

King of Medicines

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HAVE NOT LOST A SINGLE DAY on account of sickness. I believe the disease is expelled from my system. I always feel well, am in good spirits and have a good appetite. I am now 27 years of age and can walk as well as any one, except that one limb is a little shorter than the other, owing to the loss of bone, and the sores formerly on my right leg. To my friends my recovery seems almost miraculous, and I think Hood's Sarsaparilla is the king of medicines."

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Our Lady's Presentation.

BY WILLIAM D. KELLY. How blithely must her childish feet have crossed The Temple in their eagerness to win A refuge from the wicked world of sin, Tho' all the tempter's wiles on her were lost! Enveloping her about white-winged host Of guardian angels hovered; and her kin Was he, the priest, who bade her enter in; Himself the dwelling of the Holy Ghost. And where can lips and language to portray The wondrous works of grace within her wrought. Or words to speak the happiness she felt, As gliding thus her maiden years away, Within the sanctuary she had sought, In blest communion with her God she dwelt! -Ave Maria.

LILY LASS.

By JUSTIN HUNTLEY MCCARTHY, M. P. CHAPTER XXI. THE FLAG FLIES.

MacMurchad had seen from Brian's manner on the occasion of their meeting at the ferry that the danger of which Luttrell had given warning was serious.

If the Government really did intend to make a descent upon any of the National leaders there was no time to be lost.

Friends had to be seen at once, and the preparations which had been going on so quietly for the last few weeks perfected into readiness for immediate action.

MacMurchad hurriedly wrote off a line to Miss Geraldine apologizing for being unable to keep his appointment for that evening. This message he sent by a sure hand to the Crown. Then he and Brian devoted themselves to a series of rapid visits to those friends who were most involved in the movement.

It was late when the round was completed, and MacMurchad parted from Brian at Brian's door.

Foranagh and some others among the Young Irelanders had wished Murrough not to return to his own home. They were anxious that he should secure his safety by seeking shelter in the house of some one of his friends.

But MacMurchad rejected all such suggestions. The danger, he declared, was only threatened; the warrant, if it really were to be issued, had probably not yet arrived in the city. In any case the authorities would hardly act so soon.

Accordingly MacMurchad, as we have seen, walked home as usual, and alone, to the Red Tower.

The door was opened for him by Cormac. The retainer saw at once by the expression of the young chieftain's face that something exceptional had happened, and with a directness which his peculiar familiarity with his master sanctioned, he inquired the cause of MacMurchad's preoccupied air.

There were no secrets as to the movement between Murrough and Cormac, and the Young Irelander at once satisfied his follower's curiosity.

"The hour has come, Cormac," he said. "The hour has come at last." He was standing as he spoke in front of the small fire which gleamed on the hearth of the room in which Cormac had prepared some supper for his master.

Through it was summer the Red Tower appeared a somewhat chill abode, and the warmth was welcome.

At MacMurchad's words the face of Cormac brightened.

"The hour has come," he echoed, with his eyes fixed upon his master's face. "Glory be to God, the hour has come!"

A faint smile crossed MacMurchad's face at the passionate joy of his follower.

"Yes," he answered, with something like a sigh. "The hour has come. Pray heaven that it may end according to our hopes. Well, we shall have the green flag flying at all events, and the rest must lie to fate."

He turned and gazed upon the hearth as if he sought to read in the waning embers some answer to his dreams and doubts.

Cormac fell on his knees, and with kindling eyes and trembling lips prayed softly to himself for the success of the cause.

They sat silently for some time. Suddenly upon their silence came a crashing noise, a loud knocking at the outer door.

Murrough turned sharply round, and Cormac sprang to his feet.

For a moment the two men looked at each other in silence. Then Cormac, placing his finger on his lips, stole softly from the room. In a moment he was back again, and, creeping close to MacMurchad's side, he whispered:

"Tis the police, master darling; the police! The murdering villains are all round the tower at this moment."

"The police?" said MacMurchad, more to himself than to Cormac.

"Then Luttrell was right after all, and Mountmarvel has struck sooner than I thought. Well, the warning was timely none the less."

At this moment the knocking was resumed more loudly than before, and the strained attention of the two men could catch the words "in the name of the law" shouted hoarsely outside.

"In the name of the law," muttered MacMurchad, bitterly. "How long shall the name of that law parody justice and menace freedom in Ireland?"

As he spoke the noise outside redoubled, and a rain of blows fell upon the door.

"Better be off, master dear, while there's time," urged Cormac. "Shall I give the blackguards a taste of this through the window just to give them something to think about?"

And the intrepid dwarf produced a gigantic revolver, whose well-loaded chambers he surveyed with a loving satisfaction. MacMurchad shook his head.

"Not yet, Cormac," he said. "Tis hard to beat a retreat in the face of the enemy, and at the first assault, too; but we must persevere be prudent. Come, let us be gone before our unexpected visitors grow too impatient and forced themselves upon our tardy hospitality."

He took up the cloak which he had cast off and flung it upon his shoulders. From a case which stood in a niche he took a pair of revolvers, examined them to see that they were loaded and capped, and placed them in his pocket.

"Now," he said to Cormac, who was watching him eagerly. "Now I am ready. Have you got the lantern?"

"Tis here, master," said Cormac, producing a small lantern, which he lighted and handed to MacMurchad.

"Wait just a minute," he added, hurriedly, and stooping down he drew from a cupboard some folded green cloth, and rapidly left the room.

MacMurchad heard his heavy footsteps ascending the winding stone stairs that led to the roof of the Red Tower. They died away as the dwarf reached the summit, and after a few minutes MacMurchad heard them again as Cormac began to ascend.

A moment more and Cormac entered the room with a look of triumph on his face.

"Wait a bit till the dawn comes," he muttered to himself, as he took the lantern from his master's hands.

"Maybe the murdering peelers will see something then that won't be much of a joy to their eyes, anyhow. Come along, master darling."

And Cormac shuffled out of the room, bearing the lantern, and followed by MacMurchad, who was too much engrossed with his own thoughts to heed the muttered comments of his eccentric retainer.

Outside the crash of blows upon the door continued sounding horribly thunderous as the Young Irelander and Cormac entered the hall.

The door was of ancient oak, stanchioned and staped with iron, well barred and bolted. It would stand such assaults as men outside were able to make upon it in the darkness for hours.

As MacMurchad and Cormac paused and looked at the door, which scarcely trembled under the meaningless fury of the blows that fell upon it, they could hear how the whole quarter of town was waking into life, startled from sleep and silence by the unwonted clamour.

Outside they could hear windows lifted, doors opening, surprised voices shouted out hoarsely bewildered queries. Trampling feet resounded, hurrying from all points of the compass to the scene of disturbance.

Hoarse blended its tumult with the voice of earth, for the ancient and populous colony of rooks, shaken from their sleep by the universal agitation, and fluttered by the interruption of Cormac into their high places, had flown out of their sleeping-places, and were clapping, in a black, angry cawing cloud, about the battlements of the venerable building.

Master and man, standing silently in the dim hall, and listening to the mingled riot of earth and air, looked at each other and smiled. Cormac shook his clenched fist at the door, and whispered an imprecation beneath his breath. MacMurchad shrugged his shoulders, and motioned to Cormac to proceed. The dwarf, carrying the lantern, led the way from the hall into a room at the back, which appeared to be used as a kind of wood and lumber-room.

Stopping down, Cormac caught hold of the bars of the empty fire-grate, and drew them towards him. The whole of the front of the fireplace immediately yielded, and, swinging slowly out, disclosed an aperture from which a number of stone steps descended into darkness.

Cormac held up the lantern, and by its light MacMurchad, stooping down, passed under the arch of the fireplace, and, putting his foot on the first of the steps, slowly disappeared from view into, as it seemed, the bowels of the earth.

Cormac followed his master, and when the dwarf's head was on the level with the floor he drew the front of the fireplace to after him. It closed with a click, and left no trace whatever of the way in which the Young Irelander and his follower had so strangely disappeared.

Meanwhile, those outside the Red Tower who were so eager to get inside had begun to find that their efforts were making no impression upon the stubborn surface of the door. There was nothing for it but to wait till morning, with light, reinforcements, and forcing appliances allowed them to bring greater strength and skill to bear upon the building.

When the dawn did come an oath broke from the lips of the leader of the police, which was followed by a shrill cry of surprise from the crowd that had gathered to witness the siege of the Red Tower. For there, high in air, from the parapet of the tower, flapping in the fresh morning wind, floated a great green flag, on whose folds the uncrowned golden harp of Ireland was blazoned.

Goaded to fury by the rebellious standard, the police at last broke down the defiant door and rushed in with anger through every chamber of the tower. Their anger was changed to dismay when they discovered that the building was desolate, that the birds were flown, and that the means of their flight were wholly inexplicable.

CHAPTER XXII.

BLACK CARE BEHIND THE HORSEMAN. Lord Mountmarvel was in a particularly good humour with himself and with the world at large. The little plans he had laid out were prospering

as well as he could have wished; the thin thread of intrigue which he had been spinning was completing itself to his satisfaction.

Miss Geraldine and her father were visitors at Mountmarvel Castle, and had already spent one night under its roof. That was one part of his scheme perfected. As for the other part, he knew that an order had gone forth for the arrest of MacMurchad, and he was expecting momentarily information that the warrant had been put in force, and that the Young Irelander was in prison.

So Mountmarvel's reflections were pleasant enough as he walked up and down the terrace which stretched in front of Mountmarvel Castle on the July morning which immediately followed the events that have just been described.

Mountmarvel Castle, or Mountmarvel, as it was more habitually and familiarly called in the neighborhood, was a handsome building of modern construction standing on the summit of a gently rising hill. The hill had been called Mountmarvel for generations, even for centuries back. Records of "Le Mont Merveilleux" are to be found in any number of dusty old Norman-French records. But they differed in no wise from many others that surrounded the city, should have been called "Le Mont Merveilleux," and so "Mount Marvel," no one was wise enough to explain.

If ever there was a legend connected with Mountmarvel the legend had perished irretrievably; for no one, even among the legend-loving peasantry of the district, had any explanation forthcoming for the name of the hill which gave its name to the castle.

There had always been a castle standing on the summit of the Mount Marvellous; but the present castle had nothing whatever in common with its ancestor.

The old Norman keep which Hugo de Bohun, created Lord Mountmarvel by King John, had erected had wholly vanished away, and on its site there stood the smart, solid, sham-medieval which the taste of the late Lord Mountmarvel had set up in its stead.

Mountmarvel Castle was built in all that elaborate imitation of the architecture of the middle ages which was so fashionable, and which was so vilely done, more than a generation ago.

It was a ludicrous parody enough of the ages it aped and insulted, and it would have made any of the great master masons whose skilled hands and subtle brains had created so many masterpieces of stone turn in their graves with fury if they could have beheld it.

But it suited the fashion of the time well enough, and to people who knew nothing about the subject, it looked exceedingly attractive; and Lord Mountmarvel was much pleased for his good taste, and much envied by the less fortunate neighbors to whom the idea of constructing a brand-new mediæval castle had not occurred.

On this particular morning in July, however, even the sham mediævalism of Mountmarvel Castle looked attractive. The warm morning sunlight, whose subtle alchemy can make a stuccoed wall seem as attractive as the pillars of a Grecian temple, softened the harsh angles, and toned down the crude, startling novelty of the building, and made its ugliness contrast less offensively with the natural beauty of the scene, and the softness of the woods and waters that lay about the base of the hill.

Mountmarvel, pacing up and down his terrace before breakfast, was in no way concerned either with the ugliness of his dwelling-place or with the fictitious attractiveness which sunlight and summer lent to it. He was waiting somewhat impatiently for the appearance of his guests, and was revolving in his mind various plans for making himself agreeable to Miss Geraldine and her father, all of which plans were to end up in the one happy result of making Miss Geraldine the mistress of Mountmarvel Castle.

He had completed, perhaps, his twentieth turn on the terrace when he heard the sounds of steps and voices behind him, and, promptly wheeling about, he faced Miss Geraldine and her father, who had just stepped on to the terrace from one of the large windows of the Castle. Mountmarvel greeted them enthusiastically, and was delighted to find that both his guests were very ready to express admiration for the beauty of the scene that lay before them.

Indeed, the man or woman would be difficult to please whose eyes were not charmed with the prospect which lay before them.

Lillias was especially loud in her expressions of delight at the beauty of the landscape. Mr. Geraldine, whose architectural knowledge had been at once shocked and irritated by the incongruous ignorance of the building, was glad to forget the horrors that the hand of man had accomplished in surveying the soft grace and loveliness of nature's craft.

So for awhile the three stood and looked at the fair scene, and Mountmarvel explained to his guests who occupied the various country houses that rose here and there amid the embowering woods and Mr. Geraldine asked explanations of the various local names, which Mountmarvel was wholly unable to answer, and Lillias was curious about legendary lore, about which

Mountmarvel knew nothing, and cared less.

When he thought they had sufficiently admired the landscape, in which, for the first time, he found satisfaction, because it had afforded him the means of being agreeable to his guests, he proposed an adjournment for breakfast.

Mr. Geraldine seconded the proposition with sufficient cordiality. It was one of his theories, and, like most scholars, he was a man of many theories, that breakfast should never be kept waiting. Lillias alone expressed any indifference to the proffered meal.

"It seems almost a shame," she said, "to leave so fair a sight for the mere prosaic duty of eating."

Mountmarvel explained that they could return and survey the scene after breakfast; and Lillias, accepting the suggestion, was about to take Mountmarvel's arm to return to the house when her quick eye suddenly caught sight of an object of interest in the scene before her.

That object was a horseman galloping at full speed along the white road which stretched from the base of the hill towards the city, and which, a moment before, had stretched its dusty length in undisturbed solitude.

"See," she said, "there is some one else as indifferent to this sylvan loveliness as you are. I pity the man who has to spur his beast at a pace like that through so fair a country. I did not think people were ever in a hurry in Ireland, but yonder rider seems impatient enough. Is he coming to Mountmarvel?"

For the horseman had turned his steed at the point where the roads branched off up the road which led directly to the Castle.

"He must be coming here," Mountmarvel answered, "for the road leads nowhere else. Some news from the city, I suppose; but I can scarcely think of any news which warrants such haste as that."

"Do let us wait to see," Lillias suggested; "it must be something important." And the words were scarcely out of her mouth when the rider came clattering at headlong speed up the pathway which led directly to the terrace.

As soon as he perceived the company upon the terrace the rider waved his whip vigorously, and shouted out: "My lord! my lord!"

Mountmarvel frowned. He recognized the rider as a man in the service of the Government, whose official position was somewhat uncertain, but who blended in his proper personality something of the policeman and something of the spy.

Clearly the news was important when the bearer of it permitted himself the liberty of riding at such a speed to Mountmarvel's gate, and hailing Mountmarvel himself in so unceremonious a manner.

"Excuse me for a moment," he said to Lillias; and he hurriedly walked to the end of the terrace, where, by this time, the rider had dismounted and was waiting for him.

"What is the matter?" Mountmarvel asked, somewhat angrily.

"My lord!" the man replied, almost gasping for breath - for the speed at which he had ridden was fierce, and both he and his horse were trembling with fatigue - "my lord! MacMurchad!"

"Well?" Mountmarvel interrupted. "Is he in prison?"

"No, my lord," was the answer; "he has escaped. He is hiding, and no one knows where to find him!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE HAZARD OF THE DIE. When MacMurchad and Cormac disappeared from their pursuers down the mysterious exit from the Red Tower they were merely availing themselves of a retreat which had long been held in readiness in case of some such event as that which had now actually come to pass.

Both Cormac and MacMurchad had used it occasionally ere this, though not often, for up to the present there had been little or no reason for the Young Irelander or his follower to keep their comings and goings from the Red Tower secret.

Now, however, the advantage of such a back door to the old tower was obvious.

When Cormac and his master heard the spring of the secret opening shut behind them they found themselves in a long, narrow, and intensely dark passage, which seemed to run out into measureless obscurity.

More than a dozen solid stone steps led from the level of the room they had quitted to the floor of this passage, which was only just enough to allow a man of middle height to hold himself upright in it.

To Cormac, indeed, the lowness of the passage presented no inconvenience, but the stately form of MacMurchad had to bend not a little in order to accommodate itself to the cramping conditions of the subterranean way.

Holding up his lantern so that it cast its gleam ahead, and illuminated feebly some foot or two of the murky space beyond, Cormac cautiously led the way, while the Young Irelander kept close behind him.

The darkness seemed to extend before them into immeasurable infinitude of space. But they had not proceeded many yards before the light shone on the lowest of a flight of stone steps similar to those by which the fugitives had descended from the Red Tower.

Cautiously ascending the steps Cormac felt about in the semi-darkness for a few moments for the spring. It yielded promptly to his touch, and an aperture disclosed itself above their heads.

Climbing through this opening Cor-

mac turned, and, stooping, held the lantern for MacMurchad to follow.

Another second Murrough was by the dwarf's side, and by the same ingenious machinery which had permitted their escape from the Red Tower, an empty fire-grate had swung back into its place and effectually concealed the method of their entry.

The spot in which the pair now found themselves was the principal room of a small, tumble-down, unoccupied house the rear of which stood in a dingy land running off a narrow street in the rear of the quadrangle of squallid houses which surrounded the Red Tower.

It had been unoccupied for long enough, and would, like most other unoccupied houses in that part of the city, have become a sort of rookery for the floating population of tramps and beggars but for two reasons, a substantial and an unsubstantial reason.

To take the unsubstantial reason first, it was popularly assumed in the vicinity that the house was haunted, and the supernatural terrors with which the ramshackle edifice was thus invested were formidable enough to protect it from all but the most daring of tramps and the most sceptical of mendicants.

Against any such, however, the building was endowed with solid defences than a reputation for phantoms. Shaky though the building seemed to be, it boasted a door of no ordinary solidity, which was apparently always securely fastened, as any wanderer who had the temerity to test its strength, in order to secure himself a night's shelter in defiance of hobgoblins, could easily assure himself.

There was not, it is true, a single unbroken pane of glass left in the shattered windows, but behind the ruined frame-work of the sashes forbidding wooden shutters strongly barred and bolted frowned grimly on the world.

Such was the outer appearance of the building which served as the back entrance to the Red Tower. Inside it was as deserted and dreary as possible. The room in which MacMurchad and Cormac now stood was a gaunt, dismal place, empty of all furniture, festooned with cobwebs, and populous with rats, whose claws, as they scuttled wildly across the bare floor in fear of the new arrivals, gave a kind of creepy animation to the old house which sounded repulsive enough to make even Cormac shiver.

The two fugitives looked at each other with something like a shudder. The place was as dismal as a tomb. MacMurchad shrugged his shoulders. "Suppose our secret were known," he whispered, with a smile. "Suppose that when we opened that door we found a little party of police quietly waiting for us. This rat-hole would make an excellent rat-trap."

Cormac shook his head. "Nobody knows of this place but we two," he answered decisively.

"Well, let us be off," MacMurchad responded. "Tis not a spot to linger in."

Cormac lifted out of its place the huge bar that secured the door, drew the bolts, which, in spite of the ancient and abandoned appearance of the building, glided back noiselessly, turned a silent key in the lock, and, opening the door cautiously, wide enough to let his head pass through, peered into the street.

All was still outside. It was yet night, and a few melancholy lamps were burning, but far away in the east faint lines of wan light gave the first hint of coming dawn.

Cormac stepped out into the street, and MacMurchad followed him. While the dwarf carefully looked the door behind them, the Young Irelander looked up at the broken windows of the house he had just left.

"And so I am flying from the Red Tower," he said to himself, softly. "I wonder when and under what conditions I shall return to it."

He had spoken to himself, but Cormac overheard him.

"Please God, you'll come back to the old place in triumph, as a MacMurchad ought," the dwarf answered. "Ay, and bring a fair wife beneath its roof too, that the old race may endure, and that you may tell your children and your grandchildren how the master and the man left the old place to fight for the old flag."

MacMurchad rested his hand for a moment affectionately on Cormac's shoulders.

"I hope you may prove a true prophet," he said, "and, in any case, we shall do our best."

Then, turning, he walked firmly away in the direction of the river, while Cormac followed close behind him, keeping a watchful look-out in all directions.

They made their way through the quiet streets and out beyond the town, till they came to an outlying farm. Here MacMurchad knocked at the door, two sharp knocks, and then, after a pause, a third.

A window opened immediately above the door, and a man's head appeared.

"What is the news with you?" the head inquired.

"The summer is come," MacMurchad answered.

"What follows?" asked the head.

"The grass is green," answered the Young Irelander.

The window was closed, and in a few moments the door opened and a man appeared. After a whispered colloquy with MacMurchad, he went round to some stables at the back, and led out two horses, saddled and bridled.

MacMurchad and Cormac mounted, and in another minute they were riding rapidly off into the country.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Persons writing for a change of address should invariably send in the name of their former post office.