

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

CHRISTINE FABER

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

CARTER'S HIGH HOPES

The fatigue of the journey, the pain of the suspense to which she had been subjected, the renewal of her grief in the failure of her plea to Lord Heathcote, told somewhat alarmingly on Nora, when the next morning she struggled from her room to meet Father O'Connor. The latter was wondering a little at the absence of Dennis—he had not returned to the hotel since his departure for the castle the evening before.

"And I hesitate to leave you here alone," said the priest to Nora, "while I call upon Lord Heathcote."

"Oh, no!" she answered, smiling faintly; "I can rest in my room until you return. Perhaps then you will be able to tell me the object of this journey."

"Perhaps so," he replied; "but I assure you, Nora, it was not to subject you to the pain which our visit yesterday gave you."

"Certainly not; I understand that!" striving to speak cheerfully.

With some misgiving as to whether the solitude and retirement of her own room were best for her in her present apparently weak state, he left her, trusting, however, that the period of his absence would be very brief.

In answer to the message which he sent to Lord Heathcote, he was told that his lordship was too ill for an interview, but he was requested to call on the morrow. Disappointed, he hastened back to Nora.

"To stay here another day!" she exclaimed in sad dismay; "but that was her only murmur; she saw that Father O'Connor deemed it better to wait, and she tried to appear resigned. Later in the day, when they were both growing alarmed at Dennis's continued absence, a servant bearing a note arrived from the castle—it was from Dennis, addressed to the clergyman, and ran:

"Forgive my apparent desertion—I am engaged with something that may benefit our dear Carroll. Do not on any account return to Tralee until you have seen me, and tell Miss Sullivan not to be anxious because of the delay.

Yours,
WALTER."

Nora was instantly aglow. "What is it, Charlie? Is he this dear Captain Dennis, using his influence with Lord Heathcote—will it be a commutation of the sentence?" She seemed to have recovered in a second all her strength.

"I do not know—I fear to allow myself to surmise," answered the priest; "but pray, Nora."

Carter's spy, Thade, had found quarters far too comfortable in Drommacoloh to care to report truthfully to his employer. With money to treat old and long-absent cronies, with nothing to do but plan for his comfort and enjoyment the whole day long, and with a quiet, refreshing country life about him, he compromised with his conscience by saying that, of course, as he did not see Nora, she must be leading a very peaceful, domestic life within doors. Did he report the contrary, did he conscientiously say that he saw nothing of her, neither in the chapel on Sunday mornings, where she would be certain to be, nor anywhere in the district of Drommacoloh, he well knew that he would be instantly recalled, and perhaps the means of earning his comfortable stipends taken entirely from him. So he wrote that Nora was quietly living in the little pastoral residence, and Carter, not doubting the report, was satisfied, and with his brazen confidence, constantly assuring himself that he was safe, he waited for the execution of Carroll O'Donoghue. A week after Thade's departure, Carter was somewhat startled one morning to receive a letter with an official seal, and marked with Lord Heathcote's coat of arms; it was from his lordship, speaking in terms which though ambiguous, still might be construed by a conceited mind into a gratifying significance, and such an interpretation Carter put upon them; his round red face glowed with delight, and it increased when he found on further perusal that his immediate presence was requested at Dublin Castle.

"Ah," he said, rubbing his hands together when he had read the letter a third time, "I have nothing to fear from any quarter—if Dennis told his lordship the hints I dropped regarding his birth, evidently it has not angered Lord Heathcote, and should he tax me with betraying anything of his secret, I can explain the matter by saying that I was provoked to it by Dennis's insolence, but that I was careful all the time to say no more than these mere hints." He took up the letter again, and reading for a fourth time its contents, continued to soliloquize: "It looks as if I were to receive immediately the sum which will enable me to purchase the O'Donoghue estate—his lordship hints at my reward for such faithful services having been too long delayed—egad! but luck is turning in my favor at last; Carroll O'Donoghue hung, his

estate mine, and with money to boot, I think then the means will not be wanting to make dainty Nora mine, too." He put down the letter and gave himself up to thought for a moment. Then, rousing suddenly, he said, as he began to bustle about the apartment: "Well, things will keep here until I return—I'll be off tonight."

He would not have been so elated, nor would he have started on his journey with such assured confidence, could he have given one look into the little pastoral residence at Drommacoloh. There, also, much about the same time, a letter had been received from Dublin, but it came in Dennis's hand, begging Father Meagher and Clare to come on immediately and join Father O'Connor and Nora; it also requested that the clergyman should telegraph the time of their start. There was nothing more—it did even hint, as Dennis's note to Father O'Connor had done, of efforts being made in Carroll's behalf.

And Clare, wild with wonder and anxiety, appealed to the old clergyman for an explanation; but he was as powerless as herself to give one.

"You will go," she said; "you will start immediately, perhaps, oh, perhaps it has some reference to Carroll!"

"Yes," was the reply; "I can send Nora down to ask Father Meagher to take my place here, and we can start in the morning."

Clare's face slightly fell—to wait till morning was so long, though she knew that even did they leave Drommacoloh immediately they would reach Tralee too late to take the train for Dublin.

Moira, with an injunction to be quick, was dispatched on her errand to Father Meagher.

Tighe a Vohr, since the time that he had accompanied Miss O'Donoghue from Tralee, now little more than a week, had twice performed the journey to Tralee. He could not keep himself entirely from his master's prison, though the grim exterior was all that he was allowed to see; and he was equally anxious to hear from Clara, that he might learn the first news of the two who had made such a mysterious journey to Dublin; he had his own wild hopes regarding that journey, and many were there fervent petitions the faithful fellow put up to Heaven that his hopes might be realized. Now, when Moira confided to him the story of the intended journey of Father Meagher and Clare, he jumped into the air, and gave one of his peculiar whistles:

"Faith, Moira, but that's rare news—to Dublin, eh, the pair of 'em is goin'! now, mark me words, Moira, but there's somethin' big afoot; an' I suppose they'll go widout as much as axin' me nor Shaun to go wid thim! well, that's not to me notion o' how things should be done at all, an' mesel' an' Shaun'll jist folly then, an' they won't know a word about it till they see us both in Dublin along wid thimself."

"Yes, and leave me," pouted Moira; "you are always going away somewhere just as soon as you get here—I don't believe in the affection you say you have for me!"

"Now, Moira Moynahan, was there ever a man as thrived as I am? betune me anxiety for the mather, an' the ethrin' that I have to kape me mother in temper, an' the way that I'm humurin' Corry O'Toole jist to save him from despair, an' the manner that I'm takin' to show Father Meagher how mebbe it's a saint in sackcloth an' ashes I'd be some day, to have you at me now; faith, it's enough to crass an angel! don't I wear the sign o' me pledge to you, every day in the year?" He took off his wretched-looking hat, and pointed to the dirty, tattered mass of ribbon at his side.

"Isn't it a burnin' shame for me, a decent b'y as I am, wid a character for sarvin' gintlemen that can't be bate in the whole o' Ireland—isn't it a burnin' shame, I say, to have me head disgraced by the loike o' that? an' it's all owin' to you, Moira Moynahan; you won't give me another kapesake that'd enable me to dispense wid this!" and he angrily clapped the dilapidated head-gear again on his brown curls.

"Well, I can't help it," pouted Moira; "uncle won't let me receive you as a suitor, and not even for you, Tim Carmody, shall I disobey my dear old uncle!" She drew herself up, her air of willful firmness making her look prettier than ever to the enamored eyes of her lover.

"Nor would I ax you to, Moira darlin'; but God is good, an' mebbe He'd put pity for us both in yer uncle's heart, an' whin he sees how sober an' shteady I am, mebbe it's not always he'd be holdin' back his consent."

"I don't know about that," said Moira, shaking her pretty head, and directing one of her arch glances at Tighe.

"Na bockalish," said Tighe; "anyway, we'll not moind biddin' the divil good-morrow till we mate him—so kape up yer heart, Moira, an' perhaps it'll all come roight yet."

Moira with some affright remembered her errand. "And uncle told me to be so quick!" she said.

"Well, run on now," said Tighe; "an' I'll run alongside you, an' we'll be there in no time."

"No, Tighe; I'll not let you take a foot with me—I'll go the quicker

with you!" and without waiting for his answer she hurried on.

But Tighe would be true to his determination of accompanying her, and he followed, never suffering himself quite to overtake her, however, while Shaun, seeming equally impressed with the maneuver, followed directly behind his master. The procession was the same on the return, and to Moira's dismay, Father Meagher saw it from the window of his study, where he had been anxiously waiting the return of his niece.

"Do not attempt to excuse yourself, Moira," he said sternly; "I saw enough to give me all the facts."

"Well, but uncle, I wouldn't even let him come with me; he followed me himself, and Shaun followed him."

"And a pretty precious pair you are, both you and Tighe! Go to your work, miss!"

Moira obeyed, muttering when she had reached her own domain: "It's dreadful hard to be treated this way; but Tighe loves me, and I don't think he'd ever marry any one else, even if uncle never gave his consent."

Father Meagher and Clare were early astir next morning, and after some directions to young Father MeShane, whose delicate health exempted him from regular duty, and some parting orders to Moira regarding any interviews she might be tempted to have with Tighe a Vohr, at which Moira privately laughed, knowing more about Tighe's intentions than did the worthy priest, the two departed. What was their astonishment when, having arrived in Dublin, and Father Meagher was about to engage a cab to take them to Father O'Connor and Nora, Tighe a Vohr and Shaun stood suddenly before them.

"Forgive me, yer riverence, for follin' you, but he ravened o' me anxiety about you all I couldn't sitay behind. I've an inklin' someway or another that this journey'll bring good to the young mather, an' I'm on me way to know the good news as soon as the rist o' you would."

"Well, as to that, my good fellow," said Father Meagher, when he had recovered from his surprise, "we are as much in the dark about the object of our journey as you are. But jump in,—pointing to the cab—"we'll find a place for you."

"But Shaun?" said Tighe, ruefully.

"Give him the order to jump in too," said the priest, laughing. The dog required no second bidding; he was soon ensconced in a corner of the cushion, opposite Clare, and all having entered, they were rapidly driven to the hotel.

Father O'Connor and Nora could hardly believe it possible when they were summoned to meet the new-comers, but the greetings on both sides were none the less eager and warm.

"What does it mean?" said Nora and Clare in a breath, when Father Meagher told all about his mysterious summons, and Father O'Connor had narrated simply what he had said to Nora, adding, however, an account of their interview with Lord Heathcote, and dwelling on Dennis's absence. The latter had not yet returned, and beyond that one singular note, he had sent no word. "It is, it must be," said both girls, "something about Carroll; he will be saved!"

And hope once more asserted its sway, and under its influence their countenances and their manner resumed almost all their olden brightness.

Father Meagher was not so hopeful, though, loth to repress the buoyancy of the two eager girls, he pretended to share their sanguine expectations. Father O'Connor was so unusually agitated that he was never present could not express his suspicion that the young clergyman was in possession of more knowledge than he had imparted.

"I am, father," he answered; "but I cannot tell you yet."

A few hours later, and there promised to be at last an end to their suspense—a message came desiring them all, providing Father Meagher and Clare had arrived, to repair to the castle that evening.

CHAPTER LV.

CARTER CONFRONTED WITH HIS GUILT

"Egad, Dennis! but you are the biggest puzzle of the age—what with your melancholy that nothing could chase away, then your attachment to some wonderful Irish beauty, and after that your resignation for no reason under the sun but to gratify an outlandish whim, you were enough to turn sager heads than mine; and now you burst into my quarters with hints of mysteries that are enough to make one's hair stand on end!"

And Captain Crawford, with a quizzical expression on his face, approached the flushed and excited Dennis, and began to make a critical survey of the latter's person.

"Well, well," said Dennis good-humoredly; "this evening, I fancy, will end it all; and after that, Harry, you shall hear one of the strangest stories it ever has been your fate to listen to—something that will make you cry from your heart: 'truth is indeed stranger than fiction!'"

"Let me see how much I already know," said Crawford playfully, and holding up his fingers, he began to enumerate upon them, each assertion that he made. "You have told me that this informer,

has been at more rascally business than betraying unassuming Fenians, and that, by a decoy letter, you have caged him so far as to have him already in the castle, firmly believing that he is about to receive some reward from the government, whereas tonight he will be unmasked before those whom he has foully injured; you have also told me that two near friends of the injured parties, summoned from some country place to be present at this unmasking, have arrived; further, that you have not trusted yourself in the presence of any of these parties who are to come in obedience to their summons to the castle this evening, lest your agitation should betray what you desire to conceal for the present; then, also, you have written to two other parties, away up somewhere, to come at once, and be present at this mysterious something that is to happen, but so far you have received no reply from them. Now, Dennis, in Heaven's name give me the key to all this!"

"I cannot, Harry; not till after tonight," was the tremulous response.

"Will you come to me, no matter what the hour, when the business, whatever it is, is over?" asked Crawford.

"Yes, Harry; I give you my word—I shall either come to you, or send you a message to come to us." "Us!" repeated Crawford; "by Jove! Walter, but you have me as excited as yourself!"

Dennis laughed; it was so like one of his olden bursts of merriment before either had left England, that Crawford could not refrain from saying:

"Well, whatever this latest mystery is, it has had a most refreshing effect upon you."

The young ex-officer did not reply, but waving back laughing adieu, he left the room.

The hour arrived which had been appointed for so strange an assemblage within the walls of Dublin Castle, and then at last the four anxious and mystified persons who came from the hotel met Dennis; he awaited them in an apartment belonging to Lord Heathcote's suite, to which they were conducted, and he met them with so beaming a face, and so joyful a manner, that the hope which had fired the hearts of the two girls now flamed more ardently.

Clare's eyes turned eloquently upon him as she said: "You have favorable news to give us of my brother?"

"I cannot tell you anything yet, Miss O'Donoghue," was his response; "I have only to request you to be very patient for a little while. And now,"—turning to Father O'Connor,—"Lord Heathcote would see you first alone."

TO BE CONTINUED

AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Ascending the stairs to his office, the doctor was surprised to find himself tired; it was only three o'clock. The work had been strenuous lately, possibly he was not quite so young as he had been, say twenty-five years ago. The doctor paused with a start, for now that he remembered, it was twenty-five years today since he had hung up his shingle. How joyously he had begun work, with what high ideals as to the sacredness of his profession, and how long he had meant to console; such joyful, rainbow hopes, with unlimited belief in his own skill. He had taken an office in the business part of the city. Close upon it pressed factories and tenements. At once he had an enormous practice. People of all ages and conditions, from the young doctor, but busy all hours of the day, many hours of the night, and his office always crowded! Individual cases knew, and whispered to others in like need; this doctor gave the poor his services free! At that time, Doctor Leroy told himself that it was furnishing him with experience. He meant to specialize presently in something or other, believing that specialization was the only way to obtain wealth and fame in his profession, but it was well he had experience in general practice first.

The doctor and Marie had early become engaged and she had sweetly agreed to wait till he could afford marriage. But he would not let her wait long. So they married, and he moved his office to a better location. But the poor found him out, and to them he continued to give much time and sympathy, though clinics were doing good work, and becoming more generally attended. As time passed, the hope of specialization died hard, but died at last. The doctor had made a good enough living—Marie and the babies were well cared for, but it was a struggle. He had neither money nor leisure for the necessary specialization. Now, after twenty-five years of strenuous labor, Doctor Leroy told himself that, as far as wealth and ambition went, he had not made much of a showing.

Mrs. Latour was waiting for him in the office. Very lovely she was, charmingly dressed, her cheeks and hair artistically touched. Doctor Leroy had known her as child, girl, and not long ago a bride. She was wealthy, and he had only a few wealthy patients. Yet now as he saw her, his lips took a stern set.

"Well?" he questioned tersely. "I thought perhaps you had re-

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considered matters?" she said sweetly.

The doctor shook his head, and the woman turned to go, her air and manner expressive somehow of martyrdom in a great cause, while in reality it was traitor.

Doctor Leroy made no effort to detain her, he stood gazing moodily from the office window. All his life he had held fast to the old faith, knowing it true and strong and good, but more than once recently it had stood in the way of material advancement. Was there possibly truth in the claim of a pessimistic friend—Leroy had denied it hotly at the time—that Catholic doctors could not attain success in the profession? Indignantly he had cited Walsh, O'Malley of today, Pasteur of yesterday, even in evil France.

During the next few hours, patients would be coming to the office, but if the Greyson case called he would have to go at once. Rather a pity such cases were not handled exclusively by hospitals. The facilities and equipment were such an aid, and every emergency was prepared for. But Lil Greyson had a horror of hospitals, and strange doctors and faces. There were still some few people like that in the world, and they had to be considered. Besides in the course of a conversation, Edward Greyson had faltered something about the scarcity of funds. A hospital bill would put him heavily in debt, so if it could by any possibility be managed at home it would be a big load off his shoulders.

The doctor, with some misgivings, had said yes, it could be managed at home. He told himself that he would have to make a reduction in his bill. Yet the case meant time, possibly neglect of other patients.

Doctor Leroy turned at the sound of a step in the waiting room. It was young Lang. The doctor looked at his shoulder, announced that it was doing fine, dressed and rebandaged it.

"No charges," he said almost gruffly, when the boy fumbled in the pockets of his shabby coat. "That did not amount to anything."

Leroy glanced at his watch. Mrs. Moore should be here now, but it was her habit to be late. The phone rang. It was the Greyson case. He must go at once. He hoped if other patients came, they would wait. Miss Ames would not be here today. It was her afternoon off. He telephoned Marie and left the office.

The girl in the plaid dress took off her hat and patted the puffs of hair over her ears. She was a fine, strong type of business girl, but the city smoke had injured her throat.

"I've been here nearly an hour," she said crossly.

Mrs. Moore leaned back in the rocking chair, her face white, strained, cross.

"I was a little late for my appointment, but the doctor is supposed to be here from three to five. He should have waited."

A boy of ten, sitting at the table, kicked the lower part of it viciously.

"Keep still, Joe," reproved his mother irritably. "Read some of those magazines. At home you are always reading when you shouldn't."

Joe picked up the magazine and turned its pages with a bored air. The mother watched him with some anxiety. She hoped he was not getting feverish—his flushed face looked a little like it. An arm fractured in several places had given much trouble. The doctor had said the boy must be kept quiet. He was to look at the arm this afternoon, so here they were in the heat of the day, and the doctor apparently had forgotten all about them.

A step sounded on the office stairs, a slow, tired step. Every head lifted, every eye turned hopefully to the door. Surely the doctor was coming at last. Not just another patient, middle-aged, obviously ill, rather nicely dressed. You would never have known her to be the charity patient she was except for her meekness now. She sank into the nearest chair, glanced at the closed door of the doctor's private office and was silent.

The girl in plaid stirred restlessly.

"I'm so tired keeping still and doing nothing like this. It must be five o'clock by this time."

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