ears that vile calumny," said Bertha, as in the depth of her remorse she buried her face in her hands and wept bitterly.

More than an hour passed away and Bertha remained still absorbed in her vain regrets, then, struck by a sudden resolve, she drew her desk before her, and wrote a long letter to the parents of Aileen, giving full vent to the remorse she felt, and speaking of herself in terms of bitter reproach for having repeated the slander.

Then she placed her letter in that written by Aileen, and enclosing both in a large envelope, laid them carefully aside, in order that they might be forwarded to the parents of the latter in the event of her death.

Then again taking up her pen, her cheek became flushed, with an indignant glow as she rapidly traced a few lines to the authoress of all Aileen's misfortunes, apprising her of her dangerous state—accusing her as the cause of her misery, and begging her to repair at once to Toronto.

She then became more composed, and bating her fevered temples she sat down to await the arrival of the doctor, anxiously watching the pale face of the poor invalid. Often during three long anxious days did the name of Seton tremble on the lips of Bertha Ainslie—she longed to tell the name of the primary mover of so much mischief, but restrained herself, borrowing a lesson of discretion from the past, and resolved to leave all to time and the effect her own letter

might have upon Miss Seton, should there be still a soft place in her heart.

CHAPTER XII.—HARD TIMES.

"O, and I'm afeather thinking it's a black day that sees the mistress doing Pat's work; it's not the likes o'yez that should be going to a paw-office at all at all."

Thus spoke our old friend Pat Magrath, now sick and ill, for in weal and woe he had still clung to the fortunes of the Desmonds.

So, too, thought poor Mrs. Desmond, as with a heavy heart and tears welling into her aching eyes, she walked up the Camden Broadway, intending to leave some way behind her that network of streets, in one of which she lived, lest her landlord or any of her neighbors should see her leave or enter the shop.

Trade seems stagnant on such days as these; even the shops most frequented by the working classes had but few customers; and the barrows on the road-side, containing their scanty supplies of vegetables, freshened up by the drizzling rain, still remaining on the haunches of the various costermongers, without a hope of selling them at all events for that morning.

Her dress bespattered with mud, and wet with the shower that now began to fall more heavily Mrs. Desmond at length reached the shop to which she had bent her steps, and looking warily around to see if she was observed, she went in, not by the side entrance, but boldly into the open shop, under the idea that if she were seen it would not attract so much attention, as persons might think she was about to become a purchaser.

She had to wait a long while, and kept her veil closely drawn over her face, to conceal it, if possible, from the somewhat rude stare of a tall, showily dressed person, who was pledging a small Geneva watch and a silk dress.

Poor Mrs. Desmond's simple articles just fetched the half of what she had expected to receive, namely, the large sum of ten shillings; and while her duplicate was being prepared, she was listening attentively to the conversation, carried on in a *sotto voce* tone of voice, between the pawbroker's man and the person who stood beside her.

"Now, it really is too bad, Mrs. Wills," said the man; "I think you have brought me this dress every week or fortnight for six months past, and you expect as much now as the first day I clapped eyes on it."

"Don't talk nonsense, John," said the stranger, with the greatest familiarity possible; "the dress is scarce any the worse for wear; I've very often had it from you, and never put it on my back. You must lend me the pound as usual."

"Well, there is only one thing to be said," replied the man, "and that is, that you are a precious good customer; for we have more interest from such as you, than from all the world beside."

"Aye," answered Mrs. Wills, "I should think so too; for I declare my things are much of tenner in your ware rooms than in my drawers. more's the pity; but now, look at my watch, I want to have £4 upon it, not a farthing less."

"Four pounds," replied the man, "that is more than you ought to have, for it is only a small Geneva watch."

"Dear me, what a tiresome man you are," was the reply. "Put my chain along with the watch, then," she continued, taking the article in question from her neck, "and let me have seven pounds on them; you will not have them long, I assure you."

Poor Mrs. Desmond looked on in undisguised astonishment at the *nonchalance* with which the two articles were parted with. Her own distresses had compelled her frequently to send Pat on such errands, but never until matters were at the lowest possible ebb; and she now learned, for the first time in her life what the conduct was of a regular 'habitué' of a pawbroker's shop.

Poor soul, she cast a sorrowful glance at the duplicate as the man pushed it towards her neighbor, and the next moment counted out from a handful of sovereigns, eight pounds for the latter, and a ten shilling piece for herself.

With a weary sigh she left the shop, and, regretful that she was followed by the person whose familiar conversation with the pawbroker had so astonished her, she walked at a rapid pace, making a mental calculation as to how far the small sum she had in her purse would carry them on.

"There must be two bottles of medicine for poor Pat, at the very least," she said to herself; "and then, we may have no coals. I cannot look to more than six shillings for house-keeping; and, therefore, the day after to-morrow this awful expedient must be resorted to again. This silence on the part of Aileen now becomes really terrible. Heaven help us! I suppose some of these days we shall hear of her death."

These melancholy thoughts still pressing on her mind, she crossed the Broadway and was

perfectly unconscious that a cab, driven at a quick pace, was at that moment driven by. Indeed, so rapt was she in abstraction that she observed nothing till she became aware of her peril by being hurled to the ground; but, fortunately, the driver reined in his horse in time to prevent her from being crushed to death, and a friendly hand, stretched promptly forth, extricated her from her perilous position, amidst a round of angry epithets from the owner of the cab, and bore her, with the assistance of a passer-by, into one of the adjoining houses.

Here she remained for a time unconscious, but her kind friends soon had the satisfaction of witnessing her recovery under the use of the various stimulants they had employed.

"Are you hurt?" was the enquiry.

"I am badly bruised, and have sprained my foot. I fear I cannot walk," replied poor Mrs. Desmond, endeavoring to rise; and then, sinking back in her chair, her face pallid from excessive pain.

"My servant shall fetch a cab for you," was the reply, and the eyes of the kind speaker were fixed with an earnest gaze on Mrs. Desmond's face.

The latter immediately recognized the person whom she had met in the pawbroker's shop, and remembered well the scrutinizing gaze with which she had then regarded her; the next moment, however, revealed the cause, for the stranger herself pushed aside the veil which still screened the old lady's face and exclaimed—

"I was right, I felt certain I was right—my dear Mrs. Desmond, how glad I am we have met once again."

"I think I have not the pleasure of knowing you," replied the latter; "I do not remember having met you before."

"Probably not. Maud Vivian is not quite like the Maud Cleveland you knew ten years since, in her old home at Alverly; nevertheless, I am glad we have met again, though it was in a pawbroker's shop, and both of us bent on the same glorious errand; look at me earnestly now, and see if you do not remember me."

Mrs. Desmond looked inquiringly at Maud, as though she would question almost the truth of what she said; the Maud whom she remembered beautiful and bright, in her brief span of twenty-three years, being so unlike the somewhat coarse, though still fine featured woman of thirty-five; the once slender form had lost its grace, and become quite *embonpoint*, the delicate color of the formerly fashionable lady had vanished, and left her somewhat *coupe rassee*, and the rich, glossy raven hair, still abundant as ever, was here and there marked by a silvery thread.

"Is it possible I behold you once more, my dearest Maud?" said the old lady. "I recognize you now, and felt quite offended when we were in that odious paw-shop, because I noticed that you were looking so earnestly at me; but I wish we had met under happier auspices, Maud dear; I am sorry our friendship should have recommenced in such a place as that."

"Ah, well, of course, it would be as well, or better, not to have to go," said Maud; "but it cannot be avoided, you know; I tell Vivian that it would be a great deal worse not to have any thing to put in *durance vile*, when he chooses to say that I don't mind sending the things out of the house. No, I don't mind the poverty while I have anything to make money of."

"But, my dear Maud," said Mrs. Desmond, who far from recognizing the truth of Maud's theory, had, nevertheless, listened to it in undisguised astonishment; "but my dear, you have a tolerably good house here, neatly furnished, too, and are able to keep a servant; what on earth can take you to those horrible places?"

Maud laughed heartily at her friend's surprise, and then said, "Why, positively, the very fact of our keeping a servant not infrequently takes me to the pawbroker's: for instance, I have to pay her wages to-day, to do which I have parted with a silk dress, and my watch and chain have vanished to enable us to enjoy a month at Margate; then, when we return, Vivian will go to his employment again, and I shall be able to get back my watch and dress."

"A strange way of taking pleasure," said Mrs. Desmond; "but do you never think of the exorbitant rate of interest you have to pay? why, you must be very much the loser at the end of the year by conducting things in this way."

"Oh, that can't be helped; it is one of the evils attendant upon having an insufficient income, I suppose," said Maud; "but I much fear, from the horror you express about this way of raising a little money, when one is brought to a low ebb, that you are in some great distress, dear Mrs. Desmond, or you would never enter such a place."

"Decidedly, Maud, you are quite correct, things are indeed at a low ebb; I never go there but for bread," said Mrs. Desmond, sighing deeply; then, giving way to the full excess of her grief, she gave Maud an account of the circumstances attendant on the loss of her hus-

band's property, the departure of Aileen, her subsequent silence, the suspension of the customary remittances and the consequent distress into which they had fallen, destitution itself staring them in the face.

Sympathy is very sweet to the trouble-minded, and surely the warmth and tenderness of Maud's heart, and her charity to all who were in greater need than herself must have won her the pardon of a multitude of sins.

Patiently she listened to all her troubles, and then determined to accompany the old lady home in order to see if she could render any assistance.

"Susan," she said, addressing the servant, "go and fetch me my bonnet and shawl, and then run for a cab; and as the servant left the room, she said to herself, "rather tiresome being without my watch, too, no knowing how time goes; however, what can't be cured must be endured; let me see, I must write a note to Vivian; and as the servant re-entered the room, she said aloud, "take care of the children when they return from school, and be sure and tell your master that he'll find a note on the mantel shelf."

Ten minutes later she stood within a small house in a street running off the Kentish Town Road, in which the Desmonds had a couple of parlors.

Maud was much shocked at the appearance of the poverty which reigned around; the poor, sick servant, whom Mrs. Desmond at present would not hear of sending to an hospital; the lack of ordinary comforts in the room, for one by one they had all disappeared, and the attenuated countenance of poor Mr. Desmond told a tale of great distress.

Maud Vivian was one of those active women who cannot be still long together, especially if their sympathies are enlisted; and having insisted on the Desmonds' acceptance of ten shillings out of her own little store, she hastened to some of the shops in the neighborhood, procured the requisites for a good meal, which she prepared with her own hands, and then enjoyed a heartfelt pleasure by seeing them partake of it. Mindful, however, of her husband and children, she did not remain long with the Desmonds, but promised to send her servant early in the morning, and she went on her way a truly happy woman; for she had enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of doing good.

You see, this poor Maud had many good points about her. Still I question whether she would not yet be a hundred degrees short of the mark Father Cleveland desires. But Rome was not built in a day; by and by, maybe, she will drop the absurd, and thriftless, and reckless theory which so astonished Mrs. Desmond; and if her brother, of whom she stands in no small awe, ever again visits Europe, he may find his sister Maud a model wife and mother.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE DEFERRED WEDDING-DAY.

It was a very hot day in the scorching summer peculiar to Canada, and the plashing waters of a fountain fell, sparkling in the fervid rays of the sun, into the marble basin beneath. Beside the fountain stood Bertha Ainslie, looking pale and absent, as occasionally she laved her hands in the crystal waters, and carried them to her burning forehead.

The garden in which she stood belonged to her father's residence, and was laid out with remarkable care, whilst beyond, serving as a screen for the house, shading it from the heat of the sun, rose a mass of forest trees, amongst which were the wild cheery-tree, sugar maple, hemlock, and white pine.

At length Bertha was roused from her reverie by the sound of a step, and the next moment Guy Vernon, to whom she was about to engage herself in marriage, stood before her.

"Why do you come here, Guy?" she exclaimed. "Have I not told you that I will set you free if your patience be exhausted? I dare not break my vow—that vow that I would not engage myself in marriage until time should restore her whom I have deeply wronged to health, or take her from this world. You distress me, Guy, by seeking me here, and—"

"This is more than madness, Bertha," he added. "Were you Augusta Seton, the woman whose false tongue has done this mischief, you could not put upon yourself a more novel and severe penance. Our marriage day protracted month after month, forsooth; pardon me Bertha, but the idea is one that is perfectly insane. I am at a loss to see in what your sin consisted which you are atoning for so rigidly. You do not rob Miss Lascelles of her character?"

"This is nothing but miserable sophistry," Guy. Was it not my tongue which inflicted the wound which laid her prostrate on the bed of sickness? Was it not I who repeated the hideous calumny? But be not impatient; for ere the coming winter shall have passed away Aileen will be no more. Again I repeat, I set you free, if you will have it so."

"My poor Bertha," said Vernon, "forgive me