



The Time Witness

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TALES OF THE JURY-ROOM.
Eamus in jus.
PLAUT. *Pomilius*, Act v.
Dogberry. Are you good men, and true?
Much Ado about Nothing.
BY GERALD GRIFFIN.
AUTHOR OF "TALES OF THE MUNSTER FESTIVALS," ETC.

THE STRANGER'S TALE.—(CONTINUED.)
THE RAVEN'S NEST.
Her sire, an earl—her dame of prince's blood;
Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she light,
Sunset on the Countess of Lincoln

The war now re-commenced with re-doubled fury. The Lord Deputy received orders from London to have the Geraldine taken, dead or alive, and set his head, according to the fashion of those times, upon the castle-gate. In obedience to these instructions, which needed not the concurrence of his own hearty good will, Kildare marched an army to the south, and after several engagements, laid siege to the Geraldine in one of his strongest castles. The ruins still occupy a solitary crag, surrounded by a rushy marsh, at a little distance from New Auburn. The place was naturally strong; and the desperation of the besieged, made it altogether impregnable. After several fruitless efforts, attended by severe loss to the assailants, to possess themselves of the castle by storm, it was placed in a state of blockade, and the Lord Deputy encamping in the neighbourhood, left famine to complete the work which his arms had failed to accomplish.

With different feelings, Sir Ulick, who held a subordinate command in the army of his father, beheld the days run by, which were to end in the surrender, or (as was more probable, from the well known character of the Geraldine), in the destruction and death of the besieged. Two months rolled on, and there appeared no symptom on the part of the latter that indicated a desire to come to terms. Such, likewise, was the fidelity with which those feudal chiefs were served by their followers, that not a single deserter escaped from the castle to reveal the real state of its defenders. They appeared upon the battlement as hearty and as well accoutred as on the first day of the blockade.

Meantime there was no lack of spirit in the castle. The storehouse was well supplied for a blockade of many months, and the Geraldine depended much on a letter he had sent beneath the wings of a carrier-pigeon to a distant part of Desmond. The days passed merrily between watching and amusement, and the frequent sounds of mirth and dancing from within, showed that the besieged were thinking of something else beside giving up the fortress.

One evening, Margaret, retiring to her chamber, gave orders to her woman to attend her. The latter obeyed, and was employed in assisting her lady to undress, when the following conversation passed between them.

"You have not since discovered by whom the letter was left in the eastern bolt-hole?"

The woman answered in the negative.

"Take this," said Margaret, handing the maid a small wooden tablet, as white as snow, except where it was marked by her own neat characters. "Take this and lay it exactly where the former was deposited. Yet stay! Let me compare the notes again, to be sure that I have worded mine answer aright."

"Sweet Margaret,—Be persuaded by one who loves thy welfare. Let thy sweet voice urge the Geraldine to give up the fortress which he must yield perforce ere long, and with sorer loss perchance than that of life and property. Thy friendly enemy, unknown."

"Well said, my friendly enemy, not quite, perhaps, so unknown as thou esteemest."

"Now for mine answer.—"Kind friendly enemy. Thine eloquence will be much better spent on Kildare, in urging him to raise the siege, than my poor

accents on the stubborn Geraldine. Wherefore I commend thee to thy task, and warn to beware of my kinsmen's bills, which, how shrewdly they can bite, none ought to know better than the Lord Deputy and his followers. Thy thankful foe."

The tablet was laid on the window, and disappeared in the course of the night. On that which followed, while Margaret and her maid were occupied, as before, in preparing for rest, a noise at the window aroused the attention of the mistress, and struck the woman mute with terror. Dismissing the latter into the sleeping chamber, which lay adjacent, and carefully shutting the door the daughter of the Geraldine advanced to the window, and unbarred the curtained lattice. A brilliant moon revealed the lake, in the midst of which the castle rose upon the summit of a rock, the guarded causeway by which it was connected with the shore, the distant camp of Kildare, and the tranquil woods and hills extending far around. Beneath her, on the rock, appeared a figure, the identity of which she could not for an instant mistake; but how it came thither, to what intent, and wherefore undetected, was more than she had skill to penetrate. Perhaps, like a second Leander, he had braved the waves with no other oar than his own vigorous limbs! But the stern of a little curragh, peeping from beneath the overhanging rock, gave intimation that Sir Ulick (for he indeed it was) knew a trick worth two of Leander's. Waving his hand to Margaret, he ascended the formidable crag which still separated him from the window of her apartment, and came even within whispering distance. He did but come to be sure that she at least was not in want of food. It so happened that this side of the rock alone was unguarded, being supposed impregnable from the steepness of its ascent, as well as of that of the opposing shore. Sir Ulick, however, gliding under the shadow of the distant cliff, and only venturing to dart for the isle when the sky was darkest, had already visited it for three successive nights, and seemed, at every new venture, more secure of his secret. The alarm of Margaret, however, was excessive. The discovery of an intercourse would be certain death to one or both—for the Geraldine in a case of treason, whether real or apparent, would not spare his nearest blood. The same, as Sir Ulick was himself aware, was true of the Lord Deputy. Made bold, however, by impunity, he quieted the lady's fears, and without much difficulty, communicated to her mind the security of his own. His visits were continued for a week without interruption; after which period, the fair Geraldine observed with perplexity and uneasiness, that they terminated abruptly, nor did she, for an equal space of time see or hear anything that could account for this sudden disappearance of her accomplished friend.

One night as she sat in her window, looking out with the keenest anxiety for the little wicker skiff, she observed, with a thrill of eagerness and delight, some dark object gliding close beneath the cliffs upon the opposite shore. The unclouded brightness of the moon, however, prevented the approach of the boat; and her suspense had reached a painful height, before the sky grew dark. At length a friendly cloud extended its veil beneath the face of the unwelcome satellite; and in a few minutes the plash of oars, scarce louder than the ripple of the wavelets against the rock, gave token to the watchful ear of Margaret, of the arrival of the long expected knight. A figure ascended the rock; the lattice is unbarred; there is sufficient light to peruse the form and features of the stranger. It is not Sir Ulick; but Thomas Butler, the *fidelis Achates* and only confidant of the youthful knight.

"What, Thomas, is it thou? Where is thy lord?"

"Ah, lady, it is all over with Sir Ulick!"

"How sayest thou?"

"He is taken, lady, by the Lord Deputy's servants, and stands condemned in the article of treason."

These dreadful tidings, acting on spirits already depressed by a sudden disappointment, proved too much for Margaret's strength, and she fainted away in the window. On reviving, she obtained from Thomas a full detail of the circumstances which had occurred to Sir Ulick since his last appearance at the island, and the cause in which they had their origin.

About a week before, the Lord Deputy was sitting at evening in his tent, when a scout arrived to solicit a private audience. It was granted; and the man avowed that he had discovered the existence of a treasonable communication between the inhabitants of the island and the shore. In his indignation at this announcement, Kildare made a vow, that the wretch, whoever he was, should be cast alive into the Raven's Nest; and appointed a party to watch on the following night on the shore beside the cliffs, for the return of the traitor from the rock. Having given the men strict injunctions to bring the villain bound before him, the instant he should be apprehended, he ordered a torch to be lighted in his tent, and remained up to await the issue.

Towards morning, footsteps were heard approaching the entrance of the tent. The sentinel challenged, and admitted the party. The astonishment of Kildare may be conceived, when in the fettered and detected traitor, against whom he had been fostering his liveliest wrath, he beheld his gallant son, the gay and heroic Ulick! The latter did not deny that he had made several nightly visits to the island; but denied, with scorn, the imputation of treasonable designs, although he refused to give any account of what his real motives were. After long endeavoring, no less by menace than entreaty, to induce him to reveal the truth, the Lord Deputy addressed him with a kindness which affected him more than his severity.

"I believe thee, Ulick," he said; "I am sure thou art no traitor. Nevertheless, thy father must not be thy judge. Go, plead thy cause before the Lords of Council, and see if they will yield thee as ready a credit. I fear thou wilt find it otherwise; but thou hast thyself to blame."

A court was formed in the course of a few days, consisting of Kildare himself, as President, and a few of the Council, who were summoned for the purpose. The facts proved before them were those already stated; and Sir Ulick persisted in maintaining the same silence, with respect to his designs or motives, as he had done before his father. It seemed impossible, under such circumstances, to acquit him; and having received the verdict of the

court, the Lord Deputy gave orders for the fulfilment of his dreadful vow.

On the night after his sentence, his attendant, Thomas Butler, obtained permission to visit him in his dungeon; and received a hint from Kildare, as he granted it, that he would not fare the worse, for drawing his master's secret from him. Ulick, however, was inflexible. Fearing the danger to Margaret's life, no less than to her reputation, he maintained his resolution of suffering the sentence to be executed without further question. "The Lords of Council," he said, "were as well aware of his services to the King's government, as he could make them; and if those services were not sufficient to procure him credit in so slight a matter, he would take no further pains to earn it."

Disappointed and alarmed on the eve of the morning appointed for the execution, Thomas Butler, at the hazard of his life, determined to seek the lady Margaret herself, and acquaint her with what had occurred. The daughter of Geraldine did not hesitate long about the course she should pursue.—Wrapping a man's cloak around her figure, with the hood (for in those days, fair reader, the gentlemen wore hoods), over her head, she descended from the window, and succeeded in reaching the boat. A few minutes' rapid rowing brought them to the shore. It was already within an hour of dawn, and the sentence was to be completed before sun-rise.—Having made fast the curragh in a secret place, they proceeded amongst crag and cove in the direction of the Raven's Nest. The dismal chasm was screened by a group of alder and brushwood, which concealed it from the view, until the passenger approached its very brink. As they came within view of the place, the sight of gleaming spears and yellow uniforms amongst the trees, made the heart of Margaret sink with apprehension.

"Run on before, good Thomas," she exclaimed, "delay thy horrid purpose but a moment. Say one approach who can give information of the whole."

"The fetters, designed to be no more unbound, were already fastened on the wrists and ankles of the young soldier, when his servant arrived, scarce able to speak for weariness to stay the execution. He had discovered, he said, the whole conspiracy, and there was a witness coming on who would reveal the object and the motive of the traitors, for there were more than one. At the same instant, Margaret appeared, close wrapped up in her cloak, to confirm the statement of Butler. At the request of the latter, the execution was delayed while a courier was despatched to the Lord Deputy with intelligence of the interruption that had taken place. In a few minutes he returned, bringing a summons to the whole party to appear before the Lords of Council. They complied without delay, none being more perplexed than Sir Ulick himself at the meaning of this strange announcement.

On arriving in the camp, the unknown informant entreated to be heard in private by the Council. The request was granted; and Margaret, still closely veiled was conducted to the hall in which the judge sat. On being commanded to uncover her head, she replied:—

"My lords, I trust the tale I have to tell may not require that I should make known the person of the teller. My Lord Deputy, to you the drift of my story must have the nearest concern. When you bade the Geraldine to your court of Dublin, he was accompanied by an only daughter, Margaret, whom your son Ulick saw and loved. He was not without confessing his affection, and I am well assured that it was not unreturned. On the very evening, my Lord Deputy, before that most unhappy affray, which led to your disunion, and to the dissolution of our—of Sir Ulick's hopes, a mutual avowal had been made, and a mutual pledge of faith, (modestly, my lords), exchanged, always under the favour of our—of the noble parents of the twain. My lords, I have it under proof, that the visits of Sir Ulick were made to the Lady Margaret,—that to no other individual of the castle were they known,—and that no weightier converse ever passed between them, than such silly thoughts of youthful affection as may not be repeated before grave and reverend ears like those to which I speak."

"And what may be thy proof, stranger?" said the Lord Deputy, with a tenderness of voice which showed the anxiety her tale excited in his mind.

"The word of Margaret Fitzgerald," replied the witness, as she dropped the mantle from her shoulders.

The apparition of the Geraldine's daughter in the council chamber, gave a wonderful turn to the proceedings. Kildare was the first to speak. He arose from his seat, and approaching the spot where the spirited young maiden stood, took her hand with kindness and affection.

"In truth, sweet kinswoman," he said, "thou hast staked a sufficient testimony. And to be sure that it is so with all, as it is with Kildare, I promise thee to back it with my sword; and it shall go hard, but thy honest-hearted speech shall save the Geraldine, his lands and towers to boot. My lords, I think I see by your countenances, that you deem the lady's tale a truth. Then summon Ulick hither, and let a flag of truce be sent to the Geraldine, to let him know that his child is in safe-keeping. The Raven's Nest has taught me what he feels."

The chroniclers of New Auburn conclude their story by relating that the promise of the Lord Deputy was fulfilled,—that the affection of the heroic pair received the sanction of their parents,—and that whenever afterwards in their wedded life, a cloud seemed gathering at their castle hearth, the recollection of the Raven's Nest was certain to bring sunshine to the hearts of both.

If the merit of the several stories told during the night were to be estimated by the loudness and continuance of the applause which followed, the stranger's, was beyond all comparison the best. Each Juror vied with the others in expressing his gratification; and silence was restored only when the Foreman reminded them, that the gentleman had yet to favour them with a song, which he had no doubt they would find quite as entertaining as his interesting story.

"I cannot, gentlemen," said the stranger; "better acknowledge your very great indulgence and kindness than by at once complying with your wishes, so far as my abilities enable me. I will attempt a song, as a composition of my wooing days, long gone by; I yet remember, perhaps, with as much

interest as an Irishman could." Smiling, as he uttered these few words of preface, the stranger began:

I love my love in the morning,
For she like morn is fair,
Her blushing cheek, its crimson streak,
Its clouds, her golden hair,
Her glance its beam, so soft and kind,
Her tears its dewy showers,
And her voice, the tender whispering wind,
That stirs the early bowers

I love my love in the morning,
I love my love at noon,
For she is bright, as the Lord of light,
Yet mild as Autumn's moon.
Her beauty is my bosom's sun,
Her faith my fostering shade,
And I will love my darling one
Till even that sun shall fade.

I love my love in the morning,
I love my love at even,
Her smile's soft play, is like the ray
That lights the western heaven.
I loved her when the sun was high,
I loved her when he rose,
But best of all when evening's sigh
Was murmuring at its close.

No sooner had the stranger concluded his song, than all declared with one voice that he merited his liberty, and they accordingly began to devise means of procuring him that valuable boon. The window was raised, and it was soon found that by lowering him so far that his arms might reach, he could reach a projection in the building, from whence his descent to the pavement was but an easy fall. Shaking hands warmly with each of the Jurors in succession, and thanking them with the liveliest gratitude, both for the entertainment he had derived from their narratives, and for the kindness with which they continued at his escape, the stranger having ascertained, by a previous glance of inspection, that there was no person within sight, suffered three or four of the Jurors to grasp his wrists and lower him from the window, and in a few seconds found himself in the little street, with no other injury than a slight momentary inconvenience from the concussion, and stiffness in the limbs occasioned by his having been so long in one position. Waving his hand again and again to the Jurors, who stood looking from the window to see that he had reached terra firma in safety, he hastened to his hotel, where he found the Boots already stirring, and commencing his daily avocations. The stranger hurried to bed, where he soon lost all recollection of the Jurors and their stories, and slept so soundly that he was only awakened some hours after by the trumpeters, who preceded the Judges on their way to the court-house.

The instant he heard the sound of the trumpet, our traveller was seized with an irresistible desire to learn, and, if possible, to witness the issue of the trial which had already awakened so lively an interest in his mind. Dressing with all possible speed, he was able to make his way into court just as the Jury entered the box to give his lordship an account of their proceedings since the previous evening. To the traveller, who knew so much more than the rest of the spectators of the manner in which the Jurors had been passing their time, it was amusing to observe the gravity with which they took their seats, and prepared to answer the questions of the Judge.

"Well, gentlemen, have you agreed to your verdict?"

"No, my lord."

"You have considered the evidence?"

"We have fully considered it, my lord," the traveller groaned.

"Is there any point—" his lordship began, but before he could complete the sentence, one or two persons hastily entered the court, and an extraordinary commotion was presently observed amongst the gentlemen of the long robe, which soon extended itself through the body of the court. A general whispering and titling commenced, which soon became so loud as to call for the attention of the bench. In answer to a question from his lordship, one of the defendant's counsel rose, and, with a voice half broken with laughter said:

"My lord, you may remember I gave your lordship and the gentlemen of the Jury to understand that there was some influence connected with this cause, foreign to the inclinations and judgment of both the parties immediately concerned. The defendant, my client, was, I grieve to say, led against his will, to give cause for this action by the instigation of his friends, who are of one political party; and the plaintiff, I understand, was persuaded against her will to institute this action in compliance with the wishes of her friends, who hold political principles of a different kind. Both parties were thus made to sacrifice their own happiness to the prejudices of others; but now I have the satisfaction to inform your lordship, that they have this morning saved your lordship and the gentlemen of the jury the trouble of proceeding farther with the case. They have very wisely taken their own business out of their friends' hands, and taken it into their own. In a word, my lord, not to keep your lordship and those respectable gentlemen any longer in suspense, I have just learned that the plaintiff and defendant have decided the case by running away with each other, after being legally married by special license at five o'clock this morning (loud laughter), and are now actually on their way together to the Lakes of Killarney, leaving us old fools with wigs on our heads (roars of laughter, in which his lordship heartily rejoined), to pore through spectacles over our briefs, while they have done more in half an hour to bring the litigation to a satisfactory close, than all our law could effect for a whole term together."

The scene which followed was such as one does not often witness in a court of law. The counsel threw up their briefs amid roars of laughter; the Jurors, who had entered heartily into the general mirth, were immediately discharged, and the traveller, as he took his way from the court, could not help suffering a sigh to mingle with his mirth, as he murmured a wish that party spirit might never lead to worse consequences than it had on this oc-

casian, when its utmost activity had led to no more injurious result than the imprisonment of an over-curious stranger, during one night, in the corner of a Jury Room.

THE END.

IRISH LAND FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE.
Some months ago we pointed out that in many most important points Mr. Gladstone's boasted Land Act of 1870 was a failure. Mr. Butt in a lucid, argumentative and powerful speech the other night in the House of Commons, brought forward the most conclusive evidence of the correctness of our views. The indefatigable member for Limerick moved for the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into the operation and effect of the Irish Land Act of 1870, and more especially to ascertain how far that act has given increased security of tenure to the Irish tenant. Mr. Butt well and pointedly said that the act of 1870 was supposed to be intended to alter a state of things "detrimental to Ireland and disgraceful to England." That act was intended to create an estate tenancy all over Ireland, such tenancy having actual property in the improvements effected by them. The result, however, has been far different, for it now appears that a very large number of tenants are not at all protected, and have no property in the improvements. Mr. Butt proved that the act of 1870 (which Mr. Gladstone said would put an end to arbitrary evictions) had tended to induce landlords to consolidate farms and to evict tenants. He showed that the eviction cruelties before the act of 1870 surpassed the atrocities even of Cromwell, and gave several painful illustrations to support his argument. With honest candour he admitted that the intention of those who framed the act of 1870 might have been humane, but he urged that the Irish tenantry are still suffering great hardships. Mr. Butt gave the following pictures of the old Irish eviction system by force of English law:—

"A gentleman bought an estate in the Landed Estates Court and thought proper to quarrel with his tenants. A man was murdered—one of his servants. He demanded that his tenants should give up the murderer, and when they were unable to do so, he evicted 350 people in one day. The Protestant clergyman, the Catholic clergy, the magistrates and others remonstrated, but he had the law on his side, and those unfortunate tenants were driven out, many of them to starve to death. He called in the assistance of the sheriff and the military, and the forces of the Queen were employed in doing that accursed and inhuman edict. On that occasion an Irishman asked whether the Emperor of Russia would have sent his troops to help the landlord, or whether he would not rather have sent the landlord to Siberia? Another case, which he had seen himself, occurred in the county of Meath, on a piece of land on which were thirteen families. They had paid their rents punctually, and were not at all arrears, were as respectable as any in Ireland, but the landlord got into difficulties and sold the property to a land-jobber, who insisted upon the landlord evicting his tenants, and handing the land clear to him as a sheepwalk. The military came again, the sheriff came again, the people were all turned out in one day, their homes were demolished, leaving only blackened walls where there had been habitations of men."

Mr. Butt warned the English Government that, although agrarian crime had ceased, it would be revived if the former heartless eviction system were renewed; and he added that there were abundant evidence to show that evictions are re-assuming their too well known form in Ireland. He asked for a royal commission to track the real criminal to some lordly mansions he could name, but would not, as he did not wish to expose any individual to popular hatred. He concluded a memorable oration by calling on Parliament not to shrink from its plain duty, but to do its best to defeat the trickery of those landlords who, by their cruelty, brought even good landlords into disgrace, and to help the tenantry of Ireland to obtain the right to live and be fed upon their own land.

Poor Sir Michael Bech who holds the secretaryship for Ireland (an office called by O'Connell that of "shave-beggar"), attempted to reply to Mr. Butt's unanswerable arguments, but of course in vain.—He reproduced in different language, Lord Palmeston's silly joke that tenant-right is a landlord's wrong, and announced that, forsooth, the government had no intention of making the landlord's land a present to the tenant. Surely the sapient secretary, who (like most Englishmen) is profoundly ignorant of Ireland, might have waited till some one had demanded such spoliation. The leaders of the government were silent, and crushed the motion by the brute force of a hostile majority. Mr. Butt only asked for inquiry—nothing more. He brought forward no repealing or even amending bill. He merely asked for an investigation into the question as to how far the Land Act had been made a dead letter by landlord juggling and tenant terror. We think that Mr. Butt made one mistake: he complimented the Tories as if they had shown (any more than the base Whigs) the smallest approach to being friendly to Ireland. Men who have recently, by mere numbers, passed a five years' severe Coercion Act deserve no such compliments. They have again proved that they do not, for they defeated Mr. Butt by a large majority. The Tories seem determined to show that their old hostility to Ireland is as bitter as ever. It is evident that the only remedy is Home Rule.—*The Universe, London.*

"Bub, did you ever stop to think," said a Michigan avenue grocer recently, as he measured out half a peck of potatoes, "that these potatoes contain sugar, water, and starch?" "No, I didn't," replied the boy, "but I heard mother say that you put peas and beans in your coffee, and about a pint of water to every quart of milk you sold." The subject of natural philosophy was dropped right there.

Mrs. Partington having heard her son say that there were a great many anecdotes in the new almanac, begged him to cut them out, as she had heard that when anybody was poisoned, nothing was necessary only to give him an anecdote and it would cure him.

New apples are one dollar and ten cents a quart. Ten cents for the apples and a dollar for a doctor.