

The Rake-maker's Race

(By Seumas MacManus.)

In the Rebellion Year, when the boys shouldered their pikes, and went bravely out to die in a good cause, there was not a braver or a bolder soldier than the boy from Glenravel who headed them, Conn Magee—Captain Conn, as he was quickly ranked. A dashing, fine fellow was Conn—a strapping and an able one—as lithe as a mountain ash, and tall and straight as a poplar. He was a very lion cub in strength, but had a heart as good and as tender as that of a child. In all the Nine Glens of Antrim there was not a girl that did not worship Conn for his comeliness and his goodness; and the worship of his boy comrades was little behind.

Conn had a heart that always beat for his country, was ever sore for his country's wrongs, and ever and always eager to strike for her rights. He carried the United Irishmen movement like wildfire over the hills and through the glens of Antrim. And while the organizing went on, he seldom slept in his bed at night, and more seldom did his own roof cover him.

Truly a proud man was he on the day that his hand first flashed their pikes to the sun—the moon had shone upon them often—and, with high hearts, marched upon Antrim town. But, like many a brave fellow before and since, Captain Conn failed—failed, with barely less glory than success would have won him; and then, like many another brave fellow also, he had to go upon his keeping among the poor people of the Glens—to whom the hundred pounds reward upon his head meant a fortune—to stay in hiding for months and months, lurking from byre to byre, and from ditch to dyke, seldom daring to let God's sun shine on him, scolding out, like the owl, only at night, and, under the friendly cover of its black cloak, crawling cautiously over the hills to seek the friendliness of a fresh glen, when the scent had grown too hot in the one he was quitting.

Put he was cornered by the soldiers at last, and taken at bay, after selling his liberty dearly. Manacled and fettered, and guarded by a full regiment of red-coats, poor Captain Conn was borne off in triumph to Carrickfergus Gaol, and there put behind well-secured bars and bolts. His capture had cost too much for the advantage to be lightly thrown away. The Government rejoiced that so dangerous an enemy to the Constitution, and to the realm, as he, and one whose life at liberty would ever have such a disturbing influence upon the fiery spirits of the young men of Antrim, was safe in their power at last. As they were resolved that their state's sleep should little longer be disturbed by apprehensions of Captain Conn Magee, a trial for life (it might then be more appropriately termed a trial for death) cost the authorities little trouble, and less time, in those days; so, within thirty-six hours after his capture, poor Conn was arraigned on the charge of high treason, tried, and condemned, within twenty-four hours, to be hung by the neck on the public gallows until he was dead, and his head afterwards exposed on a spike over the gate of Carrickfergus, as the head of a traitor.

At which sentence Conn, standing erect, and with folded arms, in the high-backed dock, and meeting the judge's look with a steadiness that caused that official's eye to shift and when fall, smiled a sardonic smile, though, next moment, there was a heavy weight at his heart, for thinking that the poor world should come to such a degenerate pass as to brand traitor on a man who dared to love and to serve and to raise up his own fallen country!

As Conn, by his ever sterling qualities, and more generous acts of his in the heart of the late struggle, had unwittingly made himself friends, even in the camp of the enemy, there was a great effort put forth, by friend and enemy conjointly, to save his life, and many influential quarters were moved to action, with the result that, though the authorities immediately on the ground granted a respite for five days to permit of the higher powers being approached, the latter absolutely and curtly refused to hear any appeal on behalf of such a dangerous rebel, and of one who had caused them so much trouble and money, and so many lives, as Captain Conn Magee. On no account, would they consent to spare his life—altering his death-sentence even into one of perpetual imprisonment—for they hated deeply this noble and enthusiastic young fellow and were determined on executing the last drop of his life. The blood in requital for the sedition he had stirred. They said: "We shall not be satisfied until the head of Conn Magee droops on its spike above Carrick's gate, as warning and a terror to all traitors."

Of all the one person whom this sad intelligence bore hardest was little black-haired Mary O'Hara of the Braid, who loved the gallant Conn with a fervor with which man was seldom loved, who had encouraged and strengthened him in his determination to free his country, and who had promised with her hand and heart to complete his happiness on the day of Freedom's Dawn. In his narrow prison, too, were it not for thoughts of the little Mary's broken heart, the noble-hearted Conn could have looked upon his coming fate with scornful indifference.

These last bad tidings would have finally prostrated poor Mary but that one thin little hope—clean broken later. The messenger who had broken the news to her said: "They are bitter men, surely, when they will insist upon the blood of the poor boy, though by raising their little finger any one of them could give him his life, which is more than any other man in Ireland could do—blessed Lord O'Neill, of Shane's Castle, and he, you know, has the old, ancient right of his family of demanding a life in the year from the Government of the country. But, of course, bitter as the Government are against Conn Magee and his sort, Lord O'Neill—whose father's life was lost in Antrim battle—is ten times bolder, and utterly outside the idea of appealing to."

"Then," said Mary, suddenly becoming possessed of life and energy again, "I know a way to appeal to him."

"Ah," said the messenger sadly, "no way is any use."

But Mary didn't even answer. She had plucked her shawl off the peg and was gone.

She reached Ballymena late at night and the little cabin of Paddy Scullin, the rake-maker—poor Paddy Scullin, who had courted her in vain and, broken-hearted by his failure, had lapsed into sad and silent worship of her. Paddy was astounded to find Mary O'Hara, wild-eyed, burst into the cottage.

"Paddy," she said, "I want you to do me the greatest favor man can do me in this world."

"Mary of my heart," said he eagerly, jumping to his feet, "say what it is."

"She said: 'Young Lord O'Neill owes you his life?'"

"It is so," Paddy said modestly (for he had saved him from the waters of the Bann five years before; and, proud fellow that poor Paddy was, he had refused all reward at the O'Neills' hands).

"Then," Mary said, "I want you to ask a life off him in return—the life of Conn Magee." And she informed Paddy of the right which the O'Neill family had of demanding from the Government a life in the year.

"If he can grant the life," Paddy quickly said, "I will have it. Be comforted, Mary a stoic."

"Lord O'Neill is in Dublin," Mary said. "You have only six days. There is not a minute to be lost if the boy is to escape."

"Six days!" said Paddy airily—for he knew his own powers—"why, I'd go round the world and back in the time."

"God bless you Paddy!" said Mary. "And, if it is any spur to you, I may tell you that if you get a pardon for poor Conn Magee, you may have Mary O'Hara for the asking—if you think her worth it."

Paddy's eyes filled. He just bent his head in reply.

Paddy's entire preparation for the journey was to draw on his coat, which he did with haste. As he bounded off he said: "Good-bye, Mary, good-bye. If Paddy Scullin is not fit to come back with a free pardon, it's like you'll never see his face more."

And then he was gone.

In those days our people were hardy and good walkers; thirty, forty miles at a stretch they looked lightly upon. Paddy Scullin, who was probably unrivalled as a pedestrian, throughout the harvest months walked twenty-six long miles to the market in Cookstown, carrying a load of rakes, stood the market, and returned home, lightly, the same night again, and, moreover, thought it no great achievement. No journey, however long or fatiguing to other men, was ever known to tire Paddy. It was not that he was a muscular, big fellow; for, on the contrary, Paddy was small, angular, and poor of body, rather awkward in gait, also the very last man that an unwitting stranger would have chosen to undergo extraordinary fatigue. But the stranger would have been mightily disappointed; for, though his frame looked small and poor, it was very sinewy. And, though his gait was awkward, he managed to sling along to his journey's end—however far that might be—faster, and with less fatigue, than more likely men. The hundred and seven good miles from his home to Dublin was a good trot to him, and he sped along almost jauntily. As he went, the word spread far and fast along the way that Paddy went to make a last great effort for a pardon for Conn Magee, who was to be hanged in Carrickfergus at eight o'clock on Monday morning next, and the people ran from the houses, and the neighbors from the fields, to wish him God-speed, and give him a rousing cheer to lift him on his way. Wherever he deigned to stop for food or drink, the best of both that the neighborhood could provide was hastily to the fore, and pressed upon him. Great crowds filled the house where he halted, debating, encouraging, advising; while Paddy, who was a man of few words, gave apparent attention to all, but said little in return.

In two days he easily reached Dublin, but on arriving there, discovered, to his dismay, that Lord O'Neill was in London, but daily expected back.

Paddy despatched a messenger home to warn them that he was compelled to wait a few days; but he asked the messenger to bid Mary O'Hara, and all the friends of Conn Magee, as well as all the friends of Ireland, to keep up their hearts, for that, if man or mortal could obtain the pardon and fetch it there in time, he would do it.

And Paddy's determination grew more grim as the probabilities against him grew greater.

Lord O'Neill did not return on the next day, nor yet on the day after that. There was a fog in the Channel that delayed all ships. Saturday morning came, and still no Lord O'Neill, nor yet Saturday noon, and Saturday evening brought no tidings of him.

Then things were black.

Late on Saturday night the ship that bore the expected lord at length came in. Paddy, who had to be here there, and everywhere, missed him at his incoming; hastened to his house when he got the intelligence, and there found that he had gone off with some friends to spend the night. After an agonizing chase through Dublin city, he discovered, a few hours after midnight, that Lord O'Neill had come to his club. After fighting and giving a well-deserved drubbing, to the supercilious dunce who frowned on him, and would contemptuously have turned him out as a vagabond, Paddy forced his way into the club-rooms, and through them, till he found his man, luxuriously enjoying himself among fellows of his ilk, in a room of revelry.

Poor Paddy certainly had not the dress or aspect of the club-going man; but the scornful look he gave the lords, who roared at him, quickly quelled the noise in their throats, and made some of them ashamed. The astounded Lord O'Neill took him by the hand and shook it heartily, and hastily led him aside. Without waiting for question or word, Paddy poured his business upon him, and requested the pardon of Conn Magee.

Lord O'Neill's face fell, and then grew stern, as he listened. He said: "Paddy Scullin, I say now, as I said five years ago, ask me any request within the bounds of reason and it will be granted as soon as it is asked; but the life of the rebel Magee I cannot—would not—give!"

"Lord O'Neill," said Paddy, boldly looking him in the eye, "five years ago I saved your life for you; and

British America Assurance Company

SEVENTY-FIRST ANNUAL STATEMENT

31st DECEMBER, 1904

| ASSETS | |
|--|-------------------------|
| United States Government and State Bonds | \$137,368.00 |
| Municipal Bonds | 642,934.72 |
| Loan and Savings Company Bonds and Stocks | 201,656.80 |
| Railway Bonds | 282,560.00 |
| Toronto Electric Light Co's Bonds | 20,200.00 |
| Other Stocks and Bonds | 60,904.00 |
| Real Estate—Company's Building | 140,000.00 |
| Office Furniture | 27,514.23 |
| Agents' Balances | 352,938.22 |
| Cash on Hand and on Deposit | 158,359.13 |
| Bills Receivable | 8,896.00 |
| Interest Due and Accrued | 10,947.45 |
| | \$2,043,678.59 |
| LIABILITIES | |
| Capital Stock Subscribed | \$850,000.00 |
| Less Calls in Course of Payment | 14,603.69 |
| | \$ 835,396.31 |
| Losses under Adjustment | 163,595.13 |
| Dividend No. 122, payable January 5th, 1905 | 20,644.20 |
| Reserve Fund | 1,024,042.95 |
| | \$2,043,678.59 |
| Capital | \$ 850,000.00 |
| Reserve Fund | 1,024,042.95 |
| Security to Policy Holders | \$1,874,042.95 |
| Losses paid from the organization of the company to date | \$25,868,544.80 |
| DIRECTORATE | |
| MON. GEORGE A. COX, President. | |
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now I have journeyed on my two feet to Dublin, and waited in agony here for you, to beseech you the life of the poor boy, whose crime was that he loved his country. Do you grant my request, or do you refuse it? Yes or no?"

"No, Scullin!" said Lord O'Neill. "Then," said Paddy, "may the Lord above, who granted you your life again when you were on the point of losing it, deal tenderly with you when you come to your judgment than you are willing to deal with His children! Lord O'Neill," said he—and in the onlooker's eyes Paddy Scullin now looked the lord, and O'Neill a shivering serf—"I leave you to the company of your conscience. Good-bye!"

Lord O'Neill sprang after him, and got him by the shoulder as he went, delaying his progress.

Both of them went out together. Lord O'Neill ordered a carriage to be fetched, with all speed, into which he put Paddy Scullin, and entered himself, after telling the coachman to drive, as he had never driven before, to the Viceregal Lodge.

The Lord-Lieutenant was hard to awake, was in no good humor at being awakened, and flew into a rage when he discovered what he had been roused for.

Lord O'Neill firmly insisted on his privilege, and, after a deal of passionate debating, a full and free pardon for Conn Magee was signed and sealed.

The Lord-Lieutenant contented himself with the spiteful remark, as he looked at his watch, that "There is neither horse nor man in Ireland who can have it to Carrickfergus in time now, anyhow."

"I thank your Excellency," said Lord O'Neill, sneering in reply; "but if my blood-horse fails to do it, I'll promise you now to bestow him on the first tinker that crosses his path after."

Said Paddy Scullin: "If it is to be got there in time—and I trust to the good God that it will—the blood-horse that will do it is myself."

And Paddy could be moved by no remonstrance; for in his heart he knew, far better than O'Neill could guess, his own superiority to the blood-horse, and he insisted on the pardon being handed over to him instantly. He bowed his thanks to Lord O'Neill, and then burst away.

As Paddy flew through the streets of Dublin, the streams of the Sunday dawn were filling the sky. When he got rid of the city, without ceasing from his race, he drew off his old coat and cast it from him; next he cast away his vest, and, a little further on his hat. He girded his loins with his suspenders and then flew fast and light. And as he went the eyes of Paddy were turned up to heaven, appealing to God for strength and speed to carry him in time over the hundred miles that lay between him and Carrickfergus town.

From the time that he had passed that way, going to Dublin, the people all along the line of route, and for far and near on every side of it, had talked of little else than Paddy Scullin's mission, and had been since then, eagerly watching the way to observe his return. And when Saturday passed without his coming, the despair had crept into their hearts. But still they waited, hoping for a miracle. And when, on the afternoon of Sunday, the flying form of Paddy was seen coming down the way, the people, who at intervals were lined along it, burst into roar after roar which rolled away before Paddy, announcing his approach to those more distant, and summoning upon the hilltops other crowds to cheer to the skies, and throw up hats, and wave handkerchiefs and shawls. The crowd on the road divided at his approach, closed in behind him, and, shouting their encouragement, galloped after, until he tired them down or further crowds had fallen in and undertook the guard.

Paddy was a very stoic, though,

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noose. As the big church clock tolled out eight, the noose was dropped upon his neck. The crowd hereupon raised a terrible clamor, and the sheriff, who was a humane man, drawing out his watch, said: "I have no hope of a pardon coming for Conn Magee, but, to satisfy all, I will ratify to myself, allow fifteen minutes."

The immense gathering breathed a sigh of relief, and then their strained eyes sought the hill again, observing it at the point where the white road disappeared over the crest. But there was no little sign to raise again their fallen hopes. From the women a wailing undercurrent rose and fell.

The only person there that seemed unmoved was Captain Conn.

Five minutes passed; ten passed; fifteen passed; and still no sign upon the hill. The Sheriff, yielding once more to the clamor, granted another ten minutes, and finally five, but alas! in vain. "No pardon comes," he said. "Ye were foolish to think that a pardon could come."

On the stroke of half-past eight the black cap was drawn over the face of Conn Magee, and the multitude, with a mighty wail, burying their faces in their hands, fell upon their knees, as the sheriff gave the signal. But instantly a roar of another sort arose, drowning the wail, and checking the Sheriff and the executioner.

All men sprang to their feet again, and once more turned their eyes afar.

The figures of the watchers on the hilltops were seen wildly waving their arms; and soon the figure of a runner burst over the crest. Behind it a great crowd closed, and then the great sound of a distant but mighty cheer rolled down to the multitude around the gallows. For one moment there arose from the thousand throats such a roar as probably never before, and certainly never since, rent the skies over Carrick town.

The executioner was stayed in his work, while the Sheriff, watch in hand, waited eventuality. Further down and down the distant hill came the speeding form; larger and louder grew the gathering behind, and louder and louder came the cheering. By far the greater portion of the multitude around the gallows burst away and swept forward to meet the messenger, and came sweeping back with Paddy Scullin, still calm and grim, packet in hand, leading them, while all the air was filled with thunderous cheers, which went up and reverberated from the hills around.

Through the lanes of soldiers Paddy burst—for nothing could stay him—and handed to the Sheriff his packet. The Sheriff tore it open, glanced over it, and then ordered Conn Magee to be released, and to walk forth a free man.

Some way or other no person could tell how Paddy Scullin had disappeared,

HE IS EMPHATIC IN WHAT HE SAYS

Dodd's Kidney Pills Cured Robt. Bond of Bright's Disease

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"I believe I owe my life to Dodd's Kidney Pills," Mr. Bond says. "My attending physician said I was in the last stages of Bright's Disease and that there was no hope for me. Then I commenced to take Dodd's Kidney Pills and used in all twenty boxes. Now I eat well, sleep well, and my doctor says I am well. Dodd's Kidney Pills and nothing else cured me. Do you wonder I am always ready to say a good word for Dodd's Kidney Pills?"

What will cure Bright's Disease will easily cure any other form of Kidney Disease. Dodd's Kidney Pills will always cure Bright's Disease. They are the only remedy that will cure Bright's Disease. Be sure you get Dodd's.

A prayer that begins and ends in selfish desire cannot prevail with God for selfish desires are what He wishes to cure us of. "I prayed for this or that thing and I did not get it" is the argument of some short-sighted souls against the efficacy of prayer. But the selfish prayer has no upward wings. We cannot expect it to have.