

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

CHRISTINE FABER

CHAPTER XLVII.—CONTINUED

The sentence was passed—it was the extreme penalty of the law, and the execution was announced to take place on a date which left little more than the interval of a month.

"Come home," whispered Nora to Rick; "quick, or I shall faint by the way!"

He half carried her out, being obliged to support her tottering steps, even on the street.

Father Meagher was obliged to shake Clara slightly in order to rouse her; she seemed to have sunk into some horrible lethargy, and Dennier, observing the anxious effort of the priest, could control himself no longer.

"I know what you mean," answered Father Meagher to me the strange history of Rick here being your father, and how you have renounced us all.

"Has she no female friend whom you can summon?" asked the priest.

"I shall watch until you return," and he began to apply such simple restoratives as were at hand.

"Oh, father!" she said, striving to sit up, but failing in the effort from very weakness, and clasping her hands tightly over her eyes, as if to shut out some dreadful scene.

Clare were driven in the carriage, again provided by Dennier's careful forethought to take the mail-car for Dhrommacol.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Hurried steps had pursued Nora and Rick when they so hastily left the court-room that morning—steps which speedily overtook the pair, while at the same time a point that was full of wonder and pain cried: "Nora!"

Both turned to behold Father O'Connor. The sight of him, connected as he was with all that was dearest to her, and dear himself, because of his own inestimable qualities and companionship when they were children together, opened the flood-gates of her already over-charged emotions—she wept with all the abandon of a broken heart.

"Come home with us," gasped Nora, seizing the clergyman's arm; "we cannot speak here!"

He obeyed, walking beside her, while Rick, considerably abashed, walked behind them. The residents of the squalid quarter who chanced to be about gazed with reverential wonder at the painfully-contrasted pair to their humble abode.

"Do you know—have you heard?" said Nora, looking in a wild way from one to the other of her companions, when the three were within the little sitting-room, and the door securely shut on all prying eyes.

Father O'Connor seemed to understand her. "Yes," he answered: "I know what you mean. Father Meagher wrote to me the strange history of Rick here being your father, and how you have renounced us all.

"The sentence!" the crushing weight of all that was contained in those two dreadful words fell on the agonized heart of the wretched girl. Her brain whirled, and feeling that consciousness was about to forsake her, she stepped forward to save herself from falling; but it was a useless precaution, and before either of her companions could impose a hand to prevent, she had dropped insensible at their feet.

Scalding tears fell from Rick's eyes on the white, upturned face as he raised her, and with Father O'Connor's assistance, placed her upon a lounge.

"I know what you mean," answered Father Meagher to me the strange history of Rick here being your father, and how you have renounced us all.

"I shall not see them for a week or more, owing to duties which require my immediate return, and which will detain me at home for that period. Then I shall return here, in order to make an effort to see Carroll."

She perceived his subterfuge, and was quick to plead: "Promise me

that you will not write to them of my whereabouts."

He deemed it better, because of her weakened condition, to gratify her. "Since you desire it so earnestly, I shall not write."

But he did not promise to be silent about her when he should visit Dhrommacol, which he was now determined to do on the earliest opportunity, and she seemed to overlook that probability in her eagerness to win from him the promise not to write.

JOHN GARDNER'S PRIDE

(Georgia Pell Curtis, in Ave Maria)

He had enlisted in New York's gallant Irish regiment, the 69th, almost at the outbreak of the Civil War. In one of the first battles, he had distinguished himself for bravery, and was raised to the rank of a lieutenant.

All this happened when he was only eighteen; and he had fought all through the war until its close, always in the thickest of the fight; but never, save once, was he seriously wounded.

In her beautiful home that was situated on the East River, far out from what was then the centre of New York, his mother waited for his return.

But before returning to the home circle that so eagerly awaited him, John Gardner had an errand that took him to the battle-scarred lands that lay south of Mason and Dixon's line.

In an old house that was perched on a slope of the Blue Ridge—a house built in the Colonial style and of generous proportions—lived Emily Adair, the only daughter of Colonel Adair, who had fought gallantly in Lee's army, and whose only son had been cited as missing in the last great battle of the war.

Hither it was that the young Union officer was making his way. He had been there twice before. The first time badly wounded, he had spent a month under the Adair roof, and it was then that the young people had fallen in love with each other.

Gentle Mrs. Adair, whose heart bled for the North as well as for the South, had offered no objections. Would it not be well that as soon as possible gaping wounds should heal, and North and South forget the gulf that had separated them, becoming as one nation again?

It remained to be seen what her husband would have to say when he came home.

Jerry's nimble wit sensed the situation at once. "I dun hab three passengers, Cunel," he said. "Ole Miss Preston, she dun ride five miles from Richmond to Cunel Preston's plantation; and Maize McSherry's two sons, Marso Phillip and Marso Jarge, dey dun ride to Hunter's Ford, whar dey lef' de coach. Dey bofe just home from the wah."

"And these three were your only passengers?"

"Fore Gawd, Cunel, dis ole Nigger is telling you the trufe. Only three passengers today, Cunel."

Jerry's left hand slid into his pocket unperceived by Colonel Adair, where he grasped hold of a rabbit's tail. By means of this charm he saved his conscience for the lies he was telling. Not for the world would Jerry let the Colonel know that his daughter was even now in the woods talking to a Union officer.

For a moment the Colonel glowered at Old Jerry, who preserved his smile of childlike innocence; then saying, "Well, good-day, Jerry!" he turned and walked rapidly toward the gate of his plantation.

And having touched his hand to a woolly forelock that hung over his brow, the old driver picked up his reins and proceeded on his way.

"Dat shore was a narrow 'escape,'" said Jerry.

He chuckled at the idea of how cleverly he had outwitted the Colonel, thereby serving little Miss Emily, to whom he was devoted. If she and her lover wanted to make a run-away match on his coach he was ready to help them.

Meanwhile the lovers were walking through the leafy woods, deep in conversation; and John Gardner, having heard with surprise and indignation that Colonel Adair had refused his consent to the match, even to saying he would never receive an ex-Union soldier in his house, was trying to persuade his fiancée to run away with him then and there.

The pretty girl before him was only nineteen, but with character and spirit that made her refuse such a suggestion.

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