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FLORENCE O'NEILL,

The Rose of St. Germain's; OR, THE SIEGE OF LIMERICK.

BY AGNES M. STEWART, Author of "Life in the Cloister," "Grace O'Halloran," etc.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—CONTINUED.

"Is this the end of his health?" he said, with a contemptuous glance round the room, adding, "a clear case of lunacy that, I should imagine."

"I longed to let him see that the days of purification were passing over my head. Of course, my poor father retained no recollection of him. I saw his eyes fill with tears when I led him in."

"My husband sent the boy to Soho with a letter to our landlord, bidding him bring to Highgate the servant and baby, and he himself went to the nearest magistrate, laid the case before him and gave the number of the hackney coach, so that some of the property might be traced."

"I moved about his room after he was in bed. I heard him speak, and, turning round, I saw his hands joined. I listened; he was saying the Our Father, but not correctly. Then he made a recommendation of himself to God—this he repeated many times; prayed for his dead wife and child, and, awakening me to the sinful past, he repeated the words I had last read to him."

"All human comfort is vain and short." At last my husband returned, and a little while later the servant and child. The officials of justice were on the track of Deborah.

"The result of their enquiries ended in the recovery of many valuable articles and their committal to prison. My father, it appeared, had never recovered the effect of my guilty flight, and had very shortly fallen into a state in which he was irresponsible for his actions. Thus he was easily the tool of this awful woman. They induced him to convert much of his costly stock into cash, of which, between fast living and what they plundered him of, the whole amount had gone; all that remained being a couple of houses he had purchased years since, one of which—my early home—was now unlet."

"Insult and wrong were daily heaped on my head by my husband, who had always counted, sooner or later, on my winning my father's forgiveness and obtaining a handsome property. To obtain permission to keep my beloved, imbecile parent near me, I allowed him to sell the home I have spoken of, but the term of peace effected by yielding to his brutality was of short duration. In all I suffered I recognized the hand of retributive justice, and considered myself as one undergoing a term of penance. I felt that if those who are righteous bear their cross without murmuring, how much more was it incumbent on me to do so."

"It was at last with a kind of melancholy pleasure that I heard my dear father speak of and mourn for me as one dead. Far better he should have entertained that idea than the correct one."

"I knew my old friend, Father Lawson, was often in London, and I sent him my address, at a time when I knew my husband (a Protestant in faith) would be absent."

"I longed to let him see that the days of purification were passing over my head. Of course, my poor father retained no recollection of him. I saw his eyes fill with tears when I led him in. I told him my whole story, the kind of husband the man had made whom I had chosen to marry in spite of the prayers and wishes of my best friends. I told him how my father's wealth had vanished like chaff before the wind; how my pretty babe was pining away before my face; how I was abused, ill-treated, struck, I laid my hands on that of him who had loved me with such matchless love, my father, and I said, "In singing to him and soothing him is my sweetest consolation; my greatest fear lest my tyrant husband should separate me from him;" adding, "think you, Father, I am redeeming the price? I have schooled myself to the strictest patience; I have learned to be reviled and not revile again, to work for him to reap, to be silent under his abuse, to regard all that happens to me as the penalty of sin and folly, to consider that my future life must be a cross borne in the spirit of expiation."

"The days have, indeed, come," he said, "of your earthly purification. Continue thus to atone for the past, which you cannot now recall." He then drew from his pocket that French copy of the Imitation of Christ which I showed you, and turning down the chapter headed, "The Love of Jesus above all things," told me to make that chapter my daily study.

"My baby died; a little girl was born to me; it tided away and died, too, when it was but a few months old. How pitiful a sight it was to witness the love of my dear father for that child, whom he would call by no other name than Grace.

"My grief was very great at first after consigning my little ones to the grave. At last a dull apathy stole over me, and I finally rejoiced that the senseless ones had been gathered home by their Heavenly Father's mercy before their own earthly father could teach them to sin.

"At last the day of release came, but not before my husband had well nigh stripped our house of every comfort—I may almost add, of every necessity. His brutality had become unbounded on account of my constant refusal to commit my poor father to an asylum. He was harmless, quiet, and docile; if he was now poor it was my work, and what was still left was his. I resisted every endeavor to part me from him."

"At last my husband sickened with the small-pox. I nursed him carefully and showed him every attention possible. The crisis arrived, and the physician declared there was no hopes of recovery. He could not see. The violence of the disorder had deprived him of his sight some days before his death. I strove to awaken him to repentance, but his heart was callous; he died and made no sign.

"My old father and myself were thus alone in the desolate house at Highgate, but the shadow of death still lingered by my hearth. Its touch fell very gently on the only creature who attached me to the world. It was a pleasant day in Spring. I had drawn an easy chair under the porch in the back garden, and with my work in my hand (for I now had not enough to live upon save by adding to our little income, by embroidering gay scarfs and dresses for the court ladies), I sang my old songs, while my dear, wronged father sat and listened.

"These were the happiest hours I had known since I buried my little ones. I chanced to speak to him, but he did not answer. I fancied he had not heard me, and I spoke again; still no answer. I looked up alarmed; his head had fallen on his breast, I leaned over him; he was dead!

"A burst of tears put an end for the present to the story of poor Grace. I thought myself very cruel, dear Mrs. Whitely, that I had pressed her to call back these sad memories of the past. After a while she recovered herself, and stopped my protestations of sorrow that I had urged her to tell me her story. I have not much more to say, Madam, she continued. A few days later I, the solitary mourner, followed the remains of the once rich citizen to the village churchyard. I was loath to leave a place hallowed at once by such painful memories and sweet recollections of my little ones and my poor father; but Father Lawson, who called on me whilst my father was yet unburied, urged me to do so. I had not enough left to live upon. I could not bear to be with children, or should have devoted myself to edu-

cation; but my lost ones would have been ever before my eyes. I then applied to the queen, introducing myself as the daughter of the jeweller who had set the jewels which King Charles had given her on her marriage, and telling her the heads of my story, craved any employment, even of a menial nature, about the palace. From Father Lawson I learned that you, Madam, were one of the favorite ladies of our dear, saintly ex-queen. He told me how it was you were here, and charged me to aid you, if in my poor power to do so.

"My poor, poor Grace," I said, and quite overcome by her sorrowful state, I laid my head on her shoulder, and gave way to a flood of tears. Then after a while I became calm, and told Grace the example of her courage, under trial so unexampled, ought, indeed, to give me strength. "Madam," she replied, "my trials were the result of obstinate folly, not so yours; but, courage and patience, even should the eve of the day fixed for your bridal bring no help, the morrow's morn may set you free. God will not let this marriage take place. Only be calm and submissive apparently to the queen's will, and all will yet be well."

"After the recital of Grace's story I became more and more attached to her, though I do not like that a woman with a mind like hers should be employed in menial offices. As far as she is concerned, nothing seems to disturb her or to come amiss; she accepts all, I believe, as an atonement for her early transgressions. February 12th, 1692. The fifteenth is appointed for my nuptials. Grace still begs me to bear up and feign composure. The task is so hard I feel as if I should give way. Oh, for her unwavering faith!

"February 13th. Grace has just entered with my bridal robe, a present from the queen. It is a truly royal present. The petticoat is of white satin, looped up alternately with orange blossoms and sprays of pearls and diamonds; the train of Brussels lace, the long veil is also of Brussels lace. Oh, my God, support me, strengthen me. Am I to be robbed a victim for the sacrifice? Grace still says no, it shall never be; God will not permit it. Oh, Reginald, Reginald, my betrothed. February 14. I cried all night long. Last evening the Count was overwhelming, the queen kind and even affectionate in her manner; even the king less boorish. They talked openly about my embarking for Holland with the king and the count early in March. Grace is calm and composed, though to-morrow seals my fate. She rebukes me for the slightest manifestation of distrust in God's infinite power. February 15. Last evening I stood with Grace at a window of my chamber overlooking the park. The king and count had been out since early morning enjoying the pleasures of the chase. My eyes streamed with tears. "A few hours, Grace, and I shall be the bride of the Count," I said, "unless I run away, to be brought back, mayhap, and taken to the Tower."

"Suddenly the king's hounds appear through a break in the trees, and a goodly company of knights and nobles, with the king at their head; but there is no mirth amongst them, they all seem sad and sorrowful, we say. A few moments later the cause was explained. Half a dozen men slowly advanced bearing between them a plank, on which lay the form of a man, evidently covered to hide some appalling sight beneath. I turned sick and faint, my heart seemed to stand still; a cold sweat poured down my face; I sickened as, in imagination, I pictured to myself the ghastly burthen stretched beneath the dark covering that, improvised for the occasion, had been thrown over it. Grace opened the casement; the murmur of many voices fell upon my ear; I heard the name of Von Arneim; I saw the ghastly upturned face as the covering was drawn aside, and I sank fainting in her arms. * * * * * May, 1692. The pleasant Spring time has put forth its young green blossoms. Three months have passed since the night that heralded my release from the meditated sacrifice, and I am only now recovered enough to resume my pen, and give my dear Mrs. Whitely a little more news before my faithful Grace consigns these papers to a trusty messenger who will see that they reach her hands.

"The horror of the death-struck face of the hapless young Count, who was to have been forced upon me in marriage on the following morning, together with the mental anxiety that succeeded that terrible night, and the revulsion which that sight occasioned, ended in a nervous fever, from which I am but slowly recovering. Her majesty, softened by my submissive demeanor respecting my marriage, has been kind and sympathizing. Especially was she touched when she was told that the shock was made so frightfully sudden by my own eyes beholding the body of the Count as it was carried into the castle.

"The Count was an ardent huntsman, and had entered with the king into the full spirit of the chase, but had managed to separate himself from the rest of the company. To come up again with his party he had made an ineffectual attempt to force his horse over a gate. The animal stumbled and fell, throwing his rider, whose head, coming in contact with a block of stone, had produced almost immediate death. He spoke but a few words, describing only the manner of his

death, and bidding them bear his dying love to myself. Blame me not, dear Mrs. Whitely, nor let another party deem me unworthy of his love, that I shed tears to the memory of this hapless Count. I wept over his sudden death and his unrequited love. For a long while I was delirious. When at last I recovered enough to think over the past, I called Grace to my bedside. "Dear Grace," I said, "do you remember saying it would never take place? How much do I owe you—first, the example of your unwavering trust and confidence in the Providence of God; and, secondly, that, following your counsel, I became passive in the hands of the queen. How bitterly would she have felt had I opposed her to the last; and, after all, the Providence of God had decreed that union should never be."

"I have written to another person, dear Mrs. Whitely, still very dear to me; but there seems no chance of my leaving this place, so that I have released him from all engagements except he wish to be freed. It will please you, I know, to see that I have found in Grace a wise and an invaluable friend. "Poor Florence," said the queen, when she had finished reading her packet of papers, which the king had listened to with intense interest, "she has had and still has much to suffer. It is, indeed, a vague matter as to when she will be able to return to us. But St. John shall have the perusal of these papers immediately. It will please him to see how true she is to her plighted troth, and he will, of course, be at no difficulty to surmise the reasons for which she expresses a willingness to release him from his engagement."

"Send for St. John at once, let him come here," said the king. "The queen rung a small silver bell. It was answered by a page, who was forthwith sent in search of Sir Reginald. Between his wound, illness, and anxiety, St. John was, indeed, a very different person to the Sir Reginald who, two years since, had visited Sir Charles at Morville Grange. His eyes sparkled with pleasure when he saw the bulky packet in the hands of the king. His greatest torture consisted in his inability to release Florence from her state of bondage; for he argued, and with reason, if the king and queen tried to force her into marrying once, the scheme may be repeated, and in the end with success. "Tut, man," said the king, good-humoredly, trying to rouse him out of his depression, "go and read your letter. It ought to make you happy the thought alone of your betrothed lady's constancy to you." As the king spoke he held forth the packet, delicately giving, at the same time, the sum of fifteen pistoles, folded in a small piece of paper. It was thus the fallen king used to relieve the indigent Jacobites whose modesty prevented them from applying to him for pecuniary aid. Darker and more sad grew the fortunes of the hapless exiles. They felt no trial which had befallen them, after the usurpation of William, more than witnessing the sufferings of the devoted Jacobites, who with unswerving loyalty, had given up their estates and fortunes, and were in fact, starving in a foreign land for their sakes, the town St. Germain's being filled with Scotch, English, and Irish families.

"Not only did James and his consort practice themselves the most rigorous self-denial, but also their children, as soon as they could be made to understand the miseries of these poor people, devoted all their pocket money to their relief, the little princess even paying for the education of several of the daughters of the emigrants, and steadily resisting all persuasion to lessen her little fund by the purchase of toys for herself. Months passed on, and brought with them such suffering that Louis XIV. pointed out to James the necessity of disbarring his household troops. The French king was the arbiter of his destiny; to him the unfortunate James owed whatever he possessed. A large number of these unfortunate gentlemen then passed into the service of Louis. "A desolating reform" Mary Beatrice had truly termed this reduction of the military establishment at St. Germain's, and an affecting scene took place between James and the remainder of the brave followers of Dundee. These consisted of 150 officers, all men of honorable birth. They knew themselves to be a burthen on James, and begged leave to form themselves into a company of private sentinels, asking only to be allowed to choose their own officers. James assented, and they went to St. Germain's to be reviewed by him before they were incorporated with the French army.

"A few days later they dressed themselves in accoutrements borrowed of a French regiment, and drew up in order, in a place through which he was to pass as he went to the chase. The king enquired who they were, and was astonished to find them the same men with whom, in garb more becoming their rank, he had received at his levee; and struck with the levity of his own amusement, compared with the misery of those who were suffering for him, instead of going forward to the chase, he returned to the palace full of sad and sorrowful thoughts. When the day arrived on which he was to review them, he passed along their ranks, and wrote in his pocket-book, with his own hand, the name of every one of these gentlemen, returning his thanks to each of them in particular. Then he removed to the front,

and taking off his hat, bowed to the whole body. The poor king's intention was to withdraw, but he returned, bowed to them again, and then burst into a passionate fit of tears. The regiment knelt, bent their eyes downwards, then rose, and passed the king with the usual honors of war. The speech which the king made to them ended with these words: "Should it be the will of God ever to restore me to my throne, it would be impossible for me ever to forget your sufferings. There is no rank in my armies to which you might not pretend. As to the prince, my son, he is of your blood. He is already susceptible of every impression. Brought up amongst you, he can never forget your merit. I have taken care that you shall be provided with money, shoes, and stockings. Fear God, love one another. Write your wants particularly to me, and be assured that you will find in me always a parent as well as a king."

"Poor, disinherited prince! True, indeed, was his father's assertion that his heart was susceptible. One day, some time later, when unable to endure the life of common soldiers, fourteen of these gentlemen had permission, through King James having written to their commander for them to return to Scotland, came to St. Germain's to thank the king. Four of them, who were in ill health, remained there. They were wandering near the palace, and saw a little boy of six years old about to enter a coach equipped with the royal arms of Great Britain. This child was the son of the exiled king, and was going to Marle. He recognized the emigrants, and made a sign for them to come to him. They advanced, and, kneeling down, kissed his hands and bathed them with their tears.

"The little prince bade them rise, and with that peculiar sensitiveness often early developed by misfortune, told them "he had often heard of their bravery; he had wept over their misfortunes as much as those of his parents; but he hoped a day would come when they would find they had not made such sacrifices for ungrateful princes." Then giving them his little purse, containing about a dozen pistoles, he requested them to drink the king's health. The child had been virtuously trained; in fact, some of the Jacobites were heard to lament "that the queen, his mother, had brought the prince up more for heaven than for earth."

Ancient Irish Monks as Civilizers.

The ancient Irish monks raised from the soil all that was needful. Their corn was always ground in their own mills; they obtained milk, cheese and butter from their own herds; they kept their own sheep, and made their garments from the wool, which they combed and spun themselves; they cut the turf and quarried stone on their own lands; they made their own simple furniture and kitchen utensils. When they died they were buried without pomp or delay, in the monastic habit, with the cowl drawn over the face. They were no burden to the community; food, clothing, shelter, they provided for themselves—even the soil they tilled. The community scarcely afforded them protection, though it owed them everything.

"They taught the children, developed the land, dried the swamps, irrigated the fields, felled the forests, bridged the rivers. They schooled the eye and the ear and the hand of the child, who learned from them the thousand mysteries of colors and sounds, and how to use tools of the sculptor and the painter and the architect. They kept alive the respect for law in an age of general lawlessness, the memory of civil order and peace in the midst of anarchy, the reminiscences of Hellenic culture in a rough and barbarous society.—Rev. Dr. Shahan, in July Donahoe's.

A Cardinal's Advice

"Be attached to your homes," is the wise counsel of Cardinal Gibbons to the wives and mothers of the country. "Make them comfortable. Let peace and order and tranquility and temperance abound there. Let the angel of chastity that protected Agnes preside over your homes and stand at the door of your heart, repelling unhalloved thoughts, even as the angel, with flaming sword, watched at the Garden of Eden. For what is a home from which chastity is banished but a desecrated temple from which the spirit of God has fled? Let the flowers of domestic joy and gladness grow abundantly along your pathway. Let the fire of conjugal and maternal and filial love which God has consecrated burn continually on the altar of your hearts and consume every inordinate affection. Then, indeed, may the words of Scripture be applied to you: 'Who shall find a valiant woman? Far from the uttermost coasts is the price of her. She hath looked well to the paths of her home and hath not eaten her bread idly. Her children rose up and called her blessed; her husband, and he praised her. Beauty is vain. The woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.'"

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