

MCENEIRY THE COVETOUS.

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—What a rare punishment
Is avarice to itself!

VOLPONE.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN all were reconciled, John of the Wine took McEneiry apart and asked what he could do for him? McEneiry told him his business, and obtained the letter without difficulty.

"Here," said Seaghan an Fhiona, "although I wrote to him before about you, recommending him to send for you, as I understand there is not a man from here to himself, stands more in need of a cast of your office."

McEneiry thanked him, and set off for Ulster, playing his harp at the houses on the way-side, and staying no more than a night in any one place 'till he arrived within sight of the Castle of the great O'Neil. When he drew near the house he hid his old harp among some furze bushes on the side of a hill, for his success as musician on the journey was not such as to render him willing to make any display of the kind before the great chieftain of the north. On reaching the gate of the Castle, he demanded to see O'Neil, and was admitted by the chieftain's orders. He wondered much as he passed the court-yard, at the prodigious number of galloglass and kernes that crowded all parts of the building, besides poets, harpers, antiquarians, genealogists, petty chieftains, and officers of every rank. When he entered the presence of O'Neil, he could hardly avoid springing back at the sight of his countenance. However, he restrained his astonishment, and laid aside his bonnet and girdle with a respectful air, after which he delivered his letter.

"Are you the man," asked O'Neil, when he had read it, "that was with my friend O'Connor of Carrigfoile?"

"I am, please your lordship."

"Well," said O'Neil, "and when will you begin the operation?"

"In the morning airly, I think would be the best time if your honor was agreeable to it."

O'Neil ordered that he should be hospitably entertained that night. In the morning, about daybreak, McEneiry got up and asked whether the great O'Neil was risen yet?

"He is," replied the servant, "and waiting your directions."

"Very good," said Tom, "let one o' ye go now, and put down a big pot of wathor to bile, and when 'tis bilin' come an' let me know it, an' do ye take it into a big spare room, an' let there be a table put in the middle of it, an' a grain o' flour upon it, and a sharp carvin' knife, an' when all is ready let the great O'Neil come in, an' let us not be disturbed till the operation is over."

All was done according to his directions, and when both were in the room together, and the door made fast on the inside McEneiry addressed the chieftain as follows:

"Now, you great O'Neil, listen to me. Mind, when once we begin you must not offer to say a word, or make any objection to what I please to do with you if you have any taste for beauty."

"Certainly not," said O'Neil, "but will you tell me in the first place, what you are going to do with that carving knife?"

"You'll know that by and by," said McEneiry, so lie down an' do as I bid you."

O'Neil lay down. Tom whipped the carving knife across his throat, and after more cutting and mangling than could have been agreeable, he succeeded in severing the head from the body. He then took the head and washed it carefully, after which he shook a little flour upon the wound, and placed it on the body as it lay lifeless on the table.

"Rise up, Great O'Neil," said he, slapping the chieftain smartly on the shoulder, "and I wish you joy of your fine poll of hair."

It was in vain, however, that he exhorted the great O'Neil to arise and admire himself. The body still lay stiff upon the table, and the head rolled upon the floor as ugly as ever and not half as useful. Tom now began to suspect that he had got himself into a quandary, and did not very clearly see how he was to get out of it. Repeated experiments convinced him that the great O'Neil was come to the end of his career, he