## THE RETURN OF MARY O'MURROUGH

BY ROSA MULHOLLAND "The Tragedy of Chris," "Nanno, "Onora," etc.

CHAPTER XX

"THEY GIVE LEAVE FOR WHAT NEVER CAN BE DONE"

Mary and Bess sat outside Me Donohoe's door, knitting and sewing, now and then exchanging a words about their work, or a the baby asleep in Mary's lap.

At last Bess said in a low voice. When is it goin' to be, Mary?" Mary looked up.

'I mean your marriage It's never goin' to be, Bess.' in undher heaven do mean by that ?" said Bess.

too late," said Mary, with a faint smile. Meg Donohue says she's sure he

want me," said Mary.
"After him waitin' for you all those years!" said Bess.
"He was waitin' for a young girl

that went to America," said Mary, "but it was a stranger that came back. I stayed away too long; an' it's a pity I did. Shan would marry me not to disappoint me. But I won't disappoint him by marryin'

Bess sat aghast. An' is this the end of it?" she

'It's the end of it." said Mary. "An' don't you go and spoil your own life in the same manner, Bess. You're young an' nice now, and you can't believe the change 'll come. It doesn't come today or tomorrow, but it comes. There's a little somethin' every year maybe, and after a good long while you're a discount of the last person. When I came back here I of all in Shan's. I never knew my whole loss till I saw it in his eyes. Don't let Miles lose sight o' you. If he has to go away an' work, go you with him.

can't marry without my mother's blessin'," said Bess. Her hazel eyes were full of tears. "Ask her for her blessin'," said

Mary, "an' if she's too hard, marry without it. She'll send it a'ter you. She'll send it a ter you Shan didn't like to marry without his father's blessin', an' now he doesn't want to marry, with it or without it."

Bess's tears dropped. "I'm awful sorry for y'," she said.
"Never mind me," said Mary, "but
take care of yourself," She paused for a minute, and then went on in a low impressive voice. "There's many's the reason," she said, her resting on the children who were playing on the road before Meg Donohoe has a lot o'

Bess followed her eyes, and they both sat sileut, knitting and stitching, and each busy with a woman's most sacred thoughts.

Suddenly Bess stood up and clenched her hands, exclaiming, "O God, you're not as hard as my "It isn't God that's hard," said

Mary softly, "it's the people."

Bess dropped on her seat again, and picked up her knitting, and a rain of tears fell on the little sock she was making for the Donohoe to stay her. But after that hour her

A few days later, Shan came down to the forge one evening and spoke

to Mary.
"I know you don't want to speak to me," he said, "an' it isn't for my-self I have anything to say. But my father got a weakness today, an' he isn't well after it. He's callin' out that he wants you to come up to him. If v' have that much charity to come, I'll be grateful to you."
'I'll come," said Mary.

And I won't be in your way. I'll be out about my business.

'I'll go up to him in the morn-When she went up in the morning early, she found Owny recovering from one of the "weaknesses" to which he was subject, and overjoyed to see her, or rather to hear her speaking and moving around him. She soon made him more comfortable and contented in her soothing way, and remained sitting with her sewing by his bedside. Through the open door of the room where Owny was lying, she heard Shan come in and take his breakfast in the kitchen. He knew that she was there, for he had seen her coming early along the footpath through the fields; but now, as then, he kept his promise of not getting in her way, and went out of the house again without saying a word. At dinner time it was the

At evening he came into the house noiselessly, and lingered in the kitchen alone, alive to the sounds in the inner room; wishing he could venture to stay to bid her good-night when she went, or even to walk with her home to the forge. While he lingered, he heard Owny's voice her to stay with him and comfort his

raised complainingly:
"Why are y' goin' away, Mary? your home? Why don't y' marry Shan at once, now that y've come back? It's long enough that y' have waited, an' some of us to blame, an' I'd like to see all settled before the

Shan held his breath to hear what

"Shan's time enough to marry." she said, after a little pause. "You mustn't be burryin' him. He's got a lot of contrariness this while back. Y' must leave him to God's care."

Shan waited to hear no more, but went quietly out of the house, and did not come near it again until Mary was long gone home.

Next morning brought her again, and Shan lay in wait behind the hedge to see her pass on her errand of kindness; but still he made her free to go and come without the trouble of his presence. Under her care Owny was getting well again, as well as he was likely to be in this world. On the day which was to be the last of her attendance, Shan knew that his father was to sit that evening at the kitchen fire as convalescent, and coming home early, he paused to look through the little window before entering.
Owny was in his old straw chair,

with his back to the window, and Mary was giving him some nourishment that she had prepared for him. Her face was to the light, irradiated son."
"He asked me. But he doesn't overflowing with charity and sweet ness. Her cheeks seemed to have grown round again, her brow smooth, and the love-light that used to be in the eyes of the Mary of Muckross seemed to have come back to them. It came on Shan like a blow, that the Mary of his youth—the Mary of Killarney-had in truth back to him, and that he had

come back to him, and that he had driven her away from him. He waited till she came out of the house, and stood by the wall as she went past. He wanted to speak to her, but he did not know what to say. Mary looked up as she passed him, and said:

Good-night, Shan. I think your

father's better."

"He is; an' thank y', Mary.
You've been very good to him."

"That was easy enough," said
Mary. "Good-night."

Then, as she walked on, Shan said to himself that this was the stranger feeling angry and miserable. As Mary went on her way down the fields the air was full of the frag-

rance of bog-heath, aromatic with by the cattle. Masses of rich dun-purple cloud, shadowing the hills, lay along the horizon, against the mellow gold of the lower western sky. The woman was busy with thoughts that went to the maturing of a plan long in mind, sad and difficult enough in its conception, but grown possible through much pondering. She had reached and passed the climax of suffering, and, almost unconsciously, was descending again to the level of patient submission to the inevitable. She felt that it would be well for her to go away to some place where the sight of her could no longer cause pain to and reproach to any man where life might be taken up again aloof from the visible shadow of Shan's bitter disappointment. They were strangers to each other now. Assured of her perpetual absence, he would be certain of a return of happiness; and for herself there might be peace.

Down by a lower field, right in her path, she saw three figures stand ing dark in the luminous dusk. of them was certainly Father Fahy the other two proved to be Mile Donohue and Bess. Mary said goodnight to them, and would have passed them by, but Miles held out a hand No, Mary, don't go on. You're

thoughts about the future began to take a different colour.

To, mary, done go to help us.'

"What is it?" said Mary. "Here's a child wanting me to

marry her without her mother's con-sent." said the priest. "What do you think of that, Mary?"

'I think it's right," said Mary.
'God bless your speech!" said Miles. Now, Mary, child, that's not like you," said the old man.

"Tell Father Fahy what you said to me the other day," said Bess, who was in a state of nervous excite-

What did I say?" asked Mary in some confusion. You said that fathers an' mothers didn't know what was good for their

children," said Bess.
"Did I?" said Mary, "I don't re member.'

You said, 'Ask her for her bless in', and if she's too hard, marry with out it. She'll send it after you Maybe I did say that," said Mary.

'Fathers and mothers don't know their minds till it's too late. want a lot of things for their children that they never expected for themselves. They want things that they couldn't have, no more nor they could have the stars up there, for playthings for children that'll never be born.

Mary had turned her face a little

he was, as he had said he have run round, an' they've had would be, out about his business all their fill of obedience from they've crossed, and killed the life out of, then they're sorry, and they give their leave for what never can be done."

She was thinking of Owny as she spoke: his hardness to her young remaining days. The three listening glanced at her with sympathising eyes, but she did not see them. She was confessing her own failure that others might succeed. She did not want them to see that it hurt

Miles and Bess felt that their case was stated, and that the priest, school, whose heart was with them, must snow. now be conquered.

you say, Mary," said Father Fahy.
"Now, Bess, I'll make a bargain with
you. I'll talk to your mother, and do my best to persuade her. Give me three months to bring her round. And then, if she's still as hard as ever, the creature—as I hope she won't be—I give you my word that ever,

I'll marry you."
"Make it three days, Father," said Miles. "She won't give in, an' you may as well let us off sooner. There's a big emigration goin' out in Miles. a week, an' we might as well be in it. A friend has promised to put me into work in New York as soon as we

I've promised all I can," said the priest. "I'll give my old friend Winnie Dermody the best chance I can. Unfortunately there will be many a big emigration ready to swallow you up before the year is out.

and with this the lovers had to be

TO BE CONTINUED

## THE BOYS OF THE HOUSE

BY KATHERINE TYNON

She had been told the house was naunted, but when she came to it, in the second year of the War, it did not seem to her that its ghosts could be anything but gentle. The house was a low, brooding, tender old mother of children. The long corridors, the odd twists and turns, the bowery and flowery rooms were all delightful.

There was one long low room with four windows set deeply in the wall, which must at one time have been a nursery. She made the room her own. When she approached it from outside she always looked up at the windows with an expectation of children's faces and children's brown and golden heads looking at her. Perhaps they were there. too short sighted to see them if they were; or perhaps she only imagin

It was just the house for children to play in, with front and back stair cases, rooms opening one into another, deep doors, covered with curtains and hidden sometimes by an article of furniture, a wardrobe or a bed on the other side. Her own children delighted in it. It was full of nooks and corners. Outside were spacious stable yards, with lofts stables and granaries ap proached by twisting stone stairs. There was a lake, famous for its wild birds, covered with water lilies in summer, with a boat which you might navigate between the tall reeds. There were the most enchanting backwaters. Little spits of and ran between the back water, and if you were agile you could spring from one grassy path to another, or walk across an unsteady plank, surprising a heron or coot, or chickens; every kind of water-fowl haunted the little lake and the back waters, to say nothing of the geese in the wonderful winter skies, and the gulls that came when the storms were out in the Atlantic.

There were all sorts of delicious walks in the woods and coppices, and in spring there were such a plentiseen anywhere else. If you can imagine to yourself a grassy hill, so covered with primroses that for a time there was no sign of grass between the flowers. The primroses had run over like a tide and had run out as a tide will in little tongues, leaving a trail of pale greenish yellow foam behind.

Someone said one day: "The primroses must have been planted here, but what a labor! It would take the tirelessness of children to put in all those roots !"

After that she had a dream of chilen generation after generation planting the primroses, bringing them in little wheelbarrows and "dibbing" them in with toy trowels.

It was in the winter following her oming that she began to have an idea that the house was haunted, but so sweetly haunted! She heard a light young foot across the hall not ten paces from her. When she called no one answered; there was no one

Then in the shadows-the house was full of shadows that winter—down the long corridor or as she went up the stairs, something flitted before her, a boy's shape, light and slender. She caught a glimpse of it, thin as mist, against the end window of the corridor. From behind closed door she heard a boy's laugh. Sometimes she heard voices—always young voices. When other people heard them she argued about the acoustic properties of the house and the queer tricks made by sound, instancing the echo. Why, if a child laughed on the tennis lawn, or shouted, the house gave back the sound from all its open windows, as though other children there laughed and shouted too in a thin fairy way.

At first there was only one young shape, one light step in the corridor or crossing the hall. That was before the last day of the old year, when she was wakened from her sleep by a quick eager voice calling "Mother! Mother!" She lay awake in the dusk of dawn wondering if she a dream. The call elder of her boys.

Soon the house was very quiet. The younger boy went to prepare to follow his brother. The girl went to school. Bitter cold came and heavy in the young face, from when show. The old house was cut off turned away half frightened. from the world by its mile-long

"I don't deny the truth of what avenue. The wild duck went away ou say, Mary," said Father Fahy. to the sea. The gulls became pensioners on the bounty of the house, robbing the little birds by force majeure. The crows were melan-choly—black against the unspotted snow. Everything was starving. There was a track made by the rab-There was a track made by the rab-bits to the trees where they ate the bark. The sheep, dirty on the snow, nosed about piteously, looking for a bit of grass, and grew lean on their bare rations of hay. The gulls screamed all day for food and were joined by others; and it you lifted a blind at nights, you saw the ghosts of little rabbits and squirrels run-

ning against the background of It was at this time, when she had to walk the long corridors for exercise, that she became aware, quite suddenly, of two misty shapes where one had been. More often now she heard the voices and the laughter. She began to see glimmering faces in the shadows, eyes blue, eyes brown; when she looked close, there was nothing. Or something went by her, brushing her skirt, lifting her hair, as with a little wind.

There were two of the boys. She was sure of that in time. One had a serious sweet young voice. The other was merrier. There was roguery in the smile, in the blue eyes: the brown eyes were of a curious velvety depth—almost black. The brows were arched to a point. A Vandyck face. He was the elder of the two, she thought. It was the blue eyed, golden haired one who laughed from behind doors and

peeped at her from dark corners.

Then, when the snow had broken up and the grass, liberated from the ice prison, was smelling deliciously, praising God; when the first lambs were running with their mothers, and the thrushes and blackbirds sang; when the gulls had gone back to sea and the rooks were making a tremendous to-do over the building of their houses, someone came to make a call. After the usual talk about the weather and the house and the neighbors the caller said:

I hear your elder boy has gone to So sad that the two boys the war. who used to be in this house were killed. One after the other. Two beautiful boys! Their poor mother! She asked when they were killed.

"Oh, poor children! Guy last October and Pat just recently. They were so devoted to each other. Pat always said that he was going to follow Guy-quite happily and any gloom. He was such a darling—so full of life and merriment. Guy was quite different. He was already painting beautifully. That is one of his pictures over there."

Oh!" She had been wondering about those pictures with their strange glow of light and color. They lit any room they were in; and they were in many rooms. When you entered a room with one of these pictures in it your eye was unconsciously drawn to it; you saw noth ing else. "I was wondering who the They are beautiful. He gets the strange Western color, the cloud of indigo blue above a group of feather-like trees with their feet in the bog-flood; a sky of immense mole colored cloud with light below it, light silver and gold and primrose green all in one."
"People rave about his pictures,"

the caller said, getting up to go. "A thousand pities the war should take such as he! They were both beauti-

ful boys."

After that she became quite familiar with the coming and going of the She saw them or thought she saw them-she was so short sighted that she could not be quite sure— passing through the sunlit glades of pale green uncurling leaves. When her heart was heavy and cold for she came nearer there was no one. what might be happening far away.

It might have been imagination. When their faces turned to the wall. agent, and had gone through the inventory with his clerk, she had not that he had been wounded the pictures of the elder of the two brothers, she had gone from one the pictures stood with their faces

hidden, three or four deep. It was one of the long bright evenings of high summer, and all outside, to the height of the immense sky, was flooded with pale gold. The room in which the pictures were faced North was full of a dazzling reflection. For a time nothing rewarded her search. There were him. nany oil paintings, some good, some bad copies of famous originals. little of interest. She had all but concluded that the little room was a lumber-room when she found a por-

heart that she recognized it. It was Guy, the painter. He had been painted in a scarlet hunting coat and there was a little black velvet cap on his hair, which showed brown be-neath it. There were the velvety had only dreamed it; but it was not brown eyes and the thin brows a dream. The call had come to the arched to a point. The skin was The lips were sweet and grave.

The picture was not well painted—

life in it. The great flood of pale gold from the North sky seemed to after a while he talked; but by that have a reflection from the depths of the brown eyes. Sharply she turned the picture again with its face to the other canvases. She loved it, but it the forget-me-nots were like a sheet hurt her.

During that summer, with the ccession of its flowers, they did not often come. Once, smelling the sharp sweetness of clove pinks under her window, she looked up from her writing and had a momentary glimpse of the hoys; but they stayed away so long sometimes that she thought they were gone for ever. Sometimes, too, she had a sense that they were there, though she could not see them. She prayed for them with her own boys, and others in peril, and those killed in the War, in the little oratory where they had knelt at their childish and boyish prayers. It seemed to her that in the narrow room with its crucifix, its never extinguished lamp and flowers, where they were glad to see her come and grieved when she went away, these two young sons of the house often knelt beside her. When she often knelt beside her. When she lifted her bowed head from the priedicu at which she knelt she saw them. It was as though they too, like all the others whose pictures hung about the crucifix close to it on the table with its fair linen cloth, like those whose names were on the scrolls that hung either side of the crucifix, found the shrine and rain.

She was not at all afraid of these genule ghosts. On the contrary she felt the house lonely when they did not come : she began to wonder how, this place where at first she had felt castaway, she could endure that they should look for her and not find

No one else apparently knew of their presence. The ghosts the people had attributed to the house, existence. She was sure of that after a couple of years of occupation. They would have frightened her; not these radiant boys—yes, they were radiant. In that third long winter they shone on her in those glimpses with a most benignant light, their presence became a reassurance. She thought that if the old hideous ghosts the people had believed in were to come, these young knights would be flashing sword in hand on either side of her to protect her.

That was the winter when her elder boy was in deadly peril, and the younger was coming near the point to go. The older boy was in the East, threatened as much by pesti-lence as by fire and sword. Some-one had said to her: "Every man who stays long enough, unless he is disabled and sent home not to return, is killed at last." She did not know if it were true or

not. She heard it with a faint cold wonder that anyone should the like to the mother a son out there amid deadly rivers, with the sudden agonizing diseases that lay in wait for him if he went scathless

from shell or sword. Some time midway of this winter the young ghost deserted her. As she went up and down the house, shaking if the dogs barked, lest there should be a telegram, she looked in vain for them in the places where they had shone upon her like a light in mist. No more when she knelt at prayer did they kneel beside her. They had deserted the house. And now the least lonely place in the wintry house was the oratory, where the pictured faces of "her boys" as she called them—many a one came the woods, tall and young, one with a fond arm about the neck of the other, the golden head and the comfort had got abroad—brought her thrush-brown head side by side. Or reassurance when the wind cried they rocked in the boat under the around the house like a banshee, and

Then, midway of a great frost The house overflowed with pictures. At the end of the long corridor there was a room full of them, for. He was wounded. He had fought a great fight; he was to be she had taken the house from an decorated. These things she knew afterwards. When the news came troubled to see what lay the other would be sent home she felt that it side of those canvas backs. But was answer to her prayers. He side of those canvas backs. But was answer to her prayers. He since she had become interested in would be out of it, out of that hell of sickness and death; she would have him to nurse back to health, Curroom to another - there were a great | jously enough it did not occur to many rooms—examining the pictures good, bad and indifferent. And so, at last, she came to the room where home her heart sang like a bird's

The most wonderful May that was ever known had come on the tracks of a dreadful spring, and the primroses had replaced the snow—since they had so short a time to stay there was never such a blossomingwhen she brought him home. She had gone as far as she could him. What dismay she felt at the first sight of him—this gaunt, serious suffering man to be her boy, her little boy, as she had called him in her tender thoughts, though his brother was still her littlest one, her "baby"—she hid in her heart. His eyes had leaped at her out of their deep sockets. "By Jove, Mummie, deep sockets. "By Jove, Mummie, how pretty and how young you look!" he said.

He was there still—her own boy, gay and full of singing, the soul of him just the same only hurt—to be coaxed back to what he once was

She brought him home to the olive-hued, with something of the primroses. He lay out among them color of a ripe pear in the cheeks. on an invalid couch, and the scent of them, he said, clung to everything, There was something compassionate in the young face, from which she ocean in it and the days were hot; gorse and pine gave out delicious pungent odors, and the color crept

back to his cheeks. He smiled—he had been very slow in smiling—and after a while he talked; but by that the forget-me-nots were like a sheet

of sky under the apple trees.

She had not asked him about his wound or about the battle. better, he talked of his own accord and his talk flowed on quietly, the lapping of a wave, even when he talked of dreadful things.

"I have been wanting to tell you," he said "of the two to whom I owe my life. They came to my help when I was left behind, wounded You know I was two nights and a day under the Turkish fire between the trenches. The odd thing was that they had been fighting beside me in the advance, and one was an Irish Guardsman and the other was in the Dublins. There were no Dublins there and no Irish Guards; and I remember wondering how came to be there. Anyhow were great fighters.

Yes?" she said, breathlessly. Yes ?"

Sometime I will tell it to you at length," he said, lying with closed eyes, "when I am quite well and you eyes, "when I am quite well and you can hear it. We were up against the enemy guns. Our men were going down all over the place. Over and over again I felt one or the other of these two covering me. They did not seem to get hit themselves. They were like lions—irre sistible." Yes?" she said again. "Yes?"

"Yes?" she said again. "Yes?"
"There were a good many prisoners taken," he went op. "When our men fell back I was left behind, pumping blood like a horse. I once saw a horse bleed to death. It was Nothing could stop it. an artery. Nothing could stop it. I was bleeding like that: and I was in sickening pain. I suppose I must have fainted or something. I know that I had been calling out for some one to come and finish must have gone off. When I knew anything again the stars were above me—immense stars they were, like lamps rather than the tiny specks we have here. I didn't know whether they were stars or star shells, only as they stayed I con-cluded they must be stars. You see I couldn't think very well, I was ragingly thirsty, and though it was night there came a hot desert wind that parched me. Soon I said to myself the sun would rise; then \* \* \* Before I could do more than think of the torture, someone lifted my head and held water to my lips. Such water! It tasted as though it came from Paradise. Someone else was doing something to the wound, so gently. The bleeding had stopped. I felt something soft under me. It was grass. And I thought to myself that I knew now about green pastures and cool

waters.' She listened -her lips apart, her eyes fixed on his face.
"Well dear?" she breathed, when

he paused. There's not much more," he said.

"I'm afraid. \* \* \* I a slow. How keen you are?" She said to herself that he was ired. She ought not to let him talk more now, but she said nothing to

It was those two again," he went The Irish Guardsman and the Dublin Fusilier. I believe they carried me in. The chaps said I must have wriggled in. They any one had been left behind. thought they had picked up everyone. I never found who those two fellows were. No one had seen them. As soon as the sun got up I'd have been potted. That is all

"Don't talk any more," she said, hastily, just say yes or no. Was one-the Irish Guardsman-brown eved, with closely growing color of an Irish setter. Eyebrows with a queer pointed arch to them a straight nose?

Yes I noticed the evebrows. They Do you know him then ?"

"And the other, peculiarly merry-looking, blue eyed, fair-haired, very long dark lashes to the eyes?" "I don't think \* \* \* I noticed the lashes. He was fair—and he laughed, even then.'

He opened his eyes, looking at her in wonder. Wait a moment," she said.

She ran upstairs, her heart beat ing fast. She dragged the portrait where it stood behind two or three others. The dust of it was ca her white dress as she carried it down stairs and went back on to the

Hello!" he said, "I ought to be carrying that for you. Why have you dragged that great thing out here ?" "Can you look, dear?" she asked,

supporting the picture on the end of the couch 'It is the Irish Guardsman," he said. So you do know him ?

" He used to live here. The other was his brother, the golden one. tell you about them another time. You've been talking too much and must have a good rest.

As she went away with the por-trait she said to herself: Now, I shall not be so much afraid of my baby boy going to the war."—Catholic World.

You will probably suffer in some way if you always do what your conscience tells you is right, but you will have all the martyrs for com-

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