

## CHAPTER VIII.

PATRICK O'DONOGHAN.

The information which Dr. Schwaryencrona had received was not very important, but it sufficed to start his inquiries in a new direction.

He had learned the name of the ex-director of the Canadian Transportation Company, it was Mr. Joshua Churchill. But they did not know what had become of this gentleman since the dissolution of the company. If they could succeed in finding him, he might be able to give them some information about the old records of the company; perhaps there might have been a list of the passengers by the "Cynthia," and the baby might have been registered with his family or with the persons who had charge of him. But their investigations proved very unsatisfactory. The solicitor who had formerly had the books in his possession as the receiver of the company about ten years before; did not know what had become of Mr. Churchill. For a moment Dr. Schwaryencrona consoled himself with a false hope. He remembered that the American newspapers usually published a list of the passengers embarking for Europe, and he sent for a number of old gazettes to see if he could find the "Cynthia's" list; but he was soon convinced that this was a fruitless effort. He discovered that the practice of publishing the names of passengers on European steamships was of comparatively recent date. But the old gazettes were of one use to him, they gave the exact date of

sailing of the "Cynthia," which had left on the 3d of November, not from a Canadian port as they had at first supposed, but from New York, to go to Hamburg.

It was therefore in New York that the doctor must first make his investigations, and, if unsuccessful, then in other parts of the United States.

At Hamburg all his inquiries proved to be useless. The consignee of the Canadian Transportation Company knew nothing about the passengers of the "Cynthia," and could only give them information about the freight, which they had already obtained.

Erik had been in Stockholm six months when they learned that the ex-director, Mr. Joshua Churchill, had died several years before, in an hospital, without leaving any known heirs, or probably any money. As for the registers of the company, they had probably been sold long before as waste paper.

These long researches led to nothing, except to provoke the sarcasms of Mr. Bredejord, which were wounding, to the doctor's self-love, who, however, did not as yet give way to despair.

Erik's history was now well known in the doctor's household. They no longer forbore to speak openly about it, and the results of their researches were talked of both in the dining-room and the parlor.

Perhaps the doctor had acted more discreetly during the first two years of Erik's sojourn with him, when he had kept his affairs a secret. Now they furnished food for the gossiping of Kajsa and Dame Greta, and even occupied the thoughts of Erik himself; and his reflections were often very melancholy.

Not to know whether his parents were still living, to reflect that he might never be able to discover the secret of his birth, was in itself a sad thought to him; but it was still more sad to be ignorant of the land of his birth.

"The poorest child in the streets, the most miserable peasant, knew at least what his country was, and to what branch of the great human family he belonged," he would sometimes say to himself, as he thought of those things. "But I am ignorant of all this. I am cast on the globe like a waif, like a grain of dust tossed by the winds, and nobody knows where I came from. I have no tradition--no past. The spot where my mother was born, and where her ashes now rest, is perhaps profaned and trodden under foot, and I am powerless to defend and protect it."

These thoughts saddened Erik. Sometimes he would tell himself that he had a mother in Dame Katrina, and a home at Mr. Hersebom's, and that Noroe was his country. He vowed that he would repay their kindness to him fourfold, and would always be a devoted son to Norway, but still he felt himself in an exceptional position.

Sometimes when he caught a glimpse of himself in a mirror, he could observe the physical difference between himself and those surrounding him. The color of his eyes and his skin often occasioned him gloomy reflections. Sometimes he would ask himself which country he would prefer to be a native of if he had a choice, and he studied history and geography that he might become better acquainted with the civilization of different countries, and with the habits of their inhabitants. It was a sort of consolation to him to believe that he belonged to the Celtic race, and he sought in books a confirmation of the theory of the doctor.

But when the learned man repeated that in his opinion he was certainly Irish, Erik felt depressed. Why among all the Celtic race should he belong to the people who were the most oppressed? If he had felt absolutely sure of this, he would have loved this unfortunate country. But all proof being wanting, why might he not rather believe that he was French? There were certainly Celts in France, and it was a country that he would have been proud to claim as his own, with her glorious traditions, her dramatic history, and her fruitful principles, which she had disseminated all over the world. Oh! he could have passionately loved, and served with devotion, such a country. He would have felt a filial interest in studying her glorious annals, in reading the works of her great authors, and in studying her poets. But alas! all these delicate emotions were denied him, and he felt that the problem of his origin would never be solved, since after so many years spent in making inquiries they had learned nothing.

However, it seemed to Erik that if he could pursue these inquiries himself, and follow up the information already obtained, that he might discover something which might lead to some result, and his activity and zeal might succeed where money had failed. Would he not work with an ardor which must overcome all difficulties?

This idea took possession of his mind, and insensibly had a marked effect in his studies, giving them a special direction; although he was not aware of this fact himself. As he had made up his mind to travel, he commenced to study cosmography and nautical matters; in fact, everything that was taught in the school for marines.

"Some day," he said to himself, "I will pass my examination as a captain, and then I shall go to New York in my own vessel, and pursue my inquiries with regard to the 'Cynthia.'"

As a natural consequence, this project of personally investigating the matter of his birth soon became known, for he was candid himself.

Dr. Schwaryencrona, Mr. Bredejord and Professor Hochstedt ended by becoming interested, and finally adopted his views as their own. The question of Erik's birth, which had at first only been an interesting problem in their eyes, engrossed them more and more. They saw how much Erik took it to heart, and as they were sincerely attached to him, they realized how important it was to him, and they were disposed to do

everything in their power to cast some light upon the mystery.

One fine evening, just as the vacation was approaching, it occurred to them that it would be a good idea to make an excursion to New York together, and see if they could, obtain any further news about the matter.

Who first conceived this idea was a disputed point among them, and gave rise to many discussions between the doctor and Mr. Bredejord, each claiming a priority. Doubtless it occurred to them both simultaneously; but be this as it may, the proposal was adopted unanimously, and in the month of September the three friends, accompanied by Erik, embarked at Christiana for New York. Ten days later they had reached that city, and opened communication with the house of Jeremiah Smith, Walker & Company, from whom they had received the first intelligence.

And now a new agent appeared on the scene, whose assistance they had had little suspicion of, and this was Erik himself. In New York he only saw what would assist him in his search. He was up at daybreak visiting the wharves, accosting the sailors, whom he might chance to meet, working with indefatigable activity to collect the most minute intelligence.

"Do you know anything about the Canadian Transportation Company? Could you tell me of any officer, or passenger, or sailor, who had sailed on the 'Cynthia'?" he asked everywhere.

Thanks to his perfect knowledge of the English language, his sweet and serious countenance, and his familiarity with everything pertaining to the sea, he was well received everywhere. They mentioned to him successively several old officers, sailors, and employes, of the Canadian Transportation Company. Sometimes he was able to find them. Sometimes all traces of them were lost. But none of them could give him any useful information about the last voyage of the "Cynthia." It took fifteen days of walking, and searching incessantly, to obtain one little bit of information which might prove valuable, among all the confused and contradictory accounts which were poured into poor Erik's willing ears.

This one little truth however seemed to be worth its weight in gold.

They assured him that a sailor named Patrick O'Donoghan, had survived the shipwreck of the "Cynthia," and had even returned to New York several times since that eventful voyage. This Patrick O'Donoghan had been on the "Cynthia," on her last voyage, and had been a special attendant of the captain. In all probability he would know the first-class passengers, who always eat at the captain's table. They judged by the fineness of the infant's clothing that he belonged to this class. It was now a matter of the greatest importance to find this sailor.

This was the conclusion of Dr. Schwaryencrona and Mr. Bredejord, when Erik informed them of his discovery, when he returned to the Fifth

Avenue Hotel to dinner.

As usual it led to a discussion, since the doctor tried to draw from this discovery a confirmation of his favorite theory.

"If ever there was an Irish name," he cried, "Patrick O'Donoghane is one. Did I not always say that I was sure that Erik was of Irish birth?"

"Does this discovery prove it?" asked Mr. Bredejord laughing. "An Irish cabin-boy does not prove much. It would be difficult, I fancy, to find an American vessel without one or two natives of Erin among her crew."

They discussed the matter for two or three hours, neither of them willing to give way to the other.

From that day Erik devoted all his energies to the task of finding Patrick O'Donoghane.

He was not successful it is true, but by force of seeking, and questioning, he discovered a sailor who had known this man, and who was able to give him some information. Patrick O'Donoghane was a native of the County Cork. He was between thirty-three and thirty-four years old, of medium height, with red hair, black eyes, and a nose which had been broken by some accident.

"A boy one would remember among a thousand," said the sailor. "I



recollect him very well, although I have not seen him for seven or eight years."

"Is it in New York you usually meet him?" asked Erik.

"Yes, in New York, and in other places; but the last time was in New York."

"Do you know any one who could give me any information about him, so that I could find out what has become of him?"

"No, unless it is the proprietor of the hotel called the Red Anchor, in Brooklyn. Patrick O'Donoghane lodges there when he is in New York. The name of the hotel-keeper is Mr. Bowles, and he is an old sailor. If he does not know, I do not know of any one else who can tell you anything about him."

Erik hurried on board one of the ferry-boats that cross the East River, and ten minutes later he was in Brooklyn.

At the door-way of the Red Anchor he saw an old woman, who was neatly dressed, and busily occupied in peeling potatoes.

"Is Mr. Bowles at home?" he said, saluting her politely, after the custom of his adopted country.

"He is at home, but he is taking a nap," answered the good woman, looking with curiosity at her questioner. "If you have any message for him, you can give it to me. I am Mrs. Bowles."

"Oh, madam, you can no doubt give me the information I desire as well as Mr. Bowles," answered Erik. "I wish to know whether you are acquainted with a sailor named Patrick O'Donoghane, and whether he is now with you, or if you can tell me where I can find him?"

"Patrick O'Donoghane: yes, I know him, but it is five or six years since he has been here, and I am unable to say where he is now."

Erik's countenance displayed such great disappointment that the old woman was touched.

"Are you so anxious to find Patrick O'Donoghane that you are disappointed in not finding him here?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed," he answered. "He alone can solve a mystery that I shall seek all my life to make clear."

During the three weeks that Erik had been running everywhere in search of information, he gained a certain amount of experience in human nature. He saw that the curiosity of Mrs. Bowles was aroused by his questions, he therefore entered the hotel and asked for a glass of

soda-water.

The low room in which he found himself was furnished with green tables, and wooden chairs, but it was empty. This circumstance emboldened Erik to enter into conversation with Mrs. Bowles, when she handed him the bottle of soda-water which he had ordered.

"You are doubtless wondering, madam, what I can want with Patrick O'Donoghane, and I will tell you," said he, with a smile.

"An American vessel called the 'Cynthia' was lost about seventeen years ago on the coast of Norway; Patrick O'Donoghane was employed on board. I was picked up by a Norwegian fisherman when I was about nine months old. I was floating in a cradle attached to a buoy of the 'Cynthia.' I am seeking O'Donoghane to see if he can give me any information about my family, or at least about my country."

Mrs. Bowles uttered a cry that put a stop to Erik's explanation.

"To a buoy, do you say? You were tied to a buoy?"

But without waiting for any reply she ran to the stairway. "Bowles! Bowles! come down quickly," she cried, in a piercing voice.

"On a buoy! you are the child who was tied to the buoy! Who ever would have expected such a thing to happen?" she said, as she returned to

Erik, who had turned pale from surprise.

Was he going to learn the secret which he was so anxious to make out.

A heavy footstep was heard on the stairs, and soon an old man, fat and rosy, clothed in a complete suit of blue cloth, and with gold rings in his ears, appeared on the threshold.

"What is the matter?" he asked, rubbing his eyes.

"Here is somebody who wants you," said Mrs. Bowles; "sit down and listen to the gentleman, who will repeat what he has told me."

Mr. Bowles obeyed without any protestation; Erik did the same. He repeated in as few words as he could what he had told the old woman.

As he listened, the countenance of Mr. Bowles dilated like a full moon, his lips parted in a broad smile, and he looked at his wife, and rubbed his hands. She on her side appeared equally well pleased.

"Must I suppose that you are already acquainted with my story?" asked Erik, with a beating heart.

Mr. Bowles made an affirmative sign, and scratching his ear, made up his mind to speak:

"I know it without your telling me," he said, at length, "and my wife knows it as well as I do. We have often talked about it without understanding it."

Erik, pale and with tightly compressed lips, hung upon his words, expecting some revelation, but this he had to wait for. Mr. Bowles had not the gift of either eloquence or clearness, and perhaps his ideas were still clouded with sleep, and in order to recover his faculties he took two or three glasses of a liquor called "pick me up," which greatly resembled gin.

After his wife had placed the bottle and two glasses before him, and he had sufficiently fortified himself, he began to speak.

His story was so confused, and mingled with so many useless details, that it was impossible to draw any conclusions from it, but Erik listened attentively to all he said, and by questioning and insisting, and aided by Mrs. Bowles, he ended by gathering some facts about himself.