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THE IRISH LEGEND OF M'DONNELL, AND THE NORMAN DE BORGOS. A BIOGRAPHICAL TALE.

BY ARCHBISHOP M'SPARRAN. CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

The sentinel was M'Ivnanan, who bawled out, as soon as he knew him, "Arrah, thunderanous, Mister M'Quellan, is that you? May I never heat sheet or blanket with Sheelah, my own callien Roe, but we have been lucken for you those two stricken hours, and your father is as mad as buck or bear, thinking, as I believe, that he will never see you; but I tould him twenty times, so I did, that dwo! a morsel of fear there was of yes, so long as you had a slashing broadsword at your side, dangling down to the heel of your brogue, by the powers. Och, mannann, yes, did you see the ould cappul bawn any where on your tramp, for I'm somehow or other afraid that she'll be starved with hunger, achree? Musha, good luck to yourself, my bochiel more, you have a crawling clarenagh of maddy big with yes. May I ax where you have found that blood-thirsty animal, or that starved winder of a dog that I see creeping after yes like a whiteret? By the tether-stake of Bacon na Bo, I wouldn't give Driver for nineteen dozen of him, so I wouldn't, a halligh. Do you know does he hunt by the heels or the nose, far I don't see that he has the coley marks on him? But dwo! a heel or nose we have to hunt, jewel."

The arrival of Finn M'Quellan at the fortification created universal joy; every individual, from the lowest in rank to the highest, loved him, and under no other banner would they wish to encounter a dangerous enemy sooner than his. He was cool in the midst of danger, and merciful to his most inveterate foes, as was magnanimously shown that night.

In battle his eye was that of an eagle in choosing the most advantageous ground for his men; but he was not possessed of all that bodily strength of which his younger brother was, although few swordsmen could meet him with any safety in the field. Daniel, the second son, had been, from a boy, employed in studying the dead languages, and while an intelligent scholar, he was also an able commander; indeed, it was evident that these young men retained something of their great ancestors, but were not without their common share of alloy and human failings any more than their fellow-brethren of mankind.

Finn M'Quellan was asked by his father on what business he had been that detained him so long out? "Indeed," said he, "I consider

it was in the highest degree impolitic, while we are in the neighborhood of our enemy, that you should hazard your life, and not only your own, but still more, the lives of your countrymen, by going out unattended in the night, for when we had such difficulty to stand our ground to-day, with all our commanders, what must have been the consequence had one of them been taken off?" When his sword was examined, which he brought in with him, some spots of blood were seen on it near the handle, but this, on recollection, was from his own hand, and plainly told where he had been, and also that he had had a re-encounter with one of the above family. His sword had nothing more particular, save that it was remarkably rusty, as if it had been brought from some temple dedicated to the double-faced god that was unopened for five centuries. In throwing off his cloak he observed that the gold clasp was gone, on which the arms of his own family were engraved, and also the likeness of his grandfather in miniature, for whom he was called, and whom he resembled in a most striking manner. "Have I lost it in the struggle," said he to himself, "or has Baldearg wrenched it off? he has not had hold of me, and, therefore, it was impossible." It occurred to him now where possibly it might be, "and if so," said he to himself, "it is only where I could always wish to be."

Having given strict orders to the sentinels that they should have a sharp look out for the enemy toward morning, as he expected they would endeavor to come upon the camp by surprise, he walked out again; but directed his course rather toward the mountain, all the while ruminating on the disastrous events that must happen the ensuing day. The sharp and vigilant voice of the wolf-dog, as he kept guard over his helpless charge, was audible to him, and also the howling of wolves that, disappointed of their prey, were forced to keep the depth of the wood, and express their rage by yells, adding horror to the darkness of nature. "Well," said he to himself, "I find that every being, whether rational or irrational, has its enemies, some, indeed, through necessity, and some only from wantonness and cruelty; but they who have been the unprovoked cause of our late distresses are certainly culpable in the eyes of all just men, and, I would suppose, are unfitting to enter the field of battle, either now, or at any other time.

"But Nathos was on Erin's shore surrounded by night. He heard the voice of the foe amidst the roar of tumbling waves—silent he heard their voice and rested on his spear. Morning rose with its beams, the sons of Erin appear like grey rocks with all their trees. They spread along the coast. Cair-bar stood in the midst; he grimly stood when he saw the foe."—Oss.

Hesperus, the evening star, was now verging above the western horizon, and, from its twinkling beams, seemed sinking to rest; but soon it dipped from his sight, and left the sleeping world sunk in silent night. The whistling sound of the goshawk's wings, roused from its eyrie by some surprise, and swooping over his head, was one of his nocturnal companions. But although these scenes were agreeable to his mind at any other time, yet, in the disposition in which he then was, they passed by almost unobserved. As he had by this time got a considerable distance across the country, leaving the indistinct hum of the camp, he turned to look back toward the place where his enemies were, and saw the light of torches passing backward and forward, as if in the act of some hasty preparation. He immediately conjectured what all this bustle meant, being partly apprised of it, where he lay concealed in the graveyard. He had no other alternative than hurry back and get the garrison in a position of defence as soon as possible, which was not easily or speedily accomplished, for one half of them being appointed to stand in readiness while the other rested, so that they might not be taken by surprise, even should the foe wish to steal a march on them, had just retired to sleep. He did not wish to throw them into a panic by shouting or running furiously into the entrenchment, but, slackening his pace as he entered it, walked coolly up to his two brothers and whispered to them to get out the men and have them under arms as soon as they could, for he feared that O'Donnell had an intention of taking them by surprise. Accordingly, all being made sensible of what they supposed as the intention of the enemy, they were ordered to line the brakes and ditches for more than a furlong in advance of the station which they occupied.

Old Daniel M'Quellan was left in the camp with some of the troops, his son Daniel commanded the advance guard, and each of the others, Finn and Garry, took a right and left, extending their detachments in advance of the central ambuscade. They were not long posted in this direction, waiting in profound silence, when they heard the trampling of horses and men making directly for the entrenchment they so lately had evacuated, and in which there was kindled a large fire of timber that cast a

reflection to the adjacent hills. This caused O'Donnell to believe that they were only keeping watch within the fosse, and, by no means, expecting him at such an early hour, although the morning was advancing with hasty strides. Before he left the old church he had sent his daughter, Laura, with a small detachment to occupy the post below the place which she had done the day before. This was the last of the three crosses, past which had they been able to bring the property of their enemies, the feudal laws then prevailing in Ireland confirmed them in the possession of it; and, in order to encourage them in this last effort, he proposed her to him who should first bring to that station the head of any of the M'Quillans. At this place was erected a large cross, with a bough of holly bound to the top, and, beside it, under a branch of the same, with her two maids, was seated, pale and wan, young Laura O'Donnell, more like a corpse than the bridal prize of a conqueror. Perhaps many females would have been proud of this distinction, being considered as even exciting the troops to victory; but it was much otherwise with her, for she knew that to whatsoever side the victory went, it must wring her heart, being bought by those lives which she esteemed more precious than her own. But how could she endure the sight should the victor come to demand her as his reward? Yes, the exulting victor, having his hands stained in the blood of him who wrapped her in his cloak the preceding night, and purposed, even at the risk of his life, to convey her to the door of the chapel. "No," said she, "before I survive the sight, before I be insulted by the murderer of you, brave M'Quellan, may I lie low and forgotten as the remains of the poor soldier whose interment both you and I witnessed last night."

But a mournful cry from the mountain came, And echoed through the glen; It told a tale to Laura's ear, Yes, told it again and again.

'Twas the hollow moan of the death Banshee, That arose on every blast, It lamented the fate of many a youth Whose final die was cast.

This day with the rosy dawn of morn, You gallantly stride along, But ere the sun will kiss the west, I shall howl your funeral song.

The maiden sits in Tyrconnell's hall, With a spark of hope in her breast, But this night I shall shriek at her lattice pane, Your lover is sunk to rest.

No tender bosom received his head, When the crimson current flowed, But the gravely sod whereon he trod, Was his last and bloody abode.

The patient mother at dark Dunluce Sits sighing for her son; But a dismal yell to her ear shall tell, His final race is run.

Now gentle spouse, ah, hush your babes, And commend them to Him on high, For your William is laid in his gory bed, I have heard his latest sigh.

Daniel M'Quellan, being posted in the way directly through which O'Donnell intended to pass, and aided by the dark of the night, fell furiously upon him, sword in hand. Their eyes being dazzled by the light before them, he drove all into confusion, forcing their front back upon their rear; but as they saw now that he had but a few men, they rallied with double vigor, charging him both front and flank, which shock, he sustained with great intrepidity, until he saw by the light that preceded the rising sun, his two brothers hemming them closely in behind. A dreadful carnage here ensued, just as the glorious lamp of day surmounted the peaks of those mountains lying easterly from the country of O'Canan, with all the serenity and beauty of a winter morning, returning to cheer the drooping earth, and renew the promise made to fallen man by the world's great architect—that promise of the return of day and night. As the watchful sentinel darts upon the nightly robber, or on him engaged in unlawful acts, so darted upon them the harbinger of day, about to report at even to his mighty Author, these scenes of bloodshed, slaughter, and rapine. Each leader strode over the bodies of his fallen friends and enemies, lying indiscriminately together, urging forward his men, and manifesting an example in his deeds, that the most labored oratory could not pourtray to those around him.

The war-cry of Baldearg was reverberated from hill to hill—"Stand to the colors—support the flag—maintain your ground to an inch—remember the honor of great Tyrconnell and Owen Roe O'Donnell." On the other side, "Stand to the eagle of De Borgo; she spreads her wings to defend you—remember the battle of Hastings, and the invincible sword of William the Norman." "Vengeance! vengeance!" shouted old Daniel M'Quellan, "vengeance, and the redress of our wrongs!" as he rushed forward brandishing a weighty Baile na sluadh around his head, and waving his arm aloft, called aloud to his galloglaghs—"Come on, come on; my brave fellows, and witness the deeds of an old man." All the forces of M'

Quillan were now engaged to a man, hand to hand with the enemy; and as the immortal Homer says:—

"So helm to helm, so crest to crest they throng, Shield urged on shield, and man drove man along."

The actions of this veteran inspired all who saw him, dealing death on every side with the terrific weapon, until he met with a stout opponent in Owen Roe, who, with a spring, seized on the instrument of death, and grappling each other by the gorge, both fell to the ground, when O'Donnell, who was rather the younger and more vigorous of the two, rolled uppermost, and drawing a skeon-fadd,\* which hung in a scabbard at his side, was about to end the contest, but three fingers of his sword hand that instant was carried away by the blow of a sabre, and hearing a cry—the flag of Baldearg is down, he sprang to his feet, and defended himself bravely in his retreat; but his helmet, by the stroke of a sword aimed at his head, was divided in two, where it lay on the ground.

The conflict near to the colors of O'Donnell had been doubtful for a long time, and was bravely supported on both sides until Roderick O'Donnell fell covered with wounds. This having dispirited his followers, and the flag being lowered, the entire line that had obstinately and sullenly maintained their ground inch by inch, now gave way, and a general rout ensued from right to left, the M'Quillans pursuing, and hacking and slaughtering, until the flying and scattered wings of Baldearg's men formed themselves into a solid body near the old chapel, where the cattle were defended by a strong guard; these they called forth, and also the detachment at the last cross, which was but a few veterans; and now they stood all together prepared for the last engagement, and determinedly awaiting the approach of their enemies. The success of the last conflict was greatly owing to the manner in which Finn M'Quellan organized his men, taking the assailants in their own net, although no soldiers could maintain their ground more heroically in the moment of doubt, than they did. However, the troops having breathed a few minutes, Finn M'Quellan, having mounted a little eminence that rose in the centre, called aloud,— "My brave countrymen, you have not deceived me to-day. I was personally a witness to the deeds of each individual. We have taken vengeance in part for the ills which undeservedly we have suffered; and, I doubt not, but our formidable enemy would, at this moment, be happy that he had neither crossed the Bann nor the Foyle. Before you, on the bloody turf, lies a noble young soldier, Roderick O'Donnell; he fought like a lion against us, and when he fell, he fell in the bed of glory, being covered by the standard-bearer and flag. We will, in honor of himself, inter him as a soldier of his rank ought to be interred; for, my brave fellows, the struggle not being finished, we know not who may return the humane act to us in the evening. As there remains part of the work yet to be done, and perhaps as difficult a part as that which we achieved, I call upon you all, in the name of your country, your parents, your wives, and tender infants, to strike the blow, and not have it told by future generations, that Baldearg victoriously carried off our spoils, or that the walls of this old cemetery witnessed the eagle of De Borgo crouching to the bloody flag of Owen Roe Baldearg."

"By the cave of Dunkerry," said M'Ivnanan, "I see the ould cappul baan, and some ugly hangman rasal riding upon her; bad luck to the shambling cullion. Och, Mr. Macqueelen, will you let me go down and knock the brains out of the imperant scavenger, and I'll be back before yes would bless yourself three times in Irish, jewel." "We shall accompany you," said M'Quellan, smiling, and waving his sword around his head, called, "Now for the cattle and M'Ivnanan's cappul baan." From right to left, and from van to rear, the war-cry, Farah, farah, farah, was uttered, and that, assisted by the brazen-lunged trumpets, and ancient cornua, rattled like a peal of thunder through the old building, then entering the tall oaks of Dreenagh, travelled up the streams of the Curlyf to its source. Little Dunn, (I mean the dog that almost unaccountably had attached himself to him the former night,) kept as closely by him through the day; and, notwithstanding all the difficulties with which he was surrounded, remained unhurt, even when many a brave man fell both on right and left. The O'Donnells, with their allies, commanded by Cahir Roe O'Dougherty, awaited them with all the coolness and determination

\* The skeon-fadd, or long knife, was a weapon in form of a carving-knife, but two-edged like a lance, and was used by the Irish when in short holds.

† The Curly is a little stream having its source in the back part of that hill now called the Kady. On the northern bank was a large fort called Dunmore, erected by the Danes. It gets its name, I believe, from the roughness of its current occasioned by the beds of gravel, basalt, and sandstone over which it passes; if then, after some windings, pays its tribute to the Roe by mingling its waters with his.

of an enemy, resolved either to conquer or fall on the field.

The two lines closed from one extremity to the other, barricading the front of each with heaps of slain. There was no manoeuvring or taking the advantage on either side; but what the arm of flesh, or the all-attempting spirit of man could do, was not wanting. The cattle were now left undefended, or even looked after, for all were engaged in the mortal conflict.— They crowded together and from their lowings testified their innocent dread of the deadly carnage that reigned around. Owen Roe mounted an old bended thorn, that grew in the front of the church, and called aloud to his forces. "The day is our own, I have dyed my sword in the blood of M'Quellan, your enemy; on, on, I say, and bear forward the red glory of Baldearg, that never returned unless victorious from the field of battle." He had wounded Daniel M'Quellan slightly, which, in part, authenticated his sayings, but it only served as a stimulus to him in the sequel. It was now the three brothers against O'Dougherty and the two brothers, and old Daniel against Owen Roe, sword to sword, foot to foot, and shield to shield. The contest had wrought down the hill, the Baldeargs driven by the others, though sullenly urged, and what was still more wonderful, even unknown to themselves. Poor Laura O'Donnell was left alone with only her maids, and could easily, from her station beyond the little brook, see the battle, which, from reasons perfectly known to the reader, was to her of all others the most appalling.— Alas! she had not known of the fall of her brave brother, whose blood lay frozen and clotted on the spot where he fell. No, these doleful tidings were not known to her, and, perhaps, at that crisis it was much better. The only sight that engaged her attention was the white plume of Finn M'Quellan, waving over all their heads, and forming a signal which the troops followed with as much avidity as the Norman eagle. I will not say, had either her brothers or father been as conspicuous as he, but her attention might have been as much attracted towards them, and perhaps more; however, there was something of pity to be retained in a people's cause, who were contending for their own rights, and those of their country. In regard of the white plume, it was one wrought by her and her fair friend, Arelina, for him during the holidays at Dunluce. They had formed it partly from the feathers of domestic fowl, and partly from those sea-fowl that deposit their eggs in the cliffs overhanging the ocean near to the castle. Finn M'Quellan, at that time, though young, was much older than either his sister or Laura O'Donnell, and was about entering, as a volunteer, the army of great O'Neill of Clanbuoy. The plume was white, as becoming a young soldier, and, being beautiful to the eye, was as well known by its gentle fabricator; but at the time of its construction she little thought it would come forth nodding slaughter and devastation against her father, her brothers, and her country. But it came only in defence of its rights, as I said before, and she from her heart was fully disposed to give all justice in that case; and if there was any other cause why Laura kept her eye so steadfastly fixed on it, I leave it to my readers, who are much better arbiters in such matters than I can pretend to be, to judge what that cause was. The plume of Daniel was green, and that of Garry a mixture of two—white and green. Each wore a weighty target on the left arm, and a brass corslet, having a red cross depicted on the right breast; which cross all the descendants of the De Borgos wore, as representing their alliance to Robert, Duke of Normandy, son to William the Conqueror. Owen Roe Baldearg, and his three sons, wore red plumes, as being characteristic of their name; each of them also was harnessed with weighty helmets and targets, as was also O'Dougherty. It was customary then to wear a sword with a basket hilt, that covered them a considerable length up the arm, and these weapons were so highly tempered, that when the bearer would draw a circle around him on any kind of a pavement, the point of the sword was followed by a train of fire like that proceeding from gunpowder, and with such armor the two rival families were equipped.

It appeared now to both sides that this conflict must end the mortal fray, and the god of

\* The last engagement between the rival clans of O'Donnell and M'Quellan was fought in the field of Gortmore, lying north of the church, and approaching even to the wall of the graveyard. The O'Canans were said honorably to have stood by with all their fierce galloglaghs and witnessed the well-contested strife; although they could have turned the scale to whatsoever side they pleased. In the storm of battle, it is told by an old man that the chiming or ringing of the swords against each other gave a horrible grandeur to the scene.

† We often hear of many, and hard-fought battles in the present day, as certainly there are; but in times so far back as those in which I am speaking, when chivalry was in all its glory, and a warrior ever after branded as a coward, should he yield the victory to any force, there is not the least shadow of