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Through Thorny Paths.

BY MARY ROWENA COTTER.

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

Chapter I—Edward, a son of America, while visiting in Ireland, falls in love with Agnes, 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 it is 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, while 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 she would not even allow her to attend a Catholic church. She would not, gratefully him however and when Father Conlin arrived she insisted 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. Conlin marries again, a rich Protestant woman, and his son is brought up a Protestant. When Edward's eight years old his father dies Chapter III and VI—Cecilia O'Kane an orphan, who lives with her sister Nellie, is engaged by Mrs. Conlin as companion. Her stepson, Edward falls in love with this Catholic girl, Cecilia, and marries her against the wishes of his step-mother. Chapter V—Cecilia is married eight years and has three children all of whom die and she and Mr. Conlin are left childless. Chapter VII—After a lapse of seven and a half years we find Mr. and Mrs. Conlin again happy with a daughter, Cecilia, who is about to celebrate her seventh birthday. Chapter VIII—The husband of Nellie O'Kane, now Mrs. Cullen, dies and she is left a widow with one child, Agnes. Mrs. Conlin adopts her niece and brings her up with her own daughter. Chapter IX and X—Cecilia and Agnes are sent to a convent school. The grandmother is very much opposed to it and reproaches her daughter-in-law. Chapter XI—Mr. Conlin is suddenly taken sick and Cecilia is called home from school. Chapter XII and XIII—Cecilia and Agnes graduate and a grand reception is given them. Mrs. Cullen while at her sister's home it taken ill. Cecilia and her grandmother have a dispute over religion. Chapter XIV—Mrs. Cullen recovers and remains at her home. Chapter XV—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 XVI—Cecilia and her grandmother are visiting in a distant city when a terrible fire breaks out making many homeless. Chapter XVII—Cecilia visits the prisoner, Charles Conlin, who started the fire. Chapter XVIII—The mother, Mrs. Conlin, tells her grand-daughter that she has been convinced that the Catholic church is the only and true church and Mr. Conlin comes a convert. Chapter XIX—Mr. Conlin is in fear of losing all he has and Cecilia goes on the stage. Chapter XX—Chapter I, Ally St. Clair, an invalid, meets Cecilia and falls in love with her. Chapter II—Ally St. Clair accidentally finds a book belonging to Cecilia and becomes interested in her. Chapter III—Ally and the manager attend the services at the Catholic Cathedral where Cecilia sings. Chapter IV—Ally 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—Ally St. Clair visits at Cecilia's home. Chapter VII—Cecilia enters a convent to become a nun. Chapter VIII—Cecilia is about to be married to Ally St. Clair by the superior that she has no vocation and she returns to her home.

(Continued on page 4.)

(Continued from last week.)

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER XI.

"I know it, mother; but I was so weak."

"Just as my sister Cecilia was years ago," thought Mrs. Cullen.

"I afterwards prayed earnestly for grace to overcome the love which I knew was not to be returned, and I think I could have conquered had not Cecilia gone to the convent. I felt then that I would inherit much of the wealth intended for her and needed not a rich husband to give me a home; but I could not forget Maurice and foolishly believed that since she was gone he might learn to care for me. But he never did."

"Poor Agnes," said her mother. "I am very sorry for you, but God has given you a bitter cross which you can now bear and make a means of reward for eternity. Now you can make reparation by praying more earnestly for Cecilia's recovery and happy marriage, and perhaps you may receive your reward when you least expect it. You may enjoy a long, happy life with a good husband who will return your love."

Mrs. Cullen stepped to the bedside to look at Cecilia, and was pleased to find her breathing more naturally, while there was something like a smile on her face. But her eyes were still closed and she gave no indication of returning consciousness.

As if awakening from a slumber of only a few hours, Cecilia's senses had returned as suddenly as they had left her, and finding herself in her own room she did not remember that anything unusual had happened until she heard the name of Maurice mentioned and heard her mother say that he had come to inquire for her. Then it all came back to her with startling vividness, and with her first breath she thanked God for not having permitted her to take the marriage vow. Wishing for a few undisturbed minutes to think it all over, she closed her eyes when she heard her aunt asking Agnes what was troubling her. With no thought that she was about to hear anything not intended for her ears, she listened attentively. It was as if a great load had been lifted from her mind, and an idea had occurred to her which she would use every effort to execute.

"Agnes," she thought, "loves Maurice Carroll and can make him happy,

while I can never give him the love he deserves. I can never marry him now and I shall do all in my power to bring them together, that is, if God permits me to live; but if not, it may be far better for them both as well as for me."

These were the thoughts that brought to her face the smile Mrs. Cullen had noticed; but fearing to betray the fact that she had been listening, she kept very quiet for another hour until the nurse came. She longed to speak to some one and inquire how long she had been asleep and whether she had really been very ill. Half an hour passed, then as Agnes bent over her and lovingly took her hand she opened her eyes and smiled upon her.

"Cecilia will live," said the doctor, when he came late that afternoon, "but for a few days she must be kept very quiet. No strangers are to be admitted to her room."

He was so pleased that he stopped on his way home to tell the good news, first to Mr. Conlin, then to Maurice, both of whom he found deeply occupied in their places of business. With one thought the two men left their work and hastened to the house. The father was admitted at once to the presence of his child, who was happy to see him; but when she was told that Maurice was in the parlor the light faded from her eyes and she said:

"I cannot see him now."

Cecilia improved much more rapidly than had been expected and seemed very happy, especially in the presence of Agnes, whom she wished to keep with her always. The family could not help remarking that even in her illness she was more like her former self than she had been for many months. It was the first week in July ere she was able to sit up for even half an hour, but she had seen many of her friends, only one being excluded from her presence, and that was he who wished most of all to see her. Several times when he called she sent Agnes down to entertain him, urging her not to hurry back, as she could easily spare her to make arrangements to him for her own absence. Unsuspecting Agnes always went most willingly, glad to do anything to please her cousin and happy to be allowed to spend a little while in his company. After a time, however, feeling she might not be doing right in meeting him so often in Cecilia's absence, she said:

"Cecilia, I wish that you would go down to the parlor and see Maurice yourself. You are now able to sit up and he feels very much hurt at your refusal to see him. Besides, what do you suppose he must think of having me force myself upon his company every time he calls?"

"I cannot see that you are forcing yourself upon him, Agnes, when you go to the parlor to please me."

"If it pleases you, Cecilia, I do not believe that it is so pleasant to him, and I wish you would go yourself when he calls again."

"Do not urge me, Agnes. I cannot meet him yet."

"Why not, Cecilia? This is a strange way to act toward your future husband. Here you have been receiving strangers, almost any one who wished to see you, but him you would not see. What do you act so?"

"Agnes, if you must know the truth, I will tell you. I dread to meet him because I must acquaint him with facts which may be very painful; for that reason I must wait until I am stronger."

"What do you mean by that, Cecilia?"

"I mean that I can never marry him, that is all."

"Cecilia, you are jesting; I know you are."

"No, Agnes, I mean what I say. I never felt that it was right for me to marry and I am glad God prevented it ere it was too late."

Agnes looked at her in amazement, wondering if she suspected her secret; but Cecilia gave no sign of what she knew. At length Agnes said:

"Cecilia, this will break his heart. Had you seen how sad he was when we feared you would die you could never think of breaking your engagement."

"Agnes, it would have been far better for us both had I died then for me to have given him my hand without my heart."

"Cecilia, you do not mean to tell me that you promised to marry Maurice Carroll without loving him?" asked Agnes.

"That is a cruel question, Agnes; but I must say that I never cared for him as more than a friend whom I highly respected, and since my illness I have felt it far more than ever."

"Then why did you ever promise to marry him?"

"I did it in obedience to those whom I felt knew better than I what was for my good and I thought I could learn to love him in time."

"Poor Maurice; how sorry I am for him," said Agnes. "It will go hard with him."

"It may for a time, but it will wear away and then he will marry another who can make him happy, as I never could."

"Do you think so, Cecilia?"

"I do."

The cousins understood each other better now and both were happier after this conversation—Cecilia because she had, without betraying her knowledge of her cousin's secret, convinced her that as far as she herself was concerned Maurice was free, and Agnes because she felt that if she did care for him she had been doing her cousin no great wrong.

At last finding courage to face the ordeal she had so dreaded, Cecilia went to the parlor to meet Maurice. She was very pale and thin and her large eyes shone with an unusual brightness which reminded him that death had been very near. But he had not expected to find so great a change in her. She had no sweet smile of welcome for him. But what of that from one who so seldom smiled? She wore her engagement ring, now much too large, and that pleased him; but when he took her thin hand and tried to kiss her she stepped back and sank wearily into a chair. He inquired for her health and then tried to enter into a pleasant conversation, but she seemed either too weak or unwilling to talk much. As soon as he could find courage he said:

"Now, Cecilia, that God has restored you to us, can you once more name the happy day for our marriage?"

Drooping her eyes and gently drawing the ring from her finger she said:

"Never, Maurice. God broke the tie; let it remain so."

"Cecilia, you are not foolish enough. I hope, to think that because a little accident occurred to postpone our marriage the union must be broken?"

"What you call an accident I look upon as a marvellous act of Divine Providence designed to prevent what might have been to both of us the beginning of many years of sorrow."

"I cannot agree with you, Cecilia."

"I am very sorry, but there will come a time when you can understand it better; then you will thank God that we were not married."

"Cecilia, you are very cruel."

"No, Maurice, I am not; but I was cruel when I went to the altar with you knowing that I did not love you, but blindly believing that I might learn to do so in time."

"If it requires only time I can wait."

"Time can never change me. If I were like Cousin Agnes it would be different; she is a sweet, loving girl who could not fail to make your home happy, and I think you made a mistake that you did not try to win her instead of me."

Cecilia knew that she had made a strange remark, but she could not let pass this opportunity to speak a word for her cousin.

"Agnes, I know is a good girl, but I choose the one I thought would make me the better wife."

"And made a fatal mistake. But thank God there is still time enough to have it corrected, so please take back your ring."

"No, Cecilia, it is yours and you shall keep it even if we never meet again. I wish you to wear it in remembrance of me."

"If you wish I shall keep it for friendship sake, on condition that our engagement be declared broken."

"It is hard, Cecilia, but if it is your earnest wish let it be so."

"It is, and thank you."

He took his departure and Cecilia went to the room where lay the wedding gifts, which she had not looked upon since her illness. They consisted of a costly array of gold, silver, bronze and cut glass, to say nothing of the many other beautiful articles intended to please a bride. One by one she took up each article, examined it, looked at the cards, to which she added the full addresses of the donors and then said to herself:

"They are very beautiful and I appreciate the kind wishes they represent, but they must all go back, for I have no right to them now."

She went out to find a man, to whom she entrusted the task of packing the articles and seeing that each was returned with a card of thanks.

"Cecilia, what are doing?" asked her mother. "What does this mean?"

"Simply this, mother, that I have no right to the presents intended for my wedding. I am sending them all back."

"This is very imprudent and an insult to your friends. You should have kept them until you are married."

"Mother, that is all over now and our engagement is broken forever."

Mrs. Conlin was very angry, but she knew her daughter meant what she said, and in that line her power over her was gone, so she could say no more.

CHAPTER XII.

In this fair world of ours man has invented many a beautiful scene to charm the eye and enrapture the senses of his fellow-beings, but there is nothing to be compared with the rustic beauties of nature. In the very heart of some of our great cities we find pleasant parks on which much labor has been spent, and to some, whose appreciation of real beauty has been warped by the narrowness of their surroundings, such spots may appear beautiful, but to others of keener perception there is an artificial air which gives a cold stiffness to everything. We see beautiful flowers, but we are forbidden to touch them under penalty of a fine; we look for birds, but we find only flocks of English sparrows whose metallic notes grate roughly on our ear. If we would quench our thirst, instead of finding a cooling spring we are obliged to drink warm, sickening water from brassy hydrants or pay for a cold but no less sickening draught at a stand which is too often suggestive of anything but neatness. Then there is that uncomfortable feeling of being constantly watched, and in even the most pleasant spots we are apt to come upon a policeman, who may not disturb us, but still reminds us of the necessity of having some one to keep a constant watch over the place.

Such is the city park; but there are many beautiful spots where the elements of nature have combined to make earth like unto heaven, and it was one of these places that Cecilia and Agnes, with two strangers, were privileged to visit.

Cecilia did not regain her full strength as rapidly as her progress in her early convalescence had promised, and her physician, believing that a change of scene was more necessary than medicine, ordered her to the country. Cecilia's mind turned at once to a spot hundreds of miles from home and famous for its shrine where numberless miracles had been wrought. The place was only a little country village on the bank of a broad river, and the inhabitants were very poor, but good people, for they lived beneath the very shadow of the principal building of the town, a church of vast proportions which had been built for the accommodation of the many pilgrims.

Cecilia, who had never before been in a distinctively Catholic community, would have been content to have remained here for weeks, attending the daily devotions, praying and watching the pilgrims, numbers of whom came afflicted with diseases which had been pronounced incurable and went away perfectly healed. Her own shattered strength she felt was rapidly being regained, and she was greatly surprised to find how well she kept up under exercises which she could not have performed at home without great fatigue. But Agnes was less content; she grew a little tired of so much church going and wished to see more of the surrounding country. One thing that attracted her was a mountain a few miles distant which extended down into the river, and she would not be content until she visited it. She had talked with two companions in the boarding house, strangers like herself in the place, and it had been decided to hire a carriage next morning to drive to the mountains; then she went to impart her plans to Cecilia, who was not easily found.

Taking an early supper, Cecilia had gone to bed. On leaving the church she was met by a woman poorly dressed and bearing on her pale face marks of intense suffering. She was alone and had been looking for some one in the crowd to speak a word of kindness to her, when she saw Cecilia. Stepping up she addressed her and was pleased when her heroine returned a gracious answer.

(To be continued.)

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POPE FRIENDLY TO AMERICANS.

SPEAKS GRACIOUSLY OF AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Father Hendrick Gives Interesting Account of Audience With Leo XIII.—Other Incidents and Impressions of His European Tour.

Rev. Thomas A. Hendrick, of St. Bridget's Church, who has been absent from the city on a European tour, returned early Sunday morning. Father Hendrick left New York July 2d on the Majestic, of the White Star line, in company with Dr. James H. Finnesey, of this city, and Richard Kerens, Jr., of St. Louis. They arrived at Sandy Hook on the return trip at 7 o'clock Saturday morning. The party visited many of the countries of the Old World and spent considerable time in some of the most famous cities. Among these are Dublin, London, Milan, Venice, Padua, Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Lourdes, Genoa and Nice.

Father Hendrick enjoyed excellent health when away and has returned thoroughly invigorated. While not ill, when he left, constant attention to the duties of his office had fagged him considerably and he felt in need of rest and change. The incident of the trip which was doubtless most interesting was his private audience with Pope Leo XIII. To a reporter Father Hendrick described parts of his trip and gave some of the impressions left by it.

"We considered ourselves very fortunate in being able to have a private audience with the Pope. I do not think we should have accomplished this had it not been for my being as regent of the university, a state official. The Jesuits were our special introducers, but, while they arranged the audience for us, we heard that two of their own body were unable to secure the same privilege."

"The Pope is now 84 years old, but he is surprisingly alert and vigorous for his age. It is said that he will in all probability live to be a hundred. His health is better now than it has been at any other time during the past twelve years. He is a very small man. I do not think he weighs more than ninety pounds. One does not have to see him long, however, before he appreciates the power of his personality. He is a typical Italian in appearance and action. He has piercing black eyes and talks with animation and gesticulation. While in personal appearance he does not resemble Bishop McQuaid, his wonderful vigor suggests the Bishop. In pictures I had seen of the Pope, his hands were swathed because of infirmity, and I expected to see cloths on his hands, but there were none."

"Many of these who made up our party while in Rome were not with me when I saw the Pope, but we were able to arrange an audience for them later. There was a pleasant little incident in connection with this second audience. There was a small boy of the party, Joseph Sexton, and when the Pope smiled him, he called him to him and put his arm around him. He asked him what his name was and the fact that it was Joseph caused the Pope to take added interest in the little fellow. Joseph has been a family name in the family of Leo XIII. for generations. He made much of the boy who happened to bear it."

"The Pope received us in a small room, sitting on an ordinary chair. I could not speak French or Italian, so he addressed me in Latin. He did all the talking and, to tell the truth, I was glad that he did. For the time I was somewhat stage-struck. In substance he said:

"I congratulate you on the great dignity which the people of your state have conferred upon you and that I find you possessed of the fitness which makes you worthy of the honor. This cause of education is of great interest to me. All of this is pleasing to me. Because I hold the cause of education of so much importance, I bless every institution under your jurisdiction."

"It is especially pleasing to me that you, being a priest, have been called by the great and the generous and the just Americans to this important position. It is an evidence that the Christian people of the state see in you a representative of the Christian education of the young, and I am sure that so far as in you lies you will perform this trust which you have of the Christian education of young boys and young girls."

"The Pope used beautiful Latin," said Father Hendrick, "and spoke unhesitatingly and without apparent effort. His thoughts could scarcely have been better expressed if what he

said had been carefully arranged before hand. When he said the great and the generous and the just Americans, he smiled pleasantly as if he took special pleasure in voicing his admiration of them."

The tourists landed at Queenstown and had ample opportunity for seeing the Cork Exhibition. They also visited the lake region and spent some days in Dublin.

"The Cork Exhibition would not compare with such exhibitions as that of last year at Buffalo," said Father Hendrick in speaking of his way in Ireland. "The machinery exhibit was not remarkable and much of it was American. The Irish exhibit, however, was extremely interesting. The lace, embroideries, linens and various examples of Irish needlework could not be excelled in any country, if they could be equalled. The display of ceramics was very fine. There were from 200 to 300 varieties of Balmuck ware to be seen. I was told that this was made from clay, the product of decayed shells. We got some of the smaller pieces here, but seldom see anything to compare with the magnificent examples of the ware that were on exhibition at Cork."

"We spent some time among the lakes of Killarney and explored many of the old ruins and natural wonders of the district. On Innisfallen is to be found the oldest monastery in Ireland. The carving on some of these ancient monasteries is often exquisite. It is interesting to note that the Herberts once owned the land about these lakes, but were forced to sell them. A descendant of this family has recently been appointed ambassador from Great Britain to the United States. The region is now owned by Lord Ardilaun. Here we saw Muckross Abbey and Ross Castle."

"From Killarney we went to Dublin, where I visited some of the departments of technical education. While much is being done in this branch of education, they are not so advanced as we are in this country. I was talking with one of the members of the royal commission appointed to draft an educational scheme for Ireland, who was in Rochester last year and inspected the work of the Mechanics Institute, and he told me that they were doing much to advance technical education, but that their institutions could not yet compare with those of Rochester."

"I was told that conditions are gradually but surely improving in Ireland, and from what I saw I should judge that this was true. I was assured that the cities of Ireland have gone ahead markedly in the last twenty years. The land laws are being made more and more just and the condition of the tenants is being ameliorated."

"From what I heard, I believe that American competition will do more for the prosperity of Ireland than anything else. The importation of American beef and pork is going to make raising unprofitable in Ireland and, as a result, the great land owners will be willing to dispose of their estates to the government. The government will in turn divide the estates into small holdings and sell them to the poor classes. This is the policy of the American people and it is now being carried out in Ireland. It can now be bought for three cents less a pound than the home raised pork. While it is not as good as the Irish product, it is said to be the very best hotel."

Father Hendrick has had some very significant things to say about the English. Although they have in the past endeavored to ignore American enterprises, he believes that they are beginning to take notice of them and they are showing a little concern in the trend of events."

Speaking of his stay in Rome, Father Hendrick said:

"The thing that struck me most forcibly about the English was their ignorance of and indifference to American and their amazing conceit. The fact that they are not the greatest and best people on the face of the earth is not entertained for a moment. One of the reasons that they are so ignorant is because they think they are the very best way of doing things will not learn from others."

"There many indications that indifference is passing away. The American invasion has made the English in many respects more of themselves and to me it is an indication of an appreciation of American principles. The fact that American gained control of the ground system of London, with its apparatus, is a very important thing. The American people will not learn from others."