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THE LAST IRISHMAN.

(Translated from the French of Elie Berthet, by C. M. O'Keefe, for the Boston Pilot.)

CHAPTER XIII.

(Continued.)

Richard proceeded to where five or six stout fellows were mounted on as many horses which they had taken from the stables of Lord Powerscourt. To each man he gave a sealed letter, with verbal orders in case the letters were lost. Then advising prudence and celerity he permitted them to depart. A few minutes afterwards these six horsemen were scampering from the gates of the park, carrying to different parts of Ireland exact details of the rebellion of Wicklow.

Now that this important duty was performed, O'Byrne proceeded seriously to number his men. Some thousands were present, apparently determined to fight till death; but only two or three hundred, at the very outside, were armed with muskets. The remainder had clubs, forks, scythes, and other instruments of tillage. In the mountains—anywhere indeed except in the open plain—these men might be formidable, and their numbers were likely to increase, so soon as their success were blazed abroad through the country.

The principal chiefs were interrogated by O'Byrne who furnished them with the most detailed instructions as to what they had to do. As they were for the most part old soldiers, accustomed to discipline and danger, these chiefs could be relied upon. There was a sad want of ammunition among these men; but he hoped to find it in the police barracks. A great show of armed patriots to inspire the people with courage and animate them to resist their oppressors was, O'Byrne believed, the main ingredient in the success of rebellion.

After reviewing his men in the park, Richard was returning to the house, when he met Daly, led by little Patrick Kavanagh.

"Well, Daly, our success surpasses our expectations—the conduct of Wicklow is worthy of its old renown, and I begin to helere—"

"I was looking for your honor. I have news for you," interrupted Daly.

"Well, what is the news?"

"According to your honor's desire, I sent out a few poor fellows to lurk in the passes of the mountains, and watch the movements of the soldiers. One of them has just informed me that he saw bayonets glittering in the Scalp—the red coats are coming."

"What! already?—so much the better—our men are in excellent spirits—we shall attack them in the gullies and defiles where we may overwhelm them with ease. A single victory now would have incalculable effects upon our subsequent efforts. Do you know their position?"

Daly communicated all that he was acquainted with. When O'Byrne had heard the details, he exclaimed:

"Very good!—the hand of God is visible now—they must pass through the defile of the Good Messenger, where I shall expect them.—But now we want action, not words."

He issued orders to Jack Gunn, who, seizing a hunting-horn (discovered in the house) summoned the men by its notes. The multitude came from all sides, swarming round him. Ascending a slight elevation, Richard waved his hand, and the deepest silence fell on the multitude. With a few warning and encouraging sentences, he announced the approach of the regular troops, and his intention to attack them.—They heard him in silent stupefaction. Impressed from their earliest infancy with awe for the power, army, and government of England, the audacity of this proposal filled them with terror. But the animation and courage of their chief—his well-known talents, and the confidence they felt in their own numbers, enabled them to subdue those instincts of oppression. After hesitating for a moment, the whole assembly exclaimed—

"O'Byrne for ever!—We'll follow you to the world's end. Hurrah for ould Ireland!—Freedom for ever!"

"Forward, then, my fellow-countrymen,"—shouted Richard O'Byrne, electrified himself by this explosion of patriotic sentiments; "our oppressors are longing for war—let us give them enough of it. The object of our enterprise is not to castigate a cruel Lord, or punish a pitiless master. We aspire to something higher: our object is to sweep from the fields of our country the Saxon tyrant, who for ages pressed his iron hand on our hearts, our lips, and our consciences. War, then war, without truce or relaxation, until Ireland has re-attained her rank amid the European nations. In a cause so sacred we ought to be ready to sacrifice our property and our lives. Up, then, my fellow-countrymen—rise in arms like our ancestors, when they overwhelmed the Danes with defeat, and swept them from the shores of Clontarf. Let us show the insolent 'Sassanahs' that we are ready to perish to the last man rather than sacrifice our rights, our religion, and our independence."

This short speech had a powerful effect. The

Irishman is nearly as impulsive and impressionable as the Frenchman himself. The hearers of O'Byrne were in a frenzy of impatience and enthusiasm. Desirous of profiting by this tide while it was at the flow, Richard called for his horse. While a servant was flying to Lady's Church for O'Byrne's horse, that adventurer summoned to his presence an old hard-weather fisherman from Fingal, who had spent his wandering youth on board a privateer, and employed his mature years in smuggling; but who, in spite of his former bad character and evil antecedents, was remarkable for his verbal veracity and rigid adherence to truth.

"Come, Tom Lynch," cried O'Byrne, assuming that devil-may-care manner which charms the rude class Lynch belonged to, "come, my hearty, I have a job for you. As your fellows have no fire-arms, there's no use in their coming with us; so stay here and guard this house. But you must first give me your solemn promise that you will permit no one to pilfer the property of Lord Powerscourt while I am absent."

"Oh, by gar, it's too hard to expect the boys to remain idle, and they having only to stretch out their hands to gather the gold, or the worth of it. And sure, your honor, the old varmint that owned them was as worthless as an old pipe-stopper. There was no more good in him than in a quid of 'bacca after it's chewed," said Lynch, while masticating a lump of the weed he alluded to.

"No matter what he is, you must promise."

The old pirate looked alternately right and left with a puzzled air of embarrassment; he quickly made up his mind, however, and squinting a jet of saliva to a distance of six feet, he grumbled—"Well, since it's your honor's command, I'll warrant there shall be no thieving, if I have to—"

"That's enough," said O'Byrne; "your word is as good as another man's oath. I am tranquil."

He departed without noticing the strange smile that lighted up the brown face of the wrinkled tar.

The armed masses were already in motion.—Richard mounted his horse to guide their march in his own person. The moment he was in the saddle, Jack Gunn, with his bugle slung behind him and his flag-staff in hand, appeared riding behind O'Byrne. At the same time, the young schoolmaster came running out of breath.—"Your honor," said he, in a low, hurried voice, "we discovered the young lady in the Pavilion of Ruins, where she was barricaded with her governess. She is crying and lamenting, and insists upon seeing you immediately."

"It is impossible," cried Richard, with visible emotion; "I cannot quit my post at such a time. What can Lady Ellen want with me? I have taken measures for the safety of her person and the protection of her property—I can't go."

He was about to gallop off when the schoolmaster interposed: "Your refusal will afflict her, and add to her grief; and she is already bad enough, forsaken as she is by her father and the other person."

Richard O'Byrne was shaken by this remark. "With this good horse your honor might reach the Pavilion in a few seconds. After spending an instant with Lady Ellen, you can easily rejoin your men before they reach the mountains."

"That is true. I must not forget that she kept my secret, when a single word would have ruined me. I shall go."

He commanded Gunn to gallop forward, and inform the insurgents that he should quickly rejoin them. He then plunged into the avenue leading to the Pavilion.

Notwithstanding the rapidity of his progress, he could easily perceive that the protection which he endeavored to extend to the property of Lord Powerscourt had not been effective and complete. Some of the trees were broken;—and cracked branches were hanging and swinging in the air: some were chopped with hatchets, and torn and stripped of their bark and boughs. The statues had been mutilated, disfigured or dashed down from their pedestals. The rustic kiosques—empty and half-ruined—were destitute of doors and windows. Loud, mischievous, and merry groups of boys and girls were strolling or gambolling through the park, and proved that they were its masters by destroying its ornaments. Some of the pillagers were busy trawling the ponds which swarmed with fish. Farther on, an old housekeeper, who had wrung the necks of two fine foreign geese, which swam upon the lake, was carrying them quietly to her home, with the view of converting them into broth for her children; they were swinging over her shoulder and dangling down her back.—Richard, however, did not dream of punishing such violations of his commands. He never arrested the progress of his horse, which raised a cloud of dust around him, until he reached the eminence on which stood the Pavilion. He found Cleary and a few peasants strolling, standing or lying down before the entrance. Cleary

appeared desirous of speaking to the Colonel;—but the latter, flinging his bridle to the servant, passed at once into the tower. He found Lady Ellen and her governess in the room previously described. Breakfast remained untouched upon the table, and apparently forgotten amid the agitation and vicissitudes of the day. Mrs. Jones was sitting in an arm chair with her face buried in her hands. Lady Ellen, dressed in a handsome morning negligé, was walking up and down with a bewildered air. The unnatural hectic which crimsoned her cheek, and the feverish brilliancy of her eye indicated internal and extraordinary agitation. On seeing Richard, she approached and saluted him with an air of politeness that was dashed with bitterness.

"I thank you for coming, Captain O'Byrne," said she; it is a great favor: I quite appreciate its value. Fortune favors you, Mr. O'Byrne; and the descendants of Branduff revenge their cause on the partizans of Queen Victoria. It is quite just, I suppose; receive my felicitations, Lord O'Byrne. You were hiding yourself a few days ago, and now you are Commander-in-Chief—you are the head of the rascals who drove us from our house, and intended to demolish it. But in spite of all these injuries, I do not regard you as the worst of my enemies."

So saying, she resumed her promenade, whilst occasionally striking her forehead with her hand.

"Forsaken and forgotten," she murmured, "I might expect such treachery from Sir George, who is the incarnation of baseness and treachery. But my father, whom I respected so sincerely and loved so fondly—"

Her sorrow was so deep and true that Richard, in spite of the wrongs he had suffered at the hands of the young Englishwoman, was deeply affected by her grief.

"Lady Ellen," said he, with a penetrating tone, "your position grieves me, and I am desirous of ameliorating it. Like you, I have my trials, and suffer sorely in my family affections; and I know the pain such wounds occasion. But if I can do nothing against the principal object of your complaints, it is at least in my power to protect yourself, and wherever I have authority you shall be safe."

"Yes, I know," replied Lady Ellen, in an ironical tone, "I have been informed that Captain O'Byrne is a generous conqueror, and I shall be neither a captive nor a hostage; such generosity is worthy of a prince, and I ought to express my gratitude to the Lord of the O'Byrnes. After so many years of oppression, the heirs of the right owners might justly prove merciless towards the race of usurpers; they might, for instance, employ their power in torturing a young female forgotten by her kinsmen. Such conduct would harmonize with the barbarous traditions of which they religiously preserve the recollections. I, myself, fool that I am, was full of sympathy for the vanquished, and almost regretted that I was born among the conquerors. But I have been punished. I can now see what they mean by patriotism; that word signifies robbery, violence and murder."

"Don't say so," cried Richard, "in spite of the respect which your sex and your misfortunes are entitled to, I would not suffer any one besides yourself to speak so harshly in my presence, of those miserable people whom injustice and cruelty have forced into legitimate rebellion. As to myself," he added, perusing Lady Ellen with a penetrating glance; "I trust Lady Ellen will not dispute my right to protect a female of my family, and this although Lady Ellen shared in the vile intrigues by which that female was so nearly entrapped."

A sentiment of sincere astonishment covered the fine face of Lady Ellen with an expression of surprise. "Your sister! Intrigues in which I participated!" she repeated. "I do not understand you, Mr. O'Byrne, and request an explanation."

"What!" exclaimed O'Byrne, with an explosion of feeling, "Can it be possible! Have I been deceived when I accused you of this odious complicity? This morning you wrote to Miss O'Byrne, to induce her to repair to Powerscourt House, and you surely must have known that your father had then signed a warrant for the apprehension of Julia O'Byrne."

"The apprehension of Miss O'Byrne!—it is madness—it is extravagance! Explain this riddle, Sir."

"Well, Lady Ellen, I shall summon courage to unfold the horrible secret. I have already had power to tell it in the presence of thousands."

He narrated the melancholy history of his sister, as well as the event of the night before, near the Lake at Glendalough. The face of Lady Ellen alternately expressed shame, indignation, and pity.

"The infamous wretch," she exclaimed, alluding to Sir George. "He is more contemptible than I supposed. I had no idea of such horrible scandals, Colonel O'Byrne—and my father was likewise ignorant of such hateful projects. Had

I been able to foresee them, I should have rushed into the midst of the constables and made a rampart of my breast to protect your sister! No; I knew nothing—I suspected nothing. But, in truth, this morning the idea came into my head, that you might be connected with the misadventure of Sir George; and I sent to your sister to know the truth on this point—to ask her if you were connected with the assault, and to take measures to prevent the disastrous consequences that might result to yourself. That was all, I assure you, Colonel O'Byrne. But appearances were against me, and you had a right to execrate me."

"I have suffered cruelly in consequence of those appearances, Lady Ellen; in consequence of the esteem I bore you, and—why should I not avow it?—the affection you inspired. But pardon my suspicions. I should have remembered that you are too frank—too noble-minded. He took the hand of the young lady, who withdrew it without being displeased.

"My time is short," Richard continued; "and I cannot remain longer without exposing myself to just blame. Please tell me what asylum you select during these tempestuous times, and you shall be instantly conveyed thither with the respect which you deserve."

"How could I think of such a subject in the midst of such chaos?" said Lady Ellen with anguish. "Can I not remain in Powerscourt House, under your protection, attended by my servants?—It is the most suitable retreat for a young girl forsaken by her kinsmen and even her own father."

"With your permission, Lady Ellen, I see great difficulties in that project. Should I reside constantly in the neighborhood of Powerscourt House, you likewise might reside there; for then no injury could possibly reach you. But war is about to begin; and God knows where the chances of war may carry me. Now, in my absence, I dare not answer—I have raised a tempest which I may not be able to govern. As to your servants, you would know what reliance may be placed on them, if you could have seen them a while ago warmly receiving your enemies."

Mrs. Jones, who, like a well-instructed governess, hitherto appeared indifferent to the conversation, now started up in tears, and throwing herself into her mistress's arms, sobbed and stammered incoherent protestations of eternal fidelity.

"Calm yourself, my dear Jones," said Lady Ellen, no less affected than her governess: "Colonel O'Byrne does not mean you." "Well, sir," she added, "if I cannot remain at Powerscourt House, I must rejoin my father. Let my horse be prepared; and let Jones have a horse; for she is a passable equestrian. Let some trusty man accompany us, and we shall depart at once."

"But where will you go, Lady Ellen—do you know where your father and relative have gone? besides would it be prudent on your part to travel almost alone through a country torn by civil war?"

"That is true—but what am I to do? Ah, Richard O'Byrne," added Lady Ellen, with a sigh, "who could have dreamt, when you met me in the Dublin steam packet, that a day would come when you would pour such a deluge of calamities on me and my family?"

A moment's silence followed this remark.—Richard O'Byrne finally resumed: "The best thing you can do, Lady Ellen, is to remain in the village where you possess friends, and must certainly be safe. Two houses will afford you an asylum—one the house of Parson Bruce, the friend of Lord Powerscourt; he is wealthy and has daughters of your own age."

"Do not mention parson Bruce or his family," exclaimed Lady Ellen, interrupting him. "How could I receive the friendship or assistance of a family for whom I have always expressed dislike? Are you quite sure, sir, that I should receive sympathy in my misfortunes from the family of parson Bruce? Mention the other house in which you say I can find an asylum—let it be what it will, it must contain hearts more sincere and hosts more cordial."

"That house, Lady Ellen—I am very reluctant to mention it,—it is the house of my brother, Angus."

"With my dear Julia,—with your good afflicted sister," exclaimed Lady Ellen, in a tone of enthusiasm, "I shall be able to see her whenever I like, and afford her the consolations she requires. I accept the offer, Mr. Richard. Let us depart—let us go to Julia!—Mrs. Jones, are you ready?"

"Lady Ellen," said Colonel O'Byrne, "your soul is full of nobleness; but have you considered well—have you reflected on the terrible probability which weighs at present on this poor girl?—Besides the house is small."

"Do you think such considerations will arrest my purpose?—In my eyes Julia is as pure as snow. As to the privations which I may suffer, under your brother's roof, the kindness and affec-

tion I shall find there will amply compensate them. Besides, Mr. O'Byrne," she added, lowering her voice; "another consideration induces me to seek an asylum in a Catholic manse.—Notwithstanding your confidence in futurity, no one knows which party may prove victorious in this struggle.—Well, if God should give the victory to England, my presence in your brother's house may prove a protection to Julia—to the priest, and perhaps to yourself."

"Thanks for that idea, Lady Ellen; it did not occur to me. If you are determined to accept my offer, let us lose no time—your governess will hasten to your apartment in Powerscourt House, and select such articles of dress as you may require. Then the schoolmaster will conduct you both."

At this moment confused noises were heard outside the Parillon. Richard was going to ascertain the cause of this disturbance, when the door suddenly burst open, and the schoolmaster appeared.

"Oh, your honor!" he cried in breathless haste.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Richard with painful anxiety. The poor youth could not speak, but he showed by a significant gesture clouds of smoke rising above the trees, in the direction of Powerscourt House. "What is the matter?" cried O'Byrne.

"The house is on fire!" stammered the schoolmaster.

The two females, at this affecting sight, uttered cries of terror.

"Impossible!" resumed Richard. "Lynch gave me his solemn promise—the rascal cannot have deceived me!"

"It was Lynch himself that set fire to the house, your honor. Unable to control the exasperation of the peasants who hate Lord Powerscourt, and were anxious to plunder the house, he threw wisps of lighted straw into the principal apartments, and the house was soon in a blaze. He had promised, he said, to prevent theft and robbery, and had recourse to conflagration in order to realize his promise."

"The miserable wretch! he shall pay dear for his useless crime," cried Richard, with eagerness.

"Stop, Richard," said Lady Ellen; "do not compromise your authority by an act of violence. You may easily perceive by the quantity of smoke that assistance is now useless—give the vengeance which chastises us full scope, lest it fall upon yourself as well as us."

In spite of her courage she clasped her hands upon her eyes, to shut out the painful sight of her father's house in flames. Richard said something to the schoolmaster: he bowed with an air of assent.

"Mr. O'Byrne," resumed Ellen, "you are at liberty to depart; but we shall see another soon, no doubt, at Julia's.—Miserable as you have rendered me, the family of O'Byrne is more to be pitied that of Powerscourt; and the misfortunes which have happened to us diminish the remorse which your wrongs occasion." She saluted O'Byrne with dignity, and left the place, followed by her governess.

The schoolmaster, on whom the task of protecting Lady Ellen had been imposed by O'Byrne, conducted her by a path which prevented her from seeing the real condition of Powerscourt House, of which the black, deplorable and ruinous appearance must have filled her with anguish. One person, and one only, lost his life in the conflagration; this was McDonough, who was confined to bed by his wounds. Whether it was stupid ignorance, or atrocious hate, on the part of the incendiaries, it is impossible to say; but certain it is, the unfortunate man, abandoned in an outhouse, saw himself, with unspeakable terror, surrounded with flames, and unable to fly. His cries of agony, and yells of despair, were poured thick and fast, and rang through the edifice; but all to no purpose: it was impossible to succor him, though some of the honest peasants made the vain attempt. The "turn-coat" was burned alive. The curse of the blind man was realized in this way, and the melancholy event appeared to the inhabitants of the country as the judgment of God, the obvious effect of divine reprobation upon one of the most merciless persecutors of the Catholics of Wicklow.

CHAPTER XIV.

Julia O'Byrne, after the terrible scene on the fair green, had been carried to the priest's house, in the most alarming condition. Vexation, chagrin, and incessant agitation of mind had long sapped her constitution. But the events of that day were deadly. She was hardly at home when a succession of accidents hurried her to the verge of the grave. In the first moments of the crisis she might have been possibly saved by the assistance of an able physician; but it was impossible to find a doctor in the frightful perturbation which distracted the country. For want of better, two old women of the village, who were supposed to know something of medicine, were summoned to her assistance; but their traditionary recipes