

LASCINE.

BY AN OXFORD MAN.

CHAPTER IX. A DEATH CALL. "And though at times impetuous with emotion, and anxious long suppressed, the swelling heart heaves, moaning, like the ocean."

Herbert Crowner was dead at Trevan Manor. In the bright full morning the last call had come, that was to lead him through the "iron portal we call Death." Where? Would I could say? I only hope to one of those "many mansions" of which He has told us. And hope not forgotten.

The term before Edward Lascine became a Catholic, Herbert Crowner and Trevan Manor reading the beautiful drama of "Ion." Herbert Crowner was speaking.

"Well Eddy, the instinct of immortality, so eloquently uttered by the death-devoted Greek, must find a deep response in every thoughtful soul."

"Even in you, Herbert? I thought you didn't go in for anything of the sort? You certainly left a name up at Oxford of being an atheist!"

"Because I never opened my mouth on a religious subject during my whole college career, and went in for devilry, sowing my wild-oats right and left; but I didn't deserve it."

"I am so glad, Herby. That was the only reason I objected to your marriage, although I loved you very much."

"You didn't see, you young rascal? I'll pay you out for it. But for your 'Ion' (and the translation continued): "When about to yield his young existence as a sacrifice to Fate, his beloved Cleopatra asks if they should not meet again, to which he replies:

"I have asked that dreadful question of the hills That look eastward of the flowing streams That find their way to the sea's embrace, And whose voices of some high-spirited youth wait in silence all, we die, but now."

"Let's close our books now, and I'll tell you about this passage. My father was immensely fond of this drama, and afterward proved immortality to me from the Bible. It was years ago, but now the old man is dead, the ideas he gave me rise up, and make me call myself a Christian and a member of the Church of England. I am guiltless of atheism, theologians, and all that absurdity, but I believe in a Divine Essence and a revealed religion, also in a Church, which I take to be the Church of England, but some day I shall inquire into the subject—when I am an old man."

"The 'some day' and the 'old age' never came, but the intention was there—God is merciful and hope is not forbidden. They were firm, steadfast friends, Edward Lascine and Herbert Crowner, and Herbert groaned much over Edward's conversion to Popery. Two years had rolled away, and they had not seen each other; no letters, even, had passed, and now—now all was over."

The news had reached St. Osmond's that morning—Edward Lascine had heard it. No violent outcry followed the news—he had gone to the chapel, and, marble white, had knelt motionless two long hours before the Adorable Sacrament. Quietly then he had passed to his room, had seen the rector, and summer morning to the station. In the evening, the carriage was once more driving up the fair green slopes to Trevan Manor, the occupant Edward Lascine. So pale his face as he leant out of the window, and gazed on each familiar spot. The carriage stopped at the door. The cool evening breeze drew out the breath of the sweet-scented flowers, but he heeded them not. His eyes were closed, his hands were clasped in prayer. The servants lined the hall to see "Mr. Edward" once more. A few kind words he scattered among them. In a moment more his mother was in his arms.

"My darling boy! O my darling! What a volume of love spoke in those words!"

The quiet, musical voice of the son replied: "He doeth all things well, my mother. The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Edward gently led his mother into the morning-room, opening of the hall. How the proud mother's face glistened with love, as she gazed on her boy—the face spiritualized by the sorrow of the last two years! The clear white veins shone, the hair close cut, and the shaven tonsure in honor of his Master's crown of thorns. The long cassock-like coat made him appear taller—different, indeed, from the fashionable Oxford student, but with a stronger fascination now in that Protestant house. The mother's eye had taken in the difference in a moment. "Eddy, my darling, your heart has not altered so much as your dress. Have I still my place there?"

"Mother, how can you ask? I love you now with a stronger love. I try to love you as our dear Lord loved His Mother. But, mother, poor May—how does she bear this heavy trial?"

"She is broken, poor child—broken with sorrow."

the satin couch, deep in thought.

Gently he unclosed the door of the chamber. The stately crape and satin hangings swept to the floor, and in the middle of the room was the unclosed coffin. The dim light poured in softly over the covered face of the dead.

What could this stately grandeur avail him now? Man, indeed, when he is dead, and stripped of his possessions, and eaten of worms—where, I ask, is he?

Edward Lascine was kneeling there by the dead, gazing on the pale face which was already changing in that cold embrace of Death. The tears dropped thick and fast, as the whispered prayer for the repose of that soul went up to God's throne.

"By thy Cross and Passion— Good Lord, deliver him. Eternal rest give unto him. O Lord, and may the perpetual light of glory shine upon him."

A knock sounded at the door. It was the old house-keeper. "O Mr. Edward, that I should see you thus! Don't, that's a dear, dear boy, stay here. It's no place for the young—don't see, now! Look you! last at Mr. Herbert, because the undertaker's waiting with the soldier."

"Leave me for 10 minutes, Parkins. In 10 minutes the men can go."

"Well, sir, and the good woman's sensitive heart bled as she closed the door, and spoke in the servants' hall of Mr. Edward's sorrow."

Let us draw a veil over that 10 minutes. Real sorrow is too deep, too sacred for the world's gaze. Even in the agony of Christ the veil of darkness was drawn between earth and heaven. No human eye could gaze on that terrible anguish. So, in our sorrow, to be brave we must be alone. Alone, in darkness, at the foot of the cross, strength comes.

The first dinner-bell sounded. The door of a room that had been closed for a long while, except to a proud, sad woman, opened, and Edward Lascine passed down the broad staircase to the drawing-room. Lying on a sofa by the blazing fire was the fair young widow. The black-crape dress fell around the pale, sorrow-stricken form. It seemed as if a few days must see her life close, too.

"Dear May, I wish I could bear this pain for you! My darling sister, how my heart bleeds for you!"

"Dear Eddy, I shall grow strong, now you are here."

"Hush, May, my little sister!" and he drew the poor tired head on to his breast, and rested his hand on her forehead—"hush, May!" as the great sobs burst forth, "as we journey through life, whatever love we win, we win it in the silence of the desert. These are a Man Who has died and been buried, but Who sleeping and waking is still watched by us; whose very words still vibrate in our hearts, producing there something more than love, for it gives life to those virtues of which love is the mother. There is a Man who, long ages ago, was fastened to a gibbet, and that Man is every day taken down from the throne of His passion by thousands of adorers, who prostrate before Him and kiss His bleeding feet with unspeaking emotion. Let us seek Him, May, in the shadow of the olive-trees in the garden of Gethsemane, the ruby drops of blood bursting from His in His great sorrow. There, my little May, you and I can learn to bear our sorrow."

"Lead me by the hand to Him, Eddy."

"Not by my hand, May; by the cross—by the cross you are bearing now. At the foot of the cross, we can pray for Herbert's soul."

"Herbert asked for you before he died—for Eddy to pray for him."

"So I shall, May, to the day of my death; and, later on, standing at God's altar, the second Calvary, I will offer the Immaculate Victim, Jesus Christ Himself, for Herby's everlasting repose."

In a deep embrasure, hidden by the heavy curtains, Mrs. Lascine sat, listened to her children, and wept.

As the second bell sounded, Mr. Trevan came into the room. A glad light danced in his eyes as he saw Edward. The old man's "Welcome, my boy!" showed the depth of his joy. Good old Dr. Platon, too, showed something of a childish delight as he turned to dash off a tear with the back of his hand.

filled. We must bring some color to those pale cheeks." "As if I hadn't done it already," said the old butler to himself. "Don't I love Mr. Edward with any on 'em! Bowing low, he said: 'Yes, sir; the order shall be attended to.'"

And Edward Lascine had left this wealth of love. Why? A stronger love had called him. The world thought him a fool, but the world did not see the eternal beauty that had seduced him.

Early the next morning, the old house-keeper, Parkins, rapped at the door of Mrs. Lascine's room, and, in a confidential whisper, asked to speak to the occupant.

"Has Mr. Lascine arrived, Parkins?" "No, madam; but can you come with me to the Crimson Chamber? Lor, my lady, Mr. Edward was there this morning, and the flowers do look beautiful; but, lor, murr, will Mr. Trevan like it, and Mrs. Crowner? Come and see, my lady."

"Let me see, Parkins; the lying in state will be to-day."

"Yes, my lady." "Mr. Edward, I am sure, has done nothing we can cavil at; let everything be as he has left it."

"As you would wish, my lady, only I thought I would speak to you, to be able to tell the servants my lady wished it."

Two hours later, Mrs. Lascine and her daughter passed into the chamber of death.

"Eddy has been here, mummy." "Yes, May."

The crimson-velvet pall was looped up with the deathless amaranth. On the coffin rested a cross of hot-house flowers, above a crown, while at the feet was a banner made of the petals of brilliant flowers—a bordering of crimson, blue, yellow, and white, while on a raised surface in the centre one read the word "Hope."

"O mummy, that banner was Herbert's dream, with those words on it, I told Eddy last night. How good he is!"

The huge silver candelabra stood by the coffin, encased in crape; for it had always been the custom, even during those three hundred years of the Reformation, for the dead of the Trevens to lie in state for one day. The country gentry round called, were shown into the reception-rooms, left their cards on the table card-tray, and walking on to the chamber of death, walked round the coffin and left the house. A meaningless custom, indeed! Like the "passing bell" in dear old England, it had lost its use, but externally was carried out, a beautiful though scentless flower.

In a corner of the room Edward Lascine was kneeling. The dark hangings had befuddled him until now, but the turning of a leaf in the book he was reading discovered him.

Mrs. Lascine spoke.

"Eddy, why are you kneeling there?" "I am saying the office for the dead, mother. I am praying for Herbert's soul."

"It is useless, my boy. 'Where the spirits fall, they shall lie.'"

"May I discuss that question, but not here, mother. I could not give up the sweet hope of being able to help those I love after death.—Do not weep, May."

"O Eddy! I love you so much. No one but you would have thought of putting those flowers on Herby's coffin."

not find one place to rest my foot upon. There is no Church but the Church of Rome, to whom only those divine words were spoken: 'When I go away, I will send to you the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who shall guide you into all truth, and remain with you all days, even until the end of the world.'"

"Foolish boy! unless you obey me, you know your fate."

"Deliberately I choose. The Church of Rome is my choice. I throw on one side your wealth, position, and pleasure, for God is dearer to me than all."

Good old Mr. Trevan strolled into the conservatory. Eddy was deep in thought.

"Eddy, reach me those white camellia-buds for your mother's hair to-night."

"Willingly, dear uncle."

"Thank you, my brave boy; now a fond of fern for May's bouquet. I love to have you here, Eddy, even as a 'poor's kitten'—that's John's name for you, isn't it?"

"I don't mind his fun; he is a dear old fellow."

Mr. Trevan looked up. "Why that sad face?" "Papa and I have been talking. You know, uncle, I cannot conscientiously do what he wishes."

"When I wouldn't do it, my boy, God is very dear to you"—the old man turned away to wipe his eyes. "How your mother has wept over you! Your own heart has bled, too, to give her sorrow—I saw it. I see deeper than most people. Kiss me, boy, kiss me, and pray for your old uncle when he is dead."

"Passing into the drawing-room, the Rev. Mr. De Vere and the gentlemen guests were arguing on truth. They called for Mr. Trevan's opinion."

"I send a delegate, Mr. Edward Lascine."

The Rev. Mr. De Vere pulled down his white cuffs, pursed his lips, adjusted his white tie, played with his watch-chain, and then said:

"Now, Mr. Delegate."

"O uncle, excuse me."

"No, sir; go on. Let's hear Rome on the subject."

The Rev. De Vere frowned.

"What is your question, gentlemen?" the reverend gentleman rolled forth, sonorously. "Let's hear your teaching, sir?"

THE BLESSED MOTHER OF GOD.

BY REV. F. C. O'HEILLY. "To the Christian heart touched by sweetest memories of the Nativity, and wounded deeply by said recollections of the Crucifixion, there is, perhaps, no month more fittingly dedicated to her who is our mediatrix and helper than the month of May. Extolled by both Catholics and Protestant writers, and honored by all Christians as the only type of perfect womanhood, a few words appertaining to her who participated in both the Crucifixion and glorious Resurrection of our Saviour indeed seem appropos."

"Thou art of charity and love, and as the noonday torch, and art a living spring of hope to mortal man. So mighty and great are thou, O Lady, that he who desires grace and comes not to thee for assistance vain would have the desire to fly without wings. These few words just prefaced and so pregnant with thought from the pen of the Divine Poet convey but an inadequate description of her 'whose foundations are in the holy mountains.'"

"Formed by the power of God she was by exultation and acclamation not unworthy to be the mother of God; but the moment that event took place, when she gave to poor fallen and degraded man his Liberator and Redeemer, imagination loses itself in the endeavor to follow the greatness not only of her dignity, but even of the increased immensity of her merit. With the formation of the humanity of Christ within her, commenced her crucifixion, and a crucifixion so severe and continued, that it needed all her powers to bear it."

"Consider her suffering on the weary way to Bethlehem, where Christ was to be born. Consider the crushing blow that fell upon that purest heart when Simeon gave his prophecy. It was in truth a sword of sorrow and a dagger of poignant grief that would accompany her through life, and whose bitter cut would never heal until she closed her mortal eyes in death and the curtain of life drawn back forever. She had to taste the cup of we reserved for the widow without means for her orphan. She had to bear the grief of a mother whose only child is consigned to a public death of shame and torment by public authority. In fine, there is no want, no agony, no grief, no disgrace, no indignity to human misery, which this singularly holy and most elevated of all creatures had not to endure, and in a manner so intense that it surpassed in an eminent degree the accumulation of all human woe. If, then, it surpasses our powers of calculation to reach the extent of merit obtained by Mary in a single year before she became the Mother of God, when she was only the vessel of election, destined for so great a dignity, what can we say of a single day's merit after she became God's Mother? What can we even imagine of such a merit elevated by intense human suffering and endured without a shadow of imperfection for the sake of God alone! Every moment extended that merit far beyond human conception. Every dignity sinks into insignificance in comparison with Mary's. Every created being must bow in humble recognition to her elevated supremacy. And this daughter of fallen Eve, of the sinner David, of the sinner Ruth, of the sinner Thamar, of sinners in every generation, rises before us, pure and immaculate, queen of all angels and archangels, superior to principalities and powers, above the cherubim and seraphim, our model of humility, our exemplar of charity, our Mother of the great and living God."

"Her love for her Son, her deep interest in all that concerned Him, none can call into doubt. And since her Son so loved man that He laid down His life for him, can we hesitate for a moment to believe or suppose Mary indifferent to this work of salvation? An ordinary good Christian or a saint, sir, is never found without charity for his fellow man. The very word saint or holy implies charity, and it would be a contradiction to suppose a saint without this principal virtue. To be a saint, then, we must love our fellow man next to our God, and as that love for our Supreme Master increases so also increases our love for all mankind, until like a Vincent de Paul or a St. John of Matha, or St. Francis Xavier or a St. John of the Cross, we would kneel and lick the putrid sores of the ailing to lighten their passing sorrows, for in these countenances is seen the image of Him Who created us all to His own likeness."

"Jesus Christ, witness of her laborious habits, sometimes alludes to them in His parables, and these simple occupations of Mary are preserved in Gospel narrative 'like a seaweed in amber.' We see, in fact, the industrious woman putting leaven into three measures of meal, carefully sweeping the floor to recover something lost and economically mending an old garment. And when Jesus seeks a comparison to recommend the purity of heart, He draws it from the remembrance of her who cleans 'both the inside and outside of the cup.' And we suspect that this thought is of Mary when He praises the offering of the widow 'who gives not of her abundance, but of her indigence.'"

"Picture her again ministering to the wants of St. Joseph, and behold that grave and simple man placed with his heavenly countenance upon which every passion was silent, recognizing in her the woman, purest of all women, the queen whose crown was humility, whose sceptre was love, whose heart was charity, the lily without a stain, the one woman that sin had never sullied and 'our own tainted nature's solitary boast.'"

"Let imagination again take to the beautiful town of Nazareth, and as we watch the sun declining toward the lofty promontory of Carmel, Syria, mark if in our hearts is not heard that message that was to be our 'good tidings of great joy.' Yes, Gabriel has appeared to Mary while making her evening prayer to the God of Jacob, and that salutation which meant so much for us is pronounced by the celestial envoy: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord

THE BLESSED MOTHER OF GOD.

is with thee, blessed art thou among women.' Mary no doubt felt an involuntary trembling at this marvelous apparition, but humanity was disconcerted by the magnificent beauty of the angel, but, being reconciled to the wonderful prediction by God's messenger, she believed and left all to God."

"Do we realize the inheritance left us by a crucified God? The bounty that we have reaped from a Calvary and the eternal glory that awaits the faithful servant? These two thoughts so diametrically opposed and yet so characteristic of humanity, are subjects for our life's meditation. Adam sinned and by that sin lost heaven. Christ died, and by that death reopened the gates of Paradise. The loss of the human race was begun in Eve and consummated in Adam. In Mary commenced our deliverance, and in Jesus was it completed. There is also a new tree of the tree is your crucified God. The first tree caused death, the last tree life eternal. All the evil was washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and all our hopes must be centered on that dear Saviour for salvation. The sorrows of Jesus were in truth the sorrows of Mary, and so heartrending was the scene at that terrible crucifixion that the daughters of Jerusalem compassionate a true cry: 'Let us then have part in the life of this fair Queen—the King's daughter, clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and her head encircled with a diadem of stars? Love, charity, humility and obedience, which were centralized in Mary beyond degree of comparison. Love for one another, that we may fulfill God's precept and that all may know we are His children. Charity to all for 'tis the greatest of virtues. Humility, the opposite virtue to pride, that we may not become self-conscious, but may always consider what we are and how much we owe our merciful Father, Obedience, ready, ever ready to follow God's commands and to see His authority in His lawful representatives, willing, if necessary, to die for a true God and a true faith. Let us then have forward pray to Mary, spotless lady of purity, that she may intercede for us with Christ, her Son, and that we may ever follow in the footsteps of our heavenly leader."

A CONVERT'S REASON. LUTHERAN MINISTER TELLS HIS FORMER CONGREGATION WHY HE BECAME A CATHOLIC.

Announcement was made some time ago of the conversion of Rev. Mr. Melzar, a former Lutheran minister, born in Germany in 1867, whose father and grandfather were also Lutheran ministers. He was received into the Catholic Church by the Rev. J. J. Gribben, at Port Angeles, Wash. Being asked to give his reasons for becoming a Catholic, he made the following statement for the benefit of his former flock:

"Most of you, I believe, know me and know about the change I made. Formerly a Lutheran minister, I am now a Catholic layman. I have left the Church of my parents and relatives to join that of my ancestors. I have returned to the Church from which the Lutheran Church has sprung, the Holy Catholic Church. Many will blame me for leaving my Lutheran friends, and some will say that I have gone out of my mind. I can assure them that I am having the same friendly feelings toward them now as before, and some might say 'the blame' for my conversion on somebody else. My beloved brethren, if there is one to be 'blamed' it is I alone. I know perfectly well what I was doing when I asked to be received into the Catholic Church. My entering the Church is the result of many years' study."

"But why did I not join long ago? The prejudice I had against the Catholic Church was the only reason I can give. Those who were born and brought up in the Catholic Church are hardly able to understand the difficulties Protestants, especially Protestant clergymen, encounter when taking into consideration the Catholic Church. The very root of such prejudice had to be removed by earnest prayer."

"For years my heart has been longing for the Church which holds the promise of infallible teaching—the Church to which Christ promised and sent the spirit of truth; the Church to which Christ promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it; the Church to which the leaders of which He said: 'Behold I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world; the Church which enjoys a sound and solid organization; the Church which worships Almighty God in a proper stress on the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar; the Church which teaches regeneration by baptism and the necessity of infant baptism; the Church which insists upon private confession and priestly absolution; the Church which upholds and teaches the communion of saints and honors them."

"To join this Church has been the desire of my heart for many years, and although I, as a Lutheran minister, have faithfully discharged my duties toward my Church and my people, the desire was in me and grew from year to year, in spite of all changes of time, place and circumstances. It is by the grace of God, found strength to come to Port Angeles and request my old friend, Father Gribben, to receive me into the mother Church."

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THE REQUEST...

BY CONSU. It was a beautiful morning. The brilliant green world with its changing sky of May, clear, the warm flowers bloomed, joy fairly rioted in the air of the gladness and in the cemetery at Mt. Vernon a white ash gently lowered to rest.

Many eyes were grieved as one whose grief was for years. The mother of the young man, lying in the case, were about to be eyes forever."

Less than a year before woman had buried her dear Marian, her only child to rest beside him. Standing with a tightly clasped hand, the incarnation of sorrow, pale-faced little Ruth, hand's orphan niece, regarding the strictly pitying eyes.

A bird, sitting on a fir tree, burst in. How shrill and unmannerly a mockery seemed shine!"

"Ashes to ashes, Mrs. Somerville stashed broke from her lip, fell with a muffled dream the lines of a childhood, echoed her brain—

A hand of earth. A coffin under the beautiful bow. The snowy, snow. She bent forward her child's grave. And bright golden forever. She tried to escape her limbs refusing to surrender to strong arms lifted

Mrs. Somerville Edgemoor, was once ences in Mt. Auburn, buried with trembling air of substantiality in a pleasant dream down to Majestic trees, branches, cast grr luxuriant shrubs near there on the smooth interior, hand ally furnished, but light of his mistress was gone; the brush had gone out."

When she reg after the sad home as wish to be alone Jane, more friend dismissed. She weep, but somebody come. She wound sentiment in her dry and burning. The chastening of meekly, the resignation. "F done." Instead, self repeatedly: to me? What I should punish me."

"Of what use asked herself. upon anyone else my darling's inheritance. Suddenly she Moore. How poor girl was despite pendence! Then assuming the earnest brother, Felix on the subject sure, none of his be burdened with. But why should it in answer to her life depended on. Only a few Somerville had without Felix, declined the effort for any quails Ruth's face, white eyes, and Felix rose before her, if in answer to the door opened before her. Mr. guiltily, then coolly: "What all days? I want anyone."

"I know it, wanted, I thought Ruth hesitated. She said: "I don't account of a promise. Mrs. Somerville priced. "What was I I that I my grief was fresh to comfort you gladly. Then as a daughter a place."

Mrs. Somer with a repeller. "That can said. "I know it, worthy to wait. But she knew and she thought to comfort you. "Who do you? "Why, Fe Alice. It was me I have me if I have the lady rose very pale and do not believe up story to was dead darling. If Mr she would have but such a sn between us."

Ruth's pale son at her hered she will add it sounds ra