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## FATHER CONNELL; A TALE.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

### CHAPTER XLIII.—(Continued.)

"Then we'll all stay where we are, till a reasonable hour in the morning, by the great Gog! an' you must give us a good table and chairs here—d'ye hear me, sir? An' you must send somebody—here, Naddy, you brat, you'll do the business—gallop off to my house, and bring up here the cold sirloin that I left almost as good as new to-day; and the two bottles of wine that you'll find on the parlor side-board, and all the other things we want—and get all the help you can in the house to carry them with you—run, you starved brat! Ay, by the great Gog! if we must stay here till a reasonable hour in the morning, we'll make a morning of it!"

The governor of the jail, with all his turnkeys and personal servants who were awake, supplied the chairs and tables ordered. Tom Naddy ran down the street, and almost ran back again, laden as he was, followed by one or two assistants, and the table was soon covered, and the chairs soon occupied; and never, from that time to this, or before, did such a revel, a "rollicking," take place in a condemned cell. But it will be easily conceived that in all the loud or expressive portions of this merry-making, Gaby M'Neary and Tom Naddy were the most distinguished performers. Poor Helen, and poor Edmund sat side by side, hand in hand, almost cheek to cheek, and only speaking to each other in whispers, except when summoned by their chief to respond to some very emphatic question or burst of hilarity.

Tom Naddy was seated to one side of the cell; and of course recounted how he had succeeded in discovering and recapturing Helen; how Nelly Carty's hints sent him to the exact place, the old ruined building, about twenty-five miles distant, and how Gaby M'Neary's best horse enabled him to get there, almost as soon as the cart in which Helen was conveyed hither; how he quietly sought out a magistrate, told him his story, and with him and his constables, assisted by a score of the peasantry, surrounded and invaded the old thieves' den; how, by Nelly Carty's directions, he was enabled, after much trouble, however, to discover the secret stone, which gave entrance to the secret vault; how, in it, they found and secured the "young mistress," the Baby, and two of his older confederates; how the magistrate lent Helen his carriage to convey her home to her father and the "young master," while he, Tom Naddy, sat triumphantly on its dickey; and how, at the same time, the constables and the country people kept up with the carriage, conveying to the jail now above their heads, well secured on a car, their detested prisoners. And Edmund understood that it was the disposing of these individuals, against their will, in suitable lodgings in the prison, which had caused the most part of the startling noises that broke up his devotions.

The autumn morning crept in, even through the bars of Edmund's condemned cell. Nay, flickerings of pale sunlight, as if looking frightened at having got into jail, followed the dawn. It became "a reasonable hour in the morning," and the governor of the prison ventured to re-appear, and hint as much to Gaby M'Neary. Gaby took home his daughter, remained absent about an hour, and then came back, and took home his son-in-law also—every formality having been gone through—the "haaging judge" himself, who had not yet left town, having been seen.

Prodigious was the breakfast prepared under Gaby's roof. To repose he would not go, nor let any one else, until tea and coffee, eggs, and indeed all viands within reach, should have laid the effects of his two bottles of wine, which, by the way, he and Tom Naddy had almost exclusively consumed between them. Then his brain was full of another project, or, indeed, projects, to be immediately entered upon. Invitations were to be sent out, on a vast scale, for a dinner and a supper, including a ball, and preparations to be instantly commenced for the tremendous revelry. So, amongst a hundred other things, he set Helen's pen to work on the invitations, and he would go himself and verbally deliver those which she could not be expected to write. And she and Edmund were to be re-married before dinner by a Protestant clergyman, and—"blug-nages! how could he forget so long?"—old priest Connell was to be at the dinner among the rest, ay, and among the first and the best; and he and Edmund would start that moment together to secure his company.

Edmund would go with his father-in-law delightfully, on such an errand. But before they left the house, he fixed Gaby M'Neary's attention to another subject, upon which he and Helen had been speaking much and anxiously. It was that of poor Mary Cooney. So, her relationship to Gaby was stated; and then, her history, her sufferings, her character, her late domestication in Father Connell's house, Helen's visit to her there, and then her last night's sad and terrible adventures; her present sojourn in the old mill, under her wretched mother's care—everything was communicated

to the astonished, the wondering, the pleased, the delighted, the cursing and swearing, the stumping, and the almost blubbering Gaby M'Neary. He immediately dragged Edmund away with him.

As they walked through the streets of the town in great haste, arm in arm, how the thousand eyes of curiosity peered after them! And how many faces, which but yesterday had scowled upon Edmund as a disowned acquaintance, now turned to him, radiant with friendly smiles! Is it man's heart that spontaneously and genuinely gives to him generous feelings, or are those feelings which are only so called, first admitted to that heart under the keen inspection of his prudence and self-interest?

They went to Father Connell's house, and for the first time, Edmund learned that the old man had gone to Dublin the night before, to present personally the memorial in his own favor. His mind and heart gave a start—an utterly admiring, an utterly veneration—and he knew not why, an anxious and a fear-fraught start. He bent his head, and from that instant, was more thoughtful and sad than became his situation.

His companion urged him on to the old mill. Here Nelly Carty's story was ascertained to be true enough. Gaby wanted to see the poor beggar-girl immediately; but prudence forbade this, and they returned to the town, and sent back to her medical advice and assistance; and under her physician's permission, she was removed that very day, evening rather, to a commodious apartment, under Gaby's roof, where Helen received her as a sister indeed; where the master of the house, under promise of keeping himself quiet, was allowed to give her a father's welcome; where Edmund Fennell once more took her hand as a brother, and where the poor Nelly Carty still continued as her head-nurse. Happy Mary!

Edmund communicated to Helen the fact of Father Connell's journey to Dublin, and made her, by the intelligence, as sad and as nervous as he was himself. But the materials for the mighty dinner, boiled and broiled, and roasted and stewed on, and they were ready to be set on the table, and the concourse who were to partake of them assembled. All the scholars of Dick Wresham's school, with all their wives, daughters, sisters, and so forth, and a great many more of the aristocracy of the town, with their gentle appurtenances also; and in their presence, in the drawing-room, Helen and Edmund were remarried by the Protestant rector of the parish; and then the multitude trooped down to the feast; and mighty was the din and the clatter of plates and dishes, knives and forks, and of the laughing, talking, hobnobbing, and over all, Gaby M'Neary's bellowing to Tom Naddy.

"Throw open all the doors, street-door and all," cried Gaby M'Neary, "that we may hear the joy-bells I have set a-going."

In the steeple of the ancient cathedral of the city, there were four or five bells of good sizes and sounds, only that one of them was cracked, which occasionally rung out as joy-bells; and old Gaby had indeed set them in motion on this happy day.

"There they go!" he continued, rubbing his hands, as, after his instructions about opening the doors had been obeyed, the joy-bells became partially heard from a distance, even amid the din of the dining-room; "there they go jollily! But my curse on that passing-bell from your Mary's steeple, Mr. Thomson," addressing the rector—"Who the devil is dead now, I'd be glad to know; some old lady in a faded black silk cloak, I suppose, that they're making all this fuss about—damn it! it comes strong on us again—Naddy, you brat, shut all the doors now."

These orders were also obeyed, and, in consequence, the joy-bells indeed were no longer heard at the board of feasting; but Mary's steeple being much nearer than the steeple of the old cathedral, the steady tolling of the passing-bell, at measured intervals, could not be shut out.

Edmund and Helen exchanged looks not in sympathy with the bridal feast, and they the bride and bridegroom. It was a late dinner; and the revellers had not sat to table till nearly eight o'clock. About two hours had now elapsed since then, and Helen stealthily retired to dress and prepare for accompanying her husband, almost immediately, to her father's little country villa, where they were to spend the remainder of the evening alone. Edmund sat silent and spiritless after she went away. Tom Naddy came to the back of his chair, and informed him that a messenger had been sent from his bishop, summoning him to an interview, on pressing and immediate business. He started and turned pale, facing round to Naddy, and staring studiously into his eyes. The lad averted his glances, but Edmund saw that he had been weeping. He jumped up, and hurried out of the house to his bishop.

The dignitary met him gravely and sadly, though kindly. He had almost that instant received, he said, a letter, by dispatch, from the Catholic archbishop of Dublin, concerning Father Connell, in which the archbishop advised that Mr. Fennell should be consulted on the present occasion, in consequence of some

words that had escaped his old parish priest. The bishop went on to say that Father Connell had reached Dublin, about eight o'clock that morning, but in a very feverish, shattered, and exhausted state; that he had immediately called on his old friend, the archbishop,—before now, Catholic bishop of Edmund's diocese—to advise with him about waiting on the Lord Lieutenant; that the archbishop had recommended him, first of all, to take repose and refreshment; but that Father Connell's great and devouring anxiety rejected every such proposal; that almost on the instant, the writer was therefore obliged perforce to accompany him to the viceregal lodge, in the Phoenix park, where he had the entrée; and finally, that Father Connell, while in the act of presenting on his knees, to the Lord Lieutenant, the memorial in Edmund's favor, had fainted, and very shortly afterwards died.

Edmund Fennell broke out of his bishop's house. He ran to an inn or hotel, and ordered a post-chaise to be in instant readiness at his father-in-law's door. He flew home to Helen, found her dressed in her room, waiting for him to accompany her to her father's country cottage; told her the news, and saw her the moment afterwards insensible at his feet. He sent down for Gaby M'Neary, and told him the news also. Gaby filled up with a great and true sorrow; and in a few minutes afterwards his guests were dismissed, his house shut up,—

"And the banquet-hall deserted."

The post-chaise arrived at the door; Edmund strained his bride to his breast; shook his weeping father-in-law by the hands; ran down stairs, jumped into the post-chaise, and whirled out of the town at a gallop. And this was Helen's second nuptial night.

It was the Catholic bishop who had sent to get the passing-bell tolled, in Mary's steeple.

### CHAPTER XLIV.

Edmund had learned from the archbishop's letter something more than has yet been noticed. According to it, Father Connell's last words were to the effect—"That his dying blessing, as a priest and a father, should be sent to Naddy Fennell; also information that he should like to be buried with the old parish priests, in their own old church-yard."

The archbishop added, that, in obedience to these wishes of the dead, he had instantly ordered arrangements to be made for the transmission of the body from Dublin; that at the moment he was writing, such arrangements were actively going on; and that he hoped and expected that all would be on its way to its destination, about two or three o'clock that same day. And this was the particular intelligence which sent Edmund so rapidly towards the metropolises.

Before daybreak, next morning, people might be seen walking slowly, in twos and threes at a time, towards the Dublin road—rich and poor, all classes, in alternation. No public intention had been made known on the occasion; but the news that the body might be expected to leave Dublin, at an hour already mentioned, got abroad, and this silent movement was the result.

A very great crowd had congregated about two miles from the town, and still the day had not dawned. The people timed their motions very well, calculating on the decent and slow progress which would be made from Dublin. Presently, the red glaring lamps of the vehicle, steadily approaching, appeared in view. Soon after, the stepping of the horses were heard; and then the nodding of the plumes of the hearse became visible, together with the white scarf and hatband of the driver. Up to this moment there had been a deathlike silence among the crowd, now there was one low outbreak, made up of the suppressed groans of men and the wailing of women.

All heads were uncovered, and many knelt in prayer.

The hearse passed by; two mourning coaches followed it. In the first of these, visible by the light of the lamps which it also bore, and muffled up to the brows in his mourning cloak, and without motion or a glance around him, sat Edmund Fennell. In the other, the people discerned, to their great delight and admiration, the former bishop of their diocese—the former resident in Father Connell's little thatched house, and the former intimate and affectionate friend of the ancient priest. He was himself now a very old man.

There was a third vehicle, containing such of the near relations of Father Connell as had had time to go to arrange as to go a little way to meet him, on his last earthly journey.

The sad little cortege moved slowly on.—The great throng of people proceeded with it at either side, or closed behind it. Profound silence again reigned amongst them. Arrived at the suburbs of the town, very little way was to be made to Father Connell's late dwelling; and here the people left the hearse, and returned into the town. The morning came through clouds and mists upon the little city; but a moral gloom, deeper than that cast by the weather, also fell upon it. There was no man, woman, or child, among its population who was not acquainted with Father Connell's character, who did not venerate and love him when alive, and who did not now mourn him,

dead. This assertion is literal; it makes no exception for social degree, or for sect, or for party. The glorious and the great charity, in the exercise of which he had spent a long, long life, and, at last, braved and met death; the glorious and the great charity, which had been, as it were, the very essence and the very breath of his being—that charity, now filling with admiration and affection all hearts, made all unite, for a time, at least, in one demonstration of feeling. It was the pouring out of oil upon the spiteful though paltry waves of their sectarian personalities and passions, until it stilled them into a glassy stillness. And thus charity begeth charity. Their common love for one man, whom they loved, because he was charitable, made them also charitable in themselves, and to one another.

It was, and is the custom in Father Connell's town, for the shopkeepers partially to close their shop-windows, upon the death of a neighbor. On this day, every shop-window was fully closed. Every passing-bell tolled—the almost unheard, illegal little bells attached to Catholic chapels, and the more sonorous ones in the legal church steeples. The citizens of every grade met in little groups about the streets; and you could pass none of them who were not talking, in low voices, of the man and the event, whom all mourned and deplored, and of arrangements to be made for a public funeral in his honor; and Protestant and Catholic discussed the subject together. And there was, somehow, a strange silence through all places of usual public resort and bustle, which thrilled you; and few were seen to laugh during the day.

At about noon, hundreds after hundreds began to visit Father Connell's little chapel.—(There, upon an elevated framework, a kind of bier, they found, as they expected, his mortal remains, laid out in the coffin, in the middle of the building. The body was draped in its priest's vestment, over all its usual clothes, and the semblance of a chalice was between its hands: so are Catholic priests arrayed for the grave. A number of candles surrounded the coffin. The features of the corpse wore their usual living smile; and the glittering benevolence of the handsome old blue eyes was only wanting, to make it appear life indeed. Many, many who looked upon it, remembered it well as the blessed harbinger of consolation and relief to them, in former days of suffering and sorrow.)

On the floor beneath, surrounding the coffin, were benches, on which sat the mourners of the dead—his nearest relations. But apart from the rest, immediately under the head of the body, stood one mourner, who, though no one could see his features, on account of the arrangement of his black cloak, all knew well; and they knew that since the body had arrived from Dublin, he had never quitted it for a moment, casting no food, no drink—partaking of no kind of refreshment—speaking with none, and addressed by none—for his mighty grief, and the people believed, his remorse, was respected, nay, almost feared to an extent which made all both to communicate with him.

There he remained the livelong day, wordless and motionless, except that now and then, and very seldom, he would change his standing position for a sitting one. Night came on, and he was still on his post. Messages reached him from the good old archbishop, who had taken up his temporary residence in the priest's abode, near at hand, entreating—nay, commanding him—to leave the body for a time, and take some repose and nourishment; but he only answered these communications with a denying and most mournful motion of his head. His father-in-law, Gaby M'Neary, being applied to, came personally, and even with requests from his young wife, to solicit him on the same subject; but these appeals, also, he scarcely heeded.

It grew far advanced in the night, and people shuddered to see him still continue almost alone to bear the dead company.

Next morning, at the earliest hour that visitors began to come aggr to the chapel, the same figure was still seen by the coffin head. The noon of the second day arrived; the archbishop, with the bishop of the diocese, and a number of priest's, assembled to celebrate a solemn mass for the repose of the soul of Father Connell; and then, for the first time, Edmund Fennell moved from his position, walking straight down the chapel he entered the railed way of the little sanctuary, knelt down on the lowest step of the altar, and still in utter silence served the mass—such is the technical expression—the same as he had often, often done, even in childish days when Father Connell used to be the officiating priest, and when his old and beloved features used to beam the affection which his heart felt, upon the glossy-haired urchin who attended him.

The mass was over; the dignitaries and their clerical attendants in the choir, round the coffin, and began to chaunt the sublime and touching service, called in the Catholic church, the office of the dead. Edmund Fennell had preceded them to the head of the bier. The service continued for about three hours longer; and then preparations began to be made for the funeral. During the mass, one little occurrence

should not be forgotten in this notice. The chapel was crowded to inconvenience. At a certain pause in the ceremony, a priest turned round on the altar, and strove to pronounce aloud, while his voice failed him, the following words:—

"Pray for the repose of the soul of the Reverend Phelim Connell, your late parish priest."—all the people had been standing,—the moment the words were heard, man, woman, and child, suddenly knelt, and there was a burst of weeping petition to Heaven, smothered in sobs and groans, over which women's stifled shrieks partially arose, and the bitter crying of the little boys of Father Connell's school was distinctly heard.

The people would not permit the body to be conveyed to the grave, as was first proposed by the directors of the funeral, in the hearse which had borne it from Dublin;—senseless animals, they said, should not move it on that occasion, while they had arms and shoulders to perform the duty. So they provided a handsome little thing, a miniature hearse, still, with plumes and velvet trappings, fringed with gold lace; and in this, almost exactly fitting it, the coffin was placed, and borne, palaquin-like, upon men's shoulders. On coming out of the chapel, the approach or line leading to the little edifice, the churchyard, the priest's yard and garden, and the suburb street without, were found crowded with the more respectable citizens of all ranks—and after what has been said, it will be unnecessary to add, of all sects and parties, wearing ample scarfs and hat-bands of white linen, and waiting to form into funeral procession. There could not be less than thousands of them. Similar badges of mourning had been provided for the boys of the parish school; and amongst the general train, little fellows, almost children; the sons of the citizens, were also scarfed and hat-banded;—let it be permitted to us to record, that of these childish participators in the general demonstration of sorrow, two little O'Haras were included.

The order of the funeral being arranged, it proceeded on its course. Before the coffin were men in black cloaks, with poles in their hands, draped at the top in white linen, to lead or clear the way. The truly venerable archbishop, the bishop of the diocese, and a great number of priests followed them. Immediately behind the coffin, was the one wayward self-chosen chief mourner, walking companionless—alone. After him came the relations of the deceased, wearing, like him, black cloaks. After them again, the schoolboys linked two and two, and headed by Mick Dempsey, stooped with grief, and blind with tears; then the religious women and girls of Father Connell's choir, preceded by poor Mrs. Molloy, all wearing their white cloaks; and then the long procession of those wearing scarfs and hat-bands, two and two, like the schoolboys. Some private carriages made up the train.

The body was borne from the churchyard, in which, however, finally it was to rest, and proceeded by suburb ways, to the bridge, which led into the Irish town. This it passed, and continued all through the city to the second bridge, of which the position may be recollected. The multitude which accompanied the procession, at either side of the streets, was immense. As the little hearse passed the military posts of guard along its route, the soldiers were turned out, and headed by their officers, and imitated by the sentinels on duty, presented arms. The windows were thrown up, and filled with ladies and female children, almost all wearing some insignia of mourning.

While the body was crossing the second bridge, the first bridge, a mile distant, became in view, and it was perceived that the lengthened lines of white scarfs and hat-bands, had not yet nearly passed the latter, for the private carriages were not visible. But the little hearse itself, had now but a short way to go. It was soon at its journey's end. The clergyman at its head, began to chaunt the magnificent *De profundis clamavi*. The nearest of the procession halted, and stood uncovered; and in a whisper, but with electric speed, the word ran along the whole train, through the whole town, until all stood still, and were uncovered also. The last rights ensued. A shovelful of clay was thrown upon the coffin, now in the grave; the hollow noise it made, found an echo in the breasts of all who were near enough to hear it, and the lament that followed was awful. The grave was closed and mounded up, the sorrowful multitude gradually dispersed, and Father Connell's mortal portion was left, as he had wished it should be, "among the old parish priests, in their own old churchyard."

### CHAPTER XLV.

Let many months pass away; let many tears be dried—many and most sincere ones; let the old soother of the deepest human sorrow, old Father Time, have his usual—and,—but that it must be part of a great mysterious plan,—we had almost said contemptible influence, upon the deepest grief that the poor human heart can experience; at all events, let many months pass away.

Edmund Fennell is now happy with his young wife under her father's roof, where old Gaby insisted they should fix their residence. Happy, indeed; he must needs have been with