VOL. XXVI.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 1876.

ACENTS for the DOMINION. CATHOLIC PERIODICALS.

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WRITTEN FOR THE "TRUE WITNESS."

A FORGOTTEN HOUR.

Beloved thou wert once, and sweet and radiant, Thou dead and buried hour: And the glad heart moved joyfully obedient To thy delightful power: And the soul bowed, and called thee only master

Of her inmost breath; And clasped thee foully, but thou hurried faster

To thy long death. She crown'd thee as it were with wreaths of glory,

Nor cared to look beyond; For listening to the music of thy story Seemed life in fairy-land. Fears, doubts and cares were by thy witch'ry ban-

Things black as night-Lo! at thy touch, their shadows all have vanished In lovely light.

But fades the light in darkness tenfold deeper, And withers from thy head

The crown. Despairing sat a fear struck weeper When thou wert dead

But hours as dear have pleased that fickle lover, And many years

Hide with oblivious dust thy memory ever From grief and fears.

But woe betide that soul thou hast enchanted. When thou shalt arise

A shape accusing, in halls phantom haunted,

What hitter sighs Shall greet thy ghastly form and wail the vigor

Of thy fatal power, When the judge passeth sentence in all rigor,

Thou byegone hour. D. C. DEANE.

Lowe, P.Q.

WINIFRED,

COUNTESS OF NITHSDALE.

A TALE OF THE JACOBITE WARS.

By LADY DACRE ..

CHAPTER XXI .- (Continued.)

Lady Nithsdale read in Mrs. Morgan's glance that it was the king, and she hastened from the recess of the window. She threw herself on her knees before him as he reached the middle of the room, telling him she was the unfortunate Countess of Nithsdale, who implored mercy for her husband .-She spoke in French, as the king's knowledge of English was very imperfect. She held up the petition with both her hands, entreating him to read it; but the king waved her off, and attempted to proceed

The Lady Nairne also was not backward in pressing her petition, but the king impatiently thrust them both from him, and passed on towards the opposite door; but the Lady Nithsdale clung to the skirt of his coat.

As she pleaded, and pleaded in vain, she grew desperate,-almost maddened. Still in vain! The king listened not to her prayers. She would not let go her hold, and was actually dragged in her agony from the middle of the antechamber to the door of the drawing-room, when one of the lords in attendance forcibly wrested the king's dress from her hands, while another took her round the waist and

raised her from the ground. No sooner did she feel the touch of a stranger than all her dignity and self-possession returned. Quickly disengaging herself from his grasp, she stood for a moment looking on the door by which the monarch had retired. Her bosom, swelled with indignation—the blood of all her noble ancestors mantled in her faces. That she the daughter of the Duke of Powis, should thus be treated i rejected ast off like the soum of the earth! when it was

seized by rude hands!

All around seemed to swim before her eyes; and had it not been for Mrs. Morgan's kindly help, she must have fallen to the floor. Her friend gently assisud her to a seat, and then a flood of tears came to her relief.

Meanwhile, the petition which she had at-tempted to thrust into the king's pocket, had fallen to the ground, and one of the gentlemen in waiting brought it to her. The Lady Nairne had already succeeded in delivering hers to one who promised it should reach the king; and the Lady Nithsdale, when somewhat recovered from the agitation of strange scene, hastily wrote a few lines in pencil, addressed to the Earl of Dorset, who was the lord of the bedchamber then in waiting, and intrused it, with the petition, to Mrs. Morgan.

Her friend left the countess for a while, and entered the drawing-room; but to one so zealous, so devoted, so warm-hearted, the brilliant circle seemed for a moment a confused and bewildering scene.-She had just parted from a fellow creature whose soul was harrowed by the most agonizing emotions, her face pale and haggard, her dress disordered she had just been witnessing grief,-desperation in its most touching form; and in one moment she found herself among gay and thoughtless creatures, all intent on their own objects of vanity and amueament! The studied attire, the conscious simper, the pretty blush, the downcast lid, the bewitching smile, the graceful turn of the swan-like throat, the brilliant flash of the sparkling eye, the affected flutter of the fan-the thousand varied attractions were all put in requisition to charm, to dazzle, or to subdue. She heard around her the playful banter, the witty repartee, the implied compliment, the softened whisper, the politely turned attack, the sharp retort; and she wondered for the moment how such frivolities could possess so absorbing an interest!

She was threading her way through the gay and dazzling throng, when her progress was arrested by the circle around the king himself. She was compelled to wait with outward composure, although she was secretly all impatience to execute the concommission intrusted to her, and to return quickly to Lady Nithsdale. As she stood watching for an opportunity of slipping past unperceived, she found herself withing sight, though scarcely within hear-ing, of the Duchess of Montrose.

Two young men were evidently paying her the sort of homage permitted by the gallantry of the day. She was answering each with animation and spirit. There was the passing frown, the lighten-ing smile, the assumed air of absence, if any thing was said which she wished not to hear.

The attention of one of the gentlemen being presently withdrawn by some of his acquaintance, it appeared to Mrs. Morgan that the other continued the conversation in a more earnest tone than before. She fancied she saw a blush mantle on the cheek of the duchese: for a moment she appeared distressed. The Duke, who was near, and was in deep and serious discourse with the Earl of Pembroke, had in the playful conversation which was passing behind him. But the duchess, making some light evasive answer, suddenly tapped her husband's aim with her fan, and caused him to turn round. She then seemed to be detailing to him the point in dispute, and applying to him as umpire. Mrs. Morgan watched all these little managuvres; for she could not help wondering how one who professed friendship for the Countess of Nithsdale could thus give herself up to worldly vanities and When first she caught a view of the Duke of Montrose's countenance, it bore traces of sadness: bu', as he listened to his graceful and lively wife, it brightened into a bland expression of amusement. Upon the duke's being thus called to join in the discourse, the young gallant seemed discomposed but for an instant, and apparently recovering himself, at once entered into the spirit of the duchess's bantering; and Mrs. Morgan again thought of the countess's despair, and mentally ex claimed, "if she could see how gayly ber friend, the lively duchess, can smile, even now!" But she did not long feel thus. In a few, moments, the duke in a low voice made some communication to his wife, which had the effect of chasing the roses from her cheeks, and dimming the brilliancy of her smile. The dark and laughing eyes no longer sparkled with the gay consciousness of charming, but were fixed on her husband's face with an expression of dismay and wo.

She looked round, as if wishing to make her escape; then perceiving Mrs. Morgan, she rushed

to her. "Oh, Mrs. Morgan!" she exclaimed, "is this all true? You were with her, were you not?"

"Yes, your grace! I was with the Countess of

Nithsdale, even now, in the antechamber." "Is she still there? I must go to her; I must

go instantly to my poor cousin Winifred!" "Stay, dearest Christian!" interposed the duke: Lady Nithsdale herself, this very evening, motioned me not to speak to her; and the Earl of Pembroke says, the less we put ourselves forward unnecessarily, the more effectually we may be able to serve her. Be not so rash and thoughtless.— That warm heart of yours carries you beyond the bounds of prudence, dear Christian!'-but the duke looked at her with pleasure and kindness as he

checked her. "Alas! and is it true that the king dragged her all across the room, and would not give heed to her

petition ?" " Most true, your grace !"

"Oh, my lord duke I but indeed this was not kind and right in his majesty," said the duchess, turning once more towards her husband an appealing glance. "We must not speak treason, dearest Christian, here, in the royal presence !"

" Nay | I canrot but think this was cruel :- and may I not go to her? Is she still in the antechamber, Mrs. Morgan?"

"Yes, but she will be gone in a few moments; and your grace may rest assured that the countess shall meet with every kindness and attention.

"You are a good, kind, soul," said the duchess; and my poor cousin has many times told me how much she owes to your friendly sympathy." The king had changed his position, and the pas-

the packet; and received his assurance, that when the game was over, he would peruse and attend to Nithsdale. The wan transparency of her naturally its contents,

As she wound her way back, she found that the king's rejection of the Ladies Niths Jale and Naitne's and purest affections of the soul, assorted well petitions had been rapidly communicated from month to mouth ; and that, except in the immediate placed. hearing of the king no other subject was discussed. She could scarcely make her way through the crowd, so anxious was every one to learn from her each detail of what had really passed. All were eager, some indignant; but some orged, that if his majesty once received a wife's petition, it would be most difficult then to refuse, and that unless be had made up his mind to pardon treason-proved and acknowledged treason—he had no other course to pursue than to avoid witnessing grief he could not alleviate; that his sudden, though somewhat undignified flight, did not by any means bear the character of hardness, but, on the contrary, might lead a candid mind to believe he durst not trust himself to witness the desperation of two disconsolate wives.

It was with difficulty that Mrs. Morgan regained the door, and hastened back to the friend who stood so much in need of her consoling sympathy. Slowly and drearly did they retrace their steps.

The Lady Nairne, who had secret information that her application was likely to be successful, was comparatively composed, and bore what should have seemed an equal disappointment with equani-

mity and resignation.

The Countess of Nithsdale, exhausted, humbled, indignant, mortified, grieved, was for a time more thoroughly subdued than she had ever been be-

And yet she had not been sanguine as to the result of this petition; those means on which she most relied were still available; but to her lofty spirit, the contempt with which she had been treated, in sight of all the court, gave her a painful sensation of degradation. It was some slight consolation to her to learn from Mrs. Morgan, what the Duchess of Montrose the next day confirmed still more strongly, that when the circumstances which had occurred without, became generally whispered through the drawing-room, the harshness of the king had been the topic of conversation the whole evening.

With her gentleness there was blended a certain degree of pride, a consciousness of being the scion of an ancient stock, which would have rendered it impossible for a mean thought even to pass through her mind, and which ever enabled her to intrench berself in dignified reserve, should others neglect to pay that respect due to noble birth, which, unless forgotten by them, would never be remembered by herself.

CHAPTER XXII.

Distress is virtue's opportunity. SOUTHERN.

been treated in her interview with the king.

His dark eve flashed, he bit his compressed lip till the blood almost started; he paced the apartment with hasty strides, as he pictured to himself his graceful, his delicate, his shrinking Winifred, on whose fair form he would scarcely allow the winds to blow too roughly, dragged along the floor, the rude hands of strangers round that slender wais'; and it was then he felt indeed that he was a prisoner, powerless to defend her whom he had sworn to cherish! The bars, the bolts, the high walls, the mont, the guards! oh, how his soul rebelled against

nation which possessed his every faculty. Lady Nithsdale grieved to see his agitation, and vet from his very agitation she gathered hope that

them all! How agonizing was the impotent indig-

she might eventually work him to her wishes.

Meanwhile, with the assistance of Amy, she had procured most of the articles necessary for the disguise of her husband; and although resolved that every other means of safety should be tried, she atill kept her mind fixed upon this last resource. The consciousness of having still a point to look to, something still to rest upon when all else failed. sustained her courage : but at the same time it nrevented her attempting to submit to an event, which, in the judgment of others, was now inevitable. She could not even think of resignation; on the contrary, with this secret hope in her heart, and this plan in her mind, she would have been alarmed at her own want of reliance in that plan, had she tried to school her feelings to acquiescence in the fatal doom.

A few days after the countess's unsuccessful application to the king, the resolution was taken in conneil that the sentence passed upon the rebel lords should be carried into execution without delay, and on the 10th, the necessary warrants and now pertinaciously refuse to accede to it! Oh, no, orders were despatched, both to the lieutenant of it was impossible. He could not doom her to such the Tower, and to the sheriffs of the city of London | hopeless, unutterable misery! and Middlesex.

There was a startling reality in these measures that for the moment shook her inmost soul; yet she would not allow herself to dwell upon the intelligence; she scarcely gave herself time to reflect, but all the more strenuously busied herself in seeing that her preparations were complete; and she strove to interest herself in the attempt made the following day by the Countess of Derwentwater to move the king to mercy. Accompanied by the Duchesses of Cleveland and of Bolton, and by many other ladies of rank she was introduced by the Duke of St. Albans and of Richmond, to the king's presence, and humbly implored his clemency: but her application met with no better success than the Lady Nithsdale's more passionate appeal.

It was therefore arranged by the wives of all the condemned lords, that two days afterward, on February the 21st, they should repair to the lobby of the House of Peers, and there implore the intercession of their lordships with the king.

More than twenty other ladies of the very first distinction accompanied them. It might have moved the most unfecting to behold so many of the fairest and the noblest of the realm in such deep and unfeigned distress. But though among the

ged on the very ground — that she should be where the Earl of Dorset was engaged at earls with spair, some perhaps who might boast of greater happiness in this world, you who peril my salva-spurned from his feet—that she should be forcibly the prince. She contrived, however, to give him positive heantly of feature, on none did sorrow sit tion in the next!" with so touching a grace as on the Countess of pale complexion, the refined east of her features, which seemed moulded only to express the highest with the situation of deep interest in which she was

But on this occasion the hearts of all seemed steeled against them. Their application met with little attention : no measures were taken, no motion made, in consequence of their petition. In blank disappointment each sought again her disconsolate, her widowed bome.

Dispirited, but not utterly hopeless, they on the following day, the 22nd, repaired again to Westminster Hall, and with them a still greater attendance of the first, and the noblest, of the ladies who adorned the British court; and with still more passionate earnestness they appealed to both houses of Parliament.

In the Commons their petitions met with no success. Notwithstanding an eloquent address on the part of Sir Richard Steele, the court party moved that the discussion should be adjourned to the 1st of Match, and carried it by a majority of seven

With the Lords they found more favor. Although the Duke of Richmon I, even when presenting the Earl of Derwentwater's petition, declared that he wou'd himself vote against it, yet others spoke warmly and eloquently in behalf of men, who though mistaken, had still acted from conscientious

The Earl of Danby, moved with pity for the Lord Nairne's numerous family, urged strongly that the petitions of the several lords should be received and rend. The Lord Townshend and several others, who upon all occasions had given undoubted proofs of their attachment to the present government, supported the contrary opinion; when, to the surprise of many, the Earl of Nottingham declared in favor of the petitions being read. As president of the council, he drew with him many peers, and the motion was carried by nine or ten voices.

Then came the question, whether in the case of an impeachment the king possessed the power to reprieve. It was now that the Earl of Pembroke redeemed his pledge of exerting himself in Lady Nithsdale's favor. His animated and eloquent address carried with him the sense of the house; and with the assistance of the Duke of Montrose the king's power to pardon was carried in the affirmative.

This was followed by a motion for an address to the king, that, as he had the power to do so, he would be pleased to grant a reprieve to the lords who lay under sentence of death, which, although opposed by the firmest friends of government, was

Lady Nithedale's heart bounded within her, hope for a moment danced in her bosom, and lighted up her cheek with a passing bloom. Her joy was The Earl of Nithsdale felt even more keenly than however, doomed to be evanescent, for another lord if the countess the indignity with which she had represented that "through elemency was one of the brightest virtues which adorn and support a crown, yet in his opinion the same should be exercised only on proper objects;" and he therefore moved, "that they should address the king to reprieve such of the condemned lords as deserved his mercy, and approved themselves worthy of this inter, ession, and not all indiscriminately."

The amendment was carried by two voices only -but it was carried; and her heart once more sank within her. This salvo blasted all her hopes. She was assured it was aimed at the exclusion of those who would not subscribe such a petition as some of the peers had themselves prepared: a thing she knew her husband would never submit to; nor, as she herself declared, would she wish to preserve his life upon such terms.

Still, however, the address to the king had passed generally, and she thought she might turn this circumstance to account in lulling the vigilance of the guards. She lost no time in quitting the House of Lords, and hastening to the Tower; where, affecting an air of joy and security, she told the soldiers as she passed, that she brought joyful tidings to the prisoners, for that the petition had passed in their favor. She then gave them some money to drink to the lords and his majesty; but she prudently made it but a trifling sum, hoping thereby to secure their good-will, without awakening in them any suspicion of design on her part.

And now there remained but the one last resource. She trembled as she thought all was in her own mind prepared, the most difficult point remained yet to be accomplished,-her husband had not yet consented to the disguise she proposed: and although he had not retracted his promise of giving her proposal a fair and patient hearing, she had, in fact, exacted from him nothing more. If he should

Trembling, agitated, yet worked up to the utmost pitch of courage and resolution, he reached his apartment. She staggered into the room; and flinging herself into his arms, she sobbed convulsively on his bosom. She could not speak; but after a few moments she said, with hopeless composure and tenderness—

"So, my poor Winifred, both houses have then rejected our prayers! Alas for you, my love! would I were able to give you consolation! would I could alleviate your sorrow!" "You can! you can! You, and you alone, can now save me from despair!" she exclaimed with

passion. Her eyes were dry, her cheek was flu hed, her whole countenance seemed suddenly inspired, My life, my existence, are in your hands! You have but to will it, to make me the happiest of wives, of mothers! If I am doomed to the early death of the heart broken," she continued almost in a threatening tone, " or if I am doomed to drag on weary, joyless existence, a lingering death-like life, in which the welfare of my soul-yes, the salvation of a precious soul, is in peril, for I shall mumur, I shall replue—there is no resignation here-I feel I shall not submit as it would be my duty to do :- if such is the fate before me, it will mourning, group there, were many countenances be you who doom me to it! I can save you - I am well known the king received the petitions of the sage was now free. Mrs. Morgan, after briefly ex- which bore the traces of intense anxiety, many sure I can! If you refuse to lend yourself to the measures I propose, it will be you who destroy my

There was a restless are in her eye, an energy in her manner, a fearful inspiration about her, that awed while it touched him. He could not but think what must be the strength of those feelings which could so transport her out of herself; which could change the mild, timid, shrinking wife, into the inspired, threatening sibyl!

"Hush, hush, my love! you know not what you

She looked wildly and doubtingly around her; then bursting into tears,-Alas! alas! what have I uttered?" and falling on her knees, with clasped hands raised to heaven,—"Pardon, oh most merciful Being-pardon for my wild and wicked words! thou in whom my reliance is placed,-thou in whose providence I trust,-cast me not off for these hasty words, wrung from me by insufferable angu sh! And you, my lord, my love, my husband, urgo me not to despair! This brain may become un-settled, reason may give way, I may again be hurri-ed into impious ravings! Oh, take pity upon me, dearest, dearest husband!" She clung to his knees; she stretched her beseeching arms towards him.

"Do with me what you will, Winifred. If this is weakness, I am weak! If this is cowardice, I am no longer brave! Command me! guide me!—I am but the instrument in your hands, my wife! I would sacrifice my life to honor; but it there is dishonor in my attempt to escape, I will sacrifice honor itself to you, my love!"

"It is not the sacrifice of your honor I demand; yourself cannot value it more highly than does your wife. They carried the address to the king, but it was coupled with an amendment that it should only apply to those who would sign a petition of their own framing. I knew you would not -1 do not ask you to do so. Your honor is precious to me as your life-more precious than your life!-but there is no dishonor in escaping from a cruel and an ignominious death !

"Not ignominious, Winifred; an honorable death !"

"From a cruel and an unjust death !- a treacherous death! Was it not upon the understanding that your lives were to be spared that you all surrendered at Preston? Was it not to avoid useless effusion of blood that you yielded? and that you advised others to yield? Would it not have been easier and sweeter to perish in battle than to die on the scaffold, as your fellow-prisoners must? No! there is no dishonor in escaping from tyranny!" She spoke with energy, for the first time uttering the words death" and "scaffold," which had never before found their way to her lips.

" llave I not said it, my love? I am ready to follow your injunctions. Do with me what you

"You have promised it, you have sworn it!"and her face was radiant with joy. " My own love! you are mine once more! We shall not be parted : -we shall live and die together,-we shall grow old together! Oh, thanks! thanks! and her imagintion had over-leaped all the bars and bolts, the dreary boundaries of the prison. She felt they were at large to roam over the wide world tegether. He gave her one sad and grateful kiss, and walked to the window to concent his emotion; but she saw the expression of his countenance as he slowly surveyed the courtyard, and his eye rested on each sentry as he paced in his appointed spot,

She perceived the almost mocking smile which passed transiently over his lips; and she plainly read how vain he thought her hopes, how unavailing would prove the consent she had exterted from him.

"You think my schemes all visionary !- you think me scarcely in my right senses!-you deem me aiready crazed with grief!" "Nay, my love; I think your wishes run beyond

your judgment, and I fear you are only preparing for yourself a more bitter disappointment. The blow will fall the heavier for coming upon you in your present state of excitement. It would tend more to your future peace of mind if, discarding all worldly thoughts, you would fix your hopes, and would assist me in fixing mine, on heaven, and heaven alone,"

"And think you it could tend to my future peace of mind, the reflection that one hour of bold prudence, one hour of steady perseverance in the execution of the scheme already formed, might have led to a reunion for life?-perhaps a long and happy life! You would not surely retract the vow so solemnly made, even now?" she added, in a reproachful tone.

"No! I have promised, and I will keep my promise!"

She pressed his hand in token of gratitude, "Then I must away. There are still some with whom I have need to communicate. Do not look for me early to-morrow: I shall not be with you till towards dusk,-and then-"

Not till evening? The last day must I be, deprived of your presence till evening?"

"The first day of your deliverance, my love!the first of many days of liberty and happiness!" He dropped his eyes. He would not sadden her by his own forebodings. And yet he felt he should be permitted to look on her for so short a space, that it was with difficulty he could bring himself to lose sight of her for a moment.

It was already night; but he watched her from his prison window, and fancied he could detect her beloved form as she glided down the steps leading to the archway. He stood gazing at the spot till tears suffused his cycs; and he flung himself upon a seat, determined to wrestle with his emotions.

When alone—when not exposed to the influence of her tenderness—he looked on death with perfect composure, and almost wished his course was run, and that the inevitable moment was arrived. The hopes with which she strove to inspire him, unsettled and distracted him; and then he reproached himself for such weakness. Yet how collect his thoughts? how temper them down to a tranquil, firm, unmoved acquiescence in his doom, when all his energies would be required for the enterprise which was to restore him to life, to love, and to liberty? He strove to forget the plan in agitation. 'de tried to abstract himself in prayer; but when most he hoped to spiritualize his meditations, vislone of the future would flash across his mind, painful anticipations of what would be his Winifred's desperation upon the failure of her attempt,