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FATHER CONNELL; A TALE.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

The interruption was not renewed. Care-

fully and noiselessly he now removed the oiled paper from the window, put in his arm, and with a dexterous and knowing application of finger and thumb, shot back the bolt. The window then opened to the gentlest push of his hand; he clambered up to it, and knelt upon the lower part of its frame. A piece of mortar fell from the top of the recess of the window, and crashed and rattled among some kitchen utensils placed on a table beneath. For a moment he became perfectly still. Kneeling, as has been said, on the window frame, and also supporting himself by resting his hands and arms upon it, while his head and body erouched down and poked forward, not a musele had motion except those of his eyes—and even his eyes could but glare, like those of a startled tiger, checked in his spring, into the deep darkness of the kitchen.

But there came no stir through the house, to hint that the harsh and sudden noise had been heard by its inmates; and very, very cautionsly he proceeded to place one muffled foot on the table, having first felt about with it for an open spot where it might rest without causing fresh clatter. The next moment he was standing upon the table, on both feet : and the next, on the middle of the kitchen floor, his car intently watching the silence, and his eye the darkness around him,

Every way satisfied with the observations of both senses, he next crept to the fire, groping with one foot before the other, and with both light. hands, before him and beside him, lest he might stumble over, or hit himself against some unseen object. Here he again had recourse to the wallet slung over his shoulder. Extracting from it a small dark lantern, he took the candle out of this, and with cautious and thin drawn puffs at the "red sod" in the grate, soon had a light: one might imagine a sketch of hastigan's face, while he puffed at his sod; its characteristic features; the puckered action of his mouth, his down-turned eyes, with their scowling, overhanging brows - down-turned, because their glances were darted into the turf he held; the mixed expression of eagerness. caution, malignity, and black purpose, legible over his whole visage; while the portrait was lighted from underneath by the fierce ruddy glow of the sod, not more than a few inches removed from his lips. He raised the lid of the salt-box, and pos-

sessed himself of the key of the hall-door. He gained that door; believing it locked, turned the key in the lock without producing any effeet, and for a moment stood battled and confounded, and in no amiable humor, until by peering close he discovered his mistake. A few seconds after, the door was half opened, when, protruding his head and shoulders into the street, and glancing upward and downward, he whistled in so peculiar a key and manner that an uninitiated ear would be at a loss to decide whether the sound arose near or far off.

A small, small echo, and at the same time a perfect imitation of the whistle, floated through the stilled street; and very soon after, a ragged, muscular, square-built lad, whose age you could not determine at a glance, was admitted by Robin Costigan into Nick McGrath's quiet peaceable house.

Robin softly put down the latch of the door all but growling at him, and whispered into his very ear, "Stale afther me."

The barefooted pupil accordingly followed his preceptor into the kitchen. Costigan produced another supply of woollen rags, handed them to him, and motioned him to sit on the floor and adjust them over his feet.

"Can't I spake now?" demanded the youth, as he complied with these instructions.

" Yes, but spake low an' little." "I've news for you then, Darby Cooney. We must run for it or we're lost.'

"Why? How so?" "Because Mary Cooney is wid the 'prentice this present minit in Joan Flaherty's house, an'

she's tellin' him all about us." "Ha! by the morthial! How do you know

"I seen him abroad in the shop wid her, an'

I followed him to Joan Flaherty's.' "You did?" He scowled on the lad as if it were he who had committed some great fault. "You did, did you? · You're quite shure?"
"Ay, shure."

"An' won't you run while the road is clear?"

There, don't stir now till I come to you." the look, and secured it about his own person. him. He trembled, his teeth chattered, his what you would do, Robin."

"Are you ready?" he asked, coming back knees smote each other; and, unable to stir a

into the kitchen. "I'm ready-but-"

"Hould your prate, or-" there was another horrible threat, accompanied with terrible oaths. "Open your ear wide now, an' listen to me, fur your life—at the peril o' your life, mind;

do you hear? Why don't you answer me?"
He shook his scholar fiercely by the shoulders, and glared and grinned into his face, their features almost touching." "I'm listenin' hard."

"Come here." Costigan seized him by the arm, and hurried him over to the kitchen grate. "Do you see that red sod o' turf?" "I see id well."

"Mind me then, I bid you;" he applied his lips closely to the boy's ear, and communicated some orders in a whisper, so close and fine that the opposite ear might almost be said to have scarcely heard it.

"Have you the right undherstandin' o' what

"I have."

"You're positive sartin that you have?"

"I am. I'll give id back to you, an' shure that 'ud tell you whether I am or not;" and in his turn he whispered a nearly soundless whisper into his master's car. " Is that id?"

"Ay, by the mortial, that's id. Let me see

that you go by ordhers right, or woe betide his cries for Ned Fennell, as loudly as he could you. Here, take this." He placed the kit-ehen poker in the hand of his young colleague. and armed himself with the iron bar of its door. "Close afther me now, an' stale asy-asy, I tell you."

Without the slightest noise from the tread of their feet, the 'pair mounted the stairs, Costigan holding his lantern sideways, in order that his follower might have the advantage of its

They entered Ned Fennell's bed-room. The bed was unoccupied, and had not been lain in.
"Tis a truth, by —!" muttered Costigan, grinding his set teeth. "No matther—"

He turned, and still led the way onward. They gained the housekeeper's room. She was fast asleep, though her sleep scemed troubled, perhaps with some dream of danger. Costigan raised his bar in both hands. She muttered something; he paused one instant; he perfectly eaught the words. "In the most holy and blessed name of—" and these words saved her from his hand. It was not pity; it and threats mingled with the old man's almost was not a return of human feeling to the heart of the desperado, that stayed his uplifted arm least of all could it have been a religious sentiment. He afterwards said himself that it was a passing fright at something; but whatever it

He lighted the candle she had extinguished, and placed it on the floor, at the end of her bed, to avoid startling her from her sleep by its glare; and then he again whispered a short command to his pupil-

"If she stirs, touch her here," he drew his finger in a line across her forehead, without however coming in contact with it-" hould id that way in your hands, an' keep it ready, an' watch her well." He poised the kitchen poker so as perfectly to satisfy his own judgment, in both the hands of the less experienced practitioner-"keep well in your mind what I tould you in the kitchen, an' have your ears wide open for the whistle, an' do all your work well, for your life."

Cautiously, but quickly, Robin Costigan stole out of the housekeeper's bed-chamber. The lad remained alone at her bed-side; his again. His new come acquaintance was about weapon raised in both hands over his right to speak, but he shook his fist, snarling, and shoulder, and his eyes fixed in full, and ghastly watchfulness, on the old woman's face. Yes, hat boyish eye, which ought, at that moment, to have been closed in sweet and innocent slumber, or if awake at all, ought to have sparkled with the reflected merriment of a mind amused and at ease; that boyish eye was distended with only the murderer's stony abstraction of purpose, while the youthful lips, instead of quivering to the laugh or carol of boyhood, were firmly closed in the expression

of a deadly and unflinching resolve. A sudden crash sounded down stairs. The aged female started out of her sleep, and opened her eyes. They instantly encountered those which were watching her. A second glance made her understand what meant the figure, with the raised poker, and the haggard, hellish face, which stood over her; and she was about to sit up in bed, and had begun to scroam, when one blow, descending on the exact spot over which Costigan had described the airdrawn line with his finger, made her perfectly motionless and quiet.

With the concentrated force of his whole "Long threatenin' comes at last, then," said Costigun, in a low, slow, horrible tone; "bud it was indeed, joined with the weight of his come, no more words now. There's work to do. Tie on; tie on, an' hurry, or I'll cripple jarred in his hands; he unconsciously let it go; it found its way to the foot of the bed, fell thence on the floor, and overthrew and extin-"Let you do what I bid you, or you'll rue guished the candle; and he stood in complete it as well as Mary Cooney. Hurry, I say .- darkness, with, he assured himself, the corpse of the human being he had just deprived of He went to the hall-door, turned the key in life. Terror, and horror of his own act fell on

step, cold sweat flowed down his face.

door was burst open. It was the noise of this thank you. violence, which had startled Nelly Brechan from her sleep.

"Who are you? What do you want here?" demanded Nick M Grath of the ferocious intruder, as Costigan held his lantern over him. The old man was on his handmand knees, in bed, fumbling under the pillow.

"I want your money; an' there's no spare time for talkin -your money! -hurry."
"Ned Fennell! Ned Fennell! a robber! a

robber here, Ned Fennell!"

"Say that again, or cry out one word more, an' by the mortial, I'll chop you into pound pieces! Come, hurry, I say. The kay of this desk in the corner! Come! hand it out here!" the villain interrupting himself with a "Hah!" now snatched at a waistcoat, which partly protruded from beneath the pillow. Nick M.Grath flung himself upon the article of dress, in the pocket of which was, indeed, the identical key required by Costigan: and a struggle ensued between both: Nick M-Grath again setting up

"Hah! I see I must stop your pipe, then, by the mortial!'

Costigan placed the lantern on the floor, and then grasped by the throat the still prostrate old man. But his gripe no longer had in it the force of youth or of manhood; even the few years that had clapsed since we first knew the robber had, together with brutal indulgences and excesses, considerably enfeebled his arm; and in a trial of strength, for dear, dear life, even our little, fat, round friend proved himself almost a match for him. At all events, Nick M. Grath fastened the fingers of both his hands tightly in Costigan's long grey locks, now fallen from under his straw hat, and tugged with might and main. Costigan undid his grasp, and seized the waistcoat. Nick M'Grath followed his example, secured it at the other end, and was dragged off his bed into the middle of the room—now shricking shrilly for Ned Fennell, while his antagonist's curses despairing cries.

"It's only makin' a fool o' myself I am, growled Costigan suddenly relinquishing his hold of the waistcoat, starting up, seizing the self, Neddy; ask if I'm not able for a good own pocket." iron bar, and raising it high over the prostrate deal more than that, when he had me alone Nick M'Grath. But the next instant his pro- here, all to himself; ah! if you'd see the way noises around him. posed victim saw him fall headlong on the floor by his side, while the heavy weapon came. with a ringing noise, against the boards.

"Here I am, sir," said Ned Fennell, immediately after this happened-"get up, sir, and put on your clothes, and let us try to secure

this worthy person. He almost flung himself on Costigan's body, placed a knee upon his breast-bone, and held down both his arms.

bless you; and I won't forget this to you, Ned. I won't indeed;" and Nick M Grath proceeded. with as much speed as his haste, fright, and exhaustion would permit, to make his toilet.

Costigan," said Ned Fennell to his prisoner. Robin Costigan returned no word of answer. He only rolled his eyes, as a manacled wild

beast would have done, bent inwards his underlip, and gave a shrill fife-like whistle. It was a variety in the practice of the art of whistling, in which he seemed such an adept.

"What's that for?" asked Ned Fennell. Still he received no answer. The ear-splitting signal was only renewed,

"You have helpers in the house. Then I must be alive, I see. Are you ready to go down to the shop, sir?" he resumed, questioning his old master.

"I am quite ready, Ned, my good boy; but is he safe, Neddy?"

"He is, sir: I have him as safe for you, andfor the gallows, as his heart can wish.

Was it the tightness of the grasp by which he was held, that produced at this instant, certain sounds in his throat, or was it really a laugh of derision, that escaped from Robin Costigan? His old friend Ned looked close into his eyes, to help himself to ascertain the question, one way or another. But in them he could discern nothing but an ominous scowl.

"You will now go down to the shop, sir, if you please," resumed Ned, "and bring me up a good strong rope; I must tie this worthy neck and heels before I search the house .-Light the candle at the lantern, and take the lantern with you."

"I will, Ned, my good boy—I will."
Doing just as he was bid, with the docility of a child, the old man hobbled out of the room. "I was in the nick of time to spoil your sport, Robin," observed Ned to his unwilling

"You may say that," he was answered. "I was watching at the door, here to see

"How did you get into the house?" His master gained, meantime, the door of I'll tell you, then. After trying my latch-key old man to a window which looked into the Nick M'Grath's bedroom; and, as he had anticipated, found it fastened on the inside. But do for this evening, I turned to the back of the he did not hesitate, for an instant, forcibly to premises, Robin, scaled the yard wall, and eninsert the iron bar between the lock and the tered the house, by the kitchen-window, which door-jamb; and then, with a single wrench, the you so obligingly left open for me, Robin, I

"Curses for ever purshue me! That went

out o' my head, shure enough."
"Never mind, my poor friend; 'twas only a slip of memory—and we'll teach you, if we can, how to avoid such little mistakes in future,-You and I met before. Robin, my dear-does your memory fail you in that too?"

"No. I remember id well, an' I'll pay you for it, as well as for this, before I die.'

"Don't Robby; don't be so particular, I'll never ask you for payment upon my word: all that you ever got at my hands I have given gratis, and with hearty good will. You are no creditor of mine, I assure you."

"I'll pay you to the last farthin', for all

"Ha! ha! and you really expect to make a fool of the hangman, over again, Robin?"

"I'll make you no answer to that, no more than to any other gibe of yours; but I'll tell manded where the are was; and when Ned you my mind, on another thing, as often as you answered, they, in their turns, gave him back like; an' I say to you now—an' don't let what I say go from your mind—I'll make you rue the day you ever crossed me."

"The snow-ball an' all ?-Fie, for shame on you, Rob-you bear malice I see, after play; but no matter. You give me a fair warning, and I had better make sure of you then-keep my sake; go down stairs, get the key of the eye on you-see that the hangman's rope is strong, and that you hang until you are deadand even after that I had better see, with my work by myself till they get in-hord help us own eyes, that the earth covers you."

"You'd want to do all that, an' more, to

keep yourself out o' harm." Ned Fennell's light vein changed a little. Impotent as the old robber's threat, under present circumstances, might seem, still, it was made so often, and with such self-nossession, that Ned now felt a little measy and qualmish.

"So, mind yourself, my callaurn." Well then, Robin my friend, I will mind myself. And so, we'll begin at once, if you

From his master, who now returned into his bedroom, he snatched the rope he had gone for. "Hold one of his feet tight for a moment. sir, that's all I shall ask you to do. You are

surely able for so much-

Don't tell me about it now, sir if you please -wait till I have him quite fast and secure for

"Well I will, Neddy, my boy."

And with coil after coil, and with knot after knot, Ned soon had Robin Costigan as well manacled as ever was man before him.

The instant Nick McGrath saw the process ended, he went down on his knees, besides the "Ned, my good boy, God bless you, God prostrate Costigan, and took up his interrupted demonstration of the "way he gave it to him;" elinching his little fist, protruding one of his fat knuckles, and punching his late antagonist in all the softer parts of his body, not excepting changed the single monotonous expression, which accompanied all this punishment.

"'Twas your master bid you do it," he said,

chuckling triumphantly. "My master! I have no master, you old

fool. What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say, 'Twas your master bid you do it, I tell you; and a master you have, as clever a hand as you think yourself; and I can tell you who he is too, if you purtend to forget him, he's your master, the devil, you jail-bird — old Nick, my pet:" and punch, punch, punch, with his knuckle, still accompanied every word that the exultant old man

A glare of light here suddenly burst on the unshuttered window, fully illuminating the

"What can that be?" said Ned Fennell, running to the window, which looked into the little yard.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Costigan, down in his very stomach.

"Merciful Heavens! the hay-loft is on fire," rejoined Ned.

"Eh? what? what Ned? don't say that, Ned, my good boy, don't say that," cried poor Nick M'Grath, suddenly lowered in his high tones, and struck almost into inaction by this new terror, as was testified by his weak and mumbling voice, shaking frame, and vain attempts to rise from his kneeling posture.-"Don't say that; Ned, if it is truth you are speaking we must all be destroyed in a few

minutes! The warerooms, you know, Ned; the warerooms all round the hay-loft-" Another very original kind of laugh escaped Costigan; his chest and shoulders undergoing quick convulsions, in proof of the internal plea-

sure it gave him.

master, "I know too well what danger we are "Hah! you'd like to know that, would you? in-come here, sir," he dragged the bewildered the street, thrust out his own head and shoulders, after he had with great difficulty raised it up, and with all the power of his lungs shouted "fire! fire!"

"Now, for heaven's soke, dear sir, endeavor to keep your wits about you, or all will indeed be lost—fire! fire!" Ned shouted again.

"I will, Ned, my boy. I will keep all my wits about me—you'll see I will—an' the fools, Ned! my poor fools. Ned! my poor fools! are they to be roasted alive too? Only why didn't they keep off the fire and the ill-luck from the house and the place, and such a plenty of them in it this night of all the nights in the year."

The old malefactor again laughed his own well esteemed laugh,

"Silence! you grey-headed scoundrel," said Ned Fennell, turning fiercely upon him, " silence! or you'll tempt me to brain you on the spot; for your laugh frightens me like the laugh of a devil?" He snatched up the iron bar which lay near Costigan, sprang to the window, and a third time shouted "fire!"

Sashes were now thrown up in the opposite houses, and voices, in shricking alarm, dehis fearful cry of "fire, fire!" and disappeared into their houses to dress hastily, and issue forth to volunteer their best efforts to arrest

the calamity.

"Now, sir," resumed Ned beseechingly to his master, "do what I tell you, for God's hall door, and let in some of the neighbors, to help me to put out the fire-I must what's this?--why the old man is either dying or struck with siekness." He thus interrupted himself, as he perceived that Nick M Grath was now sitting on the floor, with his back to the wall, smiling and muttering, and unable to make the slightest exertion.

Ned Fennell stood a moment in almost agonized thought. Then he darted down stairs, the bar of iron in his hands,

In a few seconds Robin Costigan knew that he heard the noise of battering at the street door, on the inside; and in a few more was certain that Ned Fennell had, for the present, been obliged to give up the attempt in de-

"Curses on his gander head," growled Costigan-" he hasn't brains enough in it to give "Oh! aint I, Neddy, my boy? Ask him- a minute's guess that I have the key in my

Again the old robber bent his car to all the

He heard other and other window-sashes thrown up, and then the screaming demands of "where-where?" and reverberations of the

wild cry of "fire! fire! fire!" running, like fire itself, up and down the street—the street which, a few moments before, had been as dully and as deadly silent, as the scaled tomb. After this the noise of running feet sounded abroad, of which a great many came to Nick M'Grath's house door, while voices roared and bellowed out entracties and commands to have it opened; and while the still gathering crowd knocked and kicked at it, till the street echoed again. "A sledge, a sledge!" he then heard them say; and still the clamor of running feet "You shan't escape the third hanging, Robin his face, over and over. And suddenly he and frightened voices increased every instant. And in the midst of this uproar the curfewbell, before mentioned as hung in the high structure, over the Tholsel, now only a few yards distant, suddenly clanged out a thrilling peal; it was designedly rung in a hurried and irregular manner, sometimes slow and low, sometimes loud and fast, conveying to the already terrified minds of those who heard it a fancy that, suddenly wakened out of its sleep, like themselves, it also shared their present trepidation. At all events, as its clash, clash, broke over the midnight repose of the little city, penetrating its every nook, and reaching even to its wide-spread suburbs, no tocsin ever produced a greater panic.

Crash! at the hall-door below, and Costigan swore that it was burst open. He was right, and immediately he heard running and vociferating through the house, and almost at the same moment his apprentice quickly, yet stealthily, glided into the room.

"Your knife here!" said the old offender. The not unapt boy looked, comprehended, and instantly proceeded to cut the cords that bound his master.

"You done it, then!" growled Costigan dur-

ing this rapid process. "I did-well."

"Is the hall-door wide open for us?" "As wide open as hell's hall-door is for us." "Folly on, then !" and Costigan jumped up, and was hastening out of the apartment.

"Is he safe?" questioned his young colleague pointing to Nick M'Grath, who lay huddled up in a corner, and as silent as if he were doad. "No, but the fright 'ill do for him-who-

ther or no, we havn't time now; no, nor the tools convenient; make speed after me, I say." In a short time, indeed, the two worthies,

"I know, sir," answered Ned to his poor had escaped from the house almost unnoticed.