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SHAWN NA SOGGARTH; OR, THE PRIEST-HUNTER. AN IRISH TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

BY M. ARCHDEACON, ESQ., Author of the Legends of Connacht, &c. CHAPTER XXXI.

Captain Aylmer, who was to command the troopers, was added to the lunch party. The baronet's table was, as usual, heaped with viands, dressed by a first-rate artist, and rare wines of the first quality; and the party to partake of them was in high humor to do them justice, with, perhaps, the exception of Sir John himself. The spirits of Charley Rorke, exhilarated by the rich cheer, (in his host's opinion) though we, who have, in right of our authorship, access behind the curtain, can distinctly state it was through a better motive, were particularly exuberant. He laughed, jibed, badgered (in his own phrase) the curate, and at last succeeded in his principal object, namely, getting Sir John into good humor, too.

"Well, certainly, this lamb, though dressed by a papist," he observed—"mousser le kitchen is a Papist, I believe, Sir John?" "Why, Charley, he may be a half-relapsed Papist, like other people, for aught I know."

"Well, Sir John, whether he crosses himself with the right hand or the left, he's a jewel of a cook—don't you think so, Mr. Dixon?"

The curate, who had but seldom met Charley, and by no means relished his humorous habits, only replied by looking sour and bowing slightly.

"Allow me to help you to a little tongue, Mr. Dixon," continued Charley, "for certainly, I'm afraid, the pulpit and the Papists have your own half worn out;—don't you think, Captain Aylmer, he is looking a good deal exhausted?"

"To tell you the truth, Rorke, now that you've asked the question, if he don't manage to recruit himself speedily, and amend his looks, that match between himself and Baker's niece, the five thousand pounder, will hardly take place this season, as I heard last week she was talking highly of that dashing cornet Beaumont, of ours, and you know, Sir John, what importance women always foolishly attach to personal appearance."

"I don't know, Sir John, what latitude you may be inclined to allow Mr. Rorke, at your table," said the curate, with blazing face and scowling brow, "but I am not in the habit of bantering or being bantered."

"Pho, Dixon, use what's before you, and never mind Charley. You ought to know he's a privileged rascal of long standing, everywhere he's allowed to put his face into."

"O many thanks, Sir John; when I'm premier, I'll make you lord lieutenant, for that.—At present, I'll avail myself of my privilege, by drinking to the health of Mr. Dixon, and speedily promotion to him. Come, Mr. Dixon, a glass of this Rhenish will take the cobwebs from your throat, and sweeten your blood;—the curate looked again as black as night;—"well, maybe I'm wrong once more. To be sure, I suppose the distillers of this wine are rank Papists;—you were in foreign parts, Captain Aylmer, and can tell us."

"Yes, Rorke, I rather think they care more for the Pope than for the King, and pray to more than we do," responded the Captain, laughing.

"Well, then, I beg Mr. Dixon's pardon; for certainly, if I was as orthodox a Protestant as he is, I should have great scruples of conscience about tasting wine at all, and take to the humble beer that, I should be sure, was manufactured by genuine Protestant hands."

Dixon, who was by no means a Mahomedan, in regard to a quiet glass of wine, was utterly enraged by this last piece of banter. Turning round angrily to Sir John, he said, in his bitterest tone, Sir John, I claim your protection from this low-lived persecution. If this man continues his vulgarity, I must quit the table."

"Well, well, Dixon, as I see you can't take a joke well, Charley must choose another target for his ball practice. Is that a good military phrase, Aylmer?" "Completely technical, Sir John."

"With all my heart, Sir John," said Rorke, "as, to tell the truth, I was beginning to get tired of wasting my balls on so flimsy a mark."

The gauger now commenced firing away his "quips and cranks" at his entertainer and the Captain, who received them with a relish, heightened by the sparkling champagne and Rhenish, till Sir John, looking at his watch, exclaimed, "we have been here now nearly an hour, and it begins to be time that we should move after the party."

"Wait, Sir John, for one of my best stories about making a free-mason," said Charley, earnestly, who was most anxious to delay his companions as long as possible. "I question if I ever told it to yourself before; Aylmer has never heard it; and I am confident it will make friends of Mr. Dixon and myself again."

"Well," said Sir John, "as I think, you are in a good vein for telling a story, just now, I think, we may wait for you. But make it pithy and brief. I give you a quarter of an hour for the telling (he laid the repeater on the table); and, meanwhile, we'll take half a glass of brandy, to brace us for the sharp sea air."

There was no dissentient voice; and, smacking his lips, the gauger began his story, with the intention of spinning it out as long as he should be allowed.

"Thirty years ago," commenced Charley, "we were both something younger men; and, though my hair is getting grey now, you will remember, I was then one of the rollicking boys, that it wouldn't be easy to get the match of, those days; for, 'pon my conscience, Sir John, I think we're really going to the bad every year."

"How so, sirrah?"

"Why, Sir John, I'd have to make a circuit now, to find a single dozen of six bottle or fourteen tumbler men, though, in our youth, they were as plenty as blackberries in a dry harvest; and if things are to continue this way, getting worse and worse, what'll the young generation come to, for what example 'll they have? The fact is, I'm beginning to think, if matters don't come round again, the spirit and frolic of an Irishman will be little better than a name." Here Charley exhibited a ludicrous seriousness of countenance that, with his reasons for asserting the degeneracy of the times, made Sir John and Aylmer laugh outright, while Dixon regarded the humorous narrator with a scowl.

"Well, gentlemen," continued the gauger, "last Patrick's Day thirty years, myself, and half-a-dozen other jolly fellows, that, I must say again, it wouldn't be easy to get the matches of those days, made a free-mason, in our own style, of Tom Nally, of Ballintaggart, as good natured a tubb (milkop) as ever you came across. Oh, Sir John, it's a sad thing to think that not one of those prime spirits is over the clay, this blessed day, barring myself, that sticks to his hold like an old tree!"

"No sentiment, Charley—mind the watch."

"Well, then, Sir John, you remember that, thirty years ago, no prime fellow was right without being a mason. You may also have heard that the Nally's of Ballintaggart were then right comfortable scullogues renting upwards of a hundred acres of good land under your father, at ten shillings an acre. I'm sorry to say it's few of their kind we have those days—the worse for the country. Then, the war, too, was stirring, and everything brought a slashing price, so that the rents came as easy as kiss hand; and pounding and distaining were seldom heard of. So, poor Tom, as simple and good a fellow as ever helped to carve a goose or finish a bottle, came into the town to clear his half year's gale, and bring home broad cloth and carolinas (foreign hats, in contradistinction to felts, the home manufacture) to the brothers—none of the family was married—and let me remind you, Sir John, that at that time the scullogues wore only the best of everything."

"Mind the time, Charley, and let us not have the half of those explanations."

"Very well, Sir John," continued Charley, taking his correction like a well trained spaniel; "and to come to the point, you recollect Dr. Brennan, our leader in every frolic—I hope God has forgiven him for all his frolics, as there was little harm in him. Well, he chanced to meet Tom, and found out from the poor gomerl that he had plenty of money, and was very anxious to become a mason. So the doctor comes to myself, lame Jack Boyie, Dick Murphy, and a few others, to explain to us how the wind blew; and, soon after, we arranged with Tom, that he was to have the honor of being made a brother that very evening."

"Accordingly, at the appointed hour, Tom comes to us at the hotel, where a splendid supper was ordered for us at his expense, you may be sure; and with solemn faces we proceeded to initiate him; and devil a mason was ever made, before or since, with such other ceremonies.—We first blindfolded him; then blackened his face, hauled him about and scorched him, and, while he was roaring with the pain, we half-frightened the life out of him by taking off the bandage, and showing him Dr. Brennan, in the shape of the devil, with a long tail and a large pair of horns, which Dick Murphy maliciously said, became the little doctor uncommonly well, he had been so long in the habit of wearing them—a wicked allusion to a fine, dressy wife the doctor had; you remember her, Sir John?"

The baronet nodded assent, and Charley continued,

"Well, after getting tired of tormenting poor Tom, we saluted him as a brother, and, soon after, were summoned to supper which was, sure enough, a capital one—such lots of fish, flesh and fowl, tame and wild, with heaps of pies and pastry; and then the fine show of wine and brandy and whiskey. Maybe, though, you'd think, Sir John, our modesty might prevent us

from doing it justice. We got over that, however, surprising as it may seem, and sat till broad daylight, as uproarious a set as ever saluted cockcrow; and maybe we didn't keep Tom in the moon all the time, with songs and toasts and prophecies of how soon he might arrive at the dignity of grand master itself.

"The next day was, of course, Sheela's day, and as Tom's guineas, though a good deal diminished by the night's expenses, were by no means exhausted, ye may be sure we stuck to him like bird lime, whipping him off to breakfast at one place and dine at another, and introducing him, during the day, as a brother to Collector Dillon, the Rev. Mr. Armstrong and Captain Mahon, so that poor Tom was as proud as a peacock."

"We had as good a supper that night as on the night before, and for twice the number;—and I needn't say, at Tom's expense, too. But, when we drink hard, we must have a headache; and when our money is spent, then comes repentance. In the morning, when Tom found his guineas diminished to some five or six, he began to feel severe qualms about the rent, and came to the doctor and myself with a woful long face, saying, that he was afraid Hugh Irwin, your father's agent, you recollect, Sir John, would be so enraged with him for wasting the money, that he wouldn't give him time to pull it together again."

"Is it only time you're wanting?" says the doctor.

"That's all to be sure," says Tom, "if we could only get a few fairs over our heads, we could easily scrape up the money again, without letting Ned or Jack know anything about the matter."

"And is that all that's making you uneasy?" says the doctor, boldly. "Why, you simple gosling, what good would it be to you to be made a mason of, if it couldn't do more than that for you? Isn't Hugh Irwin himself a mason—aye, and an arch-mason, too? and what have you to do but to throw him a brotherly sign, to get the time, or, for the matter of that, to pay the whole debt if you required it?"

"Do you tell me so in earnest?" says Tom, brightening up at once.

"To be sure I do," says the doctor, "so, be giving yourself no further trouble about the matter; but let us have a bottle of wine before you go to the office to Hugh, and I'll teach you to make the sign, by advancing one foot, as it might be this way, and having one hand in this position, and the other stretched towards him, with the thumb and forefinger pointed so." Charley threw himself into a ludicrous attitude to illustrate his description; and the baronet observed with a grin laugh, "The whole gang of you ought to have the horsepond and dogwhip, after spending the poor devil's money, to think of sending him on such a fool's errand!"

"Or a cool two hundred at the drum-head might meet their desert, Sir John," said Aylmer, laughing also.

The curate offered no remark; he sat in discontented silence during the whole narrative, wondering that the baronet could waste his time in listening to such trash.

"Well, gentlemen, to tell the truth," continued Rorke, "I had some compunction myself for the prank we were playing him; but we knew that Tom and his brothers were well off, and could easily get over the loss of the money.—Any way we had the wine, during the drinking of which Tom was thoroughly instructed in the manner of throwing the sign; and he forthwith set out for the office to exercise it on Brother Irwin. Now, Brother Irwin, you well remember Sir John, was not the civilest of God's creatures, and I had a great fancy to witness the meeting between himself and Tom; so I stole softly to the office door, through a crevice, of which I could clearly perceive how things went on within."

"Hugh Irwin was busy writing when Tom entered, and did not perceive him at first; but, by degrees, Tom approached nearer to the desk, and with a 'hem, your honor,' threw himself into the attitude directed by the doctor.

"When I saw the poor omadhawn in this posture, ye may easily guess I had hard work to keep down the laughter that was half choking me, while Hugh, recognising the voice, raised his eyes from the paper, saying—"Ha, Nally, I thought to have seen you the day before yesterday, as usual; you are now come prepared, of course."

"Your honor sees," says Tom, still in attitude.

"Why, what the devil ails you, Nally?" said Hugh, his surliness beginning to rise.

"Doesn't yet honor understand?" says Tom, advancing his arm and finger.

"The fellow's drunk," says Hugh, in a surlier tone;—"begone sirrah, till ye get sober."

"Doesn't yet honor understand, in earnest?" says Tom, going still closer, and reaching his fingers near the agent's face.

"I should have given a guinea for a peep at

Irwin's countenance at that moment," said the baronet.

"And it would be worth it, Sir John," continued Charley, "as he was shouting, 'out with the drunken brute,' as savage as a bear, on hearing which words, and the tone of them, I decamped from my position at the door, as fast as my legs could carry me, to tell the doctor, who was waiting for me, how things had gone with Tom. But I had scarcely time to finish when Tom himself came up to us terribly ebapfallen."

"O, brothers Charley and Denis," says he out of breath, "I'm done; I'll be distracted at vanst. He can't be a brother at all; he had like to ait me when I threw him the sign."

"And how did you make it?" says the doctor, as cool as a cucumber.

"This way to be sure, as you told me."

"Why, you infernal ass, if that was the way you stood, it was little wonder he should scout you. How could he ever take you for a brother in such a posture as that?" asked the doctor in an angry tone, while myself looked with astonishment at him, and Tom opened his eyes as wide as saucers. "Wasn't it the right leg and left arm I told you should be put forward, with the middle finger stretched and the fore-finger and thumb closed? No wonder indeed brother Hugh should never have dreamt you had anything to do with masonry, when you went to make such a sign as that. But, over at once, with you again to the office, and you'll see how different a reception you'll get—though, on second thoughts, we may as well have another bottle of wine, to make you steady and take away the tremor."

The wine was drunk and Tom pushed off to the office again, with more confidence than ever, and myself in the rear as before.

When Tom entered again, Hugh saw him at once, and cried out, "well, you rascal, I hope you have sobered yourself since you were here before."

"Your honor sees," stammered Tom, who was now really tipsy, "that I've got the rale sign now."

"What sign, you drunken reprobate!" shouted Hugh.

"Yer honor sees," hiccupped Tom, throwing himself into the new attitude the doctor had instructed him in.

"I suppose the drunken idiot has come in to insult me; but, by the eternal—if you're not out of that in a second, I'll dogdash you into sobriety," roared Hugh, springing up and seizing a large whip from the desk.

"Murder, Sheery," bawled Tom, without waiting to practice his sign any further, but taking to his heels at once, and passing myself, in his fright, without ever remarking me. So, after laughing till I was half sick, thinking poor Tom had enough for his money, and not wishing to meet him any more that day, I found out that I had a publican to visit about a mile from the town. I learned, however, the next day, from the doctor, that he had, after a long palaver, induced Tom to throw himself in an attitude for the third time before Hugh, as that not over civil gentleman was riding out of town, by which he was so much enraged as to dismount and give him some licks of the whip, that made Tom scour off, roaring like a bull.

"It was six months after before he ventured into the town, and a full year before he would open his mouth to the doctor or myself, though he easily made up the rent without letting the prank played on him come to the ears of his brothers; and ye may be sure he never asked to get a step in masonry after."

"Not with your gang at all events, I'll be sworn," said Sir John, rising, "as the poor devil certainly got a dose of you all. Well I've heard you tell worse stories and better, too."

"If it were I that got the dose," observed the captain, "I would certainly have administered in return a dose, and no stinted one, in another kind, to the doctor and yourself, at least."

"Pooh, captain, my dear fellow, though we were a little wild, we knew our marks, and would look sharply about us before we'd provoke a charge from a heavy armed captain of dragoons."

"Aye, the whole gang were vastly more knaves than fools," said Sir John; "but it's full time for us to get to horse, gentlemen; Charley's time is beyond its allotted expiration by nearly ten minutes—to horse—to horse."

The four were, accordingly, in the saddle and on their road to the coast, in a few moments.

(To be Continued.)

COUNT MONTALEMBERT ON THE ROMAN QUESTION

The number of the Correspondant which has just appeared contains the following letter from M. de Montalembert to M. Carour:—

"M. le Comte.—I read in the report of the proceedings of the Turin Parliament of the 12th of October these words, spoken by you:—

"I believe that the solution of the Roman question must be arrived at by the conviction,

which will spread more and more in modern society, and even in the great Catholic society, that liberty is highly favorable to the development of the true religious sentiment. My conviction is that this truth will soon triumph. We have already seen it admitted by the most impassioned defenders of Catholic ideas. We have seen an illustrious writer, in a lucid interval, demonstrate to Europe, in a book which has made a great noise, that liberty has been highly useful in elevating the religious spirit."

"I am assured that you intended this allusion for me. If your words implied merely praise, I should not permit myself to accept them; but they contain also an insult; my modesty therefore can reconcile itself to them."

"You appeal to me before the public; you, therefore, give me the right to reply to you before the same public. Yet I can hardly surmount the repugnance which I feel towards it.—French blood has been spilt by your orders.—Catholic honor has been insulted by your lieutenants. The ancient hearth, the last shelter of the common Father of the faithful, is menaced by your words. Not one of your acts but wounds and revolts me, and now you strike me a fresh blow to all I love by masking your perverse designs under the veil of a false accord between religion and liberty, and in support of your assertion you invoke my testimony. M. le Comte, I owe it to myself to protest that on no account am I with you."

"Thank God your policy is not mine. You are for great centralized States; I am for small independent States. You despise local traditions in Italy; I love them everywhere. You are for unitarian Italy; I am for federative Italy. You violate treaties and the rights of nations; I respect them because they are between States what contracts and probity are between men.—You sacrifice to your object engagements, promises, oaths; I answer you with the generous Maxim: 'Means which the moral sense condemns, even though they should be materially useful, kill morally. No victory deserves to be put in the balance with the contempt of oneself.' You are destroying the temporal power of the Sovereign Pontiff; I defend it with all the energy of my reason and my affection."

"You denounce the policy which produced the French expedition to Rome in 1849, and I consider it a glory to have supported it. In spite of the cruel and unexcusable contradictions it has since met with, I am still thankful for it, for it is the last and vacillating consequence of that expedition which even at this day forces France and Piedmont to meet face to face before the Capitol."

"You give to the heroes of Garibaldi the praises which I reserve for the *mercenarius* of the immortal Pimodan."

"You are with Cialdini; I am with Lamoriciere. You are with Father Cavazzi; I am with the Bishops of Orleans, Poitiers, Tours, Nantes—with all those Catholic voices which in the two worlds have protested, and will still protest, against you."

"Above all I am with Pius IX., who was the first friend of the independence of Italy till the day when that great cause passed to the hands of ingratitude, violence and imposture."

"On our side, I dare to say, is conscience.—On your side, I believe, is success. Piedmont dares everything, France permits everything, Italy accepts everything, and Europe endures everything. Your success, I repeat it, appears to me certain."

"Two obstacles, however, still rise before you.—Rome and Venice: at Rome is France, in Venice Germany. They are strangers to be sure, but they are strong. At Naples the Italians have not arrested you. At Castelidardo you were ten against one. You had, without doubt, to overcome rights, treaties, engagements, honour, justice, weakness; but these are abstractions which offer no resistance to grape shot." At Rome there are some French battalions, and at Venice and Verona some rifled cannon. You pressed against right but you are hesitating in the presence of force.

"This force, I admit, does not protect similar causes."

"At Venice you support a just cause. Venice was odiously betrayed by us in 1797, sadly delivered up by you in 1849, unjustly abandoned by you and by us in 1859. Her deliverance is just."

"At Rome you support a cause unjust in every point of view, even, as you well know, in the Italian point of view. We Frenchmen, we Catholics of the whole world, we make a great sacrifice to the independence of the Pontifical Power in consenting that, being placed in Italy, it shall be habitually administered by Italian hands. But you, Italians, you have been asked a hundred times, what would your country be without the Papacy? What sort of figure would your petty Piedmontese Majesties cut in the centre of Catholicity turned into the offices of your Ministerial bureaus? Do you imagine that