

NATURE'S SYMPATHY.

When by all the world forgotten, Lone, unnoticed 'mid the throng, When the loves, so blindly trusted, Prove as empty as a song.

THE WILD ROSE OF LOUGH GILL.

A TALE OF THE IRISH WAR IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER XXVIII. (Continued.)

Who dare bid Brian Roe O'Neill stand back? ejaculated the Ulsterian sabreur, sharply and haughtily, addressing the last speaker.

With a final glance of contemptuous defiance at O'Connell and his principal, he linked his arm in that of O'Tracy, and wheeled the latter away from the scene of combat.

Scarcely had the train proceeded half-a-dozen yards, when the report of a pistol rang through the wood, and a ball whistled between their heads.

The twenty barrels of gunpowder stipulated for in the treaty between Owen Roe and General Monk had been delivered by the latter to the commander of the Irish detachment, whose duty it was to convey it in safety to his general in the county Antrim.

It was more than a month since Ormond had marched at the head of an immense army, numbering about 25,000 men, to attack the Puritans.

The powder and its escort had passed Castletown by about a mile, and were traversing a pass through a bog to the north of that place, when the presence of the enemy became manifest.

"Friends or foes?" exclaimed our hero, inquiringly. "Foes," replied the man in the black gown, "I fear not a royalist trumpet call, may I never cross border more."

"Obey the command, and march on!" cried O'Tracy, as he saw the enemy's ranks wheeling about and confronting the enemy, although the narrow causeway did not admit of their falling into line.

"Victory, as I live!" exclaimed Colonel O'Neill; "now, my children, comes our turn, Spare your powder, and do the work with cold steel—forward!"

swept the causeway from end to end. All was over! One hundred and twenty of the Irish were subbed in their ranks, several of them made prisoners (who were afterwards held to ransom), and all the powder captured save one barrel, which was carried off by an Ulster horseman.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PATRIOT'S DEATH—A TRAITOR'S DOOM.

"Oh, mourn, Erin, mourn! His life is dead, By whom thy prettiest flag was borne— The bravest heroes led!"

About two months following the events described in the previous chapter, there was a great stir and excitement in the camp of Owen Roe O'Neill, now no longer in the county Antrim, but in the county Londonderry.

The circumstance that had brought the Ulster general and his army so far north was the treaty between the Puritans and the savage and big game Sir Charles Coote; this is the younger Coote—for the elder Sir Charles, alluded to in the early part of this tale, had been killed in the second year of the rising, shot at Trim by one of his own troops, as was alleged.

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into the saddle, and rode at their head to the tent of Owen Roe—a tent marked by the banner of the "Catholic Army" of Ulster, a banner emblazoned with the Red Hand of the O'Neills, and the mitre and cross-keys of St. Peter.

Another hour and the Ulster army, horse and foot, was wending its way to the south, conveying in its midst, in a litter borne between four horses, the fearfully prostrated form of the victor of Benburb!

A couple of days later, and after a march of close on sixty miles, the army reached Ballyhaise, in Cavan; and at this place O'Tracy witnessed a pathetic and ominous event, the last mournful parting of the brave general and his devoted troops.

The event took place on the verdant banks of the river Annahoe. Owen Roe was propped up on his couch of pain to make a last review of his men; and Edmund, commanding the mounted escort surrounding the litter, watched with keen and melancholy interest the workings of the commander's face.

Regiment after regiment of the Ulster army, numbering about five thousand foot and four hundred horse, marched with drums beating and colors flying before the face of the commander. It was a stirring sight, that now presented by the valorous and well-disciplined Ulsterians, the best-drilled troops in Ireland.

But what of our heroine during all these years? What of fair Kathleen Ny-Cuirinn, since, four years ago, she left her in New Ross, after right bravely nursing her lover through his fever?

She was safe and well, and in good quarters. Niall having returned to his old home of garrison life in Charlemont, replacing himself under his old commander, Sir Phelim O'Neill, in that stout and strong-walled fortress he had prepared a home for his sister.

During the eventful time that had passed since his illness in the Vale of the Three Waters, Edmund's meetings with the three troths had been of pretty frequent occurrence, even taking him often to Charlemont, and shortly after the death of Owen Roe an opportunity occurred which afforded him another interview with her.

Next day, shortly before noon, he rode out of Charlemont with the written pass of Sir Phelim in his pocket. His horse was fresh and strong, and soon carried him to the port town, where, after he had closely questioned, and his safe conduct closely scrutinized by the Scottish officer there, he was directed where to find the force of which he was in quest.

The situations of Royalist and Parliamentarian in Ulster may be described in a few words. Ere Cromwell quitted Drogheda he sent one of his principal officers, Colonel Robert Venables, a Cheshire man, with about a thousand foot and a hundred and fifty horse, to commence operations in that province, and a letter soon reduced some small places in Down and Antrim.

"What goes—for the king or his enemies?" "A friend—for the king." Another few moments and he dismounted from his horse in the midst of the Scottish rendezvous, and handed his despatches to the commander of the party.

"Come with me," said General O'Reilly to him, "if you would witness his last moments, and aid his parting soul with your prayers."

neeling multitude of both sexes, of the soldiers of the castle garrison and the servants of the castle. Nearly all were engaged in fervent prayer; many of the women, both maids and matrons, were weeping bitterly.

On entering the chamber of death, Edmund was shocked at the sad appearance of the general. Fearfully pallid and worn, Owen Roe lay supine on his couch. He was attended in the brown Dominican habit, his attenuated hands grasped the crucifix; his hair and nails had fallen off.

Thus did Owen Roe O'Neill. Alas for Ulster! alas for Ireland! For the true national hopes and aspirations perished with the death of him, to use the words of O'Neill's secretary, "whose only name (if but like an echo uttered, and his life and breath in the earthly affairs of Ireland, what will the poor Northern people do now? Your father, ruler, general, is now no more!"

Two days after Owen Roe's death his corpse was conveyed for interment to the Franciscan monastery of Cavan (of which now no vestige remains), and there buried in the same grave with the heroic Miles O'Reilly.

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ride o't. Here, my bonnie bairn lay hold o't; I w'en ye ken the merits o' a stoup o' usquebaugh!"

With a few words of thanks Edmund took and drained the proffered goblet, and then eyed the donor. The latter was a stalwart Scot in the prime of life—a man with a deeply-marked countenance and a profuse shock of fiery red hair.

"No thanks. Ye're welcome, rest welcome, friend—although, I trow, we've been black enemies only four months syne. Nae matter; let bygones be bygones, an' ye're name the war for meed!"

"The next we saw o' the doings o' O'Connell was when he so calmly plotted with the traitor Bruce Cochran to take Carrickfergus from our men an' hand toun an' castle ower to General Monk."

During the night O'Tracy shared the shelter of a canvas tent with two or three of the Scots, and at an early hour he was aroused by the rattle of muskets through the tent-ropes.

On came the opposing cavalry without ever drawing rein. Confident of victory they rode at a steady and increasing pace towards the Scots, who waited their onset in stern silence.

For a few minutes the lane presented a scene of desperate conflict, and resounded with the clash of swords, the explosion of pistols, the cheers of triumphant and the shrieks of wounded and trampled men.

"Just merrily the fortune of war, colonel," remarked O'Connell, after the fray was over;—"well, what do you intend doing with me?"

"I mean to send you straight off to Coleraine to Sir George Monroe; doubtless he'll be happy to see you."

"The devil he will! A favor, Hamilton—allow me to ride thither on my own mare, and I'll feel obliged."

"Be it so," replied the Scottish colonel. "Be right wary of your prisoner, Colonel Hamilton," said Edmund O'Tracy;—"trust me, you have a cunning folk to deal with."

"What, you here, help!" exclaimed Owen, on catching sight of him; "hang me but this is good! Look you, colonel, ye've got a low Irish Papist in your midst—a puppy whom you would do well to tuck up to the nearest tree."

ments, comparing notes with his comrades, or recalling the memories of his companions who had fallen in the fray. Some yards in front rode the prisoner, in charge of a single horseman. Several miles were covered without the occurrence of anything worthy of note.

"The prisoner—his off! he's off!" "The alarm was a true one. By a dexteros usage of hand and foot Owen O'Connell had tossed the trooper beside him backwards off his horse, and was spurring off in one daring dash for liberty, his feet mare bearing him safely and well."

Jack Hamilton gave vent to a mighty oath, and was after the fugitive like a shot. Far fleeing O'Connell, for the animal ridden by the latter suddenly stumbled and swerved, throwing its rider with violence to the ground. Ere the fallen man could regain his feet, his vindictive pursuer had gained on him, leapt from his saddle, and rushed towards him. One tremendous and resounding kick from the heavy foot of Hamilton, and the writhing form of the traitor and rascal became rigid and motionless. Owen O'Connell was dead. His slayer was justified by the laws of warfare.

As O'Tracy gazed on the upturned face of the dead man, with its last distorted expression, he recalled the memorable night in the mountain, its incidents and their results—the failure of the patriot's design, Coote's bloody reign of terror, Maguire and Mac Mahon struggling on Tyburn Tree, and the racking tortures of Ireland made faster and more galling. And here at length, stark and lifeless, struck down in his strength and pride by a brutal and ignominious death, lay the Julius of his country.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE LEADER OF CHALMONT—NEMESIS. "They pushed their trenches in our teeth, Their muskets sunk on either side, And the rained on us from the press Of capped and cuirass grenadiers."

"Come, captain mine, a penny for your thoughts." "The speaker, a bronzed and helmeted soldier, slapped the hero of our story familiarly on the shoulder as he uttered the words, Edmund O'Tracy and Niall O'Connell had met once more."

Their meeting was on the bridge of Belanet—on the quaint structure that spanned the stream issuing from Lough Ogiltra. The East-Breithinn town was all astir with military life. Soldiers strolled in listless groups through the streets; soldiers dotted the high-ways leading into the country; soldiers lolled in idle converse from the casements of the cage-work houses—soldiers of the Irish army of Ulster, now in course of reorganization.

"Holla, Niall, my bonnie!" "Your hand, my trooper; what news?" "My faith, none to speak of, save that which you know yourself—that in an hour we shall know the name of our new general. Heaven send he may be another Owen Roe!"

"Amen to that. But how fares your sister?" "Oh, Kathleen is as fresh as a rose-bud, and sends you her love, gossamer, in twirl, such a tender article that I fear, rules, so like that I am, to break it to pieces in the carriage—ha, ha? No matter, you've got it and care it well, I advise you in all solemnity, but I—"

"Niall, trust me I will care and treasure it as the jewel dearest to my heart." "Never doubt you, brother-in-law that it is to be—that is, when the air has lost its smell of powder. But whom have we here?"

"Soho, Jock Hamilton, is it you?" exclaimed O'Tracy, addressing a tall Scot who strode towards the pair of friends. "That it is, my bairn, just my ain self, and glad I am to greet ye. How long ye'fared sine the day, four months ago, when O'Connell got his kail? Gadso, ye look red-bravely!"