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SHAWN NA SOGGARTH; OR, THE PRIEST-HUNTER.

AN IRISH TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES. BY M. ARCHDEACON, ESQ., Author of the Legends of Connaught, &c. CHAPTER VII.

There were three persons assembled, on the Sunday we have treated of, in what was termed the library of Ingram Castle, a dim-lighted room with oak panelings and compartments, and which contained some hundreds of volumes seldom or never opened, with the exception of some of the recent statute books. The principal person of the trio was the redoubted Sir John Ingram himself, a tall, swarthy man of middle age, and with features of peculiar sternness. The next in standing was Arthur Ffoliot, sen., who possessed no distinctive marks of personal character beyond a floridness of complexion and a rotundity of paunch that did speak strongly of fleshly indulgence, and an eternal smile that ought to have told of everything but "a mind at peace with all below." The third was Attorney Baker, a man too well known to the ill-fated Catholic gentry in his neighborhood, with a small, inflamed, ferret-like eye, and cheek as fleshless and colorless as his own parchments. And, Sunday as it was, the latter was seated at a table, spectacled and deeply engaged in examining a number of papers and statute books, piled before him, as it was only the evening before he had returned from Dublin, after a protracted sojourn there; while Sir John walked to and fro the room, with some marks of impatience, and Ffoliot looked occasionally at his watch, occasionally from the lawyer to Sir John, and occasionally at a paper he held in his hand. "I am now confident, Sir John," said Baker, taking off his spectacles and rubbing his hands with glee, "that we have a clear case against the McDonnell property, Arduff, as I have this moment in my hands quite sufficient proof that Alexander Keogh (the blind) was a relapsed papist, and, of course, was incompetent to make any settlement, so that, though his nephew is, or affects to be, a Protestant, his title can be readily set aside, coming from one incapacitated by act of parliament—I will not trouble you with the act—to confer such title." "So far you have done well, Baker," observed Sir John, with a stern smile, "as that stripe of Arduff, which runs in between my two quarters at the sea, has been a complete eyesore, and the sooner you take steps to attach it at once more to the property nature intended it to belong to, the better. But what of William Eighter particularly?" "It's my decided opinion," said Baker, in a measured and important tone (we divest the reply of its technicalities) "that, as far as Sir Ulick Bourke's property is concerned, there is clearly no title to him. In fact, in my judgment, it is a point blank forfeited one, of which a discovery was made about thirty years ago; and though I know a large sum was paid to the government, with many others under the same circumstances, to ward off the effects of this discovery, as you are aware of, Sir John, yet, as the new grants have never since, to my knowledge, been perfected, the want of title must be—that is—I think it must be fatal. But as this is a matter of high importance, I should like to have some opinion besides my own."

some overt act which will lay him entirely prostrate before us." "O, give him as much line as you please;—there can be little fear of his escaping," observed Sir John—"but who dares to make this riot in our very presence?" he added fiercely, as the voice of Shawn was heard in the hall calling down the usual imprecations on his head if he shouldn't see Sir John forthwith, no matter who was with him. A scuffle then ensued for a moment—the door was unceremoniously thrown open, and Shawn, with blood-stained face and garments, made his unexpected entrance. "How now, scoundrel," said Sir John, angrily, "do you dare to bawl in the very castle, and approach us, even while engaged, without permission, and bearing about you the filthy marks of drunken ricting? Overmuch indulgence to a ruffianly nature and the effects of drink have made you forget the awe our presence should inspire; but a brief period in the dungeons or the stocks will soon bring you to your senses again." A good deal abashed by Sir John's wrathful tone and stern aspect, as well as by the presence of Baker, who, he well knew, liked him not over well latterly, since he had appropriated to his own use some unholy spoils which the attorney had intended exclusively for himself, Shawn, despite the native assurance so long tolerated, slunk into a corner, stammering in an apologetic tone, "Sir John, I wouldn't attempt to trouble your noble honor at all now, particularly when you wor so well engaged"—he could not suppress a villainous sneer, despite the check he had received, as his eye glanced from Ffoliot to Baker—"barrin to show you afore the blood was dry, the usage I'm like to get from the priests for my loyalty, since your noble honor went to protect one o' them with your own hands, as the story goes."

enabled to capture both the priests, either in the cottage or neighborhood; and, after some further plotting and conversation, it was arranged, that the party should be despatched for that purpose, and with particular directions to ransack unceremoniously, every corner of the cottage and grounds, and that it should be under the command of Cornet Ffoliot, for the purpose of compelling him to the irksome duty of giving annoyance to those he loved as his father disliked them, while his sergeant was to receive strict injunctions, to see that the duty was sternly performed. Shawn was now dismissed with a double gratuity, in order that he might reconnoitre for a day or two, before the party should be despatched. Ffoliot and Baker soon after left Sir John also, after having assisted him to sanctify the Lord's Day, in the manner described. "The conduct of Arthur is very undutiful and provoking," observed Ffoliot, as the pair emerged from the castle, "in thus continuing his visits to such noted recusants, after my having peremptorily forbidden them, and insisted on his not thinking further of the girl." "It is provoking, indeed. If it had even been before that drunken Bob became a conformist, there might be a chance of large settlements with her. But now, the connexion would bring only disgrace and beggary, if he took it into his head (like a gosling as he is) to marry the girl." "Marry, Sir! you wao... o drive me mad... Marry her, after all the pains I have taken in planning his aggrandizement! By heaven, he should sooner marry the kitchen-maid. No, no, I'll soon clip the brainless gosling's wings; and it'll go hard, or I shall also drive the old recusant and his scheming daughter from the neighborhood, and put them out of the way of giving me further annoyance."

"Then the sooner we begin to act, the better." "Well," soliloquized Baker, as he entered his dwelling, after having parted from his companion, "Mr. Ffoliot, since he has picked up the wealth, is becoming more rapacious than Sir John himself. At all events, I must manage my cards badly indeed, if I don't play a winning game, with two such trumps in my hand." CHAPTER VIII. Sir Robert Lynch was sitting, after dinner, half stupified after a hard day's hunting and drinking. There were abundant materials for carousing, before him; but he was alone, for, conformist even though he had become, his unnatural conduct to his father and sister had by no means tended to make his company sought after by his seniors, while the younger and more thoughtless were, to some extent, kept aloof by his well known proneness to the boisterous and quarrelsome over his cups, so that he was frequently left, since his acquirement of the property, to the enjoyment of his own thoughts, as now. He had dismissed a groom, whom he sometimes admitted to join him over a bottle, and who had helped him to pass the last couple of hours, in discussing the merits of dogs and horses, and was enveloping himself in a cloud of smoke, from the pipe, whose contents he was inhaling, when Shawn na Soggarth, after having reconnoitred from without, entered the room unceremoniously. "Well, Mr. Mullowney," said Sir Robert, as he eyed the audacious intruder with a glance of half hatred and half fear, "what weighty matter brings you to Lynch Hall at so late an hour?" "Why, fath, nothing at all, masher—Sir Robert, beyant that bein' on a little duty in the neighborhood. I jist dropped in to ask bow your noble honor was."

ing a third glass with undisturbed composure; "an' you'd be right, masher Robert, as it might not tell well to have me assaulted in such a noted place as the Hall, not to talk that it ud be ill your commons to do so, after all the love an' likin' I'm after showing you. But as I'm well rested and refreshed now, here's long life to you, Sir Robert, and many thanks for your kind treatment—only be a little partikler about goin' to prayers and other religious duties, as the clergy say."