AMBITION'S CONTEST

BY CHRISTINE FABER

CHAPTER XIV

A SLIGHT GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

A singular spirit of silence and gloom seemed to have settled on the little party, which did not abate during the voyage. Howard, wrapped in his dark thoughts, would sit for hours apparently watching the sail-ors, or would pace the deck with folded arms and downcast head. Ellen rarely left the cabin, and only for a few moments at a time, when, accompanied by her maid, she sought the deck for sake of the invigorating Anne herself, once so volbreeze. uble, had little to say. The polite, merry captain endeavored in his own fashion to make the voyage pleasant to the dispirited little party; striving in his spare moments to engage Howard in conversation, notwithstanding the monosyllabic replies of the latter. Even to Miss Flanagan, whose ignorance of the language he had at once comprehended, he tried to make his good intentions known by a series of bows and expressive gestures, all of which to that lady were as unintelligible as his words would have been. For Ellen's enter-tainment, he brought from the bottom of a great sea chest a number of French books. Many of them were dusty and partly moth eaten, but they were novels, and because of that fact, he doubted not their acceptance by the young lady. The latter, divin ing the kindly motive which prompted the offer, took the books, and thanked the delighted captain with a smile and sweetness of tone which made him anxious to bring her something else, that he might be again rewarded in the same charming man-ner. But when he had bowed himself out of the little cabin, Ellen turned wearily from the books to a sheet of paper on the table before her; she had already inscribed on it the date and "Dear Mother," and now sat painfully thinking how much it would be requisite for her to tell of events that had occurred since the last writing-she was so anxious to spare pain to that tender heart at Raising her head suddenly, she looked at Anne Flanagan, who was sitting opposite, apparently in deep and unhappy thought, then

'Did Howard tell you, Anne, to what part of Ireland we were going?" 'No, nor did I ask him," was the reply, without raising her

Ellen put down her pen, and went out on deck to seek Howard. He was standing, apparently so interested in the unbroken view of sea and sky as not to heed her approach. She asked quietly:

"To what part of Ireland are we going?

He turned in evident surprise This was their third day out, and Ellen had not once previously refer red to their destination. From her continued silence he had supposed that Anne Flanagan had not told her; and though he marvelled slightly at the seeming abatement of an interest which was wont to be so vivid, he was too much engrossed by his own dark thoughts to particularly care. He answered as quietly as she had spoken:

"Why are you so anxious, just now, to know where we are going am writing to mother, and must tell her where to direct her reply.' His brow darkened, and he an

There came into her pale face an

indignant expression, from which Howard half shrank.

'Howard," she said, "you have already done that which will almost it otherwise — was ended, and one break mother's heart when she bright afternoon the little vessel cast knows; yet, now you would give a anchor about half a mile from a last cruel blow by this indifference to her anxiety. Can it be that, not coast of Ireland. Ellen could see content with abjuring your religion, you are trying to destroy even your natural virtues? The lower animals have affection for their kind-would such an air of quiet happiness you sink beneath them

His brow grew darker still.

for an immediate return to New She placed her hand on his arm.

'Is regard for your promises also going? You cannot break the con-tract we have made to remain with each other without avowing your-self to be unprincipled. Is this the character which is to win such renown, and leave a record to be envied

by future generations?" There was no trace of sarcasm in her tones — Ellen Courtney could never wield such a weapon—but her words stung her brother; he was angry with himself, with her, with world. He flung her hand off, and began excitedly to pace the deck. Ellen waited, with her eyes turned seaward, and her lips inaudibly syl labling a prayer for strength and The rough sailors threw many glances at the pair, and the captain, covertly watching, called Howard hard French names under

his teeth. The angry youth ceased his hurried

every energy of my mind has been directed since—since—"

handed, and whether to which they were study below to possible to procure a male servant herself, and then her thoughts turned in the village which they were suddenly and sadly to her erring

"Since you have forsaken your mournfully interrupted. His better nature was once more touched by the despairing sadness in her tones, the indescribable expression of sorrow and reproach in her

eyes.
"No, Ellen, no? The hasty speech which led you to form such a conclu sion was inadvertent and wrong. believe as firmly as you can wish His existence"—for an instant his eyes sought the broad expanse of "but I refuse to bow in firmanent — "but I refuse to bow in the blind obedience which our faith demands; my reason and my knowledge alike tell me it is wrong, and every faculty of my soul rises up to protest against a subservience which degrading to the intellectual powers of man.

"Can obedience, which is at once the mark of the soul's highest and noblest virtue, humility, ever be apart degrading? Of what use is it to matter acknowledge His existence, when you only do so to defy His teachings and commands? Rather is the blind pre-sumption and wretched vanity of the creature, who dares to question the authority of his Creator, low and de-

grading indeed." He was stung to the quick. The very calmness, the very tone of her reply, in such marked contrast to woman, while a strange expression the passion and impetuosity of his flitted into his face—as if some own speech, irritated him. He which he had entertained had turned away shortly, and began to pace the deck, the unhappy feelings under which he chafed visible in his lowering brow and flushed cheeks.

Ellen slowly and sadly retired. It required an effort before she could resume her pen, and begin again her letter to her mother. She strove, as was her wont, to write cheerfully out when, after recounting the events which had transpired ere their departure from France, and the assistance which Malverton Grosvenor had so nobly rendered, she would speak of the disbanding of the club as something from which—delaying, as it must do, Howard's ambitious schemes-her mother and herself might imbibe fresh hope with regard to his ultimate conversion, her fingers refused to guide her pen. His speech, rank with sentiments the most prejudicial to his faith, had well-nigh completely shattered her hopes-how then could she deceive that expectant heart at home. True Howard had retracted the statement which led her to believe that he had sunk into the slough of Atheism, but

salvation. Her hand dropped on the paper, and she sat in sad uncertainty, mournfully gazing on what she had already written. Some of the youth's better impulses had returned, and, half ashamed and half penitent for the manner in which he had turned from Ellen, he sought the cabin; but even when he stood beside her, gazing also on the half-written letter, his pride prevented the apology he would fain have uttered. Unconscious of the feelings which struggled in his breast, she

looked up wearily, asking : Will you not add a few wordsyou have not written in so long a

He seized the pen she proffered, and, taking the seat she vacated, he emed about to obey her request. But in a moment he threw down the pen, and started up without having written a word.

Mother would not care for any thing I should write," was the only explanation he vouchsafed, and he returned abruptly to the deck

Poor Ellen! her eyes filled as she resumed the seat to finish the mis-She made no excuse for Howard's failing to write, for, alas! her 'Defer writing till we are settled." mother was accustomed now to this omission of filial duty on his part. At length the tedious voyage-for

it was tedious, despite all the efforts of the kind-hearted captain to render the sparkling strand where barefoot children were at play, and the row of fishermen's cabins just beyond, and seemed to pervade the scene that she could have looked for hours. But the sailors were signalling to one of "I will have no comments upon my conduct—once in Ireland, you and the numerous little craft plying your maid can make preparations about the water, and when it came sufficiently near, owing to the ignorance of the French seamen of the English language, Howard himself was obliged to negotiate for the conveyance of his party to the little village in sight. The arrangements concluded, preparations were at once begun for the transfer of the ladies into the row boat. The polite captain had many bows for Ellen, and many kind wishes for her welfare. Even to Anne Flanagan, impelled by his natural courtesy, he made som complimentary speech, though con-scious that his listener did not understand one word. But Anne endeavored to look as if she comprehended it all, and she waved her adieu, as Ellen did, when at length all were seated and sturdy rowers began to shove away from the fish

ing-smack. Approaching the land of her mother's birth was the only thought which filled Ellen's mind, and, for the first time for dreary days, some thing akin to happiness stole into "I intend to go to Dublin," he said seemed engrossed by peculiar emospeaking rapidly; "there to remain tions, for her eyes were strangely till some further arrangements can misty, and her face had a softened Howard plied the oarsmen "What arrangements?" she asked.
"I do not know myself, yet. I am only certain of one thing—the determination to achieve that to which

approaching? One of the rowers slackened his work a little in order to reply to the queries. He was a sturdy, bronzed fellow of forty-five or more with level or the contract of the contract more, with luxuriant, black whiskers, and eyes of the same color. He had cast many furtive glances at Ellen and her maid, but particularly at the latter, and an expression as if he were striving to recall something had come into his face. which remained while he replied to Howard. His tones were sufficiently marked to render his Irish nationality apparent, but it seemed to add to the richness of his voice.

The children who had been playing on the strand, and some of the women who had been watching from low doorways, gathered into little groups on the beach as the party landed. Suddenly, Anne Flanagan, waiting with Ellen a little distance while Howard arranged some matter with the boatmen, put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed almost aloud.

Anne, dear Anne," said Ellen in alarm, " what is the matter ?' Miss Flanagan was too overcome

by emotion to reply.

Ellen's exclamation had been over heard by the blackbearded rower; he doubt. which he had entertained had gone, leaving in its place clear, convincin He turned back, and waited proof. till Howard had concluded speaking other boatmen; then he to the approached, doffing his hat, and

Your honor was speaking of a servant. I'd like to engage with you, if your honor would think I'd suit."

Howard surveyed the man for a moment, unconsciously smiling at the odd figure he presented in his rough boatmen costume. The latter with the intuition natural to his countrymen, divined the impulse that had prompted the smile, and he replied somewhat proudly:

I have better garments than these and if your honor wouldn't mind stepping into one of the cabins for a rest, I could be ready to go with you shortly.

Something in the honest, and even handsome face of the rower pleased young Courtney.

Very well, my man," he said, "I'll take you. We'll wait for you here."
The boatmen walked hastily across the strand in the direction of the cabins, while his companions seemed only to make an avowal which too much astonished to do more than oved him as far from the pale of look at each other for the next few moments, and Howard, turning to his sister, perceived for the first time | could justify her suspicion. Anne Flanagan's emotion. One or two of the women who had been so curiously viewing the strangers, actuated by the kindness which is part of the Irish nature, had ventured to approach, softly asking if the lady was sick, and urging her to cominto one of their homes until she should recover. But Anne subdued her emotion, and, drying her eyes she thanked the women for their offer, and walked along the strand with Ellen and Howard. The latter did not question the cause of the sudden grief-regarding Anne agan as an eccentric old maid, he wondered little at her peculiarities.

In an incredibly short space of time the bronzed rower returned, looking like a different man, in corduroy breeches, buckled at the side, and coat, and a beaver hat.

Have you nothing to take with you—no luggage of any kind?" asked

The man laughed, and answered in tone in which mirth and pathos "I thought as much, Miss, when a tone in which mirth and pathos strangely blended:

'It's not much the likes o' me has you as well as those that would have more perhaps," and he doffed his

Something in the words themselves or the manner of the man, touched Howard Courtney. He said, in a kindlier tone than Ellen had heard him use for a long time:

'Perhaps you have been too hasty in your proffer, and I also have been too hasty in accepting your services You may be entering a position which you will not like so well-one which may remove you from your family." The man laughed again and replied

with the same mixture of mirth and Dick mournfully hung his head. pathos in his tones:

I have no family, your honor, I'm free as the wind that's blowing about us from the kiss of wife or children;" and then, as if fearful of further inquiries, he led the way to the conveyance which he had engaged during his brief absence.

Ellen Courtney had never since she left her American home felt such a sense of peace and security as there seemed to descend upon her that first night in Ireland. As she stood by a window in one of the apart-ments which Howard had temporarily secured in the hotel, she wondered whence her strange feeling, that was almost happiness, came—concluding, at length, that it must be because she was in her mother's native land. Something in the very air of the place seemed to waft to her mind conjectures of the events which must have been in her mother's early life : and then her busy fancy travelled to akin to happiness stole into heart. Anne Flanagan also her mother's early home. Ashland Manor had been the title of that home in those bygone times, but it had passed into other and more careless hands since Mary Ashland's marriage

brother; but there was not so much despondency mingled with her sad ness as there had been; her youthful spirit was asserting itself, and hope, which had never yet entirely desert-ed the gentle girl, whispered of new efforts to be made in Howard's be

half. There was little communication between the party that night. Each one seemed too much engrossed with his or her own particular thoughts to care even to begin a conversation; but the next morning at breakfast, Ellen broached to Howard her desire to visit Ashland Manor.

"It cannot be a great distance from here," she said. "Do you not remember mother speaking of her frequent visits into the city of

Howard answered impatiently

"For Heaven's sake, Ellen, do not intrude those whims of yours upon Go where you will; I can spare Dick "-motioning to his re cently engaged servant, who stood behind his chair—"to attend you and your maid, but do not include me in your arrangements;" and he turned some written memoranda which

he had placed beside his plate. Anne Flanagan had lifted her head at the mention of Ashland Manor, with a startled, eager look; but no body, save Howard's servant, seemed

to notice it. Ellen did not reply, but the flush which dved her face was evidence of the pain she suffered from her brother's speech.

Immediately after breakfast, Dick resented himself at the door of Ellen's room: The master told me I was to be

at your service to-day," he said with ot ungraceful bow. Ellen turned to her maid, who was

npacking a few requisite articles. Where shall we go, Anne?" Dick advanced a little further into the room. "If I might make so bold, Miss, I

think I heard you speak of Ashland I know the way to the place if you'd like to go." Anne Flanagan turned and

looked sharply at the speaker; but finding nothing in the latter's face to reward her anxious scrutiny, she resumed her work, Is the place known as Ashland

Manor still?" Ellen asked. "Oh, yes, Miss; it never lost its name, though it has lost its beauty

this many a day."

Again Anne Flanagan looked sharply and anxiously at the speaker, but again she failed to discover aught in that countenance which

Ellen's delight at having discovered in her brother's servant one who could tell her something about her dreadful position. God is so good to mother's early home almost banished the pain which she still suffered from Howard's petulant reply. She invited Dick to a seat, and placing herself opposite, bade him tell all he knew of Ashland Manor and its former inhabitants. Anne Flanagan suspending her work, fastened her penetrating gaze on the man. He moved uneasily in his seat for a moment, though he tried to appear unconscious of the maid's fixed Christmastide observation.

It's not a great deal I can tell you, I've seen the place long ago, when it was as purty a spot as there's in all Ireland. But it had a master and a mistress then—the master was shoes, also buckled, cloth vest old, but the mistress was a fair, sweet, young creature, that the whole country might be proud of-

murmured Ellen, mother !" brushing away the tears which had

the master told me his name was creatures, how can one help being Courtney, and when I heard you gay? Next to being a religious, it is to take; but never mind, master—I speak of Ashland Manor—for the the grandest vocation on earth don't know your name yet-I'll serve purty young mistress of that place married a Mr. Courtney. Her father died suddenly a few hours after her marriage, and when the funeral was over she went with her husband to America. The place passed into other hands that gave it little care, and they went abroad soon. I heard that afterwards they wrote to have the place sold for them; but however that was, it wasn't long till the house was stripped of everything and left bare and lonely. Its rooms are all empty now, and its grounds are sadly neglected. I used to see it once in a while when I'd be down that way, but it was a sad sight enough," and

Anne Flanagan, rising from her low seat by the trunk, crossed and stood directly in front of the man. He did not lift his head.

You who know so much of these old times," she said quickly, " do you remember my being in Ashland Manor—Anne Flanagan?"

He replied without lifting his eyes What I knew of the folks in the big house, concerned mostly the master and mistress, and the whole country knew them:

What is your surname?" she asked.

her face. But still she failed to make any recognition, and a shade of disappointment crossed her countenance as she turned to resume her

seat. "We will go to Ashland Manor," said Ellen, "I am impatient to

see it.' Dick, with another graceful obeisance departed to make the necessary arrangements, and in a short time a conveyance was in waiting, into which the thoughtful man had carefully stored a hamper of provisions, knowing that the little party would scarcely return till long past the hour for dinner.

TO BE CONTINUED

AN OLD WOMAN'S GRATITUDE

A TRUE STORY OF A HOSPITAL WARD

By B. S. Lyne

Twas 10 o'clock, one wintry night, In dreary, dark December When at my window came a tap, Remember, love, remember."

So sang my friend in a clear sweet voice, as we sat around the fire in the drawing-room of my little suburban villa, some two or three years ago, and listened to the howling of the storm outside. It was a terribly cold winter, and

this particular evening was the worst I had ever known, for the snow, which had been falling thick flakes all day long, lay a foot deep in the streets. Large hailstones beat against the panes of the windows as though they ould break them in, while the

storm, as it swept round the eaves

and gables of the roof, literally shook

the house in its fury, shricking and vailing like a host of departed spirits. Inside all was bright and cheerful enough. The lamps were lighted, the heavy crimson curtains tightly drawn, and the pine wood fire, blazing up the chimney, cast a pleasant glow on the fair face and golden hair of my visitor, who laughed merrily at the shudders with which I drew nearer to the warmth, and sang the words of that old song in order to

cheer me, so she said, out of a fit of the "blues." She was a lady nurse—a fair. sweet woman of some forty years of age, though looking considerably younger, whose whole life had been spent in doing good to others, and who had come to spend her Christmas with me, and take a short rest

before beginning work again. Nothing seemed to make her mel ancholy: the hard life of a hospital nurse had but toned down the exuberant spirits she possessed in her youth into a kind of cheerful gaiety, which though she could look serious enough when occasion demanded it, eemed ready to burst forth at the slightest provocation.

"I cannot think how you can be so merry," I said, half inclined to be "just listen to that storm." "Listen to it!" she cried, laugh

"I can hear it without listening. Isn't it splendid ?' 'It's enough to blow the roof off

the house," I replied moodily. 'Not it," she answered cheerfully we ought to thank God that we are in this comfortable room instead of dreadful position. God is so good to

'God help the poor!" I murmured. Only think what they must be suf

fering In an instant the bright face ecame clouded, and a look of infinite pity stole into her eyes. "Ah, yes, God help the poor!" she

replied. "And may He open hearts of the rich and charitable to do something for them this holy "I cannot think," I repeated, "how

you can be so cheerful, living as you do amongst so much misery and wretchedness. The sight of human suffering always makes me miser-able, knowing as I do how feeble and futile are our best efforts to alleviate their condition.

"Feeble, but not futile," she responded, "at least so far as hospital work is concerned; and when one thinks what a great privilege it is to serve our dear Lord in His suffering

"I dare say you are right," I replied. "You generally are; but I replied.

could never be a hospital nurse." "No, dear, I don't think you could, it is not your vocation," she answered with a smile, as she glanced round to do it.
my luxurious little drawing-room, "And but possibly you may do far greater good than I, though you do employ others to dispense the greater part of your charities. After all, it is the intention that God looks at and rewards, and as long as we work for Him, and to please Him, it matters of our death. little what that work may be.'

"Still, one likes to see some little result for one's labor on earth," I cried, "and I can assure you, Estelle my work amongst the slums of the city makes me heart-sick at times, and ready to throw it all up. It is not that I under-value the great charitable institutions of the metropolis, nor the immense good our hard working clergy and active Orders are doing, but it all seems of such little avail. Nothing appears to stem the tide of sin and misery and drunken-ness that overwhelms the land."

"Nothing but prayer and faith, said my friend, softly

"And where will you find that?" I Monahan," he answered, and then questioned; hardly amongst the he lifted his head and looked full in poor. Even our Irish Catholics here appear to have forgotten the very ords of the Catechism they learned at home in Ireland; and for one who goes to the Sacraments, how many stav away ?"

'You cannot touch pitch and not be defiled," she replied. "They are led away by the bad example of those with whom they mix, and it requires a strong faith indeed to stand against the taunts and sneers of atheists and heretics. But it was not of the poorer folk I was thinking when I fervent prayer; it was of ourselves. It is the holiness of our own lives, the earnest and steadfast faith of those who know the truth and working for God live and pray as he would have them do, that alone shall

win souls to Him and bring back our the Church.

"God will not work miracles," replied moodily.

"Oh, yes, He will," she cried,
"sooner than a soul that trusts in
Him should be neglected or lost, I

have seen many an instance of this during my hospital life, and I know what prayer can do. You are morbid tonight, my dear Marion—suppose I tell you some of my hospital experi They are not at all doleful and will help to cheer you."

Limped at the idea. "Oh, by all

I jumped at the idea. "Oh, by all means," I exclaimed. "I should love to hear them. But at first let us stir the fire and throw on some more logs. Then we will try and forget those warring elements outside."

"You may forget, but I never all," she said, as a beautiful smile irradiated her face, and her eyes shone with rapturous light. would I wish to forget; they speak to me of the infinite goodness of God, and of his loving kindness to these who confide in Him. But to my story :

One very cold night in December, 1883, a poor old Irish woman was admitted to M. Ward in one of the larger city hospitals, to which at that time I was attached. She was suffering from bronchitis and com-plications, but though very ill, was ot sufficiently so to receive the last Sacraments, for which she was ask ing most earnestly. However, as both priest and doctor were in the when she came in, the doctor vard very kindly examined her again, and then assured the priest that there was not the slightest danger.

"Under those circumstances I can-not possibly administer the last Sacraments," said the priest.

"No," replied the doctor decidedly "I cannot say what turn the disease may take in the course of a few days out at present there is no danger. So the good priest sat down by the

heard the old woman's con fession, and tried to comfort her as best he could with the hope that sh might soon get over this attack. But the old woman shook her head. 'Ah, yer Riverence, but you'll

never leave me without the Holy Sacraments, she cried, imploringly. It's this blessed night I'm going to die, and sure I cannot die without the rites of the Church. 'I cannot, dare not give them to you, my child,' he replied compas-

sionately. 'The doctor declares you are in no danger of death, and must not go against his opinion. But what would a Protestan' like him know about it at all, at all?' she exclaimed indignantly. 'I know it's dying I am. For the love of Heaven

yer Riverence give me the rites o the Church.' "'Not now,' he replied, as gently as he could, 'but I'll come and see you first thing in the morning, and

'I shall not be alive in the morning,' she sobbed piteously. 'You'll never be so cruel as to lave me with. out the anointing and the prayers that will help me on me way. wirra, wirra, yer Riverence, but it's breaking me heart you are.

was present at this scene, for the agitation and talking brought on fits of coughing, during which I was obliged to hold her up, and it made my heart ache to hear how, amidst the paroxysms, she prayed and plead ed for what was far more tha to her, the means te help her on her journey to the eternal shores

The priest stayed with her as long as he could and then left promising to come directly if he were sent for.

"I myself stayed a long time by her bedside, trying every means knew to induce her to lie quiet, but she was restless beyond measure.

"'It's no use, acushla,' she said.
'It's dying I am this blessed night and they will not believe me. It's the Holy Mother of God herself must help me now for I've none on earth

"And out went the trembling hands for the beads that she carried with her, and though no sound came from her lips but sighs and moans, I knew what she was so fervently repeating
—'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour How that poor soul prayed!

clutching her rosary, raising the Crucifix to her lips and kissing it passionately. I felt so sorry for her but thinking at the same time that the doctor must be correct in his diagnosis of the case, I was unable to do more than try to comfort her by assuring her that the priest would sure to come early in the morn 'Ah Marion, if you would know

what faith really is you must see a good Irish man or woman die. Even those who have led indifferent lives, who have, perhaps, been out of the Church for years, if God gives them consciousness at their death they will return to the Faith which they have breathed in with their native and which is as immortal as their souls. "But I am wandering from my

point, and moralizing, as I always do when speaking of the Irish. Well, as I was sitting by the poor old woman's bedside, wondering what I could say to get her to wait patiently till dawn, my eyes lighted on a young Protestant clergyman who, during the absence of the other ordinary Chaplain, was taking duty for him. He was an extremely nice man, and spoke just now of the necessity of always very kind to Catholic patients, reading to them out of their own books, saying their own prayers for them if they liked, and helping them to the best of his power. That night he chanced to come through H. Ward, so I went and told him to go

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