CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

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CHAPTER XLVI.—CONTINUED

"Well," was the latter's answer, "you wait widin for him, an' I'll watch for him here, so that I'll know whin he inters, an' I'll be on hand for you to call me whin you're ready."

Corny went back to wait in the little untidy parlor, and an hour before midnight Carter returned, somewhat under the influence of liquor. He scowled at the queer little figure which presented itself before him, but Corny, with his most polite air, bowed and said; "Mr. Carter, I believe."

"Yes," was the gruffly spoken response; "What is your business with me?"

"I think this will tell you quicker and better than words"—and Corny proffered the paper which he had written in obedience to Tighe's direction.

Carter took it, walking unsteadily to the light, and read with strained eyes the following:

"Mr. Carter: The bearer can give you information of the Fenian document which has been missing from the recent trials; he will confer with you, and if you can come to reasonable terms, he will let you have possession of it, as it will be of great importance on the present trial."

There was neither signature nor date.

Carter's little eyes lost their half-drunken stare, and snapped with eagerness; he was all aglow in a moment. "Who are you?" he asked.

"Never mind who I am," responded Corny, speaking in a whisper; "the document was got from Tighe a Vohr, and if you will take me where we can be more private than this we'll talk over the matter; I have a grudge against that same Tighe a Vohr, and glad enough I am to have an opportunity for a little revenge!"

"Come up-stairs to my room," said Carter, who seemed to have become sober at once; and he led the way rapidly to his own apartment.

"You see, Mr. Carter," said Corny, in a tone of eager confidence, when both were seated, "there were two of us concerned in the stealing of that document from Tighe a Vohr; and my friend, who holds it, isn't willing to let it go without making something by it—and as it's of importance for this trial against the prisoner, he thought you'd be willing to pay something for it."

"How much does your friend want?" asked Carter, his anxiety betraying itself in his voice.

"Well, how much would you be willing to give?—or, stay a moment—perhaps I could induce him to come up and see you. He's a queer, shy fellow, and he wouldn't come in with me; but he's waiting for me at the corner beyond. Maybe I could get him to come up—shall I try?"

"I'll go down with you," said Carter, rising, and looking for his hat.

"It wouldn't do," answered Corny; "if he saw you with me, he's such a frightened, nervous fellow, he'd think may be you were going to force him into giving the paper for nothing, and he'd be off to the law on him—no; the only way is to let me try and bring him up."

"Well," said Carter, resuming his seat, "do so."

Corny feigned to be calm, and even slow, about his movements, shutting the door of Carter's room behind him, and descending the stair as if the semi-darkness—the entry light had not been quite extinguished, out of respect to Mr. Carter's visitor—caused him to grope and stumble. He met Tighe directly without the hall door.

"It's all right, so far," he whispered; "he's waiting for you to come up, in order to make terms for the document."

They both entered the house, Corny leading the way to Carter's room; he ascended slowly, and looked cautiously to ascertain if the door of the room was closed as he had left it. It was; he signified that fact to his companion, and Tighe paused to draw from his pocket a sponge and a vial, partially saturating the former with the contents of the latter. Then Corny, with a knock which he did not wait to have answered, entered Carter's room. The occupant was still seated, his arms folded, and his head inclined. There was a sudden springing forward of some one in Corny's rear, and before Carter could recover his startled senses, he was pinioned in his chair, and the sponge held to his nose. A stupor seized him—he fell back like a log, almost overturning his chair; and Tighe, drawing a rope from his pocket, proceeded to bind him.

"Quick!" he said to Corny, "sarch his pockets—the stupor mayn't last long."

Corny obeyed, turning out pocket after pocket of Carter's capacious garments; and nervously reading in a loud whisper the contents of every paper he found; but the latter comprised only various business memoranda—no document contained anything like the words which he had heard Carroll repeat.

"We're too late," said Tighe, in a tone of bitter despondency; "he's given it to some o' the authorities, onless it could be hid somewhere in the room." He glanced doubtingly about him.

"Wait awhile," said Corny; "we haven't done searching him yet; sometimes a man has secret pockets in his breast," and with trembling haste he tore open Carter's vest. There, in an inner pocket, he found a folded paper.

Carter gave signs of returning consciousness, but Tighe's sponge was instantly to his nostrils, and the heavy form relapsed into stupor. Corny read:

"The undersigned swears that his fealty to Ireland's cause is unchanged, that his loyalty as a sworn member of the Irish Republic Organization is undiminished, and that, declaring himself an open enemy to the English Government, he is ready to die in the defence of his country.

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE."

"That will do!" and Tighe seized the paper, concealed it upon his person, and unbinding Carter, extinguished the light. Then both men stole softly down the stair and from the house, and both were exulting over their success in Corny O'Toole's little apartment by the time that Carter recovered from the effect of the narcotic which had been administered to him. His restoration was slow, and the darkness in which he found himself seemed to convince him for a while that he had fallen asleep in his chair, and dreamed the whole of the incidents which he was beginning to remember in an indistinct and confused manner. By degrees all came fully to him—his strange visitor, the return of the latter with a companion, the sudden bounding of some one to his side, the vise-like grip in which he was held—and that was all. He recalled the face of his visitor perfectly—but of the face of the latter's companion he could remember nothing, save that it was a colored face. He roused himself and called for help; in a brief time the whole household was about him, frightened men and women half dressed, and with their lamps high above their heads, peering from safe distances into Carter's room, as if they expected to meet a whole army of desperate thieves.

"I have been robbed," shrieked Carter—"bound down in my chair and robbed—an outrage has been perpetrated upon me!" But the condition of the room did not seem to corroborate his story; not an article had been disturbed.

"Of what have you been robbed?" gasped one terror-stricken voice. It was not his money, for his porte monnaie was safely in its accustomed place; nor his watch, for that was in his fob pocket; yet his disarranged garment gave evidence of some unusual proceeding. He discovered his loss at last, and with a yell, as he fruitlessly searched for the paper which he had received from Carroll, he bounded to the middle of the floor. "It is gone!" he screamed, "gone!"

"What is gone?" asked two or three of the mystified crowd.

"A paper—an important paper!" he gasped; and then he threw himself into a chair, burying his face in his hands, and groaning, while the puzzled lodgers, their tongues at last becoming loosed, burst into their own wild conjectures as to what had really happened, and they offered equally wild suggestions as to what had better be done. Some were for running for the police, others for making a general alarm in the neighborhood, and others, shaking their heads, said it was too late to attempt a discovery of the thieves.

Carter had a horrible suspicion of the truth—he felt that Tighe a Vohr was the perpetrator of the theft; but what could he do in the matter now? he knew that no efforts of his could recover the paper, and did he bring a charge against Tighe he had no witnesses, no proof to sustain it.

The lodgers, finding that Carter seemed more disposed to commune with his own unhappy thoughts than to listen to their suggestions, gradually returned to their rooms, and Carter was left alone with his landlord.

"What will you do about this thing, Mr. Carter?" he asked.

"I'll do nothing about it till the morning," was the sullen reply; and the landlord, having relit Mr. Carter's lamp, withdrew, leaving his lodger a prey to ungovernable hate and fury.

CHAPTER XLVII.

CRUEL TREACHERY

It was the third day of the trial, and interest and expectation were more rife and eager because current rumor had it that on this day it was certain the prisoner would be sentenced.

Father Meagher and Clare were in their accustomed places, as were also Rick and Nora; and Tighe a Vohr and Corny O'Toole were in the center of the throng that densely filled the court-room, both eagerly peering in every direction for Carter, but he was nowhere to be seen. In one of the foremost seats, yet sufficiently in the rear not to be seen by Clare O'Donoghue, sat Dennier. He could only see the back of Clare's form, with an occasional glimpse of her clear-cut profile, but there was evidently enough in the view to chain his gaze; his eyes never turned from Clare until the prisoner entered.

A quarter of a century seemed to have passed over the latter's youthful head, his form was so bowed, and the lines in his face were so deeply worn; even physical strength appeared to have deserted him for a brief interval after he had taken his place in the dock, for he tottered and caught the railing of the enclosure for support.

The mass of evidence already collected was increased by new testimony—the witnesses on both sides pressed and worried, or re-examined, and at length, just when it was supposed that the last evidence had been taken, and people were settling themselves back in their seats to listen with fresh zest to the summing up by the counsel, it was rumored through the court that a new witness on the part of the crown was to be called. Ears were strained to catch the name, and necks stretched that the earliest glimpse might be caught of the person of the witness. Another instant, and the name rung through the court, falling like molten lead on more than one quivering heart—it was Mortimer Carter.

As if it were the result of some magician's power, the prisoner's bowed form straightened to its former erectness, his face, so ghastly a moment previous, flushed with all the crimson of his fiercest moods, and his eyes, which from physical weakness had worn that morning so dull a stare, now seemed to shine with supernatural brilliancy.

The corpulent form ascended to the witness-box, breathing so heavily that it seemed to pant, and the round, red face was so thickly covered with perspiration that it required a protracted use of the crimson-colored handkerchief. He seemed to avoid turning his eyes in the direction of the prisoner, and when by accident he caught a glimpse of that flushed and startled countenance, he instantly turned his eyes away. The witness required no pressing to tell his tale—clear, decisive, in almost true legal style, it fell from his lips—from the first moment of Carroll O'Donoghue's connection with the I. R. B. down to the expression of Carroll's treasonable sentiments which the witness had obtained from the accused in writing on the previous day, but which statement had been purloined from him on that same night by unknown parties—all was sworn to without a pause, or even a tremulous accent.

Not a shadow of hope remained for the horrified prisoner—that testimony was sufficient to convict him of the most felonious treason. People held their breaths, and even those who had been attracted to the trial from no motive of sympathy with the poor accused felt their hearts tighten a little as they listened to the damning proofs of a guilt which must insure the most stern conviction. Clare had thrown up her veil, and with compressed lips and hard breathing she had listened to the testimony, while Father Meagher's horror and indignation were plainly visible in the expression of his countenance. Even Dennier's face expressed contempt and loathing, while Tighe a Vohr could hardly refrain from bursting aloud into his own peculiar expressions indicative of his feelings. Nora, removed from the support of those whose very tenderness would have been of little use in this terrible time, felt herself sicken when she heard the name and saw the person of the last witness; and she was obliged to catch Rick's arm to save herself from falling, and she was forced to retain her clasp in order to prevent herself from sinking under the icy weight which seemed to press upon her. Carter stepped down from the witness-box, and with brazen effrontery took a seat almost on a line with the prisoner.

The jury retired, and within a half-hour returned with a verdict of guilty, without the slightest recommendation to mercy.

There was no scream from the sister of the prisoner, no undue excitement on the part of his nearest friends, as perhaps some of those in the court-room expected—there was only a longer drawing of breaths, and a rustling of garments as people changed their positions. On the part of Clare there was not a motion: she sat in the same inclined manner, her lips still compressed, her breathing still hard, and her eyes fixed in a wild, agonizing stare on the prisoner. The latter stood erect, his gaze fixed on Mortimer Carter; the verdict had not affected him, for he was absorbed in the horror of the traitor's act. The judge arose, and after the usual form, asked the prisoner if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon him. Carroll drew a long, heavy breath, while his nostrils dilated, and his keen glance withdrew for an instant from Mortimer Carter, to fix itself upon those whom he should now address; then, folding his arms, he began, his voice sounding at first as if it had been weakened by physical suffering.

"My lord, and gentlemen of the jury: You ask me if I have anything to say. In the face of the conviction which has just been returned, of what use, in your opinion, is anything that I could say? And yet, do not construe my remarks into a semblance of a wish to retract from the sentiments which have been sworn as mine—into any desire to make my sentence lighter than the court will adjudge. I am proud to stand here as the avowed friend of Ireland, and I am not afraid to denounce that system which makes as its base of operations in treason trials the information of perjured traitors. To yonder man"—his voice, increasing startlingly in tone, reached to the extreme ends of the crowded space, and his arm, outstretched, pointed in scathing denouncement of Morty Carter,—"I owe my present conviction: as my sworn bosom friend, he extorted my secrets under the guise of the tenderest affection, and he has revealed them here, to exemplify in his own person how fiendish can be the heart of a traitor. But he has only harmed my poor perishable body—my soul he cannot touch, and that, my lord, and gentlemen of the jury, is guilty of no crime to your government beyond love for a country which centuries of oppression has only left more endeared to the hearts of her inthralled sons. I have done!" His hands fell to his sides, his head dropped forward, and all the marks of premature age and suffering returned which had been so manifest on his entrance to the court-room.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE FATE OF EIGHTY DOLLARS

Florence Gilmore in Rosary Magazine

Mr. Fischer was thoroughly enjoying himself, although the purpose of his journey was grim enough. Hour after hour he smilingly watched the hot and tired and dusty people, who filled and refilled the day coach, or looked across the prairies, through which the train passed, and found them neither monotonous nor uninteresting. He played with a cross baby until the poor little mite forgot how uncomfortable she was, bought an ice cream cone for an Italian boy who had no English in which to thank him, and talked with intense interest to a traveling salesman who was on his way to Lincoln, with a line of holiday goods.

When this acquaintance left the train his place, in the seat facing Mr. Fischer, was taken by a small, spare man, in shabby—almost ragged—clothes. On looking at him Mr. Fischer's first feeling was one of pity. Why he felt sorry for him it would not have been easy to explain, for the world is crowded with poorly dressed people whose hearts are as light as their pocket books.

The man sat down, holding his small and very shabby bag on his knees. Mr. Fischer pushed his own well out of the way, saying good humoredly, "There's plenty of room for your bag, down there on the floor beside mine. You will soon grow tired of holding it."

Mr. Fischer then remarked that he had left home at eight o'clock in the morning, and was going to Omaha; the other was returning to Omaha after an absence of several months.

"Lincoln is a good town, isn't it, Mr. O'Malley? (The man had mentioned his name by this time.) I've heard traveling men say that it's a brisk, busy place," Mr. Fischer remarked

"That's the reputation it has, and I used to imagine it is better than most places. I always felt that I could get on in Lincoln—but I found it about like Omaha: some men have good luck; and some have bad, no matter where they are, or how hard they try. That's the way it is in this queer world."

Mr. Fischer felt sorry for Mr. O'Malley, but a little impatient with his dreary hopelessness. He could think of nothing cheery to say under the circumstances, so he contented himself with looking interested and saying not a word.

After a time Mr. O'Malley went on, sadly and yet boastfully, "Now, if my wife had been a man, I tell you she would have made money. She has more energy, and more sense, and more pluck than any man I know. It's because she's made that way, she can't understand—can't understand about me. I mean she never has understood why I can't succeed. I've always tried. I never loafed in my life. I work hard, and think I am doing well and will soon get a raise, and then—then, when pay day comes, I'm fired, because I'm slow and inefficient and—no good. That's the way it goes with me. It's hard on her, but I can't help it, and it only makes me slower and more discouraged to be railed at. If she could be patient with me I might do better. Maybe I wouldn't, but I might."

"Have you a position now?" Mr. Fischer asked, not through curiosity, but only to show a friendly interest.

"No; but I think—I think I can get one in Omaha. Perhaps she will be able to find one for me," Mr. O'Malley answered, so helplessly that Mr. Fischer pitied him from the bottom of his very tender heart.

"Now you: I suppose you always have a position," Mr. O'Malley said, ending a pause during which he had looked admiringly at Mr. Fischer's cheap, new, ready-made suit, and fat, good-humored face.

"I'm ticket agent for the Union Pacific, out in Spring Creek. It can hardly be called a town; it's only a railroad junction, with a few houses scattered about near it, and one general store. I've had the place for twenty years. No one else wants it very badly, but it suits me. If the president of the road could only be persuaded that I am half as smart as my wife thinks I am—why, I would be general passenger agent in no time." Mr. Fischer chuckled contentedly, and then exclaimed, with the eager zest of a child, "We're coming to another town!"

As he turned his head to see what manner of place it was Mr. O'Malley noticed that a large growth disfigured one side of his neck.

For a time there was silence between them. It was Mr. O'Malley who reopened the conversation, by saying, with a sigh:

"I admit that it's hard on a woman to have to keep boarders, when she has an able-bodied husband who ought to be able to support her and her children. I'm a Catholic; and she says my going to the Catholic Church, and sending the little girls to the parish school is against me. But it isn't. I won't admit that it is. I have never given in to her yet about religion; that's one thing I have never done, and I hope I never will. She thinks it doesn't matter what church a man goes to, if he does the square thing. Probably you think so, too."

Mr. Fischer laughed. "No, I don't. I am a Catholic; and my wife—you would suppose she is the Pope's own sister, from the way she haunts the Church, although its two miles from Spring Creek." Mr. Fischer laughed again, greatly amused by his own wit. He wished Mr. O'Malley would talk of something more cheerful than his trials, and tried to change the subject. "I hear you have a fine new Cathedral in Omaha," he said.

"Yes, it's big and fine. I've seen it only twice. We live down town—miles away from it. There are pretty Catholic churches in Lincoln, too. There was one near my lodging house. I thought I'd like Lincoln, before I went there. I had always felt that I would have better luck there than I ever had in Omaha. My wife told me it was all nonsense; she said one city is like another; and she was right about it. That's the trouble: she's always right. When I went to Lincoln, six months ago, I promised to send for her and the children, if I succeeded and like the place, or else take back to her all I had saved. She said fifty times that she knew I'd come 'sneaking home' without a penny."

"Weren't you able to save anything?" Mr. Fischer asked kindly.

"No. I haven't even the twenty-five dollars she gave me when I left. I had thirty-five dollars when I lost my first place, and most of that went before I found another. Then I had saved fifty-two dollars when they turned off two men, and I was one of them. That was four weeks ago, and I couldn't find another position. For a week I was hungry all the time, and then I wrote and told Mrs. O'Malley that I was going home. I didn't hear from her. Perhaps there wasn't time; but I'll be glad when it's over. If I had saved something, my going home would be different; but I had to pay three dollars and a half a week for my room, and I had to eat; and one day my hat blew off, and a car ran over it, and I had to pay a dollar for another."

Mr. Fischer had been staring thoughtfully at the window still, while Mr. O'Malley talked. Now he turned to him, and asked, "How much had you hoped to take home with you?"

"When I had my first position, it was in a cigar store, a nice, genteel place—I calculated that in six months I could save seventy or eighty dollars. I could have done it, if I had held my position. I don't get very hungry, and my room was not uncomfortable after the weather began to grow warm."

For some time Mr. Fischer said nothing. He looked out of the window, apparently interested in the scattered groups of houses which were the first indication that Omaha was only a few miles away, and Mr. O'Malley looked at him, with a miserable consciousness that he had, quite inexcusably, talked about his private affairs to a stranger who could not possibly be interested and had probably been greatly bored by the recital.

At length Mr. Fischer turned again to Mr. O'Malley, who thought he was going to say something about the suburbs of Omaha. To his amazement Mr. Fischer drew his wallet from an inner pocket, carefully counted out four twenty-dollar bills, and held them out toward him.

"I want you to take these," Mr. Fischer said, in a most matter-of-fact way. "They will buy you a welcome, and I—you see how comfortable I am."

Mr. O'Malley's face flushed. He took the bills hesitatingly, shame-