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WHICH WAS THE TRAITOR?

A STORY OF '98.

(From the Dublin Weekly Freeman)

CHAPTER V.—THE FIRST TROUBLE.

Marion sat in her bedroom, ailing with a sick headache, and miserable in spirit. She was a girl of brave heart, and sense beyond her years, but her organisation, though not delicate, was extremely sensitive, and the shock of Raymond's communication, with the efforts she made to bear up against it, ended in a reaction which prostrated her mentally and physically. The more she examined the situation the more hopeless it appeared. She was Raymond's plighted wife, and loved him with an affection equal to that he rendered her. Though conscious how formidable a barrier existed to their union in the religion of her lover, she was not without strong confidence that his numerous good qualities would finally prevail over the fierce unreasoning bigotry of her father. She remembered, blushing and sighing as she called to mind, how once in a jovial mood the Squire had gone so far as to declare, if only Raymond would pledge him in a bumper to the glorious, pious and immortal memory, there was no man living he would so gladly call son-in-law. That hope had fled. Creed was crime enough, but when to the crime of religion was added that of rebellion, nothing she felt remained but resignation in despair. Sometimes she sobbed reproaches on Raymond for the Quixotism which had divided their lives. Then she recalled their last interview. She owned the truth of much that he had said, she saw him kindle with enthusiasm, and blessed Heaven that had given her a lover so gallant, so devoted. One thought was too dreadful for her to dwell upon. Fortunately the young girl's fancy had not yet learned to shape into form the dangers which hemmed round the very existence of the man she held so dear. She had no experiences in a life of ease and elegance which would enable her to realise in all their gravity the perils of the path on which he had entered. There was mercy in this ignorance so soon to be enlightened. Her reflections, however they wandered, always reverted to the one gloomy conclusion—her dream of happiness was over. She went fresh to think how impassable was the gulf Raymond had voluntarily created between himself and her. She tried to picture the effect of such tidings upon her father, and shuddered at the prospect of his fury and hate. Marion was not alone. Her own maid, Norah Donnelly, the orphan daughter of poor tenants of her father, and who, on the death of her parents, had been adopted as a playmate for the young child-heiress, now bore her company. Norah, a pink of ladies' demoiselles, pretty and coquettish, with saucy graces, a pert tongue, and the quick wit of her countrywomen, was more the companion than the servant of her mistress, whom she idolised, and who in return petted and spoiled her. It went to the soul of this faithful tire-

woman to see Marion's distress. This was the first time she had seen her mistress lose that gaiety of heart which belongs to her years. She watched with rueful visage the poor young girl who, seated by the open window, looked with sad abstracted gaze upon the fair summer scene. The fragrant breezes toyed with her loose locks, and the woods were vocal with the song of birds, but Marion, who had a poetic capacity for enjoying the loveliness of Nature, seemed neither to see nor hear the various charms of the landscape. Norah, who was wholly in her confidence, knew of her trouble, and had acuteness enough to perceive how serious it was. She had wept for company with Marion, and now that tears had soothed her, determined to attempt a little distraction. "Miss Marion," said she, as with deft fingers she proceeded to tress her lady's hair, "Blind Tim, the piper, has made a song about you. He taught me the English of it, and, O, if it isn't beautiful—the words and the music." She was about to add that the author and composer had chanted his effusion at Raymond Park, and had been rewarded with a ten-pound note by Charles. But she caught herself in time. "Poor Tim," said Marion, smiling in spite of her great distress, "I wonder what his muse has said of me?" "Let me sing it to you, my darling mistress," persisted Norah, and in a twinkling she had squatted on the carpet at Marion's feet, and in that inconvenient posture burst forth in a sweet and, thanks to her kind patroness, not uncultivated voice, with the following strain:—

LOVE IS A TREASURE. Give gold to the miser, Give me a bright eye; And which is the wiser, The miser or I? His days are all care, While mine are all pleasure— For Marion is fair, And love is a treasure. Give meat to the glutton, Give wine to the sot; For me not a button, I envy their lot— In loving I share A joy beyond measure: For Marion is fair, And love is a treasure!

Blind Tim was the last of the minstrels. A gentleman by birth and education, he had dissipated his patrimony and with the loss of sight lost everything but his genius; in this he resembled Carolan; but his irregular and intemperate habits, encouraged by a gonaal people, rendered his ability without result, and only two or three of his compositions are now extant. Norah was about to offer another lyric from the same source, for the poetry and music of which the vagabond piper was capable were much to Marion's taste, when a sudden clatter of hoofs along the avenue interrupted her purpose, and Mr. Harden came riding furiously from the shadow of the deep beeches towards the house. He had never drawn bridle during his four miles, ride from the Castle! The citizens, seeing the booted Squire dash through the streets with a scowl upon his face, had pitied the wretch upon whom they fancied him hastening to execute the vengeance of the law. He looked up to the window as he drew rein at the half-door, but his only reply to the kiss his daughter wafted from her taper fingers was an angry frown. It was with a heavy foreboding at her heart she descended to meet him. They met in the hall, and as she approached he threw open the door of the nearest apartment, and entering, sternly signed to her to follow. Inside he confronted her with the same harsh countenance. "My dear father," she cried, "advancing to him," what is all this? What has angered you with me?" He warned her back with the whip he still carried. "Stay where you are, Marion Harden, till you have answered me!" It was the first time in her life her father had shown her the least unkindness. He was proud of his beautiful and accomplished daughter, and loved her with all the strength of his rough nature. In proportion to his affection for her were the anxiety, anger, and determination that now possessed him. For Marion, the instinct of her sex informed her but too correctly of the cause of his unwelcome passion. "Listen to me," he continued. "Have you encouraged in this house the presence of a rebel and a traitor, knowing him to be such, an never informed your father?" His violence of manner and language roused in her a spirit, which circumstances now called forth for the first time. "I do not understand you, father," she re-

plied with a calmness which confounded him. "You understand me well, girl. I demand to know from your lips whether or not your hero, and I now suspect your lover, Charles Raymond, is or is not a United Irishman?" "Father forgive me; I cannot answer that question; she answered with the quiet of despair. "So Sergeant Bradley was right. D—n him," added the old man savagely, "This was well done for my daughter. You permit a sworn assassin to lurk about my house, to mark his victims and his plunder, and never utter a word to place me on my guard. Had you no fear of your own fate, no care for your own honour, when this fellow and his rabble rout should reign in Castle Harden, and you, woman—you were at their mercy?" She rushed forward and threw herself at his feet, "O, pity me, my father," she supplicated. "Away with you," he cried vehemently, "but let me tell you this man's race is run. I make his capture my special duty, and I take its responsibility upon myself. To-morrow night, and sooner if I can, he shall be on his road to the gallows." As the squire, almost beside himself, rushed from the room, his daughter fell senseless on floor. In this condition the terrified Nora discovered her. Exceeding great is the love of woman. Marion's first thought on coming to herself was of Charles Raymond. Now had the hour of danger come indeed, and now her noble nature rose with the emergency. "We must save him, Nora!" she cried.

CHAPTER VI.—NEMESIS ON THE TRAIL. Night had fallen close and dark, a dense and thunderous sky shrouding the faint grey radiance of the twilight, which at this season makes luminous the entire circle of the hours. The city lies in the obscurity, shapeless and gigantic, its outlines blurred and the greater masses of building which rose above the wider level made solemn and awful by the mystery and shadow of the darkness. The few far-scattered lamps gleam dimly in the streets, which, though it is yet early, are almost deserted, for martial law is now the rule of civic life, and it is peril of transportation or the triangle to be abroad late into the night. It depended altogether on the discretion or the temper of the officer with whom the civilian happened to fall in whether he should not be suffered to return home instead of being hurried to prison and punishment. If the officer chanced to be in an ill-humour, say that the weather was bad, or he had been obliged to forego an evening's pleasure—in that case the luckless wayfarer, whose loyalty or station was not beyond question had everything to fear. When her popular condition was of this kind it is to be supposed Dublin looked dismal enough at times. Nor was this aspect of things in-doors much less triste. The routs and drums, the card-parties and fashionable promenades which rendered the Irish metropolis famous for its hospitalities and the gaiety of its social life, all these had ceased. People could no more make festivity at such a time than if they lived on the slopes of Vesuvius and had heard the monitory rumblings of an explosion. This was the state of the great majority of the population. Suspicion took so wide a range, and had indeed so ample a field of view, that no man, of what station however, if he were at all marked by religion and political belief, could hold himself safe. The breath of an informer was more potent than all evidence of respectability and loyal sentiment which the suspect could offer. All this while the insurrectionary movement was gathering head with a force which would have been irresistible had its fury been well directed. If the citizens, well disposed or the contrary, slink apprehensively through their streets, we encounter some persons who traverse the public ways in other guise. This is the strong cavalry patrol which has issued from the Castle. The men are fully accoutred, and have that look which soldiers wear when going on duty. At the head of the troop, in company with the officer, rides a man whose costume is but half military. This is Town Major Sirm. In the rear rides a solitary dragoon, who carries at his saddle-bow a sledge or axe, and other instruments by which an entrance or passage might be forced. With these there is strung on an iron ring a number of handcuffs. As the patrol moves on through the city, Sirm points to a house and whispers to his companion— "You see those two lighted windows—in that room I might at this moment seize the man who heads the Directory of the Irish Republic, as they call it. But I shall find him there to-morrow; or, if not there, I shall be

able to lay my hand on him elsewhere, when the time has come." "It seems unaccountable to me," observed the officer, "the strange want of caution, or unconsciousness of, or indifference to danger in which all these people appear to live." "Not at all," cried Sirm, with some elation; "the fact is, our system is so perfect, and their's so piece-meal and full of blunders, we have got as it were to see over them completely. We have every stir of these men watched, and only wait our purpose to take them. For instance,—" He clapped a finger to his mouth and whistled. A man who had been walking slowly in the opposite direction stopped at the sound—turned and followed the horseman to the end of the street. Here he mended his pace and ran up to them. "Well, O'Brien," said the Town Major, interrogatively, "anything new from No. 24?" "Nothing, your honour, only that at half-past eight a hackney cab called and left with a woman and a box. The woman showed boots and spurs, when she was getting up, and by the make of the box, it held fire-arms." "Well?" "They have been practising the sword exercise at 24, and they have written out a proclamation—" "What?" cried Sirm, with eagerness. "They have written out a proclamation. I saw a piece of paper blow through the open window to-day. The eldest one looked out and made as if he would have almost jumped into the air after it. It fluttered away with the wind, but I managed to keep it in sight, and here it is, your honour." The spy placed in Sirm's hand a narrow slip of paper, evidently the upper margin of a sheet which had been torn off. Sirm managed to read in it by the faint light of the nearest lamp, the words, "To the People of Ireland." "This is beyond doubt the head of an address," cried Sirm, more to himself than by way of observation to those in his company. "It is now the 18th. To-morrow we must strike the blow." He sent O'Brien to resume his wretched vigil. O'Brien was not, however, the only instrument in waiting. As the troopers cleared the city and entered on one of the suburban roads, they were joined by Sergeant Bradley, who had just quitted with that purpose a meeting of the Union held at Rackle's Rest. Bradley walked on by the stirrup of Sirm. After a ride of some three quarters of an hour in silence, they entered on a part of the road bounded by a high wall pierced with a single narrow wicket. Bradley spoke to Sirm, who, addressing the officer, cried, "Major Craddock, this is the place." Craddock, for it was he, ordered the men to dismount and load their carbines. They formed in front of the wicket. Bradley advanced and tapped once. The door was opened by Richard Raymond. He came forward and greeted Sirm, who shook his hand with vehemence, but slunk abashed when he recognised Craddock, with whom he had, like his brother, a slight acquaintance, but whose character he knew sufficiently to hold it in respect. Raymond besought them to enter speedily, and returned hastily within the wicket. But he had remained too long in the exposure of the road. During his brief interchange of civilities with the Town Major, a young girl, her face veiled by the hood of her ample cloak, passed swiftly by. She started at seeing the soldiers, who laughed at her fright and the speed with which she proceeded to leave their neighborhood. She would probably not have got off so happily had not Craddock been the officer in command. The fugitive was Norah. She bore a warning from her mistress to Raymond, and had come to see how imminent was the need of the precaution. Her quick mind at once took in the position. She made one mistake; she believed Richard Raymond, whom she saw and recognised as she passed, was a prisoner in the hands of the soldiers. Everything now depended upon speed; and Norah, active as a fawn, bounded along the domestic wall of Raymond's Park, towards the entrance-gate, some hundreds of yards beyond the wicket. She passed the gate and sped over the approach to the house at the same pace, panting less with the exertion than with terror lest she should, after all, be late. She saw lights in a room which she knew to be the library. This apartment opened directly upon the lawn. The large casements were now opened to the night air, only light curtains shading the interior. Norah rushed straight towards one of the windows, and, eagerly scanning the apartment as she drew near, saw the door opposite her eye open, and Richard Raymond enter the room.

In the pause of astonishment which this incident caused her to make she heard the clump and neigh of horses outside the wall, and caught sinister sounds among the trees which lined it within. A sense of a new and horrible danger—a suspicion she could not have given a form to, but which in its intangible shape was treachery—seized her mind. She threw aside the curtains and entered. CHAPTER VII.—TRAPPED. The testimony of his own lips has shown with what ardour Charles Raymond embraced the national cause. He had hundreds of associates of his own class whose sympathies, however, unlike his, do not go the length of action. The insurrectionary movement penetrated far more among the better classes than is known. Had the insurgents achieved but one substantial success numbers of the gentry would have flocked to their standard, some from sentiment, others from a more selfish motive. The plan of the rising is matter of history. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, leading the forces of Dublin, Wicklow, and Kildare, was to advance upon the capital, surprise the military at Loughlinstown and Chapelizod, seize on the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council, and, in co-operation with the Dublin division, establish the Republic in the Irish metropolis. Simultaneously the three provinces of Leinster, Ulster and Munster were to raise the banners of liberty. Three hundred thousand men were to have struck together for independence, and with many prospects of success. By express desire of the noble Geraldine, who recognised in our hero the rudiments of a high military capability, he had been entrusted with an important part in the initial movement. This was the command of the brigades of Santry and Rathfarnham, numbering nine thousand men, the armed and most reliable section of the patriot army. It was a post of danger as well as honour, for Raymond's instructions were to check the Royal troops in any attempt to advance from the city to the relief of their comrades at a distance. Should the insurgents reach the city, according to the arrangements Raymond was to lead with his formidable band, acting as a forlorn hope. The plans of the Union Chiefs had been somewhat disconcerted by the vigilance of the Government, and it was necessary to settle finally the order of insurrection before venturing to carry it out. A council, with this purpose, was assembled in the library at Raymond Park. It included our hero, John and Henry Sheares, Aylmer of Kildare, Keogh of Wexford, Captain John Hay, the chief d'Écadron Villemont, a soldier of the Grand Pré, and Thomas Duigenan, a young alumnus of the University. Richard Raymond was also present, and shared in the deliberations. Charles had often chafed at his brother's lack of enthusiasm, which he attributed to his brief service in the British army, in which Richard had begun his career, but which he had quitted suddenly, on the plea of distaste for the profession, an explanation not satisfactory to all people. Charles had not the same distrust of his brother that some of his colleagues felt, and was, therefore, never excited to suspicion by the hints and comments from time to time thrown out. We must add to the above a personage who will reappear frequently in the course of our story. This is Ned Fennell, Charles Raymond's own man—in the phrase of that day, his "body-servant," who filled the places of valet, footman, and humble confidant to his master. Charles had lighted on him at the Brazen Head Tavern, at that period the resort of the Catholic gentry of the capital, and taking a liking to the alert spirit and honest face of the waiter, had entered him upon his household. In the relations between Charles Raymond and Marion Harden it was inevitable that Ned Fennell and Norah Donnelly should fall in with each other. Following the example of their betters, they fell in love, a catastrophe which Ned often provoked the pretty waiting maid, by seriously declaring was brought about, so far as he was concerned, entirely by a wish to keep his master in countenance, by showing him how to "court a lady." Ned Fennell's part in the council of the three leaders was confined to serving to them the hospitalities of Raymond Park. In the intervals of leisure he refreshed himself by stepping outside the open window and whistling in a whispier. While so occupied he had observed his master's brother crossing the lawn towards the wicket, which was near the house, and soon after caught the tramp of hoofs and the jingle of accoutrements on the high-road. The night was very still, and he perceived by the subsiding of these sounds that a halt had taken place.