

CARROLL O'DONOGHUE

CHRISTINE FABER

Author of "A Mother's Sacrifice," etc.

CHAPTER XL. CONTINUED

Could he have bestowed one backward glance into the room he had left, it might have given the last impetus that was needed to make him emerge from the guilt in which he was plunged, and the mire of which was engulfing him deeper each moment. Nora had flown sobbing to her knees, her grief all the more bitter and violent because of its very reaction—she restrained it so sternly in Rick's presence, she immolated herself so remorselessly before him, assuming cheerfulness and tender filial regard when her whole being was recoiling from both, and her heart was torn with the thought that she had sacrificed. Then Rick's own manner—moody, silent, repellent, betraying little of the affection of which he had given such touching descriptions to herself and Father Meagher—all acted upon her now with resistless way; but she had voluntarily accepted her cross, and however deep it cut she would not murmur. She dried her eyes when the burst had spent itself, and calling good-natured Mrs. Murphy to her aid, began to examine her wardrobe for the purpose of disposing of its superfluous articles. Also, there were not many; it looked more meagre than even poor Nora thought, and by the time she had retained the very necessary articles, there was little left, and that little of comparatively small value. But Mrs. Murphy, who had been drying secret tears of compassion during the whole of the inspection, had words of cheer to offer. She comforted the poor young creature, and taking the garments which had been selected, promised to make a speedy disposal of them. She was true to her word, and returning much sooner than Nora had anticipated, poured into the latter's hand a larger sum than the poor girl expected to receive. Had Nora been aware that the amount was swelled from good-natured, sympathetic Mrs. Murphy's own pocket, she would not have been so joyfully surprised, nor so eager to accept.

The kind landlady, charmed as she was with the lovely girl, and puzzled to reconcile the near relationship of the latter to an uncouth and vagabond-looking being as Rick of the Hills, was so touched when she discovered their poverty, and that it was owing to the latter they must leave her, that she would have insisted on their remaining did not her own slender means prevent. Rick returned in the wane of the afternoon, and in so exhausted a condition that Nora, filled alone with pity for his evident suffering, besought him to rest. He shook his head. "I cannot till you are settled; I have hired our new home,"—speaking bitterly—"and we can go there now."

"You are so weak," she answered, "will it not be better to wait till tomorrow? Mrs. Murphy has kindly said not to hurry."

"No," he said quickly, "we must go now!" She offered no further remonstrance, though she wondered somewhat at his singular haste, but began her few preparations for departure. The abode to which Rick conducted her did cause her to give one little involuntary shudder as she crossed the threshold; it was so small, so sparsely furnished, and so situated in a quarter of the town where only the poorest congregated. Still, even in that moment of bitter repugnance, she forced a smile to her lips, and spoke cheerfully, while Rick, as usual, watched her in sullen silence. As in their previous abode, she went about rearranging the few articles of furniture, and striving to atone, by her own exquisite taste, for the lack of beauty, and even ordinary neatness in the two little apartments. True to her self-imposed mission, she suffered neither the poverty, nor hardship, nor disgust, with which her hard and isolated life was filled to cause her to betray a murmur of regret or dissatisfaction. She was always the same, when Rick left her and when he returned—cheerful, and apparently contented, making the best of their present position, and hopeful for the future.

She had learned the way to the shops, and was now able herself to dispose of her handiwork; but she always went out heavily veiled, and dressed poorly enough not to seem above the humble rank she had assumed. Rick sometime put money into her hand, which he said he had earned by loitering about the public houses, and doing chance errands; he could have told her how, driven to desperation by her noble sacrifice, he had sought for steady labor, but his weakened condition, and his wandering life, so little accustomed to work of any kind, utterly unfitted him for it.

She had not apprised Father Meagher of the change in their circumstances, and perhaps the fact of that bitter isolation from all that she loved told more upon her health and spirits than other deprivation. She was "willing" as Rick expressed it,—"willing before his very eyes;" for despite her assumed cheerfulness, he noticed her daily increasing pallor, and the look about her eyes each morning which indicated a night of sleeplessness. In her enforced journeys to bring home and to return with her work,

she went far out of her way in order to pass the jail—there was a melancholy pleasure in being under the shadow of the walls which held him for whom her heart so fondly beat, though she herself had passed the flat which must perpetually separate them.

CHAPTER XLII.

TIGHE'S EFFORTS TO AID CAPTAIN DENNIER'S COURTESHIP

It wanted but a week of Carroll's trial, and the interest and excitement which had centered about those recently tried for participation in the attack on the barracks was not yet allayed; it received fresh and startling impetus from the youth and reputation of Carroll O'Donoghue—stories were told of his daring, his wonderful escape from Australia, the loss of his ancient home, which could hardly fail to attract and interest the most indifferent hearts. His name was on every tongue, and more than one fair maid was anxious to obtain a sight of the brave, handsome young prisoner. Even Nora was forced to hear the gossip about him; in the very shop to which she carried her work men were discussing the probability of his speedy execution. She drew her veil tighter, and clasped her hands on her side under her cloak, to quiet a sudden pain; and all the way home burning tears obscured her vision, and unhappy thoughts made her head ache. When Rick came in that night she assailed him with questions about the approaching trial, striving to speak with unusual vivacity in order to hide her horrible anxiety. He detailed all that he knew.

"Will you take me to the court when the trial begins?" she asked, her voice trembling a little; "we can stay in some retired part, and I shall be so heavily veiled that no one will recognize me."

"Yes," responded Rick, looking at her sharply, but not suffering his countenance to show the thoughts which that look engendered; "we can go where much notice will not be taken of us."

About the same time, in a different part of the town, Captain Dennier had started his valet by saying, "Tighe, I am thinking of a journey to Drummondville—can you guide me to the home of Miss O'Donoghue, the sister of the prisoner?"

Tighe's face became immediately aglow, and his eyes danced with delight. "Faith, yer honor, you couldn't give me a task more to me mind! I'll be proud an' happy to show you the way."

"Very well, then, we'll take the morning car," Tighe seemed to hesitate. "What is the matter?" asked the officer. "I was only thinkin' that it mightn't be respectful to yer honor to take Shaun, but couldn't I have him, for he'd pine wid the lonesomeness, an' maybe it'd give him another spell o' sickness!"

"Oh, bring him by all means!" laughed the captain; and Tighe, relieved, left the room to impart to Shaun at his first opportunity his opinion of Captain Dennier's unexpected announcement.

"Begorra, Shaun, it's nothin' else than love that's takin' him; he's as lost a man wid regard to his heart as there's in Trakee, bye, as there's in the whole o' Ireland this day; he's as far gone as that poor omadhaun Garfield was! How an' over, as I said afore, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good, an' the wind that's blowin' him to Miss O'Donoghue will blow me to Mora, an' a faith it'll blow Corry O'Toole's letter to me mother!"

And laughing softly as he imagined what might be the ridiculous contents of the epistle, he began to busy himself with preparations for the journey. Father Meagher was absent on his parish rounds, when Captain Dennier, escorted by Tighe, and followed by Shaun, arrived at that little pastoral residence. Moira admitted them, and the presence of the military stranger awing her somewhat, prevented the scream of delight with which she would have greeted Tighe. She ushered the officer into the parlor, saying she would summon Miss O'Donoghue, and with one of her pretty, naive courtesies, withdrew. Tighe was waiting for her in the hall.

"Tell Miss O'Donoghue," he said, catching both of Moira's not unwilling hands close within his own, that I'd like to see her first. I have something to say privately to her."

head was runnin' this minit on the flatthey that some omadhaun's been givin' you."

Moira drew herself up. "And why shouldn't I, Mr. Carmody, receive somebody else's attentions—they tell of your doings in the town—your racing and your sporting, and—"

"Och, Moira darlin', is it that that's troublin' you? Faith, there's not one thing in that story, but a lot o' balderdash about a horse which I'll explain to you at a more convenient time; an' don't you see how true I am?"—he pointed to the faded bow at the side of his hat; "through thick an' thin, Moira, it niver leaves its place. Come, be yerself agin, an' give me that flower in yer breast, as a mark o' yer forgiveness." A bunch of heliotrope, picked that morning, adorned the front of Moira's dress.

Moira could not resist the tone in which the words were uttered, nor the glance by which they were accompanied; she gave him the flower, and with an ejaculation expressive of her own feelings on the subject of her delay in summoning Miss O'Donoghue, she flew to find that lady. Tighe remained in the hall, and intercepted Clara when she was on her way to the parlor.

"Only a word miss," he said with his most respectful bow.

"Certainly, Tighe"—extending her hand with charming condescension "have you news of my brother?"

"No, miss, I'm sorry to say I have nothin' to tell you about him—it's regardin' the captain beyant," indicating the parlor door by a motion of his head, and then stopping short in confusion that almost amounted to consternation, as he realized for the first time the boldness and the difficulty of the task he had imposed on himself.

"Well, Tighe, go on,"—and Miss O'Donoghue's wonder and curiosity increased.

"Oh, Miss O'Donoghue, I'm afeared you'll be angry intirely wid me, when you hear what I have to say; if I thought more about it afore, I wouldn't be takin' the liberty I'm doin'."

"No, no, Tighe; go on—I shall forgive you whatever it is."

"Well, then"—blurring the words out, while the rosy hue of his cheeks became deeper, and his hands worked awkwardly together,— "I have the manes o' suspectin' that the captain is dapeily in love wid you; an' oh, Miss O'Donoghue, he's so noble, an' so big-hearted, that it kem into my head to spake a good word for him. If he axes you, an' it'd be agin yer principles to say 'id, do the refusin' lightly, so it won't break his heart."

Clara was painfully scarlet. "You are mistaken Tighe," she said, "the gentleman has not met me a sufficient number of times to do more than recognize my face."

"Faith, miss, it's little matter about that—love doesn't wait for tomes nor places. I niver was mistaken in a case o' it yet; an' when I seen the signs an' tokens o' it in the captain, I was touched intirely by rayson o' his goodness. Forgive the liberty I'm takin', but oh, Miss O'Donoghue, promise me you won't give him a woundin' denial!"

"Really, this is too absurd!" said Clara, her painful blush deepening her very neck, turned abruptly from Tighe, and hurried to the parlor.

"Well," muttered the discomfited Tighe a Vohr, "I tried to do him a good turn, an' if it fails, it's through no lack o' a worthy intension on my part."

Captain Dennier, in his impatience at the delay, was already standing when Clara entered—she had paused a moment without the parlor door to allow her flush to subside, and to acquire steadiness in her voice. He came forward with the courtly bow she so well remembered.

"Miss O'Donoghue!" his tones were tremulous, and the color in his cheek and the flash in his eye, evinced painful anxiety. "Pardon my intrusion, made this time, perhaps, with less excuse than it was in my power to offer on previous occasions; but I have come impelled by a desire to see you, and to ask you once more to think kindly of me—I would have this assurance before I leave forever a land that shall always have for me most sweet, and yet most bitter memories."

She had involuntarily started at the announcement of his departure. He observed the motion and it seemed to make him bolder. "May I take with me," he said, "the assurance of your kindly feeling; despite the cruel character it was my painful duty to assume, may I bear with me to the distant land to which I go the remembrance of your charitable forgiveness?"

THE OLD CLOCK ON THE WALL

By Helen Moriarty in Rosary Magazine

Mrs. Somers had been sewing all afternoon and at four o'clock came downstairs to stir up the kitchen fire. The March day was balmy. Through the west windows the retreating sun cast a warm challenge, touching to trembling points of light the fading stipples of gold on the old-fashioned blue dishes in the cupboard. A very satisfying kitchen—this, with its dark linoleum brightened with rag rugs, the shining stove, the drop-leaf table with its checked red and white cloth, and a blue tenkettle humming softly on the back of the stove. Clean and colorful and cosy; and yet—so lonely—so lonely! But then the house was lonely. Mrs. Somers did not mind so much that the rest of the house should be lonely, but she never lost her puzzled surprise and resentment in the failure of the kitchen which manifested such a disturbing interest in the state of his health, or she might have imagined that the ancient timepiece on the south wall was forever demanding, "Where . . . is . . . Dan . . . Somers? Where . . . Somers? Where . . . Somers?"

But she only knew that the clock annoyed her, spoiled the kitchen for her, broke the peace of her meals, and left her irritable and dissatisfied.

There was no reason why she should be irritable, she told herself. Not dissatisfied either. It was not her fault that Dan Somers had gone away. If he chose to act foolish and go away like that, leaving her to face the critical amazement of the neighbors, that was his affair. It was a contemptible way to treat her, of course, but he didn't think that she'd show how much it hurt her. Never! She had held her head as high as ever, and no one ever guessed how hard she had been struck. When it got out that Dan Somers had gone away she had to face the brunt of many questions. She faced them, level-eyed, self-possessed with dignified composure and the fewest possible words.

Yes, Dan was gone. She did not know where he was. No, he had not told her he was going. It was a cold day today, wasn't it? Thus closing the conversation and leaving the neighbors baffled. They couldn't understand Dan Somers—acting that way! Best natured fellow in the world, he was. "I bet she druv him to it," surmised one of the wise ones shrewdly. "Always was a high stopper, and Dan Somers, he just about humored her to death."

"Uh-huh," agreed a complacent auditor, "I always did hear she was as cranky as all get out."

And it was a curious thing, but the clock seemed to have arraigned her in the same way, and she resented it as much as she began to resent its presence in the kitchen. Her kitchen! She tried stopping it, but the broad face and the silence accused her more than ever. So, she started it again, with bitter invective against her own foolishness,—she who was known for her strong common sense and her practical way of looking at things. She was practical, but the clock had got on her nerves, always appearing subtly to insinuate that she was at fault.

But she wasn't. Every day nearly, though a year had passed, she went over in her mind their last conversation. There had been a little quarrel—yes. One word had led to another.

It was a cold morning. When Dan came into the kitchen he said, resenting it for the moment, "Where in time did you put my old shoes, Lyddy?"

"What old shoes?" looking up from the ham she was frying. She smiled at Dan in her superior way, and said, demurely: "Good-morning, Dan."

Dan knew very well he was being called down, a process to which he usually responded with a good natured chuckle, but this morning he only granted unintelligibly. He had a kind of headache and he repeated the oldest shoes. "I say where's them old shoes of mine?" he repeated crossly.

His wife turned the big slice of fragrant ham and stepped over to the table for the eggs which she broke expertly into the sizzling fat. Then, having time for it, she answered Dan. "Those old worn out brown things?" she said calmly. "You don't want those any more, Dan."

"That would dispose of the matter."

"What did you do with em, I'm askin' you?" Mrs. Somers turned a look of real surprise on her husband. What was the matter? Seldom

indeed did Dan question her words or acts, and really he looked as cross as a bear.

"What's the matter, Dan?" she inquired solicitously. "Don't you feel well?"

Now, if there is any one thing more exasperating than another to a man with a headache—and a grievance—it is to be treated like a refractory child. And as most men are childlike when arguing with their wives, Dan roared out, "I want them shoes—that's what's the matter with me!"

A cold look settled on Mrs. Somers' handsome features. Mechanically she put the breakfast on the table, poured out the coffee and sat down. Dan, as she very well knew, growing more furious all the time. Silently and offended Dan in his little tantrums. Now he sugared his coffee expensively and said sarcastically, "When you get good and ready you can answer my question."

Mrs. Somers remembered distinctly that it was right here that she got so angry, and told Dan straight out that she gave the silly old shoes to a tramp. "You have plenty of other shoes, haven't you?"

"A tramp! Good Lord!" Dan laid down his knife and fork to stare at her, "M' easiest shoes and she gives 'em to a tramp!" Then, recognizing the futility of further protest and sore at the loss of the comfortable shoes, he growled out, "Darned if I don't think you're gettin' crankier and crankier every day!"

"Well, those shoes were horrid, dirty old things, that's what they were! And every time you put them on you did nothing but track mud all over my house!"

She saw a queer change go over Dan. "Your house," he said in a slow ruminating way. "Uh-huh, it is your house, ain't it?"

"I should say so, arrogantly. 'My money built it, didn't it, and I keep it clean, don't I?'"

"Yes, ma'am, you certainly do keep it clean," still in the same slow fashion. "Too bad to muss it up with old shoes . . . an' things, ain't it?" He pushed back his chair, got up and made for the sitting room door. "Well, so long, Lyddy. I guess me an' my old shoes'll be movin' on."

His wife stared after him, started, puzzled, indignant, and a little bit amused. So she told herself as she started to speak. "Why, Dan—"

But the door closed very quietly and she could hear his slow steps going up-stairs. She sat at the table not eating, listening to the faint sounds from above. They were not many and after awhile they ceased. She arose and put the meat and coffee back on the stove. He'd come down again in a little bit and want something to eat. He liked his breakfast, Dan did. He was put out about the shoes, but he'd get over it. Still, at the back of her mind there was an uneasy feeling, she could not have told why, though she did wish she hadn't said that about the house.

She had a notion to go and call up to him. She would . . . if he didn't come down before long. Half an hour later she was still thinking about calling him when the boy from the interurban stop over on the pike came with the paper.

"Dan going to town, Mrs. Somers?" she asked. "Just saw him cuttin' across the meadow with a suitcase," as she stared at him sadly, he thought.

She heard herself answering in a measured tone, "Yes, he's going to town."

"When's he comin' back?" "Oh, in a day or two." "Thanks, Charlie," as she took the paper.

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