



# THE TRUE WITNESS

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### REDMOND O'CONNOR; OR, THE SECRET PASSAGE.

A PAGE OF IRISH HISTORY.

(From the N. Y. Irish-American.)

#### CHAPTER IV.—THE CONFEDERATES.

That evening, about an hour before sunset, O'Connor and his trusty follower approached the banks of a small river which marked the boundary of Tyrone. Fergus was no longer the wild and ragged stranger who had appeared at the lists of Salamanca. His coarse saffron had given place to a neatly trimmed buff coat and polished cuirass, and his cap of deer-skin was replaced by a low-crowned Spanish hat and plume. He led by the bridle a stout pack mule, which carried his foster-brother's effects and the heavier part of his armor. The Knight himself was mounted on the same steed that had borne him so gallantly at the tournament, and was dressed similar to his follower, only that his clothes were of better material and more richly embroidered. Their road lay along the bank of the river for some distance, and as the Knight looked impatiently at the declining sun, he struck into a sharp canter, and soon arrived at a ford in the stream. "Fergus," he said, as he entered the water, "keep in my wake, for I think this water is deep, it runs so smooth."

There was, however, little need of the caution; the smoothness of the water was merely owing to the gravelly bed over which it flowed. In a few moments they were on the opposite bank, and slowly ascending a narrow bridge path, lined on either side with clumps of furze bushes, which wound in a serpentine course toward the height above. This they soon reached; and when they did so, a scene presented itself which compelled them to draw bridle in admiration.

The country, as far as the eye could reach, was one expanse of the deepest green; rivaling even the rich lands of sunny Spain. Here and there a thicket of beautiful holly or hazel met the sight and lent variety to the landscape. They were now in that Tyrone which had been hitherto guarded by the stout princes of the Red Hand, who for generations held their patrimony inviolate against the invader. The face of the country was dotted thickly with peaceful cottages, and the song of the husbandman could be heard floating on the gentle evening breeze, as calmly as if an army of Saxon marauders were not already at his door. To the left of the travelers, and about a mile down the stream, lay the white walls of Portmore, which the O'Neil had abandoned for lack of men to garrison it. But the object which riveted the Knight's attention remains yet to be noticed. Right opposite to where they stood, and not more than a fourth of a mile distant, stood the white tents of the Confederate army, few in number, it is true, but filled with stout hearts united in one purpose—the freedom of their altars and their homes. Conspicuous from the others, from its size, stood the tent of the O'Neil, with the terrible banner of his house hanging lazily from a flag-staff in front. Upon the mud parapet which surrounded the tents, the wild northern sentinels paced slowly to and fro, lightly caroling some song of olden times.

"Fergus," said the Knight, when he had feasted his eyes on this glorious scene, "let us move on; it is growing late, and I am impatient to be of the number of those rebels, as they are called. But yonder comes some one bound to the camp, and his company will do us no harm."

As he spoke, he pointed to the right, where a solitary knight was seen riding slowly along a green lane which led off in an oblique direction toward the river. His shield hung about his neck, and his lance lay carelessly in front. He held in his hand a paper which he seemed to be perusing attentively, and his steed nibbled the grass on each side as he came on. He was hidden from their view for a moment by an intervening thicket, and the knight, turning to his follower, exclaimed—

"By my faith, Fergus, I would not wonder if this should prove to be the O'Neil himself. But no, he would not be mad enough to ride abroad so carelessly, seeing the golden reward offered for his head."

At this moment the stranger again appeared in sight, and the setting sun, now shining on his shield, revealed the Red Hand of Ulster.

"It is O'Neil himself," cried Fergus; "I see his famous coat of arms."

Ere he had done speaking, four men, armed to the teeth, sprang from the thicket beside the stranger, and without uttering a word, attacked him on all sides.

"My shield! Fergus, my shield!" cried O'Connor, tearing the shield from its fastenings;—and putting spurs to his gallant horse, he flew to the scene of action. It was time he did so, for O'Neil's noble steed was ham-strung, and he himself stood, with his back against a tree, defending himself against his assailants. One of them already lay stretched upon the sward, and

the remaining three, with their long rapiers, pressed him at all points. But they had met the soldier of his time, and their blows were parried with the dexterity of an accomplished swordsman. So intent were the assassins on their object, that they did not notice O'Connor until he was upon them, and, shouting his war cry, cut down two of them with as many blows. The other turned to fly, but ere he had advanced a step, the sword of O'Neil was buried in his back.

It was at this moment that Fergus, having tied the pack mule to a tree, came galloping up, sword in hand, but too late to take part in the struggle.

"Might I beg to know the name of the gallant Knight, to whom I am indebted for this timely succor?" asked the O'Neil, taking off his helmet.

"Fergus O'Connor, my lord, is but too happy to render this trifling service to one for whom he would give his best blood," replied the Knight, bowing.

"Thou art, then, of the O'Connors Faly?"

"I am, my lord."

"And, if I mistake not, the son of Shane O'Connor, of Glendearg, who hath met with such foul treatment?"

"The same, my lord."

"Then, by my faith, I am right happy to see thee," cried the Prince, embracing him; "and be assured that Hugh O'Neil will not forget this day's work. I'll warrant thou art come to wrest thy fair castle from the usurper?"

"It is, indeed, for that I came, my lord. The skeleton of my sire hanging at his own gate, is no small motive for revenge."

"Now, that is spoken as becometh one of thy race and lineage; and what aid I can give, hath been already purchased. But, I pray thee, drop this title of 'lord,' which I have cast behind with my English allegiance. Do thou, good fellow," he continued, turning to Fergus, "search the bodies of those dogs, if thou canst find anything that will give us an insight into their names, or that of their employers."

Fergus sprang to do his bidding, and O'Neil, turning again to the Knight, inquired:

"Hast heard any news from the Spanish court, lately? It would seem as if King Philip had forgotten his faithful allies."

"So far from that," replied the knight, "there is a vessel now lying at Ballyshannon, with warlike stores for thee and the Prince of Tyrconnel. I have also the honor to be the bearer of a letter from His Catholic Majesty, to the Prince of Tyrone."

So saying, he took from beneath his cuirass a packet, bound with silk, sealed with the arms of Spain and the Indies, and addressed to "The valiant and mighty Prince, Hugh O'Neil, generalissimo of the Catholic army of Ireland, &c. These, by the hand of our good Knight, Redmond O'Connor, of the Order of St. Iago."

"Now, by my sword," exclaimed O'Neil, when he had read the address; "it seems thou art high in favor with his Majesty, and I heartily congratulate thee. As for the packet, I will forego the reading of it, till we arrive in camp, and I will introduce thee at the same time to my brothers in arms, who will be proud of thy companionship. Ho! there, good fellow," he cried to Fergus; "hast found anything on those carrion knaves?"

"Nothing, my lord, but this paper," said Fergus, coming forward. "The cursed thing is English print, and I cannot decipher it."

O'Neil took the paper, and as he glanced at its contents, his brow lowered, and in a tone of bitter irony, he exclaimed—

"By my faith, the *callagh* queen of England sets a high value on her humble servant. Here she is, offering two thousand pounds for the pleasure of an interview with the arch traitor, Hugh O'Neil, or one thousand for his head; a princely price indeed! It may be that those fellows would have taken Irish lands, instead of the gold, and we will give them, at least, their own length and breadth, good measure."

He handed the paper to O'Connor, who read it with mingled feelings of surprise and indignation. It was a copy of Elizabeth's famous proclamation, declaring O'Neil a traitor, and offering a reward for his capture, dead or alive. This explained, at once, the reasons for such a desperate attack on the Prince, almost within calling of his own forces.

It was quite dark when they reached the camp, and O'Neil led the way through a narrow passage in the mud wall, lined on each side by his own warriors, armed with long pikes, which glistened in the torch-light. O'Connor and his follower were conducted to a spare tent, which the Prince ordered for their accommodation, and while a couple of stout fellows aided Fergus in caring for his cattle, another waited on the Knight, while he changed his attire. This being done, he was conducted to the Prince's tent, from which a bright glare of light streamed through the open door. As he approached, he could per-

ceive O'Neil himself, seated at the head of a long table, which was covered with smoking dishes, and surrounded by those men whose names reflect glory on the history of their time. Here was Hugh Maguire, the brave Prince of Fermanagh; Cormac and Aed O'Neil, the General's brothers; MacMahon, of Monaghan; MacDonald, of the Glens; the valiant Tyrrell, of Fertullagh, and a host of others. All eyes were bent on the stranger, as O'Neil rose to meet him, and introduced him to the company.—The Prince had related the adventure of the evening, and all pressed forward to offer their gratitude to the man who had saved the life of their adored chief. O'Connor, as a mark of distinction, was seated at the leader's right hand, and when King Philip's letter had been read, and listened to with deepest attention, the supper proceeded amid the most delicious music from the aged bard of O'Neil, who sat behind his master's chair.

Having done justice to the viands, they were removed by the pages in waiting, and their place supplied with flasks of wine, and rich and massively wrought *corruas*, or drinking horns.

"My friends," said O'Neil, rising with his horn elevated in his hand; "pledge all around the health of our ally of Spain, and his gallant knight, Sir Redmond O'Connor, who hath come to take part in our rightful struggle for religion and our Fatherland."

The toast was pledged with a hearty good will, and O'Connor returned thanks with a modest diffidence, which gained him still more the sympathy and esteem of his new companions.—The wine passed freely round, and good fellowship reigned supreme. The aged bard caught up the inspiration, and his fingers swept the strings to sounds of wild pleasure and delight.—It was not till the moon was careering high above the camp, and shedding a flood of mellow light over white tent and mailed sentinel; that the young O'Connor sought his lodgings, delighted with his reception by the gallant Confederates.

#### CHAPTER V.—THE EXPEDITION.

The next morning, long before the sun appeared above the western hills, O'Connor again made his way to the General's tent. A couple of steeds, ready saddled, were led up and down before the door; and entering, he found O'Neil alone with Maguire, the commander of the cavalry.

"I see," said O'Neil, "your Spanish sojourn hath not made a scabbard of you. We wish to show you some of our 'wild Irish,' of whom you have doubtless heard much."

"Men," replied O'Connor, "whose homes are sacked, and themselves pursued like wolves, cannot be taught else than wild."

"By St. Patrick, thou sayest truly!" exclaimed the fiery Maguire; "when their princes are outlawed, and a price set upon their heads, by a petticoated *callagh*, whose power they never owned!—and all this for presuming to breathe the breath of freemen on the hills their fathers ruled for ages! But I see our cattle are at the door, and we must to horse, or be late for roll-call, as the sergeant hath it."

Fergus had his master's horse waiting at the door, and vaulting into the saddle, he accompanied the two princes to the parade-ground on the rear of the camp, where the men, under their respective chiefs, were going through various military evolutions, under the eye of the brave Cormac O'Neil. The cavalry were mostly clad in buff coats, with shining helmets and drooping plumes, which kept waving in the breeze, and gave to the weather-beaten features a gallant appearance. The infantry were armed—some with matchlocks, more with pikes, and even a few of MacDonald's people with such primitive weapons as bows and arrows.

When the parade was over, and the troops were deploying past, Maguire, pointing to the cavalry, asked—

"How would the command of a squadron of those fellows suit your fancy, Sir Redmond?"

"Come now," laughingly interrupted O'Neil, "you are taking an undue advantage! Know, Sir Redmond," he continued, addressing the Knight, "that my two friends, Maguire here and Richard Tyrrel, are both anxious for the companionship of your gallant self, and I promised that each should plead his cause, face to face.—But here comes Tyrrel himself."

That nobleman now rode up; and addressing Maguire, asked:

"Hast opened negotiations yet with our young countryman?"

"I had but begun," replied the Prince, "when I was hindered by the O'Neil, who is such a stickler for honor; but ye are both of a Leinster brood, and I fear my case is hopeless."

"Well, then, Sir Redmond, I march to-morrow on an expedition into Meath. If you will accept of a command with me, I shall be proud of your aid and experience."

"I am deeply grateful," returned the Knight, "for the kind offer, and heartily accept it; the more so, as you are going towards Leinster. I

also thank the noble Maguire," he continued, bowing to the prince; but I have registered a vow in heaven to avenge the murder of my kindred; and it seemeth as if every step I took towards Leinster would bring me nearer its accomplishment.

"I respect your motives," replied Maguire, "and will not urge you further. Were it not that we will have some blows with this fellow, Burrough, by my faith, I would even go myself, and handle the usurper as he deserveth."

"Now, I am mightily pleased you have missed him," said O'Neil, smiling. "I fear Sir Redmond would be spoilt, were he to follow you and your reckless horsemen."

A grim smile was the only reply from the dark-visaged chief; and when the troops had all passed, they followed them to the camp.

The remainder of the day was spent in preparations for the march; and when night set in, O'Connor betook himself to his tent, where he enjoyed the first refreshing sleep he had had since leaving Spain.

It was broad daylight when Fergus aroused him from his slumbers; and, springing to his feet, he exclaimed—

"Fergus! did I not tell you to rouse me with the dawn?"

"I was loth to disturb you," replied Fergus, "till the last moment. The cattle are already at the door, and I have breakfast here in waiting."

"Then hand me a morsel of that bread and a draught of wine. That will do. Now do the points of this doublet while I am eating."

Fergus proceeded to tie the numberless points, or ribbons, which connected the hose with the doublet; and when this was completed, his foster-brother, lying on his helmet, exclaimed:

"Now, Fergus, in the name of God and our Lady, for Erin and vengeance!"

So saying, and laying a hand on his steed's shoulder, he vaulted into the saddle, and cantered to the front of the camp, where the men were already formed for the march, their countenances beaming with delight at the prospect of a foray. Several of the nobles were out to see them march away, and as O'Connor took his leave of O'Neil, the latter whispered:

"I hope to see ye return successful, Sir Redmond; and by no means act rashly. Your father's stout castle is yet to be regained; and with the blessing of God, as soon as we have disposed of this fellow, Burrough, you shall have as many of our troops as will serve your turn."

The Knight thanked O'Neil; and putting spurs to his steed, dashed after the troops, who were already on the march. By sunrise they had crossed the river, and were ascending the steep bank beyond. All that day, they marched without seeing an enemy. The peasantry, having received intelligence of the march of the Deputy with an overwhelming army, were hurrying to the hills. They knew, by sad experience, the cruelties practised by the English troops, and dared not await their approach.

The little force encamped that night around a ruined abbey, and the commanders established themselves under a massive arch which had withstood the fury of the fanatical destroyer. It was enclosed on one side by a thick curtain of green ivy, which still clung to its stem supporter, as if in sympathy for its misfortunes. A quantity of faggots was collected, and a pleasant fire soon illumined the sombre ruin with its red glare. Before this fire the commanders discussed their frugal supper.

"By my faith," said Tyrrel, as he handed his companion the wine-flask, "this is a pretty place for story-telling, and I have a wonderful curiosity to know by what adventure this foreign handle was fastened to your name. The Spaniard is too rugged of his honors to bestow them, like Elizabeth, upon every fool who shows his teeth; and the story will be romantic, I am thinking."

"Nay," returned the Knight, smiling, "the story has but little romance; but as it will help to beguile the time, which, to me, drags heavily, I do not care if I tell it."

So saying, and taking another draught from the flask, he related briefly the story, which is already known to the reader.

The gallant Tyrrel reclined against the grey wall, his legs across, and ever and anon uttering an exclamation of delight as each incident was pithily and modestly related by the Knight.

"Now, by St. Patrick!" he exclaimed, when the story concluded, "it were well worth crossing the seas twice, aye, ten times, to bear the palm of chivalry from the haughty Dons; and that before the eyes of their more haughty king. But well I know it was not within college walls such dexterous horsemanship was taught, and I must hear where it was gained, else I will take you for none of this world's knights."

"Then pass me the wine-flask till I moisten my lips, which are grown dry with story-telling, and I will satisfy your desires as to that," answered his companion.

The flask was passed, and O'Connor, merely

tasting the contents, returned it to Tyrrel, and continued:

"If ever the fate of war should lead you to the Red Castle of O'Connor, in Offaly, you will see on the level ground, to the right of the main entrance (if the bend Wingfield hath not ruined that likewise) as pretty a tilt-yard as any in Leinster can boast. 'Twas there, ere I could bear a lance heavier than a stout willow wand, that I learned those lessons which have served me bravely since. My father, who served for some time under Duke Charles, of Burgundy, was my preceptor; and even now I think I can see him mounted on his fiery charger, and with a wand for a lance, charging against his day-warrior. Ah! little he thought that boy would be a stranger in his own country, and slogging for the day when he shall take down his bones from the gibbet, and hoist the assassin in their stead! I have told you my school and my preceptor, and hope you will still believe me one of earth's children."

"And gallant preceptor he was, if report says truth," answered Tyrrel; "and I hope the day you sigh for will soon arrive, and that Richard Tyrrel may have a hand in your just quarrel."

(To be Continued.)

#### REV. DR. CATHILL.

WHICH SIDE, IN THE PRESENT ITALIAN CAMPAIGN, SHOULD CLAIM THE CATHOLIC SYMPATHY?

(From the Dublin Catholic Telegraph.)

When one reads the entire history of the wide Austrian Empire, from the earliest period to the present time, it develops a continuous and successful plan of *annexation of foreign territory*, such as has not been practised or realised by any other country in Europe. Immediately after the fall of the western Roman Empire, and so early as the sixth century, the nucleus of this great kingdom was not larger than an Irish county. It was called Avaria from the Avaras, a barbarous tribe, which then had possession of it; and it was not till the ninth century when this small patch of territory widened its extent into a large principality, that it was called Osterrich, or domain of the east; now Austria. Since this period Austria has been making additions to her original dominions; one time annexing a dukedom, again a marquisate; now a kingdom, then a city. At other times adding a river, a valley, a mountain, a lake; but always increasing its domain, till after one thousand years and upwards of uninterrupted conquest, or diplomacy, or purchase, or intrigue, or marriage, it has spread out its Empire, which now takes its rank, as a first-rate power in all the arts of modern civilisation and military preponderance. It contains two hundred and fifty-six thousand square miles of territory, and thirty eight millions of inhabitants, and it is peopled by four out of the seven nations into which mankind is said to be divided. It is composed of sixteen states annexed at *distinct* dates, at epochs; and in which states, even in the present day, *distinct languages* with numerous varying dialects are spoken in a vigorous abundance, and with an elegant construction. I have taken the trouble, for a purpose which will soon appear in this letter, to note the territories, the cities, &c., which have been annexed to this empire, together with the years in which they were thus added to the Austrian dominions—

Austria (Germany)	1526
Styria	1549
Preiberg	1547
Carinthia	1562
Tyrol	1619
Trieste	1623
Pludent	1630
Castilia	1643
Valdewald	1647
Goritz, &c. &c.	1647
Sandomberg	1648
Bosnia, Moravia, and Austria Silesia	1647
Gork, Likan	1651
Hungary, Croatia	1657
Continued	1723
Transylvania	1699
Slavonia	1699
Mantua	1708
Milan	1714
Benat, &c. &c.	1718
Hohenemb	1750
Castiglione	1773
Bukovina	1777
Poland (final)	1794
Circle of the Inn	1796
Venice, Dalmatia, &c.	1797
Trient, Brixen	1803
Salzburg	1805
Bergamo, Brescia	1815
Valley of Veltline	1816
Ragusa	1816
Sabinetta	1818

A view of the times in which these annexations have been made, will show that the Emperors and the statesmen of this country have been steadily (almost every year) making some little addition of some place or other however small. And this is a fact which will at once convince the reader that the permanent aggressive character of Austria stands unequalled in Europe; that she has been for ten centuries gnawing her way into all the surrounding states; and moreover that in these unceasing aggressions nothing was too large for her territorial appetite or too small for her hungry conquest. These observations will demonstrate too, that as she has struggled to acquire all her possessions on land, and scarcely anything (as they say) on sea, her commerce is essentially neglected, and limited, while her agriculture becomes the exclusive staple support of the state. This fact again leaves the city populations without commercial speculations and employment, diminishes the public revenues, leaves the discontented in a permanent, stagnant combination at home, and thus fosters the principle of revolution. At a mere glance, one must feel that an empire com-