

TALES OF THE JURY ROOM

THE SIXTH JURYMANS TALE

CHAPTER III

McEnery, like a great many people in the world, had a great respect for his own advice. He slept that night at the house of a neighboring farmer who was not so nice in music as John of the Wine, and in the morning early set off for Carrigrohane. It was near sunset when he beheld the majestic castle lifting its head between him and the west, and proudly towering above the waves that lashed the base of the lofty cliff on which it stood. When he arrived at the gate, he was surprised to find all in confusion before him. The courtyard was full of men and women running to and fro, and a large body of kerns and galloglachs were under arms before the door. While he looked on all sides, perplexed to think what could be the cause of all this tumult he saw a man approach, whom he recognized as one of those who had been sent to drive the cows home with him and his man. The poor man saluted him with great respect, and seemed overjoyed to see him. In answer to his inquiry respecting the cause of the confusion which he beheld, the countryman told him that there was confined in the castle, a young boy, a servant of John of the Wine, whose name was Claus o' Faillbhe, or Falvey of the ear, (so called because he had one ear of unusual size.)

"Everybody is sure," said he, "that he will be hanged this evening or to-morrow morning airtly, an that's the reason the 'yre gatherin' to see the execution."

"An' what is it he done out o' the way?" asked McEnery.

"I don't know that, indeed," replied the man, "but they say there's no doubt but he'll be hanged. If the master places to hang him, sure that's no business of ours to ax the reason."

"Surely, surely," assented McEnery. "The quality an' us is different."

At this moment, casting his eyes towards the door of the castle, he beheld O'Connor coming forth with his handsome new countenance looking very mournful. He went toward him, and John of the Wine brightened up a little on seeing him, and received him very cordially.

"I am very glad to see you," said O'Connor, "but I have not time to say much to you now, for I am in great trouble of mind. There is a servant of my own, for whom I have a great regard, in prison in my castle, for some offence he gave to my brother O'Connor of Connaught, who is come to demand satisfaction for the affront he gave him, and I am very much afraid he must be hanged in the morning. I can't tell you how sorry I am for it; for he was one of the wisest men I ever had in my service, besides being an excellent poet, and you know yourself what respect I have for poets, and bards, and all branches of science and learning. However I'll tell you what you'll do. Go in to the castle and stop there to-night. I'll give orders to have you well taken care of, and in the morning I'll hear whatever you have to say to me."

McEnery did as he was desired, and was entertained for the night in princely style. In the morning, hearing a bustle in the courtyard, he arose and looking through a window, saw the people gathering as to behold the execution. He dressed himself as quickly as he could, and coming down to the court, found the two brothers, John of the Wine and O'Connor of Connaught, standing before the castle, surrounded by knights and gentlemen, kerns and galloglachs, waiting to have the prisoner brought forward.

"Well, brother," said John of the Wine, "this is too bad. I hope you won't go any farther with the business now. He got punishment enough for what he did, in the fright you gave him, without carrying it any farther."

"You may defend him, and have him hanged or no, just as you like," said O'Connor of Connaught, "but if you refuse me satisfaction for the affront I have received you must be content to incur my displeasure."

"Oh, well, sooner that assure," says John of the Wine, "if you insist upon it, he must of course be hanged and welcome, without further delay."

He turned to some of his attendants, and was just about to give directions that the prisoner should be brought forward, when McEnery, having heard what passed, stepped boldly forward and made his bow and scrape in the presence of the two brothers.

"Pray, my lords," said he, "might I make so free as to ask what was it the fellow did, that he is going to be hanged?"

O'Connor of Connaught stared at him for some moments, as if in astonishment at his impudence, and then said, turning to his brother:

"What kind of a fellow is this, that has the assurance to speak to us in that manner?"

"He is a man of a very singular profession," replied John of the Wine, "and what profession is it?"

"Why," answered Seaghan an' Fhiona, "he has that degree of skill, that if a man had the slightest features nature ever carved out upon a human head, he could change them into the fairest and most becoming you

ever looked upon. I have reason to know it," he added, "for he tried the same experiment upon myself, and executed it very much to my liking."

"Indeed," said O'Connor of Connaught, "you may well say it is a singular profession, and since you speak of yourself, sure enough, I remarked the great change for the better in your countenance, although I did not like to speak of it before, for fear you might think me impertinent; and what most surprises me is that he should have preserved the resemblance so completely, notwithstanding the great alteration."

"Yes," said John, "everybody says I'm a handsome likeness of what I was."

"Please your lordship," McEnery said, addressing O'Connor of Connaught, "might I make so bold as to ax again, what is it he done amiss, an' if it be left to my decision, I'll add with a tone half jesting, half serious, 'I'll do my endeavours to get at the rights of it.'"

O'Connor of Connaught commanded one of his attendants to tell McEnery what Falvey of the Ear had done.

"Some time since," said the attendant coming forward, "my master came down here on a visit to his brother, and was so much diverted by the wit and sprightliness of the prisoner, that he asked John of the Wine to let him go with him to Connaught for a while. When they were about going, John of the Wine called the prisoner aside, and addressed him in these words. 'Now, you Falvey of the Ear, listen to me and remember what I am going to tell you, for if you don't it will be worse for yourself. My brother is a man of a hasty, turbulent temper, and I strongly recommend to you to keep your wit under check, and take care never to play upon his words, or to make him a smart answer, or take him short in what he may say, for that is what nobody relishes, and what he cannot bear. A satirical tongue, or a mouthful of repartees, Claus,' said he, 'are more dangerous to the owner of them, than to anybody else. You may remember what the Latin poet says:

Mitte jocos non est jocos esse malignum, Nunquam sunt grati qui nocere salas, and moreover: Omnibus minatur qui facit uni injuriam.

meaning, that the honey of wit cannot sweeten the sting of satire, and that the jester is a common enemy, for he who cracks a joke upon one threatens all. But enough said—remember what I tell you. Falvey promised him to be careful, and came with us to Connaught. He went on very well for some time and my master liked him every day more and more. One morning, however, my master and some gentlemen went out fowling in the wood of Landers, belonging to his wife's father, and there he shot a bird, which fell into the top of a very straight and lofty tree. When my master saw that, he said he would be very glad to have the bird down by some means or another. 'I'll go up for it, O'Connor,' said Falvey of the Ear, and accordingly he did so. When he was coming down again with the bird in his hand, my master looked up, and said: 'Niam suas an' gearan ar mo capid.' (I would not go up, there for my neck.) On hearing this Claus looked down at him, and said: 'Do theachair domhadul suas gan curam capid do bleith oram.' (It was hard for me to go up without a horse. The wit of Claus o' Faillbhe's answer turns on the double meaning attached to the one in Irish, which signifies either for or upon, according to its context Claus affected to take it in the latter sense.) At this there was a laugh amongst those who stood by. When my master heard his words played upon in that manner he got furious. 'Take him some of me,' said he, 'until I hang him this instant out of the tree.' They made a run at him, but Claus hopped away from them, and ran homewards. My master and his people followed him a long way, but he had an advantage of them, for he could go all the short cuts across the country, while they, being mounted, were obliged to take the road round. They pursued him to Limerick and beyond, and got sight of him just as he drew nigh over the river Maig, where it flows between Adare and Court. There being no bridge, he had no other way to escape than to leap across the river, and he did so cleverly, and I'll leave it to anybody that ever saw the Maig, whether it wasn't a noble hop. Well, when my master saw that, he forgot all his anger in admiring such a spring. 'Claus' said he 'that was a good leap.' 'It wasn't better than the run I had to it,' replied Claus taking him short again. At that my master got twice as furious as ever, though he was upon the point of forgiving him the moment before. The whole party dashed into the river on horseback and swam across, but with all the haste they could make, Claus was at Carrigrohane before them, and told John of the Wine all that happened, begging of him to save him from his brother. 'Well,' says Seaghan an' Fhiona, 'I told you how it would be, and I don't see any chance of pro- tecting you, for I'm sure I have no notion of getting into a dispute with my brother on account of a trifle, such as the hanging a fellow of your kind. Claus hearing my master at the gate, went up into a turret of the castle, where he is now confined, and waiting the order for his execution."

When the attendant had concluded his narrative, O'Connor of Connaught turned to McEnery, and said with a jesting air:

"And now that you have heard the case, my good fellow, what is your opinion of it?"

"My opinion is, please your lordship," replied McEnery, "that I de- clare to my heart I'd give the poor crathur a chance for his life."

"Well," said McEnery, "cried John of the Wine. 'He is right, brother, and you ought to give the poor fellow a chance.'"

"And what chance do you ask for him?" said O'Connor of Connaught, a little softened.

John of the Wine was well aware of Claus's abilities in verse making, and has no objection to let the com- pany witness a specimen of them.

"The condition I propose," said he, "are these: You see that sea-gull swimming abroad upon the sea. Let him, before the sea-gull rises from the wave, compose extempore, six stanzas, which must not contain a lie from beginning to end, and every stanza ending with the word 'west.'"

"That's a chance an' earnest," ex- claimed McEnery.

"If he does that," said O'Connor of Connaught, "upon my honour, as a gentleman, I'll give him his life, and never say a word more of what has passed."

"That's fair," says John of the Wine.

Accordingly, Claus came forward to the window of the turret in which he was confined, and without rolling his eyes this way or that, or starting, or brushing up his hair, or indulg- ing in any other of the customary tricks of improvisation, recited in a clear and loud tone the following:

Full many a rose in Limerick spreads its bloom With root embedded deep in earth's soft breast; So many miles from hence to lordly Rome, And many a white sail seeks the watery West.

Full many a maid in ancient Cashel dwells, In Carrigrohane feasts many a weary guest; Full many a tree in Lander's shady dells, Shook by each breeze that leaves the stormy West.

Far east a field of barley meets my gaze, Farther, the sun in morning splendour drest; When Lander's daughter views his sinking rays, Two gentle eyes behold the purple West.

Rock of the Basin, it is well for thee! Bright shines the sun against thy lordly crest, While shivering Fear and Darkness wait on me, Thy gallant brow looks proudly towards the West.

Bird of the Ocean, it is well for thee, High swells the wave beneath thy snowy breast, Fast bound in chains I view you foaming sea, While thou at freedom, seek'st the pathless West.

All present agreed that the poet had fulfilled the conditions agreed upon, after which O'Connor of Connaught gave orders that he should be brought down and set at liberty, and obtained the letter without difficulty.

"Here," said Seaghan an' Fhiona, "although I wrote to him before about your recommending him to send for you, as I understand there is not a man from here to your office, more in need of a cast of your office." McEnery 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 much as he passed the court-yard, at the prodigious number of galloglachs and kerns, 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 spring- ing back at the sight of his counte-

ance. 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 Carrigrohane?"

"I am, please your lordship."

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

"In the morning airtly, 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 day-break McEnery 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 of ye go now, and put down a big pot of wather to bile, an' when 'tis bilin', come an' let me know it, an' do ye take it into a big spare room, and 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 'tis ready, let the great O'Neil come till the operation is over."

All was done according to his direc- tions, and when both were in the room together, and the door made fast on the inside, McEnery 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 please what are you going to do with that carvin' knife?"

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

O'Neil lay down. Tom whipped the carvin' 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 face and your fine poll of hair."

It was in vain, however, that he ex- hortated 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 him- self began to suspect that he had not clearly seen 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 was as dead as a herring, and he had little doubt if the family should lay hold of him, that his own was not much farther from its close. After much per- plexity and several cold fits of terror, during which the gallows danced many a hornpipe before his mind's eye, he luckily behought him of the window. The height was consider- able, but Tom wisely, calculated that the chance of a broken leg was prefer- able to the certainty of a dislocated neck, so he let himself drop on the green. Finding his limbs whole, he ran across the country with all the speed of which he was master, to- wards a forest on which the window looked. After some hard running, he reached the hill where he had hid his harp, and judging that he had not time to lose, he quickly raised a cry and cry would be equal, and he deter- mined to conceal his night-fall, and then continue his journey home- ward. Accordingly, he crept in amongst the furze bushes, and covered himself so completely, that he thought it was impossible for the sharpest eye to discover him.

In the meantime, the family of the chieftain were perplexed to think what could be the cause of the long delay made by their lord and the pro- fessor of beauty in the room, which they had locked themselves in. Hearing no noise, they knocked at the door, but of course received no answer. At length their suspicions being awakened, they broke in the door, and their sensations may be im- agined on beholding the great O'Neil weltering in his blood, the window open, and no account of the stranger. Their astonishment giving place to grief, and their grief to rage, they dispersed in all directions, seiz- ing whatever weapons they could lay hands on, and breath- ing vengeance against the murderer. Hearing from his place of concealment the hue and cry that was raised after him, and was ready to die with fear, when, unexpectedly, he felt his legs grasped hard just above the ankles, by two powerful hands. He uttered a yell of despair, and kicked and plunged with all his might and main, but to no purpose. He was dragged forth from his hiding place, and thought all was over with him, when suddenly a well-known voice addressed him in the following words:

"Well, tell me what do you de- serve from me now, after the manner in which you have acted?"

At this question Tom ventured to look up, when, to his great relief and joy, he beheld his man standing before him.

"What do you deserve, I ask you?" said the man.

"I deserve to be pulled asunder between four wild horses," answered Tom, with a look of humility.

"Very well," said the man, "since I see you have some sense of your merits, I will protect you this once, although it would be serving you right if I left you to fall into the hands of your pursuers. But rise up

now boldly and come with me to the castle."

"To the castle!" cried Tom, in terror, "is it to be torn to pieces you want me?"

"Do not fear that," replied the man, "tell them when you meet them, that you could not finish the operation without my assistance, and leave the rest to me."

Tom allowed himself to be per- suaded, and both went boldly forward towards the castle. When the multi- tude beheld McEnery, they rushed towards him with horrible outcries, demanding his immediate death.

"Stop! stop! hear me!" cried Tom.

"We won't hear you," they ex- claimed, with one voice, "you mur- derer, what made you kill the great O'Neil? We'll make small bits o' you."

"Don't," said Tom, "if you do, the great O'Neil will never rise again."

"No wonder for him, when you cut the head off him."

"He'll be quiet," said Tom, "an' I tell ye he'll be as brisk as a kid in half an hour. The operation isn't half done yet, for I couldn't finish it rightly without my man as he had some- thing belonging to the profession that I couldn't do without."

"'Tis true for my master," said the man, "let ye fall back, if ye want ever to see the great O'Neil again."

The people were appeased, and McEnery, with his man, entered the room in which the body lay. When all was made fast, a strong guard being now set on window and door, the man took up the head, and shook a little powder on the wound, after which he placed it on the shoulders, and slapping him smartly on the back said:

"Rise up, now, Great O'Neil, and I wish you joy of your fine features, and your fine poll of hair."

O'Neil jumped upon the floor, and he flattered upon the looking glass, but on seeing the beautiful countenance during which he now possessed, his transports were so great that he had well nigh broken his bones springing and leaping over tables and chairs, and cutting all kinds of capers in his ecstasy. When the vehemence of his glee had somewhat abated, he un- locked the door, and summoned his lady, and all the household to witness the change which had been effected. All congratulated him and caresses on all lavished praises and caresses on as they had done abuse and men- ace before. A grand banquet was made, to which all the chieftains in the neighbourhood were invited. The feasting lasted several days, during which McEnery and his man were treated with all the respect and at- tention due to noblemen of the high- est rank. At length they signified to him their intention of departing, as his duties of their profession would bid them to continue longer at his castle. O'Neil pressed them much to stay longer, but finding this determined, he commanded his herdsmen to fetch forty of the fattest bullocks in his paddock, and while he was doing so ordered his groom to bring forward two noble horses, ready bridled and saddled, for the journey. When all was ready he went into one of his own secret apart- ments, and brought out two pair of boots, one pair full of gold, and the other of silver. Ten men were then summoned to drive home the cattle. "Allow me, Mr. McEnery," said the Great O'Neil, "to present you with this trifling mark of my esteem. These horses, and this gold and silver and the cattle which you behold, I re- quest you to accept as a very inade- quate compensation for the import- ant service you have rendered me."

They took leave all in the castle and departed. When they were passing the furze hill in which McEnery had concealed his harp, he got down off his horse and went to look for it. Finding it safe where he had it, he brought it out and placed it on the saddle before him, when all resumed their journey. When they had gone two or three miles on the road homeward, the man called aloud to the cattle drivers, and asked them who they were? They answered that they were labourers belonging to the Great O'Neil.

"What time," said he, "did he allow you to go, and come?"

"He allowed us a fortnight, or a month, if necessary," replied one of the men.

"Ah!" said the man, "go home, my poor fellows, and till your gar- dens during that time, and we will drive these cattle home ourselves."

Saying this he put his hand into one of the boots and gave each of silver, and sent them away filled with gratitude, and leaving abun- dantly of praise and blessing behind them.

When they were out of sight, McEnery said, after proceeding for some time in silence:

"How very liberal you made your- self, in sharing my gold and silver?"

"Make yourself easy now," said the man, "I did not I am sure alto- gether give one bootful out of the four, and we shall have more in the remainder than we can spend for the rest of our lives."

"That won't do," said McEnery, "you shall have borne in mind that I was the master, and that the whole was given to me."

"Remember," said the man, "that what we have was very easily ac- quired, and therefore we ought to share with the poor; for what we have ourselves does not belong to us altogether, especially when we have obtained it without much trouble. And as to your part, I am sure if I was to leave you where you were, hid in the bush the

other morning, you would be think- ing of something else besides boot- fuls of gold and silver before now."

McEnery said nothing, and they continued their journey in silence, until they reached the foot of Knock Fierns.

"Now," said the man, "we are on the spot where we first met, and as I suppose we must part, let me see how you'll behave yourself, and I hope not as you did on a former occasion."

"Very well," replied Tom, "I am here now, at home and among my own neighbors, and those that know me, and will you let me have the sharing of what we got?"

"Let us hear what division you in- tend to make of it first," said the man.

"There are forty bullocks here," said McEnery, "and if you are will- ing to take five of them, I'll be con- tent with the remainder. There are also four bootfuls of gold and silver, with the exception of what you made away with on the road, and I am satisfied you should take a propor- tionate share of them as of the cattle."

"And do you imagine," said the man, "that any one would be sat- isfied with such a division? I'll leave it to that woman behind you, with the can in her hand, whether I ought to consent to it."

"What woman?" asked McEnery, looking around. He saw no woman, and turning again neither cattle, nor man, nor boots, nor horses were visible. At this second disappointment McEnery began to roar and bawl at such a rate, that it was a wonder he had not the whole neighborhood in commotion. His lamentations were interrupted by the approach of a horseman very genteelly dressed, not with rather a simple expression of countenance, who accosted him civilly, and inquired the occasion of his grief. Tom evaded the question, and feeling very proud of what had taken place, and the stranger, observing a harp in his hand, requested him to play a little, and that if he liked his music, he would give him a piece of money. Tom complied, but did not produce altogether such ravishing strains as when at the castle of Seaghan and Fhiona.

"Indeed," said the stranger, "I can't flatter you on your proficiency in music; but, however, as I know something of the art myself, I will give you this horse, bridle and saddle, as he stands, for your harp."

"Never say it again," said Tom, "it is a bargain," thinking in his own mind that he could make something of the horse by selling it.

The stranger alighted, and Tom got up in his place, but he soon found cause to repent of his bargain. He was no sooner fixed on the saddle, than the horse stretched him- self at full length, and shot like an arrow along the hill side, and taking the direction of the Cove of Cork, flew over hedges and ditches, walls, houses, churches, towns and villages, with such rapidity, that Tom felt as if his life had been left half a mile behind him. When he reached the Cove, the horse suddenly turned, and keeping his off shoulder to the sea galloped, or rather glided, all round Ireland, and never stopped until he returned to Knock Fierns, where the stranger was still stand- ing with the harp.

"Well, how do you like your pur- chase?" he asked with a smile, as McEnery, gasping for breath, sat clinging to the saddle bow, his features pale, his eyes almost start- ing from his head, his hair blown backward in such a manner that he looked more like a maniac than a rational being.

"Oh, take me down, an' the heavens bless you," said Tom, with difficulty. "I'm stuck to the saddle, myself, an' I can't stir. Make haste, or I'm in dread he'll be for the road again."

The stranger complied, and Tom alighted from the horse.

"You may take your horse now," said Tom, "and much good may it do you."

"No," said the stranger, "I can't do that, for what I once give I never take back again. But I'll buy him from you, if you are willing to sell him."

"What will you give me for him?" asked Tom.

"I have a razor here," said he, "and it is endowed with a property, so that let a man's clothes be ever so bad, if you give them the least scarp with it, he will have a perfectly new suit in an instant."

"I declare then," said Tom, "a little touch of that razor would be very much wanting to myself at this moment, for my own are nothing the better for the wear."

The bargain was struck again, and Tom was so eager to be well dressed that he opened the razor in an instant, and cut a small piece off the tail of his coat. No sooner had he done so than he found himself attired from head to foot in the pie- bald uniform of a professed fool, perfectly new, but boasting a greater number of colours than he cared for.

"Well," said the stranger, "are you satisfied with your new suit?"

"I'm made a real fool at last," re- plied Tom, "but tell me what is your reason for playing these tricks on me?"

"You may well ask that," said the stranger, "all that you have suffered is the fruit of your own covetousness. You were extravagant in your days of prosperity, and poverty did not teach you compas- sion."

"I own it," said Tom, with a sorrowful look, "and I blame myself now very much that I didn't take the fair half I was offered both times, since I see you know all about it—or that I did not content

myself with even a part of that same."

"Still," said the stranger, "it is your covetousness makes you express that regret, and not a due sense of your error. And now do you wish to know who I am?"

"I would indeed be glad to hear it," said Tom.

"I am Don Firine," replied the stranger, "of whom I dare say you have often heard, and I reside in this mountain."

At the sound of this famous name, McEnery started back in astonish- ment.

"I heard of your distress," con- tinued Don Firine, "and I came to relieve you when you first left home with your harp, but you were so covetous that I could do nothing for you, although I made several trials, thinking that one or two severe lessons might be sufficient to open your eyes and your heart, but you would not be taught. I would have made you rich and prosperous for the remainder of your life; but now, that fool's coat you wear shall be the only one you shall ever be able to purchase."

Saying these words he disappeared, and McEnery returned to his home poorer than when he left it. His wife and daughter received him kindly, until he told them how he had fared since they parted, and the cause of his re-appearing amongst them in his present ridiculous dress. When they had heard his story, they all joined in blaming him, and though they shared his disappointment could not but acknowledge that he had brought it on himself.

"And now, gentlemen," said the seventh Juror, "comes a difficulty which was hardly contemplated in the regulations of our institution. You all, I suppose, expect either a song or a shilling from me at this moment. I acknowledge my culpability is not having confessed my infirmity at the time when our rules were made, but I'm not the only per- son in the world who has allowed himself to be placed in a prominent position without recollecting that he wanted some necessary qualifi- cation. I never turned a tune in the whole course of my life."

At this announcement there was a murmur of dissatisfaction amongst the jury.

"And I, gentlemen," said another Juror, "am in exactly the same predicament. I think it better to tell you so before it comes to my turn, lest you may accuse me of having any longer deluded you with false expectations. It will be impossible to make me sing inasmuch as Nature denied me the capability, and it would be unjust to fine me for it, as my will is wholly blameless in the affair."

"I fear, gentlemen," observed the Foreman, "if this be allowed we shall have neither songs nor fines. For my own part," he continued, "with a look of increasing determina- tion, 'I am fully resolved to enforce the conditions agreed upon at the commencement of the night's entertain- ment, so long as I am supported by my respected brethren who have placed me in the chair.'"

The fine—the fine—the fine re- sounded from all parts of the room, at the conclusion of this address, and ceased only when the defaulting jurymen had deposited a shilling in the snuff tray. He protested, how- ever, that when offering his inability to sing as an excuse, he had no de- sire to evade the penalty. This un- expected difficulty being arranged, the jurymen next in succession com- menced his tale as follows:

THE EIGHTH JURYMANS TALE

MR TIBBOT O'LEARY, THE CURIOUS

CHAPTER I

In that exceedingly romantic, but lonesome tract of country which extends along the Upper Lake of Killarney, there stood, within my own recollection, one of those antique man- sions, which are to be found in differ- ent stages of decay in many parts of the country. It was easy to see from the style or building, that the hands by which it was raised, had given up business for more than a century at least.

In this house, somewhat less than fifty years since, there dwelt a gen- tleman of very ancient family indeed. He was one of those persons whose faces ought to be turned behind them in order to cor- respond with the prevailing bias of their intellects for he seemed to think of nothing but the past, and was infinitely more familiar with the days of Moses and Zoroaster, than with his own. As to the future, he saw and desired to see no more of it than a man beholds of those objects which stand in a right line behind him. His tastes, if not so entirely sentimental as those of Sterne, who could find more satisfaction in com- muning with a dead ass than with a living Christian, appeared yet suffi- ciently fantastic in their way, to that very limited number of persons who had the honour of being scattered in his neighborhood. A mouldy Irish manuscript, a Danish raft or fort, a craggy ruin of an abbey, or castle which had survived the very memory of their possessors, a moss-covered cromlech, of lonely Druid stone, were to him more welcome company any day in the year, than the wittiest or most sociable amongst his living friends. As to the ladies, if Cleo- patra herself were to arise from the grave, unless her great antiquity might awaken some interest for her, she would find her charms and tal- ents as entirely wasted on the in-

ance. 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 Carrigrohane?"

"I am, please your lordship."

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

"In the morning airtly, 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 day-break McEnery 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 of ye go now, and put down a big pot of wather to bile, an' when 'tis bilin', come an' let me know it, an' do ye take it into a big spare room, and 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 'tis ready, let the great O'Neil come till the operation is over."

All was done according to his direc- tions, and when both were in the room together, and the door made fast on the inside, McEnery 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 please what are you going to do with that carvin' knife?"

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

O'Neil lay down. Tom whipped the carvin' 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 face and your fine poll of hair."

It was in vain, however, that he ex- hortated 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 him- self began to suspect that he had not clearly seen 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 was as dead as a herring, and he had little doubt if the family should lay hold of him, that his own was not much farther from its close. After much per- plexity and several cold fits of terror, during which the gallows danced many a hornpipe before his mind's eye, he luckily behought him of the window. The height was consider- able, but Tom wisely, calculated that the chance of a broken leg was prefer- able to the certainty of a dislocated neck, so he let himself drop on the green. Finding his limbs whole, he ran across the country with all the speed of which he was master, to- wards a forest on which the window looked. After some hard running, he reached the hill where he had hid his harp, and judging that he had not time to lose, he quickly raised a cry and cry would be equal, and he deter- mined to conceal his night-fall, and then continue his journey home- ward. Accordingly, he crept in amongst the furze bushes, and covered himself so completely, that he thought it was impossible for the sharpest eye to discover him.

In the meantime, the family of the chieftain were perplexed to think what could be the cause of the long delay made by their lord and the pro- fessor of beauty in the room, which they had locked themselves in. Hearing no noise, they knocked at the door, but of course received no answer. At length their suspicions being awakened, they broke in the door, and their sensations may be im- agined on beholding the great O'Neil weltering in his blood, the window open, and no account of the stranger. Their astonishment giving place to grief, and their grief to rage, they dispersed in all directions, seiz- ing whatever weapons they could lay hands on, and breath- ing vengeance against the murderer. Hearing from his place of concealment the hue and cry that was raised after him, and was ready to die with fear, when, unexpectedly, he felt his legs grasped hard just above the ankles, by two powerful hands. He uttered a yell of despair, and kicked and plunged with all his might and main, but to no purpose. He was dragged forth from his hiding place, and thought all was over with him, when suddenly a well-known voice addressed him in the following words:

"Well, tell me what do you de- serve from me now, after the manner in which you have acted?"

At this question Tom ventured to look up, when, to his great relief and joy, he beheld his man standing before him.

"What do you deserve, I ask you?" said the man.

"I deserve to be pulled asunder between four wild horses," answered Tom, with a look of humility.

"Very well," said the man, "since I see you have some sense of your merits, I will protect you this once, although it would be serving you right if I left you to fall into the hands of your pursuers. But rise up