



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. X. MONTREAL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1859. No. 20.

THE LAST IRISHMAN.

(Translated from the French of Elie Berthet, by C. M. O'Keefe, for the Boston Pilot.)

CHAPTER XII. (Continued.)

The bluff face and red nose of Mrs. Flanagan, disfigured with a couple of pimples, each the size of a haw, was seen smiling at the door of her tent, welcoming her friends and acquaintances with interested courtesy. She seemed in much better spirits than usual, because she possessed her two barrels of strong beer and one of pure Drogheda ale, together with her half barrel of John Jameson's best Dublin whiskey—thanks to Miss O'Byrne's little gift. She never ceased lauding the purity and strength of her liquors, "all XXX, first shot, 365 degrees above proof," &c. The tents in which eatables were sold were fashioned like the above, with the exception that a few long planks, supported on stones, ran the whole length of the tent. The central board was the table d'hote, and was covered with a profusion of wooden plates, delf dishes, and capacious trenchers filled with segments of smoking bacon, pigs' cheeks, and heaps of half-cooked cabbages, to which voracious strangers did ample justice. The sign which these restaurants usually exhibited was perfectly unmistakable; it consisted of a large pot containing cubes of pork and masses of green cabbages, simmering over a blazing fire which flamed in a hollow or cavity in the ground. The fortunate wight who had money and an appetite was armed with a two-pronged flesh-fork, on presenting a small coin to the self-important proprietor of the pot, who kept lustily bawling out the price he charged for a lunch—"three prods for a ha'penny." This enviable individual, who purchased this desirable privilege of plunging the flesh-fork among the boiling cubes, was regarded with interest by the less fortunate by-standers, who gaped and grinned with moist lips at performances they envied. The cubes of pork were so volatile, and the flesh-fork so blunt, and the ocean of water so prodigious that it required a keen eye, great practice, and consummate dexterity to secure the flying fragments of pork circulating in that flood with whirling motion and elusive rapidity. But if the fugitive fragments of pork evaded capture, the more sluggish motion of the greens enabled the temporary wielder of the flesh-fork to fish forth steaming wisps, dripping with water, smocking with steam, and loaded with scum.

"Sorrah take him if his ha'penny would go for nothin'," was the exclamation with which the adventurous explorer encouraged himself to energetic action. Elsewhere tables, covered with scanty napery, which displayed a profusion of pigs' feet, long since separated from the parent pig, sausages of an undecipherable appearance, but, above all, sheep's trotters, which were individually announced as an "illegant leg of mutton for a pinny, an' plinty of salt to the bargain," were ranged here and there. Hand-carts and wheel-barrow, containing ginger-bread, sugar-stick, liquorice-ball, and nuts, moved through the multitude, and paraded the fair in all directions, urged slowly by the vociferous proprietors, proclaiming eagerly the merits of their merchandise. While groups of ragged urchins, playing pitch-and-toss with brass buttons instead of half-pence, casting stone quoits for pins, shooting marbles, or squabbling as to the results of their game, occupied the more vacant outskirts of the fair green.

Early in the morning might be seen groups of both sexes vending their way by the different roads that led to the fair. The men drove herds of lowing kine, flocks of sheep, droves of pigs, &c., to have the first luck of the fair." At a later hour, the bustle of business cheered the spirits of the casual observer, who, having heard that famine and deep distress prevailed throughout the land, began to believe, as he contemplated this scene, that the famine was feigned and poverty pretended. Crowds gathered round the dealers in cattle—cheapening their purchases and attracting attention by their vociferation, as they slapped with all their might large copper coins upon the hard hand of the sellers of stock, loudly asseverating that they offered over-value for the animals. Elsewhere you might see the purchasers taking up dirt with their sticks, and thus marking the stock they purchased.

On this occasion numbers of strangers were seen loitering through the fair, who had no visible marketable business, and never once joined in the merry dances, games of chance or other pastimes. They wore great coats, and bore a suspicious appearance.

Skirting a fair green, contiguous to one of the entrance-gates to Powerscourt House, was a half-ruined cottage; this cabin, tenanted by a poor widow, was rendered remarkable by the number of persons who visited it, though there were neither eatables nor drinkables for sale, nor any attractive amusement. Before the door stood a robust man, enveloped in a great frieze coat, who spoke a few words to strangers who approached the house in twos and threes, and

then departed, with earnest faces intent on business, after a brief delay. In a back chamber of this house, which had no window, sat Richard O'Byrne alone at a little deal table upon which papers, writing materials, and some letters were strewn, and upon which his lamp reflected a dim unnatural light. The parties who visited the house received brief instructions from O'Byrne, and subsequently joined the crowd, where they formed small earnest-looking groups. Suddenly, amid the hilarity and bustle of business, a party of peelers appeared in the distance, and caused much excitement and speculation as to their object; accompanied as they were by officials in colored clothes.

Meantime Miss O'Byrne sat in her brother's house reflecting sadly upon her misadventures and hopeless future. The clergyman entered her room and dispelled her reverie: "Here is a letter which a servant in livery has just handed me—it is from Powerscourt House, probably from Lady Ellen—see what it is."

Julia opened the note and read: "An humble subject presents her dutiful compliments to the Queen of Glendalough, and requests the favor of her Majesty's presence at the Pavilion of the Ruins in the Park. Fail not; your loyal subject has business of importance to communicate to your Majesty. Your Majesty's devoted subject, Nelly."

"What does she mean?—I do not wish to go," exclaimed Julia.

"Dear Julia, you look pale and sad—you have my permission and request to visit your friend: her animated conversation may dispel your sorrow for the eviction and distress of our poor neighbors which seems to prey upon your mind. Get up, and I shall accompany you to the gate."

"Well, since it is your wish I shall go, brother," said Julia, putting on her bonnet and scarf.

Father O'Byrne, with his sister on his arm, proceeded through the fair. On his approach, the crowd opened and made a passage for the pastor of the parish. Hats were raised by the men and curtsies dropped by the women as he passed along; but, contrary to the usual custom, no one seemed anxious to speak to his reverence. The coolness of the people seemed strange to Father O'Byrne; for, in Ireland, the priest is the friend, the confidant, and the counsellor of his parishioners, and they are desirous of consulting him whenever they have an opportunity, or, if they have no other business, they solicit his blessing and implore his prayers. As Father O'Byrne and his sister passed through the multitude they were met by the parish schoolmaster who made his obeisance.

"Why, this is a very crowded fair, John," observed Father O'Byrne.

"Yes, your reverence; and I see most of them are strangers."

"I have observed that too," replied the priest; "what can be their object?"

"Faix, sir, I can't tell; but I suspect there is something serious contemplated. I have observed two or three of the leaders of the Young Ireland party from Wexford and Kildare; and also a prominent person from Dublin."

"Oh, I hope they have nothing rash in contemplation, and I also hope none of our neighbors will involve themselves in their machinations," said Father O'Byrne.

"I hope so too, your reverence; but this Young Ireland Party has grown very powerful, and imagine themselves fully a match for the Queen's troops," said the schoolmaster.

Meantime the priest and his sister accompanied by the schoolmaster arrived within a few paces of the company of peelers whose approach caused so great a commotion among the folks at the fair, a few moments before. Some of the people, as the peelers passed, shouted sarcastically, "The Peeler an' the goat," "Who killed the people at Newtownbarry?" and made other remarks equally unpleasant to those well paid preservers of the public peace.

"Captain Wiggins, how do you do?" said the priest to the chief in command of the police; "Oh, Mr. Jameson, is this you—how do you do?" added he, addressing Lord Powerscourt's bailiff who accompanied the peelers.

That official took off his hat, and made a bow to the priest; he then muttered something to the captain; and the peelers made a sudden halt.

"I hope, Mr. Jameson," resumed Father O'Byrne, "you contemplate no trouble to our poor parishioners enjoying themselves at the fair?"

"Oh, nothing particular, yer reverence," replied the bailiff. Father O'Byrne was proceeding on his way towards the park gate when two or three constables, with the Captain and Jameson stood in his way, as if to impede his further progress.

"What do you mean, gentlemen?" asked the priest in surprise; "I am accompanying my sister who has a note of invitation from Lady Ellen Wingfield—do you mean to oppose my passage?"

"No, yer reverence," replied Jameson, "but

we have a painful duty to perform—we hope yer reverence will excuse us—do your duty, Captain Wiggins."

Wiggins laid his hand on Miss O'Byrne's shoulder, saying, "I arrest you in the Queen's name!"

Miss O'Byrne shrieked and clung to her brother for support.

"Arrest my sister! arrest my sister! for what—what crime could this innocent child commit?" exclaimed the alarmed Father O'Byrne.

"You are the Queen's prisoner," said Wiggins addressing Miss O'Byrne—"for that you entered into a conspiracy with a large party of persons, some of whom are known, to waylay and assault with intent to murder Sir George Clinton, Baronet, ensign in her Majesty's regiment of the First Royal Dragoon Guards, on yesterday in the park of the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Powerscourt."

"It is false! it is false!" shouted Father O'Byrne, "and I shall proceed immediately and convince his lordship of the utter impossibility of such an act on the part of my innocent sister—show me the warrant."

"Here it is," answered Wiggins; "you'll find it perfectly legal; signed by two magistrates of the county, the Right Hon. Viscount Powerscourt and Rev. Mr. Bruce—here it is."

"Oh!" cried Miss O'Byrne, "is it possible that Ellen sent a note of invitation to ensnare her innocent friend?"

"You are innocent, and I shall prove your innocence before both these gentlemen—there is some mistake in this matter," said Father O'Byrne.

"She is innocent—I can swear it," re-echoed the schoolmaster.

A peeler constable took hold of Miss O'Byrne's arm; she shook him off indignantly, murmuring—

"If he was here—"

"And I am here to protect you, Julia O'Byrne," shouted Richard, as he dashed in among the peelers. "Do not presume to touch that lady or you shall die!"

Giving utterance to a shriek, Miss O'Byrne fell into the arms of her noble-hearted brother, and swooned.

"Good God! is this possible? Can it be you—is this Richard what brought you here—how did you come to Ireland?" exclaimed Father O'Byrne, looking around him in the utmost surprise.

"Yes, I am Richard, sure enough, Angus;—and I am come to repair your faults," replied Richard, in a dry tone.

"My conscience reproaches me with no offence," said the priest, with an air of simplicity.

"But tell me, I beseech you—"

"By and bye; I have other matters to attend to at present," said Richard, in a fierce tone.

At a few paces from the spot rose a block of granite; having one arm round his sister's waist, while he grasped a loaded pistol with the other, Richard mounted the block. In this elevated position, he could see the whole multitude.—While they in their turn could gaze at him. As soon as he appeared with his lovely burden as pale as death, he was greeted with a shout of rapturous applause. Richard waved his hand as he looked upon the multitude, and hushed them to silence, as it were, by enchantment.

"Fellow-countrymen," he cried, in a voice which appeared to issue from a chest of bronze, and which was heard in the remotest extremities of the valley, "you know me; I am Richard O'Byrne—I am come here to protect my sister." These words were greeted by a shout of transport, louder, if possible, than the former.—"The crime which this poor girl has committed is well known to you; it is a crime for which Lord Powerscourt and Parson Bruce are desirous of burying this innocent child in the stony dungeons of the county jail. I, the offspring of the Kings of Leinster—the brother of this unfortunate girl—will tell you the nature of her crime. She has been the innocent victim of an abominable act of violence, which the vile spawn of trained perjurers and assassins, Sir George Clinton, perpetrated on the sister of your parish priest—"

The speaker was interrupted by a hoarse roar of fury and indignation which burst spontaneously from the multitude.

This agonized avowal occasioned Richard O'Byrne unspeakable torture. His voice was broken, and his face haggard, while his eyes, suffused with blood, seemed ready to start from their sockets. The beautiful girl, whom he held on his arm, made an effort to rise as if stung by the blow, then relapsing into helplessness—hung inanimate and inert from his arm.

Father O'Byrne looked up to heaven—"What lies, my God, what lies. The man has gone mad—stark mad. But he should, nevertheless, respect the honor of his family."

"It's false, it's false!" shouted the schoolmaster, "it's perfectly false. Were it true, I should revenge it at the risk of my salvation itself."

This blasphemy escaped the notice of the priest. Meantime, Richard continued: "Representing as I do the unsullied honor of a Milesian family—representing the generous Feach Mac, the fearless champion of the clans of Wicklow—I naturally endeavored to defend my sister—I endeavored to discover that monster of baseness, Sir George, and provoke him to fight me; and when he refused I struck him with my pistol in the face. To punish this assault the future lord of Powerscourt House wishes to plunge Julia O'Byrne into a prison. Will the clansmen of O'Byrne permit him to perpetrate this crime?"

"Never, never," shouted the whole fair.

"Come on, then, for your country," exclaimed Richard. "Let us avenge poor Julia on the insolent Sassenaghs. Hurrah, hurrah. O'Byrne for ever!"

"Hurrah! O'Byrne for ever!" shouted the crowd.

It is impossible to describe the ardent passion which fired the tumultuous multitude. These passions seemed to annihilate, not a handful of enthusiasts, but a whole country. Centuries of unsatisfied hate—whole ages of anger seemed to start into existence and roar for gratification, and reveal themselves in nude intensity. The people threw themselves upon the peelers, whose arms were wrung from their hands, while they themselves were hurled on the ground, felled by their own firelocks. In the very first onset two or three were killed or wounded, before Richard O'Byrne, reluctant to quit his precious and beautiful burden, could intervene to prevent it. The people, maddened by the sight of blood flowing on the earth, seemed seized and animated by the demon of destruction. Richard vainly exerted himself; he could not command the rage and roar of the tempest he himself had called up.

On hearing the dreadful screams of the dying peelers Father Angus forgot his personal afflictions, and plunged into the tumult to arrest its violence. He endeavored, to no purpose, to protect the vanquished by interposing his own person. They were torn from his embrace and butchered before his eyes. This sacerdotal authority on other occasions so profoundly respected was at present treated with indifference or contempt. He might as well attempt to subdue the stormy seas of Iceland during a tempest by chastising it with rods, as essay to repress the headlong vengeance of a maddened people—blind with fury, drunk with anger, and transported with revenge.

Richard, meantime, had succeeded in seating Julia on the stone which served him as a tribunal. The charming girl betrayed some signs of consciousness, but her head reclined upon her shoulders; she could scarcely sustain herself.—But the fury and rage of surrounding circumstances gave Richard no leisure to cast even a glance of pity on his sister. He was hurried away by events.

"Let us now, my countrymen," he exclaimed, addressing the populace, "hasten to Powerscourt House and get the fore hand of the authorities, who intend to assemble in that house to issue warrants against the patriots. Forward, then, my countrymen. Let us not stain our sacred cause with petty pillage, useless cruelty, or private vengeance. The man who perpetrates such crimes is unworthy of fighting in the array of patriotism. But lest our enemies mistake us for malefactors, let us unfurl the glorious flag under which it is our duty to triumph or to die."

At these words Jack Gunn unfurled a green flag, adorned with a snow-white harp, surmounted with a radiant cross with burnished gold.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Old Ireland for ever!" shouted the multitude.

Meantime, Richard threw off his cloak, and appeared in the beautiful green gold-laced dress of the Irish volunteers, such as was suggested and worn by Daniel O'Connell and all the chiefs of the people.

Shouts of applause greeted O'Byrne "The Count O'Byrne for ever!" "Down with the peelers!" "Hurrah for the last chief of the race of O'Byrne!" "Well spoken!" "It's all God's truth!" "We'll stand by you until we die!"

"Oh, ho! no violence. . . . it's all false. . . . my sister did not attempt to commit any crime. . . . She knows her religion better than to think of such. . . . She has no cause for so doing. . . . It is all false!"

"It is all false. . . . She is innocent!" shouted the schoolmaster, re-echoing the words of the priest.

But the voice was drowned in the rising and raging tumult of the infuriated people, rushing like a tide in the direction of Lord Powerscourt's demesne.

CHAPTER XIII.

The peelers on guard at Powerscourt House made a faint show of resistance before they fled their post, and yielded the park to the stormy multitude. It would indeed be folly on the part of that handful of men to attempt to arrest the

insurrectionary deluge which poured and surged around the house of the nobleman. Posted behind the iron gate of the park, the peelers fired a volley at the advancing host, which compelled the latter to halt. The rebels then seized a cart laden with straw, to which they attached a long ladder. A number of men seized this ladder by rungs, and forced the cart to run rapid before them. With this cart they covered their front, smashed in the gate, and scattered the peelers, and triumphantly rushed headlong, like a flood, into the park.

The imbecility of the resistance swelled the ardor of the assailants. Scrambling crowds swarmed over the walls, which they mounted, whilst furious thousands struggled in through the gate-way, which was broken. Richard O'Byrne meantime, directed small detachments to seize the remaining outlets of the park. One of the first men who entered was Richard himself.—Those excesses, for which the infuriated insurgents were thirsting, might, he hoped, be restrained by his presence. He eagerly desired to secure the safety of Lady Ellen, and entertained perhaps, some peculiar purposes with reference to Sir George. Some of his men he directed to pursue and disarm the peelers; he then made his arrangements for the capture of the house which rose at the end of the avenue.

A man of genius cannot tolerate deliberation. As he acts from impulse, not from reasoning, he will not be pestered with the useless and frivolous debates of vain-glorious garrulity. Hence such men as the two Napoleons were or are obliged to shut up, or sweep away deliberative assemblies, which only serve to put them out, and perplex or delay, or frustrate those inspirations of genius which, when followed, lead to victory.

As O'Byrne advanced, he could easily perceive that no one intended to defend the magnificent house of Lord Powerscourt. No attendants were visible; doors and windows lay wide open. O'Byrne, nevertheless, halted his insurgents in the court, and prepared his arms, and ordered out detachments to circumscribe the house and explore the shrubberies and gardens in which cowering enemies might lurk in ambush.

Meantime, no life was visible in the mansion. The silent residence seemed to be utterly forsaken, completely abandoned; but when the captured house was surrounded by a circle of shouting insurgents, two men, waving their hats appeared in the vestibule vociferously cheering for the cause of Ireland.

"That's Cleary! that's Cleary!" cried Kavanagh, whom this conversion of sour 'soupers' into generous patriots, at first perfectly confounded. "Oh, the bloody varmint! mind how he shouts; hurrah," continued Kavanagh, ironically echoing the cheer, "hurrah."

"Who is he at all?" asked a peasant from a remote district, taking up his firelock while suffering under the incipient temptation of shooting the newly-coined Irishman.

"Sure he's the lord's valet—a worse graft never was born—that's the villain that's hard to the poor—Musha, sweet bad luck to your red wig! Oh! to be sure—Hurrah," continued the mocking Kavanagh, derisively waving his hat in ironical imitation of the lord's valet. "And mind Tyler. Oh! look at Tyler! an' he as big a shoneen as ever was born! Oh! look at Tyler See the capers he cuts! Oh, mind how he bows and scrapes! Oh, by gorras, he's got a notice to quit! Arrah, Mr. Tyler, maybe it's what you'd have an objection in your pocket to put a poor man out of his cabin, this morning—eh! Oh, sweet bad luck to your yellow phiz, it's you that looks wholesome," &c.

The most obsequious of his lordship's servants, while his lordship was in power, were thus the first to throw open his house and welcome his enemies when he was fallen. Richard, sword in hand, advanced alone towards those two fellows. They received him with smiling indications of servile respect and submission.

"Your lordship is heartily welcome, my lord. . . . O'Byrne," cried Cleary, bowing to the very ground, "you will find none in this house but lovers of Ireland, my lord. The servants have run away in terror, and no one remains, except ourselves, to welcome the liberators of our country. It makes me rejoice, my lord, to see a noble shoot of the old tree in a place which was wrongfully usurped so long by tyrants and oppressors of Ireland. I know well, my lord, that Powerscourt House belongs to your lordship and your lordship's family. Command us, my lord—command us. You have only to order, and we shall obey."

"No words can convey the satisfaction and delight which we experience at seeing the illustrious offspring of the kings of Leinster appearing under the sacred banner of Ireland!" exclaimed Tyler, whose pale face assumed a forced expression of enthusiasm. "Many an honest heart, my lord, that was forced by hard necessity to eat the odious bread of the oppressor, and bend the knee under the yoke of the foreigner,