

THE O'CONNORS OF BALLINAHINCH

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The O'Connors of Ballinahinch by Mrs. Hungerford

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MRS. HUNGERFORD

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OF BALLINAHINCH**

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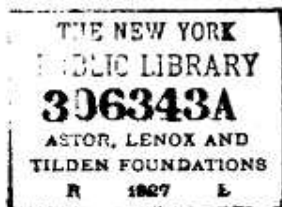
BY
MRS. HUNGERFORD
("THE DUCHESS")

AUTHOR OF

"MOLLY BAWN," "HER LAST THROW," "MRS. GEOFFREY," ETC.

M O

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MOY WAS
SLIP
VIA

TO
MY COUSIN
MARY HAMILTON
IN MEMORY OF A DAY THAT I HOPE
SHE TOO REMEMBERS

31. BRENDA'S
July.



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THE
O'CONNORS OF BALLINAHINCH.

CHAPTER I.

“To mortal men great loads allotted be.
But of all packs, no pack like poverty.”

“Poor old Dad !” says Kitty, softly sighing. Kitty could hardly do anything *but* softly, she is so fair and so plump. *Fat* is a horrid word ! We always call Kitty plump, it sounds so much better. She is two years younger than Geraldine (who is twenty-one) and a year older than I am. Her height is about five feet nothing, and she has melting blue eyes, and a lovely mouth, and the jolliest temper I know. I do love Kitty !

“Oh ! it's a shame, a shame !” cry I, with all the vehemence that characterises me. “*Fancy* his having to give up his hunter, and hunting is just the one thing

he loves best. Darling Dad! I can't bear to think of it."

"And just at the end of his life, too," says Geraldine, who, for her, seems wonderfully sympathetic. Of the three of us, Geraldine is the one least likely to give herself away on the score of emotion. She is tall and dark, and rather Spanish in appearance. The south of Ireland has produced these Spanish types every now and then, ever since the landing (as they *say*) of the Spanish Armada. But they say so many things nowadays that one never feels sure of the truth of anything. At all events, Geraldine is as dark as though a southern clime had ripened her, whilst as for me—I am nothing—nothing at all. A mere 'twixt and between—a sort of balance for the other two. Geraldine is taller than I am—a very little taller—Kitty is shorter; Geraldine is darker, Kitty is fairer; Geraldine is what is generally called a "fine girl" (though you couldn't possibly make her madder than to tell her so, and, indeed, Kitty and I reserve this expression for occasions when *Geraldine hasn't been to us all she ought to be*); Kitty, as