The Secret of the Well.

BY JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

I know it all my boyhood in a lonesome valley meadow,
Like a dryad's mirror hidden by the wood's dim green shade,
The eye flashed back the sunshine, and grew dark and sad with shadow,
And I loved its truthful depth where every pebble lay so clear.

I stooped my hand and drank it and watched the ripples quiver
Of its rippling rings of silver as the drops of crystal fell
I pressed the richer grasses from its little trickling river,
Till at last I knew, as friends know, every secret of the well.

But one day I stood beside it on a sudden, unexpected,
When the sun had crossed the valley and a shadow hid the place:
And I looked in the dark water—saw my pallid cheek reflected—
And beside it, looking upward, met an evil reptile face;

Looking upward, furtile, startled at the silent swift intrusion:
Then it darted toward the grasses, and I saw where it had fled;
But I knew its eyes were on me, and the old-time sweet illusion
Of the pure and perfect symbol I had cherished there was dead.

Oh, the pain to know the perjury of seeming truth that blesses!
My soul was scared like Eru to see the falsehood of the place;
And the innocence that mocked me, when in dim unseen recesses
There were lurking fouler secrets than the furtive reptile face.

And since then.—Oh, why the burden?—why the joyous faces greet me,
With eyes of limpid innocence, and words devoid of art.
I cannot trust their seeing, but must ask what eyes would meet me
Could I look in sudden silence at the secrets of my heart!

THE ROSE OF VENICE;

—A STORY OF—

Love, Hatred & Remorse.

BY S. CHRISTOPHER.

PART II.

CHAPTER II.—(CONTINUED.)

In one corner was a bed, the only piece of furniture in the room which, though mean enough, was not broken, and not altogether uncomfortable, and beside it was a small chest. In the opposite corner was a chimney, and on a shelf near it a few broken or cracked plates, and cups and saucers of the commonest earthenware. A few other house and kitchen utensils were placed with some pretense to order on the other side of the room, but they were blackened by long usage, or by the continual smoke which had well-nigh enveloped room, furniture, and mistress.

And this was all that Rosalia possessed after twenty-four years' work! It is true that she had saved a small sum of money, besides some very decent clothing, but hoping to better her fortune, she had invested her money at a high rate of interest, and had only succeeded in losing it all, and with it her best articles of dress. Guido gave her a small allowance, but this not being sufficient for her maintenance, she had resorted to the trade of female quack, or rather of decoction-maker, in order to secure herself a livelihood.

This occupation, added to her tall figure, large black eyes, few scattered white locks, sinister smile, or disagreeable frown, and shrill voice, had caused her to be known by no other name than that of—The Witch!

Furthermore, she was not a Venetian, and although it is the boast of several races, the Venetian amongst the rest, that they are most courteous and indulgent towards foreigners, it is no less certain that the appellation of foreigner aggravates every defect, magnifies every crime, and induces people to believe as solemn truths the most outrageous and unlikely assertions.

This happened to Rosalia.

Her denomination of foreigner, whilst it served to enhance her pretended skill in drugs—which according to the common belief, had equal power in curing the most opposite diseases and different ailments—contributed in no small degree to give credence to the popular saying that she held communication with the devil, who visited her in person during the night; and the saying was the more readily believed as it was remarked that she never attended Divine service, or went to say the Rosary in the parish church; and the wise said she owed to him her knowledge in the medical science.

It followed, by a contradiction not uncommon even amongst the instructed, and most common amongst the ignorant and superstitious, that no sooner was any one ill in the neighborhood, or some unhappy infant teething, but Rosalia was sent for, received with due marks of deference, and her drugs and advice duly appreciated. But whether the sick person was obliged to go to the hospital, died at home, or by some lucky chance or other recovered, the modest fee was no sooner paid into the hands of the female practitioner, than she was declared to be nothing more nor less than a witch, and would on no account be called in, or even spoken to again.

These resolutions, however, were never carried into effect for any length of time, for the moment any one was taken ill again, Rosalia was sent for in haste, and her mixtures most willingly swallowed.

It must also be said that, although she undertook the treatment of all kinds of diseases, she had not, hitherto at least, performed any of the charms, divinations, etc., by which witchcraft is supposed to work its cures.

Communications with the fiend, alas! she had held, but they had been of another and more serious description, as the reader will see hereafter.

Guido was the first to break the silence that had ensued:

'I suppose, Rosalia, you have already guessed the cause of my visit. It is to bring you that pittance which you say is barely enough for your daily bread.'

'I guessed it, and I thank you for it. Foolish those words said in a moment of irritation. I am glad I have the means to pay your kindness.'

'Yes, you do. You watched over my infancy and boyhood. You were cross and perhaps unjust at times, but, on the whole, I owe to you the gratitude one generally pays to the person who has brought one up.'

'You owe me nothing. Pray never mention it again or you will force me to refuse your bounty, and consequently to die of hunger.'

These words were uttered in one of Rosalia's most disagreeable tones of voice, and a fresh and deeper cloud again hung over her countenance, forcing the young man to more moments of silence, for he now felt, as he had done all his life whenever Rosalia spoke in that determined manner, if not what is called positive fear, at least a sensation which made him most uncomfortable.

In the meantime, having put aside her detection, carefully covered it, and extinguished the remaining embers, Rosalia drew the small chest near Guido, seated herself on it, took her knitting from off the table, and, in a softened tone, said:

'Indeed I thank you, Guido, for the allowance you bring me so regularly. It is a great comfort to me. I do not know what I should do without it. But why do you look so perplexed and sad? Has some lady-love proved unfaithful?'

'Not exactly unfaithful, for she never loved me. Say, rather, indifferent. But I suspect the cause—nay, I am sure I have accurately guessed it!—and it is this which in truth perplexes and worries me.'

'They call me a witch, can I use my witchcraft on your behalf?' said Rosalia, with a slight smile on her cross countenance. 'Tell me whom you expect,' she added, in a still more jesting tone and manner, showing her beautiful teeth that had not yet lost their dazzling whiteness, and which seemed to light up her whole face, 'of having stolen your lady's heart?'

Guido Bernardi had been, especially of late, so little accustomed to his former nurse's smiles, that he could not help staring at her, and returning the smile, although in the oppression of his perplexing thoughts he felt Rosalia's manner jar on his sensibility at that moment, and he answered seriously:

'You must have guessed I loved Marco Centofoglia's rich and lovely daughter?'

Rosalia's countenance changed again. That momentary glimpse of cheerfulness left her. Her lips quivered. She felt as though her voice would refuse its utterance. She bowed her head and knitted furiously, to gain a few minutes' silence, in order to compose her agitated feelings.

Guido, who appeared to be staring at the fire-place, but who in reality was wondering deeply whether he should or should not make his former nurse his confidante, did not observe the sudden change; and after resolving in his own mind to unburden his sorrows, he added:

'Unfortunately I have every reason to believe she does not care for me, but loves the senator Antonio Focarini.'

'So much the better for both,' answered Rosalia, without so much as raising her head from her work. 'You will never marry her.'

'Why so? What reason can there be why I should not marry Rosa Centofoglia?' replied Guido with a painful earnestness in his voice and look.

'I do not wish to make you unhappy, Guido; I speak for your good. Don't set your mind on marrying that girl. She will never be your wife.'

'Ah!' answered Guido, with an expression of countenance, and in a voice which showed too clearly the love and deep jealousy that were waging war in his troubled breast. 'Ah! witch, as they call you, you have guessed there is no hope for me, that she has accepted my rival, who has possessed himself of her heart, who is greater than I am, who has therefore had better chances of success than I could possibly have; and I—I—miserable wretch, am as nothing in her eyes. If you, Rosalia, are sure of it, as your manner leads me to believe, tell me, oh! do tell me so—I would settle upon you half I possess to know it!'

Rosalia had raised her head from her work. The earnestness of Guido's manner, the pathos of his voice, the expression of sorrow and wrath which she read in his deep blue eyes, the heightened color of his flushed cheeks, almost startled her. She gazed at him. Her hard countenance seemed to soften down to pity, as she said in an undertone:

'Are you in love, Guido? Poor young man! And you fear another is preferred before you? It is torture! and——'

She said no more, and fearing she had disclosed too much of her own feelings, added hastily:

'I am sorry I cannot gratify your wish. I do not know whether the lady prefers another man, or whether she has accepted his hand.'

'Do you speak the truth?'

'I do.'

'Then wherefore tell me in that positive manner I shall not marry her?'

'That you may not encourage a hopeless affection.'

'You speak in enigmas, Rosalia. Do, pray do, explain more clearly what motives you know, or fancy exist, to prevent my obtaining the promise of Rosa's hand.'

'I never said you would not obtain the promise of her hand. That you may obtain; but I said, and I repeat it, she will never be your wife.'

'I cannot understand you, Rosalia. Be more explicit I implore you! You torture me! but——' and his manner became almost menacing.

'Be calm, young man! You know, by experience, that violence and threats have little effect on me. When was it ever known that Rosalia Leoni feared? I repeat, Guido, be calm, and listen to me.'

Here Rosalia made a movement as if to drawn the chest nearer to her visitor. She put down her knitting. She arranged the black handkerchief she usually wore crossed over her bosom. She clasped her hands, and held them firmly on her knees. She gave a glance around the room, as if to see that all was in order, but only to gain time, and acquire as much calmness as possible—for she determined within herself to be calm—and then fixing those large black eyes of hers on the young man, who had been watching her attentively, she continued:

'Do you remember a lovely evening at Lucca, about sixteen months ago? I was sitting on a grassy bank on the beautiful shady ramparts which surround the old town, when you happened to pass. Feeling tired, and the spot where I was inviting you to rest, you seated yourself beside me, and fell into a reflective mood, looking at the setting sun, which like a ball of fire seemed to touch the tops of the mountains that separate Lucca from Viareggio. Ah! how well I remember that evening!'

Rosalia paused a moment, and frowned. But she immediately remembered she had determined to be calm, and checking the rising feelings which in spite of her resolve made her heart beat quickly, resumed her conversation:

'It was so calm and quiet. There were only you and I in that spot. On a sudden we heard the noise of rapidly rolling wheels. A superb chariot passed by. You caught a glimpse of Rosa and of—her father, I mean, and turning to me you said: 'I never cared much for riches or titles before, but within the last few months I am glad I am a count, and still more glad that I shall be rich some day.' Guido, do you remember my answer?'

'I can't say I do, very clearly at least.'

'Then I will remind you of it. I said, 'Guido, you will not be rich.' Answer me, are you rich? Did I prophesy the truth, or not?'

'And all these words are merely meant to remind me of a thorn that is in my heart, which may, perhaps, end in being the cause of my greatest misfortune—that of seeing a wealthier suitor preferred before me. I know I am not rich. I am poor. After having spoiled me with her blind fondness, my mother suddenly listens in her last moments to her covetous confessor, and bequeathes nearly all her fortune to others. I was wronged—shockingly wronged! My mother must have answered for the evil she has brought on me.'

'Your mother was blameless. I have told you so, often enough.'

'Have you disclosed all you wished to tell me?' asked Guido, in a peevish manner.

'Not quite,' answered Rosalia, in a voice whose unnatural softness showed how far it was at variance with what she inwardly felt. 'Not quite. I have not reminded you of your wrongs in order to pain you, but to warn you, that as my prophecy has once been fulfilled with regard to your fortune, it may be so now respecting your marriage.'

'Yes, for once you have really been a witch; but you shall not succeed the second time. No, Rosalia, I promise you, you shall not. I would shrink from nothing to obtain Rosa's hand.'

Guido spoke but too truly. There was nothing he would have shrunk from in order to become the possessor of the loveliest and richest of the daughters of Venice!

Rosalia was going to take up her knitting again, but the young man rose.

'Good-bye, witch!' said he; 'as you will act like one, you may as well be called so.'

'Call me what you like best, it is all the same,' she answered with great composure.

By this time Guido had reached the outer door. Rosalia hastened after him, holding a flickering light in one hand, and unlatching the door with the other.

'Let me at least light you downstairs,' she added.

'Don't trouble yourself. I am used to the staircase. I shall be at the foot in a minute.'

Saying these words he almost pushed her inside the room, and closed the door. Then descending with singular speed, considering the total darkness, he crossed the court-yard briskly, and sprang into his gondola. He ordered the gondolier to row to the Palace Centofoglia, seated himself, leaned back, and fell into a profound reverie.

When Rosalia again found herself alone in her cheerless room, and remembered how unceremoniously her visitor had left her, she felt an inward satisfaction at his evident vexation about her prophecy, but her eyes fell on the few silver coins he had brought her, and she sighed as she said:

'Poor Guido is kinder to me than I deserve!'

CHAPTER III.

A CONVERSATION.

It is a well-known fact. Tell any one, however meek, humble, and prudent he may be; tell him he cannot, or may not, act up to any long-desired or carefully-schemed plan; place before him all the trouble, the suffering, nay, the danger it will bring upon him; make use of the most persuasive arguments which affection or interest can lend to readily at hand—and all will be useless. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred you have only helped indirectly to bring to pass the very thing you wished to prevent.

This was the case with Guido. For several weeks he had been turning over in his mind whether he should ask Rosa's hand at once. He would not have delayed so long, or revolved it so often in his mind, as he knew himself to be a favorite of her father's, had it not been for the thought, that although descended of an illustrious name and title, he was the owner of a very moderate fortune indeed. Had he therefore the right to expect that the loveliest girl and richest heiress in Venice should bear his name? Where was the magnificent palace to which he should conduct his bride? Where were the costly jewels he should present to her as the heirlooms destined to adorn the ladies of the noble Bernardi family? These had been once his expectations, dreams nothing but the recollection of them now remained to him. Every day, every moment as it passed, he felt more deeply how much his mother had wronged him.

It had been his ill-luck to fall in love with the rich merchant's daughter, but it was his still greater misfortune to be cursed with the most jealous of dispositions. Had he see she visited the Centofoglia family, whom he had reason to suspect of possessing a better chance than he of obtaining Rosa's hand, reflection and the fear of a refusal would at length have quelled the gentler passion of love, but jealousy having once entered into his heart, all reflection, all sense of proper and manly pride, even common justice, were impossible to him.

And now his old nurse's words, added to the fulfillment of her first prophecy, tortured him to the quick. As he leaned back in the gondola, his right hand thrust through his beautiful golden hair, he firmly resolved to make good his resolute answer to Rosalia, that he would obtain Rosa's hand, that he would shrink from nothing, literally nothing, in order to gratify his passion, or prevent another from enjoying what would in all probability be denied to him. He felt he could not support his present state much longer, and decided that, laying aside pride, he would seize the very first opportunity of seeking a private interview with Marco Centofoglia, in order to ask him at once for his fair daughter's hand. In the event of a refusal he would then determine upon the best course to pursue, so as to thwart his rival's success.

Having thus arranged matters to his satisfaction, by a sudden reaction he felt almost light-hearted, and driving away the busy suggestions reason strove to enforce, he longed to feel the boat stop. It did stop at last, at the entrance of one of the finest palaces on the Canal Grande.

'You need not wait for me, Bartolommeo,' said Guido to the sleepy gondolier.

'Signore, the other gondoliers are waiting. Why should I not wait? Do I not row as well as they?'

'I spoke thus because you seemed tired and half asleep.'

'So I am. I sat up the whole of last night.'

'Was there some ball which required the continual attendance of gondolas and gondoliers?'

'No, signore. My wife is ill, and——'

'What a model husband you are, Bartolommeo,' replied Guido, jokingly. 'Then you sat up all night with your spouse?'

'Not that either.'

'You were sitting up with—I mean, making love?' and Guido cast a mischievous look on the gondolier, accompanied by the most good-humored smile.

'Bartolommeo Reni, signore, was not making love, never has made love since his marriage,' answered the gondolier, drawing himself up.

'What were you about then? Why, man, how mysterious you look!'

'First, I went and got a physician for my wife——'

'And did you find one who left his warm bed to go and visit the wife of a poor gondolier?'

'I did not go for a real physician——'

'Then you went for a quack?' And Guido laughed outright.

The gondolier by no means enjoyed Guido's laughter, and answered in a lower tone of voice, and in a very serious manner:

'In my neighborhood—that is, at the very spot where I first conducted you this evening, there lives an old woman, who knows as much as a physician who has spent years of her life at Padua. They call her the witch——' Here Bartolommeo devoutedly crossed himself, saying 'St. Mark defend us!'

'Ah!' explained Guido, interrupting the boatman, then checking himself quickly, for he would not have allowed any one, even the humble gondolier, to know of his acquaintance with a witch, he said to himself, 'It is poor Bartolommeo, after all, who is to pay the two eggs.' Then added aloud:

'St. Mark defend us, indeed! And what makes you call on a witch, Bartolommeo?'

'I am poor, signore, at least I am so at present. Later on in life I shall, perhaps, not be so poor. But just now 'tis well to have a doctor who prepares his own medicines, and is pleased with a very small fee. Besides, she is clever; she has cured my sister-in-law of an incurable disease. Although a witch it is better to employ her than go to the hospital, or die.'

'So you went and got her, and then I suppose you accompanied her home, and stayed chatting with her, so that the night was passed meritoriously enough, old man, was it not?' and Guido tapped the gondolier on the shoulder.

'I did not so much as wait to see the witch. I knocked at her door, told her my wife was ill, and went away instantly,' answered Bartolommeo, looking important.

'Did you go to preside at the Council of Ten, then?' replied Guido, who in the exuberance of his spirits could not help turning the gondolier's words into ridicule.

'I did not preside at the Council of Ten; but . . . Ah! Signore Conte, St. Mark help us all! I can say it with truth. Don't laugh, signore. The Council of Ten is the salvation of the State.'

Guido recollected himself. Who dared so much as smile when the dreaded Council of Ten was mentioned!

'True Bartolommeo,' he added gravely. 'I am not laughing. I am too good a patriot to laugh at that most honorable and honored council—as you justly say, it is the salvation of the State. As long as it exists Venice is safe.'

Guido did not think so, but he thought it wise to say so. 'After all,' added he, 'you have not told me where and how you passed the night.'

'In serving my country, signore, for which I would give soul and body,' answered Bartolommeo, bowing his heads and speaking so low that it was hardly audible to understand him. 'A relation of mine died in battle. We have all been honorable patriots,' he added louder.

'To speak the truth, Bartolommeo Reni was, or rather had been, an honest man. He firmly believed he served his country, for which he did risk, if not the welfare of his body, at least that of his soul. But Guido's knowledge of the laws and customs of his country, coupled with the remembrance of the gondolier's allusion that perhaps in the future he might not be so poor, awakened certain suspicions in his mind, which made him wish he had never joked with the old man, and never mentioned the Council of Ten. He took good care, however, not to let him suspect he had guessed in what his services consisted. He made up his mind to employ him more instead of less frequently, in order to make him his friend, and giving him a double fee, he said:

'Here, old man, I have made you lose time in talking, it is but fitting I should pay the penalty. Take this, it is a double fee. Wait for me if you like.'

He waved his hand to the gondolier and was already entering the stately door of the Centofoglia Palace when he heard his answer:

'Your humble servant, signore; may St. Mark grant you long life and health.'

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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For further particulars apply at the office of Zenas A. MacDonald, Charlottetown, solicitor.

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ELIZA M. McDONELL, Assignee of the above Mortgage.

mar 21, 1894—2i.

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Flour, Tea, Sugar, Molasses, and all Kinds of Choice Groceries.

Our Stock is new and fresh, and will be sure to please.

ONE DOOR NORTH OF OLD STAND,

Rogers' Building, Queen Street.

A Few Big Snaps FOR February

We Undersell all Competitors.

Good Dress Goods, 4c per yard.
Good Prints, 3c per yard; Better, worth 8 & 9c, for 5c.
Children's Clothing at prices out of sight for cheapness
Men's Clothing in great variety, at wonderful prices.
Carpets, Oil Cloths, House Furnishings, of every description at very low Prices.

We are bound to do the Dry Goods Trade of the City, so if you want a real bargain the ONLY place to find it is at

PROWSE BROS

The Farmer's Boys & Wonderful Cheap Men

AMERICAN KEROSENE OIL!

The Best is the Cheapest.

DON'T buy low grade, inferior Oil because it is a little cheaper in price than the highest grade. It is false economy as you will find it to be the dearest in the long run.

Poor Oil will not burn nearly so long as the better grades, and besides it will smoke your chimneys and make a very disagreeable odor in the house.

This fall we are selling the BEST AMERICAN WATER WHITE OIL cheaper than ever before, and we guarantee every gallon of OIL we sell TO BE THE BEST AMERICAN WATER WHITE.

Bring in your can and have it refilled at

BEHR & GOFF'S.

THE BEST COUGH CURE.

Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup is the safest and best cure for coughs, colds, asthma, bronchitis, sore throat, and all throat and lung troubles. Price 25c and 50 cents.

WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD.

Dear Sirs,—I can truly say that Hagyard's Pectoral Balsam is the best cough cure made for coughs and colds, and is worth its weight in gold.

HENRY L. [illegible], L. [illegible], Ont.