AMBITION'S CONTEST

BY CHRISTINE FABER

CHAPTER XXVI

HOME AT LAST

Very different was this return voyage to the journey abroad made by the brother and sister, nearly ten years before. Then, Howard's un-curbed ambition would listen to no truth which did not advocate its own headlong course; now, his humility craved nothing but to do his Master's his intellect would Then, suffer no restraint; now, his faith burned but to submit to the decrees of a Divine Authority. Then, his impatience, and his proud bearing, were alike conspicuous; now, his gentleness, and the winning sweetness of his manner touched and charmed all with whom he came in Then, he would listen to no moralizing, no religious topic ; no of his own accord, as he paced the deck on long, bright evenings with Ellen, he poured forth the beautiful sentiments of a heart which had pledged itself to Heaven. His sister felt her secret sorrow soothed while she listened, and she would willingly have borne a far greater grief for such a reward as this. Howard had not once, after her refusal to see Malverton, on the day of sailing, referred to that unhappy subject. Evidently, he deemed her resolution unalterable, and he would not again her by an allusion which could effect little good; perchance, too, he was content to leave the affair to time, that unraveller of most mys-

Anne Flanagan, also, was actuated by very different feelings on this return voyage. Under the magic power of Dick's tender attentionswhen he could bestow such without attracting observation—every vestige of unholy and unhappy sentiments were fast disappearing. She could even think of Mrs. Courtney with a feeling akin to the real affection which Ellen had long ago won from her-the vacuum in her heart filled, and the womanly traits in her character came out as they had never done before, till, even in her very appearance, the change was visible; the harsh lines in her countenance seemed to have softened—the expression of her face to have become less repellant.

Vivid, warm sunshine welcomed the return of the brother and sister to the shores of home - rain and gloom, as if to prognosticate the agitation and trouble which should mark their tour abroad, had been accompaniments of their departure-but an unclouded sky looked down upon their arr ival

Some one of the annoying circumstances which oft-times occur to stay the steps of travellers, prevented Howard and Ellen from landing as immediately as they could wish, and the Courtney carriage was obliged to wait for hours. Mrs. Courtney was not within it. Severe as was the trial of her impatience, her solicitude, her burning affection, she would remain to receive her children's first embrace in her own home, rather than expose a meeting, which to her, at least, would have so sacred a character, to the public gaze. During the long hours of suspense she feverishly alternated from one window to the other, as if the very intensity of her desire must make the welcome sight

The carriage rolled up the street at last. It stopped before the door, and Mrs. Courtney rushed into the but her trembling feet would not bear her further, and, faint and dizzy, she grasped the balustrade for The messive door opened her vision was too blurred to discern more than the outlines of forms coming quickly in, but in another instant there was a sharp, sudden

Mother! mother!" and her son -her returned prodigal-was in her arms. Closely, closely she folded him; the dignity of his manhood, the sacredness of his profession, were forgotten; the lapse of those long, horrible years breached over - he was her boy, her delicate darling, as he used to be in the long ago, and her very heart seemed to gush forth in the sob in which her pent-up feelings at last gave way. No eyes of the little group that looked upon the scene were dry. Howard's tears mingled with his mother's; Ellen, waiting the embrace for which he heart panted, sobbed in the plenitude of her exquisite joy; while Anne Flanagan was crying vigorously, and even Dick, not ashamed of the unmanly emotion, had his handkerchief pressed to his eyes.

Maternal instinct reminded Mrs Courtney of the other dear one; and she released Howard, to fold to her breast patient, faithful, heroic Ellen. Nobly, nobly, my darling, you

have done your work," she mur-mured. "Never has pledge been more sacredly fulfilled—never reward been more nobly won.

When she turned to Anne Flanagan, instead of the mere warm clasp of hands, which the latter had alone expected, Mrs. Courtney bestowed a warm and lingering embrace.

You have been as a mother to Ellen, Anne," she said, " and I have loved you for it."

The very last trace of aught approaching to the old hate and rancor for Mary Ashland died then out of Anne Flanagan's heart. At last, she

Then Howard presented Dick to his mother. She warmly greeted the boyhood forever. ' -in whom she no more

loved Allen Courtney's wife.

self had formerly done. After that, Anne and Dick retired below, where a fresh welcome awaited the former, and Mrs. Courtney turned, with her children, to the parlor, where she might note more fondly and linger ingly the changes which time had effected in Howard and Eilen. When her fond sclicitude had quite satisfied itself, and her equally fond pride was gratified by the handsome, manly appearance of her son, the delicate and graceful beauty of her daughter, she consented to Howard's request to receive, without further delay, the welcome of the servants, going her below to ascertain if all the domestics were in the servant's hall. They were all there, flushed with the happy excitement of Anne Flanagan's return, and with the novelty of making a "greenhorn," as Dick was considered, cordially at home among

them. A respectful silence took the place of their joyful clamor, when they learned that the young master of the house was coming to receive their welcome, and they hastened to obey O'Connor's directions. The old man's notion of the reception which should be accorded Howard, was the oldfashioned one of having the servants drawn up in line, in such a manner as Mrs. Courtney, when a bride, had been received by her husband's domestics, and, trembling with the excitement and joy of so soon meeting his young master, he proceeded to

arrange his fellow help.
"Did I ever think I'd live to see this day?" he said, as he placed himself at the head of the line. Swiftly Howard came down the stairs followed by the equally swift steps of his sister and mother. He paused when he saw the line of domestics.

O'Connor advanced, trying to speak the words of welcome he hastily conned, but ere he could open his lips, the young priest threw his arms around his neck.

My dear old friend! Once you had ever received from the Courtneys—thus I atone for it; thus

beg your forgiveness."
He pressed his lips long and tender-

ly to the old man's cheek. Astounded, delighted O'Connor! To be thus publicly honored—to have the arms of a priest about him, was for his overflowing all too much heart, and his happy tears gushed forth. There were few of the servants who were not affected, and tears mingled with the smiles with which they received his cordial replies to for and idolized of our party. their own warm salutations when, having released O'Connor, Howard shook hands with and addressed each inturn. Then followed Ellen's warm any greeting, and rarely did an evening ose on happier hearts than those

the Battery.

The first night at home—that first emotions were not its hours filled. Howard, in the room of his boyhood, to which his mother and sister had fondly accompanied him, felt a rush of emotion which he could were the same as when his eyes last rested upon them: the orreries, the mounted stands, the cabinet of minerals, the crayon drawings, all were in their old positions, all were aglow with the old, old thoughts. Vividly he saw himself, the ambitious boy whose mind would comprehend all truths, rejecting those his reason could not grasp; but it was in the softened lights of his own changed heart, of his sacred profession, that he beheld the retrospection, and he press, as he used in his boyish days, the hands of his mother and sister. and to look, with glances of a love that could scarcely satisfy itself, into'

the dear faces of both. They left him, when Mrs. Court-ney's maternal solicitude was satisfied that every arrangement for his comfort had been made, and even then mother and son were loath to partlingering over their good night caress as if both feared the vanishing of a happiness which seemed too perfect

Then the mother's fond anxiety could not content itself without being as affectionately busy in Ellen's room as it had been in Howards-her loving fingers found so many little last touches to give, for her joy was restless from its very intensity. With fond consideration, fearing the result of over-fatigue for her daughter, she urged the latter to retire, but slumber was far from Ellen's eyes. She besought her mother to remain and Mrs. Courtney, only too eager to prolong the sweet converse, granted the request, so mother and daughter continued the loving interchange of all that concerned them so dearly.

Mrs. Courtney drew much from the gentle girl of the troubles which had marked the latter's life abroad, but there was one thing she failed to discover - the place which Malverton Grosvenor occupied in Ellen's affections, and the cruel pledge which she had been forced to give his father. Though Ellen answered all her mother's questions pertaining to the kindness of Malverton, and his wonderful conversion, she betrayed

neither by sign nor word her own burning, unhappy secret. "The dear, kind boy!" Mrs. Courtnev murmured, forgetting that Mal verton, like Howard, had left his When Howard and you write to him, as of course

have an opportunity of thanking Ellen bowed her head; she could not trust the expression of her face

Mrs. Courtney seemed agitated by some singular emotion. One mo-ment she looked into her daughter's face with an expression which seemed to bespeak the forthcoming of some strange communication; and the next she withdrew her gaze, and even dropped her eyes, as if to discount enance the idea, if any such had

been entertained. Two or three times she had acted in this manner, and Ellen showed by the look in her eyes that she won dered a little at the strange proceed-Then Mrs. Courtney, as if some impulse stronger than the others had conquered, threw her arms around her daughter's neck, and cried

O Ellen! I cannot wait longer. I must tell you, now, my unhappy

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MYSTERY UNRAVELLED Mrs. Courtney withdrew her arms from her daughter's neck, and pushed her chair slightly back, as if her selfimposed task was one which could not be performed amid the soft blandishments of affection.

"Long since," she began, have heard me tell sufficient about my early girlhood to know that it was a peculiarly bright and happy The only child of a widowed father, I was surrounded by every in dulgence which his affection could suggest, and his wealth procure. He enriched my mind from his own varied store of learning; he placed the advantages and the delights of travel at my disposal, and he surrounded me with select and charming society. Judge how intense, wild, must have been my affection for such a father. When I was in eighteenth year, some young dared to raise my hand to you—once I friends came over from England to I dared to give you the first insult spend the summer at Ashland Manor. Lady Grosvenor, then unmarried and simply the honorable Miss Dudley, was one of the party. There was an American gentleman among them whom I had never met. He was a relative of one of my father's warm est friends, which fact was sufficient to make him cordially welcome Handsome, courteous, possessing re markable mental endowments, and having the rare faculty of causing his society to impart a charm to any assembly, he soon became the sought

"He paid me the most delicate and flattering attentions, and I, whose heart had never before held image save my father's, was powerless to resist the attraction of this graceful and fascinating man. which beat in that old homestead on Almost before I was aware how deeply my affections were involved, The first night at home—that he night amid scenes which seemed to the returned wanderers so old, yet so the returned wanderers so old, yet so the craved a longer delay, saying a he craved a longer delay, saying a he craved a longer delay, saying a would be unseemly and abrupt. accepted his excuse, but afterwards I knew the true reasons; he had read what I had failed to perceive-that my father, while he would not commit scarcely control. The surroundings the slightest violation of the rules of were the same as when his eyes last hospitality, while he would not, fear to be guilty of such, even prohibit my cordiality of manner to the stranger, had conceived some peculiar dislike or distrust of him, and for that reason my lover feared his suit would meet little favor. So our regard for each other was maintained a profound secret.

One day this gentleman to whom I had pledged my girlish affections, announced his intended departure, He was going to England, where he fain have poured itself out in new thankfulness for having been saved from the ruin of such a course, to travel, and poring over Latin works relative to some dreamy notion which he had of some time entering the Church, and who, because of that same taciturnity and distaste for gay society, had refused the inviwhich had been equally tation extended to him to visit Ashland Manor. I besought my lover to defer his departure and to urge his brother to accept our invitations, my father's and mine, to visit Ireland. He vielded to my entreaties, and his prother consented to come, writing that sending his baggage ahead, he take a circuitous route and travel slowly in order to see the country. Some of the gay party, with whom my lover was already on terms of warm friendship, urged him, as his brother intended to make so long a delay, to accompany them on did not seek to dissuade him from that journey, knowing that he would speedily return to us, and he took his departure with a promise of frequent correspondence. His brother arrived at the Manor after a delay longer than even we had anticipated but the delay had been occasioned by illness. He was, as he had been described, grave and reserved—almost too grave at first; but soon his society exerted such a charm as even my lover's had never done. There was an irresistible attraction about his manner, and even his voice, while the very dignity of his appearance, so unusual to one of his age—he was but twenty three—seemed to enhance his remarkable personal beauty. My father was charmed with him, and he frequently spoke of him to me as an extraordinary young man, and one

of whom any parent might be proud. "Our gay company had all gone, and there was ample opportunity in which to note the character of our guest. His courtesy to me was recognized Owen Renehan, one of her father's servants, than Anne her him to come over that I may also been, while it was equally flattering,

and, alas for the honor of the mother whom you so highly esteem, Ellen, I felt myself a second time yielding my heart to another. I struggled against the feeling; I wrote more passionate and more tender letters to my own plighted lover, and I shut myself away from this second attraction till my father reproached my want of courtesy. One day he called me to his room and told me, with every evidence of joy and satisfaction, that our guest had sought from him permission to endeavor to in my heart. I grew cold and hot in the same moment; my soul thrilled with delight at the announce-ment, but my heart sank at the thought of the pledge I had already given. I dared not tell my father it was the first secret I had ever kept from him; the first thing I had done without his permission, and I shrank sickeningly from the keen and bitter reproach which the telling of it now would entail. I remained silent, trusting that my lover would soon return, when his clear judgment would assist me out of my difficulty, and in my next let ter I urged him to come back. I did not tell him the cause of my sudden anxiety for his return, for it seemed if I mentioned it at all that honor would demand of me to tell the whole truth-how my affections were a second time involved. Deem affections ing it but the impatience of affec tion, he answered playfully that he could not come just yet; not till the sport was over.

we thought him dying. He himself supposed such to be the case, and he placed my hand in that of our guest, requesting that as soon after his death as possible our marriage should take place; and I did not withdraw my hand—I did not tell of my former pledge. O Ellen! your pure soul can have no conception of what I suffered then, for I wildly madly loved Allan Courtney-I, who was already betrothed to his brother. But my father rallied, and, fearing another attack which would probably prove fatal, and leave me sadly unprotected, he urged that prepara tions should be begun for the wedding. Allan warmly seconded the request, and I, alas! I—sacrificing my honor and my truth-consented. The anguish I suffered made it diffi cult for me to maintain a cheerful manner-to assume in my new lover's presence the demeanor he would naturally wish to see, and so at times, though my heart yearned to be otherwise, I was distant and almost cold. I received news that my first lover was returning. In my desperation I could think of one desperation I could think course to pursue—to meet him upon his arrival, and before he could learn anything from other lips, tell throw him what occurred, and myself on his generosity. If he should insist on the fulfilment of the troth I had pledged him, then would I make it his task to break to my father and his brother the true state of affairs. If, on the contrary, he should not insist upon such a fulfilment, but, through revenge or any other feeling, he would inform his brother of the wretched course ! had pursued, then I would brave it all, and afterwards hide myself in a But oh ! how I hoped, how convent. I prayed that he would be generous

My father became suddenly ill-

enough not to mar my happiness. 'I met him when he came, and in tears and anguish I confess miserable state-never shall I forget the expression of his face when he comprehended it all-the tones of his voice as he said: 'So my saint like brother has robbed me to enrich himself. Fear not, Mary Ashland, no word of mine shall prevent your marriage to this model brother. shall be more honorable than you

have been.' I was stung by the taunt in the last part of the remark; but since I had his word not to interfere, I was satisfied, and I tried to stifle every other feeling save that of joy at my approaching nuptials. Allan hearing me regret the departure of a favorite maid, spoke to me of a girl who had been singularly kind to him in some illness with which he had been attacked when on his way to the Manor, and requested me to give her the vacant place. I consented, and there came in re sponse to his letter, she who has been with us so long-Anne Flana-

Ellen gave an involuntary startremembering distinctly every word of once poured into her ears, she knew now that it was her father to whom the woman had been so unhappily a shooting expedition into Scotland, attached, her mother for whom she had entertained so protracted and so bitter a dislike-but Mrs. Courtney, having her gaze directed towards the send a cent.' floor did not perceive the motion,

and she rapidly continued: Because of the kindness which he said this girl had rendered him, because of the very gratitude he bore her, I was disposed to advance her almost to the footing of a com-She was intelligent, better panion. educated than most of her class, and I pitied her for the seeming desolation of her life. My marriage took place—he, to whom I had been so false, witnessing it with a better grace than I expected; and my gratitude to him, for having so nobly refrained from doing aught to mar my happiness, knew no bounds. When I gave him the sister's salute which he demanded, it was with my whole grateful heart I threw my arms around his neck and kissed

TO BE CONTINUED

Though you think all the world's a stage, learn to act well your part.

PEGGY OF THE MODELS

By Eileen Moore When Ann of the notion counter was promoted to be a clerk in the office of the great dry goods empor ium she was justly elated. She had worked hard to attain this eminen After long days of work in her de partment she had taken a course in stenography and typewriting at a business school. In six months she had become fairly proficient, and now the opportunity had arrived. It meant more salary, a more digni-fied position and shorter hours. It was quite by accident that she got the position. Another girl had been engaged, but had been taken ill. Ann had offered to fill her place temporarily and had done her work so well that when the girl returned Ann was kept on in the office. It was characteristic of Ann that

same evening and there before the Blessed Sacrament return thanks for her promotion. As she was leaving she saw a young girl, in tears, kneeling before the altar. There was a despairing look on her face and her hands were tightly clasped. Ann noticed that they were white and delicately formed. The girl had beauty of a refined type; her eyes were blue, and her hair had a golden, glint. She was neatly clad in a wellvorn navy blue suit, with a white Vandyke collar. All this Ann took in at a glance. She felt a strong impulse to speak, to whisper a word of comfort, and only the natural reticence which forbids intrusion on the private grief of another strained her. She lingered in the vestibule until the girl came out, hoping for a chance to draw her into conversation and find out whether she could help her in any way. She had not long to wait. Soon the appeared, making no effort to hide her tear-stained face as she dipped her hand in the holy water font and made the sign of the cross. could restrain herself no longer. 'Can you tell me," whether confessions will be heard tonight?" It was an innocent device to draw the stranger into conversation -one that Ann had successfully practised many times.

The girl raised her swimming eyes to Ann's face. What she saw there reassured her. "I don't know," she "I am a stranger here only dropped in for a moment in

"That is a habit of mine," said Ann "I never can pass a church; something seems to pull me in. I always feel better afterwards. It was a visit of thanksgiving this time. got good news today and it made

thanks. "And I." said the young girl sadly, "had bad news, and I came in here to ask strength to bear it. I lost my position today, and I feel that there is not much chance of getting another

for some time, and—and—"

world, once this week's salary is gone. owe half of it already. I am alone here—a stranger in New York. "Poor kid," said Ann sympatheti-cally. "It seems as if I were sent to help you out. Let us walk home together. What's your name?"

"Margaret O'Donnell; but my friends call me Peggy, for short." The ghost of a smile played round

her pretty lips.

"And mine," said Ann, "is Ann
Tumelty, I work in Price and Walker's, the big emporium. What is your line? Perhaps I may be able

prayer. I am a model for cloaks and suits. I was discharged vesterday from L. C. Goodbody's for being late for work. I had a fainting spell in the morning-it was the second or third time it happened-so I guess they wouldn't stand for it again.

"Guess you hadn't had any break-fast," said Ann laconically—"waiting on your pay envelope. I have been through it, I know the ropes. Faint ing spells can always be accounted You were saving the money for for. something else.

'Yes," said the young girl, "that's it! I buried my aunt five weeks ago, and there were some debts to be paid She was the only relative I had in New York. I came from Connec the secret confidence which Anne had ticut six months ago. I had always once poured into her ears, she knew longed to live in New York. My mother didn't want me to come here —I am too proud to let her know the straits I am in. Besides, she is not well off. I thought to send money home, but have not yet been able to

"Cheer up, kid," cried Ann, as she noticed the blue eyes suffuse with "They employ models in our tears. firm and I'll see if I can't smuggle you in. But I don't like the model business," she added thoughtfully. 'You meet a funny lot in that depart-

ment. "I know it," said Peggy, "but there is good money in it. I am a perfect model for a sixteen-year-old girl. never learned any other business-it was my first job.

"Poor kid," again said Ann, squeez ing the arm of the young girl affectionately. "I see we are going to be friends. Come and share the luxury of my palatial hall bedroom and I'll make you a cup of tea and some toast, and then, if you wish, you can tell me all your troubles.'

"Oh, Miss Tumelty," cried the girl her pretty face aglow with renewed hope, "it's very, very kind of you-but remember I am a stranger."

"Shut up!" said Ann, and the "shut up" sounded like a blessing-"and

say, kid, I feel it in my bones that we are going to be friends, so call me Ann-Miss sounds so stiff and stand offish Here we are now at my castle. My 'boudoir' is up in the tower next the roof."

Ann put her key in the door and the two girls entered. It was a room ing-house of, a respectable but shabby sort. Dingy red carpeting covered the hall and stairs. The wall-paper was of a nondescript color not calcu lated to enliven the spirits. Alto gether it was a distressingly gloom atmosphere which the dimly lighted gas did not help to mitigate. But in Ann's room it was different. twinkling Ann had a lamp lighted showing a nine by twelve bedroom It had a folding couch, a lounge by day, a bed by night, covered gaily colored chintz and cushions The walls were hung with photographs of Ann's friends. and a small table completed the furniture. From a clothes closet Ann took a small gas stove and attached she should drop into a church that it to a gas jet. A kettle was filled with water and boiled. Then a toaster took its place, two cups and saucers were set on the table, and in a short time Anne and Peggy were drinking tea and chatting as if they were old friends.

Ann was in her element : she was helping a sister in distress. During their modest meal she gleaned a lot from her guest. She was a shrewd reader of character. She saw that Peggy was of the yielding kind, lovable but not a fighter. Ann sighed mentally, for she knew that girls in business to succeed must have a little of the fighting instinct. Ann decided that the Lord had given her something to do-to act a big sister's part to this young stranger who was so distractingly pretty.

"Have you advertised for a position yet?" she asked Peggy, as she washed the teacups and placed them carefully back in the closet.

'No," said Peggy, "I never thought of it. I intended to make a round of the stores instead."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said "I'll see whether there is an opening in our firm and you can call nere tomorrow night and hear the news. The next day Ann inquired whether

there were any vacancies in the emporium. To her chagrin she found but one-and that in the model department. She would have pre ferred something else for Peggy. felt inclined to wait a few days for some other opening. Then she remembered how terribly long time would hang on Peggy's hands, waiting in her lonely room and her money gradually getting less. She found to her surprise and gratifica tion that her good word for Peggy was sufficient to get her the place. me so happy I simply had to return provided she had the correct meas urements. When Peggy heard the news she flung her arms impetuous ly round her new friend's neck and fairly cried with joy. Ann thought it a good opportunity to give her a little wholesome advice. meet some very silly girls in your department," she said. into tears "I haven't a penny in the

Oh, I know," cried Peggy eagerly. "But I am not of that class. I can take care of myself, I assure you You needn't be the least alarmed about me. My aunt was always impressing me with the idea that I didn't know the world. She wouldn't allow me to have beaux. girls had beaux in Goodbody's, and they had such good times—theatre parties, joy-rides, and such presents!" Peggy's face lighted up animation—"American Beauty roses, boxes of gloves! But I never had a hean" she added sadly, "I would

to help you to get a job."

"Oh, if you would!" said the young
"Oh, if you would!" said the young
smiling. "I shouldn't wonder but
smiling. "I shouldn't wonder but I would call it an answer to my that I'd be at your wedding. But the beaux that take the girls out joy-rides have little notion of matrimony. They are no good. Beware of them

"Oh, I am wise," said Peggy, screw ing up her pretty nose in disdain. "But I would like to marry a rich fella and not have to work any more

"Them kind don't grow on bushes. said Ann sagely if not grammatically 'Cut it out, kid, about the rich guy You won't find many of 'em in the market. Can't I slang when I want to ?" she asked, laughing.

falling in with her mood. you have a friend.' 'Yes," admitted Ann with a soft

blush which glorified her face, mak-

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