

Doyle's Conquer.

AT VALENTANO, 1867.

(From the 'London Month' for December.)

Another story yet, Adéodat?
What shall it be, I wonder? Something true,
You say, and something I have seen myself.
Why, child, my life has been a quiet one,
Not much worth telling in it—only just
When I was fighting for the Santo Padre.
So, that is what you like the best of all,
What you would like to do yourself, to fight
And die for Pio Nono? So he said,
Our brave young Captain, and your namesake too,
And truly I believe that he was given
By God to be a blessing to us all.
So brave, so modest, reckless of his life,
Something too much, they said; but ever mindful
Of all besides; to do and dare,
The last to speak, so that perhaps his words,
When they did come, were all the more remembered;
And those who knew him best had heard him say
It was his wish, if God so pleased, to die,
While young, a soldier's death—he had his wish.

We had fought hard that day at Valentano,
And all of us, the Captain at our head,
Had washed away our sins in Jesu's Blood,
And, strengthened by His Body, gone to battle,
One had hung back a little, a poor boy
Of eighteen summers, from the Captain's country,
Franche Comté: "Why you see, *mon Capitaine*,
It is not long since I confessed, and this
Will not be much of an affair, I hope
To follow you in many a harder fight
Than this will be." "No matter about that—
Follow me now," said our Adéodat,
"Both you and I shall fight the better, Léon;
And think, would not your mother tell you so?"
It was enough—the Captain had his way.

The work was sharper than young Léon thought,
And many a one who fell thanked God, I know,
That he had made his peace with Him. I saw
The Captain raise his arm, and with his sabre
He signed the Cross, shouted "*In Nomine*,"
No more: the Garibaldians rushed upon us,
From where they lay in ambush, and he fell,
Pierced by their bayonets.

The hospital
Was nearly dark that evening when I went
For a last look, perhaps for a last word,
From our Adéodat. The floor was wet
And slippery with blood, the flickering lamp
Showed faces—some such young ones!—all convulsed
With the last agony, and some were calm
And fixed for ever in the peace of death,
And there were stifled cries of pain, and names
Of far-off loved ones, broken words of prayer—
Thank God, no curses; and the white *cornette*,
So dear a sight to dying soldier's eyes,
And the priest speaking the absolving words,
And bidding the brave Christian soul depart
In Jesu's Name.

At last I saw the face
I sought for. It was very calm and white,
And the dark moustache made it whiter still:
Less grave by far than when in life. I wished
His mother could have seen the smile it wore.

Once more I passed between the ghastly rows
Of dead and dying. I had reached the door
Just as a man, wounded to death, was brought
Upon a litter. "Lay him down," they said,
"He has not many minutes more to live,
And he knows no one—let him die in peace."
"Léon! *mon garçon*," but his ears and eyes
Were closed to sights and sounds of earth. I knelt
And prayed beside him waiting for the end.
Then, suddenly, he lifted up his hands,
And all his face flashed into light and life,
And in a clear loud voice he cried: "*Je vois
Le Capitaine, mon Capitaine je viens!*"
"Poor lad!" they said, "he raves of Valentano,
And his last charge;" but I—I think not so.
I think that he, who on that battle-eve
Prayed him so earnestly to follow him
Up to the altar, had for the last time
Bade his boy-comrade follow where he led.
Through the dark valley, to the Feet of God.

HAWTHORNDEN.

CHAPTER XXX.—Continued.

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

"I'm much obliged to you, Ned; I dare say I look very silly; but please tell me what you mean by displeasing Harry. Have you quarrelled? I thought you were always the best of friends."

"Ah, yes," said Ned, "the very best; but it is not in the nature of saintship in the flesh, nowadays at least, to bear every thing, and I really think I stand very much in the way of this young man."

"Do explain yourself, Ned. How can you possibly interfere in any way with Harry? You talk in mysteries."

It is only your lonely life that makes it a mystery, and prevents your understanding what I mean; I warrant Marion will explain all before you've been together twenty-four hours."

"You talk in enigmas, Dr. Hartland," said Rosine, blushing crimson; "I don't think you understand yourself."

"Ah, you have it now," he replied, laughing; "I can read your blush. The thought came with the suggestion of Marion, very naturally."

Rosine arose to leave him. "Stay, sister," he said, taking her hand, "I will talk plainly, if you wish it."

"You have said all that I can hear," she replied, with dignity, "unless you change the subject."

"I'm sorry, Rosie," he said, coaxingly. "Don't be offended; I was only comparing you in my mind with other women; I don't know of but one that approaches you."

"That will do, Ned," replied Rosine, chasing away the slight frown from her face by a sunny smile; "others don't agree with you in your kind opinion."

"I take a good deal of pride, you think," he said, gaily, "in my own training."

"Go, find Harry," was her gentle reply.

Dr. Hartland obeyed unhesitatingly, and came upon the young man in the furthest corner of the lawn, among a clump of old arbovitæ which Aleck had trained into many fantastic shapes. He had thrown himself full length upon a mossy seat that had been planted in the midst of this principal group. The Doctor came upon him quite unexpectedly, and he sprang to his feet at once, as if he had been interrupted in some important matter.

"Don't hurry away again, Harry," said the Doctor, standing before him, and looking at him keenly; "I have come for you."

"Why should you trouble yourself about me?" was the cold reply, in a constrained voice.

"At her bidding," said the Doctor. "Don't make fool of yourself, Harry, but go back to the piazza like a man, and finish up this business, which, unlike your usual prompt way of doing, has been left hanging by the eyelids too long."

"Ned," replied the young man, with a touch of sadness in his voice, "don't joke me there again. I cannot bear it. I ought not to have come here. I shall leave in the morning, for—I must go to work again."

"You talk like a crazy fellow, Hal! I really believe you are in love, and like all genuine lovers, take to talking nonsense! My advice to you is to make a clean breast of it."

"Don't talk so, Ned; you exasperate me," replied young Greenwood, in an excited tone. "I am in love, I'm not afraid or ashamed to own it; but do you think for a moment I would compete with you, or ask for what you are yourself seeking?"

"Now, by my troth, Hal, you are a jewel, and carry your principles of right further than most lovers; but I can assure you, on my honor, that you need give yourself no uneasiness about me. I am much obliged to you for your consideration; believe me, there is no ground for your suspicion," he added, looking into his eyes; "there, shake hands; now begone."

Greenwood needed no further stimulus. After an hour's wandering by the last rays of sunset and the light of the rising moon, Dr. Hartland returned to the house and found the family assembled, but Rosine and Mr. Greenwood were not come in. The evening had grown cool and damp, and various hopes and fears were expressed as to the sufficiency of Rosine's clothing for this late hour; the Colonel was restive, and was on the point of instituting a search with waterproofs and shawls on his arm, when the delinquent couple entered the hall, Rosine running immediately to her room on the plea of wet feet. Harry was flushed, bright and eager in his look, and the Doctor argued success. Rosine did not appear again during the evening, the little Lily was restless, and she excused herself, to watch with the mother. When the family were about to separate for the night, Mr. Greenwood waited in the hall. Ned whispered in his ear, "I see, hearts are trumps and you have the ace."

"Ace and queen," retorted Harry, "and I am after the king," he added, turning again into the parlour, where the two old friends, Mr. Benton and Colonel Hartland, were still lingering.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AFTER STORM COMES SUNSHINE.

WE must find Laura, whom we left with a weight of sorrow and remorse crushing her heart, and wearing like a fetter into her young life. With the impulsiveness of her nature, when the last hope of reconciliation with her husband had died out, she had desired the seclusion of the cloister, but this, with her husband still living, was impossible. She had buried the bitterness of her remorse, and found solace where the penitent one is never refused, and contented herself with a life nearly as secluded from society as if she had taken the vows of a *religieuse*, submitting her will, which had so nearly been a rock of shipwreck to her soul, to the guidance of good Father Roberts, dwelling under the same roof with the orphans, spending herself and her means in the service of Christ's poor. She too was an orphan, her father having been brought to her from the battle-field in his coffin, and buried with military display,