

## CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

CHRISTIAN FAIR

Author of "A Mother's Sacrifice," etc.

## CHAPTER XVI.—CONTINUED

His lip trembled, and he turned away. In a moment, however, he turned back, and having taken a warm adieu of his newly-found brother, he departed to seek the nobleman, while Father O'Connor, as we must continue to call him, joined his friends. They returned to the hotel, and there the young priest told the strange, strange story.

"I felt it," said Father Meagher, jumping up with all the alacrity of a young man, and seizing the clergyman's two hands.

"My brother!" exclaimed Nora, every vestige of color flown from her face, and her large eyes looking larger and unnatural in the intensity of their wild stare.

"Father O'Connor my brother, and Captain Denner my brother also—surely it is a dream!"

She did not seem to be so impressed by the fact that Lord Heathcote was her father, as that she was the sister of the two young men, and it required Father Meagher's assurances, and Father O'Connor's affectionate reiteration of all that he had told, and Clara's joyfully weeping congratulations, to convince her of her singular relationship.

"Do you swear to these statements?"

It was the interrogatory put by Lord Heathcote to Mortimer Carter, with Denner as the solitary witness. Not a ruffle appeared in Carter's manner; not a deepening of his florid color, not even an instant's dropping of his eyes, but with all the assurance of well-imitated conscious rectitude, he stood firmly drawn to his full height, and his face expressing a bold triumph as he answered in a distinct, ringing voice:

"I do, my lord, swear most solemnly that all which I repeated to your lordship a short time ago in the presence of those who were there assembled is most assuredly and unqualifiedly true."

"Allow me to remind your lordship," interposed Denner, "that the oath of a traitor is of little worth—this man must have already perjured himself many times in the despicable service in which he has been engaged, so that it required little effort for him to take a false oath now."

Carter affected to bear in silence the scathing imputation, waiting respectfully for Lord Heathcote to speak. His lordship said quietly, after he had turned over nervously some papers on the open cabinet before him:

"You have expected, I believe, as your reward for recent information a sum of money sufficient, if I mistake not, to purchase the estate of the prisoner, Carroll O'Donoghue?"

"I have had your own assurance of it, my lord," answered Carter, his eyes beginning to sparkle.

"Well, Mr. Carter," the nobleman arose, and placing his hands with careless gesture behind him, bent his sternest look upon the miscreant—"perhaps you are already aware that her gracious Majesty, the Queen, has pardoned recently some of these Fenians?"

He spoke very slowly, as if he would give his listener ample time to comprehend:

"Feeling grateful for the care which was given to my children by this O'Donoghue family, I have interested myself in behalf of the doomed prisoner; the result of my efforts reached me today—it is an entire pardon of Carroll O'Donoghue, and an order that his estate be purchased and restored to him."

The florid color of Carter's face changed to purple, becoming so deep that it threatened to end in an alarming blackness; the veins in his forehead and neck swelled—he was obliged to loosen his collar to give himself air.

"My lord," he gasped, "you do not mean that I am to lose my reward—I toiled for it night and day!"

"I regret, Mr. Carter," said the nobleman ironically, "that you are so little the Christian as to desire your reward at the expense of a fellow-creature's life—so diabolical a spirit would indicate deliberate error in the matter of your sworn statements."

Carter bit his lip until the blood came in his effort to repress his baffled rage. "Am I, then, to have no reward for my work in behalf of the government, my lord?" he asked, his voice husky and trembling.

Lord Heathcote answered quietly: "None, Mr. Carter, save the testimony of your own conscience."

He touched the bell; an attendant entered, and baffled, discomfited, humbled Carter was obliged to leave the room without uttering another remonstrance.

The nobleman turned to Denner, the anguish which he had striven to repress showing so painfully in his face that the young man could not bear to look at it. "Walter," he said, speaking with difficulty, "I shall do every justice to you all save that of making any public acknowledgment—my wealth shall be at your disposal; it will enable Marie to bring a dowry to him to whom she has already given her heart; it will place within your reach influence for the lady you would reward; and it will give to this young priest, to whom my heart yearns, though I cannot yet entirely believe

that he is my son, enough to enable him to disengage his charities. For myself, my failing health has made me think for some time of resigning my onerous position—I shall now do so, and returning to England, I shall bury, in a life of quiet and retirement, this heart which has sustained so many shocks."

"Father!" The young man knelt beside him. "Since your own voluntary act will give to her brother and her home again, I ask no more. I shall devote my life to you, and my brother and sister will, I doubt not—"

"Cease!" interrupted the nobleman with something of his old sternness. "You do not understand me, Walter,"—his voice softening.

"I shall go away without seeing again those who remind me of that unhappy, that guilty past. I shall bury myself in a solitude which they must not disturb. If you—the sole one whom Marie left to me when she took her guilty flight—if you choose to cheer my declining years, I feel they will be few—I shall accept the sacrifice; understand, I place no restriction upon as much of the tale being told as may be necessary to make people know that my daughter is not the child of the degraded man who claims her as such. I only ask that my name be spared!"

"Do not fear, father," answered the young man somewhat bitterly; "in the pain which must result from the thought of the guilt which you still believe adheres to our mother, there will be little disposition to mention your name."

"Well, go now," said the nobleman wearily—"you say that you promised to join your friends—and come to me in the morning. I shall leave for London tomorrow."

Denner took a hasty adieu, and hurried to the hotel, where his friends so impatiently awaited him.

What a greeting was his—what a welcoming upon every side! and as he stood, one arm encircling Nora, the other hand clasped tightly in both, Father O'Connor's, and directly in front of him Father Meagher and Clara, and the whole party too excited, and too wildly joyful to do more than look at each other and give vent to their feelings by incoherent exclamations, he also gave himself, for the moment, entirely up to that unrestrained joy.

He would not tell them yet of the sadness which oppressed his own heart—instead, he would whisper first into Clara's ear the story of her brother's pardon, and the restoration of his property. She repeated aloud the delightful tidings, and then, while joyous excitement again reigned, she seized his hands and cried her grateful tears upon them.

He could not restrain the impulse to stoop and whisper:

"Have I made amends for all the past, Miss O'Donoghue?"

"Captain Denner—Mr. Berkeley, I mean,—how can you ask?" and her beautiful eyes turned upon him with a look which thrilled him.

At length Denner's communication was entirely made—Lord Heathcote's determination and his own resolution. To leave them—to go back to England! not even to accompany them on their return to Tralee in order to congratulate Carroll on his wonderful good fortune! How Clara paled and quivered! and then for the first time he read the reciprocation of his passion. He extended his hand while he ventured to whisper:

"Clara—I may call you so this once—you will sometimes think of me—you will pray for me—you will hope with me that one day Heaven itself will interpose to rend this veil before my father's eyes, and that—"

She broke from him to conceal her painful blushes, but he had read more than enough to convince him of a very blissful fact.

He bade them all adieu, confiding his newly-found relatives to each other's care; and promising to write speedily, he tore himself away, hurrying to the quarters of Captain Crawford, though it was long past midnight.

TO BE CONTINUED

## THE MASS PATH

The little headwoman was silent for a minute or two, and I could see that she meant to tell me another story from her store of strange experiences before she let me take my way home that evening.

"If you're not tired out from listenin' to me, I'll tell you another story about an affair that took place years and years ago, when poor Johnny Maher that I was tellin' you about was alive and well, God rest his soul. It was he was travelin' with me at the time. Are you too tired to hear it, Missie?"

"Certainly not," I replied eagerly, adding, as I noted her thin shoulders and the pallor of her refined old face, "that is, if you are not tired yourself."

She shook her head, smiling up at me reassuringly.

"For all the little miserable looks of me, 'tis I that am well able to face more hardships than tellin' a story at my ease to a young lady that's pleased to listen to an old woman's raimics," she said, and then began her story.

As I said, the story I'm goin' to tell happened one time that Johnny Maher was travelin' with me to a place in the West named Ardrennan, where the Fathers from Dublin were to give a general mission. Johnny knew the place before, be-

cause he went there a few years back of the time I'm tellin' about, for a week when he retired for the men of the parish was on, and he told me that the place was lovely, and the people very good an' innocent, an' the lodgin' for the likes of himself an' myself clean an' comfortable an' nothin' unreasonable in the charge.

"I was always glad to have poor Johnny's company on the way to a place I wasn't well acquainted with myself, for he was an' obligin' poor man an' a great help in every way you could think of."

"It was a long journey, and by the time we arrived at the station in the fall of the evenin' we were cold an' hungry, the two of us, but Johnny knew where to go an' where to direct me to go, and a convenient place it was, in a little country street just back of the church itself. Johnny Maher was only three doors away, so that if I wanted to see him about anything I hadn't far to step."

"I hope you'll do well, ma'am," said the woman of the house as she put the teapot on the side of the hob ready to me hand and as much hot cake as a big man couldn't eat in a whole day in front of me.

"I hope so," said I, wonderin' why she said this, as, to speak the truth, it is seldom that we don't do at least middlin' well at a big mission."

"'Tisn't a big town, I know," I said after a bit; "but the friend that was with me on the way down was tellin' me that the people from all the places round about here will be flockin' in after the first day an' night. But, even if we don't make much, so long as the people come to hear the Fathers and make their peace with God—glory be to Him—we'll be satisfied."

"An', please God, He won't fail ye, either," she said. "But what I had in my mind was this: The Mass Path is closed, I hear, an', if that's true, I don't know how the mission will be attended by the people from Clonmona and Clasheragh; they have no other way to come here, as the round by the road would be eight or ten miles, while across the fields by the Mass Path a half-hour would bring them."

"The heart sank in me for a minute after hearin' that, an', though I said in my mind, 'What's the pleasin' to God is pleasin' to me,' I had a minute's fear that I might be at a loss for comin' to Ardrennan at all, a loss that I could no way afford."

"I suppose ye have a retreat for the men every year an' one for the women, too?" I asked her after a few minutes.

"We have, indeed, thank God," she answered. "But that's the reason I mentioned the Mass Path. The people about the place here, on account of the yearly retreat, are never hardly out of beads an' scapulars an' such things. But 'tis different with the outsiders. They come from long distances, and a few of them can manage the retreat; but, of course, a mission comes only once in a long while, an' the far-out people would do many a hardshipin' thing so as not to miss a few nights and mornin's at least, at it, an' makin' their confessions to the missionaries. Now, I'm afraid you'll be without them customers this turn, for only a few will be able to come the long distances, and I'm afraid that 'tis only too true that the Mass Path is closed, after bein' open to the people ever since Cromwell's time, when there was only a rock in a little hollow for the priest to say the Holy Mass on unknown to the soldiers in the bad old times."

"Did the parish priest say anything about it last Sunday?" I questioned her then, knowin' that in the country places the priest would be likely to tell the parishioners about a thing like that an' the mission comin' on.

"He did," she said. He said to us before leavin' the altar at last Mass: 'I am afraid, dear brethren, that, despite all my endeavors, the gentleman who is now the owner of Rossgrannan will close the path which leads through his lands to this church, thereby deprivin' a great many people of the benefits of attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, as only a certain number will be able to come here by the long round of the roads. The hardship is all the greater as we got no notice of this privilege bein' stopped an' the missionary Fathers from Dublin bein' on the way here already, an' all arrangements for a general mission havin' been made for some time we feel very deeply the loss to the people of Clonmona and Clasheragh, who are always so assiduous in their attendance at mission times.'"

"The poor gentleman seemed greatly distressed," she said then, an' no wonder. 'Me husband tells me though, that very likely they'll build a chapel of ease at Clonmona as soon as they can, but, owin' to the debt on our own church here, that won't be for some time to come. But God is good, an' maybe Atway Trooper won't have things always in his own hands.'"

"Is he the owner of the place where the Mass Path is, ma'am?" I asked her.

"'Tis an' a more bigoted man never stepped. Except in the 'Black North' above you wouldn't get the likes of him, I think. However it was that Mr. Pat Crilly sold it to him, I don't know, seein' that he was a Protestant an' the Mass Path runnin' through his fields; for even an unbaptized Protestant in Rossgrannan, through the means of that, would be

out of place, for, God help us, they haven't the light an' grace to know the value of the Holy Mass and the need of the convenience of the short cut to Catholic people."

"The whole story of it is this. The Crillys were livin' in the Rossgrannan for hundreds of years, an' before them again the MacMahons, an' the Rogans before them. Beyond them three families people can't go; but 'tis always said that from Cromwell's time the path was used to this day to take the round of the roads off of the people. About fifty years ago the Crilly divided their land, and part of it passed as a fortune to a Miss Crilly, who married old John Maher, who is still livin' in the upper part near Clasheragh, an' of course, the Path is always open in his place, just as the continuation of it was open in the Crillys' until last week, when the people came through for the last time, they were told."

"Two years ago, this Atway Trooper bought 'e place by private sale from Patrick Crilly, the last of the Crilly family who went away with himself, 'tis said, to Australia or some place like that, because some lady he had a fancy for would not marry him. He wasn't in need of money at all, but took some notion against the place after his refusin' him, an' made up his mind to leave the country for good. Everyone said his head must have turned when they found out who was the new master, an' indeed, no one was thankful to him for sellin' his fine old home to a bitter Orangeman."

"What harm if he was even a religious man in his own kind of belief, if he had one; but he hasn't an' goes nowhere on a Sunday, though there's a Protestant church just a bit beyond his gates, an' plenty room in it for above a hundred, although the minister has only four people along with the clerk an' his wife to be preachin' to, or whatever they does insist."

"God is more powerful than all the Atway Troopers in the world," says I when she was finished talkin'.

"An' who knows but between this an' Sunday—it was of a Saturday night we were speakin'—the Mass Path might be open again, with His Holy help?"

"Soon after that I went to my room, an' after sayin' my few prayers an' the Rosary, I went to bed as I had an early mornin' before me an' plenty to get to about gettin' a good place for my stall an' all the rest of it."

"When I was goin' to Mass in the mornin' who should I see comin' along toward the church but a big black-lookin' man with a terrible frown on him an' a ridin'-whip in his hand an' he givin' every eye at the people goin' in, as if he'd like to use the whip on them if he dared. I didn't expect to see one with a face like his goin' into the house of God; but, quare thing that it was, in he went, an' passin' me out where I was kneelin' at the back, went into a seat half-way up the church and sat down. 'Twasn't right of me, I know, but I couldn't help givin' a look at him every now and then as the Mass went on to see if he'd kneel down; but never a kneel! He sat down the whole time, and moreover, what made me put him down to be after losin' his senses, he kept his hat on his head as well."

"I met Johnny Maher a few minutes after I came out, an' the two of us went down to the little corner by the west wall of the church, where there was a good sheltered spot for us to put up our stalls, an' we marked them an' went back to our breakfasts then. As we were goin' away I asked Johnny did he notice the man with the ridin'-whip that sat down all the time in church an' kept his hat on Sunday, an' he stopped an' looked at me."

"Didn't you hear who he was?" he asked me.

"Indeed I didn't I answered him, for I was in such a hurry to see me own affairs that I didn't stop to ask strangers any questions."

"Well, then, Kate Madigan, he might be after makin' things very interestin' for your business, an' you not to know anything about it, an' to mind the injur he's thryin' in his mane way to do the Catholic religion by closin' the right of way that the people of these parts had since Cromwell's day to their Sunday's Mass an' the holy exercises of the mission. That was Atway Trooper, the man that closed the Mass Path this week so that the people of Clonmona and Clasheragh could neither go to Mass nor the mission except the well-off ones that have their own time at their own cars, an' even only some of them same will be able to go, the way things are with the long round of the roads on them."

"I know all about that, Johnny," I said. "But if that was him, what took him into the church above? 'Twasn't the way he became a convert, anyway, from his way and he inside there."

"Most likely impudence an' curiosity; an' I wouldn't be surprised either if he had an iday that some one of the men might tackle him for bein' so ignorant as to wear his hat in our church, an' then he'd have an excuse for doin' what he'd be glad to have a chance of doin', givin' some of us a taste of the whip."

"Maybe you're right, but I'm thinkin' the man isn't right in his mind," I said.

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After that I went into my lodgin's to have a cup of tea after the mornin', and then I went down again to the church, where Johnny and me self helped each other to put up our two stalls.

"I think I'll put out a few of them pictures of the Sacred Heart that I got for the women's retreat at Derygort awhile back," I said to Johnny Maher. "I sold a lot of them that time, an' I'm sure I'll be able to part with what's left of them here. An' that reminds me."

"I promised to give you a dozen of them instead of a few Blessed Sacrament beads until me own ones come on to me. I won't get them before Monday, I'm afraid."

"I nearly forgot about them," said Johnny.

"After a minute or two he gave me the little beads, an' I gave him the roll of pictures and one in a fine gilt frame to entice the people to buy. Not that any devout person would want more than a look at the Face of that picture to make him want to have it. I never saw any picture so lovin'-lookin', an' I always sold a dale of them. I kept another few for myself, an' I was puttin' one in front of the other with things on my stall in readiness for the mornin' sermon, when I heard a voice at my stall sayin'—"

"Where did you get that picture?" an' who should be there but the black-lookin' man of the mornin'—Atway Trooper.

"In Dublin, sir," I answered him, civily enough.

"'I'll buy it,' he said, and then, 'How much?'"

"One and sixpence, sir, without the frame," I began, but he stopped me, his two hard black eyes runnin' over with tears.

"I don't want the frame," he said roughly. "It's the picture; it has the face of a boy of mine, my son that died in America. That'll do. Roll it up."

"Well, then, sir, if you had a son with a face like that, your own heart must be a kind one, an' I'm sure it isn't true that the people are tellin' me—that you won't let the Clonmona parishioners nor the people from Clasheragh go through your place to hear God's word. The father of a son with a face like that wouldn't do it, I'm sure."

"Take your money and give me the picture. Stop, though. What's this printed here?"

"He took out a pair of spectacles at that and, unrollin' the picture, read in a kind of whisper, 'Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine.' He shook his head sorrowfully at that, rolled the picture again and, without another word, turned away."

"Johnny Maher was like a stone image with astonishment for he was listenin' an' lookin' on all the while Atway Trooper was dealin' with me."

"God send the picture may soften his heart. Maybe the poor man had his own thrills," said Johnny, an' it turned out that he was right for the next mornin' the priest gave out that the Mass path was open again."

"The woman where I was lodgin' told me all about it, for a niece of hers was working under Atway Trooper's housekeeper at Rossgrannan, an' she was tellin' her the story after Mass. It appears that the Troopers were always a bigoted family, and when the youngest and favorite son became an artist and went to Italy to learn paintin' he was converted to our religion, praise be to God. An' not alone that, but he became a priest an' went on the American mission an' his Superior, who was given to paintin' holy pictures, put his face on a picture of the Sacred Heart some time before he died, an' there were copies of it goin' about the world, but the Protestant father, who was after discoverin' his boy long years before, never saw one of these until the Lord put it into his head to notice the one on my stall the very night, he told the priests after, that he had a mind to set fire to the church because he hated Catholics so much—moreover, on account of his son becomin' one an' leavin' him to become a priest."

"He showed the picture to his housekeeper when he went to Rossgrannan that night, for she was ever and always with the Troopers since she was a girl, an' remembered the boy that became a priest well."

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