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THE IRISH LEGEND OF M'DONNELL, AND THE NORMAN DE BORGOS. A BIOGRAPHICAL TALE.

BY ARCHBISHOP M'FARRAN. CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

Meeting with his magnanimous friend, he opened on him with a clap of his two horny hands like the report of a musket. "Oh, Mr. M'Quillan; oroh ochon, I'm rabbed, I'm rabbed; I'm broken, jewel! Crummy and Hawky are both whipped away from me, but the poor Neenan's ogs, ochon mara fastie, one of my cows, fifty forrow, and the other's time was in at ould Hollantide avilish, and the ould mare and the clibbuck that I was affored five pound bate a crown far in the Martinmas fair of Culrathain, dira chora, oh, miely murder, my three poor oganaghs and their dry hearts. Arrah, may the plague overtake them; arrah, masha, a murrain light on the bad breed of the Baldeargs and their dirty slenght. As I may safely say, this good Monday morning, fresh and fasting, jewel; ochon, ochon, my poor cappul's and brimmagh, will I ever see your purty white face again coming nodding up to the door of my cabin, with your sweeping long tail and your skipping and jumping! Munnam your soney! gacy's face asthore! Oeh, oeh, what will my poor oganaghs do that haven't a white drap this morning, gragalmaehree?"

Such a plaintive apostrophe to his cattle as what M'Ilvannan uttered touched his master's heart, for it appeared to him the workings of nature; and this oratory never fails to captivate the attention of the audience. "I am distressed for you," said he, "nor can I redress your wrongs at present. However, my orders are not to you alone, M'Ilvannan, but to all; haste with utmost despatch, and rouse my clansmen and gallow-glasses from the Bann to the Bush, and the Bush to Slieve Barragh; let all haste to the ferry at Culrathain, bearing whatever weapons they can seize, and, perchance, we shall overtake the despoilers." The alarm was soon given, and spread over the country like a northern meteor. The war trumpet and Irish corn were blown from the top of Croaghmore, their blasts travelling along the valleys, while every chief caught the ominous sound, and sent it like infection from hill to hill. The great flag bearing the arms of De Borgo was unfurled, and at ten that night they raised the Irish war cry on the banks of the Bann. When young Garry M'Quillan came to the water edge, being foremost, he saw that the boats were all bound fast at the other side, and the boatmen tied with their hands behind their backs, so that they were rendered unfit to assist them. He, how-

ever, spurred his horse with fury into the river, and the faithful animal, striking like a water-dog, bore him to the other bank, then, dismounting, he untied the ferrymen. But what was his surprise when he was told that the oars were sent down the stream? The want of them was supplied by wrenching off a couple of shingles from the side of a yawl that lay hard by, and, with the assistance of these, they brought all the boats over. Temporary oars were procured after some delay, and the troops marched forward at a quick pace. The night being dark they could not make much speed; however, the country was pretty well known to them, having fought the O'Canans almost on every mile of it.

M'Quillan gave orders that no music should be heard, nor the sound of any instrument whatever, but that all should march in deep silence, keeping as near the leaders as possible; and, for further security, he detached an advance guard to explore the recesses of the wood, so that they might not be surprised by an ambuscade. To his eldest son, Finn M'Quillan, he gave the command of this body, marching along with the standard himself and his two other sons, who were all engaged in hushing whatever noise might arise, and urging forward the army. They began at length to emerge from the woods, and, entering a kind of moor, the horses were every moment plunged into the girth, so that they were necessitated to seek a better and firmer ground for the cavalry, and allow the infantry to proceed through the bog. This manoeuvre separated the forces for some time, and, had they been in the neighborhood of an enemy, might have proved fatal to them; but having an advanced guard commanded by an active, vigilant officer, and all well proven in adventures of this kind, they were under no apprehensions. It was the space nearly of two hours before the ground became firm enough to admit a re-union of the forces, and, after they were joined on a hard footing, it was so rough that the riders were often unhorsed, and sometimes rider and horse rolled over each other alternately. The night was still very cold, but, being well advanced, they were soon in expectation of the moon. All at once the mountain became level and quite hard. As they approached that part of it called Gortcorbery, M'Quillan, who commanded the advanced guard, stooping down with his ear to the horse's neck in a listening posture, gave orders to halt, as he thought he heard the sound of horses' feet at a distance, but approaching them at a hard gallop. None in the ranks could conjecture what the meaning of this solitary horseman could be, coming with such rapidity in the dark of the night, and through a mountain, where he did not see two leaps before him. Some thought that it might be a prisoner making his escape from the enemy; others, with more probability, imagined that it might be a scout sent out on the same business on which they themselves had been ordered. A few of the soldiers were for cutting him down, and some others for taking him prisoner. At that time, M'Quillan, looking between him and the western horizon, which now began to brighten from the reflection of the rising moon, saw the appearance approaching there as if led by a line. "Stand to the right and left," said he, "and seize him as he passes."

"The thin-named, high-headed, strong-headed, fleet-bounding son of the hill, his name is Dusrunal among the stormy sons of the sword. A thousand thoughts bind the car on high; hard polished bits shine in a wreath of foam; thin thongs, bright-studded with green, bend on the stately necks of the steeds—the steeds that, like wreaths of mist, fly over the streamy vales. The wildness of deer is in their course; the strength of eagles descending on their prey, their noise is like the blast of winter on the sides of the snow-headed Gormal."—Oss.

The wind was whistling off him as he skimmed the heath like a swallow, when M'Ilvannan, who was in this party, and well accustomed to vigilance in the night, looked up, and seeing the horse's white face, roared out, "By St. Bridget and the nine Whillans,* it's the brimmagh dhu. Arrah, masha, lead miel a faultie to your soney face, my poor fellow, and you just came to meet us, ma vourneen. Oeh, I knew it was the sound of your own feet as soon as ever I heard them. But where have you left the poor ould cappul bawn, your mother, achree? Oeh, she was not able to follow yes with her ould stiff legs that have plowed and harrowed so long to us; murr, bad luck to the thief's breed of the Baldeargs, she'll be breaking her poor ould heart after yes." He had a feeling breast, and delivered himself in his own way with the most tender sympathy. His beast acknowledged the affection of his master in a wonderful degree, for, as soon as he heard his voice, pitching himself on his haunches with the utmost activity, he was standing stone still in two leaps; then grunting and shooting his head over his shoulder, they caressed each other like two brothers that

had met for the first time after seven years' separation. It is supposed that he was wild and light a-foot, he had escaped from his enemies at some turning, and gaining the open fields their pursuit only increased his flight, until, with the wind blowing right a-head of him, he began to smell some of his old companions with whom he gambolled many a day on the green coast of Antrim, and thus directed his flying course for them.

The dame of the young horse was a good highlander, of a reasonable size, and for fire or spunk, as the jockeys term it, was behind none other. His sire was a blood horse of M'Quillan's, and one of the most powerful animals on the sod ever known in Ireland; so that the brimmagh, for speed and activity, was well come home on both sides, as the saying is.

It was with much difficulty that M'Ilvannan could be separated from his friend, chafing his neck and clapping him, frequently asking him questions, as if he could answer all his inquiries. There is no nation in the world so fond of their cattle, chiefly their horses, as the Irish, unless the Arabians; and the reason is, that the poor Irishman and his beast are constant companions. He has not high company, luxuries, or invented pleasures, to direct his attention from his faithful companion. He frequently lives in the same shed with him, talks to him, tells him his grievances, and asks after him, as M'Ilvannan did. This is a manner of fondling and making much of the animal, and seems to be perfectly understood by him in turn.

The officer gave orders to march, and called to him to come on. "And what will I do with the brimmagh, jewel; you know," said he, "if I let him go here he will follow us, and may be the blackguards will get hold of him again, achree, so the blackhearted spalpeens would ax no better, I'm sure and sartin. Pshshrew, pshshrew—stand still, I say, do you know where you're gwine, Boehil Dhu? Hallo, has any of yes an ould halter or hay-rope about yes? Noh! and what will I do then? I'm affared if I go home with him, I could not overtake yes; but hould, hould, I'll send him home himself. I say, sir, you must keep the very same track that you came, and when you come to the great big water, or lag na darragh, as I may say, yes need not be waiting for a boat just swim through at Culrathain, and then straight home, an' my benneagh leat, masha." After all this digression, and so friendly a caution to his horse, M'Ilvannan, putting his two hands to his mouth, and raising a spluttering noise, let the colt loose, and flinging his hat among his feet, raised a whilliu and cry; the colt, flying off with the speed of the wind, soon disappeared in darkness. "Arrah, masha, but I had bad luck," said he, "and now it's just come into my head that I didn't send home these ould martins, for they're only an in-emburiance to me, and if I had tid them to his tail, he would have taken them home to the garloghs or sheelah, that they would keep her legs warm." He received a sharp reproof for raising so much noise at that particular juncture, and also for his unnecessary delay; but, excepting M'Ilvannan alone, there was none other dare have taken those liberties.

Whether the brimmagh had stopped to feed along the road is not known, but it is possible to think he did, after so much fatigue and so long a journey; however, the sun was up before he came round the hill at Ballymagary, which he did as if he had been turning one of the sweeps on the Curragh of Kildare, his glossy skin shining with the water through which he had swam some six miles back. As he passed the castle he neighed aloud, and turning, gazed about him, snuffing the air, and then, with a toss-up of his heels, took the road again, until the sound of his feet and the appearance of his cheerful white face brought the family to the door of the cottage, round which he went three times with his head erect, and tail turned up, the long hair falling down on his back. This he did as a kind of salutation to them, and afterwards was supplied with some refreshment in his own familiar stand. As the colt came across the country, all the women, old men, and children of the neighborhood, flocked after him, seemingly to learn the

news concerning their friends and property. M'Quillan led them as near the road that the colt came as he could, keeping a close look out on every hand, for the horizon was becoming clear, and the morning fast advancing. They were now on the top of Knoekanbaan, and pretty close to the old Duridical temple, which served in place of an observatory. The troops being ordered to halt, and one of them to ascend the highest part of the wall, he told them that he saw a very large fire, the smoke of which began to be perceptible to them all on account of the brightness of the morning, and now and then their ears were saluted with the neighing of horses, lowing of cows, and bleating of sheep. Garry M'Quillan mounted the old building himself, and saw that O'Donnell had entrenched himself immediately beneath them on a little rising ground covered with furze. The cattle were turned into a large field, where they were browsing at their ease, save now and then that they would lift up their honest front and feelingly utter the impulse of nature.

They had posted a strong guard on the park, and in the middle of the intrenchment the red standard of Baldearg was hovering over them like a fiery dragon, breathing death and destruction to all opposers. The smell of roasted flesh was strongly felt, and some were seen seated along the trench, which was of a quadrangular form, others supplying them with refreshments; when the cornu was filled and handed about from one to another, pledging their great leader the war-cry of Baldearg made the distant mountains echo through brake and dell, not escaping the ears of De Borgo and his gallow-glasses. An immediate council of war was called behind the old ruins, and Daniel M'Quillan arose, and addressing the assembly, spoke a few words nearly as follows: "Our common enemy," my friends, "lies securely entrenched beneath us, in no kind of fear. I am certain, of an attack, nor indeed, has he reason; for, considering the strength of his position, the number of his forces, and, again, a matter that is still greater than any of these, he is encamped in the country of our mortal enemy—I mean Coocoy Na Gall O'Canan, who, should we be victorious, might fall upon us when our numbers are weakened and in disorder, and thereby annihilate us altogether. My opinion is, therefore, this, that we rest here, or rather in the depth of yonder wood, until two of the swiftest of our horses carry tidings to our friend O'Neill of Clanbuoy, with whose assistance we might have a better chance of victory." Finn M'Quillan, his eldest son, next addressed them thus: "Follow-soldiers and Brothers, "I must confess that I perfectly agree with my father, that to fight in conjunction with our friend O'Neill, might be more secure, and likewise might give us a greater chance of victory, that is, if he were present; but must we lie inactive here, waiting for succour, while we behold our enemy coolly march off with the plunder of our country? I think I hear at this moment the cries of distress which first informed me of this unprovoked act of rapacity, nor is there a man present who ought not to feel the injury as sensibly as what I do. In regard of O'Canan, I am not afraid of his interference; I know he is possessed of honor. I have often experienced it when we fought him singly, and, therefore, cannot attribute a dishonourable part to him in such a crisis as this. Therefore, I call upon you, follow-soldiers, by holding up your left hands, if you wish that our enemy should march off with the spoil of the fatherless, the widow, and the infirm, while you, in your right hands, grasp the swords that so long have stricken terror to the enemies of the Norman de Borgo. If otherwise, raise your shining blades to heaven. For myself, I say, that had I only twenty of my choice gallow-glasses, I would attempt it, however inefficient."

In answer to this patriotic appeal, all as one man held up their right arms, pointing their gleaming swords to the sky, and entreating him to lead them forward. His two brothers, Garry and Daniel, rose up and said they had nothing to say what but he had spoken before them, and, therefore, the sooner he led them to the attack the better. "I wish now," said he, "that you, Daniel, retire along the west side of the mountain with one detachment, and, if possible, gain the bottom of the river unperceived by the enemy. Then marching along this stream, by no means show yourself out of the wood until you are completely behind them. In this position you must remain until you see unfurled the eagle of De Borgo, yes, and even until you see me engaged, and that their attention be turned all this way; then I wish you to come on like a thunderbolt, and we shall have them between us. To you, Garry, I commit the right wing, and desire that like myself you use no weapon but the broadsword, and on this occasion let us imitate our great ancestors at the battle of Hastings. A few words to you, my dear father, and then I'm done. If the entreaty

of a child can prevail upon you, will you and some chosen ones, whom I shall name, remain in this ground and view the battle? You cannot aid us much, but should you fall, it would ruin our cause." Turning to the soldiers, who were all well prepared for the action, as well in body as in mind, "I cannot assure you, my brave fellows, of victory," said he, "although our cause is good; but I can assure you that I fear no man in the ranks of our enemy, whether in single or general combat, and wish you to do nothing, only imitate my example. You see that my brother with the green cockades has gained the wood, and now I call upon you all, have you swords in your hands?"—"Yes."—"Well, behold your cattle, and those who have wrested them from you." The standard was now unfurled, and all with one shout raised the Irish war-cry, Farah, farah, farah! It was customary, or rather one of the feudal laws prevailing in those days, that the enemy who could forcibly take the property of another past three crosses situated a mentioned distance from each other, then became the lawful possessor of it, and, therefore, O'Donnell had placed one cross at the Bann side, another somewhere in a central direction, and the last beyond the old church of Drumachose.

At this cross, defended by a strong guard, he had ordered his lovely daughter, Laura, to remain, in order that the troops might be more incited to reach the last goal. With her were her waiting-maids, all seated in a kind of temporary tent, erected from the boughs of trees. She was pale as death, and could have wished that she had been deprived of sight before that bloody day; for she trembled to think that she might see Finn M'Quillan and her brothers engaged, one of whom, she knew, must fall. Baldearg and his forces were astonished to hear the war cry and see the standard of an enemy whom they did not consider on the same side of the Bann with them. Therefore, the first general cry was Shiuu kateway,* or some such word, which signifies, behold the multitudes. The next cry, "To arms, to arms, and let the word be Laura O'Donnell."

CHAPTER III. "As the sudden rising of winds, or distant rolling of troubled seas, when some dark ghost in wraith hovers the billows over an isle, an isle the seat of mist on the deep, for many dark born years; so terrible is the sound of the host moving over the field. Gall was tall before them. The streams glitter between his strides. The birds rise the song by his side, he strikes his shield between: on the skirts of the blast the tuneful voices rise."—Oss.

Finn M'Quillan marched forward, commanding the main body, while his brother, Garry, led on the right wing, supported by some inferior officers of good experience, and, as the enemy made a full stop, observing the disposition of his lines, and extending his left wing so as to cover the field in which the cattle were driven, he attacked them with impetuosity, and drove them back over a small stream that empties itself into the Curly; at which time his younger brother was warmly engaged by one of the Baldeargs, leading on the clan O'Flannagan and the clan M'Laughlin, two fierce tribes from the south of Donegal, or Tyrconnell, as it was formerly termed. Garry being fewer in number than his opponents, saw his forces about to be outflanked, and by degrees retired a short distance, keeping good order, and forming a junction with the rear-guard of his elder brother, who was laboring hard in the front of his faithful gallow-glasses, and encouraging them both by his voice and actions. The enemy, now collecting toward the standard of De Borgo, and the spot where Finn M'Quillan, inch by inch, was selling his ground to them, heard the terrific war-cry in the rear, Farah, farah, farah! and turning round, saw the green cockades, under Daniel M'Quillan, rushing upon them behind. Such an unexpected manoeuvre checked them for a considerable time and also divided their forces, leaving the two brothers more equal numbers to contend with. Young M'Quillan and Roderick O'Donnell, each in the prime of life and pride of ancient family, were now engaged hand to hand, with two weighty broadswords and shields of massive structure. Each, before his troops, emulated to strike his opponent to the earth, and end the bloody contest. The powerful arm of M'Quillan at length cleft his enemy's shield, and wounded him slightly on the left shoulder; he, however, retired without any further injury, bringing off his men with the flag and flag-staff of the enemy.

The O'Donnells were plied hard at this time both in front and rear; and although fighting in the country of an enemy, yet, from their well-laid plans, M'Quillan had hard work to

From this word the hill was ever after called the Kady, in place of its former name, Knoekanbaan. The battle lasted for two successive days, although some say three; but I am rather given to believe the former from certain indisputable reasons. The entrenchment in which O'Donnell halted, was of a quadrangular shape; but whether originally formed by him I cannot say; it bears no resemblance to the circular Danish forts which we often see. It has been levelled last season, and is now under crop.

* The young infants. † Dry heart is a term usually applied to people who have no milk. ‡ Tribe or clan. § Mare. ¶ Colt. ** Lucky. *** Broad and cheerful. †† Culrathain, the town at the foot. ††† This hill is in the neighborhood of the Giant's Causeway, and is six hundred and ten feet above the level of the sea. §§ This river has its source in the mountains of Mourne, county Down, and is called the Black Water, until it enters that romantic sheet of water called Lough Neagh. It is termed the Bann from this till it falls into the sea.

* Nine rocks near Glenarm. † The black colt. ‡ The white mare.

* Martins, old stockings wanting the feet, which are usually worn by those who are necessitated to travel through wet ground. † Black boy. ‡ Deep and dark. ¶ My blessing be with you.

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