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CHEATING THE GAUGER; OR, HOW BARNEY O'TOOLE INFORMED AGAINST HIMSELF.

AN IRISH STILL-HUNTING EPISODE. By an ex-British Subaltern.

Once upon a time, when the Duke of York—God bless him!—reigned at the Horse Guards, and it was an article of faith that the commander-in-chief could do no wrong—an illusion now happily dispelled—it was ordained by fate and his Royal Highness, that I, John Jollynose, a jovial subaltern, in the Royal Fire-eaters, should become a temporary inhabitant of that island which one of her enthusiastic children maintains to be "first flower of the earth," and which another of her well-wishers proposed should be sunk in that sea, of which, on the same authority, she is asserted to be the "gem." In other words, I was quartered in Ireland.

Not the prosperous, well-behaved, slow going Erin of these degenerate modern days, when bogs are wilfully drained and cultivated, and the destruction of snipe-shooting; when corn-fields are arrogantly superseding the good old fashioned potato-gardens; and Irish gentlemen have taken to paying their tailors' bills; but the regular whiskey-drinking, jig-dancing, shillelah-flourishing, rebellious Ireland of forty years ago, when every man's house was his castle, from which he defied the law and all its myrindons.

One of the most rampant institutions in those good rollicking days, was the illegal manufacture of whiskey; and the duty of assisting the civil power in its suppression, was looked upon with almost as much dread as banishment to Sierra Leone. The unfortunate individual engaged in the uncongenial sport of still-hunting, was converted for the time being into a regular Robinson Crusoe, with all the exciting accompaniments enjoyed by that illustrious exile; and the distillation of the outlawed spirit was carried on in the wildest and most uncivilized parts of the country.—It is not singular that this duty was rather unpopular among military men; for though willing to lay down their lives for their country in a fair fight, there were very few candidates for the honor and glory of being shot by an illicit distiller of *whiskey*.

Entertaining strong objections myself to becoming an animated target under any circumstances, and being naturally of a social disposition, no language can express the intensity of the disgust I experienced on reading one evening in that peremptory volume the Regimental Order Book, that Lieutenant Jollynose would "hold himself in readiness to proceed with a detachment to Ballyblanket, there to be stationed, and assist the civil power in the suppression of illicit distillation." It is unnecessary to repeat the energetic expression I made use of as I sent the offending manuscript flying to the other side of the room, to the no small astonishment of the orderly-sergeant who had brought it. "Hold myself in readiness!" I exclaimed bitterly, when the non-commissioned officer had vanished after gravely picking up the book and saluting without moving a muscle of his countenance. "Just as if I should be ever ready to exchange all the fun and jollity of head-quarters, with a steeple-chase and a dozen balls in perspective, for solitary vegetation in the middle of an Irish bog, with no one to speak to but the priest and the excise-man, and nothing to eat but eggs and bacon."

'To be obliged to leave unfinished, at a most interesting crisis, a flirtation I was engaged in with Julia Mackintosh, the prettiest girl in the place, to the no small envy of a score of rivals, and march to Ballyblanket, a little town somewhere in Wicklow, the female population of which walked about with bare legs and no bonnets,—O, it was too horrible! But I resolved not to resign myself to my fate without a struggle. Although an order issued is thought to be as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, if I could only provide a substitute, I might escape the doom which hung over me of exile from mess, and separation from the only girl I ever truly loved in that part of Ireland.

I rushed frantically about the barracks, and expatiated in glowing terms, and quite at random, on the beauty of the mountain scenery, and the excellence of the snipe-shooting to be obtained at Ballyblanket, of which I knew about as much as I did of Kamschatka. I pathetically represented to each and every subaltern I met, that by taking my place in the terrestrial paradise I had painted, it would only be a source of the greatest gratification to himself, but would everlastingly oblige his attached friend and comrade, John Jollynose.

All, however, seemed to turn a deaf ear to my eloquent appeals; and I was upon the point of giving up in despair, when, to my great joy, I discovered a sentimental young ensign who had been abominably jilted, and was plunged in the lowest depths of despair in consequence. I immediately gave him the benefit of the enthusias-

tic descriptions, which the others, to their shame be it told, had failed to appreciate, and dwelt affectingly on the calm repose, so soothing to a wounded spirit, to be enjoyed at Ballyblanket. He gave in at once; this touching allusion to his dejected state, fairly overcame him, and he burst into tears. He didn't care, he said, about snipe-shooting, the only thing he wanted to shoot was himself; it was a matter of perfect indifference to him where he went—his life was a blank now; she was another's; and he rather liked the idea of going to Ballyblanket, as the solitude of the Wicklow mountains would fitly harmonize with the desolate void that was in his heart; and should a bullet from the blunderbuss of some vindictive Milesian put an end to his miserable existence, he would consider it the greatest favor that could be conferred upon him; with which cheerful sentiment he left me to commence packing.

"Hurrah!" I exclaimed in an ecstasy of delight. "I thought that lit about 'a wounded spirit' would hook him. What a lucky thing his fair one should have thrown him over just in time to save me from Ballyblanket! It's an ill wind that blows nobody good. Now I can keep Julia all to myself."

I was reckoning without my commanding officer, and hallowing before I was out of the wood—or rather bog. My praise-worthy attempt to oblige the interesting victim of unrequited attachment, proved an utter failure. I had written to the adjutant, asking him to negotiate the exchange of duties, thinking, of course, no objection could be raised in the orderly room; when, in the midst of my frantic demonstrations of joy at my release, a knock came to the door, and in walked that functionary himself, with my note in his hand. I knew something was the matter from the official way in which he clattered into the room, and my heart sank within me at the rattle of his steel scabbard.

"The colonel desires me to tell you," bawled Dumbell, standing bolt upright, and speaking in the loud monotonous tone in which he used to read out the proceedings of a court martial on parade, "that he regrets exceedingly it is out of his power to grant your request, as he has especially selected you for the command of that detachment about to proceed to Ballyblanket, on account of the implicit confidence he places in your judgment, and the admirable qualifications you possess for the satisfactory discharge of the difficult duties you will be called on to perform; which means, Jollynose, my boy," said Dumbell, with a wink, dropping his official elbow, and subsiding into my arm chair, "that you've been bleeding the old gentleman a *lecille* too freely lately. Here's your route," drawing a hard-hearted looking document from his pocket and tossing it on the table; "you start to-morrow."

"What?" I screamed, "not even twenty-four hours' notice?"

"Case of emergency," said Dumbell, who on duty matters, spoke in short, staccato sentence: "gauger disappeared—he was last seen at Ballyblanket."

"But," I urged appealingly, "I haven't a thing packed; and my servant's a prisoner in the guard-room."

"Can't help it—colonel's order—parade to-morrow—eight sharp. I thought," said Dumbell, poking the fire with the end of his scabbard, "when I saw you crowing over the old fellow every night, and joking him about his bad play, that your fun wouldn't last very long.—Take my advice," said he solemnly, rising to depart, having successfully smashed a refractory knob of coal into 'swathereens,' you'll find that your winning from him is generally always a losing game in the end."

Dumbell was right. I had been guilty of the unpardonable crime of being a better whist-player than my commanding officer—an ill-tempered, blue-nosed old veteran, who cared for nothing but cards and port-wine; and the present opportunity was too favorable a one to be missed, for getting rid of an adversary who had the knack of invariably winning the odd trick, thereby decreasing the gouty old field-officer's balance at the paymasters. I little thought when I was triumphantly pocketing my commander's half-crowns, how dearly I should have to pay for my amusement.

Next morning, at "eight sharp," as Dumbell said, "I found myself shivering on parade, in a drenching rain; and a few minutes after, with my martial cloak around me, marching gloomily out of the barracks, at the head of my detachment, en route for Ballyblanket, the colonel maliciously waving his hand to me as I passed his window. I had besides to run the gauntlet of various satirical congratulations from my brother officers, shouted after me from the mess room, including an offer from several to be the bearer of any tender messages I might wish to send to Julia as my last dying speech, and an affectionate request from the senior ensign, to take the greatest care of myself, and on no account, to give him his promotion by sharing the fate of

the missing excise-man. The rejected lover, disappointed of his "dreary solitude," and the chance of perforation he was so anxious for, was the only one who sympathized with my misfortune; the rest were only too glad to have escaped the "forlorn hope" which my unlucky skill at whist had entailed on me.

After a march of three days, through a never varying succession of mountain and bog, and a never-ending downfall of rain, I arrived, with my small and saturated army at Ballyblanket.—And here I may remark, what I have no doubt has often been remarked before, that there is a sullen and dogged determination about Irish rain, worthy of a better cause. In tropical climates, where they have the "rains," *par excellence*, the water certainly does come down in bucketsful, with a hearty good will while it lasts; but when once over, there's an end of it—till next year. In Ireland, however, it rains all the year round. From January to December, it is one continual shower-bath; and when not actually pouring, there is a thick mist hanging about that penetrates to the inmost recesses of one's flannel waistcoat; so that the amphibious inhabitants of that excessively moist little island have but two phases of existence—the thoroughly wet and excessively damp, which may, perhaps, account for their extreme aversion to water in its undiluted state, administered internally.

I discovered on my arrival that Ballyblanket was only occasionally occupied by a military detachment, and that it was what is technically termed a half-billet station, that is neither barrack nor billet, with the miseries of one and the discomforts of the other skilfully combined.

A dilapidated old building had been hastily prepared for our reception, in one corner of which I was accommodated with a small kennel that had the door, window and grate so conveniently situated, that I could open one, shut the other, and poke the fire in the third without stirring from my chair.

The men, however, were too glad to get a roof over their heads after their wet march, and soon made themselves tolerably comfortable; and being no feather-bed soldier myself, and a bit of a philosopher to boot, after letting off my indignation by the Briton's usual safety-valve—a good grumble, which relieved me very much, I determined to make the best of a bad business; and to my surprise, soon found myself getting jolly under circumstances that even Mr. Mark Tapley would have allowed afforded considerable opportunities for "coming out strong."

Ballyblanket was not a cheerful place. Situated at the foot of a bleak and desolate mountain, and nearly surrounded by a vast expanse of black and impenetrable bog, it required no great stretch of the imagination to fancy I had suddenly dropped down into one of those chaotic regions which geologists delight in; and if I had met a megatherium, or other monstrosity wandering among those gray rocks, or seen a troop of ichthyosari floundering about in those inky pools, they would only have been fit accompaniments to the thoroughly antediluvian and uncomfortable appearance of the prospect.

There were few buildings in the town that could have been dignified with the name of houses, with the exception of the chapel, the priest's house, and the tumble-down old edifice which formed our temporary barrack. This last had been originally intended for a court-house; but justice had been so little appreciated, and so roughly treated by the inhabitants, that she had long since taken her departure, and her temple had fallen into disrepair. The remainder of the town consisted of a straggling street of miserable hovels, the majority of the human occupants of which appeared to consist of women and children; and on inquiring into the cause of the absence of the male sex, I learned that the "boys" were always busily engaged "cutting turf"—a professional term, as I afterwards learned, for brewing whiskey; in which meritorious occupation it very soon became my painful duty to interrupt them.

It is generally admitted that a certain unmentionable personage has not been treated with justice in the various portraits which have been painted of him; and that he is not by any means of so sable a hue as has been maliciously represented. In the same way I discovered that even Ballyblanket had its advantages, consisting in first-rate shooting, and a genial parish priest; and when not officially engaged in persecuting the unfortunate "turf-cutters," I managed, in total oblivion of mess, halls, and steeple-chases, and with an occasional sigh to the girl I had left behind me to pass my days slaughtering snipe in the bogs, and my nights with equal enjoyment, and chess with Father Patrick.

His reverence had taken me under his especial protection. All sorts of anathemas were invoked upon the heads of any persons doing us the slightest injury, and no enraged whiskey-manufacturer could take summary vengeance upon me for such a snaking old varmint; but the incensing certain excommunication and every

other disagreeable pain and penalty it was in the power of the jovial Father P. to inflict.

It was lucky I had such a friend to stand between me and harm, for the "boys" had no cause to bear me any particular good will. My arrival had been the signal for the commencement of a vigorous crusade against the *al fresco* distilleries with which the district abounded; and when a still had been marked down, though anything but a labor of love, I had nothing to do but order out my men, and assist the excise officers in the execution of their duty of destroying the implements and capturing the proprietors. For the first two months we were very busy, and requisitions from the civil authorities were continually turning us out of our beds, as seizures were generally made at night; but at the end of that time business began to get "slack," as the shopkeepers say, and an alarming rise in the price of the condensed spirit showed what havoc we had made among its producers. Numbers had been taken, and their apparatus destroyed; others had migrated further into the mountains, where gaugers were unknown; and the few that remained conducted their illegal proceedings with such secrecy as to baffle the attempts of the most sharp-scented excise-man to discover their hiding places.

One man in particular, a Mr. Barney O'Toole—supposed to be a deserter from some regiment, and celebrated all the country round for the superior quality of his brew—was known to have an establishment in the neighborhood in full work; and though a large reward was offered for any information leading to the discovery of a still, the "Old Soldier," as he was called, had hitherto eluded all detection, and continued to supply the population of Ballyblanket (myself among the number, *sub rosa* of course), with the most delicious mountain-dew that ever gladdened the heart of a lonely subaltern.

By the merest accident I became acquainted with the spot where this nectar was distilled. I was strolling one day along a desolate valley, gun in hand, on my way to a spring tenanted by a lively little jack-snipe that had become quite an old acquaintance. I had nearly reached my small preserve, and with two barrels at full cock, was expecting my invulnerable little friend to get up a screech, and whistle off as usual unharmed through a shower of No. 8, when I found myself suddenly enveloped in one of those mighty mists that were continually stalking like ghosts about the country, which soon increased to a drenching rain. I look'd in vain for shelter.—Not a creature was in sight; and as far as I knew, I was miles away from any human habitation; so "reversing" my arms, I made my way to a large rock, under the lee of which I crouched, and having lighted my pipe, philosophically made up my mind for a ducking. My thoughts, I suppose, took their color from the surrounding scenery, and I soon became wrapped in a study of the brownest description. I settled entirely to my own satisfaction that the colonel was an avaricious old tyrant, and myself a persecuted individual. I speculated as to who had taken my place in the elastic affections of Miss Mackintosh. By an easy transition, my thoughts wandered to Mrs. Brown, my sergeant's wife; and I was deciding whether that invaluable woman would bash or mince the leg of mutton that had formed my yesterday's dinner, when my ruminations were disturbed by the figure of a man looming through the mist, apparently making for the rock under which I was sitting.

He was dressed in a long-tailed grey frieze coat and hayband gaiters. I could not see his face, for he kept his head down, butting like a ram at the gusts of wind that swept down the valley; and with one hand holding on his apology for a hat and the other grasping a stout black-thorn, he battled his way against the storm till he caught sight of the muzzle of my gun pointing to the centre of his waistcoat. If both charges had been deposited there, he could not have jumped higher than he did.

"Och, murder!—I'm done for," he exclaimed. "Halloo, what's the matter with you?" I said laughing, for I never saw a man so utterly taken aback. "You're not shot yet?"

At the sound of my voice his alarm seemed to subside, and after scratching his head—a practice common to Irishmen when they find themselves in a hobble; the irritation acting, I suppose, as a kind of mental blister, and drawing out an idea—he said, tugging at a carrotty lock that was dripping down his face, and lashing out behind with one of his hay-banded legs by way of an obscenity: "Och, is it you, captain? I'm glad to see yer honor looking so well."

"You're a queer way of showing it, Barney," I replied; for by this time I had recognized him as the notorious Mr. O'Toole.

"Faith," said he, with a comical look, "I thought it was Mister Ginger (this was the excise-officer). I ask yer honor's pardon for takin' you for such a snaking old varmint; but the rain blinded me."

"It's lucky for you I'm not," I said. "I expect you're after no good on the mountain, Barney."

"I was only takin' a stroll this fine soft day," said he, trying to look the character of an innocent stroller, and failing utterly in the attempt. "None of your nonsense," I said, laughing at his idea of a fine day, and looking for some trace of the still, which I guessed from his manner was not far distant. "Where's the shop, eh, Barney?"

This question quite upset his assumed composure; and he whined, dreadfully alarmed, "Ah, captain, you wouldn't ruin a poor man that has nothin' else to depend on."

"O, don't be afraid of that," I said; "I am not on duty to-day."

His face brightened directly. "Then be my sowl, it's myself that's right glad to see yer honor; and won't you walk in out of the rain?"

The offer of shelter was most acceptable, as the weather, to use Barney's expression, was getting softer and softer; but I tried in vain to detect any sign of the habitation he so hospitably invited me enter. I could see nothing but the rock I had been sitting under, in a crevice of which there grew some stunted furze bushes. I was not long kept in ignorance of the entrance of Mr. O'Toole's mountain residence; for having first peered cautiously about, an unnecessary proceeding on his part, as the mist was thicker than ever—he pulled aside the shrubs I had noticed, darted through a low opening they had entirely concealed, and beckoning me to follow, disappeared into a dark passage, from the recesses of which I could hear him shouting,— "Mind yer head, captain!"

This admonition was not unnecessary, as, notwithstanding the greatest caution, my head came several times into severe contact with jagged and unexpected angles of rock, raising bumps unknown to phrenology—and I had to progress some distance in a swimming position before I emerged into a good-sized cavern, smelling unmistakably of whiskey.

"Yer honor's welcome," said my host, bare-headed and bowing, as soon as I had exchanged my horizontal for a perpendicular position.

"Why, you've got quite a snug little parlor here," I said, looking about.

"O, snug enough," said Barney, grinning.— "It's little I want, if I'm lit alone."

"If you could only lighten your passage a little," said I, rubbing my head, "it would be more convenient for your friends."

"I don't care much about convenience, you see, captain. You'll know your way better another time. But sit down, yer honor," said Barney, turning up a suspicious looking tub for my accommodation, "while I bar the door;" and he dived into his tunnel.

(To be concluded in our next.)

REV. DR. CAHILL

AND THE PROTESTANT BISHOP OF KILKENNY.

(From the Dublin Catholic Telegraph.)

The General who points out and exposes the vulnerable points of the garrison he defends from within, is a more dangerous enemy to his companions than the foe who makes the assault; and the reader will, perhaps, agree with me that Dr. O'Brien, in his late public letter, has inflicted on his own Church Establishment and Creed a more deadly blow than could be well expected from the attack of his most powerful assailants. Most people have read the fable of the mule standing up in a public assembly of horses, claiming equality with their race, and boasting of the distinguished pedigree of his mother, the mare, when his father, the ass, having arrived, and having heard that all allusion to him was concealed, began to Bray, amidst the laughter of the entire audiences. Covered with confusion, his son, the mule, repented for his folly, in alluding to his pedigree while all the animals of every class knew his spurious genealogy, and moreover were intimately acquainted with his father! The following extract, taken from the late letter of Dr. O'Brien, will demonstrate the extreme folly of the Bishop in speaking of the origin and the genealogy of what he calls his Church; while all mankind, of every denomination, know that the early Reformation had its origin in ecclesiastical insubordination: in pride: in lust: in broken vows: in perjury: and in crimes, over which men shudder, and history would fain draw a veil of silent horror. In any remarks that may follow in this letter it is not intended to offer the slightest offence to the feelings or the creed of Protestants; and if any should feel pain, it must be ascribed to the gratuitous and wanton misrepresentation of Catholic doctrine on the part of one of their Bishops. I believe them to be mistaken, but perfectly sincere, in their religious opinions. No man would conscientiously follow a religion which owed its existence to vice, since such a profession would, in point of principle, make a Demon of God; nor would any person knowingly worship at an altar founded in obscen-