

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

CHRISTINE FABER

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

CHAPTER LI.—CONTINUED

"Carroll O'Donoghue escaped from Australia and returned safely to Ireland. He was in secret quarters waiting an opportunity to pay a stealthy visit to his sister and his affianced. Rick knew of his arrival, though Carter did not, and Rick had learned, through unguarded hints dropped by Carter, that information had been supplied to the authorities which would bring a military force to the very spot where Carroll was secreted in the bosom of a devoted band. Rick warned the unsuspecting fellows, without disclosing his own suspicion that it was Carter who had supplied the information—not that he did it to save the traitor, but lest the latter, discovering at any time that Rick had been in any instance untrue to him, might take the revenge he never ceased to threaten. The military force, with Captain Dennier at its head, marched to the spot to which they were ordered, only to find all the men whom they had expected to capture. On their return they lost themselves in the wild way by which they had to journey. Rick and the Hills saw them, and concealing himself, till, divining from their manner that they had lost their way, he was impelled, by the hope of perhaps learning something which might benefit Carroll O'Donoghue, to appear among them as a wild fellow who had little or no sense. He did so, and acted as guide for the party back to the garrison, where he met, to his own surprise, and to Carter's discomfiture, Mortimer Carter, and the latter learned from Rick of Carroll's presence in Ireland. His scheming now became more vigorous and deadly. He set every faculty to work to gain information which should insure young O'Donoghue's recapture; and he succeeded so far as even to make the miserable Rick become at last the betrayer of Carroll—the latter was arrested just without the house which had been the shelter of his sister and his affianced. But the law was too slow for the traitor Carter—he would have O'Donoghue out of the way quickly, and he planned an escape for the prisoner, then gave information to the authorities which should cost Carroll his life, either by a shot from one of the armed guards, or a speedier conviction when this attempt to escape should be brought forward on the trial as evidence against the prisoner. Carter was also determined to press his suit with Nora McCarthy in a way which he fancied must compel her to accept him. He took Rick more into his confidence, and revealed to him for the first time all his mad passion for the beautiful girl; degraded as poor Sullivan was, he had yet sufficient manhood to express to Carter's face his indignation at the thought of such an alliance; but what was his horror and dismay when he found it proposed to him that he should claim this girl as his daughter! sufficient was known to Father Meagher to prove his claim, and then, to Rick's greater horror, he stated how that it was in view of this very project he, Carter, had concealed for all these years Cathleen Sullivan from her father. From that moment that he had learned of Rick's surrender of little Marie to the O'Donoghues, and knew what advantages would be hers, he thought how, should she, when of marriageable age, refuse his hand, he could humble her by producing Rick as her father—that was the plan by which he had intended to frustrate her marriage with Carroll O'Donoghue, and should it be insufficient to prevent it, at least it would cover her with shame. For the purpose of carrying out his cruel scheme he had continued to hide Cathleen Sullivan from her father; so doing gave him a power which always kept Rick his unresisting tool. And Rick was forced to consent. But Carter did not bargain for the issue. He had not correctly estimated Nora McCarthy's noble character. He had supposed that she would shrink from the horror and the shame of being this vagabond-beggar's daughter, and he had told Rick to place before her two alternatives—either to become Carter's wife, with the world remaining in ignorance of her parentage, or to refuse to do so, and be published as daughter of Rick of the Hills. But Sullivan, dumfounded at the noble manner in which she received his revelation, could not speak to her as Carter had bade him do—he could only endeavor to act his wretched part as best he might. Nora McCarthy, believing herself to be Rick's child, yielded all to go with him—home, friends, the lover to whom she was affianced,—and her noble devotion to the unhappy wretch, her efforts to reclaim him, her pure, angelic character, touched and won his heart; he could no longer endure her sacrifice, and he came to me and told this story. Previously accident had given me information of a young woman, named Cathleen, whom Carter had brought when a baby to a widow living in the north of Ireland, and to whom he paid regular sums for the child's care. He claimed to be the little one's uncle, and he made occasional visits to see her. I had no hesitation in pronouncing her to be Sullivan's abducted child, and I saw the poor, unhappy father depart for the place of her abode.

"I have finished, my lord, and I await your answer." He stood with folded arms, and head slightly bent forward, the flush on his cheeks deepened to a vivid glow. Lord Heathcote at last removed his hand, and raised his head; was that the stern, cold face which had drooped to its hidden position at the beginning of the tale—that white, aged looking countenance? every line had been brought forth with startling distinctness, every feature betrayed an agony upon which it was painful to look. He rose from his chair, and tottered to the priest, saying, in so cracked a voice that it might have belonged to eighty, rather than the fifty years he was: "This cruelly injured husband of Marie—this Walter Berkeley—did he who unfolded to you this tale tell you who he was?" The priest bowed low, and responded: "He did, my lord. Carter had unguardedly on one occasion imparted to him that knowledge. You, my lord, are the Walter Berkeley of my tale." "Oh, God!" The nobleman flung his hand wildly to his forehead, then, as if seized by some sudden convulsion, he clutched frantically at the air for a moment, and Father O'Connor, alarmed, hastened to support him. "Thank you; I am better," he said, when he had rallied; and he strove to assume the wonted coldness of his voice, as he released himself from the gentle hold. "But this is an idle tale," he continued, quickly; "what proofs have you to sustain Marie Dougherty's innocence of all that has been imputed to her—what proofs to show that Sullivan's story is not a concoction to shield himself?" "None, my lord, beyond what I have told you—she who could prove its truth has long since been accorded justice in Heaven."

"Do you believe it—did this mysterious tale carry conviction to your heart?" and the nobleman seemed to await the answer in trembling expectation. "I did, my lord; full and entire." Lord Heathcote tottered to his chair, and sunk into it. The perspiration stood in beads upon his face, and his breath was labored. "You tell me," he said, speaking with difficulty, "that the daughter of this Marie Dougherty grew to be the image of her mother—is she as bright like this?" He pulled from his bosom a golden case, set round with pearls; touching the spring, it opened and revealed the counterpart of Nora McCarthy. The likeness was so exact and so vivid that the priest started, and his manner, more even than his words, expressed the remembrance which the picture bore to his living copy. He closed the case and returned it to his breast, then, leaning forward until his labored breath seemed to fan his listener's face, he said: "The twin son of this Marie Dougherty whom Carter abducted—where is he now—what is he doing?" "Living obscurely among the poor of Ireland, with no desire save to do what little good he can, and remain unknown to the world."

"Is he known to you?" The question was put in a painfully eager way. "He is, my lord." Lord Heathcote leaned back and closed his eyes; but the working of his mouth betrayed how little diminished was his inward agitation. After a few minutes he looked up, and said with the first natural tone of voice he had used since the conclusion of the startling tale: "You have admitted that you know this son of Marie Dougherty whom Carter is said to have abducted—do you also know his twin brother, whom Berkeley was reported to have carried to England? did no suspicion ever enter the mind of Sullivan—did he never gain from Carter any information which might lead him to surmise the identity of this son?" "Never, my lord, to my knowledge—I do not know the young man."

"But this daughter—this counterpart of her injured mother—do you know her?" "I do, my lord, well." "And did you not, when this strange story was told you, immediately unfold it to this sister and brother, or did you not hint at portions of it which might work upon their minds?" "No, my lord; my first and only impulse was to come to you. All that I have told you is buried in my own breast."

A look of satisfaction crossed Lord Heathcote's features, and he said in a still more natural tone: "Will you bind yourself to follow some instructions I desire to give you?" "I shall be happy to do so, my lord, if they conflict with no duty."

"They will not. I would have you maintain profound secrecy about all that you have told me, and I would have you bring to me, here in the castle, this girl, Nora McCarthy—I would see her without having anything of this interview disclosed to her. Can you do this?" A shade passed over the priest's face. "I do not know, my lord; but I can try, and should I fail, I shall acquit your lordship."

Lord Heathcote bowed his assent, then touched the hand-bell at his side, and waving an adieu to Father O'Connor as the attendant entered

the room, leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes.

CHAPTER LII THE WORK OF A SPY

Father O'Connor, the prey of emotions as wild and varied as much of the scenery through which he passed on his return journey, hastened back to Tralee. There he found, to his relief, Nora once more in the bosom of her friends—Clare and she both inmates of general Mrs. Murphy's home. Father Meagher coming up from Drommacol, as often as the duties of his pastoral charge would permit, and Dennier, in his courteous, kindly way dropping in as frequently as the laws of etiquette allowed, but far too seldom to satisfy the desire of his own impetuous heart; and he found also Tighe a Volt once more installed as Dennier's valet; but he found no too sad at the thought of Carroll's approaching doom to wear even the semblance of a smile, and his own emotions, roused into wildest being by the scene through which he had so lately passed, were also subdued and saddened by the near approach of the dreadful end. He had little time, however, to give to deliberations other than those required for the delicate mission intrusted to him by Lord Heathcote, and he seized the first opportunity of requesting from Nora a private interview.

She had become anxious about Rick, and having received no word from him, he first thought was that Father O'Connor had perhaps some alarming intelligence to communicate. "No," the priest said in answer to her fears when they were alone, "you have no cause for alarm; but perhaps you will wonder when I ask you to come immediately with me to Dublin."

"To Dublin—why?" she could hardly speak from surprise. "I cannot tell you, Nora—I have only to ask you to submit blindly to my directions in this matter—I have only to say that I think it is well for you to go."

"Ah! I understand," she said quietly; "poor Rick," and then she stopped and corrected herself—"my father is there ill; he has acquainted you of it, but he would not let me know, lest it should induce me to make some sacrifice, and he has written to you not to tell me; but you think it is my duty to know and to go to him. Is not that it?"

"No, Nora; that is not it; but this journey, if you will undertake it, may go far to right a wrong of the past, and to restore a reputation which has been foully defamed."

"Carroll," she said—"it will take me from him." "Only for a few days, and as they tell me all of you have been refused access to him for the present, your absence can hardly make much difference."

have a pint of mulled porter together." With every evidence of delight, he to whom the invitation was given accepted it, and the two repaired to an inner room, which was filled up with round tables and wooden chairs. TO BE CONTINUED

MARIAN MEDDLES

By Mary Clark Jacobs in Rosary Magazine

Altuna was a quiet, little town, towards which many weary, toll-worn workers, looked eagerly at the close of the day. Here they invested their savings in comfortable bungalows, with broad, white verandas in the front and a vegetable garden and chicken run in the rear; here, in slippers and shirt-sleeves, they rested their tired bodies, their fagged brains, and garnered strength for another day in sweeter factory or shop or amidst the dull routine of the office.

Then into this haven of peace crept, like the spectre of death, polluting the atmosphere with obnoxious fumes, menacing the lives of babies, lessening the frail vitality of the aged, scarring all who must breathe the gas-laden air. When the big oil refinery was being built on the outskirts of Altuna the inhabitants did not dream its portent. With idle curiosity for some, the promise of employment for others, they watched the huge oil tanks in the process of construction; they saw the mighty fume tunnels stretch skyward, gleaming in the sunlight like black exclamation points against the background of the hills. But when the refinery began to operate and the huge vats of boiling oil belched their fume-laden breath over the little town of Altuna, the people were aroused. They protested, but their protests were ignored or smiled at superciliously. A mass meeting of the inhabitants was held at the Town Hall and legal counsel employed to fight this menace to lives and homes. A just judge granted an injunction restraining operations. The usual red tape of legal procedure followed: The case was carried to the higher court; the injunction was lifted, and in the end the Refinery was declared not obnoxious, no menace to health or comfort and permitted to operate at will.

And into this maelstrom, where money purchased the power to bring destruction, came two young people, to love, to suffer, to fight, and, in the end, to conquer, because their cause was just and their fight upheld by the might of right. Although John Hartley's name was seldom heard in connection with the Refinery it was well known that he owned the controlling stock in the company known by all but his daughter Marian. Beautiful, vivacious, lovable, Marian was his only and idolized child. For her he worked, saved and planned. Meanwhile, the object of all his labor floated through society's midst, laughed, sang and danced, unspoiled by adulation, and frequently at her side was a promising young attorney, Jerry Warrington.

Early one afternoon the young man ran up the broad stone steps of the Hartley mansion. "So sorry, Marion," he explained, after she greeted him, "I can't play golf with you this afternoon. Business requires me to go over to Altuna to gather some evidence, so I must forego the pleasure of driving you to the Country Club."

"Altuna?" she repeated. "The little town over the river?" he nodded. "I would like to see Altuna. I read an article in the evening paper that excited my curiosity. It was about an oil Refinery over there." He looked at her earnestly for a minute and realized that she was perfectly honest. She did not know that her father was interested in the plant.

"Will you go with me to Altuna? My firm has been retained to fight for the removal of this Refinery. It is on that case I am working this afternoon. If you would enjoy the ride, my car is outside."

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