

A FAIR EMIGRANT

BY ROSA MULLHOLLAND

CHAPTER IV—CONTINUED

"I had done so. Heaven is my witness that I had forgotten my bitterness by the time I found myself climbing the side of Auna. My mind had gone gladly back to the contemplation of my own happiness, and full of hope and joy, I felt my veins thrilling with the glory of the sunset, often so magnificent among those Antrim hills. I had no thought of unkindness towards any one when I saw Baderick Fingall approaching me with bent head and gloomy eyes; I felt nothing but pity for his disappointment, self-reproach for having allowed myself to be irritated by the expressions of his morbid jealousy. He was walking to meet me, without having perceived my approach, and thinking himself alone in this mountain solitude, had allowed his face to express unreservedly the bitterness of his soul. Filled with compassion and compunction, I disliked the idea of surprising him, and began to whistle that he might be warned of my nearness to him.

"He misunderstood me and took my whistling for a sign of triumph and derision. As I found when, a few moments afterwards, we passed face to face on a narrow path above a steep and ugly precipice.

"So," he said, "you have come to dog my steps even here, to flourish your confounded good fortune in my face?"

"No, indeed, Fingall," I said. "I had no such thoughts. We have met by accident. Let it not be an unfortunate chance. I feel no ill will towards you. I wish to God you felt none towards me."

"I thought I saw a gleam of relenting in his eyes as I went on. We were once good friends; let us be so again. I never knowingly did you wrong, and if I have caused you pain it is a grief to me. On some points I believe you to be mistaken. You will live to find it out."

"He looked at me scrutinizingly. I think he was beginning to believe in me. The breeze, brilliant mountain air, the glorious sunlight, the ennobling beauty of the scenery around us were all in my favour, and I felt it. He looked up, and threw the hair from his brow. I saw that struggle was going on between his natural generosity and the evil spirit that had got possession of him. Finally his eye sought mine.

"God is around and above us," I said; "let not this glorious sun go down upon our wrath. Fingall, why cannot we be friends?"

"I stretched out my hands towards him, and he made no movement. As God is my judge, I do not know whether he intended to advance towards me in friendship or to retreat in denial of my appeal. His step backward may have been an involuntary one; the next moment he might have flung himself forward into my arms. My memory of the look in his eyes assures me that to do so was his intention. But he stood upon treacherous ground. In the excitement of our feelings neither of us had noticed that he had backed, while speaking, to the very edge of an abyss. He took one fatal step and vanished. I heard his cry as he went whirling down the precipice—then all was silent.

"I hurried down the mountain in a terrible state of agitation; met some people and told my story, and we went in search of him. He was found quite dead. At the inquest I gave my evidence, and a verdict of accidental death was returned. His family were in a frantic state of grief. He was his mother's youngest and favourite son, and the calamity threatened to deprive her of her reason. So deep was my own affliction that it was some time before I began to perceive that people were looking at me. Some one was whispering away my fair fame. A nameless horror rose up beside me, dogged my steps, haunted me like an evil spirit; when I tried to grasp it, it slipped through my fingers and vanished. I resolved not to see it, tried to forget it, ascribed its existence to my own over excited imagination; but still the reality of it was there, asserting itself at every opportunity. At last one day with a sudden shock I came in front of it and saw its face, ghastly with falsehood and corruption. It was believed that I had murdered Fingall!

The whisper grew and swelled into a murmur so loud that I could not shut my ears to it. Even in Mave's tender eyes there arose a cloud of doubt. Her smile grew colder and colder, and a look of fear came over her face when I appeared. I became aware that I had a powerful though secret accuser, who, while assuming to screen me, was all the time gradually and persistently blasting my good name.

"There came a day when I could bear it no longer, and I went to Mave and asked an explanation of the change in her manner towards me. I said there were two or three names in circulation concerning me, but I should not care for them, I could live them down, if only she would bravely believe in me. At once I saw my doom in her averted eyes. It seemed that, whoever my accuser might be, he had her ear and that her mind was becoming poisoned against me. Seeing the despair in my face, she burst into passionate weeping; but when I drew near to comfort her she shrank from me. In the agonising scene

that followed I learned that some secret evidence had been laid before her which she considered overwhelming. Timorous and gentle I had known her to be, but that she could be so miserably weak and wanting in trust of me, whom she had chosen and dignified with her love—of disloyalty like this I had not dreamed. I went to her brother Luke, who was the dominant spirit in that unwholesome household, stated my case, declared my innocence, and asked him as man to man, to help me to free myself from this curse that was threatening to blast me. I found him cool, reticent, suspicious, professing to be my friend, unwilling to say anything hurtful to me, but evidently firmly convinced of my guilt. He said that, for the sake of old friendship and of his sister's former love for me, they were all anxious to screen me from the consequences of what had happened. I answered that I wanted no screen, only to come face to face with my accuser. He smiled slightly, saying that that I could never do.

I left him feeling as if I had been beating my head against a rock, and for some time longer I held my ground, lying in wait for my enemy, striving to kill the lie that was slowly withering up the sap of my veins; but as air escapes the clutch of the hand, so did this cruel calumny fatally and perpetually elude my grasp. As the wretch doomed to be walled up alive watches stone placed upon stone, building up the barrier that separates him from life, so slowly and surely, I saw the last glimpse of light disappear from my horizon. One day I rose up and shook myself together, and owned that I could bear it no longer. I went to Mave for the last time, and, finding her still possessed by the belief in my guilt, I bade her an abrupt farewell and went forth like a lost soul out of her presence. I shook the dust of the Glens from my feet, and departed from the country without taking leave of any one. Strange looks and wags of the head had so long followed me, that I believed scarce a man in the place would have cared to shake hands with me. I was looked on as a murderer, who, for certain reasons of old friendship, had been allowed to escape justice, but whose presence was not to be desired in an honest community.

"To understand fully the general abhorrence in which I was held, one would need to know the character of the Glens people. A murder had not occurred among them within the memory of man, hardly a theft, or anything that could be called a crime. The people had their faults and their squabbles, no doubt, but they were, on the whole, a singularly upright and simple-minded race, who kept the commandments and knew little of the world beyond their mountains.

"I went forth from among them with the brand of Cain on my forehead, to go on with my life as best I might in some spot where rumour could not follow me. No man bade me God speed. Every one shrank from my path as I walked the road, and doors were shut as I passed them by. In all this there was only one exception. As I walked up Glenan with my heart swooning in my breast and my brain on fire, a woman opened her door and came a little way to meet me. Her name was Betty Macalister. She had been a servant in the Fingall family, and had recently married and gone to live in Glenan. Doubtless she knew the whole tragedy as well as any one knew it, but she opened her door and came out and offered me a drink of milk, which, I suppose, was the best way that occurred to her of expressing her good will. My first impulse was to dash it from her hand and pass on. How could she dare to be kind, when Mave—? But a look in her homely eyes, which had an angel's light in them at the moment, altered my mood. I took the milk and tasted it, and returned it to her with thanks.

"Good-bye, Mr. Arthur," she said, "and God defend the innocent!" "I could not answer her. I looked at her silently, and heaven knows what she saw in my gaze. She threw her apron over her face and rushed sobbing into the house.

"I went to London, where I stayed till I had effected the sale of my little property in Kerry, and the home that was to have been hers and mine was made over to strangers. All that time I walked the streets of London like a man in a nightmare. So long as I kept walking I felt that I had a hold on my life, had my will in control; but when I sat down, the desire for self-destruction rushed upon me. I believe I walked the entire of London many times over, yet I did not know where I walked and remember nothing that I saw. During this time I wrote to Luke Adare, telling him I was going to Minnesota, and would send him my address when I arrived there. I was not going to behave like a criminal who had been glad to be allowed to escape. If at any future time I were to be wanted by friends or enemies, they should know where to find me.

"After that Luke wrote to me, once in London and two or three times to Minnesota. There was nothing in his letter which seemed to require an answer, and I did not answer him. Indeed, it was, and is still, a wonder to me that he wrote as he did to a man whom he believed to be a murderer, and one who would not even confess or regret his crime. There was a sympathising and pitying tone in his communication which surprised me, for Luke was no tender sentimentalist. He gave me no information about home;

he never mentioned Mave. What was the reason of his writing at all I could never make out. "I received one other letter from the Glens, and that was from Betty Macalister, to whom I had also given my address, having an instinctive feeling that if anything were to turn up to clear my good name, she would be more likely than Luke to let me know."

Bawn here turned to Betty's letter, which was as follows: "Your Hon. Dear Mister Arthur: "This comes hoppin' you are well as leaves me in this present time the same and husband. The hollow folks is not doin' well. The old Mister Barbadus he left all he had to Mister Look. The old house luke had an' Miss Mave she dozzint walk out at all. The gentleman has quare ways an' the people dozzint like them a bit better nor they did. There was great doin' for a while, but the munny dozzint last with them. I think, for she old place is lukin' bad now. My man an' me sticks to you thru thick an' thin, but yure better where ye are. —Yours to command, "BETTY MACALISTER."

This epistle, which bore a date ten years after Arthur's departure, Bawn read over and over again, and one piece of information it contained struck her as remarkable: "Old Barbadus" had left all his money to Luke Adare—the money which it was supposed would, under other circumstances, have come to Arthur, as his favourite.

The next letter she opened was from Luke himself. He wrote: "I hope you are doing well, for in spite of all that has happened I feel a deep interest in your welfare. The New World is before you, and your story cannot follow you there. In deed, it is hushed up here, for all sakes, though it never can be quite forgotten. You may yet be a prosperous man, outlive the past, and make new friends. I shall always be glad to hear of you, and to know what you are doing, etc., etc., etc.—"Your sincere well wisher, "LUKE ADARE."

The remaining letters were very much in the same strain, expressing a desire to know something of the exile, and showing a leniency towards him as a murderer, which was hard to understand. Some of them contained reproaches of Arthur for not having written to give an account of himself. "Only that Betty Macalister had a line from you, I should think you were dead," he wrote under the latest date of twenty-five years ago. It was evident that Desmond had never gratified the curiosity of this anxious friend.

Bawn was very apt to jump, rightly or wrongly, to a conclusion, and by the time she had folded up all the papers and replaced them in a box she had made up her mind that Luke Adare was the person who, for his own selfish ends, had whispered away her father's good name, and blighted the lives of both sister and friend. Arthur a murderer and banished, and Koderick Fingall dead, the inheritance had devolved upon Luke as the eldest of the Adares.

"And this frail creature," she said, studying Mave's portrait again, "this was a tool easy enough to work with. Had you been a brave, true woman, ready to stand up in his defence and fight the lie with him, he might have been able to hunt down the liar and clear himself before the world. But you quailed and deserted him, you coward! Luke was the villain and you were the fool!"

The greater part of that day Bawn spent lying alone over the prairie, revolving and mulling her project as she went, considering the details of it and the dangers and difficulties it might include. That evening she walked up to Mrs. Desmond in the drawing-room and said, in a tone of simple friendliness: "Jeanne, I have made up my mind to let you have the house."

Jeanne was amazed. She had made her demand, well aware she had no right to make it, and without expecting to find her audacity so quickly rewarded. Bawn continued: "I am going to St. Paul in the morning to speak about it to Dr. Ackroyd."

Mrs. Desmond was instantly alarmed. She did not like the interference of Dr. Ackroyd, who would make it a matter of business. "Why need he interfere between us?" she said. "Cannot we make our own arrangements? You are of age."

"I wish to consult him," said Bawn quietly. "It is not long since he was my guardian. And you forget, Jeanne: it will be necessary for me to find some shelter for myself when I leave the prairie to you."

"This is very provoking of you," cried Jeanne, "to talk as if I wanted to turn you out. Why can we not all go together?" "Let that be; it is my affair," said Bawn. "I have other plans for my future."

THE EDITOR'S ROSARY

It was 4 o'clock. The air was quivering with heat; the pavements were blistering. An all-too-resplendent June had swept in upon the grimy city.

The dramatic editor, one foot on the window sill, gazed down into the hot alley and mopped his brow. "And what is so rare as a day in June?—may heaven be duly thanked!" he muttered feelingly.

Monica Spalding banged a drawer in her desk. In addition to her arduous duties as suffrage editor on the Call, she was by way of being an assistant to Ralph Conolly—helped him cut with important interviews he wasn't equal to managing, she once patronizingly explained in his presence.

"You have said it," she assented fiercely. "And yet you find people who insist that this is a perfect summer climate. Perfect!" She pulled the cover over her typewriter with a jerk. The drama editor was too busy for utterance.

"When I think of the mountains a day like this," she continued, "I—" "Don't interrupt Conolly," the subject's too painful. There'd be the mosquitoes, you know."

Monica's back was expressive; her tone was withering. "Really?" she said. "Truly," he answered wearily.

Monica reached for her purse and peered into its depths. "Perhaps you may be able to suggest," she said suavely, "some place more pleasant."

Conolly removed his foot from the sill, and thrust both hands in his pockets. "Oh, yes," he said obligingly. "The ocean, for example."

"You sound," observed Monica, "like a professor."

"Whereas I am merely a reporter," he added. "Merely!" murmured Monica, dropping her arms limply. "He says he is 'merely.' The like I never heard before in this building."

"Lay it to the heat," put in Conolly, lazily. "On no account," she replied, being engaged in counting over some change. Conolly's dark gray eyes were twinkling as he took off his glasses and began to polish them.

"Yes," he purred, reverting to their former topic, "the ocean's the place. The bounding blue under your feet—"

"Perhaps you'd enjoy it bounding," Monica broke in. Some don't though. For my part I'd prefer the mosquitoes."

"Imposible!" spoke Conolly, unbelieveably. "On no account," drawing out the last word. "And, anyway, there's an antidote for mosquitoes. Er, you know, that stuff you rub on. And then there's netting, yes, and one can buy screens and things. But when it comes to 'mal de mer,' I've crossed the ocean twice myself, also our dear little lake, as you very well know, so don't argue the matter with me."

The editor held out his glasses and scrutinized them thoughtfully. "Everyone to his taste, of course," he conceded. "Or, er," supplemented Monica. "Pardon," returned Conolly. "For the moment I forgot your, ah, official position."

Nothing pleased him better at times, so it seemed, than to assure Monica that at heart she was not a suffragette; he did not blame her, dear no! for her assumed convictions, don't we all have to hold down our jobs? but if she were the literary editor, for instance, she'd loathe the ballot, she would take absolutely no interest in the chase of phantom freedom, mechanical rigate."

that had become entangled in it, flashing across the room. With a tink a tink the flying trifle dropped at Conolly's feet; it was a tiny black rosary.

So swiftly had she inadvertently tossed the beads away, that for a second she stood a bit dazed, wondering what she had done, at the tinkling sound, however, she started forward with an exclamation.

"Ah, my rosary!" Then as Conolly stopped to pick it up: "I couldn't imagine for a moment what had happened."

She reached out her hand for it, but Conolly, instead of returning it gathered it into his left palm, fingering the crucifix with an interested expression.

"So this is a rosary?" he said slowly, "I never handled one before."

"And with your Irish name?" Monica shook her head reprovingly, her smile somewhat forced. "You ought to be saying it every day in the year."

"Steady there!" complained Conolly, still scanning the small cross. "Blame my ancestors away back in the 'seventeen's if you like, but don't hold me responsible, too."

Monica made no comment; she was looking past him at the blank wall of the building opposite the window. He glanced at her suddenly.

"Does that mean you intend to, all the same?" he demanded laughingly.

For an instant she was silent. Then, "Yes," she said simply and her eyes met his with a grave directness.

She saw a gleam of half smiling amazement creep into his face. "But you can't mean, surely—" he began. "You mean that you think my Irish lineage makes it incumbent upon me to adopt Catholicism?"

Monica closed and opened again her purse with hands that were not altogether steady. She felt miserably inadequate.

"I wish you'd speak out your mind frankly," Conolly said quietly. Monica's head was flung up resolutely. "Well, then, since you give me leave. . . . You've been trained to reason, haven't you? You're supposed to be able to differentiate between falsehood and truth. And you do differentiate, too, except—except in any matter that has to do with—faith. Right there you stop."

She drew in her breath with something very like a stifled sob. Her appearance was that of one who had much to atone. And then she went on, stammeringly: "You must admit that religion plays no part in your life. I hear you say yourself that you go to church once a year—Easter—the weather permitting. You're as indifferent to the God who made you as—as most of the other men I see about. You actually believe in Him, I guess, but beyond that you're—very broad, my creed or no creed; that sort of thing is not worth while concerning yourself over."

She paused again, and Conolly said grimly: "You can hit squarely enough once you start. I hadn't realized exactly the kind of impression I'd been making."

Monica put out an impulsive hand. "Oh, don't fancy I think you're not good, because I know, I know—"

"Good!" Conolly turned away with a flush, crushing the rosary in his hand. "I don't set out regularly to keep the Ten Commandments, but as for being what you'd call 'good,' Monica—"

you of it now," she said in a strained tone. He started forward anxiously. "Why, Monica!" he exclaimed. "Have I said anything to offend—"

"No, no!" she protested, ashamed. "I—" The hand extended for the beads dropped of a sudden. "Oh, keep the rosary, will you?" she said a little wistfully, "and, carry it, just to hummer a whim of mine?"

A curiously warm expression followed upon Conolly's momentary astonishment. "Will I keep—"

Monica interrupted him hurriedly. "It's terribly Catholic, of course, but then it can't harm you, and perhaps it will do you a lot of good. I—she began to back away, and though she was smiling again, it was clear that the tears were not far distant. "Be provoked if you like, but I'm sure Our Lady will make a Catholic of you yet, Ralph Conolly."

She did not wait to hear his reply, if there was one, but made straight for an elevator. She had forgotten that the thermometer registered "ninety" in the shade; the vanity case, with its cosoling powder puff, lay ignored in the bottom of her purse. Only one vital fact stood out in her consciousness, she had told the man she loved something of what was in her heart for him.

The elevator descended to the ground floor. As she started for the line of revolving doors, a "city man," Rockwell, halted in from the street. He was perspiring, but cheerful, and when Monica would have passed him with a dreamy nod, he blocked her path.

"Cool vision," he addressed her, fanning himself energetically with his straw, "what is the latest from the militant front? All progressing successfully on the Thames, brick throwing and hunger strikes and the rest?"

She looked at him vaguely, wishing she could elude him, he alone. "Er, yes, I guess so," she said heavily. "You might ask Mr. Mueller for the last wire." She commenced to ease downward.

But Rockwell would not have it so. "One minute!" he commanded. "I pine to know, also, what's up. Fate, kind fate, throws me across your path. I strive to amuse you with my scintillating wit, and you cast me off with a serious answer. Where, oh, where is your repartee?"

Monica tucked her purse under her arm in half laughing exasperation. "Can't you see I'm worn out and hot?" she said. "Please let me go, Mr. Rockwell."

"And this," bemoaned Rockwell, keeping step with her, "and this is what the job is doing to her! Sober, that is, I mean, solemn at her age, poor child! I must take you down a block or two, I think—"

"Of course," murmured Monica darkly, "if you shan't mind a hysterical person on your hands, it's immaterial. But I warn you that I'm likely to laugh and then cry, and then laugh and then—"

"Stop, for the love of heaven!" pleaded Rockwell. "I'm going, 'Good night,' slangily. He departed forthwith.

Monica hastened out into the street, rejoicing at her liberty. Yet she was thankful for her encounter with the jovial reporter; he had helped her down again to a mundane atmosphere, on which level, while under surveillance, she knew herself to be safest.

In search of foundation for her Sunday story she raced across town to interview a popular young actress. Then back she rushed to the office, and it was not until she was through with her work at 9 that she remembered that she had neglected dinner entirely. Restraint of her emotions, however, had kept her to such a pitch by that time that she felt unequal to tarrying down town long enough to procure the meal she rather sorely needed.

She was glad simply to take a car and arrive at last at the room she called "home." Once within that shelter she broke down completely; to long had she denied her heart as long had she prayed, that the shred of hope vouchsafed her that afternoon proved her undoing.

Surely it was no mere accident that caused her rosary to fall at Ralph Conolly's feet, she thought; surely the Blessed Virgin must have put it into her mind to ask him to carry the beads! His mother would pray for him now—she couldn't help herself. And Monica was happy, tearfully so.

that he would not greet her news with any great hilarity.

"Tanner's taken on you?" he said sharply, with a stormy frown. "The darling he is, yes," she responded. "For goodness' sake, don't be a wet-blanket!"

"Jove, no!" he returned hotly. "I'll say I'm dead glad you've taken no advice—that in reporting lies your single chance." He picked up the pencil he had dropped at her entrance, and glared at the pile of copy before him. "It's a— He bit back the rest. "Tanner has enough sense to paddle a canoe—just about," glumly.

Monica's eyes flashed angrily, but she rejoined coolly enough: "Dear me! you're in a delightful humor. I'll take myself off before you attempt something in the way of felicitation."

She was quite clear of the desk before he swung around. "I say!" he muttered in a milder tone. "You mustn't rush away like that. I'm sorry."

She did not pause. "Apology accepted," she broke in with a careless gaiety that did not entirely hide the underlying hurt. "Matter of no consequence, anyway."

One instant later he had covered the space between them. "I've a notion somebody else is out of humor, too," he said ruefully.

"Not at all," she shot back with a grudging laugh. "Just because the dramatic editor won't say, 'Bless you, my child!'—"

"But 'he does,' came in a low voice. "He does, you know." And then he had turned quickly and gone back to his crowded desk. But Monica, after one inaudible gasp, stood her ground courageously.

"In the long run," she said deliberately. "It's—It's a 'duck' of a paper, tussy editors and all."

After which she had marched off with colors flying, feeling happy in a strange sort of fashion. She had an insane impulse—one not easily controlled—to tell the city editor that she had changed her mind, that on further reflection she had discovered that she had doted on making up the children's page for the Sunday edition and such like. An unwilling reporter was Monica.

Startled at her own vacillation, she had begun to put two and two together. It was not long thereafter that she reached the conclusion that she loved Conolly—had been loving him for many a day. But for all the beautiful certainty she was in misery. He was not a Catholic.

In vain, she had struggled to assure herself that in her case this fact need not blot her road to happiness. Had her other women married outside the faith, without disastrous consequences? Was there anything on earth that could shake her loyalty to the Church? Conolly was the soul of honor—could not the trust him not to interfere in matters religious? Readily enough came satisfactory answers to each question, and yet—

There was no loophole, strive though she did to find one. She knew, no one better, which course was safe and which women married outside the faith, without disastrous consequences? Was there anything on earth that could shake her loyalty to the Church? Conolly was the soul of honor—could not the trust him not to interfere in matters religious? Readily enough came satisfactory answers to each question, and yet—

Another June afternoon—this of soft breezes fresh from the billowy lake, and a sky of pearl and lilac. Garbed in crisp blue linen, a bright light in her face, Monica set foot on the fourth floor corridor of the Call building at 130, only to run full tilt into the dramatic editor. A vivid rose dyed her cheeks but otherwise she retained her poise.

"You, actually down?" she said. "I read your interview this morning. How you ever managed to remain amiable—and live—is beyond me. What was it like here at midnight?"

"A pleasantly blazing furnace. Altogether delightful," replied Conolly. Then a note of teasing crept into his voice as he lifted his hand to an inner pocket of his coat. "Have my lucky rosary along as per instructions."

Monica's eyes wavered, but the next moment she laughed outright. "If one might suggest," she murmured daintily, "you haven't it in the right place, Catholic men carry theirs with their change and keys and things."

"But I'm not a Catholic man," he pointed out tormentingly. "—yet, you should be," she volleyed back. Conolly sighed. "Oh, well," he said, transferring the beads, "anything to make you happy, even the 'yet' if you insist."