

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

Author of "A Mother's Sacrifice," etc. CHAPTER XLV.—CONTINUED

For the first time in his life Tighe a Vohr, during those two days of the trial, had avoided being seen by the priest and Clare. Watching them from an obscure corner of the court-room, noting Nora's absence with as heavy a heart as that which was borne by those who so fondly loved her, and reading in the faces of the clergyman and his fair companion a touching grief and anxiety, he shrank from meeting them, for he felt, to express his own words: "that he should only make a fool of himself with his blubbering."

And now that he was unable to help his beloved young master, to speak a word of hope to the tender hearts he would have comforted, he felt alone like hiding himself, and telling his grief to dumb affectionate Shaun. Father Meagher faint would have found Tighe a Vohr, feeling that the latter's shrewdness and wit would be effectual in discovering Nora; but Tighe had too securely hidden himself, and the anxious clergyman, and his equally anxious companion, turned their faces dejectedly homeward.

Towards the evening of that day Tighe suddenly encountered Captain Dennier, in the dress of a civilian, and just issuing from the coffee-room of the "Blennerhasset Arms."

"Why, Tighe, my faithful fellow, how are you?" and the shapely hand of the aristocratic gentleman seized Tighe's brown, hard palm in a cordial clasp. "I have just returned from Dublin," the captain continued, "and I intend to remain a few days—I am stopping here, —glancing at the hotel."

Tighe's eyes were wandering with a surprised look over the civilian dress. Captain Dennier understood the look.

"Ah!" he said, smiling, "I am a man again you see, Tighe, and I am an officer—having resigned her Majesty's service, I am no longer Captain Dennier."

Tighe a Vohr's eyes and mouth opened in astonishment.

"Never mind being so surprised about it," laughed the gentleman, "but tell me how you have been getting on."

escape the other night, that you, at least, were his friend!" Tighe's face twisted itself into a most comical expression, and his lips emitted a half-suppressed whistle, meant to be expressive of his amazement at the revelation which had burst suddenly and clearly upon him. "Oh! that's it," he said, lengthening each word,—"so that could knave has been here, just as I thought he would, playing his double game upon you! Tell me, master, dear, what he said to you."

"Now, Tighe, this is too bad—that you should believe these infamous slanders of the poor fellow! He has proved himself more than friend, not alone in planning my escape the other night, but in taking care of my reputation with those who should think better things of me!" and then, not deeming that the former pledge of secrecy which Carter had extracted from him was binding in this instance, he detailed the whole of his interview with Carter, even to the recounting of the contents of the paper which he had given to the miscreant.

"Oh, master dear, you are lost!" and Tighe, in his agony, with his knees at Carroll's feet; "that paper'll be used agin you on the trial—you're gone—you're gone!" The blubbering of which the poor fellow seemed to be so much afraid on other occasions now earnestly began.

"Hush!" commanded Carroll, "and stop this instantly; you are letting your heart run away with your head. I tell you, Tighe, Morty is as true to my interests as you are—he has sworn it to me; and when I remember his distress when he detailed to me those wretched reports, I am more than convinced. No! waxing warmer in his defense,—"it is horribly false—I shall not believe a word of it!"

"Sworn to you," repeated Tighe; "sure that could traitor no more moinds the takin' o' a false oath than I'd moind callin' Shaun to me! Oh, master dear, listen to me while I tell you."

"I'll listen to nothing," interrupted Carroll; "you shall not say one word against him in my presence!"

"Oh, wirra asthru! but what'll become o' us all?" and Tighe wrung his hands in fruitless agony.

"Come, Tighe," said his master soothingly, "stop this folly and tell me about Nora."

little what could be the purport of this evidently hurried visit. "I did, an' I'm vry thankful to yer honor for the great favor you done me; but I've a question to ax, an' the answerin' o' it, if yer honor doesn't consider it too good, 'll be a great settlemint o' me fallin'."

"Well, Tighe, what is it?" "Supposin' now, Captain Dennier, that an informer—a man who was playin' a double part, purtindin' to be the friend o' the prisoner an' the frind o' the government,—was to go into the poor, unsuspectin' prisoner an' to win from him in writin' a statement that's enough to hang the poor craythur—supposin', now, that was done late this afternoon, in view o' that trial that'll be goin' on tomorrow, could the informer make use o' that paper tonight, or would he be loikely to kape it till the mornin'?"

A peculiar smile played upon the frind o' the government,—was to go into the poor, unsuspectin' prisoner an' to win from him in writin' a statement that's enough to hang the poor craythur—supposin', now, that was done late this afternoon, in view o' that trial that'll be goin' on tomorrow, could the informer make use o' that paper tonight, or would he be loikely to kape it till the mornin'?"

"Faith yer honor has the clearest head for guessin' o' any gintleman in the country—that's just it! I'll make no concealment o' the matter for I know I can trust yer honor."

"Well, Tighe, this informer, whoever he be, will rather be obliged to retain the paper until morning, for the authorities to whom he might give it would hardly suffer themselves to be disturbed by such business after hours, and especially as it is a matter that can be attended to as well in the morning."

"Thank yer honor—I'm grateful intirely, an' me loife-long prayer'll be that you may prosper in love an' war!"

"What is it you propose doing?" asked Dennier.

"Plaze don't ax me, yer honor, for I haven't it well settled yet—oh, master dear, listen to me while I tell you."

tempted with MERCY Mrs. Norman hastened along the path that led from the railway station to the watering place of Braymore; and though it was said that one of the finest views of the surrounding coast was to be had from the slight eminence on which the station stood, the lady passed hastily along the path without a glance seaward. Once or twice she stayed her steps for a few seconds.

"Oh, poor, poor Rose! Her only child! A widow and childless!" she murmured, as she had done several times since at the breakfast table that morning she had read of the tragic death of Henry Crawford, only son of the late Sir Walter Crawford and Lady Crawford.

"I must go to Rose at once!" Mrs. Norman had cried to her hostess. "I never knew she was living at Braymore. We ceased to correspond years ago," and she had gone on to tell how she and Rose Fitzgerald had been classmates and close friends at the convent in Dublin, where both had been educated. Then Mrs. Norman had married the doctor of a regiment stationed in Dublin and afterwards accompanied him abroad, so that visits to her own land were few.

She had met Rose Fitzgerald, a radiantly happy bride, and her husband, when the pair were on their honeymoon; and though she grieved that her friend had married a Protestant, she had acknowledged that apart from the difference of religion, the pair were ideally mated. Rose, fair, slender and ethereal; Crawford, tall, strong and determined, showing even then the quickness of decision and forceful character that had made him one of the wealthiest and most influential of Belfast merchants.

Mrs. Norman had to inquire the way to Hazelrook. The man who gave her the required directions added: "It was a terrible accident." He pointed to a high cliff on the other side of the town. "The young man was walking there alone when he fell. The late storms must have been accountable for the fall of a portion of the cliff. He fell with it. May God rest his soul!"

The man raised his cap reverently, and Mrs. Norman took her way towards the pretty villa to which she had been directed. A maid with red and swollen eyelids admitted her and led her to the darkened drawing-room.

"Perhaps Lady Crawford is unable to see anyone," Mrs. Norman said. "Tell her, please, that Mary Blake is here, willing to stay or leave, as she desires."

"Oh, she will see you," the girl replied. "She is wonderful, wonderful. She has not cried a tear—not one tear." The ready tears fell down the speaker's cheeks as she left the room.

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