

Through Thorny Paths.

BY MARY ROWENA COTTER.
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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Chapter I—Edward Dutton, of America, while visiting in Ireland falls in love with Agnes Conlin, a poor Catholic girl. Thomas Conlin, Agnes' cousin, who is soon to be ordained a priest, notices a serpent ring on her finger and when told this her engagement ring he tries to persuade her not to marry this Protestant stranger. She, however, refuses and is married by the old parish priest after which they depart for the strange beautiful home in Boston. Chapter II—Thomas Conlin is ordained and comes of America as a missionary and arrives at his cousin's home. There he learns that while his cousin has wealth and luxury she was not happy. Her husband had selected a circle in which she was to move and as it was strictly Protestant, he said that she might give up her superstitions and become a member of his church. He would not even allow her to attend a Catholic church. She would not do so, but she was engaged to him. Father Conlin arrived she assisted that he hear her confession and baptize her little baby son, who had just been born. Father Conlin goes away with his secret. Agnes dies a week after. Mr. Dutton marries again, a rich Protestant woman, and his son is brought up a Protestant. When Edward is eight years old his father dies. Chapter III and IV—Cecilia is an orphan, who lives with her mother and brother, who Mrs. Dutton, a companion. Her stepson, Edward, falls in love with this Catholic girl, Cecilia, and marries her against the wishes of his stepmother. Chapter V—Cecilia is married eight years and has three children all of whom die and she and Mr. Dutton are left childless. Chapter VI—After a lapse of seven and a half years we find Mr. and Mrs. Dutton again happy with a daughter, Cecilia, who is about to celebrate her seventh birthday. Chapter VII—The husband of N. L. O. O. K. now Mrs. Cullen dies and she is left a widow with one child, Agnes. Mrs. Dutton adopts her niece and brings her up with her own daughter. Chapter VIII and IX—Cecilia and Agnes are sent to a convent school. The grandmother is very much opposed to this and reproaches her daughter-in-law. Chapter X—Mr. Dutton is suddenly taken sick and Cecilia is called home from school. Chapter XI and XII—Cecilia and Agnes graduate and to great reception is given them. Mrs. Cullen while at her sister's home takes ill. Cecilia and her grandmother hear the news. Chapter XIII—Mrs. Cullen recovers and remains at Dutton's home. Chapter XIV—Cecilia tells her mother that she intends entering the convent and becoming a nun. After a dispute she promises to remain at home one more year. Chapter XV—Cecilia and her grandmother are visiting in a distant city when the latter breaks out making many homeless. Chapter XVI—Cecilia visits the prisoner, Charles Conlin, who started the fire. Chapter XVII—The mother Dutton tells her grand-daughter that she has been convinced that the Catholic church is the only and true church and Mrs. Dutton converts. Chapter XVIII—Mr. Dutton is in the fear of losing all he has and Cecilia goes on the stage.

Part Second—Chapter I. Allie St. Clair, an invalid, meets Cecilia and falls in love with her. Chapter II—Allie St. Clair accidentally finds a book belonging to Cecilia, entitled "Following of Christ." He reads it and becomes interested. Chapter III—Allie and the manager attend the services at the Catholic Cathedral where Cecilia sings. Chapter IV—Allie asks Cecilia to marry him and she refuses. Chapter V—Mrs. Cullen discovers that Charles Conlin, a criminal, is her long lost brother. Chapter VI—Allie St. Clair visits at Cecilia Dutton's home. Chapter VII—Cecilia enters a convent to become a nun. Chapter VIII—Cecilia writes to her mother to receive the veil is told by the superior that she has no voice and she returns to her home.

CHAPTER IX

"And he is a good Catholic," interposed Mrs. Dutton, not stopping to consider the slight this remark involved for her own husband.

"I cannot understand why you should object to marriage, especially when so good an offer has been made you. It is wrong for you, on whom the hopes of my family depend, to act thus."

"Perhaps she thinks," said her mother, "that because she has spent a few months in the convent she has no right to marry, fearing what people may say."

"Cecilia, I hope, is not so foolish as that," said her father.

Not wishing to enter an unpleasant argument with her parents on a subject which neither of them could be made to understand, Cecilia remained silent while they talked to her using every persuasion to break her will. But in her heart she would not relent. When at last she found herself alone and free to think it all over she wished for some one to talk with and from whom to seek sympathy. Grandmother, she knew, would too quickly espouse the cause of her lover and try to have the marriage; with Agnes it would be much the same.

"Dear me," she thought in despair, "why couldn't he have fallen in love with Agnes? She is far better suited to him and would make him a good loving wife which I never can." But Cecilia did not yet suspect the secret love which still burned in the breast of her heroic cousin.

Aunt Nellie was the only one to whom she felt that she could talk freely, and to her she went, telling her everything and begging her to plead for her with her parents. But for the first time Aunt Nellie's counsel failed.

"Cecilia," she said, "it really seems that it is right for you to marry, and I would not wish to try to prevent it."

Greatly pained by this unexpected answer, Cecilia exclaimed: "But, auntie, I feel that it would be wrong, and I think I am the best judge of my own feelings."

"Perhaps so, Cecilia; but the best thing for you to do is to go to your confessor, lay the subject clearly before him and follow his advice."

"How foolish of me not to have thought of that before," thought Cecilia. And she went full of hope that she would find her answer in the

not try to encourage her marriage when she felt that God did not wish it.

The priest talked long and earnestly with her, questioning her in regard to her true feelings toward Maurice Carroll, and when he learned that she highly esteemed him as a man in whom is found every Christian virtue, he said:

"I see no reasonable excuse for you to refuse to comply with your father's wishes in marrying this young gentleman."

The words, so wholly unexpected, struck Cecilia like a cruel blow.

"But, father," she said, "I feel that God does not want me to marry."

The priest smiled. "Did God send an angel from heaven to tell you so?" he asked.

Blushing deeply at the reproach, Cecilia said: "No, I have not been thus favored, but I feel it in my own heart."

"Our own hearts often deceive us, my child, and we should listen to the advice of others who understand us better than we do ourselves."

"Father, when I was fifteen years old I made a promise to give myself up entirely to God, and I feel that I cannot break it."

"What prompted you, child, to make such a promise?"

"My father, who is a Protestant, was very ill at the time, and I asked that he might live to be converted, promising that if my prayer were answered I would enter the religious state."

"But your father has not been converted."

"He lived, father, and there is yet hope of his conversion."

"Yes, there may be hope; but your promise was made when you were a school girl not old enough to know your own will, and I do not consider it binding."

"I think, father, that my mind was as strong then as it is now, and I have never regretted that one act of my life."

"Child, you came here to ask my advice, and I give it as I think best. You entered the convent once. Had you been in your proper place you would have remained, but you were not, and God permitted you to be sent away because He had other designs for you. Now that you have a chance to marry one of your own religion who will make you a good husband, you will do best by complying with your parents' wishes. And I assure you that you will have God's blessing upon your marriage if you prepare as you should."

Cecilia bowed her head and her face plainly showed the terrible struggle going on within. She did not wish to disregard her confessor's advice, but she felt that he did not understand her case. Divining her thoughts, the priest continued:

"God wants good people in the world as well as in the religious state, and the good wife and mother is worthy of a very bright crown in heaven. Eternity alone can reveal all of the good wrought through her by her offerings for many generations after she has gone to her eternal reward."

Humble submission was Cecilia's only refuge, but it cost her many a bitter heart pang to say "I will" when two weeks later her father told her that Maurice Carroll had called again and repeated his proposal.

"Cecilia, you are a good girl," said her father, "and I am proud of you now. When my young friend hears your answer from your own lips I know he will feel that he is fully rewarded in finally securing the precious prize he found so hard to win. Now, when may I tell him to call on his fair lady?"

"Any time you wish, father," was her reply, so unlike what should have been heard from a promised bride who expected the bridegroom.

"This evening, Cecilia?"

"Yes, father, if you wish. I leave it all to you."

Mr. Dutton kissed his daughter tenderly and went to write a short note, which was carefully sealed and sent to Maurice Carroll. It made the young man very happy, and early in the evening he found himself alone in one of the pretty parlors of Innisfallen listening until he heard Cecilia's step in the hall.

She was dressed in a simple gown of white, with a single white rosebud in the wavy hair done high upon her head, and looked like a queen about to meet one of her subjects. Her face was extremely pale and he was sorry to see that she had not the smile of welcome he had hoped for. After a greeting which she knew to be far colder than even she would have wished, she sat down, while he took a chair beside her and commenced to

repeat the story he had told before. When he had finished and again asked her to marry him she answered: "Yes" in a tone that gave no indication of the deep emotions that raged within her. Then she permitted him to kiss her as he slipped a costly diamond ring on her finger.

A little later the family offered their congratulations and she accepted it all as a matter of course, but was glad when at last she was alone in her own room. None of the sweet thoughts expected from one in her position were hers. She looked at her engagement ring, but instead of bringing a sweet smile of happiness, it brought tears to her eyes, and quickly hiding it in her jewel case she sat down and found some relief in weeping.

"It is done," she murmured to herself, "and now may God help me and teach me to love him as a husband should be loved."

Her heart seemed to rise in her throat and she wished for some one to talk with. Once she thought of Agnes and went as far as the door, intending to go to her room but fearing that her cousin would only laugh at her foolishness, she turned back.

"It is over," murmured poor Agnes in her own room. "It was even harder than I thought to give him up. May God help me to bear it and teach me to bury the love which I have no right to feel for my cousin's husband."

Agnes, too, wept many bitter tears in secret that night, and it would have been hard to have told which of the cousins was the more unhappy. Both were struggling under the weight of a bitter cross, but each had fully resolved that her sacrifice should remain a secret within her own breast.

CHAPTER X

"Long engagements are all right in some cases," said Mrs. Dutton to her husband, "that is, when both parties are very young or the gentleman has no sure means of support. But with our daughter it is different. Though still young enough, she seems to be at least five years older than Agnes. Maurice Carroll, too, has an independent fortune of his own, and I think it best to hasten the marriage."

"You seem quite eager to have our daughter leave home," said her husband. "I did not think you would be so anxious to part with her."

"You misjudge me, Edward; no mother could love a child more devotedly than I ever have loved the only one whom God spared us, but we cannot keep her with us always, so why try to detain her when she should be in a home of her own?"

"Do you think that Cecilia is very eager to leave us?"

"Well, no, she does not seem to be."

"Then why hasten her marriage? Let her enjoy her freedom a little longer."

"She may wish to enjoy it too long and thus put an end to all of our plans for her."

"What do you mean, Cecilia?"

"Our daughter acts very strangely and I should not be surprised if she were to take it upon herself to break her engagement when we least expect it. On that account it will be best to hasten the marriage."

"Do as you like, Cecilia, though to speak frankly I will say that if I thought our daughter would not be happy in her married life I would not urge her to it."

"No danger but that she will be happy, for Maurice Carroll is a man who can make any one happy. Cecilia will be most fortunate in marrying him."

"When would you have the ceremony take place? Not before Lent, I hope."

"No, not quite so soon; but when the roses are in bloom in June then Cecilia must be ready to wear her bridal wreath."

"So it was settled that the wedding should take place the first week in June. Cecilia made no comment when the plans were laid before her. It seemed that she had lost all interest in everything and cared no more to think for herself. She readily gave assent to whatever her mother suggested. It was noted, however, that the color was gradually fading from her face, that she was growing thinner. She was seldom seen to smile. Fearing for her health her mother consulted the family physician, but he could find no trace of any disease. Her case puzzled him. He sent her away with only a tonic intended to give strength.

After Lent the engagement was publicly announced and the bride-elect was the recipient of many congratulations from those who envied her good fortune but could not understand how she could take everything so coolly. That she could possibly be dissatisfied with her choice no one

ever suspected. Some said that she had never been the same after the months she had so foolishly spent in the convent; others believed her to be failing in health.

No one was more keenly alive to the change in her than Maurice Carroll himself, and in the secrecy of his heart it gave him many an anxious thought; but in his deep love for Cecilia he would never permit it to be mentioned by others. He earnestly prayed that she might not be always thus, and each time he called on her he watched for signs of welcome, but none of her coldness melted away.

"It is hard," he thought, "and I would that she were more like other women. But it doesn't seem to be in her nature, and I suppose if I am to have the happiness of having her for my own I must learn to bear this little cross for love of her."

As time passed and there was no change in Cecilia, Maurice found it hard to keep the resolution he had made. There began to dawn upon him a realization that perhaps, after all, she was not for him. If so, no matter what it might cause him to suffer, he would not make her whole life unhappy. So one evening in the early part of May, when he found her sadder than usual, he remarked:

"Cecilia, it sometimes seems to me that you are not so happy as you should be."

"Why so?" she asked, looking at him in surprise and smiling faintly.

"Because the Cecilia I knew before I went away seemed to be always in smiles, and it was thus I remembered her during my absence. I find her greatly changed."

"Time is apt to change any of us," she said.

"Not without cause, Cecilia, and I can see no reason why you should be so different from what you were then."

She bowed her head and began to toy first with her engagement ring and then with the serpent with the emerald eyes.

"Tell me truthfully, Cecilia, have I been the cause of the shadow which seems to be resting upon you? If I have, and you wish it, great as my love for you, I will set you free. Better do that than have us marry and be unhappy together all our lives."

There was the tenderest love in his eyes as he spoke, and, seeing it, she grieved that she had not been able to return it as she should. Her heart had leaped for joy when he spoke of setting her free, and for the moment she had been strongly tempted to accept his release; then, when she remembered how her confessor had recommended the match, she felt that she had no right to break the engagement by her own act.

"Maurice," she said, very tenderly, "you have nothing to do with it."

"Thank God for that, Cecilia! And now it may sound very cruel if I ask you if you really love me as husband should be loved?"

"Maurice, I do love you as much as I can love any man."

"Would you deem that a satisfactory answer to my question? I wish to know how you really feel towards me. There is something wrong and I am not blind to it, so please trust me. I am to be your husband and have a right to know. Tell me what it is."

To answer him without equivocation was a bitter task, yet she was too truthful to deceive him.

"Maurice," she murmured, "do you remember how I once told you I did not want to marry?"

"I do," he said; but I hope that you have not deceived me by promising to become my wife when in your heart you still felt the same."

"No, Maurice; please do not accuse me of deceit. You know that opinions held for years are often hard to sacrifice, and I have felt for so long a time that the convent was my place that it was hard for me to think of marrying. But I was convinced before we were engaged that I had made a great mistake and my place in the world was that of a wife."

"Is that all, Cecilia?"

"Yes, Maurice, that is all."

"And now, Cecilia, tell me that you love me as a husband should be loved."

"Maurice, as I told you, it is hard to give up old opinions; it takes time; and after we are married, if not before, I am sure I shall learn to love you as I should."

"I thank God for having heard you say that, Cecilia."

(To be continued.)

Wedding Invitations.

We can supply the wants of the young lady or gentlemen who are about to be married at reasonable prices. Call and see our samples.

REQUIESCAT.

(Lines suggested by the death of Rev. R. H. Albert, C. M., who died July 27, 1902.)

Thy work is done—the Angel Death
Has come through deepest night,
His simple touch—his icy breath
Has borne thee from our sight.

For God thou worked, mid sighs and tears,
His lowly, lifted up,
A short life lived, but full of years,
With host and blessed cup.

Thou taught us how to work and play,
To mingle pain with song,
To bear our cross, and child like say
For Thee, dear Lord, I long.

O patient one, may joys be thine,
May Jesus grant thee rest,
With Angels orders—chorus nine,
Thy soul be ever blest.

O Mary! through his dreary night
Of purging flames and ories,
Be with him then and cheer, with light
From thine Maternal eyes.

May Joseph clear the clouds, that roll
Between thy God and thee,
And take thy cleansed and holy soul
To bliss eternally.

May rest be thine on yonder shore,
With Him who stands and waits,
Who beckons from the cleansing door
To Heavens eternal gates.

E. M. F.

THE BACHELOR BRUTE.

Why He Would Have Married Had He Been a Korean.

The matron was disgusted with the bachelor. There was no doubt about it. She said she was.

For the fourth time he had foiled her most skillful efforts at matchmaking. She had given him every opportunity to fall in love with four girls, any one of whom was a prize. They would have taken him, too, had he asked them the all important question, for he was decidedly a "catch." But he was happy in his single life and did not care to take a risk.

"I wash my hands of you," she said. "Never again, never, shall I introduce you to another girl, and I hope you may never know the happiness of being married to a charming woman."

"I second that hope with all my heart," he added, smiling.

She glared.

"I wish you had been born a Korean!" she cried.

"Can't second that proposition," he replied. "American birth is good enough for me. But why a Korean? Surely you would not have me a pygmy, that you might beat me."

"I wouldn't touch you," she answered shortly; "but if you had been a Korean you would forget this bachelor madness. Until you had married you would have to wear hair in a braid, keep quiet in company and be without rights as a man. That would bring you to time quickly enough."

"I'm not so sure," he said. "Let us see what rights come to the Korean by marriage. He can pile his hair on top of his head, he can squat instead of sitting down properly, and he can jabber away in company."

"But you forget that until married he cannot smoke tobacco."

She knew that was a telling shot. Had he not been punctuating his remarks with rings from his shining brier?

"I did forget the smoking," he said, smiling. "If I were a Korean, I would certainly marry."

"Brute!" she cried as he left her.

—New York Tribune.

She Got Her Papa.

William Allen was known as the "iron governor" of Ohio not because he had been an iron king or anything like that, but because he had not the slightest sympathy in the world for a criminal, and whenever an application was made to him to pardon an erring one he was as "iron" and could not be moved, so he was called the "iron governor."

One Thanksgiving eve he was applied to for executive clemency by the wife of a notorious horse thief and one who was serving a third term at that. He sat at his desk, his back turned to the tearful pleader, not even condescending to look at her. She had brought with her a five-year-old girl, who had been quietly watching. Suddenly the child went to him and, pulling his coat-tail, said:

"You mean old thing, I want my papa."

And the "iron governor" snatched her up, kissed her smack on the mouth and said: "And you shall have him."

True to his word, later that day the wife and child came away from the prison with the pardoned husband and father. —Denver Times.

PUNCH AND JUDY.

Origin and Evolution of This Famous English Puppet Show.

The drama of "Punch and Judy" is supposed to have originated in Italy about 1600. It soon spread and became very popular in England, especially in the reign of Queen Anne, 1702-14. The abuse of performing in churches had led to the practice of performing plays in inn yards, on scaffolds upon a green adjoining a town or village, sometimes in public halls of boroughs and cities and sometimes in the dwellings of the nobility. This drama, as originally performed, was very lengthy as compared with the present and had never any programme or bill of fare, but largely worked in passing events.

About 1813, however, a play was cast, of which the following is an outline of the plot: Mr. Punch is a gentleman of very courtly presence and marries a lady of the name of Mrs. Judy. This is the distinguishing title of maiden ladies not ennobled, a title which Mrs. Judy retains in wedlock also. The issue of the marriage is a beautiful child, a little girl, whom Mr. Punch kills in a fit of frenzy; but as the deed is accomplished Mrs. Judy enters, but leaves the scene to return with a bludgeon, with which she belabors her lord and master. The tables are soon turned, however, and the dead infant and the dying mother are shot out through the window into the street. The house being extinct, Punch escapes on horseback to Spain. The play ends in a satire, idleness being represented by a black dog, disease by a doctor, death by a skeleton and the devil first by a beautiful woman, then in propria persona, dragging Punch to the infernal regions. But the attempt fails, and Punch triumphs over doctor, death and the devil.

The drama was entitled "Punch and Judy," which appellation the puppet performance still retains. In 1710 there was no dog in the play, but a pig, so well trained that it danced a minuet with Mr. Punch.

Mrs. Grundy.

Every one knows that "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" is a question tantamount to "What will people have to say about it?" but few people know anything about Mrs. Grundy herself.

The character of Mrs. Grundy originated in Thomas Morton's comedy of "Speed the Plow," which was first acted in London in 1798. The garrulous old lady does not appear at all upon the scene, but is frequently mentioned by Dame Ashfield in her conversations with her husband, for she is envious of Mrs. Grundy's good luck. Farmer Ashfield becomes thoroughly exasperated and exclaims:

"Be quiet, will ye? Always mentioning Dame Grundy in my ears! What will Mrs. Grundy say? What will Mrs. Grundy think? What thou be quiet and let her alone!"

The audience took up the cry: "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" and Mrs. Grundy came to be considered a garrulous and scandalous old woman, the typical gossip of the town, whom it would be well to shun and who should never be allowed to gain a knowledge of any affairs which she should mind having proclaimed from the house-top.

THE KILLER TALKER.

"Here is a poem, which you may publish in your paper," said a young man, with eyes a fine frenzy shining, as he entered the editorial room. "I dashed it off rapidly in an idle moment, and you will find it in a rough state, as it were. You can make such corrections as you think necessary."

"Ah, much obliged," said the editor. "I will give you a check for it at once."

"You are very kind," said the contributor. "I shall be delighted."

"There you are," said the editor, handing him the check.

"Many thanks," answered the young man. "I will bring you some other poems."

When he got to the door, he suddenly paused, then came back.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I have no written the poem, and I am afraid, now I have your check, I cannot name it."

"Oh," said the editor, "it is all right. You may have the check in full."