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A Tale of Irish Struggles of 1886 and Recent Times

by CHRISTINE FABER

Continued from last week

Chapter XLVIII.

Sacrifice Bearing Fruit.

She perceived his subterfuge, and was quick to plead: "Promise me that you will not write to them of my whereabouts." He deemed it better, because of her weakened condition, to gratify her. "Since you desire it so earnestly, I shall not write." But he did not promise to be silent about her when he should visit Drogheda, which he was now determined to do on the earliest opportunity, and she seemed to overlook that probability in her eagerness to win from him the promise not to write.

Rick returned with good-natured Mrs. Murphy. Her motherly skill immediately devised means of comfort for Nora which were grateful and refreshing to the still weak girl. She reclined on the well-worn lounge, and looked at the kind-hearted matron bustling about in services for Rick, as into the well as for the invalid she had come to tend, with, as Mrs. Murphy expressed it, "the smile of an angel." Father O'Connor was obliged to depart, and having taken adieu of Nora, he turned to Rick.

"Good-by," he said, holding the coarse palm of the latter warmly in his clasp, "good-by, Rick, and with the benediction of Almighty God reward Nora's devotion by making you what you yourself would be in the sight of Heaven." Rick started—had the eyes bent so earnestly upon him the power of reading his soul? did the priestly attributes of the speaker enable him to penetrate the secrets of his wretched heart? It would almost seem so from the deep import of the words; and under the influence of such feelings, Rick could not answer—he wrung the clergyman's hand hard and turned away.

Mrs. Murphy was also obliged to leave to attend to her own household, but she promised to return in the morning, and the painfully contrasted pair were left alone together.

"Nora," said Rick, when a long interval had passed in gloomy silence, "would you be content to remain with Mrs. Murphy for a few days while I go away on a little business?" She endeavored to assume a sitting posture, but weakness made her sink again on her pillow. "Perhaps you want to leave me," she said, faintly. "Perhaps you are troubled at my condition, and would take this means of restoring me to Father Meagher; but do not, I beg of you—do not deprive me of what I have prayed and hoped for so long!"

"And what is that?" he asked. "To see you once more before God's altar, a true penitent"—her cheeks flushed with the ardor of her feelings—"to know that you kneel again in that tribunal where God himself would give you pardon and peace!" He rose from his chair and approached her. "Nora," he said, standing where she could not see his face, "this intended journey of mine will be for the purpose of making a restitution—and if I would, I could not take you with me, because of your feeble state. It is due to your influence that I have at last made up my mind to perform this act of justice; perhaps, if I delay, my weak soul may fly from the task."

"Then go, father; I shall not bid you stay—but where and when is this journey to take place?" "To-morrow, when I have seen Mrs. Murphy, and made arrangements with her concerning you; I have little doubt that she will give you a home with her until I return; but where my journey is to be I cannot tell you—it is one of my guilty secrets."

She said no more.

Mrs. Murphy came in the morning and gladly consented to Rick's proposition; later in the day, when Nora's strength was sufficiently regained to enable her to walk, leaning on the good-natured woman's arm, the three set out for Mrs. Murphy's abode, and there, having reluctantly allowed himself to be persuaded to remain for one of the good woman's substantial meals, Rick bade Nora adieu and left her.

Chapter XLIX.

Peace To A Storm-Tossed Soul.

Father O'Connor, after his hurried visit to Tralee, arrived at home much to the satisfaction of his old housekeeper, and to the extravagant delight of stammering Jerry. There was also another in the little household to welcome him—a beautiful boy of some twelve summers; but his beauty bore the traces of recent illness, and his dark eyes had the brilliancy which gives evidence of early decay. He had been sitting on the lowest step of the little porch, so that he might be ready to spring forward at the first glimpse of the returning clergyman, and with many an anxious question to both the old housekeeper and Jerry he had long maintained his watch. He had been rewarded at last; the tall, clerical form appeared, turning into the bower, and the anxious well as for the invalid she had come to tend, with, as Mrs. Murphy expressed it, "the smile of an angel." Father O'Connor was obliged to depart, and having taken adieu of Nora, he turned to Rick.

"Bartley, my boy, how are you?" asked the priest, grasping the lad's outstretched hands. "So much better your reverence, that I think I'll be strong enough for my journey to-morrow." Father O'Connor shook his head. "No, Bartley, you must not think of that yet—these cheeks must grow more plump—and he playfully patted the boy's face.

"I'm pining for Cathleen!" The flush suddenly faded from the fair countenance, and the dark eyes glistened with tears. "But Cathleen knows why you remain from her," answered the priest; "have I not twice written to her about you—how you were hurt in Tralee by the overturning of a vehicle, how strangers kindly cared for you, and how you persevered in journeying to me only to become ill as soon as you found me? She knows these particulars, and she knows, also, that I will send you back to her as soon as you have sufficiently recovered—are you tired of me, Bartley, that you want to leave me so soon?"

"Tired of you, your reverence!" the boy's two hands closed with an affectionate pressure upon the priest's hand, and his eyes met those of the clergyman with an eloquent expression of gratitude, while he continued: "I place you in my heart with Cathleen." No more was said, and the boy walked confidingly by the side of his benefactor to the little dwelling, where the self-sacrificing priest found that, comparatively short as had been his absence, there had been numerous calls for him. So perfect, however, was his discipline of himself that though tortured by distressing thoughts of the doomed Carroll and the unhappy Nora and Clare, each the fond playmate of his youth, no trace of his inward agitation was suffered to appear—his exterior had all that calmness which is ever the sign of a truly mortified will.

The next day was the vigil of the Assumption, and in the afternoon many waited in the little chapel to be admitted to shrift. Hour after hour the poor, patient priest sat, hearing the doleful story of sin and voluntary imperfection, and reproving, admonishing, exhorting and counseling. He never seemed to weary; even when the tale was but the outpouring of a morbid self-love, craving for the sympathy which should minister to its vanity.

The last penitent had disappeared within the confessional, and the whispered sound of voices from the curtained recess could be heard throughout the little chapel, when an ill-dressed man with shambling gait entered, and knelt for an instant near the door. Then raising, he looked about him with a wild stare. There was no one within sight, and guided by that sound of whispering voices, he walked slowly to the confessional. Kneeling almost in front of the sacred tribunal, he bowed his head and beat his breast, while burning tears gushed from his eyes. The penitent came forth, and Father O'Connor, observing the kneeling form, waited. It rose, walked a few steps forward, then, as if deterred by some sudden fear, paused, and knelt again to bow its head and beat its breast. Still the priest waited.

At length with a motion so sudden and hurried that he seemed to be impelled by an unseen power, Rick of the Hills arose, and darted within the penitent's side of the confessional. "What was there in the tale he so graspingly told to make the priest start and tremble—to make him lift the curtain which screened him from view, and lean forward as if he was stifling for air?" "You do not speak, father," gasped the penitent, when the last of that thrilling confession was told—"is there no pardon for me?"

The priest turned to him, his breath scarcely more regular than the quick and fevered breathings of the wretched man beside him. "Are you willing to make all the atonement that is in your power?—will you reveal those secrets to the world, so that justice may be done?" "I will, father; I will make a public confession of all; I ask for no earthly mercy for myself—I seek nothing but the pardon of my offended God." His sobriety. "Then make your act of contrition; speak the words from your heart, and God, whom you give so outraged, will Himself give the absolution my unworthy lips shall utter."

He raised his hand and pronounced the words by which the fetters of that miserable soul were unloosed, and Rick rose up a freer and happier man than he had been for twenty-seven years. A strange peace had descended into his soul, and he tottered to the altar, there to make, by his tears and broken contrite prayers, such a thanksgiving as would have made Nora, could she have witnessed it, feel amply paid for all her self-immolation. The priest also left the confessional. His face was deathly pale, and his inward agitation was somewhat visible in the unsteadiness of his step. He too sought in the Leitrim mountains at a place called Aughacashel, some ten miles from Carrick-on-Shannon. A process-server, who was proceeding to serve ejectment processes on the tenants of various estates who had refused to pay rents, was intercepted as he entered the hills, and robbed of his documents. He was not subjected to any violence, but was escorted out of the locality. He reported the matter to the local constabulary, but they are without a clue as to the identity of his assailants.

News From Ireland

Trim Board of Guardians have elected by a large majority Dr. Cecil Corby as medical officer for the Summerhill Dispensary district, in room of Dr. Trotter, who has resigned. Dr. Corby, who is a son of a well-known County Cork physician, returned thanks to the Guardians for his election. Amongst his testimonials was one from Most Rev. Dr. O'Callaghan, Bishop of Cork.

Nurses Dillon and Sears have resigned their positions as nurses in Queen's Co. Infirmary. At a meeting of Mountmellick Guardians on Oct. 5, it transpired that there had not been a single patient in the Mountmellick Hospital for the past six months. The only inhabitants being the nurses and attendant.

Mr. M. F. Fisher, for many years accountant in the Mullingar Branch of the National Bank, has retired on pension. The lands of Coonabore, which have been made a thorn in the landlord's side, have at last been cleared, and are now about to be distributed by the Land Commissioners.

The barley crop in New Ross district and in the southern portion of the County Wexford, has been much damaged as the result of the constant rain recently. The oat crop has also suffered materially. It is generally admitted that the injury to the harvest is more ruinous than during last year. To add to the seriousness of the situation the potato blight has manifested itself in the district.

The interment took place at the Convent of Mercy, Arklow, on Oct. 5, of the Rev. Mother Mary Ursula Tynan, R. O. O. C. and High Mass were celebrated prior to the funeral by the Rev. J. Fottrel, S. J., in presence of a large body of the community, the clergy and laity.

The dedication of Bonneton Church, which has been remodelled and greatly improved was performed on Sunday, Oct. 4, by Most Rev. Dr. Lyster, Bishop of Achonry. An eloquent sermon was delivered by Most Rev. Dr. Clancy, Bishop of Elphin.

A daring attack by a band of disguised men, who wore crepe and had blackened faces, took place on Friday morning, Oct. 9, in the Leitrim mountains at a place called Aughacashel, some ten miles from Carrick-on-Shannon. A process-server, who was proceeding to serve ejectment processes on the tenants of various estates who had refused to pay rents, was intercepted as he entered the hills, and robbed of his documents. He was not subjected to any violence, but was escorted out of the locality. He reported the matter to the local constabulary, but they are without a clue as to the identity of his assailants.

Mr. J. J. O'Loughlin, who for a great number of years has been accountant in the Bank of Ireland at Castlebar, has just been appointed to the management of the Ballinrobe branch. The Chief Inspector of factories has appointed Dr. L. McGuinness to be certifying surgeon under the Factory and Workshops Act for the Crossmolina district of the County Mayo.

The death took place at Ballinacorney, Castlereagh, of Mrs. E. J. Moran, at the age of 59 years, after a few days' illness. Died—Recently, P. G. McCormack, Castlereagh, Sept. 27. Timothy Gara, Carrareagh, Sept. 22. Patrick Cattle, Mullingar, aged 78 years.

Sligo. Died—Sept. 22, Mrs. Martin Boylan, Socks, Dromahaire, Sept. 30. Mrs. Michael McGowan, Carrareagh, Oct. 4. Thomas Conway, Rosser Point, Sligo.

Around the Globe

Catholic News From Many Places. Bishop Janzen of Ballarilla, Ill., preparing to celebrate his golden sacerdotal jubilee on Nov. 15. The faithful of that diocese will join in the religious ceremonies during the day and there will be a torchlight procession at night.

St. Nicholas Church, at the Second street, New York, is the oldest German Catholic Church in the arch-diocese, but just celebrated its diamond jubilee. At the pontifical high mass Most Rev. John M. Farley was celebrant. The jubilee sermon was preached in German by Rev. Otto Starck.

In Newark, N. J., the other evening organized charity was the subject discussed. The speakers were Rev. Francis A. Roy, rector of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, Nulley; Rev. Dr. Stephen S. Wise, rabbi of the Free Synagogue New York, and Rev. John McDowell, pastor of the Park Presbyterian Church Newark.

A dinner was given in New York last Friday night for Thomas L. Mulry and Rev. Dr. Death J. McMahon in honor of the respect honors conferred upon them by the Pope. Among the hundred guests were Herman Eicker, Pastor of St. Ignace, and Rev. Dr. Farley and Mrs. Lavalle, Hayes and Mooney.

In the West there exists a society which it would be well to introduce in the East. It is the Ladies of Father Mathew. The increase in membership in the last two years was 20 per cent. There are now sixty-seven societies numbering 22,000 members and including three ladies.

The Holy Name Society of St. Paul's Church, Cambridge Mass., has opened a splendid new club house. The house is to serve as headquarters for the society, which is growing in membership and power, and promises eventually to include all the parishes in its membership.

Oct. 11th the Father Mathew Total Abstinence and Beneficial Society of Akron, O., celebrated the 11th anniversary of the birth of Father Mathew, the apostle of temperance. The program was concluded by the administering of the pledge of the total abstinence to a large number by Father Brady.

Tenthousand Catholics attended the coronation lying of the new Cathedral at Elizabeth, N. J., Oct. 4th. The structures will be a superb tribute to the generosity of the Catholics of the great Northward, as well as an evidence of the Church in that territory.

The Jesuit Fathers in Brazil have perfected an invention of their own for the destruction of ants, which are especially destructive to crops in that country. Following their success the Jesuit Fathers of New Orleans anticipated Father Biever to purchase one of these instruments for the annihilation of the ant pest that has become a menace to the cotton and sugar crops of Louisiana.

Rose O'Neil, 70 years old, fifty years a teacher in the public schools of New York, died recently in the Girl's Catholic Orphan Asylum, in charity, where she had lived for two years past. Four years ago she became blind. Patrick O'Neil, her father, was principal of schools in the Sixth Ward sixty years ago. His daughter, Rose, began teaching in the primary grades when fourteen years old. For forty years she was principal of public school 22. Her two brothers also became teachers in the public schools.

Five Minutes

The Baby's Baptism.

The first of the year's baptismal season, in a church, and a present baptism, and the spiritual death of the infant, was the subject of a sermon by Rev. Dr. Farley, at St. Nicholas Church, at the Second street, New York, is the oldest German Catholic Church in the arch-diocese, but just celebrated its diamond jubilee. At the pontifical high mass Most Rev. John M. Farley was celebrant. The jubilee sermon was preached in German by Rev. Otto Starck.

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