

The Catholic Journal

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Carroll O'Donoghue

A Tale of Irish Struggles of 1886 and Recent Times

by CHRISTINE FABER

Continued from last week

Chapter LI.

Father O'Connor's Tale.

"Now was the time for Carter's work; he had never ceased to love Marie Dougherty, wife though she had become, and jealously of the youthful husband combined with his own unrequited passion, made him skilful to plot, and strong to execute. Mrs. Berkeley, instead of recovering, seemed to grow daily weaker; indeed, she was in no condition to answer her husband's affectionate letters, which came with every mail, and upon Mortimer devolved entirely the task of amanuensis. She would not suffer him, however, to state truly her feeble condition; she insisted rather that he would ascribe it to her perfect obedience to her husband's request regarding her fatigue. So Mortimer, by the young wife's own feebly accorded permission, had ample opportunity to read each English letter when it came and from them he learned that the illness of the old lord, fatal as it was certain to be, might still protract itself to the duration of months, and that young Berkeley, owing to the slight tenuity upon which his father's life was held, could not tell him of his marriage—that he was even, for the sake of that frail life, compelled in a measure to feign assent to a future alliance with the lady whose name, from past letters, was familiar to Marie. But all gave the devoted wife little concern—she loved her husband so truly, she confided in him so surely, that nothing short of his own sworn statement would convince her that she had anything to fear. Carter studied to imitate Berkeley's handwriting; he succeeded admirably, and then, intercepting the next English letter which came, he opened it, and substituted for its contents a letter which he had penned in his forged hand.

"That letter told the young wife that her husband, yielding at last to his father's persuasions, was about to marry the lady with whose name Marie was familiar. It deplored the cruel necessity, it assured her of his undiminished affection, but it repeated in unmistakable terms the terrible fact. Marie, with sudden supernatural strength, arose from her couch, a determined and desperate woman; she would go immediately to England, she would force her way to the dying lord, she would herself proclaim her marriage—not for her own sake, but for that of her children. The very strength of her grief favored Carter's designs; he approved of her resolution, he sought to facilitate it when she announced her determination to take her baby with her, by proposing to find a waiting man to take care of the little party, which would consist of the mother, and infant, and a nurse for the latter, while he would remain to guard the twin brothers, now sturdy little fellows of eighteen months. She assented, and Carter sought Richard Sullivan. To him he made it appear a necessary and noble act to accompany the young wife to England, but not, however, to lead her as she desired to the home of her husband; instead, she was to be conducted to a different part, and there kept in seclusion till Carter could join her. Carter insisted that such a course was absolutely necessary, in order that she might retain her children, and preserve to them their faith—otherwise their treacherous father would tear them from her, and Sullivan's warmest sympathies were enlisted, and full only of a wild anxiety to save this broken-hearted woman another blow, he finally consented. Unsuspecting Marie gratefully agreed to travel with Richard, whom she well knew, and Carter, having promised to take Richard's place for the time to the latter's little one, supplied him with ample means.

"But the night before the journey, as Marie stood tremblingly looking at her marriage certificate preparatory to putting it safely away—for they were to accompany her—the reaction of her strained feelings, her sudden unnatural strength, her wild fears, set in, and she fell fainting to the floor. When she recovered her reason, her mind had flown; that bright, cultivated mind had forever. Carter, prepared for any emergency, kept the fact harmless insanity a secret even from the few servants in the little household, bringing immediate attendance upon her, a foolish girl of the neighborhood, but innocent though the latter was termed by the neighbors, she had sufficient sense to wait upon her mistress, and idly enough not to understand what might be going on about her.

"The journey was delayed, and Carter wrote to Berkeley one of the letters which the latter was wont to receive from his wife. Then, while waiting for Marie to gain strength sufficient to leave her couch, he feigned to have frequent need of Sullivan at the house, forming pretenses which should take the latter, who was not ill-looking, nor of bad address, at that time, to Marie's room at questionable hours, and taking care that some of the gossiping servants should know of the fact. He further pretended to the domestics to be astounded at, and suspicious of, the favor with which young Sullivan seemed to be received by the lady of the house, hinting that an attachment had existed between them previous to her more advantageous marriage; but of all this young Sullivan, anxious alone to be of service to the young creature whom he sincerely pitied, was ignorant. He fell blindly into the trap which was prepared for him. Marie had recovered strength to walk, but she still remained without sufficient mind to recognize any one but her baby; and Carter came to Sullivan with a marriage certificate in which the name of Walter Berkeley had been skillfully erased, and Richard Sullivan inserted in its place. He pretended to have received news of the immediate return of Berkeley, and he affrightedly said that the very condition of the poor wife would but further the husband's design of casting her off, and taking her children—that as a foil to this, and as there might be danger of meeting him if he now made a journey to England, he had thought of another plan. That Richard should pass to strangers as her husband—she was in no condition to contradict the statement; and for that purpose, lest any one perhaps, surprised at the eminent superiority of the beautiful wife, should question the assertion, he had changed the marriage certificate which certified to her marriage by a Catholic clergyman, Sullivan, could travel with her and her baby, from whom she refused to be separated for an instant; and there wait for Carter to join them with the twin boys; he also promised to bring with him Sullivan's little daughter. Again, poor Sullivan, though at first shrinking and hesitating, was induced to consent, and from no motive but that of saving Marie and her children.

"Shrouding their departure with all the secrecy he could throw about it, Carter saw them go, the poor young wife—having been induced to allow her baby to be carried by the foolish girl who had been her last attendant—clinging to Sullivan's arm and laughing as gleefully as a child. Then Carter turned to the execution of the remainder of his plot. He stole immediately from the little household one of the twin brothers, the baby William, and traveled with it to friends whom he expected to find in the extreme northern part of Ireland. He found, however, that his friends had emigrated to America nearly a year and a half before, taking with them their sole child, at that time a boy of six months. That information made him determine on another plan. The babe of six months who had been taken to America, and whose name was Charles O'Connor, would be now about the same age as little William Berkeley, the companion of

Carter's journey. Going to the parish clerk, he obtained a copy of the baptismal certificate of the little Charles O'Connor on the pretense of being commissioned to do so by the child's parents; and then, hastening to a remote spot, he induced the good-looking, religious, to assume temporarily charge of his little companion, to whom he gave the same name as that of the baptismal certificate. Then he returned, and he pretended to be amazed and horrified by the discovery of the elopement of Richard Sullivan. Already he had paved the way for belief in the horrible tale by the few servants of the house, and they had not been slow to propagate hints of scandal abroad. The whole district, comprising even those whom her charity had been most largely dispensed, and by whom the purity of her character should have been undoubted, seemed to be convinced of her guilt, and expressions of horror came from every mouth. It was reported that she had taken two of the children with her—many asked why she had left the third. Carter insinuated that it was because he bore his father's name, Walter.

"Giving sufficient time for Richard to have advanced far on his journey, Carter wrote to the young husband an account of the terrible circumstances; then, pending the answer, which he felt would be young Berkeley in person, he repaired to the woman who had charge of Sullivan's little daughter; deploring the guilt which now attached to her, and expressing his sympathy, he announced his intention of caring for the child. Alas, poor ignorant woman, and without telling her his destination, he departed with the little one.

"Young Berkeley came, as Carter had anticipated, came with all the incredulosity of a devoted and entirely trusting affection. He found the proofs of the horrible tale in his deserted household, in Carter's apparently distracted demeanor, in the accounts given by the servants, in the excited gossip of the place. Horrified and sickened, he seemed after the first dreadful shock to shut himself within a stern pride and reserve. What his feelings were no one knew. When Carter would propose pursuit of the fugitive, and at least recapture the children, the young husband answered sternly:

"She has stained my name; let her infamy shroud her and hers!"

"He paid and dismissed the servants, bade Carter a short farewell, and engaging a nurse for his remaining child, departed with it to England.

"In the interval Sullivan, passing as the husband of Marie, and the father of the beautiful babe journeyed to the place designated by Carter; but in a village near Tralee the poor young mother became unable to proceed. They were in an inn, and Richard, in deep distress, knew not what to do; the kind landlady called the attention of the Catholic pastor to the case, and he in turn, strangely interested, brought to the notice of one of his wealthy and estimable parishioners, Mrs. Donoghue. She immediately took the little family to her own spacious home, and there cared for the sick lady with all the tenderness of a mother. Sullivan was interrogated upon his past history; he shrunk from maintaining the false pretenses he had been induced to assume, and he felt that he had met with true friends, who would aid in rescuing his unhappy wife; but he feared to change his line of conduct without Carter's sanction, and as there was not time to communicate with the latter before satisfying his questioner, he determined for the present to adhere to his falsehood, and after, when he should have acquainted Carter with the whole, he would retract his statement, giving reasons for the same which would prove a sufficient excuse. So he told an apparently straightforward story—a truthful one so far as Marie's early life was concerned, adding that in her unprotected state her dying father had consented to her

marriage with a man who was her inferior in every way save her beauty. Maria after the birth of her child had resented her husband's friends who would care for her. Sullivan also pretended to be amazed and horrified by the discovery of the elopement of Richard Sullivan. Already he had paved the way for belief in the horrible tale by the few servants of the house, and they had not been slow to propagate hints of scandal abroad. The whole district, comprising even those whom her charity had been most largely dispensed, and by whom the purity of her character should have been undoubted, seemed to be convinced of her guilt, and expressions of horror came from every mouth. It was reported that she had taken two of the children with her—many asked why she had left the third. Carter insinuated that it was because he bore his father's name, Walter.

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Around the Globe

Archbishop McEvoy of Toronto has bought the *Catholic* of that city and will transfer the office of *Catholic* to Toronto, Canada.

San Diego, Cal., Catholics have erected a monument to the memory of Father Black, whose labors were finished in aid of the mission days. Two thousand witnessed the unveiling on All Souls' Day.

Mr. Burns, the ex-king of Calgary, one of the most famous Catholics in Canada, has donated two hundred acres of land to Father Lacombe, O.M.I., for his projected home for the poor and destitute.

Six Flemish priests, mission-aries of the Sacred Heart, arrived in Boston, recently on the Red Star steamer *Comet*, from Antwerp, on their way to Hawaii. Two of them had spent in Hawaii before, one thirty years and the other ten years.

The Rev. Joseph A. Smith, assistant pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, residing in St. Catharines, Ontario, that borough, on Nov. 20, 1908, was born in Philadelphia, and has been a priest twenty-three years. He was formerly attached to the church of St. Vincent de Paul, Manhattan.

The death is reported from Newtownbutler, County Fermanagh, of Mrs. Catherine Keenan, claimed to be Ireland's tallest inhabitant. Mrs. Keenan had attained the remarkable height of 118 years, 90 of which she had spent on a lonely island in Long Island. She had clear recollection of the incidents following the rebellion of 1798, and used to tell of a tragic affray in 1829 between Protestants and Catholics, traditionally remembered as "Mackin's Fight." A crowd of boys, Connor Mackin was hanged in connection with the fight.

To perpetuate the memory of Rev. Father DuCharme, founder of the Seminary of St. Theobald in Montreal there is a movement on foot to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of that college by erecting a monument to him. On the anniversary of the superior of the seminary, Rev. Canon Jamin, it is announced that he will contribute \$500 toward the cost of the monument.

News From Home

Verdun, France, The American Red Cross has received a donation of \$100 from the Verdun chapter of the American Legion.

St. Louis, Mo., The American Red Cross has received a donation of \$100 from the St. Louis chapter of the American Legion.

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Philadelphia, Pa., The American Red Cross has received a donation of \$100 from the Philadelphia chapter of the American Legion.

Boston, Mass., The American Red Cross has received a donation of \$100 from the Boston chapter of the American Legion.

New York, N. Y., The American Red Cross has received a donation of \$100 from the New York chapter of the American Legion.

San Francisco, Cal., The American Red Cross has received a donation of \$100 from the San Francisco chapter of the American Legion.

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Norfolk, Va., The American Red Cross has received a donation of \$100 from the Norfolk chapter of the American Legion.

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