

FATHER DE LISLE.

By Miss Taylor

(A Tale of fact in fiction's garb.)

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"I was sure of it," said Arthur, smiling, "when I saw that adventurous boat set forth. I have another horse waiting at a distance, will it please you to mount?"

"As soon as I have given the sailor who accompanied me the reward I promised him—for happily my purse has come safe to land also—then I am at your service."

With much eagerness did Sir Robert and Henry watch the approach of two horsemen who were riding up the avenue at sunset that evening. The foremost was Arthur Leslie, his open generous face flushed with long exercise and with the pleasure of having accomplished his mission.

"How young the other is," remarked Sir Robert to his son; "it will be easy to disguise him. He will pass for a gallant cavalier any day."

And, as the gentlemen dismounted and advanced towards them, they perceived that though his frame was thin from toil of some sort, a grace hung about it of which nothing could divest him. The face was pale and worn, but there was something so noble in the broad open brow, and so sweet in the full dark eyes, that it drew one instinctively towards him.

"Welcome, Arthur," said Sir Robert, "and welcome to you too, sir, I pray you to enter my poor house."

And while Henry stood outside to hear Arthur's narration, Sir Robert led his guest into his private cabinet. Mary was there, anxious to receive the first blessing of the priest. On seeing him, however, she uttered a sort of stifled cry, and gazed in mute wonder.

"Yes, Mary," said he, coming towards her, "your memory deceives you not. At last I have fulfilled my words, and 'come to Thoresby.'"

"And you are a priest?"

"Yes, thanks be to God, and a member of the Society of Jesus."

Mary threw herself on her knees for his blessing and Sir Robert knelt beside her. They were soon joined by Henry and Arthur, and the secret of Walter's relationship was intrusted to the latter. It was likewise agreed that it were safer he should not be known by his usual name, and should adopt that of Walter's as a 'nom de guerre,' and less likely to draw suspicion. This arranged Arthur took leave.

"And now, Father," said Sir Robert, "for that is a title dearer to us than that of kinsman; after you have seen my poor Blanche, you must take the repose you so much require."

"Oh! Blanche," said Mary, after Walter had gone to his room, "is it possible?—he a priest!—he who seemed formed for a life of sunshine, to be a missionary here! Oh! suppose he is taken, and they slay him with that cruel death," and Mary burst into tears.

But think of the end, the glorious reward, the martyr's crown," said Blanche soothingly. "Surely we may say, he hath left all to follow Christ."

"All, indeed," said Mary. "Was he not fitted rightly to be the head of his noble house?"

"You have never heard much of him since you parted at Apswell, have you, Mary?"

"Only in fragments I heard he and Lord Beauville had disputed, and Walter had returned to Rheims; then, when I heard of the marriage of Lady Constance, I could not but marvel if that had aught to do with it. Then came Isabel's unhappy marriage, and I wondered not that Walter did not return to England, but I thought he would seek some foreign court, or take service in some army. I never dreamed to see him return a mission priest. Truly, God's ways are wonderful."

Walter de Lisle a mission priest, it is no wonder Mary is surprised;

let us look awhile at him, our dear Walter, whom we parted from in his hour of trial, long years ago. Methinks any one who had known him well would have found him out under any disguise, for there is the same radiant smile, the same sparkling eyes as of yore. True, there are lines written on the face which tell of conflict and of suffering, and the vigorous frame is thin, worn with frequent penance and untiring labor. Walter's life since we left him may be briefly traced, for long years of suffering of leave little little mark behind them. It would not be interesting, even intelligible, if we had accompanied him through those heavy days and nights which followed his flight and his sacrifice. How his heart died within him, and he repented almost that he chose God instead of man; how life seemed quenched within him, and he wanted only to let time drift by him, and never to begin the struggle afresh. Constance Beauville had not been loved as many men love, as a vision sweet for the time, but soon forgotten when it passes away. Walter's love was but of one kind, strong as his whole nature, and deep as a torrent. He loved thus or not at all. He would love God thus or not at all. So Father Mordaunt saw, and thus he prayed; and the prayer was granted, the struggle was past; the vow spoken at Campian's feet became a reality. 'Twas the news of the martyrdom of this holy man that first roused Walter from his slumber. He turned with his whole heart and energy to serve God, and he was rewarded even speedily. To him was given that call which even the angelic hosts may envy; and the low still voice said to him, "Come and serve me, dearest of the sons of men. Come speak in my name; hold my keys, and have jurisdiction over 'me' your Lord and your God."

And so Walter became a priest, and then he prayed his superiors to send him on the English mission, for to die for the country he loved was his ambition. He was refused at first, and tried in various ways and by various toils, and at last his wish was granted, and strangely enough he was directed that the eastern coast should be the first scene of his labors, since no priest had been in those parts for long and Sir Henry Thoresby had been advertised to meet a priest who would land on the coast. He had sent, little expecting to receive his own nephew.

Thoresby Hall was bright indeed now, for once more the Holy Sacrifice was offered, once more the fainting weary souls drew near, first to hear the words of pardon for sin, as they laid down their burden at the feet of Christ, then to nourish their souls with the Bread of Life. Then peace reigned around, and thanksgivings many and fervent rose up from the little band of confessors of the faith in Thoresby Hall.

"Alas, Father," said Blanche Thoresby, one day, as Walter sat by her couch, "I fear me I often murmur at the lot that renders me in these troublous times a burden upon all."

"You would rather," said he, "have fulfilled your early wishes, and consecrated yourself to God in the cloister."

"Oh yes, Father; and I aspired to join the convent, where day and night they watch in lowly adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and pray continually for sinners, and I could have prayed for my country, our own dear England, and offered up all I did for her—what 'are' you smiling at, Father, was it too presumptuous?"

"Not so, dear child," he answered; "but I smiled when I thought our hopes vanish, and our plans are blown away, even as the wind brushes off the leaves. Blanche, I would rather choose the lot you have than the one you marked out. Yes," continued he, and his face

lit up with a radiance which scarcely seemed of earth, "to lie still in his arms must be best for His creatures. If we work for Him we mix up self with our best deeds, but to be called to give up the pure hopes and visions at His call, to lay down life even, and that not in one quick moment of agony, but through long years of suffering, this is blessed indeed; for wherefore do you suffer? Because you bore in your arms the tokens of His suffering love, the tokens of His great humiliation in subjecting Himself to His creatures: by these means you saved the life of a priest; that priest lived perchance to offer once again the Adorable Sacrifice, to reconcile one more sinner to his God. Was not that enough? Oh, believe me, my daughter, God took these pure hopes of yours to heaven, and sent them down again loaded with benedictions. You prayed to watch before Him day and night, and behold He bids you do it with the incense of willing suffering. You loved Him in His sacrament, He asked your life to be given in that love. Fear not Blanche, if life be long before you, if you lie here helpless while others hurry to and fro in their master's service. Nay, if even never again on earth before your eyes shall be raised up on high the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world—from your heart shall ascend a perpetual sacrifice, a perpetual adoration, as true and as worthy as if you were in the convent of your choice."

There was a long silence. Blanche's face was hidden in her hands, for such words needed no answer; words from which she gathered strength for many years to come.

Mary entered the room, and seeing them both silent she sat down beside Blanche.

"Mary," said Walter, suddenly raising his head, "do you ever hear from Isabel?" The word was spoken with an effort.

Mary had been expecting this question, and schooling herself to meet it, yet now it came she trembled.

"No," she answered; "but you know we seldom write letters in these days of danger."

"When did you last hear? Now, Mary, be open with me, it is true kindness to tell me all you know. I have heard nothing but the fact of her unhappy marriage."

"Her letters," answered Mary, "well-nigh ceased some time before she married. When I heard of the event, I wrote to her and begged that nothing might interrupt the love between us. Then came a few lines saying it was impossible for her, as I must see, to keep up intercourse with her relations. There was that in the spirit of those few words which showed me, that though she was pained at parting from me, her whole soul was wrapped up in her husband. It was therefore no entrapping of the late Earl's; indeed I never could credit he could have bent Isabel's will."

"No," said Walter, "in the one letter she wrote, in which she bade me not to write, she said it was her own free choice. And you have never seen her?"

"Yes, once; two years since, I was in London for a while, and we stood one day on the pier of Greenwich, to see the queen take boat for Westminster. I had never seen her majesty, and 'twas a grand pageant, many ladies of the court were there, and among them Isabel. She has grown into such majestic beauty, she looked fitter than Elizabeth to be the queen, albeit her highness hath a stately presence."

(To be continued.)

The papal chair in St. Peter's cathedral is, it is claimed, the oldest and most interesting relic of antique furniture in existence, having been in use since the days of ancient Rome. The strongest structural parts of the great chair are of acacia wood. It is to these supports that the massive rings are attached through which staves are run when the pontiff is borne shoulder high through the great church when he pronounces a blessing on the kneeling multitude. The chair is ornate with carved panels and ivory plates and is kept in a wooden case almost as elaborate as itself.—Catholic Citizen.

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One of the pictures is called

"Heart Broken"

We will not let the reader into the secret of what has happened, but one of the merry little companions of the woeful little maid who has broken her heart is laughing already, and the other hardly knows what has happened. Cut flowers nod reassuringly at them, and a bright bit of verdure covered wall stands in the background. There is something piquantly Watteauesque about one of the petite figures, suggesting just a touch of French influence on the artist.

The other picture presents another of the tremendous perplexities of childhood. It is called

"Hard to Choose"

As in the other picture, we will not give away the point made by the artists before the recipients analyze it for themselves. Again there are three happy girls in the picture, caught in a moment of pause in the midst of limitless hours of play. One of the little maids still holds in her arms the toy horse with which she has been playing. Flowers and butterflies color the background of this, and an arbour and a quaint old table replace the wall.

The two pictures together will people any room with six happy little girls, so glad to be alive, so care-free, so content through the sunny hours amidst their flowers and butterflies, that they must brighten the house like the throwing open of shutters on a sunny morning.

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