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GERTRUDE MANNERING

A TALE OF SACRIFICE BY FRANCES NOBLE

CHAPTER XXVII.—CONTINUED A few hours later, between five and six o'clock, Gerty awoke, and asked at once for Father Walmsley; and while her father went to sum-mon him Rupert arranged the little mon him Rupert arranged the little altar in her room, as it had been now three or four times since her return home from Beachdown. Im-pelled by some irresistible feeling, Lady Hunter begged to remain in the room, and Gerty's face was lighted up with a smile as she heard her decision.

"She has never been so near to God before as she will be now," she whispered to her father and Rupert, as Lady Hunter knelt, as they did.

by the bed.

Then with her father's arm supporting her, and after a few earnest prayers, Gerty received her Lord into her heart—Jesus, for whose love she had given up so much of earthly love and joy. Father Walmsley let her pray silently for a few minutes, and then began to make aloud for her the thanks-giving after Communion, during which Lady Hunter was motionless with her head bowed in her hands. Then suddenly, as he paused a minute, a change came over Gerty's

gasped for breath in act assessments.

"Papa," she whispered, "it—is—coming—now, the end! I feel it—papa—kiss me—and say good-by! Father Walmsley, I am not—to—see—him! God is—calling—me—his—will—be done!" And then, with the deadly faint coming over the again as she struggled for her again as she struggled for

breath, she lay speechless with her head on her father's breast.

Whilst they did as had been ordered, Lady Hunter carrying out the doctor's directions, as Mr. Mannering was too paralyzed to do Father Welmalay whispered so, Father Walmsley whispered to the latter and Rupert, and a minute or two later was adminis-tering to the dying girl the Church's last holy consolation of Extreme Unction, with an inward prayer of thanksgiving that time was granted for it. She seemed to revive a little as he finished, and they knew she was conscious by the sweet smile on her pale lips.

"Father Walmsley, the crucifix—give it to me," she said. And he placed it in her hands—the one she wished to have there at the last, the one which was to be given to Stanley Graham—asking her as he did so if she suffered much.
"A - little, but-the - joy - is

greater!" she whispered, the beautiful smile breaking over her face again as she looked up for an instant at her father, and then with one gentle sigh lay back quite still in his arms. For a minute, only Father Walmsley knew that she was dead, that the pure spirit had passed away to God, to the heaven which it had so well won; then, as the rest slowly realized it too, as even Mr. Mannering, in his speech-less, tearless agony was forced to less, tearless agony was forced to do, the good priest, with trembling voice, repeated aloud the prayers for the soul just departed. Then, with only Rupert's and Lady Hunter's sobs breaking the stillness, he waited for Mr. Mannering to he waited fo grow more able to realize that his darling was dead, as the little hand grew colder each moment in his grasp; and in a few minutes, still

upon his knees, he spoke:
"Mr. Mannering, now that she is dead who was so dear to us allto you more than all the world. your most precious treasure—now that God has called her to himself while yet he dwelt sacramentally in her heart, I may tell you what, in deference to her sweet humility, I might not tell you while she lived. Months since, whilst her trouble was still fresh, when she felt her bodily health just beginning to fail, she offered up her young life for Stanley Graham's conversion, with a perfect spirit of self-sacrifice and submission to God's will, feeling, somehow, as she told me, though then I made light of it purposely, that if God heard her prayers for this conversion, he would want Stanley Graham in some way for his own service, for some nobler destiny than earthly love and marriage. Hence she, in making this offering, drove all selfish human motive from her prayer for him who had been her earthly idol, being ready to rejoice to be taken away in God's own good time. And even now, when her prayer was so wonderfully answered, when God wonderfully answered, when God accepted the pure offering of her innocent life, she yet made a further sacrifice, in the fear lest anything of mere earthly love and regret should tarnish her thoughts at the last; for with his other abundant graces God gave her that of true, earnest humility and dis of true, earnest humility and distrust of herself. She prayed that if He should will, this last joy might be denied her—of living to see again the object of all her prayers; that He would make it easy and best for Stanley Graham himself to come and find that the pain of parting was spared him, his ring upon her finger to be the silent token of their reunion. Mr. Mannering, even in your terrible

with God."

And now, from even the parchedup eyes of that bereaved father,
that bowed old man, lately so hale
and strong, the tears flowed freely—
the kind, relieving tears—as he
gazed on his darling's peaceful,
dead face, with a feeling in his
heart, broken almost as it was with
its grief, that he could not have
called her back, that he could
cherish no selfish yearning to have
his treasure again on earth, away
from her eternal rest in the blessed
home with God, where she was
praying for and awaiting him. praying for and awaiting him.

CHAPTER XXVIII

before they knew anything of the secret of her death. They put a wreath of the purest white roses upon her brow, and on her breast and about the pillow they placed lilies, fitting emblems of her maidenhood and sweet virginity. minute, a change came over Gerty's face, which quivered in pain as she gasped for breath in her father's arms.

"Papa," she whispered, "it—is—
"Papa," she whispered, "it—is—
and bade them also to let the ring they observed upon her finger be they observed upon her finger be they observed upon her finger be left conspicuously to view, so as to be seen at once by any one entering the room. They obeyed him, and then in a few impressive words he rewarded them by telling them what was no longer a secret now, but a beautiful district fact then in a few impressive words he rewarded them by telling them what was no longer a secret now, but a beautiful, edifying fact. the story of their dear young lady's love and self-sacrifice; of the wonderful conversion granted, as if by miracle, to her prayers; and that he who was to have been her the did not secret and the secret and that he who was to have been her husband, but whom she had renounced for God's sake, was coming that very day, to find her dead with his ring upon her finger—the silent token of forgiveness she might not speak in words. Then, when all the household had visited her, their sweet little saint laid ready for her last resting-place, when her father prayed long and silently by her side for strength silently by her side for strength and silently by her side for strength and silently by her side for strength silently silently substitute so noiselessiy.

The old nun smiled. "It would be a vision in keeping with its surroundings," she observed. "Westminster is very wonderful, but it is wonderful in its own way. As a matter of fact, I do know someone who once saw a vision here—in the station, if you like. We have just time enough."

Oh, she thought, to be undisturbed, and to be able to plunge into the mystery that was being shown. Oh, to lead a life like those lives symbolized so wonderfully by the self-consuming candles. Oh, to be gazing through the blinding brightness of prayer at the Divine Cloud. She felt her heart getting bigger should be a vision in keeping with its surroundings," she observed. "Westminster is very wonderful, but it is wond way. As a matter of fact, I do know someone who once saw a vision here—in the strength she and the substitution is sown way. As a matter of fact, I do know someone who once saw a vision here—in the strength she and the substitution is sown way. As a matter of fact, I do know some if by miracle, to her prayers; and that he who was to have been her and resignation, the spirit of agitating expectation seemed to come upon them all, as though they could do nothing now but wait for the arrival of him to whom the blow of her death meant so much blow of her death meant so much more than even to that bereaved

more than even to that bereaved father.

It needed all Lady Hunter's sweet persuasion, all Rupert's holy consolation, to calm Mr. Mannering's agitation, as he moved restlessly about the rooms so desolate to him now, looking every minute at the clock to see if the hour drew near at which they expected Stanley Graham.

Graham.

"Rupert," he said two or three times that long afternoon, "pray that when I see him the spirit of which she thanked Providence was

drawn blinds as he drove up, but refused yet to realize what they must

own into them for a moment.

Then with a terrible groan he

turned away, and leaned upon the mantelpiece in his old attitude, with his head bowed upon his hand. "When was it?" he asked at last, still with that hollow tone.
"This moorning, about six o'clock, was harmily, and an preparefully." very happily and so peacefully, Stanley," she replied, in a broken

voice.
''My God! am I not punished too

position.

Father Walmsley entered just then, in time to hear that agonized exclamation, and approaching Stan-ley he laid his hand gently upon his

seeing it was a priest who addressed him, he at once changed his look

to feel, almost with certainty, that this last sacrifice was enough, sufficient to purify whatever of earthly stain remained, and that our little Gerty is already in heaven with God."

And now, from even the parchedup eyes of that bereaved father, that bowed old man, lately so hale and strong, the tears flowed freely—the kind, relieving tears—as he gazed on his darling's peaceful,

Gerty must have loved him, how he had won such a deep idolatry from the sensitive heart now so still upstairs in its hard-won rest; he felt clearly, old man as he was and detached from all mere earthly affection, what it must have cost her to make her sacrifice so promptly and willingly. There was silence for a minute, and then Lady Hunter gently went closer again to A few hours later they had made

> that she would not have been long-lived, even if she had been always perfectly happy. If she had become your wife, Stanley, you might have lost her very soon, by the first illness that came to her. And as it was, Stanley, she begged so hard that you might never be let to

TO BE CONTINUED

BY THIS WE KNOW

"I wonder if anyone has ever

into the story:

"It was told to me by the woman
to whom it happened," she explained. "She was employed in an

bright August Day was beginning way to put it?—about a week and to decline, they heard the sound of was feeling what the young ladies wheels through the closed blinds, employed in her office call 'fed up,' and a minute or two later Stanley Graham was shown into the breakfast - room, where Lady Hunter, with her heart beating terribly, had gone first alone to receive him. He had seen the days we hind as he draws we had a minute or two later of the short of it, out of her head as soon as possible. Sometimes this was exceedmean; meeting Lady Hunter's gaze with one of almost wild entreaty, "Lady Hunter! I am not too late?" And the hollow, agonized tone struck to her beating heart.

"My poor Stanley!" And she held out both her hands, taking his own into them for a moment. shallowness of the interests that she heard discussed. There was one young person who especially got on her nerves. She was a Catholic, my friend discovered, but not one of the type which visits the Cathedral office. As for the Vision, it had in lunch hour unless there is something to be got out of St. Anthony. My 'epicure' found her no better My 'epicure' found her no better than the others—rather worse, in fact, for she was the biggest chatter-

"On this Friday evening my into the Cathedral that she had come to the end of her tether. She had her book with the tit was the statue, she told had her book with the tit. had her book with the Little Office, but the other office, the one that "Mr. Graham," he said kindly and solemnly, "you are a Catholic now already in heart, by God's mercy granted to her unceasing prayers; you can understand how that which, in your present bitter grief, seems so cruel, may yet be to you a source of holiest consola-

silent token of their reunion. Mr. Mannering, even in your terrible loss, your intense grief, you must feel what holy consolation is yours, to know that you have reared a little angel for God, that you have reared this day given back to Him another sweet saint for heaven; for I seem where the silent token of their reunion. Mr. Mannering, even in your terrible and attitude to one of respect and of the respect and attitude to one of respect and the respect and the respect and the respect and attitude to one of respect and the respect and attitude to one of respect and the respect and attitude to one of respect and the respect and the respect and the respect and the resp

heart, or you would not speak to me of consolation."

And, as Father Walmsley listened to his words, as he looked on the noble face, its beautiful features so stamped with stern anguish, he understood still more fully how Gerty must have loved him, how he had won such a deep idolatry from the sensitive heart now so still uptained in its hard, won rest; he fall the sensitive heart now so still uppered dimly having heep told that

'She moved over and made her way into the little chapel, realizing its nearness to the Blessed Sacra-ment in that corner, so like St. A few hours later they had made her ready for the grave, three young girls from the village, who had been special favorites of Gerty's, having come with many tears to beg to be allowed to help in the sweet, sad work, bringing with them choice, beautiful flowers to be laid about her remains, which they persisted instinctively in reverencing as those of a saint even before they knew anything of the lights. The chapel was empty and gloriously quiet. My contempla-tive sank down on her knees with a sigh of satisfaction and gazed through the candle-haze into the blackness beyond. At once a thought entered her mind, alert for outside impressions—she had asked our Lord to provide her 'points,' you will remember. Here was a perfect symbol of the mystic's vision. The blinding light, the blackness which was the Divine Cloud of unknowing. She knelt there enthralled. God was indeed telling her something. It fascinated her to try and make out images in the darkness. Once it seemed to her that the shadows were shaping themselves into some thing, but as she peered into the gloom a sound distracted her. Someone had slipped in quietly. Now the intruder was leaving, not and bigger within her. Then there came a great pain—a feeling of rebellion against the things which interfered with this. God, thought she, had yet to explain why He was tantalizing her with visions of what was being withheld from her. She shot out the challenge into the 'dark Cloud.' Then she returned to her contemplation. She may have been on the verge of—shall we say 'abnormal state of prayer?'—when there was another interruption. This time it was a real intrusion. Someone entered the chapel, intent on putting up a candle in the shin-ing row. My friend buried her face in her hands and listened with throbbing nerves as the pennies rattled into the tin box below. Then she drew her head upward and gazed into the distant shadow, across the stooping figure of the intruder. expostulating with the One behind the 'Cloud.' She drew her breath in quickly and continued gazing. The darkness had rolled away, and now in the pale shadow was distinctly outlined a majestic white figure with outstretched hands. "For about a quarter of a

minute she went on gazing. (The intruder—it was a woman—was still bending over the box containing the candles, some of which she was endeavoring to extract.) Then as she scanned the white-robed figure that stood out from its dark background, she instinctively bowed

"There was a sharp and sudden jog at her elbow. 'Say a little prayer for the fine day,' said a voice in her ear. She looked up. The lights were blazing unobscured. The intruder was standing upright at her side. It was Betty of the

the legend.
"Betty smiled in a friendly way 'I've put up five candles to the Sacred Heart for a fine day,' she "My God! am I not punished too heavily?" he groaned, as he leaned there still in that bowed-down on the river on Saturdays.or to Kew Sacred Heart for a fine day, she said. 'Isn't it a lovely statue! You can't see it now because of the condition.

glare of the candles."
"But I did see it just now," my
friend found herself saying. Of 'Oh,' Betty said, 'that's because

to you a source of holiest consolation."

"Consolation!" burst quickly from Stanley, heeding and knowing not who spoke, as he looked up with the old sternness on his face; then spoken the probability of a fine next day her head, as though they had been spoken: "He who loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can face beamed. "I've got it verbance with two gods whom he seeth not?"

Then my friend closed the book tim, she said." "My club girls keep me up to the latest.

"Then my friend closed the book would be if it were wet tomorrow. me up to the latest.

"Then my friend closed the book and tried meditation. That was even more hopeless. Betty and the value of the latest and the latest and tried meditation. That was even more hopeless. Betty and the value of the latest and the

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