

IN MEMORIAM.

CELA'S, BERNST SMITH, DIED APRIL 23RD, 1881.

In the graveyard softly sleeping, Where the express breeches wave, Laid out in the narrow grave...

REDMOND O'DONNELL OR LE CHASSEUR D'AFRIQUE. PART II.

CHAPTER XXIX.—CONTINUED.

She bears a footstep approaching up the avenue, but no one in whom she is the least interested ever comes to Scarborough...

"Good day to you, Lady Cecil!" he lifts his hat as though they had parted yesterday...

"I would have tried it six years ago, if Redmond O'Donnell had given me the chance. I would have tried it eight months ago, if his pride had not stood between us..."

"I do think, I think you want to talk me into saying no—you fear I may take you at your word. Very well, sir—I say it. I am deeply honored by your offer, and beg to decline..."

"I am glad," he says, "that you are so glad to see me back at least, to say you were glad to see me back at least..."

"The last person we expect to see is very often the first person we do see," O'Donnell answered, still eminently self-possessed...

"You sister is well, I hope?" "My sister is quite well, thank you."

"I preferred to come alone. Other people may be very anxious to see you as well as Rose—may they not? And you know I never like third persons during my interview with you..."

"I hope so," she answered softly. "Your father is in Germany, Lady Cecil?" "He is always in Germany of late—he seems to make it his home. Poor papa!"

"Very well, and strongly matrimonially inclined. He is down with me and gone to the Silver Rose to see his old sweetheart. I be-

lieve a marriage will follow in the fullness of time, and so you are governess to the twins, terrible drudgery, I should fancy—and practice drawing in the intervals. Let me have another look at my portrait—clever, perhaps, as a work of art, but, as I said before, absurdly flattered as a likeness. You do think of me then sometimes, Queenie?"

"The old pet name! A faint rose-pink flush deepened all over the fair, peerless face. "I think of all my friends—what an opinion you must have of my memory, and I have a private gallery of their portraits. Please give me my sketch back—it is easier for you to criticize than to do better."

"A rule which applies to all criticism, I fancy. I'll give you the sketch back on one condition—that I may give you myself with it!" "Captain O'Donnell!" "Lady Cecil!"

"The faint carnation was vivid scarlet now. She started up, but he caught both her hands and held her. The bright blue eyes, full of piercing, laughing light, looked up into the startled brown ones. Not much fierceness—not much sternness there now."

"What do you mean, sir! Let me go. Here comes the children—pray, let me go!" "Let them come!" cried this reckless young Irishman. "Let all the world come if it likes. I shall not let you go until you promise. You like me excessively—oh, it's of no use denying it—you know you do, but not one thousandth part as I like you. And I want you to marry me. It will not be so very much more stupid than vegetating at Scanswood and teaching the nice parts of speech to Pansy and Pearl. Come, Queenie! We have been in love with each other pretty nearly seven years. They say the certain cure for love is—matrimony. Let us try it."

"Not until you promise, Queenie, I mean it. I have come all the way from New Orleans to say this. I love you—be my wife. Since you can bear up under the drudgery of a governess' life you can endure to be the wife of a poor man. The question is—will you try?"

"I would have tried it six years ago, if Redmond O'Donnell had given me the chance. I would have tried it eight months ago, if his pride had not stood between us. I am not afraid of poverty—perhaps because I was born to it—poverty and servitude were my birthright. Does Captain O'Donnell forget princely blood flows in his veins, and in mine—that of a waiting-maid?"

"That is meant as a reproach. Well, my still-thackeriness in the past deserves it. But think again, Queenie—how you have been brought up—that luxury has been the very breath you draw—think what marriage with a poor man means. Six stuffy rooms—one grimy maid of all work—one silk dress a year—the carriage—no opera—no society—the beautiful and poetical of life a dream of the past. Think!"

"I do think, I think you want to talk me into saying no—you fear I may take you at your word. Very well, sir—I say it. I am deeply honored by your offer, and beg to decline. Ho draw her to him—close, closer. If those innocent twins are anywhere in the visible horizon now, they stand a strong chance of being amazed and scandalized."

"Queenie, my darling—whom I never hoped to hold, to kiss like this—you really love me well enough to endure poverty and obscurity for my sake. You will be my wife and never repent. You will go with me and resign everything?" "Everything! Oh, Redmond! I shall have you!"

"And then—the twins are drawing nearer—their howls can be heard through the trees, Lady Cecil has some consideration for their artless youth, if Le Beau Chasseur has none, and laughing, and blushing, and looking—oh, so lovely!—withdraws to the extreme end of the rustic seat."

"No, Captain O'Donnell—not one inch nearer—I insist upon it! My hearing is excellent—any remarks you may have to make I can hear at this distance perfectly well. And the other performance is not necessary. Pearl and Pansy are coming, and you know the proverb—'Little pitchers have great ears.'"

"Confound Pearl and Pansy! Queenie, you are sure you will never repent marrying a penniless soldier of fortune!"

CHARLIE STUART AND HIS SISTER.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING.

CHAPTER I.

BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM ELECT.

Firelight talling on soft velvet carpet, where white lily buds trail along azure ground; on chairs of white-polished wood that glitters like ivory, with puffy seats of blue satin; on blue and gilt panelled walls; on a wonderfully carved oaken ceiling; on sweeping draperies of blue satin and white lace; on half a dozen lovely pictures; on an open piano; and last of all, on the handsome, angry face of a girl who stands before—Inez Catheron.

"The month is August—the day the 29th—Miss Catheron has good reason to remember it to the last day of her life. But, whether the August sun blazes, or the January winds howl, the great rooms of Catheron Royals are ever chilly. So on the white-tiled hallway of the blue drawing-room, this summer evening, a coal fire flickers and falls, and the mistress of Catheron Royals stands before it, an angry flush burning deep red on either dusky cheek, an angry frown contracting her straight black brows."

"The mistress of Catheron Royals—the biggest, oldest, queerest, grandest place in all sunny Cheshire—this slim, dark girl of nineteen, for three years past the bride-elect of Sir Victor Catheron, baronet, the last of his Saxon race and name, the lord of all these sunny acres, this noble Norman pile, the smiling village of Catheron below. The master of a stately park in Devon, a moor, and 'bothy' in the highlands, a villa on the Arno, a gem of a cottage in the Isle of Wight. 'A darling of the gods,' young, handsome, hearty, and best of all, with twenty thousand a year."

"She is his bride elect. In her dark way she is very handsome. She is to be married to Sir Victor early in the next month, and she is as much in love with him as it is at all possible to be. A fair fate surely. And yet while the August night shuts down, while the wind whistles in the trees, while the long fingers of the elm, just outside the window, tap in a chesely way on the pane, she stands here, flushed, angry, impatient, and sullen, her handsome lips set in a tight, rigid line."

"She is very dark all at times. Her cousin Victor tells her, laughingly, she is an absolute nigger when in one of her silent rages. She has jet-black hair, and big, brilliant, Spanish eyes. She is Spanish. Her dead mother was a Castilian, and that mother has left her her Spanish name, her beautiful, passionate Spanish eyes, her hot passionate Spanish heart. In Old Castle Inez was born; and when in her tenth year her English father followed his wife to the grave, Inez came home to Catheron Royals, to reign there, a little imperious, hot-tempered Morisco princess ever since."

"She did not come alone. A big boy of twelve, with a short head of blue-black hair, two wild, glittering black eyes, and a diabolically handsome face came with her. It was her only brother Juan, an imp incarnate from his cradle. He did not remain long. To the unspeakable relief of the neighbourhood for miles around, he had vanished as suddenly as he had come, and for years was seen no more."

"A Moorish Princess! It is her cousin and lover's favourite name for her, and it fits well. There is a certain barbaric splendour about her as she stands here in the firelight, in her trailing purple silk, in the cross of rubies and the fine gold that burns on her bosom, in the yellow, perfumy rose in her hair, looking stately, and beautiful, and dreadfully out of temper."

"The big, lonesome house is as still as a tomb. Outside the wind is rising, and the heavy patter, patter of the rain beats on the glass. That, and the light fall of the cinders in the polished grate, are the only sounds to be heard."

"A clock on the mantel strikes seven. She has not stirred for nearly an hour, but she looks up now, her black eyes full of passionate anger, passionate impatience."

"Seven!" she says, in a suppressed sort of voice; "and he should have been here at six. What if he should defy me?—what if he does not come, after all?"

"She can remain still no longer. She walks across the room, and she walks as only Spanish women do. She draws back one of the window-curtains, and leans out into the night. The crushed sweetness of the rain-beaten roses floats up to her in the wet darkness. Nothing to be seen but the vague tossing of the trees, nothing to be heard but the sighing of the wind, nothing to be felt but the fast and still falling of the rain."

makes her lovely. The eyes light, the lips part—she takes her step forward, all anger, all fear, all neglect forgotten—a girl in love going to meet her lover. The door is flung wide by an impetuous hand, and wet and splashed, and tall and smiling, Sir Victor Catheron stands before her.

"My dearest Inez!" He comes forward, puts his arms around her, and touches his blonde mustache to her flushed cheek. "My dearest coz, I'm awfully glad to see you again, and looking so uncommonly well too." He puts up his eye-glass to make sure of this fact, then drops it. "Uncommonly well," he repeats; "give you my word I never saw you looking half a quarter so handsome before in my life. Ah! why can't we all be Moorish princesses, and wear purple silks and ivory roses?"

"He flings himself into an easy chair before the fire; throws back his blonde head, and stretches forth his boots to the blaze. "An hour after time, am I not? But blame the railway people—don't blame me. Beautifully cold weather for the last week of August—cold as Iceland and raining cats and dogs; the very dickens of a storm, I can tell you."

"He gives the fire a poke, the light leaps up and illumines his handsome face. He is very like his picture—a little older—a little worn-looking, and with man's 'crowning glory,' a mustache. The girl has moved a little away from him, the flush of 'beauty's bright transient glow' has died out of her face, the hard, angry look has come back. That careless kiss, that easy, cousinly embrace, have told their story. A moment ago her heart beat high with hope—to the day of her death it never beat like that again."

"He doesn't look at her; he gazes at the fire instead, and talks with the hurry of a nervous man. The handsome face is a very effeminate face, and not even the light, carefully trained, carefully waxed mustache can hide the weak, irresolute mouth, the delicate, characterless chin. While he talks carelessly and quickly, while his slim white fingers loop and unloop his watch chain, in the blue eyes fixed upon the fire there is an uneasy look of nervous fear. And into the keeping of this man the girl with the dark, powerful face has given her heart, her fate!"

"It seems no end of good to be at home again," Sir Victor Catheron says, as if afraid of that brief pause. "You've no idea, Inez, how uncommonly familiar and jolly this blue room, this red fire, looked a moment ago, as I stepped out of the darkness and rain. It brings back the old times—this used to be my favorite morning-room—the good old mother's picture, 'and summer and winter a fire always burned here, as now. And you, Inez, cara mia, with your gypsy face, most familiar of all!"

"She moves over to the mantel. It is very low; she leans one arm upon it, looks steadily at him, and speaks at last: "I am glad Sir Victor Catheron can remember the old times, can still recall his mother, has a slight regard left for Catheron Royals, and am humbly grateful for his recollection of his gypsy cousin. From his conduct of late it was hardly to have been expected."

"It is coming," thinks Sir Victor, with an inward groan; "and, O Lord! what a row it is going to be. When Inez shuts her lips up in that tight line, and snaps her black eyes in that unpleasant way, I know it to my cost, it means 'war to the knife.' I'll be routed with dreadful slaughter, and Inez's motto is ever, 'Woe to the conqueror!' Well, here goes!"

"He looks up at her, a good-humored smile on his good-looking face. "Humbly grateful for my recollection of you! My dear Inez! I don't know what you mean. As for your absence—" "As for your absence," she interrupts, "you were to have been here, if your memory will serve you, on the first of June. It is now the close of August. Every day of that absence has been an added insult to me. Even now you would not have been here if I had not written you a letter you dare not neglect—sent a command you dare not disobey. You are here to-night because you dare not stay away."

"Some of the bold blood of the stern old Saxon race from which he sprung is in his veins still. He looks at her full, still, unflinching. "Dare not!" he repeats. "You use strong language, Inez. But then you have an excellent sort of nature, and were ever inclined to hyperbole; and it is a lady's privilege to talk."

"And a man's to act. But I begin to think Sir Victor Catheron is something less than a man. The Catheron blood has bred many an outlaw, many a bitter, bad man, and to-day I begin to think it has bred something infinitely worse—a traitor and a coward!"

"He half springs up, his eyes flashing, then falls back, looks at the fire again, and laughs. "Meaning me?" "Meaning you." "Strong language once more—you assert your prerogative royally my handsome cousin. From whom did you inherit that two-edged tongue of yours, Inez? I wonder? Your Castilian mother, surely; the women of our house were never shrews. And even you, my dear, may go a little too far. Will you drop vituperation and explain? How have I been traitor and coward? It is well we should understand each other fully."

whisper; "was to have been—Victor, does that mean it never to be?" "He turns away, shame, remorse, fear in his averted face. He holds the back of the chair with one hand, she clings to the other as though it held her last hope in life."

"Take time," she says, in the same slow, whispering way. "I can wait. I have waited so long, what does a few minutes more matter now? But think well before you speak—there is more at stake than you know of. My whole future life hangs on your words. A woman's life. Have you ever thought what that implies? 'Was to have been,' you said. Does that mean it never to be?"

"Still no reply. He holds the back of the chair, his face averted, a criminal before his judge. "And while you think," she goes on, in that slow, sweet voice, "let me recall the past to you remember, Victor, when I and Juan came here from Spain? Do you remember me? I recall you as plainly at this moment as though it were but yesterday—a little, faxed-haired, blue-eyed boy in violet velvet, unlike any child I had ever seen before. I saw a woman with a face like an angel, who took me in her arms, and kissed me, and cried over me, for my father's sake. We grew up together, Victor, you and I, such happy, happy years, and I was sixteen, you twenty. And all that time you had my whole heart. Then came our first great sorrow, your mother's death."

"She pauses a moment. Still he stands silent, but his left hand has gone up and covers his face. "You remember that last night, Victor—the night she died. No need to ask you; whatever you may forget, you are not likely to forget that. We knelt together by her bedside. It was as this is, a stormy summer night. Outside, the rain beat and the wind blew; inside, the silence of death was everywhere. We knelt alone in the dimly-lit room, side by side, to receive her last blessing—her dying wish. Victor, my cousin, do you recall what that wish was?"

"She holds out her arms to him, all her heart breaking forth in the cry. But he will neither look nor stir. "With her dying hands she joined ours, her dying eyes looking at you. With her dying lips she spoke to you: 'Inez is dearer to me than all the world, Victor, except you. She must never leave the world alone. My son, you love her—promise me you will cherish and protect her always. She loves you as no one else ever will. Promise me, Victor, that in three years from to-night you will make her your wife.' These were her words. And you took her hand, covered it with tears and kissed and promised."

"We buried her," Inez went on, "and we parted. You went up to Oxford; I went over to a Paris pensionnat. In the hour of our parting we went up together hand in hand to her room. We kissed the pillow where her dying head had lain; we knelt by her bedside as we had done that other night. You placed this ring upon my finger; sleeping or waking it has never left it since, and you repeated your vow, that that night three years, on the twenty-third of September, I should be your wife."

"She lifts the betrothal ring to her lips, and kisses it. "Dear little ring," she says, softly, "it has been my one comfort all these years. Through all your coldness, all your neglect for the last year and a half, I have looked at it, and known you would never break your pledged word to the living and the dead."

"I came home from school a year ago. You were not here to meet and welcome me. You never came. You fixed the first of June for your coming, and you broke your word. Do I tire you with all these details, Victor? But I must speak to-night. It will be for the last time—you will never give cause again. Of the whispered slanders that have reached me I do not speak; I do not believe them. Weak you may be,ickle you may be, but you are a gentleman of royal race and blood; you will keep your pledged troth. O, forgive me, Victor! Why do you make me say such things to you? I hate myself for them, but you neglect has driven me nearly wild. What have I done? Again she stretches forth her hands in eloquent appeal. "See! I love you. What more can I say? I forgive you all the past; I ask no questions. I believe nothing of the horrible stories they try to tell me. Only come back to me. If I lose you I shall die."

"Her face is transfigured as she speaks—her hands still stretched out. "O Victor, come!" she says; "let the past be dead and forgotten. My darling, come back!"

"But he shrinks away as those soft hands touch him, and pushes her off. "Let me go!" he cries; "don't touch me, Inez! It can never be. You don't know what you ask!"

"He stands confronting her now, pale as herself, with eyes aghast. She recalls like one who has received a blow. "Can never be?" she repeats. "Can never be?" he answers. "I am what you have called me, Inez, a traitor and a coward. I stand here perjured before God, and you, and my dead mother. It can never be. I can never marry you. I am married already!"

"The blow has fallen—the horrible, brutal blow. She stands looking at him—she hardly seems to comprehend. There is a pause—the firelight flickers, they hear the rain lashing the windows, the sighing of the gale in the trees. Then Victor Catheron bursts forth: "I don't ask you to forgive me—it is past all that. I make no excuse; the deed is done. I met her, I met her and I loved her. She has been my wife for sixteen months, and—there is a son. Inez, don't look at me like that! I am a scoundrel, I know, but—"

ful, though petite figure. She is a blonde of the blondest type; her hair is like spun gold, and wonderful to relate, no Yellow Wash, no Golden Fluid, has ever touched its shining abundance. Her eyes are bluer than the September sky over the Russell Square chimney pots; her nose is neither aquiline nor Grecian, but it is very nice; her forehead is low, her mouth and chin "morsels for the gods." The little figure is deliciously rounded and ripe; in twenty years from now she may be a heavy British matron, with a yard and a half wide waist—at eighteen years old she is, in one word, perfection."

"Her dress is perfection also. She wears a white India muslin, a marvel of delicate embroidery and exquisite texture, and a great deal of Valenciennes trimming. She has a pearl and turquoise star fastening her lace collar, pearl and turquoise drops in her ears, and a half dozen diamond rings on her plump, boneless fingers. A blue ribbon knots up the loose yellow hair, and you may search the big city from end to end, and find nothing fairer, fresher, sweeter than Ethel, Lady Catheron."

"If ever a gentleman and a baronet had a fair and sufficient excuse for the folly of a low marriage, surely Sir Victor Catheron has it in this fairy wife—for it is a "low marriage" of the most heinous type. Just seven months ago, sauntering idly along the summer sands, looking listlessly at the summer sea, thinking dreamily that this time next year his freedom would be over, and his cousin Inez his lawful owner and possessor, his eyes had fallen on that lovely blonde face, that wealth of shining hair, and for all time—aye, for eternity—his fate was fixed. The dark image of Inez as his wife faded out of his mind never to return more."

"The earthly name of this dazzling divinity in yellow ringlets and pink muslin was Ethel Margaret—Dobb!"

"Dobb! It might have disenchanted a less rapturous adorer—it fell powerless on Sir Victor Catheron's infatuated ear."

"It was at Margate this meeting took place—that most popular and most vulgar of all English watering places; and the Cheshire baronet had looked just once at the peach-bloom face, the blue eyes of laughing light, the blushing, dimpling, seventeen-year-old face, and fallen in love at once and forever."

"He was a very impetuous young man, a very selfish and unstable young man, with whom all his life, to wish was to have. He had been spoiled by a doting mother from his cradle, spoiled by obsequious servants, spoiled by Inez Catheron's boundless worship. And he wished for this; rose of the rose-bud garden of girls as he had never wished for anything in his two-and-twenty years of life. As a man in a dream he went through that magic ceremony, "Miss Dobb, allow me to present my friend, Sir Victor Catheron," and they were free to look at each other, talk to each other, fall in love with each other as much as they pleased. As in a dream he lingered by her side three golden hours. As in a dream he said, "Good afternoon," and walked back to his hotel smoking a cigar, the world glorified above and about him. As in a dream they told him she was the only daughter of an old heiress of a well-to-do London soap-boiler, and he did not wake."

"She was the daughter of a soap-boiler. The paternal manufactory was in the grimiest part of the grimy metropolis; but, remarkable to say, she had as much innate pride, self-respect, and delicacy as though 'all the blood of all the Howards' flowed in those blue veins."

"He wasn't a bad sort of young fellow, as young fellows go, and frantically in love. There was but one question to ask, just eight days after this—"Will you be my wife?"—but one answer, of course—"Yes."

"But one answer, of course! How would it be possible for a soap-boiler's daughter to refuse a baronet? And yet his heart had beaten with a fear that turned his dizzy and sick as he asked it; for she had shrunk away for one instant, frightened by his fiery wooing, and the sweet face had grown suddenly and startlingly pale. Is it not the rule that all maidens shall blush when their lovers ask the question of questions?"

"The rosy brightness, the smiles, the dimples, all faded out of this face, and a white look of sudden fear crossed it. The startled eyes had shrunk from his eager, flushed face and looked over the wide sea. For fully five minutes she never spoke or stirred. To his dying day that hour was with him—his passionate love, his sick, horrible fear, his dizzy rapture, when she spoke at last, only one word—"yes." To his dying day he saw her as he saw her then, in her summery muslin dress, her gypsy hat, the pale, troubled look chasing the color from the drooping face."

"But the answer was "yes." Was he not a baronet? Was she not a well-trained English girl? And the ecstasy of pride, joy, of that city soap-boiler's family, who shall paint? "awake my muse" and—no! it passeth all telling. They bowed down before him (figuratively), this good British tradesman and his fat wife, and worshipped him. They burned incense at his shrine; they adored the ground he walked on; they snubbed their neighbors, and held their chairs at an altitude never attained by the family of Dobb before. And in six weeks Miss Ethel Dobb became Lady Catheron."

"It was the quietest, the dullest, the most secret of weddings—not a soul present except Papa and Mamma Dobb, a military swell in the Grenadier Guards—Pythias, at present, to Sir Victor's Damon—the parson, and the pew-opener. He was madly in love, but he was ashamed of the family soap-boiling, and he was afraid of his cousin Inez."