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## WHICH WAS THE TRAITOR?

A STORY OF '98.

(From the Dublin Weekly Freeman)

### CHAPTER XXI.—A COUP DE GUERRE.

Throughout the night he spent in the stage-house, Squire Harden was not only unquiet himself, but was the cause of unrest to others. Often the soldiers were roused from the half slumbers into which weariness led them, but which the anxiety left after the recent scare prevented becoming a sound sleep, by the ejaculations and movements of the old captain of yeomanry, as he started from his chair to stride up and down the earthen floor, muttering curses and vows of vengeance.

He cursed his own precipitancy and impatience, which refused to listen to the stage-house keeper, when that individual was only too eager to give him the very intelligence he required, and which would have insured the capture of his runaway daughter and her abductor; and he swore never to return to his home till either or both should have fallen into his hands.

The Squire's temper was destined to be sorely tried. He watched the hours as they brightened into day, and vented his wrath in the strongest terms of his vehement vocabulary upon the tardy soldiers who lay snoring round indifferent to the trouble which was tearing at his heart. Unable to control himself, he roused Craddock and urged him to march at once.

Craddock, willing to indulge him now rose from his uncomfortable couch, and ordered the *reville* to be sounded. Soon the detachment were in marching order, and making a hasty preparatory meal from the provision in the ration-bags.

"This is all I can do, Mr. Harden," said Craddock. "The person who has disgraced the command of this party has informed me that his orders were to wait here for the arrival of a co-operating force, which I expect to come up in an hour or two."

Squire Harden took from his pocket-book Raymond's last letter to his daughter, and handed it to the Major, who read it twice, once for information, and once from the sympathetic curiosity men feel in such out-pourings of the heart.

"I think you are right, Mr. Harden," he observed, as he returned the document. "This seems to contain a certain clue. This Father O'Hanlon's house to which Raymond has, in all probability, conveyed Miss Harden must be in the neighbourhood of the position, we are about to attack, and, if so, you will have, I fear, to await the issue of the fight before you can hope to seek your daughter there."

This opinion was not calculated to soothe the Squire. "And in the meanwhile," he retorted, "this villain, if he carry her there at all, may remove her farther out of reach. By heaven, it is a most extraordinary thing that the company of half a hundred men, with arms in their hands and soldiers' trappings on their backs, won't keep a man an inch nearer to this one scoundrel and a single weak girl! Dick Raymond," he continued, turning angrily on that personage, who approached, "if you were not the cowardliest cur alive this day, I should be under my own roof now—and that brother of yours, bad as he is, a better man than you—would be kicking his heels in a dungeon, in-

stead of triumphing at the dishonour he has brought on me."

But Squire Harden's passion could not alter the arrangements of military discipline, and he was compelled to restrain himself till the shriek of fifes and the beating of drums announced the coming of the expected reinforcements, and to a merry marching air the head of a strong body of military appeared stepping briskly into sight. Before them rode an elderly officer of a stern and haughty expression. He returned Craddock's salute coldly, and when that officer had narrated to him the events of the night, and the circumstances under which he had temporarily deprived the Welsh ensign of his sword, he said, harshly—

"Major Craddock, the gentleman whom you took the liberty to treat in so arbitrary a manner without possessing any direct authority over him happens to be my son."

"Colonel Fordyce," replied Craddock, "I acted on my own responsibility, but under circumstances which I am convinced rendered the severe measures I adopted indispensable. I regret your relationship to Ensign Fordyce, but I cannot regret having done my duty."

"It seems to me that you have in some points yet to learn what is your duty," was the arrogant retort. "Let Ensign Fordyce be instantly released from arrest, and replaced in his command."

Colonel Fordyce having the command of the assembled force, his dictate was, of course, above question. This unpleasant episode produced an estrangement between the two officers, and the Colonel, giving the word to march, reserved his place at the head of the column, Craddock, as a volunteer unattached, following in the rear with Mr. Harden and Richard Raymond.

Colonel Fordyce had received explicit instructions from his general. The force he commanded was to form the left attack upon the insurgent position, which by a circuit might be flanked on that side. This detour could, however, only be effected in case the royalists were able to improve their advance, and by confining the rebels to the eminence, leave the ground open for the evolution, which, when accomplished, was to be converted into an attack upon the rear of the encampment thus turned. The troops with whom he was to act had bivouacked some two or three miles from Arda the night before, and only awaited his co-operation to commence the attack. Colonel Fordyce therefore pushed on, resolved to effect a junction in good time, and already inflated by the anticipations of "honorable mention" in despatches from head-quarters.

The men, too, all of one regiment, were in high spirits, even the unheroic runaways of the night before taking new heart from the numbers no less than the confidence of their comrades. The order of march was in solid column, attenuated in the centre, which contained a single field-piece. Front and rear of the main body were covered each by a sergeant's guard.

This martial array stepped out gallantly to the stirring sounds of military music, casting a careless glance at the aged cripple who hobbled out of the line of their advance, and surveyed with mingled timidity and admiration the horrent files whose fixed bayonets and burnished accoutrements glittered in the sun.

The last seldier had scarcely passed laughing at the dismay of a creature too helpless-looking to provoke suspicion when the pretended cripple, throwing aside his crutches and the grey wig which counterfeited age, sprang over the fence and bounded away unseen.

Further on there was a buxom country girl milking a cow on the *down* of the little farmhouse ready by. The soldiers winked and kissed hands as they passed, and would have liked to break some military jests with the fresh-coloured roanion who so boldly returned their salutations, and then, when they had rounded the next turn, throwing off the garb which concealed a stout and active youth, dashed off in the direction the first impostor had taken.

The column now entered a woody and broken country, through which the road wound in short curves, closed by thicket and ravine so close and steep as to form a grateful shade from the sweltering heat and glare. The stiffness of the bright, languid summer day filled this region, and the only sign of life to be seen was when the wild rabbit scuttled among the crags, or the startled thrush burst from her leafy cover among the trees which elad the gorges to their tops.

Craddock rode past the column, and addressed Colonel Fordyce:

"Pardon me, colonel," he cried. "I know I am not warranted either by my position here or by my experience as compared with that of an officer so distinguished as yourself; but it strikes me that a single guard in advance is not sufficient in so ill-looking a spot as this." The same idea had struck Colonel Fordyce, and he was about to give the necessary order when Craddock addressed him. His native

obstinaey and pride, no less than the soreness he felt against the man who had put a deep indignity upon his son, at once revolted.

"Thank you for your advice Major Craddock," he said with a hauteur increased by a feeling of hostility; "but I am commander here, and must be presumed to know my own business."

"Assuredly, sir. But you must, in that case, know that some very serious surprises have befallen his Majesty's forces recently, and considering that we are in the vicinity of the rebels, and that no more favorable place could be chosen for an ambush, I think it behoves you to be on your guard."

"Major Craddock," replied Fordyce with disdain in his voice and manner, "again I thank you for your advice, and if I were not a soldier with thirty years' service in North America and elsewhere, I should feel beholden for it to you, or to one who knew my duty better than myself."

"I cannot forbear from again cautioning you. The war with the Colonies is marked by one example which you cannot forget, and which should teach you the danger of marching in this loose fashion—excuse me—through an enemy's country."

"Burgoyne was a fool, sir, and like many others could theorise better than he could practise the art of war. I am not going to alter my loose fashion, as you call it, at your suggestion." And he looked straight ahead with a gesture which showed that he had ended the interview.

"As you will," cried Craddock, backing his horse to let the column again precede him; "only be good enough to remember that I recommended you to double your advanced guards, and to cover the march for some distance at each side of the road."

Fordyce, submitting his better judgment to offended pride, determined to forego the precautions he had resolved upon, lest Craddock should think they were due to his recommendation. Besides, in an hour more he should be in communication with the co-operating forces. But he was uneasy, and kept his gaze upon the *avant garde* as it disappeared into a gloomy pass, which seemed to swallow the little party slowly into its sinister shadow.

The colonel, looking back as he gained the jaws of this ravine, saw that a gorge of similar aspect, when beheld from that direction, overhung the march of his soldiers, and seemed to shut in their rear with its steep frowning curve.

"Truly a murderous spot!" he muttered. A terrible sound smote him, a crash and rattle as of loud thunder, followed by a peal less loud, and at once he beheld the men of his front guard rushing back towards him. One of them staggered and fell.

The sounds were those of musketry, exaggerated gigantically by the reverberating rocks and the hollow cavities of the glen.

"The rebels! the rebels!" shouted the fugitives, as they gained their supports. The announcement was unnecessary, for every man could by this satisfy himself.

As if the gorge and thicket contained within them some vast mechanism, so general and simultaneous was the movement, they bristled on all sides with pike and gun, and the fierce looks of resolute and relentless enemies.

Fordyce wheeled his horse in front of the column, Craddock facing him in the rear. They cried in the same breath.

"Steady men; steady. Halt! Ground arms!"

But the order was lost in the roar of the tempest which had burst on the devoted troops. Every organ spit fire; from higher points of vantage huge stones were hurled, and on each flank, and upon front and rear, the pikemen thickened, projecting their long weapons as they collected shoulder to shoulder for the first rush. The yell of these men was more awful than even the infernal din made by the musketry, the crash and whiz of stone and bullet, and the groans and shrieks of the wounded whom the first onslaught had brought down.

Discipline perished first under the stunning blow. Few among the soldiers could have obeyed a command even if he had heard it. The flanking files and their supporting ranks faced instinctively right and left. Destruction threatened equally from each side. They fired a random and scattered volley, and then the pikemen were upon them. These, leaping the ditches at each side, or rushing from the ravines in front and rear, dashed upon the infantry, who could only oppose to weapons fourteen feet long the short "Brown Bess," with its stumpy bayonet. The rebels searched their ranks with their long lances, which met through the broken and disjointed formation.

Fordyce did his best to atone for his horrible error. He succeeded in rallying some of his men, who cleared an opening with one fortunate volley, and through the gap the routed soldiers followed, slaughter pursuing them. The colonel saw his son fall, but his own life was on a hair, and he fled on.

One-third of the royal troops were destroyed or taken prisoners. The rebels lost but few men.

Among the prisoners were Squire Harden, Major Craddock, and Richard Raymond. The old man had fought stoutly with no other weapon than his louted whip, but he was knocked off his horse, and an insurgent, shortening his pike, was about to run it through his breast, when a strong hand dashed it aside, and Charles Raymond confronted the squire.

One was not more confounded than the other at this rencontre.

Richard Raymond had his cheek cut open, but escaped with his life by throwing himself upon the ground, and feigning insensibility.

The worst befell Major Craddock. He had done all that a gallant gentleman could do, if not to retrieve, at least to avert, the fortune of the day when a stalwart insurgent faced him. Craddock fired his pistol right into the man's forehead, but the rebel, collecting his dying strength, swung his pike, as he fell forward dead, and struck Craddock with the iron on the head, sending him to the earth as senseless as his own lifeless self.

The victors marched off with their prisoners and military store, but their triumph was somewhat lessened upon discovering that while performing their successful exploit, the British general, tired of waiting for the expected reinforcements, had resolved to attack the rebel camp, and that Villemont, in the absence of his best men, had abandoned it, retreating in good order towards Wexford, followed by the troops of whom, however, he had gained a considerable start.

Charles Raymond and his force re-occupied the deserted position, intending, after some repose to set out on the track of their confederates.

### CHAPTER XXII.—SQUIRE HARDEN IN PERIL.

The insurgents were more jubilant over the capture of Squire Harden than with the success which had given him into their hands. His notoriety had spread far and wide, as one of the most virulent, if not the most actively cruel among the gentry who exerted themselves to crush the popular uprising. The Squire had, it must be confessed, sanctioned, and in some cases directed, the infliction of certain among the many exceptional forms of punishment employed upon the patriots or those suspected of sympathy with them, but he had never allowed the extreme atrocities perpetrated under the authority of some of his colleagues. As we have said, his nature, though violent and revengeful, was not deliberately cruel.

Unfortunately the barbarisms committed by the yeomen he commanded, as well as many which were the work of strangers, were all accredited to him, and the fear and hatred in which his name was held were not greater than the thirst for vengeance upon himself. The feeling against Richard Raymond was little less vehement, for his guilt was held to be deepened by the fact of his religion, from which the insurgents considered he had apostatised when he embraced so eagerly the opposition to the national cause. For Craddock, he was a soldier, and they regarded him simply as a prize valuable either as a hostage or as a means of retaliation in case any of their captured leaders should be executed by the enemy. The remaining prisoners they would have gladly got rid of in any way short of setting them at liberty, for they possessed no depot in which trophies of this kind might be secured, while their presence and the necessity of guarding them impeded the movement of the rebel forces.

When it was discovered that among the spoils of war were the detested squire and his lieutenant, their universal joy found vent in repeated and enthusiastic cheers, and the insurgents crowded around to look upon their persecutor. Even the stout squire might quail as he steeled himself to return with scornful, defiant glances the fierce and threatening regards bent upon him. He could not help but feel that these were no idle words which promised him an end marked by tortures exceeding all he had ever wrought upon others.

Bound firmly hand to hand, the Squire and Richard Raymond were marched in the midst of a phalanx of pikemen, who made no scruple whenever their prisoners hung back to urge them on with blows and buffets, heaping upon them all the time almost every form of execration and reproach that two languages could supply. Craddock, disabled by a serious wound, was conveyed on an extemporized stretcher formed of two pikes laid parallel, with a dozen boughs placed cross-wise on them. By direction of Charles Raymond the rude contrivance was rendered more tolerable by a thick layer of leaves, a luxury for which the officer could only thank him by a look of gratitude.

Our hero having intervened in the nick of time to save the squire from death, and committed both him and his brother, Richard to the keeping of a strong guard under Ned Fenell, with instructions to see that no harm or

insult was offered to either, hastened off to call his followers together, and lead them off the field of fight. Ned read his orders by the light of his own sentiments towards the prisoners, and so long as no positive injury was offered to either of them, continued to wink at the minor annoyances they suffered. It would "pull down their nobles a bit," he said, and teach them to remember "that every dog has his day," that "it may be the worm's turn tomorrow," with other appropriate quotations from his proverbial philosophy.

Charles Raymond was no less anxious to get out of the squire's neighbourhood than the squire was willing that he should do so. The truth is they were both embarrassed by a situation which had so strangely altered the relations they had previously stood in to each other.

The insurgents, as we have said, returned to find the camp empty, and the men they had left in charge of it, as well as the foe which threatened them, both had disappeared. On their arrival they were invaded by a friendly army of the neighbouring peasantry, assured that the "red rogues" had gone, who brought with them food of various kinds, cooked and prepared, and off this a dinner was made, the prisoners being offered, and some of them thankfully accepting their share of the repast.

Charles took possession of that spot which Villemont had dubbed by the pretentious title of "Head Quarters," as became his rank, with his second in command, Duigenan. This latter had been a student of medicine when the rebellion had broken out, and had ascertained that Craddock's wound, serious though it looked, was not dangerous, the chief ill-effect to be apprehended being concussion.

Charles had fully explained to his colleague his position as regarded at least two of the prisoners, and they were discussing what course would best become the circumstances, when the colloquy was interrupted by a cheer from a crowd congregated at one part of the camp, as we have been all along terming it. The cheer announced the decision of a conference, and the gathering now advanced towards our hero and his friend. Charles saw that they were headed by the person who had officiated as president of the "Court of Cross-pike," and guessed at once the purport of their mission.

"General Raymond," said the spokesman, saluting Charles, but addressing him with mingled respect and independence, "I make so bold as to ask you when are we to march from this place?"

"An hour after dark," replied Charles. "Well, general, before we start, I and the men with me have come to claim our right from you."

"Speak on, Sergeant Carmody." "Four days ago we condemned to death a number of men, swearing to execute our sentence upon them at the first opportunity. At your request we adjourned our Court of Cross Pike. Well, we have just held one; two of the men then condemned are in our hands; we have passed sentence upon them, and we ask your sanction for its enforcement."

"Who are the criminals?" "Look for yourself. Open the way there, boys."

At his bidding the throng behind drew off on two sides, leaving Squire Harden and Richard Raymond, still manacled together, standing alone.

Charles rose and in a calm, steady voice cried—

"I refuse my sanction to this act. And I forbid the execution of the prisoners."

This utterance was received with loud murmurs and mutinous gestures by the majority of the audience.

"Mr. Raymond," said Carmody in tones as resolute as his own, "you're our commander, and we are ready and willing to obey you for the good of our cause. But we want justice on these two men, and with or without your authority, justice we must and will have."

This was greeted with applause. Charles faced the tumultuous assembly sternly:

"If I am your leader and chief, I will be so in all things, and no man here shall dare gainsay me. I command you, Carmody, to remove the cords from the hands of these men, and to let them go free."

Amazement so seized upon his hearers that for a while they gazed incredulously upon him. But there was no mistaking his determination. Howls of anger and defiance rose on every side.

Carmody, encouraged by this kind of support, confronted Charles. Quitting the form of respect he said—

"Raymond, you aided and abetted these men before now; you saved their lives when a chance offered itself to us. I tell you you are a traitor!"

"You lie!" And with a blow Raymond sent the sturdy fellow tumbling on the grass. He then boldly advanced to the two prisoners and cut their shackles. But Carmody laid by