

The chaplain then entered the sick woman's room. He was still very young; he had only received holy orders a short time before, and had at once entered Countess Degenthal's house, so that it was for the first time that he had to exercise his holy office at a death-bed. Helen looked at him for a moment, as if she were studying his face. His features wore the calm of an angelic purity, and the holiness of his estate gave him a dignity far beyond his years. She felt that she could place confidence, place the great care of her life within his hands, and make him the representative of her wishes to her husband. And by an admirable guidance of Providence, the few words of a chattering child had given him the key to her position, so that he could understand her at once, to her great relief. His advice accorded completely with her wishes, and she felt a sensation of repose come over her which she had not had for a long time, after she had given him full powers concerning her child.

Her peace with God was soon made; she had a simple and childlike mind, unsullied by the world, and prepared long ago for this solemn hour.

Her husband entered as soon as she had completed her confession; he had received the news quite unexpectedly on arriving at the hotel, for the messenger had just missed him, and his passionate nature gave way completely before this dreadful anguish which had fallen upon him unawares. Helen's pale face was animated by a faint color when he entered, and a ray of love shone forth from her eyes; but the peace she had just felt was disturbed. It is not easy to quit this earth when two loving arms hold us back, when earthly happiness asserts itself once more. Alfred was only conscious of his own presence; he did not even notice that strangers were there. Helen's heart, however, was filled by another love as holy as that she felt for her husband: knowing that she had but little time left, she called for her child.

The husband hardly heard what she had said, but the countess, herself a mother, understood her, and made Curt a sign to bring the little girl in. Nora was still in his arms and would not let go of him, poor little frightened and sorrowing thing; so he carried her to her mother's couch, and held her up in order that the dying woman might embrace her.

But was it jealousy, or was it to bring the child before its father's notice, which made Helen push the boy hastily away, and lay her husband's hand on Nora's head? Something in this action pained Curt, and he retreated a step, blushing.

With the quickness of observation peculiar to the dying, Helen noticed this, and held her hand out to the boy; she signed to him to come nearer to her, until he leant completely over her. His was a handsome and pleasing boy's face, and tears were falling from his large brown eyes—so deeply did he feel another's sorrow.

Helen looked at him searchingly, and then raised her weak hand and laid it upon his head as if to bless him; her lips formed the words, "Thank you!" but she was prevented from saying more by a violent attack of coughing. To the alarm of the standers-by her handkerchief was once more tinted with blood. The doctor entered at last and made use of his authority, although he admitted that nothing could be done. He ordered the child away, and the chaplain led the husband also out of the room. The countess, however, remained, and continued to nurse Helen with care, fulfilling to the last her self-imposed service of love.

That was a long and melancholy night during which the young life fought its battle with death. It was only at morning dawn that all was over.

Around the couch upon which Helen had breathed her last, knelt these various people so strangely brought together: the priest, who had administered the last consolations to her, and the despairing man he was endeavoring to comfort, offered two very different types, chosen from two very different stations in life; the boy knelt also, and tenderly held the little girl who had cried herself to sleep in his arms; and the countess stood and supported in a sisterly manner the head of the dead stranger, the wife of the horsebreaker, whose position had wrung a sigh from

her, and caused her to shrug her shoulders with a proud pity.

Eight days passed by. Helen's body had been three days in its home under the earth. The widower had mastered the first emotion of his grief, and the exigencies of life began once more to claim their due. It is, indeed, fortunate when work does come and force us out of the contemplation of our grief. There is something levelling in great sorrows, as in any out-of-the-way events, which do away for the moment with every social barrier. The countess had been indefatigably kind and active in the services she had rendered the afflicted family. Little Nora had remained completely under her protection, so that the child should not feel the loss of her mother too acutely.

(To be continued.)

## The Irish Revolution and How It Came About

(By WILLIAM O'BRIEN.)

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

His Party, nevertheless, proved themselves equally perverse in cheering his denunciation of the prostrate rebels. They cheered again when the Prime Minister announced that the "National" (i.e., Board of Erin) Volunteers in Drogheda had proffered their services to the police against the insurgents, and cheered more loudly still when the Prime Minister delivered an eulogium of the least reputable of all their colleagues who boasted that he had stolen the rifles of the insurgents on the night of the meditated rising in the County Limerick and then made his escape to the House of Commons to enjoy his blushing honors. They were to give a still more striking proof of their alienation from honest Irish sentiment. Mr. Birrell had just returned from Dublin and handed in his resignation. This time distressingly serious and with irrepressible lines in his eyes, he made a moving description of his feelings as he "stood amongst the smoking ruins of Dublin and surrounded with my own ruins in mind and thought" and had the sympathy of a House melted by his eloquence and by his fate. He by ill chance proceeded to give a new reminder of his irremediable incapacity to understand Irish feeling by hazarding a remarkable prediction: "The unanimity of Ireland has as I say even yet been preserved. This is no Irish rebellion. I hope that, although put down, as it is being put down, as it must be put down, with such success and with such courage and yet at the same time humanity toward the dupes, the rank and file, led astray by their leaders, that this insurrection in Ireland will never, even in the minds and memories of that people, be associated with their past rebellions or become an historical landmark in their history."

A coarse chorus of assent boomed from the Hibernian benches. They could not have given more offence to Ireland's most sacred traditions if they had cursed the memory of Robert Emmet, the hero of a curiously similar insurrection outside the walls of Dublin Castle. If it be true that Success is the goddess of an Englishman, Failure, in the patriotic sphere, is no less truly an object of Irish worship. Our history for ages is the history of heroic failure, pitted for ever against odds to which it was no shame to succumb, and condemned fatally to terminate in the prison or on the scaffold, in broken hearts and calumniated names. If Ireland has no other reward to offer, she has at least a lavish love in which to enshrine her beaten soldiers, and if her young conscripts of Easter Week had done nothing more memorable than to give up their lives in what the Prime Minister of England was among the most generous to acknowledge to be a clean and gallant fight for a fine ideal, the more hopeless was their fight, the less willingly Ireland would forgive any aspersion on their memory.

But as a matter of fact the Easter Week Insurrection was something more than an obscure deed of desperation. It was, even if it stood by itself, an amazing military success. A body of enthusiasts having according to the official calculation only 825 rifles at their command succeeded in taking possession of the seat of Government within a single hour and holding possession of it for five

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