

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

Authors of "A Mother's Sacrifice," etc.  
CHAPTER LI.—CONTINUED

"One night, just as he had parted from the care of the little, one-few old enough to evince her delight at his presence, he met on a lonely road a bailiff with whom in bygone days Sullivan's father had some unpleasant transaction. Contrary to wonted circumstances, old Mr. Sullivan had triumphed, and the bailiff was made thereby more angry and revengeful. He never lost an opportunity of taunting any member of the family, and on this occasion he poured forth a torrent of abuse on young Sullivan, and spoke insultingly of the latter's father, long reposing in his grave. The young man was grieved beyond endurance—in the heat of sudden passion he struck his aggressor a most unfortunate blow; the man, after three heavy groans, expired. "While the murderer, realizing what he had done, stood horror-stricken above the corpse, unable either to leave it, or to take precautions of secrecy, accident led Mortimer Carter to the very spot. With his usual quickness he immediately thought of a plan by which the guilt could be transferred. The ribbon men were about, their aggressions frequent, and as the murdered bailiff was known to be disliked because of his hard measures, it would excite little wonder or doubt, could it be made to appear that he was another victim of the mysterious band. Carter was familiar with their signs, and it required but little time to affix to the corpse the paper which should tell of another crime by the nightly marauders. They hurried from the spot, the deadly secret buried in both breasts. "Carter's ruse succeeded; there was not a suspicion that the bailiff was murdered in any other manner; but Sullivan was haunted by a horrible remorse; safe though he was, his fears gave him little peace, and the love for his child alone restrained him from some desperate act. "Letters from England requesting young Berkeley's return had become frequent; letters which contained ardent expressions of the old lord's desire for his son to contract a befitting alliance, and there was mentioned the name of the lady so designed. But Berkeley gave little heed, returning evasive replies—now citing his health as demanding a longer stay, now expressing a desire to prosecute at further length some researches. And thus matters continued for a little more than another year, when a third child was born—a girl; it was christened Marie. Then, when the young mother was still too weak to clasp her baby, a letter came demanding young Berkeley's instant presence in England—his father was dying. The young man, seized with remorse for his long absence, hurried his departure, leaving to the care of the still trusted and cherished friend, Mortimer Carter, his little household. He tore himself from his babes and his wife, telling the latter not to fatigue herself in her weak state by writing to him—that Mortimer would do all. And thus he departed. "Again Father O'Connor paused, but there was still no motion from the statue-like form in the easy-chair; and there was no remark, further than a brief request to proceed. The clergyman drew forth his little pocket tablets, and holding them in a convenient manner for frequent consultation, resumed: "Now was the time for Carter's work; he had never ceased to love Marie Dougherty, wife though she had become, and jealousy of the youthful husband, combined with his own unrequited passion, made him skilful to plot, and strong to execute. Mrs. Berkeley, instead of recovering, seemed to grow daily weaker; indeed, she was in no condition to answer her husband's affectionate letters, which came with every mail, and upon Mortimer devolved entirely the task of amanuensis. She would not suffer him, however, to state truly her feeble condition; she insisted rather that he would ascribe it to her perfect obedience to her husband's request regarding her fatigue. So Mortimer, by the young wife's own feebly accorded permission, had ample opportunity to read each English letter when it came, and from them he learned that the illness of the old lord, fatal as it was certain to be, might still protract itself to the duration of months, and that young Berkeley, owing to the slight tenure upon which his father's life was held, could not tell him of his marriage—that he was even, for the sake of that frail life, compelled in a measure to feign assent to a future alliance with the lady whose name, from past letters, was familiar to Marie. But all gave the devoted wife little concern—she loved her husband so truly, she confided in him so surely, that nothing short of his own sworn statement would convince her that she had anything to fear. Carter studied to imitate Berkeley's handwriting; he succeeded admirably, and then, intercepting the next English letter which came, he opened it, and substituted for its contents a letter which he had penned in his forged hand. "That letter told the young wife that her husband, yielding at last to his father's persuasions, was about to marry the lady with whose name Marie was familiar. It de-

plored the cruel necessity, it assured her of his undiminished affection, but it repeated in unmistakable terms the terrible fact, Marie, with sudden supernatural strength, arose from her couch a determined and desperate woman; she would go immediately to England, she would force her way to the dying lord, she would herself proclaim her marriage—not for her own sake, but for that of her children. The very strength of her grief favored Carter's designs; he approved of her resolution, he sought to facilitate it when she announced her determination to take her baby with her, by proposing to find a trusty man to take care of the little party, which would consist of the mother, and infant, and a nurse for the latter, while he would remain to guard the twin brothers, now sturdy little fellows of eighteen months. She assented, and Carter sought Richard Sullivan. To him he made it appear a necessary and noble act to accompany the young wife to England, but not, however, to lead her as she desired to the home of her husband; instead, she was to be conducted to a different part, and there kept in seclusion till Carter could join her. Carter insisted that such a course was absolutely necessary, in order that she might retain her children, and preserve to them their faith—otherwise their treacherous father would tear them from her; and Sullivan's warmest sympathies were enlisted, and full only of a wild anxiety to save this broken-hearted woman another blow, he finally consented. Unsuspecting Marie gratefully agreed to travel with Richard, whom she well knew, and Carter, having promised to take Richard's place for the time to the latter's little one, supplied him with ample means. "But the night before the journey, as Marie stood tremblingly looking at her marriage certificates preparatory to putting them safely away—for they were to accompany her—the reaction of her strained feelings, her sudden unnatural strength, her wild fears set in, and she fell fainting to the floor. When she recovered it was with her reason gone—her bright, cultivated mind had flown forever. Carter, prepared for any emergency, kept the fact of her harmless insanity a secret even from the few servants in the little household, bringing for immediate attendance upon her a foolish girl of the neighborhood; but, innocent though the latter was termed by the neighbors, she had sufficient sense to wait upon her mistress, and idiosyncrasy enough to understand what might be going on about her. "The journey was delayed, and Carter wrote to Berkeley one of the letters which the latter was wont to clasp her to her wife. Then, while waiting for Marie to gain strength sufficient to leave her couch, he feigned to have frequent need of Sullivan at the house, forming pretenses which should take the latter, who was not ill-looking, nor of bad address at that time, to Marie's room at questionable hours, and taking some of the servants to his wife. He further pretended to the domestics to be astounded at, and suspicious of, the favor with which young Sullivan seemed to be received by the lady of the house, hinting that an attachment had existed between them previous to her more advantageous marriage; but of all this young Sullivan, anxious alone to be of service to the young creature whom he sincerely pitied, was ignorant. He fell blindly into the trap which was prepared for him. Marie had recovered strength to walk, but she still remained without sufficient mind to recognize any one but her baby; and Carter came to Sullivan with a marriage certificate in which the name of Walter Berkeley had been skilfully erased, and Richard Sullivan inserted in its place. He pretended to have received news of the immediate return of Berkeley, and he affrightedly said that the very condition of the poor wife would, but further the husband's design of casting her off, and taking her children—that as a foil to this and as there might be danger of meeting him if he now made a journey to England, he had thought of another plan. That Richard should pass to strangers as her husband—she was in no condition to contradict the statement; and for that purpose, lest any one perhaps, surprised at the eminent superiority of the beautiful wife, should question the assertion, he had changed the marriage certificate which certified to her marriage by a Catholic clergyman. Sullivan could travel with her and her baby, from whom she refused to be separated for an instant, to the southern part of Ireland, and there wait for Carter to join them with the twin boys; he also promised to bring with him Sullivan's little daughter. Again poor Sullivan, though at first shrinking and hesitating, was induced to consent, and from no motive but that of saving Marie and her children. "Shrouding their departure with all the secrecy he could throw about it, Carter saw them go; the poor young wife—having been induced to allow her baby to be carried by the foolish girl who had been her last attendant—clinging to Sullivan's arm and laughing as gaily as a child. Then Carter but of the execution of the remainder of his plot. He stole immediately from the little household one of the twin brothers, the baby

William, and traveled with it to friends whom he expected to find in the extreme northern part of Ireland. He found, however, that his friends had emigrated to America nearly a year and a half before, taking with them their sole child, at that time a boy of six months. That information made him determine on another plan. The babe of six months who had been taken to America, and whose name was Charles O'Connor, would be now about the same age as the little William Berkeley, the companion of Carter's journey. Going to the parish clerk, he obtained a copy of the baptismal certificate of little Charles O'Connor on the pretense of being commissioned to do so by the child's parents; and then, hastening to a remote convent, he induced the good religious to assume temporary charge of his little companion, to whom he gave the same name as that on the baptismal certificate. Then he returned, and he pretended to be amazed and horrified by the discovery of the elopement of Berkeley's young wife with Richard Sullivan. Already he had paved the way for belief in the horrible tale by the few servants of the house, and they had not been slow to propagate hints of the scandal abroad. The whole district, comprising even those to whom her charity had been most largely dispensed, and by whom the purity of her character should have been undoubted, seemed to be convinced of her guilt, and expressions of horror came from every mouth. It was reported that she had taken two of the children with her—many asked why she had left the third. Carter insinuated that it was because he bore his father's name. "Giving sufficient time for Richard to have advanced far on his journey, Carter wrote to the young husband an account of the terrible circumstance; then, pending the answer, which he felt would be young Berkeley in person, he repaired to the woman who had charge of Sullivan's little daughter, and she told him the story which now attached to her father, and expressing his assurance of the fact that the little girl was entirely deserted, he announced his intention of caring for the child. Ample compensating the woman, and without telling his destination, he departed with the little one.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

Regina Dowling in The Missionary

Eileen Norton was in tears as she knelt at the altar-rail in the big church, where she found herself alone with the Sacramental Priest. She had come here one day after day for nearly two years, since her marriage to handsome Philip Norton, and today marked the second anniversary of that marriage. "Was Eileen happy? Friends and neighbors would tell you they knew of no happier marriage. Philip Norton held a promising position in the bank of which his father was president. He was one of the handsomest young men of his class and a natural leader among them. "While he was being educated at a Catholic University, his good mother had hoped and prayed that her boy would decide to enter the holy priesthood. His father, on the other hand, had great ambitions for him in the business world, and when on one occasion Mrs. Norton mentioned her desire, she was told sternly never to speak of the subject to either Philip or him again. "Philip's mother knew the One who could overrule her husband, so constantly she went to Him and earnestly begged His help. "But when Philip had finished his course at college he became deeply interested in his father's plans and threw himself into his work with ardent zeal. "Then came the day of Philip's marriage to Eileen Hathaway. Mr. Norton was perfectly pleased for Eileen came of a very fine family, was educated, cultured and refined, and her personal charm was exceptional. But Mrs. Norton had no praises for her intended daughter-in-law. She fought hard against the girl's winsome charm, which was gradually drawing her closer against her will. "This day then, was the hardest of all to Mrs. Norton. She saw her dream crushed, her prayer unanswered, and hard and bitter feelings took possession of her heart. That day, the first in many years, she failed to pray. "For months the woman who had knelt before the closed Tabernacle door in fervent supplication, never went beyond her pew, where she merely attended Mass on Sundays. But can a good woman remain in this moody indifference long? No, the blessings and graces she had merited in former days helped her now. "Looking upward at the Sacred Host raised on high by the Priest's hands during Mass one Holyday, all her fervor returned, and repentantly she begged God's pardon. Then, she realized that He works all things for the best, and if her boy did not have enough devotion to make the sacrifice voluntarily, how could he make of himself the proper apostle of Christ. So, she schooled herself to the lesson of the Great Master and said: "Not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done!"

The months in which Mrs. Norton failed to make her daily visits to the church found a new suppliant, Eileen, envied by friends of her good fortune and the great love of her handsome husband, had another story to tell Him, who said: "Come unto Me!" "There was no flaw in Philip's love for Eileen. His tender care of her was marked by all, but a barrier, small at first, but growing rapidly, had begun to arise. "Its first appearance was on the Sunday evening after their honeymoon. Mr. and Mrs. Norton had visited them in the afternoon, but returned home early. Left to themselves, with the long evening before them, Eileen suggested that they attend Benediction. But Philip's answer surprised her. "Now, dear, haven't we been to church already today? This is our first Sunday evening in our own home, let us enjoy it quietly together." "But," Eileen argued, devotions only last about an hour, and what could bring us greater blessings than attending Benediction when we have the chance? There will be so many times when other matters will prevent our going. "Jumping up from her seat to make ready, thinking she had convinced him, she was shocked by his reply. "Please don't spoil the evening, dear. I am satisfied to go to Mass on Sundays, but I can't be running to church every time the bell rings. I have had enough of that at school and with mother, now I want a rest. Come sit here and let me tell you all, or some of the plans I have in mind for making our married life an exceptionally happy one." "It was his first opposition to her wishes, and it hurt her. Nevertheless, she kept her feelings to herself and nestling beside him, listened to his enthusiastic plans for the future. "The days and weeks passed in sweet bliss for the young couple; concerts, operas, theatre parties among a group of young friends, taken up with the pleasures their station in life afforded them Philip plunged headlong into it, with all the enthusiasm of his young spirit, and seemed to want more and more of this wonderful gay life. He was happy in the thought that he was in a position to give his pretty little wife the full benefit of life as it should be lived in youth. And Eileen, only a girl, loved the things of life just as other girls do, but the teaching of that dear departed mother was always uppermost in her mind. "God first, pleasures after our duty to Him is accomplished." Hard at first, in earlier youth, this lesson had been a constant visitor to her value of self-sacrifice had been learned, how sweet the thought that to Him would be given the best that was in her, and how sincerely her innocent pleasures could be enjoyed. First and always. It was becoming as gall in her mouth. "Thus passed the greater part of that first winter. Had Eileen not been a constant visitor to her value of self-sacrifice had been learned, how sweet the thought that to Him would be given the best that was in her, and how sincerely her innocent pleasures could be enjoyed. First and always. It was becoming as gall in her mouth. "Thus passed the greater part of that first winter. Had Eileen not been a constant visitor to her value of self-sacrifice had been learned, how sweet the thought that to Him would be given the best that was in her, and how sincerely her innocent pleasures could be enjoyed. First and always. It was becoming as gall in her mouth. "Thus passed the greater part of that first winter. Had Eileen not been a constant visitor to her value of self-sacrifice had been learned, how sweet the thought that to Him would be given the best that was in her, and how sincerely her innocent pleasures could be enjoyed. First and always. 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