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SHAWN NA SOGGARTH; OR, THE PRIEST-HUNTER.

AN IRISH TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

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CHAPTER XVI.

As fast as the thirst to communicate his intelligence and the hope of obtaining the consequent reward could lend him speed, Shawn hastened on to Sir John, whom he chanced to find—the doubling of his reward—in deliberation with the man on whose house the attack was to be made; and it was speedily arranged that half a dozen picked dragoons should be stealthily conveyed to Ffoliot's Grove for its defence against the attack, while half a troop should be ambushed in its neighborhood, to cut down or capture the rapparees during the attack.

Accordingly, ere two hours had elapsed after the information had been received, the men were stationed unperceived in Ffoliot's, where they were to remain, of course, in concealment, till the attack. The remaining horsemen intended for the dispersion and capture of the rapparees could not be placed, that night, in the dwellings of Sir Robert and Andrews, (the places intended for their ambush) as there would be too great a risk that some of the menials in either place would, in the long interval till the intended period of the attack, find means to convey warning of their arrival to the rapparees. They were accordingly in the saddle shortly after noon the ensuing day, and set forward publicly, as if escorting as prisoner a disarmed comrade placed between their files. They moved forward slowly and made several halts, as if careless what hour they should reach their destination with the prisoner. They moved forward, too, by Sir John's directions, with apparently reckless jollity and unsuspicion; bandying jests, carolling and cursing occasionally, though every eye was wary, and every hand prepared to instantly grasp its weapon, as they knew not how many eyes were watching their movements, nor could tell from behind what hedge might commence an attack upon them. This watchfulness might have been spared, however. No attack was contemplated, as it, of itself, would have defeated the very object of the rapparees' plan to come into contact with the military at all, whatever its result; and the appearance of the prisoner, with the manner of the march together, prevented even Fergus, the most watchful of the rapparees, though he followed the route for some miles, from cherishing any suspicion of the real object of the party, particularly after the clatter of the horses' hoofs had died away far beyond the residences of Sir Robert and Ffoliot, towards which a single rider had never, apparently, turned eye or thoughts. But when the party had reached some three miles further, the words "halt—dismount," were given; and, each dragoon instantly leading his horse over a low hedge and into a near hollow now discernible from the road, the animals were supplied with the provender carried for them.—The men, too, were immediately after seated on the grass enjoying the contents of haversack and canteen; and here they remained till after sunset, when the horses being left to the care of the pretended prisoner, the party set out for the cottage as their nearest destination, whence the section appointed to ambush in the hall could be despatched there.

They moved in single file, closely muffled in their ample cloaks, and with some yards between each man, under the guidance of one of the party who knew the locality well; and a distressing march, short as was the distance, it proved to the men who, with the incumbrance of cloak and arms and heavy boots, were obliged to clamber over wall and ditch and jump across, or wade through an occasional bog-drain; besides that their pace was quite unequal, as, though they moved slowly and cautiously, while under the shelter of wall or hedge, they were obliged to traverse rapidly the open grounds in their path, in order to get as fast as possible out of the range of observation—for which object also, their helmets had been left with the horses to their comrade's care, and foraging caps assumed in their stead.

It was, indeed, a ludicrous sight, to see the panting and perspiring Heavisides, who commanded a division of the party, rolling himself over hedges, forcing himself by sheer "weight of flesh," through the single stone walls, or borne over ditches on the back of a stalwart dragoon, as his Falstaff-like "alacrity for sinking" made it hazardous to leave him to his own exertions in crossing; and, despite the caution they were bound to observe, the two nearest of the party were several times constrained to burst into low laughter, as they saw him gathering himself up from his frequent slidings and rollings. Except, for those trivial mishaps, however, the party reached its destination without the slightest

accident. And slender was the welcome for them from Aaron, when they did arrive. He muttered something to the sergeant about every man's house being his castle—that no one had a right to turn the cottage into a barrack, without his consent, and that he did not fancy incurring suspicion and danger for any man. He was proceeding to add that the whole savored of some heathenish proceeding, which he was bound to oppose, when, placing her hand on his mouth, Bessy whispered him not to provoke the wrath of Sir John and Ffoliot, for a temporary inconvenience, for which he had no remedy.

"Begone till yer room, forward hussy. Hoo daur ye be seen in such a place—ye'll ha' me disrelish till sogers, I daur swear. But Samuel M'Nab, will be here to-morrow, ond, by the God o' Abraham, before the sun gangs doon I'll put a barrier for ever between ye ond soger or sailor."

With a face crimsoned deeply as a summer sunset, by this rough address, Bessy retired from the presence of the speaker; the latter followed her, after having bestowed a glance indicative of anything but liking, on the sergeant and party, though he had sufficient self-restraint, to refrain from offering further opposition to their remaining for some hours in the cottage. And, even as it was, it was well for him, that his Protestantism was so well established, that he was known to be in high favor with Sir John, and that the sergeant-major was friendly, or fearful might have been the vengeance wreaked on him and his, for his having dared to demur at all, as it is easy to conceive that, in such a state of society, there was impunity for almost every military crime and excess. Indeed, one of the dragoons, after damning his own eyes with great heartiness, suggested, that a good cut over the head would make the old chap a deal less saucy. But this, Heavisides, interdicted most energetically, stating that he would positively report for insubordination, whosever should even hint at injury to any inmate of the cottage.

CHAPTER XVII.

The men now moved forward for Lynch Hall with even more caution than they had used in approaching the cottage, as they were now much nearer the rapparees, whose place of rendezvous for the night was, however, in quite an opposite direction to their route from the cottage. This party was under the guidance of a corporal, the sergeant-major preferring to remain at the cottage, because, as he stated, it was nearer the place of the intended attack. Shortly after the departure of his comrades he was debating in his mind some important considerations—considerations suggested by Aaron's previous words and his own opportunities that night, which might not recur again for some time. But how was he to obtain a private conversation with Bessy in the temper her father was now in, and speedily, too, as he could not, of course, tell at what moment he should be compelled to move from the cottage? Should he endeavor to cajole the father into better humor, that he might be enabled to convey a whisper to the daughter? He had reached this point in his cogitations when he felt his shoulder tapped, and looking up, beheld Bessy herself muffled in a large shawl.—She beckoned him to the door, without speaking, and pointing towards the gable remotest from the party, and which was shadowed by a full-grown lime, glided before him to its shelter; and, after an instant's pause, he followed her telling the men he should be with them in a few moments, though he felt some misgivings that he might be running the risk of having the presence of the party discovered by his movement. But in the mood he was then in, except for the circumstance that he owned no world to lose, the old performance of "all for love; or, the world well lost," would have been enacted over again.

"A riglar sly un is the serjeant-major," observed a dragoon: "I'll be d—d if he aint gone to court the purty wench as was 'ere just now!"

"He court! he knows as much about courtin' as he does of jumpin' over a bog-hole, or as my mother's ould cow does over a holiday," rejoined another.

"Blast my eyes," said a third, "if I shan't 'ear their talk any low—they're only at yonder tree."

"Haud mon an' diinna spoil sport," said his comrade laying a hand on his collar; "ye wadna loik in yer ain luvemakin' to be spied on, 'an what for suld ye interfere noo w' another; ond the serjeant-major's no a bad fallow o'her a'."

"Sandy's right," said the first speaker, "let the 'uge seal 'ave his sport now; and, d—n my eyes, but we'll extract summut o' the fat when we go back to quarters."

The first glimpse of the troopers had suggested to Bessy's mind proceeding in which Frank was likely to be implicated, and which would, of course, be fraught with risk and danger to him; and she resolved at once to worm out from the sergeant the plan and intentions of the party.—With this object she had enticed him to the present meeting, profling, for a few moments, of

her father's having betaken himself to his Bible, to keep down down thoughts of vexation and strife.

"Well, Bessy, my hangel," said the love-swayed sergeant-major, or reaching the tree, "the old 'uns in precious hill 'umor to-night, if he really means wot he says."

"I fear he means it in the most serious earnest," she rejoined in a tone, the sadness of which Heavisides mistakenly placed to his own account, for the words and tone of her father weighed heavily on her heart, though the poor sergeant-major had no place in her thoughts in reference to the matter.

"Cheer hup your little 'art, my hangel, or, as the queerish hold feller calls you, my sweet rosebud, for as sure as a bullet's made o' lead we'll houtdo the hold boy still. It'll be a story to tell indeed if a bold dragoon and a woman can't sarcumwint a hold 'unks any day, howsomedever rumbustons."

"Remember, Serjeant-major Heavisides, you are talking of my father; but what I wished to learn from you is what duty you're on to-night."

"A, my hangel, hankxious for my safety.—Well, I like you the better for that, and sure it's nat'el too. But honner, duty—a secret hexpedition—might be discovered—mustn't tell you for a couple of hours—breach of discipline—reduced to the ranks—court martial—can't indeed."

"Surely you cannot think I would desire to bring all this injury on you?"

"No, no; but women, you know, is never reckoned the best at keeping a secret, and you'll be sure to know all in the course of the night without hanny danger to me."

"Then I have no further business here;" and she made a step towards the door; but, grasping her gently by the arm, he said,

"No, my little rosebud, you're not a gom' so easy after all the plans I was a layin' to 'ave a meetin', so let us pursued at once to settle our own affairs while the hopenortunity lasts, and little time enough we have for it surely. Bessy," he continued, after a second's pause, "I'm a thinkin' if the hold un was to marry you in earnest to that ere feller, as he says is to be 'ere in the morning, and wot's as hully as a naiger I'll be sworn, it would surely break your little 'art, and give me a wopper as I'd have no relish for, no how. So why should we be separated and made miserable for hanny feller, when we 'ave this very night so beautiful a hopenortunity of balking 'em all. Do you then, my hangel and my love, pack up some clothes and anything else valuable as you care, and, before we sleep, parson Joiner, our captain. 'll have us buckled, and then we may laugh at father and naiger."—He chuckled her confidently under the chin as he concluded, "Besides, when the job's once completed, I 'ave binterest enough with the captain and Sir John to get 'em to make all square with the old feller again, as was always fond of me, when we can hintirely leave the hanny to 'elp him in the business; or he can purchase a commission and make you a hoffer's lady, wot ud be the hagreablest, as surely the sound of trumpets and drums would be more pleasanter than the sound of 'ammers and wheels."

It was with much exertion that Bessy had been enabled to restrain her struggling laughter during this modest and disinterested proposal, in the course of which the sergeant was obliged to pause for breath three or four times, though, fortunately, the tender summer starlight did not allow her wooer to observe the expression her countenance wore; and she now rejoined in a tone of great affected gravity, withdrawing her arm at the same time, "may I ask, Mr. Heavisides, what part of my conduct has induced you to think I would act a part so unbecoming a maiden as to quit my father's house and matchmake against his consent?"

"There's nothing in your person or conduct, my hangel, wot doesn't cause me to admire you more and more; and I only made the hoffer for the 'appiness of us both, and to show that my haffection was aburnin' for you fiercer after wot I 'eard from the old un."

"The affection, indeed, of a man that hasn't even confidence enough in her, that he pretends to have his heart, to tell her the service he is on for the night?"

"We shall pursue the dialogue no further. The sergeant-major was completely in the toils. But a few minutes more elapsed until he had communicated to her all he knew of the intended proceedings for the night, in return for her feigned compliance with his arrangement, that she was to join him after the affair should have terminated, for which purpose he was, by her own request to provide her with a cloak for concealment, as she herself could obtain a cap. Accordingly she was speedily supplied with the smallest cloak among the party—in fact, all the cloaks were to be left in the cottage till the termination of the business—and, immediately after, muffled in the cumbersome cloak, and with the cap slouched over her face, the courageous girl, gliding from a low

gable window, moved forward stealthily and unperceived by the dragoons, towards the bend of the shore, where she knew the rapparees were frequently in the habit of assembling. She moved at first but slowly, of necessity, but when she had gained some distance from the cottage, sustaining the skirts of the cloak on her arm, she continued her motion as fast as the light and ground would permit her. She felt but little apprehension in approaching the haunt of lawless men, as she knew that her father had never made herself obnoxious to them, and they had never attempted to harm him or anything that was his; and were there in reality some risk, she would not have hesitated to incur much higher in her present excited mood, to convey to Frank, whom she was certain to find among them, the knowledge of what was prepared for him.

And Frank she did meet, as she cautiously approached the shore; he was leaning against a rock at some distance from where the band was assembling fast, with his head bent and arms folded, as if in a chafed or thoughtful mood. He did not perceive her as, recognizing him, she advanced with light and steady step till, tapping him on the shoulder, she said in an assumed voice, "Surrender yourself or you die!"

Then starting from his recumbent posture, and his practiced eye perceiving the horseman's cloak even in the imperfect light, he rapidly snatched from his breast a pistol, and was in the act of putting his finger to the trigger when, bursting into a low laugh, she observed in her natural voice, "Spare your powder, gallant captain, you will soon have worthier objects for it, though you might, perhaps, earn increased fame by shooting a woman."

"Good heavens! is it you Bessy: and why at this time?"

Without further wasting the time which she knew to be now so precious, she informed him, as she led him somewhat further from the place of rendezvous, of the troopers' ambush and its object, beseeching him earnestly, at the same time, to have no participation in the attack, and revealing, by admission and implication the terms on which she had obtained the information, as well as her father's intentions for the morrow.

"Well, my sweet Bessy," observed Frank, when her communication closed, "as you are proving our preserver to-night, you must not make miserable a life you have been the savior of; and though you will, I trust, quit your father's house to-night, it will be under the sailing orders of one who feels a warmer and more disinterested affection for you than the speculating, low-lived trooper."

On a former occasion we boasted we were no eavesdropper, to spy out and gossip of the proceedings of lovers in their stolen interviews; and though we could guess shrewdly at the further arrangements of the present instance, we shall, in order to sustain our character, drop the curtain here, barely recording that vain were her tenderest and most earnest entreaties to dissuade him from accompanying the party that night.

(To be continued.)

SUFFERINGS OF THE SYRIAN CATHOLICS.

The Rev. Richard Palgrave, a Jesuit priest, is now in Dublin soliciting aid for the succor of Christians in the East. The reverend gentleman is son of Sir Francis Palgrave. He entered Oxford at 17. Having graduated and taken his degrees, he entered the Indian army as Lieutenant in the 8th Regiment Bombay Native Infantry, wherein he served for three years, during which time he became a convert, gave up his commission, and repaired to Rome, where he went through his theological course. Having been ordained priest, he joined the order of the Jesuits, and went on the mission to Syria, where he has been for 11 years. He was an eye-witness of the late fearful massacres, and narrowly escaped with his life, having been fired on several times when with the Christian army. He was in Damascus, and just had time to fly when the town was sacked and the Christian population slaughtered. He left Syria on the 20th of July last. The Rev. gentleman delivered a lecture on the Syrian Massacres in the Rotundo, Dublin. We find the following report in the *Dublin Telegraph*:—

The Reverend Lecturer on being introduced to the meeting was received with loud and long-continued cheering, which was again and again repeated. He is of most commanding appearance, and bears evidences of having been exposed to the action of a hot sun. He wore the soutane of his order, and bore on his head the round tasselled red and black cap. His manner is natural and easy, and his delivery is clear and vigorous. He brought to his all-absorbing subject a great amount of knowledge and experience, and from the beginning to the end of his discourse he was listened to with deep and marked attention by those present. He expressed the pleasure he felt in having the opportunity of

addressing an audience in the city of Dublin, composed of the members and friends of so valuable and useful an institution as the Catholic Young Men's Society. Although not personally acquainted with this society in Ireland or England, yet he had heard much of it, and he had himself attempted—not without success—to introduce it into Syria. A poor missionary for fifteen years amongst a people who did not understand English, and with whom he should communicate in their own tongue, it was not to be expected that his accent now was perfect, and he, therefore, claimed their indulgence on that account. At the present moment the eyes of all Europe, particularly of Catholic Europe, were turned with horror to the east. He wished to tell the audience that he was a witness of the horrors and desolations that chilled the very blood to read of; he saw them with his own eyes, heard them with his ears, and only escaped by the providence of God from being amongst the number of the victims. This narration was not demanded to evoke their sympathy for the Christians of Syria, for that sympathy already existed, but he might be able to put them in possession of the true circumstances connected with the frightful events that had taken place in that country, concerning which they only got intelligence by piecemeal—by detached morsels, often incorrect, sometimes false, and altogether of a nature that did not allow people to have a clear, distinct view of the occurrences under consideration. Syria, by its geographical position, favored the development of different races. That long strip of country lying the east of the Mediterranean was divided first by a range of mountains called the Lebanon range, running north and south. This district was principally inhabited by the two nations, the Maronites and Druses. Behind this was a spacious, splendid, and fertile plain, bounded by the Anti-Lebanon range of mountains, inhabited principally by the Christians, mixed, however, with Mahomedan schismatics and a colony of Druses. Behind this range stretched the Syrian desert of the Euphrates, on the verge of the plain were the cities of Damascus and Aleppo. The Christian population of these districts were drowned, as it were, in a mass of the most fanatical Mahomedans that exist on the face of the earth. The Maronites were Catholics united with the assent of the Lord, in the bonds of holy faith, having the same sacraments and laws, and differing only in the circumstance of their ritual, prayers, and ceremonies being in the ancient Syriac language instead of Latin. They were the descendants of Syrian Catholics instructed by the Apostles. In the fifth century a monstrous heresy was introduced amongst these Catholics.—

It was a denial of the incarnation of our Blessed Lord, and an assertion that His life, His death, and His resurrection were merely phantasmagoria. A certain portion of the Syrian Catholics stood fast in the faith of their fathers; they were consequently made the subject of dreadful persecutions, which for two centuries were, perhaps, only equalled by the persecutions endured by the Catholics of Ireland. Numbers of the Syrian Catholics fled to the Lebanon, where they formed a body and nation distinct from, and hostile to, the heretics. After some time, instead of reorganizing again their laws and customs, which had suffered from persecution, they chose, with the permission of the Holy See, a patriarch whose name was Marone; hence they were called Maronites, and from that period to the present, a term of 1,200 years, the Maronites, with a constancy having few, if indeed any, examples, had remained faithful to their faith and their God. Now, as to the Druses. They were the most extraordinary people on the face of the earth; they were the Atheists of the East. He was enabled, from an intimate acquaintance with their sentiments, to speak authoritatively of their belief. The Druses denied absolutely the existence of a Creator in heaven, or of a Prophet or Redeemer on earth. They gave their curse (God forgive him for saying it) equally to the religion of Mahomed, and held that the happiness of man was in being free from all laws and religions. It was wonderful that such monsters could exist, and more, that they could be not only an organized, but the most organized nation of the East, having an aristocracy to which they were subject, and consisting of only five noble families. Obedience to their chiefs alone had preserved the Druses, whose morality was expressed thus in their own language—"Everything done in secret is lawful—everything done in public is subject to religion and morality;" or, "if no one sees you, you may do as you chose." They were brave, but the Christians, after all, were more courageous and better soldiers, considering their perils and persecutions. The great plain was inhabited, too, by Greeks, one-third of them Greek Catholics, obedient to the Holy See. For 150 years—the date of the existence of the Greek Catholics—persecution were upon them: In Aleppo once twelve heads of families were beheaded for no other reason except that they were Catholics: The total