



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1861.

No. 3.

TURLOUGH O'BRIEN; OR, THE FORTUNES OF AN IRISH SOLDIER.

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE WARRANT.

Almost at the same moment when the old servant thus planted himself against the chamber door, were heard upon the outside, voices and the noise of feet; the latch was raised, and there followed a loud and peremptory knocking.

'Leave the door, Donovan—stand aside, I command you,' cried Sir Hugh, vehemently.

With a mute gesture of despair the old domestic obeyed, and at the same moment the knocking was still more loudly repeated.

'Come in, whoever you be—come in,' cried Sir Hugh, sternly.

The summons was hardly uttered ere it was complied with, and Miles Garrett, accompanied by an officer, and strange to say, by the identical red-faced sinister-looking personage who had a few evenings before placed Grace Willoughby in such fear and actual peril, in the wood of Glindarragh—the ruffian Hogan, accounted precisely as he had been on that eventful day, and all three followed by a party of soldiers, entered the chamber.

'Ha, Miles Garrett,' exclaimed Sir Hugh, in unmeasured amazement.

His gaunt kinsman answered not, but turned upon him a look before whose ominous significance, in spite of his constitutional hardness, the old knight felt a certain sinking of dismay.—The hard features of the unexpected intruder were unnaturally pale, and through the habitual cunning of his eye glared something wolfish, as with a rapid sweep it took in the contents of the chamber. He waved his hand to his soldiers, who halted at the door, and advancing some paces into the apartment, without removing his high-crowned hat, he paused by a little chamber, and resting his gloved hand upon it, drew himself up to his full height; and eyed the old knight still in silence with a look in which agitation and hatred were strangely blended.

'Miles Garrett,' said the old man slowly, and with subdued sternness, as he returned his gaze, 'there's ruin in your face; speak out, man—what is your message?'

'One that you need scarce be in such haste to hear,' retorted Garrett, slowly and with something bordering upon a smile, but so hideous and unearthly that it bore no more resemblance to what a human smile should be than the fire damp of a graveyard does to the blessed sunshine of a summer's day.

'Do you know that gentleman, sir?' he added, sternly, pointing toward Hogan, who was standing with his legs apart and his arms folded, leaning impudently at Grace Willoughby, who, terrified at his presence, stood trembling, while her color came and went in quick succession, behind the old knight, and clinging instinctively to his hand.

'Do you know that gentleman, sir?' repeated Miles Garrett, with louder and more insolent emphasis.

'Spare your breath, sirrah,' retorted Sir Hugh, reddening with indignation; 'I'm not to be frightened by loud talking, and you know it.'

'So much for the respect you pay the king's commission,' said Garrett, glancing at the officer, to call his attention to the fact. 'You have, however, yet to learn, sir, that his majesty has servants who will firmly do their duty, and who will enforce submission and obedience, though they may fall in procuring that respect which every loyal subject cherishes for the authority they hold.'

'Miles Garrett, once for all, speak plainly,' cried Sir Hugh, stamping passionately as he spoke. 'What is your business here?'

'To arrest you,' replied Garrett, gruffly, and fixing his malignant eye steadily upon the old knight, for he had now perfectly recovered his self-possession.

There ensued a pause of some moments. 'How?—me!' at last exclaimed Sir Hugh. 'Ay, you, sir—you,' retorted Garrett, with fierce and insulting emphasis.

'Me! and for what—upon what charge?' urged Sir Hugh, glancing indignantly from man to man. 'Tell me, sir—in God's name tell me, what am I accused of?'

'Treason—high treason—levying war against the king,' replied Miles Garrett, coolly.

'Treason!' echoed Sir Hugh, vehemently—'treason; the charge is false, all false; you you know it, none better—false, false as your own black heart—villainously false! Oh, Miles Garrett, Miles Garrett, you double-dyed villain; this is all your doing. Yes, you d—d traitorous scoundrel! Oh! that you but dared to leave this feud to the arbitrament of the sword; old as I am; that I could, but meet you foot-to-foot, and hand to hand, in a fair field, and strike but one good blow for my life; but I forget myself; I am half a child, and do but heighten your cowardly triumph by chafing thus in the meshes. I will be more a man.'

He turned to his terrified daughter, and while he spoke some words of affection and comfort in her ear, Miles Garrett, addressing the officer, placed a letter in his hands.

'This, sir,' said the latter, 'is for my superior in command. Corporal O'Higgins, take this letter to the colonel.'

The man departed, and Garrett continued, turning to Sir Hugh, and a second time pointing toward the ill-favored personage who accompanied him—

'You know this gentleman, I presume?'

'I know him not,' retorted Sir Hugh, more calmly; but if he were a gentleman, methinks he would know better than to stand covered, as you do here, and in a lady's presence.'

'This gentleman is a chief witness against you,' continued Garrett, with a stern emphasis upon the word, 'and, as I venture to predict, will prove a conclusive one. Upon his information you are about to be arrested and removed; and upon his testimony you are likely ultimately to lose your life. Am I sufficiently intelligible?'

'And who or what are you, sir, who are so very ready to swear away the life of an innocent man?' asked Sir Hugh, bitterly.

'Who am I—phew! What the devil does it matter who I am, or what I am either?' replied Hogan, with a grin and swagger—

'My thrade's a horse doctor, acushla, says he, 'An' I'll cure you for nothin', alians ma chree!'

These verses he sang with coarse buffoonery, and then continued—

'What is it to you what I am, any more than that I'll tell the truth, an' if that puts a nail in your coffin, it's no fault of mine, surely.'

'Hold your tongue, sir, interposed Garrett, bluntly. 'It seems, then,' he continued after a brief pause, and turning again toward Sir Hugh—'it would seem that you are not acquainted with the person of this gentleman, he was about to say, but the recent exhibition restrained him, and he modified the phrase—'of this deponent. Well, observe me, sir, I desire to acquaint you with the nature and substance of his charge; I shall deal with you directly, and above board.'

'Directly and above board!' repeated Sir Hugh, slowly and sarcastically, and then with a bitter smile he shook his head.

'Ay, sir,' continued Garrett, doggedly, 'you shall be dealt with indulgently beyond what I fear you will eventually appear to have deserved.'

'Miles Garrett,' cried the old knight, vehemently, and with an expression which struggled between rage and strong disgust, 'forbear to mock me with this loathsome cant. Enjoy your villainous triumph, like the bloody and crafty man you are; but insult me not by naming indulgence, directness, honesty—in connection with your atrocious mission of perjury and blood.'

'This it is to hold the king's commission of the peace in times like these,' ejaculated Garrett, with a smile of contemptuous resignation. 'What rebel ever liked his punishment yet? Strike high or strike low, 'tis all one—no pleasing them!'

At this moment a firm and rapid step was heard, accompanied by the clang of the long cavalry sword ringing upon the pavement, and Col. TurloUGH O'Brien entered the room.

The blood which but a moment before retreated to her heart, had left her cheek pale as monumental marble, now sprung tingling through every channel to the beautiful face of Grace Willoughby, in a tide so full and warm, that her very neck, and even to her temples, glowed with bright vermillion; and her eyes, hitherto fixed in wild alarm upon the strange and dreaded actors in the scene, now sank to the ground.

As O'Brien entered he removed his plumed hat, and bowed with grave, it might almost have been sorrowful respect, Sir Hugh and to the beautiful lady who clung by his arm.

'Have I your permission,' he said, in a constrained and somewhat haughty tone, addressing Sir Hugh, 'to confer for a moment with this gentleman, Miss Garrett, of Lisnamoe, whom,' he added, with a slight bow to that gentleman, which was as slightly returned, 'I presume I see here now.'

'Colonel O'Brien,' replied Sir Hugh, proudly and sadly, 'you have the power, and for aught I see to the contrary, the king may soon give you also the right, which I believe you claim, to use this Castle of Glindarragh, and all belonging to it, even as you list.'

'This comes,' observed Miles Garrett, with a savage sneer—for the blush which, at the entrance of the handsome soldier, had mantled the face of the beautiful girl, and still more, perhaps, Sir Hugh's allusion to O'Brien's ancestral claim, had somehow roused the worst passions, of his evil nature into keener activity—'this comes of men usurping what they cannot keep. Cuckoos ought not to build in falcon's nests!'

TurloUGH O'Brien's dark eye flashed for one moment upon the last speaker, with a look whose

proud and savage fire might well have warranted the image which its glance rebuked; and Garrett, ugly, ungainly, and repulsive—requited the noble glance of the soldier with a look to the full as firm, but one in which caution and craft alone tempered the undisguised and sanguinary ferocity which now lighted up its awakened significance.

Adverting his glance from Miles Garrett almost as quickly as he had first bent it upon him, Colonel O'Brien turned again to Sir Hugh, and with an air and tone of proud respect which touched the old knight, he said—

'I have your permission, then, Sir Hugh Willoughby, to remain here for a few moments!'

'You have, Colonel O'Brien—you have,' returned the old man, in a tone more gentle than he had yet employed; 'and though the question be but a form, I thank you—with all my heart I thank you—for the courtesy which prompts it.'

Strange to say, the very friendliness of spirit in which this slight respect was greeted by Sir Hugh, had the effect of repelling the stern and haughty nature of the younger man; in an instant the habitual remembrances of inveterate feud were awakened, and the deep chasm of hereditary hostility yawned again between them. He bowed coldly to Sir Hugh, and, turning to Miles Garrett, observed—

'I shall glance again at this letter, the contents of which as yet, I am but imperfectly acquainted with.'

All this while Mr. Hogan, with his hands buried in his waistcoat pockets, stood whistling in profound contemplation of one of the old portraits which hung upon the walls, and with his back turned full upon the speakers; and in the deep recess of the window, TurloUGH O'Brien was soon absorbed in the perusal of the letter.

'Sir Hugh Willoughby,' resumed Garrett, with singular calmness and gravity, 'it is fair you should know what has been sworn against you. This Mr. Hogan lost some cows and horses about the beginning of this month; he procured a warrant of search, and having reason to suspect that your herds had stolen them, he proceeded hither with his friends; and mark what follows: just ten days since, at fall of evening, he asked leave, under this warrant, peaceably to look for his cattle.'

'Peaceably!' echoed Sir Hugh. 'Good! sir, proceed.'

'Peaceably,' repeated Garrett, 'to search for his cattle concealed, as he believed, within this castle; he was accosted from the shot-hole overlooking the gate by you, sir, and denied admittance, insolently and peremptorily denied admittance; he then fixed the warrant itself upon a staff.'

'Would he swear it was not upon a pike-staff?' said Sir Hugh, with indignant and sarcastic emphasis.

'Upon a pike-staff, was it?' repeated Garrett, quickly, and paused in anxious silence for an answer; while his eye, intent with cat-like vigilance, watched every movement of his prey.

'Go on, sir, go on—if you mean to speak more, go on,' said Sir Hugh, with intense and bitter scorn.

'Yes, sir, if you will; he conveyed it to you, as you say, upon a pike's end,' resumed Garrett; again pausing for a second or two at the last word; but receiving no answer from Sir Hugh, he quickly continued, raising his voice as he proceeded, 'You, sir, received it, tore it to pieces, threw it to the winds with your own hands, and defied the poor gentleman who claimed admission in virtue of its authority to enter; and now, like a vaporing coward—ay, sir, start and scowl and glare as you may—a vaporing pot-valiant coward, you dare not, dare now avow your own braggart action.'

Miles Garrett had well calculated the effect his words were likely to produce upon one of his hearers at least, for, boiling with rage and scorn, the old knight was upon the very point of giving rash and vehement utterance to all that Garrett most desired to hear him speak. There was, however, another listener upon whom his language wrought to very different purpose, so suddenly that it seemed as though an apparition had started from the floor, TurloUGH O'Brien stood between Miles Garrett and the enraged old gentleman.

'Forbear!' he cried, in a tone of stern and deliberate command, as, with outstretched hand, he warned Sir Hugh; 'forbear—speak not for your life—speak not a word—for your child's sake, speak not.'

The suddenness and energy of the apparition which thus interposed, in all the impressiveness of command and warning, effectually checked the impetuosity of the knight, and a dead silence of some seconds followed.

'Sir Hugh Willoughby,' continued the soldier, almost sarcastically; 'there is a homely adage which says that least said is soonest mended.—Beware of ungoverned passion—and rush not into admissions which may touch your life.'

Come, Sir Hugh, be a man, and a calm one, or so surely as you stand there, and living at this moment, your enemies will take you in the snares of death.

'Oh! he is right, he is right, dear father—he speaks truly,' said Grace passionately, throwing her hands about the old man's neck, and clinging to him in agony of love and terror; 'answer them not, dear father—for my sake answer them not. Oh! good sir,' she said, with a piteous smile, as she turned to Miles Garrett, and pleaded sweetly with him, all unconscious of the hideous passions with which she thus essayed to parley, 'he is hasty, easily moved, but kind and gentle, and forgiving; for pity's sake, sir, do not chafe his spirit now.'

'Grace—Grace, my girl,' said Sir Hugh, turning to her, sadly and sternly, 'speak not to that bad man; you know not, perhaps you never may, wherefore I say it; but, my child, speak not to him, look not upon him, avoid him as the incarnate curse of our family—one that has been the great destroyer of all that, for us, time can never, never with all its crowding changes and chances—never restore again. My innocent child, my darling—my only, only child—I will not tell you more; but, once for all, hold with him no communion.'

He kissed her forehead with a melancholy fondness, as he concluded.

'Colonel O'Brien,' said Miles Garrett, eyeing the officer askance, while his face grew white and livid with concentrated rage, 'you attend here under the direction of that letter, and to obey my orders; beware, sir, how you exceed your duty.'

'Pshaw, sir, reserve your lectures for your bailiffs and constables,' retorted TurloUGH, with cold contempt; 'we both act under orders, you as well as I, and yours are not, and cannot be, to treat your prisoners as dangerous admissions.'

'I know my duty and its limits,' replied Garrett, while his face grew paler and paler, and the scowl upon his brow grew blacker and deadlier, 'and one of its behests is to unmask all treason and to expose all traitors, no matter, Sir Colonel, whose livery they may wear.'

'Sir Hugh Willoughby,' said the soldier, coldly, and without appearing to have so much as heard the last observation of Miles Garrett, 'you are my prisoner; I arrest you under this warrant, which has been handed to me for execution. This second paper is a summons directed to you, and which I now deliver, to attend the Privy Council in Dublin Castle.—It is my duty to provide an escort for your safe conveyance, which shall be done; and now, Mr. Justice,' he continued, turning to Miles Garrett, 'I am responsible for Sir Hugh Willoughby's appearance, and shall deliver his person into custody in Dublin, as required. You have no further business here, I presume.'

'None, sir,' replied Miles Garrett, with an affectation of carelessness, 'none. You are now accountable, and let me tell you, sir, an error on the side of strictness is more easily mended than one the other way. You scarcely can be too rigorous for caution in this case; 'tis enough to meet rebellion in the North; we must not let it spread into the South; examples must be made, and shall before long; above all, be strict and do not scruple in all respects to treat him as a military prisoner, for such he virtually is; in a word, sir, alike for others' warning and his own security, exercise severity. You understand me—severity!'

'Severity! good, sir,' repeated O'Brien, coldly. 'Have you anything further to suggest before you depart?'

'One word more—one word,' continued Garrett, as he directed a look, in which malignity and meanness struggled for the ascendancy, toward the old knight and the beautiful girl who clung to him with all the moving agony of love and terror, 'I would have you prevent communication between the prisoner and other persons, even those nearest to him in kindred; on that very account, perhaps, the most dangerous with whom he could hold intercourse. You will see the necessity of this measure.'

'From the young lady, his daughter, you mean?' inquired TurloUGH O'Brien, in the same cold tone.

'Certainly, most certainly,' replied Garrett, eagerly catching at the suggestion which, relieved him from what even he felt to be the embarrassing necessity of being more explicit.

The father, with a mute gesture of despair, drew his daughter still more closely to him; and, with a bursting heart, and false face, gazed on her loved countenance, while she, clinging to him: with the very wildness of fear and love; turned her imploring eyes in mute appeal from Miles Garrett to the soldier, who, with stern and thoughtful brow, was moodily pacing the floor to and fro. One quick glance he stole toward his prisoner, and addressing Garrett, said—

'No doubt the course you name was safest—wisest.'

'Clearly,' interrupted the magistrate. 'Would this duty had fallen to another's lot!' ejaculated TurloUGH.

'But then,' resumed O'Brien coldly, 'the lady is very young—almost too young to share in treasonable enterprises. What think you?'

Miles Garrett shook his head.

'You really apprehend danger to the king's government in this young lady's being admitted to converse with her aged father?' said TurloUGH, sarcastically. 'Do I understand you rightly, Mr. Garrett—are you serious?'

'Take your own course, sir,' replied Miss Garrett, hastily; 'and if there be any miscarriage in the matter, on your head be the consequences.'

'Nay, but would you have me separate them from this moment?' persevered the soldier;—'were not that undue severity?'

'Sir, I have said my mind already on the matter,' replied Garrett, doggedly. 'Your duty is plain; what your conduct may be I pretend not to divine.'

TurloUGH bit his lip, as he for a moment fixed his eye steadily upon the magistrate. He turned, however, sharply on his heel, without speaking, and walked to the window.

Meanwhile Garrett prepared, though lingeringly, to depart.

'You will need to make all possible despatch,' he said, once more addressing O'Brien, as he drew on his gloves; 'you have a weighty responsibility cast upon you, sir, and I venture to caution you, as a young man, against yielding to any influences, save those of duty only.'

As he spoke, he glanced at Grace Willoughby with a significance so obvious that, spite of her fears and agitation, a feeling of a very different kind for a moment overcame her, and she blushed so deeply that even from her neck to her very temples glowed with the crimson tide. Thus she stood overwhelmed with confusion and maidenly resentment, still holding by her father's arm, and with her eyes turned to the floor, while her quickened respiration was visible through the heaving of her silken bodice.

'Enough, sir,' replied the soldier, sharply and emphatically; 'and let me caution you in turn against intruding gratuitous advice where impertinence may be resented, and where its repetition may be punished. I have no more to learn from you; your presence is useless to me, and obviously painful to others; so, in mere decency, methinks it were better to withdraw.'

Miles Garrett was on the point of retorting; but the prudence of villainy prevailed, and he restrained the angry emotions which experience had taught him to control. He tapped Hogan upon the shoulder, pointed the way to the door, and having glanced hesitatingly for a moment or two successively at the other occupants of the chamber, he turned abruptly, muttering something between his teeth, and without addressing one word to those whom he was leaving, strode gloomily from the room.

Overcome with the agitation of the scene through which she had just passed—her heart wrung with feelings the most agonizing and exciting—poor Grace Willoughby no sooner saw herself relieved of the hateful and dreaded presence of those who had just departed, than, yielding herself up to the torrent of passionate grief and affection, terror and tenderness, which had long struggled in her bosom, she threw her arms around her father's neck, and covering him with kisses, wept and sobbed as if her heart would break.

TurloUGH O'Brien, meanwhile, stood stern, dark and silent, in the deep recess of the window, looking forth with compressed lips and a clouded brow upon the retreating forms those from whom he had just received his dread commission. He suffered this uncontrollable burst of feelings to expend itself without interruption, and it was not till many minutes had passed that he again addressed the fallen master of Glindarragh.

'Sir Hugh Willoughby,' said he, 'I am now, as you are aware, accountable for your appearance in Dublin: your person is in my keeping. I shall place you, however, under no unnecessary restraint. You are a gentleman, and your word is all I require to assure me that you will not attempt escape, while under my charge. We must reach Dublin within five days, and the sooner, therefore, we leave this the better. We have a hundred miles of bad road before us, and twenty miles a-day is as much as my men are accustomed to travel.'

'I am your prisoner, sir,' replied the old knight, with melancholy dignity; 'you have a right to command my movements. In trusting to my honor, as you propose, you will not find yourself mistaken. One request I have to make, and that is, that my poor child may be allowed, as you have heard her so earnestly entreat, to accompany her old father on this unexpected journey. We shall be prepared to set forth, if need be, this afternoon. My daughter may come with me.'

'Surely, surely, Sir Hugh,' replied the soldier,