

"It belongs to Cassils, sir," returned Alastir, saluting; "I picked it up in his room as I passed the door, and was going to give it to him." Which was strictly true, though not, exactly, the whole truth. For which omission Alastir's awe of the colonel must be his excuse.

"Give it to me." The colonel was a good officer, and a kindly man enough; but absolute power does not, as a rule, develop the gentler traits of a man's character. If the colonel had a fault, it was a fondness for practical jokes, which was a trifle undignified, and more than a trifle unfair, since his victims could not retaliate. In the present instance he could not resist the chance of "baiting a Papist."

Ludovic had missed his Scapular before he reached the mess-room, and made a little act of contrition for his disloyalty to our Lady. Then, by-and-bye, our Lady called on him to prove himself Her knight, in very deed.

Dinner was nearly over. It was the last night on shore, and several toasts had been drunk "in bumpers." Presently the colonel called out, "Silence, if you please, gentlemen," as if about to propose another toast. Instead of which, he held up Ludovic's Scapular on the end of his sword, and asked, somewhat contemptuously, "whose rag of popery is this?"

There was a general laugh, as if the colonel had said something excruciatingly funny.—It is, of course, always best to laugh at your superior officer's jokes—if you can. Then, in the midst of the laughter Ludovic rose, passed quickly round the table, stood near the colonel's chair, and said, so that all could hear him, "Mine, Sir."

The colonel threw the Scapular to him, with a laugh; less contemptuous, this time, and more good-natured.

Ludovic, standing where every man in the room could see him, crossed himself, kissed "our Lady's badge," and put it on over his uniform; then went quickly back to his place. Thereupon, so do all true men love pluck, moral or physical, the laugh changed to a ringing rousing cheer. They called him "the knight of the Scapular," ever after, but it was meant as much as a title of honor, as in jest, and Ludovic knew that it was so.

III. OUR LADY'S GUERDON.

Winter in the Crimea; have we not all read the tale of hardships, bravely borne, of gallant deeds that Britain loves to place among her records of honor? Ludovic, "the knight of the Scapular," as his comrades loved to call him, had shown, many a time and oft, that he possessed physical courage, as well as moral. He was, indeed, his father's son, a brave, loyal, Catholic Highlander. A day came in which he was to show a physical heroism, as great as the moral heroism he had shown, when, in the crowded mess-room, he had proved himself our Lady's knight indeed. Nor did She ever forget her knight; when does She ever forget those who serve Her truly?

It was Ludovic's turn to be on duty in the trenches. It might mean death for him, as it had meant for others, but that thought did not trouble him. He had been to Confession and to Communion the day before; if he died, would not our Lady help him in that last moment? It would break his mother's heart; cousin Jessie's too, for ought he knew; but they would both be proud of him, both pray for him. So he went to almost certain death as a Catholic should, without fear, yet knowing what death means. Such sudden death is, surely, sudden glory.

How it all happened, he hardly knew