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THE HEROIC WIFE.

A TALE OF THE REIGN OF TERROR. (From the Lamp.)

When the revolutionary tribunals were established in 1793, Monsieur Duportail's name was one of the first which figured on the list of those suspected who were to undergo trial...

Having fortunately received intimation of the threatened danger, he quitted his dwelling a few hours previous to the arrival of the revolutionary emissaries, and secreted himself in the house of an old domestic in the faubourgs.

'We must instantly leave Paris,' said she; 'a carriage containing the children waits for us; and if we reach Bordeaux, we can easily conceal ourselves in my father's house until an opportunity offers for embarking for Martinique.'

During the evening the old servant, having gone out to reconnoitre, returned with the startling intelligence that every conveyance was strictly searched at the barriers, and that many persons endeavoring to escape had been arrested.

The next day he met the carriage at the appointed hour, and after some persuasions, prevailed on Madame Duportail to leave Paris accompanied only by her children, promising that he would immediately quit the city on foot, and disguised.

As was expected, on reaching the barrier the coach was stopped, and at either side appeared a sinister countenance, surmounted by the red cap. 'It is a woman,' exclaimed one.

Madame Duportail tendered her passport, and after a short scrutiny, the order was given to proceed. With a lightened heart she continued her route, each moment hoping to be overtaken by her husband; but in vain were her expectations.

'My husband!' was all she could utter, throwing herself into her parent's arms. 'Your husband! Unhappy child, you are not then aware of his arrest?'

All remonstrance was unheeded, nor would she even allow her father to run any risk by accompanying her. The only delay to which she consented was while he went to procure a letter from an old acquaintance to a member of the Convention...

'I shall wait for him,' said Madame Duportail. 'As you please,' replied the old woman; 'but where will you stay?'

'I shall remain here,' replied Madame, terrified by the insolent tone of the speaker. 'In the rain? You must be an aristocrat, then, for they are capable of anything. Our duties have enough to do, I warrant; for they are beset from morning till night with petitions.'

With a malicious glance she passed into the lodge. Thus left to herself, the young wife could not avoid reflecting upon the situation in which she was placed; and though, under other circumstances, she would have shrunk at the idea of visiting a man unknown to her, she was too much absorbed with the thought of her husband's peril to heed it at that moment.

'Here is the deputy, young lady. I find that I was mistaken in saying that he had gone out,' exclaimed the portress, chuckling as she emerged from the lodge, yet half afraid that her falsehood might get her into trouble.

Madame Duportail presented the letter to the stranger, who, glancing at the writing, and then at his visitor, requested her with an air of constraint to come into the house. On opening the letter, and perusing it rapidly, 'I am going to the Convention,' said he, 'and have no time to lose; this letter tells me who you are, and is sufficient to make me do all in my power for your husband. Oblige me by coming up stairs.'

He led the way into an elegantly-furnished apartment, the furniture of which bore evident traces of the Revolution. The pictures were surmounted by armorial bearings, some of the subjects being devotional, while others represented battle scenes, in which the members of the Royal family were conspicuous.

Having handed his visitor to a chair, the deputy seated himself before a table covered with papers and pamphlets. 'Madame, I fear that citizen Danton is at present in the country, but I shall give you a letter which must be delivered to him by yourself on his return.'

'Will his stay be long, monsieur?' 'A few days.' 'But, monsieur, the scaffold will not wait his return,' she would have said, but her voice failed, and she burst into tears.

Her eyes followed the pen in its movements, and with difficulty she restrained herself from sobbing aloud. 'There,' added the deputy, folding the letter, 'I am confident my friend will be satisfied that I have done all in my power, as he demanded. I am happy in having rendered you this little service; continued he, as he rose and politely presented the letter.'

Madame Duportail had also arisen. 'Do you think, monsieur, that Citizen Danton will take pity on me?' she asked, in an almost inarticulate voice.

The deputy regarded her for a moment silently and with a scarce perceptible smile, replied, 'I have no doubt of it.' He made a few steps towards the door, but returning, added, 'Be sure to deliver the letter yourself.'

They descended the stairs, and the deputy, making a profound salute, rapidly traversed the courtyard. Madame Duportail followed more slowly. It was only then that she was struck with the peculiarity of the look which accompanied the injunction to deliver the letter in person, and she felt some misgivings as the idea arose in her mind that there was a mystery hked with it which she could not fathom.

'A list of the execrable conspirators who have been condemned by national justice to suffer to-morrow morning.'

She shuddered as she tendered a piece of money to the man, who, handing her one of the papers, continued his route, uttering his funeral cry. With a palpitating heart she glanced over the list, which contained the names, ages, and rank of the victims whose doom had been pronounced; but her husband was not among the number.

'He still lives,' was the wife's silent ejaculation. But who could speak for the morrow? The remainder of the day was passed in glean- ing information respecting the prisoners. Her husband, she learned, was incarcerated in the Oratoire.

The next morning she went to Danton's house. The citizen minister still slept. On her return some hours after, she was told that he had left town.

'Where has he gone?' 'To Auteuil,' was the reply of the domestic, in a tone of impertinent familiarity.

This suspense was dreadful; but her hopes again rose when, on consulting the public lists, her husband's name did not appear. The following day, changing her dress so as not to be recognised by the valets, she inquired for Danton. The minister was in his office, but could not be disturbed. Entering a cabaret on the opposite side of the street, from whence the house was observable, she called for some wine. The woman of the shop, interested by her youth and beauty, and rightly guessing that some other motive than that of drinking wine induced her to remain so long, strove by her attention to lessen the young wife's grief.

The evening fell, and thanking the woman for her kindness, Madame Duportail, with the energy of despair, boldly entered the minister's hotel. On the domestic's endeavoring to prevent her going beyond the courtyard, she showed the letter, mentioning its being from Captain R..., and the necessity of its immediate delivery. The deputy's name acted like a talisman, and she ascended the grand staircase. Servants were hurrying to and fro, and in the confusion she reached the door of one of the upper apartments, from whence the sound of boisterous mirth proceeded. She was here accosted by a servant, who inquired her business. Without making a reply, she endeavored to pass him, in which she partly succeeded, but recoiled with terror at finding herself in a brilliantly-lighted apartment, where a number of men were seated around a supper-table. The noise occasioned by her entry attracted the attention of a man with square high shoulders, his hair in disorder, and wearing a ribbon at the breast of his coat, who angrily demanded the cause.

'Citizen minister, it is a woman.' 'Ah, she wishes to see me, I suppose. We must attend to the ladies,' added he, coming forward and endeavoring to assume an air of politeness.

Madame Duportail lowered her eyes as she presented the letter, which Danton opened and perused. 'Madame Duportail, my colleague has already spoken of you; we must look after this affair.'

'You know, monsieur, how pressing it is.' 'Yes, yes; I know all about it,' replied Danton, as he rudely gazed at her.

'Monsieur, one line from you per—' 'Assuredly; we shall see; but I cannot allow so pretty a woman to depart so soon. I have a few friends with me, but there need be no ceremony. Favor us with your company.—Come.'

A dizziness seized her as she entered the room, on perceiving that the eyes of the guests were directed towards her. 'I present you, madame, to the friends of whom I have spoken. They will be delighted, I am sure, at seeing you among them,' said Danton, as he handed a chair, which she, however, removed some distance from the table.

'Will you not, then, honor us by taking supper.' Madame refused by a gesture. For a time her presence seemed to throw a constraint over some, while others continued their conversation, glancing at her with looks of impertinent curiosity. Danton alone addressed her, endeavoring from time to time to persuade her to join them at table. During supper he drank deeply, and now and then joined the conversation which was around around him, his stentorian voice, when he spoke, drowning all others. A discussion at length arose, which was put an end to by Danton's health being proposed and drunk.

'To the republic!' shouted a voice at the lower end of the table. The glasses were immediately filled, while the eyes of all were turned towards Madame Duportail.

'This time, I am sure, you will not refuse to join in the pledge with these brave gentlemen; the wine is of the mildest description.'

'I suspect,' said one of the guests, 'that it is not the wine she fears, but the pledge the toast carries.'

'I'll wager that she does not voluntarily drink to the nation,' remarked another.

'Confound this hesitation,' exclaimed Danton, impatiently. 'Prove that you are a good patriot, and worthy to figure at table with the principal members of the Convention.'

Madame Duportail's agitation was excessive, but a sense of danger recalled her presence of mind, and, taking the proffered glass from Danton, she replied, 'I shall drink to the nation with pleasure.'

On her pledging the toast, the plaudits of all were vociferous.

'We want nothing but music to complete our enjoyment,' said a young man, addressing Danton.

'True, very true; I love music passionately, though I do not understand three notes. One would imagine that, with such a voice, I should sing well; but in my younger days

'The woods with echoes rang, From the tone in which I sang.'

While all laughed at the quotation, he leant gallantly towards Madame Duportail. 'With such a charming countenance, you must have a divine voice. Do you sing? A reluctant affirmation escaped her lips. 'You will sing, then?' added he; 'but we must procure a harp.'

Madame Duportail, pale and indignant, with the sensitive feelings of a woman, though she felt that the life of her husband might depend upon her acquiescence, endeavored, when the harp was brought, to excuse herself; but those by whom she was surrounded seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in the misery they were inflicting.

'Will you refuse me, then?' said Danton, half aloud. 'Take care, madame; recollect it is the first favor I have asked.'

Having sat down before the harp, with a trembling hand she played a prelude, and sang with tolerable composure, one of the favorite songs of that period, which Danton applauded with ecstasy, and obliged her to repeat. The effects of the wine became every moment more perceptible on all. Several coarse jests were hazarded, and at length became of such a nature that she arose, under pretext of requiring air. 'Very well,' said Danton, in a brusque manner, and without leaving his chair, 'you can wait for me in a neighboring apartment.'

She was conducted by a valet along a corridor into a room, the walls of which were hung with costly pictures. In the centre, strewn with papers and writing materials, was a table, from which, in all likelihood, had emanated those fearful warrants of death which had made so many hearts desolate. Such was the involuntarily thought of Madame Duportail; and as the idea smote on her heart that her husband's condemnation might at that moment be lying before her she was seized with a vague feeling of terror, and sank powerless on a chair. The sound of hoisterous mirth caused her frequently to start, and her apprehensions were further increased by perceiving that the candle was nearly exhausted. She had been nearly two hours alone when a domestic entered, bearing a lighted candle in each hand. 'When shall I be able to see the minister?' she asked in an agitated voice.

'He is coming,' replied the man, as he deposited the candles on the table and retired. At the same moment a door at the opposite side of the apartment opened with a shock, and before the young woman uttered the cry which rose involuntarily to her lips, she recognised Danton, who, staggering into the room, threw himself upon a chair. He was without his cravat, and the frills of his shirt were disordered and stained with wine. On perceiving his visitor, his inflamed countenance assumed a maudlin expression as he exclaimed, 'Ah, is it you, citoyenne?'

The injunction of the deputy, when giving the letter, flashed vividly across her memory. 'I shall surely die of apoplexy,' muttered the minister in a maudlin voice, 'that is if they give me time. These suppers are very pleasant, but—the morning.'

Madame Duportail's terror changed to agony at the thought that he might be too inebriated to write, and hastily approaching him she exclaimed, 'Citizen minister, you surely have not forgotten the promise you gave me?'

'Ha! what do you say?'

'The letter you are to write—the grace you would accord me at the recommendation of Citizen R—the life—the life of my husband!'

'Well, it is but necessary to erase his name from the list—that is to say, to remove it from the bundle.'

'What bundle?' exclaimed the wife, with feverish anxiety; 'where is it?'

'Give me air. I am stifled.'

Not daring to go within reach of the drunken monster, she ran and opened the window. 'That Robespierre is a scoundrel—he never drinks unless it be blood; Baptiste undress me.'

'Monsieur—Monsieur!' interrupted the young woman, 'where is this bundle—this list? Give it me.'

obliged to R—for having sent you. Do let me hear another chanson; you sing so divinely.

For a moment she remained silent; but perceiving that he was again falling into a lethargy, she once more broke silence—'Carton B?'

'What's his name?'

'Duportail.' 'Duportail!—Carton A!—Carton B! Seek then in D. How stupid you are my dear. You amuse me with your Carton A,' added he, giving way to a burst of laughter, as he sank back in his chair.

Without loss of time she took the bundle of warrants marked D, and opening the string, hastily perused the name written on the back of each. Her husband's was the third; the warrant bore the minister's signature, and his execution was to have taken place the following morning. Seizing the paper with an inward thanksgiving, she moved forward to thank Danton; but seeing that his eyes were closed, noiselessly glided towards the door and disappeared.

The next morning, with the warrant in her possession, she found little difficulty in getting Duportail's name erased from the gaoler's book, and she and her husband were soon on their route to Bordeaux, where reunited to their family, they sailed for Martinique. At the Restoration they returned to France; where the Heroic Wife and her devoted husband lived for many years after.

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN ON THE AMERICAN WAR.

Mr. Smith O'Brien has published in the Dublin Irishman a letter, replying to Brog, General Meagher's, addressed to his countrymen some time since advocating the cause of the Federal Government. We subjoin the greater part of the letter:—

KILLARNEY, Oct. 28, 1863.

My Dear Smyth—I perceive that our friends T. F. Meagher, not satisfied with having made in America a series of brilliant orations in favor of a continuance of the civil war that has raged during nearly three years in the United States, has sent a despatch to Ireland which is evidently intended to induce Irish emigrants to enlist under the Federal banners upon their arrival in America.

I cannot calculate at less than two hundred thousand the number of Irishmen who have already fallen in this horrible warfare. These men have fallen in the prime of life—in the vigor of youth and strength. Had they fallen in contending for the freedom of their country their memory would have been consecrated in the annals of patriotism. Their heroism would have been admired even by those who hate our nation; but truth compels me to say that these brave men are now regarded as mere mercenaries, who for the sake of a handful of dollars, enlist themselves in a strife, the sole object of which is to determine whether one third of the citizens of the States shall be governed according to their own free choice, or shall be coerced by force to submit to a connection and to a government which they repudiate and abhor.

Nothing but a sense of duty could place me in antagonism to a comrade who shared many of my hopes and disappointments; but as there are some in Ireland, and in America, too, who pay attention to what I say, I feel it to be incumbent upon me at a time when thousands upon thousands of Irishmen are leaving our shores, to declare that it would be far better for them to remain at home earning a shilling a day than to be seduced by the glitter of military trappings—by solicitations of crimps and man-brokers—or by the invocation of the most splendid oratory—to perish as mercenaries in the unholy strife which now desolates the states of America.

Gen. Meagher complains that the Irish people have identified themselves with the Orangemen and Tories of England in their sympathy with the Rebels of the South. This charge proceeds from a misconception of the state of feeling that prevails in this country. There are few Englishmen or Anglified Irishmen who do not rejoice in the separation which has taken place between the Southern and Northern States, because they were accustomed to feel that the growth of American power under the Union was so rapid as to become extremely formidable to England. On the other hand, the patriot party in Ireland deeply regret the severance of those States, because they found the increasing strength of the United States a guarantee against English oppression, which, under various contingencies, might be useful for the protection of Ireland. But after this war had unhappily broken out—when, from the course of events, it became manifest to all mankind that there is between South and North an alienation of feeling which cannot be reconciled—when it became evident that the South, even if conquered, could be retained in connection with the North only by coercion—then the lovers of human freedom