

The True Witness,

AND

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XXI.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUG. 26, 1870.

NO. 2

THE IRISH WIDOW'S SON;

OR,

THE PIKEMEN OF NINETY-EIGHT.

BY CON. O'LEARY.

CHAPTER III. — (Continued.)

Before calling on Kate, Cormac and the two Mullans were to scour the country for help. Many were waiting for the word, and would have been on the spot to protect that which was dearer to them than life, but Father John continued to believe that matters would not assume so bad an aspect after all.

Shortly afterwards, over fifty men arrived upon the spot, but the fire had extinguished itself. Chaperons in those days had, for the most part, thatched roofs, so that the hands of the miscreants had but little to do in the prosecution of their nefarious schemes.

Not a rafter of the building was burned. A light wind had sprung up at the time, and carried the burning thatch into an adjoining field. Not even a spark could be found in the interior. Father John entered, and with him all those who rushed to save the building. With one accord they knelt at the Altar and poured forth their thanks to God. There were those among them who would have had a hard struggle ere they would have prayed fervently for their enemies. Humbly thankful they were for the protection of the old spot, endeared to them by so many hallowed memories.

Many and rapid were the inquiries as to who the villains were who had concocted such a plot. Only a very few were aware of this. Father John knew well that if it were known, bloodshed that night would have been the result. Not even to the faithful Cormac did he disclose the name of his informant, and he felt quiet confident that those who imparted the information to him would religiously observe the injunctions he placed upon them as to secrecy.

Shortly after, he entered the house in company with a few of those who had hurried to the scene of fire; Cormac accompanied them. Kate was just leaving her room, and instantly on beholding her uncle, she rushed toward him as a child, who had escaped some terrible danger, would rush to its father.

'Twas a solemn moment! That instinct of the Irish Catholic heart, which manifests itself on some occasions, pervaded all present. They felt, they knew, that Kate O'Neil had, by the power of prayer, stayed the ravages of the flames. Cormac Rogan loved her with a deep and most holy love. He knew that none but himself possessed a place in her pure heart; yet on that instant he stood awed in her presence, and turned his head away to conceal the emotions that made his heart beat with a strange uneasiness.

Some few remained in the priest's house, lest another attempt should be made to fire the chapel.

Contrary to expectation, Kate remained with the company and became quite attentive to the comfort of her guests. She listened with marked interest to the conversation, and paid particular attention to every utterance that bespoke a good wish for Ireland. She was no longer the doubting, childlike girl that she appeared to be in the earlier part of the day. Her faith became strengthened as she listened with pleasure to the remarks of her uncle on a subject which previously had seldom escaped his lips. Next to God, Ireland was to her the dearest and holiest thought to dwell upon. She had often felt this to be so, but not having much opportunity of learning anything on national matters, she considered it unwise for one of her class to advance her opinion before others.

"Then you consider that a nation whose existence is in jeopardy is a matter for the consideration of its people independently of its rulers," said Cormac Rogan to Father John.

"Certainly not, Cormac. You misunderstand me," replied the priest. "The rulers are the appointed guardians of the liberties of a nation, and it is for them to undertake the work of regeneration."

"But, if they refuse, or cannot see, or will not understand the grievances of a people, but remain persistently blind in their ignorance, what then are the people to do?" inquired Cormac, with much animation.

"Then, as all rulers are the servants of the people, it is the duty of those who are sovereign in power, either to make the rulers fulfil the mandates of the people, or remove such rulers as refuse to acquiesce in the nation's demands."

"Are such things applicable only, when people like ourselves for instance, are subjected to the lawlessness of a mob of Wreckers; or, do your teachings refer to the entire country?" inquired Kate of her uncle.

"Certainly, to the whole country," said Cormac, who was anxious just then to stand high in the good graces of the fair quierist, and undertook to answer for the clergyman.

"Why, really, Cormac," said Father John, "you appear to be as well versed in politico-religious questions as if you had made the matter your particular study. I think you are right, however, but as I have often told you before,

there is no persecution after all so great as persecutions for conscience sake."

"But who made our rulers the appointed guardians of our liberties?" insisted Kate, "I am sure we never did."

"Quite right, Miss O'Neill," said an old man, sitting in a nook by the fireside, quietly smoking his pipe, but listening to all that passed as if he had half a dozen ears.

"That involves another and a more serious matter," said Father John. "You know we are bound to acknowledge—"

"The powers that be," said Cormac, "well I don't; unless those powers are lawfully constituted, and even then if they outstep their proper line of duty, and tyrannize over a people, making that people to bear burdens which oppress them, then I go in for their removal."

"So do I," said Kate.

"So do we all," cried each in turn.

"Hold on, hold on a little," said Father John, rousing himself up in his old chair, his keen grey eyes sparkling as if about to defend some favorite thesis of his own that was being unmercifully handled by clever opponents. "To go in for the removal of any existing authority, without the positive assurance of possessing the means to successfully remove that authority, is to commit a greater blunder, and to place the people under a greater tyranny than that which they experience from any rulers, be they good or bad."

Cormac, Kate, and in fact the whole of the company were silent, thus permitting Father John to enjoy his triumph.

"And must a people be unanimous all in one day, in order to effect what you say?" asked Kate. "I am sure our people never will, they are so frightened of the consequences."

"It does not necessarily follow," said her uncle.

"Then I suppose they may prepare and organize to attain that unanimity," said Cormac, gathering strength and force of argumentative power from the remarks of Kate.

"Most decidedly," said Father John, "but they must first make sure that they live under an oppression that entitles them so to act."

"Quite so," said Cormac, "I understand. But as to the organization?" he inquired.

"That will do now, children," said Father John, who began to think that enough ground of that particular kind had been travelled over.

While the old Irish priest and a few of his faithful flock were thus discussing the merits of resistance to their own and their nation's sufferings, quite another kind of conversation was being carried on not a mile off from where they sat.

CHAPTER IV. — ORANGE CONSPIRACIES — A SHOCK TO THE NERVES—MIKE GLINTY.

"The wailing of women, the wild ululations, the dread tidings from cabin to cabin conveyed; but loud thro' the plains and the shrieks which ensue, The war-cry is louder of men in array."

Beautifully situated at the foot of a small hill, was a well built house, remarkable for its snug and cozy appearance, and giving a stranger to understand that its occupants were people well-to-do in the world. Not for many miles around could a finer homestead be found. The out-offices were in perfect keeping with the house, and gave an air of comfort to the place. Opposite the front entrance was a haggard, well filled with the fruits of the past Autumn. To the left lay piled large heaps of fuel for the winter.

This was the house of Duncan Cameron, a Scotch adventurer, who only had arrived in the country some six or seven years ago.

Duncan Cameron, Esq., as he was sometimes called, was a man of rather unscrupulous character. He was about forty years of age, and his appearance was that of a crafty man of the world. Any one to look steadily at him, would find that he was very much inclined to shift his head in an awkward fashion; not that there was anything delicate or bashful in his nature, but that he appeared to feel uneasy, and choose not to look a man straight in the face, unless that man were a poor dependent, and then Mr. Cameron was wonderfully bold. His whole appearance was sensual; not openly so, but covered, as far as the canny Scotchman knew how to benefit himself, by the aid of hypocrisy.

The farm which belonged to this aimable and highly favored individual, consisted of some sixty acres, and better land could not be found in the whole province. A fortunate man was Mr. Cameron, in not having a mill-stone around his neck in the shape of a conscience. Less fortunate men might have looked upon him as a paragon of wisdom in that respect.

Only two short years ago, that farm and homestead, of which the Scotchman felt so proud, belonged to a family named Dorrian, who inherited it from their fathers, on the strength of a long lease from Lord O'Neill, and who, in their turn, again inherited it from another family named Dorrian, who also held it for a noble proprietor, of the name of O'Neill. In other words, the farm was in the possession of the Dorrians for a longer period than I can tell.

Mr. Duncan Cameron was a sort of drover in his earlier days, and, as most people in country parts will talk ill of their neighbours sometimes, by way of lively recreation (especially when said neighbours are well off, and in comfortable cir-

cumstances), it was currently reported that he suddenly came into possession of a sum of money, which he had not honestly earned, neither was it bequeathed to him by legacy, or otherwise. Be that as it may, he managed to get acquainted with an under-strapper on the O'Neill estate, named Fleming. This man, Fleming, was a great tyrant in his own small way, as most men of his stamp are, when acting in the same capacity. He contrived, on every opportunity, to create an ill feeling between his employer and the Dorrian family. At first, little heed was given to his stories, for the Dorrians were well liked, and respected; but then, Fleming could have no incentive but the discharge of his duties. His opportunities in this way were not few, and as the family whose destruction he was seeking, knew nothing of his villainy, he managed at last to find a willing ear, and soon succeeded in his efforts in creating a misunderstanding between the Dorrians and the agent on the estate. Why dwell on the manner in which this was effected? The story is written in blood! The Dorrians, if not legally ejected, were forced to the necessity of leaving the country. The younger son, finding out the villainy of Fleming, and meeting him one night, nearly killed the wretch.

This hurried their departure; and Mr. Cameron, being known to be a respectable, thrifty man, had little if any difficulty in obtaining entrance to, and possession of, the house and farm which he coveted so much. This was about four or five years previous to the date at which our story commences. Cameron found himself much disliked, by every one in the neighborhood, although he used every artifice to conciliate his neighbors.

By none was he so intensely hated and disliked, as by a poor wandering boy, named Glinty. This lad had been found handy and useful in doing rough work for the Dorrians, and was at liberty to take up his quarters there whenever he chose, and to work or not, just as he pleased.

After that family had left the place, poor Glinty used to wander about the farm, and involuntarily commencing work, sometimes, just as in former days, he would instantly stop, saying,—"The pip-pip-oor Dorrians are g-g-g-gone, n-n-n-n-now, and that blib-blib-blag-g-gard has their home, s-s-s-s-s-so he has."

If Mike Glinty had a hammer in his speech, and the first words we hear him utter prove that,—there were moments when he could roll out a torrent of words without that impediment inconveniencing him in the least.

Cameron did not like him, and one day observing him near the house, ordered him away, using an oath, at the time, that Mike never forgot.

The night after Christmas was bitter cold. A piercing wind whistled through the leafless trees, sounding like a dirge. Not a star shone in the heavens, and not a ray of light was visible, but that which came from the snow that lay covering the earth like a shroud.

There were bright fires in the house of Duncan Cameron, Esq., and a motley company was gathered around them. This company was composed of men, some of whom were well-to-do, and others were of a much lower class. Cameron himself was busily engaged in keeping his party in order; for they talked and shouted in rather a high pitch of voice, at times, for the business they were engaged in.

"Who was appointed to carry out that affair last night?" said one of the men.

"Graham," answered Cameron.

"Was he to be here to-night?" was next asked.

"He promised us he would."

"He should be strung up by the neck like a dog," said another of the party. "We had one chance, and that having failed, the place will be too well guarded to permit us to punish that nest of idolaters and traitors."

"Never mind," said Cameron; "the worse luck now, the better again. I have news for you, boys; there were no less than five fires last night, in different parts of Antrim and Down."

"Bravo!" they all shouted. "Another glass, Cameron, to wash down the news, and to help us to say 'no surrender,'" said one of the party.

This was just what Mr. Cameron wanted to arrive at. He had a plan in his head, and did not care to moot it, till he had his men well primed.

"And what is better than all," said the host, "two of the fires were inside of Mass houses." "Hurray, boys!" resounded on all sides, "and here's that Cameron may flourish, and that the devil may soon get his own."

This last was in reference to the Papists.

At this moment a loud knock was heard at the door, and each man sprang to his feet.—Cameron and a few of the company rushed out; but, dark as was the night, it appeared doubly dark to them, coming from the well lighted kitchen in which they had been sitting. Cameron rushed back again into the house, and instantly procuring a lantern, ran round about in all directions, followed by those who were brave enough to follow him. Not one man amongst the lot but felt terrified all that night. Cameron and the men returned without the slightest clue as to the cause of the disturbance. Owing

to the situation of the house, they believed that no mortal being could have been the cause of the loud knock, without being detected, so suddenly were the men in pursuit. To add to their perplexity, the dog-house was close by, and Tiger stood up wagging his tail whenever he saw his master. What could it be?

That question was easier asked than answered. After some time the party endeavored to forget the interruption; but not a man amongst them could banish from his thoughts the strangeness of the circumstance.

After some more drink had been partaken of, it was finally arranged that one or two "traitors" resident in that part of the country, should be made to quit it.

There was the Rogan family, for instance, harboring a pair of rascally United Irishmen, by the name of Mullan, and under the pretence that these men were servants. That scheming mother of Cormac Rogan's was no better than she should be; although the neighbors did endeavor to make it appear that she was a wise and kindly sort of person. But wise here, or kindly there, men's feelings were not to interfere with their duty to their king and country.

"What say you, boys?" asked Cameron.

"To h—ll with the whole lot of them, seed, breed, and generation. So long as the country is cursed with such vipers, there will be no peace for honest people."

Such was the infuriated cry of this pack of Orangemen, against those who never did them a wrong, or harbored a thought of injury toward one of them.

And this was the response to Cameron's drunken appeal!

"But what's to be done, and how is the work to be carried through?" asked one of the men.

"Is it the faggot, or the pistol?" asked another.

"Is it waste powder on the likes of them," chimed in a drunken brawler.

"Both's best; and whatever is best is surest," put in a fourth.

Finally, it was agreed that word should be sent to the Antrim men to meet a few of the "brethren," at the "thorn in the gap," on that night week.

"Of course you'll be there yourself?" said one of the men to Cameron.

This was the very thing that Cameron wished to avoid; but the question coming so pointedly, he could not decline answering.

"Be there myself!" he said. "Yes, the first man on the ground!"

Coward that he was, he endeavored to make it appear that his courage was not behind that of any present.

After a good deal of dirty hand-shaking, gripping of thumbs and fingers, and pressure of horny nails into each other's palms, the company separated, pledged to each other by oaths and curses, to meet like brothers; while the post of honor was awarded to Mr. Cameron; which meant that he was to set fire to the dwelling of the Rogan's.

Quick as the flight of the deer, sped Mike Glinty over the country on the following morning. His face was beaming with intelligence, and every now and again he would suddenly stop short in his career, remain standing buried in thought, then he would cross himself, strike his breast, make a peculiar sound by slapping his open mouth with his hand, and then proceed as quickly as before. Mike was evidently in a great hurry. The morning air was sharp and raw, but Mike was quite in a perspiration. On his way he met Kate O'Neill, who stopped to inquire the cause of Mike's hasty strides.

"Kie-kie-can't tit-tit-take time to-tell you, Miss O'Neill," said Mike, scarcely stopping to speak, "an'-an'-an'-even if I had time, wou-wou-wouldn't tell you, Miss O'Neill, ninn-no, wou-wou-wouldn't tell you," and on he hurried.

Kate watched him for awhile, and presently saw him take a short cut across the field, in the direction of Widow Rogan's. Arrived at home, she found Father John just rising from his knees, having been engaged at some act of devotion. She acquainted him with the fact of having met Mike Glinty, who was crossing the country at a rapid rate, and appeared wild and excited. That he was the bearer of some news to Widow Rogan she believed, and he refused to tell even her his mission. Looking up into her uncle's eyes, Kate inquired if he had heard any news since she went out, or if he thought that some new troubles were at hand?

"Well, my child," said the priest, "I have heard no news, and we are all getting so used to troubles that, when they do occur, we seem to have expected them, and so they fall lighter on whoever receives them—glory be to God. If you think that Mike was the bearer of any bad news to Cormac or his mother, I have no doubt we shall shortly hear of it. What if I would take a walk over that length, and speak to them, I might learn something?"

"Yes, dear uncle," said Kate, "pray do; my mind is very uneasy regarding them."

"To speak the truth, so is mine," said the priest; "and yet, if I were questioned, I could not tell the reason why. However, we shall soon learn."

Kate was not long in bringing his overcoat and walking-stick, and Father John stepped out

of the door with a light step, but, somehow, with a heavy heart.

On he went towards the widow's house, but Mike was there long before him.

On entering, Mike saw that Cormac was about to leave on some business. He did not take time to tell him anything, but rather astonished Cormac by catching him tightly by the arm, and returning into the house with him. Mrs. Rogan was engaged in the performance of some household duties, and the two Mullans were just finishing breakfast.

Mike sat down, wiped his face with the cuff of his coat, and having invited them all to listen, asked them if they remembered the day after the Dorrians had left, how Cameron threatened him with the dog Tiger, if he did not leave off coming about the place?

"Yes; they all remembered it well enough, and told the poor fellow not to think of such things."

"Bib-bib-but Mike will th-th-think of them, just as Mim-m-mike pleases, so he will," said the natural, a good deal aroused at the recollection of the wrong; "an-an' if Mim-m-mike hadn't th-th-thought of f-f-f-th-that day it would ha-have been worse f-f-f-f-for the whole of you. Lil-lil-look here, now," he said, and his face was swollen with rage, "th-th-that threat was worth s-s-s-s-something, after all, for, if-f-f-th-that devil Cameron hadn't s-s-s-s-said it, Mim-m-mike might have been in his bib-bed last night, instead of tit-tit-teaching Tiger n-n-n-not to heed pip-p-oor Mim-mim-mike, even for Cameron."

He was not long in communicating to these astonished people all that had taken place the night before in Cameron's: how he had gone there at nightfall, as usual, creeping about the place, until he got near the dog-house, where he sat down and held converse, after his own fashion, with the dumb brute, feeding him with his own hands, and telling him, "Mike fond of him, but him not bite Mike—Cameron not good kicked Tiger one day," and the dog half growled, as if he comprehended every word Mike said.

Next he described how he heard the loud talk, and the cursing and swearing of the men; how he went from window to door, and back again, listening to every word, and finally, how he thought if he only had a blazing turf in his hand, how he would have burned the house over their heads, "only they were not drunk enough, nor sleeping," added Mike. Again he described his feelings when he thought of good Cormac and his mother, and John Mullan, and Peter Mullan,—and Mike looked bewildered, and seemed to forget one half of all he had to say, as he looked at Peter and John alternately. "I give a jum-m-p like that!"—and here Mike cut a caper, and sprang upward fully three feet from the ground—"an'-an' with a-a-big stone was go-go-go-in' to kill Cameron, but just give th-th-the door one th-th-thump, an' out they all ran."

Mike then described the race in the dark, to find out the cause of the noise at Cameron's door, and laughed heartily at the idea of the search, while he himself was quietly concealed in the rear of the turf-stack watching Cameron run here and there like a Will-o'-the-wisp, with his lantern in hand, and, as Mike shrewdly remarked, afraid to venture twenty yards from his companions. He assured those whom he addressed, that not one of the men could find out what he did, and that they did not for a moment ascribe the interruption to the right cause. When Mike had finished the recital of his wonderful news, Mrs. Rogan had taken a seat beside the fire, and, with her head bent down, was lost in thought.

Cormac's eyes flashed fire, and, as his mother looked up at him now and again, it was evident that thoughts of her son and the course he was likely to pursue under the circumstances, were as trying to her heart as the grief occasioned her by the tidings which the faithful Mike had just communicated.

The family circle joined in conversation as to the probable motive of Cameron in selecting a widow's house for such vengeance.

It was well known that he was the friend, and favorite of the yeomanry under Lord Massarene and Lord O'Neill. In consequence of this he was dreaded by the country people, and secretly hated, as he was dreaded.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but to await the current of events, and prepare to meet them as best they could.

The reign of martial law, and the suspension of all liberty as far as the poor Catholics were concerned, had rendered their lives miserable.

The magistracy of the country was, without exception in the hands of the Orange landlords, and even the poorest attempt at redress was never dreamed of on the part of the persecuted race.

Cormac Rogan was evidently in a bad state of mind. He felt that the independence of his position, which he had fought so manfully against adverse circumstances to attain, was the cause, in some way, why Cameron and his myrmidons had selected his mother's house for destruction. To say that he loved his mother with a full and ardent affection, would be trite and commonplace. He owed everything to her devoted care, and right loyally did he repay that mother's anxiety for his welfare. He was both husband and son in one; and felt as proud of