TALES OF THE JURY ROOM

By Gerald Griffin

THE FIRST JURYMAN'S TALE

SIGISMUND — CONTINUED

"Villain," exclaimed Sigismund, "traitor and ingrate—but," he added, suddenly repressing his anger, "why do I speak thus when I know not if I am yet awake? I must restrain this violence. Clotaldus," he added mildly, "I admire thy fidelity, depart and serve thy king."

Clotaldus withdrew, bowing respectfully, and admiring the moderation of Sigismund, while the latter exclaimed, "Whether or not, let me act as virtue directs. If these things be real, I shall have done much good, if otherwise, I shall gain friends for the moment of waking." With these words, he departed to place himself at the head of his troops.

In the meantime, Basilius and Astolpho, alarmed at the powerful insurrection which menaced the throne, had placed themselves at the head of a large body of forces and taken the field. Basilius was in the act of consulting with the prince on the best measures to be immediately adopted, when Clotaldus arrived, breathless and exhausted, at the royal tent.

"Clotaldus here!" exclaimed Basilius, "what then is become of Sigismund?"

The old man explained the circumstance which had taken place at the dungeon, and Basilius calling for his horse, hastened to place his army in a posture fit to receive the insurgents. Clotaldus was about to follow, when Rosaura entered and detained him.

"Stay," she exclaimed, "and hear me for a moment. You know that I came to Poland poor and unfriended, until I was fortunate enough to obtain your protection. You commanded me to remain disguised at the palace, and to avoid the sight of Astolpho, but he has seen me, and so little regards the promises he once made, that he is to meet Estrella this very evening in the palace garden. I have obtained the key, and by favouring your entrance that way, we may compel him to do me justice."

"It is true, Rosaura," said Clotaldus, "that since I first saw you, the interest you excited within me was such, that I would have given my life for yours if the sacrifice was demanded. I had then resolved to compel Astolpho to fulfil the promise which he had made you, but our position has since been altered. Astolpho has saved my life at the risk of his own, when I lay prostrate at the feet of Sigismund. I cannot therefore lift my sword against him, for it would be a detestable action."

"It is true," replied Rosaura, "that I owe you my life, yet I have heard you say, that he who lives under an offence, does not in fact live at all. Then if I still remain unredressed, I owe you nothing, and my life is my own. But if you will prefer your affection to your gratitude, I hope yet to receive it from you. Be liberal first, and then be grateful."

"Thou hast convinced me, Rosaura, and I will be liberal. I will give thee my fortune, with which thou mayest retire as thy virtue is yet unspotted to a monastery. I behold my country distracted by civil feuds and must not add to them. Thus I shall be loyal to my king, liberal to thee, and grateful to Astolpho; and I think I could do no more, Rosaura," he added, speaking with much tenderness, "were I even thine own father."

"Were you my father," exclaimed Rosaura, with much indignation, "I might endure this insulting speech, but not otherwise."

"What then do you intend?" said Clotaldus.

"To redress myself," replied Rosaura.

"This is madness," exclaimed Clotaldus.

"Be it so," replied Rosaura, "it is a virtuous madness, and it shall be executed." Saying which she hurried out of the room, unheeding the efforts made by Clotaldus to detain her.

The drums were now heard at a distance, and Sigismund, still attired in his dress of skins, appeared in the adjacent plain attended by Clarin and the soldiers. A trumpet was heard, and Clarin addressing the prince said, "I see yonder a courser which, if I am not much deceived, bears a woman on his back—here she comes, beautiful as the bridal day. It is Rosaura," he added with astonishment.

"She is restored to me," said Sigismund with rapture. Rosaura at the same instant reined in her steed and alighted.

"Generous prince," she said, "you see before you an unfortunate woman who finds herself compelled to implore thy protection, lend me thine ear but for a few moments, and thou shalt know why it is that I am compelled to trouble thee."

Sigismund waved his attendants to some distance, and requested Rosaura to proceed.

"I was born," said she "of a noble mother, in the court of Muscovy; she doubtless was very beautiful, for she was very unhappy. A jealous husband tortured her by unfounded doubts, and at length deserted her; I was the fruit of their unhappy union, and the heiress if not to the beauty at least to the misfortunes of my parent. Astolpho, the prince of Muscovy, forgetting the sacred vows which he once pledged to me, has come hither to Poland to espouse Estrella; thus have I been left, despised, contemned, forsaken, to mourn in secret the perfidy of the man whose promises I had too readily met by reciprocal vows of attachment. I wept over my forlorn condition in a lonely chamber, where no one entered to disturb me; one day, my mother Violanta suddenly broke into my prison, and finding me in tears drew from me the secret of my desertion; she advised me to follow Astolpho to the court of Poland, and handing me the sword which I now hold, she bade me contrive to show it to the nobles of the court, one of whom would recognize it and afford me protection. I obeyed her, and the issue proved her words true. All my modes of redress have, however, failed me, and I now throw myself at thy feet to seek the assistance which is necessary to prevent the completion of my misery."

Sigismund heard this discourse with a mixture of surprise and sorrow.

"If this be true," said he to himself, "let memory depart, for it is not possible that a dream should comprehend so many things. What man was ever tortured by such a multitude of perplexing doubts. If that day of pomp and splendor was in reality a dream, how happens it now that this woman again appears before me, and relates so many perplexing things with such a scrupulous minuteness. It was no dream; it was reality. Is glory then so like a dream, that the happiest are shadows, and the briefest only real? How like the copy is to the original. Well, then, since grandeur, pomp, power, and majesty, shall one day pass like visions, let me profit by the moment of illusion, and use them worthily. Rosaura is now in my power. I love her, and might make her mine forever. I can now dream of happiness, but for that dream I must forfeit my eternal honor. A happiness once passed, is but a dream we hold no more of, than the shadow that lingers in our remembrance. Then since I know that pleasure is but a beautiful flame converting into ashes the lofty mansions of virtue and of glory, let me only strive for that which is eternal; the happiness that never dies, and the greatness which never passes away. Rosaura then is safe."

Saying this he ordered the drum to beat to arms, and prepared to give battle with his undisciplined troops, carefully avoiding Rosaura with his eyes.

"Does not your highness answer me?" exclaimed the latter, "am I then rejected? you do not even look upon me."

"Rosaura," said the prince, "I do not answer thee because my deeds must speak for me, nor can I look upon thee while I wish to preserve thy honour." Saying which he hurried out of the tent, leaving Rosaura more perplexed than ever.

Clarin having remained until now at distance approached Rosaura, saying, "Am I allowed to see you, madam?"

"Ah! Clarin," exclaimed Rosaura, "where have you been?"

"Locked up in a tower," answered Clarin," with death grinning in my face, and ready to die of vexation."

"Why so," asked Rosaura."

"I know a secret," said Clarin, "and had no way of telling it. The fact is, Clotaldus is your—but what noise is this."

Great shouts were now heard on the adjacent plain, of "long live our king," liberty for ever!"

"King and liberty for ever," as long as you like," said Clarin, "for I do not care two straws for either. Provided the one gives me enough to eat, that's all I'm anxious about. I never heard so much trumpeting, or saw so many bones flying in every direction since I was born. Ha! here is a fine large rock, from behind which I can safely see the whole affair. It is strong and well concealed; this little parapet is the best amulet in the world against a wandering arrow." Saying which he ensconced himself behind it.

The battle which had been raging with great fury, now turned against the king.

"The traitors," exclaimed Astolpho to the latter, "are victorious."

"You are mistaken" replied Basilius, "the epithet of traitor, in occasions like these, always applies to the vanquished; but let us fly."

As they passed the rock behind which Clarin lay concealed, a flight-arrow dropped on the spot, and pierced the latter. He uttered an exclamation of pain and entreaty.

"Who is there," demanded the king.

"An unfortunate man," replied Clarin, "seeking to avoid death among these rocks, where as it happens I am only come to meet it. Whoever thou art, I advise thee to return to the field of battle, where you will be just as secure as in the most secret recess; for if heaven has decreed thy death, rely on it that your flight is vain." Saying these words the merry Castilian expired.

"How well, alas,' said Basilius, "does heaven point out to us our error, and our ignorance, by the words of this unhappy jester. I will fly no further for if it is decreed by Providence that I shall die, I should seek in vain to avoid my destiny.

At this moment Sigismund appeared followed by his troops, from whom he dispatched scouts into all the intricacies of the mountain to search for the fugitive king, commanding them not to suffer a tree or even a bush to pass without examination.

Clotaldus and Astolpho, could not prevail on Basilius to take horse. On the contrary, so deeply was he impressed with the certainty of his doom, that he advanced to meet Sigismund.

"Prince," said he, "thou art in search of me, and here I am prostrate at thy feet. Set thy heel upon my hoary head—upon my feeble neck—and on my glittering crown. Regard not the reverence which is due to my years—the respect which my rank should inspire. Accomplish thy revenge and make thy father thy slave."

Sigismund paused for a few moments while he gazed on the prostrate monarch. At length addressing the nobles who had crowded round, he said:

"Illustrious court of Poland, give me your attention, and judge between my father and me. In order to subdue the native fierceness of my temper, my father had me reared as men rear their captive lions and tigers, and this before he had ascertained other than by his own calculations, what danger might have been expected had he left me at freedom. In fact he increased, if he did not create the danger, by his own conduct; or had I been born of an humble and docile mind, the life and education to which he doomed me would have made me such a monster as he believed me to be. Strange way to preserve himself from the consequences of my infirmity! If any man had an enemy who sought his life, would he seek to preserve it by waking that enemy up from sleep? If he was told that the sword which he carried at his side should be the occasion of his death, would he seek to save himself by unsheathing it, and pointing it to his breast? If he was told that the water should be his tomb, would be put to sea in a storm? But so it was that Basilius acted, when he sought to tame the fierceness of my temper, by giving me for tutors the beasts of the desert. Let this example then of disappointed prudence, show to the world, the folly of that wisdom in which Basilius reposed confidence. The will of heaven has humbled him even to the feet of his own child. But let the lesson terminate here. Arise, my father, and give me thy hand; and if thou art unsatisfied with what thy son has done, behold me at thy feet again, powerless and humble, and ready to obey thee!"

Basilius made him rise. "My son," said he, "you have again enkindled within me the affections of a father. You have conquered, and you are again our prince."

"Still," said Sigismund. "I have a more difficult conquest to achieve over myself. Let Astolpho fulfil his promise to Rosaura."

The Muscovite started. "It is true," said he, "that I was once bound to her, but you should consider the inequality of our conditions."

"Hold," exclaimed Clotaldus, "let that no longer be a bar, for Rosaura is noble as well as Astolpho; she is my daughter."

After the astonishment which Rosaura, as well as all the rest of the hearers evinced at this intelligence had subsided, Clotaldus continued. "Yes, she is my daughter, although this is not the time to explain why I so long kept this a secret."

While Astolpho endeavoured to make peace with Rosaura, Sigismund turned to Clotaldus and said, "You who were loyal to my father, though at the hazard of your life, ask now any favour that Sigismund can grant."

A man who appeared to exercise considerable authority amongst the populace, here stepped forward and said "since you are so liberal to your enemies, what do you intend for me who was the cause of the tumult by which you recovered your liberty?"

"The same tower," replied Sigismund, "in which I was myself confined."

The king and those who were around him could not help admiring the extraordinary change which had been wrought in the character of the prince.

"What is it that surprises you?" exclaimed the latter. "I have been taught by a dream, to restrain selfish wishes, I know not but I may yet awake and find myself once more chained within my dungeon. My anxiety now therefore is, to profit wisely by the illusion while it lasts."

At the conclusion of the Foreman's tale, a long continued round of applause gave gratifying evidence of the interest it had excited. As soon as silence was restored however, he was reminded of the song, which according to his own proposal should follow the story.

"I had almost forgotten," said the Foreman, "and thank you for reminding me of it. As the fickleness of a lover formed the chief subject of my story, it will not be inappropriate to make constancy the theme of my song. I cannot pretend to do justice to one of the most beautiful of our ancient Irish melodies, but venture with it as the best I can offer:—

AILEEN AROON

I.

When like the early rose,
Aileen aroon!
Beauty in childhood blows,
Aileen aroon!
When like a diadem,
Buds blush around the stem,
Which is the fairest gem,
Aileen aroon?

II.

Is it the laughing eye,
Aileen aroon?
Is it the timid sigh,
Aileen aroon?
Is it the tender tone,
Soft as the stringed harp's moan,
Oh, it is truth alone,
Aileen aroon!

III.

When like the rising day,
Aileen aroon!
Love sends his early ray,
Aileen aroon!
What makes his dawning glow,
Changeless through joy or woe,
Only the constant know,
Aileen aroon!

IV.

I know a valley fair,
Aileen aroon!
I know a cottage there,
Aileen aroon!
Far in that valley's shade,
I knew a gentle maid,
Flower of the hazel glade,
Aileen aroon!

V.

Who in the song so sweet,
Aileen aroon!
Who in the dance so fleet,
Aileen aroon!
Dear were her charms to me,
Dearer her laughter free,
Dearest her constancy,
Aileen aroon!

VI.

Were she no longer true,
Aileen aroon!
What should her lover do,
Aileen aroon!
Fly with his broken chain,
Far o'er the sounding main
Never to love again,
Aileen aroon!

VII.

Youth must with time decay,
Aileen aroon!
Beauty must fade away,
Aileen aroon!
Castles are sacked in war,
Chieftains are scattered far,
Truth is a fixed star,
Aileen aroon!

"This gentlemen," said the Foreman, after slightly acknowledging the renewed plaudits of his brother jurors, "you are aware, is the celebrated composition which was imposed upon the English public some years since as a Scotch melody, under the name of Robin Adair.

"It is amusing to witness how coolly our modern composers avail themselves of our ancient stores of melody, without the slightest acknowledgement. It is far easier with them to adapt an old and far too often almost forgotten melody, than to trust to their own powers for making a due impression of their capabilities as composers, upon the public mind."

"Your remark is just," said one of his brethren, "but as respects Robin Adair, the plagiarism might have been unintentional. I mean that the adaptor might have had no intention of imposing the music upon the world as his own. Aileen Aroon was about that period too well known for any person thus to risk his reputation. An Italian lady was in the habit of singing it with the original Irish words, at Covent Garden Theatre; and although the adaptor took only two parts of the original air, and adorned the simple melody with some grace notes, it is still probable that he only looked to the words, silly as they are, for the success of the publication. You are of course aware that they are supposed to refer to the attachment of the then Prince of Wales to Mrs. Fitzherbert. That gave them an interest which the melody was certainly not calculated to lessen."

"If it were a solitary instance," said the Foreman, "I might perhaps think with you; but the thing is common. Indeed it has been practised with such impunity by some modern composers, that they do not confine themselves to ancient airs. They do not hesitate to extend their depredations to the more modern. One instance I call to mind at this moment. A song which was noised through London recently, as sung by Madame Vestris at the Olympic Theatre, called "They marched through the town,' is neither more or less than the old rebel air of 1798, which you all doubtless are familiar with. I mean, 'Green to my Cape.' The worst of it is, however, that in order to conceal the plagiarism, they spoil the melody; as in this case the composer has destroyed the fine freedom of the second line of the original."

"I do not mean to dispute what you have stated said the former Juryman, "but still plagiarism in music as in poetry will sometimes unintentionally occur. A long forgotten strain perhaps recurs to the mind of the composer; he cannot remember that he has heard it before; it haunts him until he begins to persuade himself it is original, and forthwith embodies it in leaden plates, from whence it issues to delight the drawing-rooms of the fashionable world. This, I think, was the case with a gentleman whom Ireland has reason to be proud of; and who, perhaps to this hour, is not aware that one of his most beautiful compositions, 'The Angel's Whisper,' is taken from the old air of the 'Fox's Sleep,' to which Moore has written the beautiful words, 'When he who adores thee, has left but the name.' Indeed the first line of the music of each are identical, and if the plagiarism be caused in the way I have suggested, we have double cause to be thankful to the old air, inasmuch as it has inspired a new one nearly equal in beauty."

"I could say more on the subject," said the Foreman, "but I am detaining you from the amusement which I perceive by his abstracted expression of countenance, our friend next me is preparing for us."

"I am sorry to say, gentleman," said the Juryman alluded to, "I have been engaged rather in hunting for a story than in preparing one. My perplexity nevertheless has this moment reminded me of a tale which if it possess no other merit, has at least that of being appropriate to the ocasion, so I shall relate it without further preamble."

THE SECOND JURYMAN'S TALE

THE STORY TELLER AT FAULT

At the time when the Tuatha Danans held the sovereignity of Ireland, there reigned in Leinster, a king, who was remarkably fond of hearing stories. Like all the princes and chieftains of the island at this early date, he had a favorite story-teller according to the custom of those times, who held a large estate from his majesty, on condition of his telling him a new story every night of his life, before he went to sleep, and sometimes with the laudable purpose of lulling him into that blissful condition. So inexhaustible was the genius of the king of Leinster's story-teller, that he had already reached a good old age, without failing even for a single night to have a new story for the king; and such was the skill and tact which he displayed in their construction, that whatever cares of state or other annoyances might prey upon the monarch's mind, one of the Story-teller's narratives was sure to make him fall asleep.

In the course of his career, the Story-teller had married a wealthy and high-born lady, daughter of a neighboring lord of that country, with whom he lived in peace and prosperity during many years. There is nothing however in this world which is not subject to decay or change, and ever the human mind, which from its spiritual nature might well be supposed incorruptible, is doomed to share the infirmities of the frame, with which it is so mysteriously united. The progress of old age began to produce a sensible influence on the imagination of the Story-teller. His fancy grew less brisk and active, and the king observed that he began to diversify his incidents with a greater number of moral and philosophical reflections than he conceived to be necessary to the progress of the narrative. However, he made no complaints, as the Story-teller's reflections evinced a great deal of judgment, and the grand object in view that of settling the king to sleep, was as perfectly accomplished by his philosophy, as by his wit or invention.

Matters thus proceeded, the Story-teller growing older and older, and more and more philosophical, and less and less fanciful, but he was yet true to his engagement, and never failed to have a new story at night-fall for the king's amusement. Every day however brought increasing indications of an intellectual crisis, which would not be very distant.

One morning the Story-teller arose early, and, as his custom was, strolled out into his garden, and through the adjacent fields, in order to turn over in his mind some incidents which he might weave into a story for the king at night. But this morning he found himself quite at fault; after pacing his whole demesne, he returned to his house without being able to think of anything new or strange. In vain he sent his fancy abroad, it returned as empty as it left him. He found no difficulty in proceeding as far as "There was once a king who had three sons," or, "there lived in the reign of Ollav Folla;" or, "one day the king of all Ireland," but further than that he found it impossible to proceed. At length a servant came to announce to him that breakfast was ready and his mistress waiting for him in the house. He went in and found his wife seated at the table, and looking much perplexed at his delay. She was not long observing the air of chagrin that overspread his countenance.

"Why do you not come to breakfast, my dear?" said his wife.

"I have no mind to eat anything," replied the Story-teller. "As long as I have been in the service of the king of Leinster, I never yet sat down to breakfast without having a new story to tell him in the evening; but this morning my mind is quite shut up, and I don't know what to do. I might as well lie down and die at once. I'll be disgraced for ever this evening, when the king calls for his Story-teller."

"That's strange," said the wife, "can't you think of anything new at all."

"Nothing whatever; the door of my mind is locked against it."

"Nonsense," said his wife; "can't you invent something about a giant, or a dwarf, or a Bean Mhor (huge woman), or a baoch (champion) from foreign parts?"

"Oh it is easy enough to find heroes," replied the Story-teller, "but what am I to do with them when I have them?"

"And can't you invent anything at all?"

"I cannot; our estate is gone from us forever; besides the open show that will be made of me to-night at the palace."

When the Story-teller's wife heard this dreadful news, she broke into a fit of crying and weeping, as if all her friends and relations were dead. At length her husband prevailed on her to be composed.

"Well," said she, "let us sit down to breakfast at any rate; the day is long yet, and maybe you'd think of something or another in the course of it."

The Story-teller shook his head as if to intimate his distrust of its contents, but sat down to breakfast as his wife desired. When all was removed, and they had sat down for a while in silence,

"Well," she asked, "do you think of anything yet?"

"Not a pinsworth," said the Story-teller. "I might as well lie down and die at once."

"Well my dear," said the lady, "I'll tell you what you'll do. Order your horses and chariot, and let us take a good long drive, and maybe something might come into your head."

The Story-teller complied, and the chariot was prepared. Two of his finest horses were harnessed in the carriage, and three favourite hounds followed them. After driving a long distance, they took the road homeward once more, and towards evening when they came within sight of their own demesne, the lady again asked her husband if he had yet thought of anything to tell the king?

"There is no use in my attempting it," he replied, "I can think of nothing. I'm as far from having anything new, as I was when we left home."

At this moment it happened that the lady saw something dark at the end of a field at a little distance from the road.

"My dear," said the wife, "do you see something black at the end of that field?" "I do," replied her husband.

"Let us drive towards it," said the wife, "and perhaps it might be the means of putting something into your head which it would answer to tell the king."

"I'll do as you desire," replied the Story-teller, "though I am sure it is no use for me."

They turned the horses' heads and drove in the direction pointed out by the lady. When they drew nigh, they saw a miserable-looking old man lying on the ground with a wooden leg placed beside him.

"Who are you, my good man?" asked the Story-teller.

"Oh, then, 'tis little matter who I am. I'm a poor, old, lame, decrepit miserable creature, sitting down here to rest awhile."

"And what are you doing with that box and dice I see in your hand?"

"I am waiting here to see whether any one would play a game with me," replied the old *bococh* (beggarman).

"Play with *you*!" exclaimed the Story-teller, "why, what has a poor old man like you to play for?"

"I have one hundred pieces of gold here in this leathern purse," replied the old man.

"Do you go down and play with him," said the Story-teller's wife, "and perhaps you might have something to tell the king about it in the evening."

He descended, and a smooth stone was placed between them as a gaming table. They had not cast many throws, when the Story-teller lost all the money he had about him.

"Much good may it do you, friend," said the Story-teller. "I could not expect better hap in so foolish an undertaking."

"Will you play again?" asked the old man.

"Don't be talking, man; you have all my money."

"Haven't you a chariot and horses and hounds?"

"Well, what of them?"

"I'll stake all the money I have against them."

"Nonsense, man!" exclaimed the Story-teller, "do you think for all the gold in Ireland, I'd run the risk of seeing my lady obliged to go home on foot?"

"Maybe you'd win," said the *bococh*.

"Maybe I wouldn't," said the Story-teller.

"Do play with him, husband," said the lady. "It is the second time, and as he won before, you might win now. "Besides I don't mind walking."

"I never refused you a request in my life, that it was possible to comply with," said the Story-teller, "and I won't do so now."

He sat down accordingly, and in one throw lost horses, hounds, and chariot.

"Will you play again?" asked the *bococh*.

"Are you making game of me, man?" said the Story-teller, "what else have I to stake."

"I'll stake the whole, money and all, against your lady," said the old man.

Now, gentlemen of the Jury, although these were pagan times, the Story-teller could not help thinking the bococh had a great deal of impudence to make him such a proposition. However he only looked at him with an expression of great surprise, and was turning away in silence, when his wife spoke to him again:

"Do, my dear," said she, "accept his offer. This is the third time, and how do you know what luck you may have? Besides, if you lose your estate to-night, as you are afraid, sure I'd be only a bother to you all our life."

"Is that the way you talk?" said the Story-teller, "you that I never refused a request to since first I saw you."

"Well," said she, "if you never refused me a request before, don't refuse me this one now, and maybe it would be better for us both. You'll surely win the third time."

They played again and the Story-teller lost. No sooner had he done so, than to his great astonishment and indignation, he beheld his lady walk over and sit down near the ugly old bococh.

"Is that the way you're leaving me?" said the Story-teller.

"Sure I was won, my dear," said the lady "you would not cheat the poor man, would you?"

"Have you any more to stake?" asked the old man.

"You know very well I have not," replied the Story-teller.

"I'll stake the whole now, your lady and all, against yourself," said the old man. "Nonsense, man!" said the Story-teller, "what in the world business would you have of an old fellow like me?"

"That's my own affair," said the bococh. "I know myself what use I could make of you; it is enough for you if I am willing to consider you a sufficient stake against all I have."

"Do, my dear," said the lady; "surely you do not mean to leave me here after you?"

The Story-teller complied once more and lost.

"Well," said he, with a desolate look, "here I am for you now, and what do you want with me? You have the whole of us now, horses and carriage, and mistress and master, and what business have you of us?"

"I'll soon let you know what business I have of you at any rate," said the old man, taking out of his pocket a long cord and a wand. "Now," he continued, "as I have possession of your property, I do not choose to be annoyed by you any longer, so I propose transforming you into some kind of an animal, and I give you a free choice to be a hare, or a deer, or a fox, which ever of the three best hits your fancy."

The Story-teller in dismay looked over towards his wife.

"My dear," said she, "do not choose to be a deer, for if you do, your horns will be caught in the branches, and you will be starved with hunger; neither choose to be a fox, for you will have the curse of everybody down upon you; but choose to be an honest little hare, and every one will love you, and you will be praised by high and low."

"And is that all the compassion you have for me?" said the Story-teller. "Well, as I suppose it is the last word I have to say to you, it shall not be to contradict you at any rate."

So he made choice of a hare; and the old man immediately threw the cord around him and struck him with the wand, when the transformation was effected. Scarcely had the poor hare taken a step or two in order to divert himself, when the lady called the hounds and set them after him. The hare ran, the dogs followed. The field in which they happened to be was enclosed by a high wall, so that the course continued a long time in the sight of the old man and the lady, to the great diversion of both. At length the hare, panting and weary, ran to the feet of the latter for protection. But then was witnessed a singular instance of the caprice and mutability of the sex, for the Story-teller's wife, forgetful of all his kindness, experienced during a long course of years, unfeelingly kicked him back again towards the dogs, from whence arose the proverb, long current in after time, *caith se a glab na con* (she threw him into the hound's mouth) as applied to all who act with similar ingratitude. They coursed him a second and a third time, and at the end of each the lady acted with the same heartlessness, until at length the old man struck the hounds, and took the hare into his lap, where he held him for some time, until the hare sufficiently recovered his strength. He then placed him on the ground, and putting the cord around him struck him with the wand, on which he immediately re-assumed his own form.

"Well," said the old man, "will you tell me how you liked that sport?"

"It might be sport to others," replied the Story-teller, looking at his wife, "but I declare I don't find it so enticing, but I could put up with the loss of it. You're a droll man whoever you are. Would it be asking an impertinent question to know from you who you are at all, or where you came from, or what is your trade, that you should take a pleasure in plagueing a poor old man of my kind in that manner?"

"Oh," replied the stranger, "I'm a very odd kind of man—a sort of a valking, good-for-little fellow—one day in poverty—another day in plenty—and so on. But if you wish to know anything more about me or my habits, come with me in some of my rambles, and perhaps I might show you more than you would be apt to make out if you were to go alone."

"I am not my own master to go or stay," replied the Story-teller with a resigned look.

When the stranger heard this, he put one hand into the wallet which he carried at his side, and drew out of it before their eyes, a well-looking middle-aged man, to whom he spoke as follows:

"I command you, by all you heard and saw since I put you into my wallet, to take charge of this lady, together with the carriage and horses and all, and have them ready for me at a call whenever I shall require them."

He had scarcely said these words when all vanished from the Story-teller's sight, and he found himself on a sudden transported, he knew not how, to a place which he recognized as the Fox's Ford, well known as the residence of Red Hugh O'Donnell. On looking around, he saw the old man standing near him in a dress still more grotesque than before. His figure was now erect, though tall and lank, his hair gray, and his ears sticking up through his old hat. The greater part of his sword was exposed behind his hip; he wore a pair of tattered brogues, which at every prodigious stride he made over the marshy ground, sent the water in jets up to his knees; and in his hand he carried three green boughs. It happened on this very day that O'Donnell and his followers and kinsman were partaking of a splendid banquet in his house. They were very merry feasting and drinking together, and as the Story-teller and his companions drew near, they heard one of the guests exclaim in a loud and commanding tone:

"Who will say he ever heard finer music than that? Is it possible that twenty-two musicians could be found from this to the shores of Greece, better skilled in their art than the twenty-two who are here to-day: I mean Darby M'Gilligan, Cormad O'Cregan, Timothy O'Cunningham, and many more whom I do not mention now by name?"

"We do not suppose," said several of his hearers, "that any such thing is possible."

At this moment the Caol Riava (thin gray man) and the Story-telier entered the house:

"Save all here!" said the Caol Riava.

"And you likewise," replied O'Donnell; "where do you come from now?"

"I slept last night," replied the stranger, "in the palace of the king of Scotland."

"Call the door keeper before me," said O'Donnell. He was summoned accordingly.

"Was it you let in this man?" asked O'Donnell.

"I give you free lave to whip the head from my two shoulders," replied the door-keeper, "if ever I laid eyes upon him before this present moment."

"Let it pass," said the Caol Riava, "for it would come just as easy to me to go out as to come in, whether the door was open or shut."

Then turning to the musicians:

"Play something for us," said he, "that I may judge whether all that I have heard in your praise be merited or otherwise."

They began to play, first successively, and then in full concert, all kinds of airs and elaborate pieces of music, both on wind and stringed instruments, and when they had concluded, all looked to the newcomer to learn his opinions of their performance.

"I assure you," said the Caol Riava, "that since I first heard of Belzebub, and Meloch, and satan, and the rest of their infernal compeers, and of the hideous noise and uproar compounded of rage and lamentation which prevails in the dreary region of the demons and in the court of the sable princes of hell. I never could imagine worse music than what you are just after playing."

"Play something for us yourself then," said O'Donnell.

"Maybe I will and maybe I won't," replied the Caol Riava, "for you may be certain I will do exactly what I like myself and nothing else."

"I don't doubt you," said O'Donnell.

The Caol Riava then took a harp, and began to play in such a manner that the dead might have come out of their graves to hear him without occasioning any astonishment to those who knew the cause they had for so doing. As to the company who were present, sometimes he would make them weep, sometimes laugh, and at the other times he could lull them asleep with the power of his enchanting strains.

"You are a sweet man, whoever you are," said O'Donnell.

"Some days sweet and some days bitter," replied the Caol Riava.

"Go higher up and sit in company with O'Donnell, and eat along with him," said one of the attendants.

"I will do no such thing," replied the Coal Riava, "for a pleasing accomplishment in an ugly fellow like me, is like honey in the body of a man who is going to be hanged; so I will go no higher up than where I am; but let me see his goodness here, if he has a mind to show it at all."

He kept his place and O'Donnell sent him by the hands of an attendant a suit of attire, consisting of a cloak of many colours, a fine tunic and other garments to match.

"Here," said the attendant, "is a full suit that O'Donnell sends you."

"I will not accept it," replied the Caol Riava, "for a good man shall never have to say that he lost so much by me."

"He is either an enemy or something more than mortal," said O'Donnell. when he heard that the stranger had refused his gifts. 'Let twenty horsemen in full armour keep guard outside the house, and as many foot soldiers be stationed inside to watch his movements."

TO BE CONTINUED

LITERARY BIAS

Under "Reviews of New Books," the Literary Digest of October 5, gives over a page to what purports to be a criticism of Ward's Life of Cardinal Newman, but which contains not a word about the book to be reviewed—after the manner of Artemus Ward's lecture on Africa. There is misrepresentation of St. Augustine, a glorification of Wickliff and Wesley, and a sympathetic appreciation of Renan's renunciation of Christianity, following which, Newman took up "the fetter and yoke that Renan had flung down." Twelve years of intense study of the subject are found all too brief to enable Newman to reverse his former attitude towards the Catholic Church, and though he was "the thinker and had a great mind," once he became a Catholic "he believed that, no matter how cultivated the mind, that (sic) the moral faculty was of God." There is a large assortment of similar stupid misstatements which only shed light on the character of the writer, who further reveals himself by suggesting that Kingsley's infamous charge, which evoked the great "Apolygia," was true after all.

His name is Newell Dwight Hillis, D. D., but with him we are not concerned. The Literary Digest professes rigid impartiality in regard to creeds and parties, but frequently its practice falls short of its professions, and in such cases Catholics are usually the sufferers. The Hillis travesty is a glaring instance of naked partisanship, which is the more manifest that it has neither critical skill nor literary adornment to relieve its nakedness.—America.