

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

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

CHAPTER XXI.—CONTINUED

"But what, Mr. Carmody?" The gleaming eyes were fastened unpleasantly on Tighe's face.

"Mr. Maloney," Tighe took a step forward, and assuming an expression indicative of severe mental distress, he said in a lower tone than he had previously used: "I heard something today that made me feel purty bad iver since; an' all the way down here I've been holdin' an argymint wid mesel' whether I ought to tell you or not; it was in a saycret it was revealed to me to be sarvint' o' one o' the spoorin' min; it concerns you, Mr. Maloney, but I'm loth to tell, for mebbe it's none o' me business after all; an' I'm aequally loth to kape it, for thin I'll be lookin' at an honest man loike yersel' losin' hap'es o' money."

"Losing hap'es o' money!" the miser wildly repeated, and his giant frame trembled like aspen; he clutched Tighe's hands with his bony fingers. "Tell me, Mr. Carmody; what did you hear? mebbe it's none o' me business after all; an' I'm aequally loth to kape it, for thin I'll be lookin' at an honest man loike yersel' losin' hap'es o' money."

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thrudin' on us till we're ready for him; he'll think everything is all right, an' in the manetome I'll have no name booked as if I had a horse to ride in the place o' Rody Crane's filly that I tould you was withdrawn. I can do that aisly, as long as I do it in toime, an' the lists won't be closed till tomorrow evening. Thin, on Tuesday nixt, when Mr. Joe Canty foinds himself on the way to the jail, I can stand for'ard to take his place; be rayson o' havin' me name booked they can't object, an' I can make it appear how I'm a frind o' yours, an' couldn't stand by an' let you be thrated in such a manner as that; an' niver fear but ivery one o' the bettors on our side'll be ready to back me. Now, understand, Mr. Maloney, it's no intherest o' moine one way or the other—it'll nayther take a pinny in me pocket, nor will it take a pinny out o' it; but I couldn't stand by quietly an' let a man be bate out o' the sum o' money you'll lose nixt Tuesday, whin it was in me power to purvint it."

The miser's eyes seemed to glitter through Tighe, so bright and continuous was their sparkle, while he listened to the rapidly delivered assertions. Tighe had a dim idea that his arguments were very illogical, but he trusted that the volubility and rapidity with which they were delivered would so beleave the old man's brain as to leave him with little power of reasoning beyond the fact that if he did not accede to his visitor's proposition he would be sure to sustain a great pecuniary loss. Tighe's wish seemed to be gratified; the miser was confused by the rambling statement, which his ignorance of sporting affairs made all the more rambling and incoherent to him, while at the same time he was impressed with Tighe's forcible and apparently honest manner.

"I should like to communicate with Mr. Carter," he observed, his whole manner indicating trouble and perplexity.

"What for?" asked Tighe in well-feigned indignation.

"Now, Mr. Maloney didn't you swear solemnly afore Heaven that yer soul might burn foriver in hell's fire if you revealed a syllable o' what I tould you? An' for what else'd you be writin' to Carter for? If I tould the saycret to you to save yer bit o' money from bein' thricked out o' you, that's not sayin' that I'm goin' to betray intirely the confidence that was put in me; an' besides, Mr. Carter hasn't the money at stake that you have, an' he can't be the loser that you will. But there's one condition I was forgettin'—the last words were owing to one o' Tighe's sudden thoughts, and with his wonted quickness he determined to act upon it, though it was shadowed with some misgiving;—"If I ride for you, you'll have to give me the money for the jockey's dress, I can have it in the town be givin' the order in toime."

The miser's brow knitted.

"I see, Mr. Maloney," resumed Tighe, "you're not satisfied, an' I'll not force you; the risk is yer own, an' I have a ciance conscience now; I've discharged me duty loike an honest man, so I'll bid you good evenin'."

Again he turned to depart, and he had almost reached the door of the little shop when the old man hurried after him.

"One moment, Mr. Carmody; how much money will this dress cost?"

"Oh, the matter o' a pound or so," answered Tighe, looking as if he were very unwilling to be longer detained; but I'd rather you'd thrope it all now, Mr. Maloney; to ride for you will only be trouble an' inconvenience for mesel'—I didn't think o' it afore, but now that I'm givin' the matter reflection, it'll be best for me not to do it. Agin I bid you a very good evenin', Mr. Maloney."

He turned quickly and shot out of the open doorway. The miser was after him, out on the road, begging him in an abject manner to return. "I will give you a pound, Mr. Carmody," and he fumbled in his breast.

Tighe returned with him to the shop, watching with no slight inward satisfaction the dirty leather wallet slowly and reluctantly brought forth. He turned his back to Tighe while he opened it, and when at last he faced Tighe a Vohr holding out the required amount, his hand trembled so that it seemed as if the bank-note would drop from his fingers. Tighe took it, pocketed it carefully, and then with a hurried air, as if anxious to make up for lost time, he said:

"Now, Mr. Maloney, I'll be here bright, an' airly in the mornin', for the horse, an' do you tell the groom to be bidable to me directions. Thin, when I get to Tralee, an' see the horse properly stabled, I'll make it me business to call on Mr. Canty, an' deliver yer message to him; an' if he persists in comin' down here after that do you act the part I prescribed for you. Are you quite ready an' willin', Mr. Maloney, to do all that? No hesitation now, but spake up loike a man."

"Yes," answered old Ned, as if the monosyllable was choked out of him.

"Very well; thin; an' mebbe whin you're the gainer o' as many pounds as I have holes in me carben,—pointing to his tattered head-gear—you'll have the cause to be thank-ful to Tighe a Vohr."

There was no solicitation this time to return, and Tighe, with Shaun at his heels, was soon taking

hasty strides toward his mother's humble home.

"I may as well kill two birds with one stone," he murmured to himself; "I'll see mother, an' thry if I can't put in a good word for Cony O'Toole; it will rise the spirits o' the little man, an' kape him me constant frind; an' faith, mebbe I'd need him agin' in the way o' writin' or the loike."

CHAPTER XXII.

CARTER VISITS DUBLIN

Mortimer Carter was desperate. The fact that his perfidy seemed so well known to both clergymen caused a horrible fear that through their united efforts something might occur to intercept or destroy his plans. He chafed at the bare possibility, and as he walked the narrow confines of his temporary lodging after his meeting with the little party from Drommacool, he muttered to himself, with the savage and threatening look of a wild beast disturbed from its lair:

"A lifetime in the one pursuit! I failed with her mother, but by the powers I shall have her, though the devil should buy my soul the minute after! She turned her face away from me today; I am a traitor and a worm in her sight!" He clinched his hands and paced the room with quicker strides. "Oh, to bring her proud head down! but it shall be brought down, and that soon. Rick will be prepared to do what I ask him when I return, and if I can succeed in getting Carroll to try to escape aginst me, perhaps he will be shot in the venture, and that will be quicker for me than to wait for his hanging."

He ceased walking, and standing by the low mantel, folded his arms upon it and gave himself up to moody thought. Captain Dennier's manner to him on the occasion of their last interview had been productive of many a doubt and fear; he regretted, also, having given the Fenian document to that officer; he could have cursed bitterly for not being himself the bearer of it to Dublin; then, the promised reward—there was an ambiguity about even Lord Heathcote's assurance to him which did not point so surely to the compensation as the traitor desired. What after the completion of his work, if treachery he should find that he himself had been caught in the meshes! the thought was maddening, and goaded to an extremity to which in calmer moments he would scarcely have proceeded, he determined to go immediately to Dublin.

Rumor had it that thither Lord Heathcote had repaired after his last visit to Tralee, he would see that high military official, and have a distinct settlement, as well as an assurance that the paper which he had given to Captain Dennier had been received by the proper authorities. He remembered the race for which he had entered Ned Maloney's horse, but a moment's thought convinced him that that need prove no obstacle to his journey; the preliminaries of the race were all arranged, and Joe Canty, now that he was really secured for the animal, was too good a horseman to require any supervision; besides, the numerous backers, as interested as Morty was himself, were sufficient to guard the interests of all concerned. He would be obliged to break his promise of bringing the horse up to Tralee, but old Maloney could do that himself, or failing to do it, he could trust the animal to the groom for the journey. These points settled in his mind, he hastily wrote the note which he subsequently entrusted to the boy who was injured by the overturned gig, and then he rapidly indited another to Joe Canty, which he also sent by hand; the latter message simply stated his intended absence from Tralee and the uncertainty of the precise time of his return. To Dublin then he set his face, only to find, when he reached the capital and repaired to the castle, that there were more difficulties in the way of seeing Lord Heathcote than he had anticipated. He chafed at the delay which involved a loss of days and rendered him more desperate and eager. It dawned upon him at last that the difficulties in the way of seeing his lordship were interposed by the latter himself; then he sent up an impudently card, and after still further delay he was conducted to the nobleman. Dignified and cold to sternness, Lord Heathcote received his visitor; but the latter had fortified himself too strongly to be abashed by the haughty presence, and having made his obeisance, he responded to the curt:

"Well, Mr. Carter, the object of this visit?"

"I have ventured to intrude upon your lordship in order to settle serious doubts which have arisen in my mind."

"Regarding what?" asked Lord Heathcote, eying him coldly, and for an instant toying with one of the medals on his breast.

"Regarding the paper containing information of the Irish Republic which I gave by your order to Captain Dennier."

"I can quiet your fears about that," was the cold response. "The paper, in a sealed cover, was delivered at the castle, and it is now, with other sealed papers, in possession of the proper authorities; it will play an important part on the trial of the prisoners who are now confined in the county jail at Tralee. Have you any further business, Mr. Carter?"

Still unabashed by the increasing sternness of the nobleman's tone, or the cold manner which so plainly signified a desire for the visitor's departure, Carter said:

"Captain Dennier's own manner to me, stigmatizing me as a traitor, and showing by his words that his sympathies were more with this country than with his own, led me to fear that there might be foul play with the document."

There was a knitting of his lordship's brows for an instant, and a firmer closing of his rigid mouth; but he made no response. Carter, hurried by his short-sighted eagerness into a remark which should compel some reply from the haughty, impassible being before him, continued:

"Believe me, your lordship, incapable of saying aught which might lessen the affection you bear Captain Dennier, as your—"

"Cease!" the nobleman thundered, bounding out of his chair, and standing before Carter with so stern and commanding a mien that the traitor trembled and shrunk.

"Years have passed since that time," continued his lordship in the same voice; "how have you penetrated my secret now—speak!"

The last word was uttered in a still more peremptory tone, as Carter, wholly unprepared for the anger he had aroused, and vainly wishing he had been silent, stood in cowering hesitation. But that peremptory tone would brook neither delay nor evasion. He forced himself to meet the keen eyes bent upon him as if they would pierce him through, and he answered with a painful tremor in his voice:

"The secret of those years ago, your lordship, has always been safe with me; I have never revealed it, and I should not have known this now but for the gossip of the barracks—"

"And that gossip?" demanded his lordship; "what did it reveal?"

Your singular interest in the young officer, an interest that extended over years, and the resemblance between his manner and your own—how it was marked by the same sternness and power of command; it flashed upon me then, your lordship, that Captain Dennier was—"

"Stop!" almost thundered the nobleman; "never must I utter that word! it brings back to me the disgrace the pollution of that unfortunate, that miserable pair!"

Unhappily excited, despite his evident determination to remain calm, he paced the room with nervous and hurried tread. Carter watched him, regaining confidence and assurance as he saw this evidence of his power to move that stern and haughty soul. Suddenly he stopped before Carter; he had again his emotion, and his mien had recovered its calmness.

"Have you betrayed this knowledge, these suspicions—with an emphasis on the last word, as if he would force the belief upon Carter that the latter's mind, ignorant of the true facts in the case, held suspicions alone—of yours, to any one else? have you hinted of them to Captain Dennier?"

"No, your lordship; I had too much regard for you; I would let the revelation of this come from yourself; it was not my place to know aught."

TO BE CONTINUED

DUFFY

Duffy sat in the roundhouse with his head in his hands, though he was supposed to hurry to the restaurant across the street to take advantage of the twenty minutes' wait for the fast express to pass. No. 3 would not make any more long stops until he reached Elton, at ten o'clock, where he would be replaced by McArde.

But Duffy was not feeling hungry just now. When he left Elton, forty-eight hours before, there had been a heavy load on his heart. Then he had been out-bound. Now he was on the in-run, only eight hours from Elton and the final admitting of the truth to himself. Katie had been accepting McArde's attentions with ostentatious favor of late. The evening before starting out, in his presence, she had turned to McArde and spoken of the delights of trolley riding. It had resulted in a prompt invitation, while he stood stupidly by and listened. McArde was bright, handsome, high-spirited and careful. He was slow and stupid and plain. Why not admit the truth? What if he and Katie had been sweethearts since their public school days? She loved McArde now. The hard part was that he had been waiting for his promotion to speak, and the promotion had come only a few weeks before. The odd part was that McArde had been promoted from the road-master's gang at the same time, and to the same train. McArde's run was two days West, his two days East; and they shifted at Elton. So Duffy now sat in the roundhouse, alone, with his head in his hands and his heavy chin growing square and hard and uncompromising. It made hard a bit of difference that he was the one to be crushed, or that McArde the supercilious was his enemy and rival from their early school days. She loved McArde, and there was nothing in the wide world that he would not do for Katie!

So when the warning toot of the engine recalled the men from their lunch, Duffy rose with all the inde-

cision gone from his gray eyes and square chin.

An increasing rumble was vibrating the rails to the west. Another few minutes and the express would sweep in, make its three minutes' stop, and then tear off into the East. As its rear car passed the rails of the siding the switch-tender would connect the rails and allow the freight to roll out. Duffy climbed to the top of the last box car and grasped the brake wheel. The vibration became a roar, and the express rounded the curve and rushed upon them, past the siding. Then came the signal, the brakes were loosed, and the long freight started out upon the main track like a huge snake slipping from its lair.

It had been snowing for an hour, soft and sticky, and clinging to whatever it touched. Presently the snow became rain, and a little later the weather dropped twenty degrees and the oozy mass froze into a smooth, solid coating over the tops of the cars.

Old brakemen know what that means—the worst peril in the lives of men who walk freights. Duffy was naturally slow and methodical, and though springing all, careful to a degree. Fortunately there were few stops or grades that called for extra braking, and for the most part he was able to stay at the rear car brake, and even occasionally during long runs to slip down into the caboose.

But as the afternoon grayed into evening and the evening blackened into night, his face grew troubled and anxious. Beyond Elton was a wild country, with sharp up and down grades where the brakes would have to be changed frequently. On that part of the road, in the darkness, a careful man on top of the freight would be in more danger than a soldier facing batteries. The brakeman in charge of the section ahead seemed alive to the peril, for once they approached each other he called across the cars: "Keep up your spunk, Duffy. If you can hold on to Elton you may thank your stars that another goes into the hills. I've been on this road fifteen years, and have only seen ice like this once before, and there wa'n't many freights on the road then but last men. I hate to think what this night's going to bring to some poor fellows!"

Duffy had been thinking of the hills ever since the melting snow became rigid, glassy ice, and now the words of the experienced brakeman confirmed his worst fears. If McArde took the hill trip there would be no use planning life for Katie through him. As for planning help without, if such thoughts occurred to Duffy they were spurned unceremoniously aside. Katie loved McArde. But what could he do?

Nothing presented itself until they reached Marshall Junction, where the conductor found a telegram stating that No. 7, down freight, was an hour behind, and that instead of waiting for her there they would hurry on and wait at Norwood, ten miles beyond Elton. This would bring them to Elton twelve minutes in advance of schedule, and instead of remaining the usual twenty minutes, they would only stop four or five, just long enough to change men. Usually the new shift were lounging about the station, smoking and exchanging experiences; but Duffy remembered that McArde, with his customary recklessness across the station at the last moment and swinging himself upon the train after it started. With the remembrance came a sudden desperate plan.

Almost before the freight stopped he was on the platform, as was the conductor.

"Rush the new men out here, quick!" the conductor yelled. "We must make Norwood on time—Oh, here you are! The new shift hurried forward, "all but McArde, Duffy, do you know where he boards? We can't spare many minutes."

"Yes, sir. He has a room just across the street."

"Well, get him quicker than lightning. The rest of you swing up."

Duffy ran across the station, through the opposite door, then to the rear of the rest of the train, coming up on the far side. In two minutes he was standing on top of a car, with cap tilted rakishly to one side in the manner that McArde wore his. The conductor hurrying back from the telegraph window where he had gone to see if there were later orders, saw the figure with its face turned away.

"Oh, there you are, McArde!" he called. "All right!" Then his hand made a quick half-circle in the air, and the engineer, looking back, saw, and opened his throttle.

It was a night that Duffy and all others who walked freight trains on that road never forgot. An hour out, and the wind became a hurricane, sharp as needles and bitter as death. No brakeman thought of such a thing as attempting to walk upright on his cars. When it was necessary to cross from one brake to another they went in the only way possible, upon hands and knees, even crawling with fingers gripping the edges of the plank to keep from being swept away by the wind.

Duffy was vigilant and careful that night as he had never been before. Every movement of a foot, every grip of his fingers, was made with the thought that it might be the one which was to hold him back

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