



AILEY MOORE;

A TALE OF THE TIMES.

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Forde was the first witness called by the Crown; Mr. Ford most readily answered the summons.

Mr. Forde looked badly, or as the popular voice declared, 'villanously.' He was pale and worn-looking, though well dressed; and the sinister or black, scheming look of the 'souper,' all the 'low' people said was stamped on his face and hung round his hearing.

Well, Mr. Forde was an object of great curiosity, and many glasses were raised to many eyes for the purpose of scanning him more closely.

Mr. Forde was ready to swear, just as he had been prepared to swear; indeed, he was like a bound in a leash, and occasionally ran ahead of the learned Crown counsel's wishes.

Mr. Forde had seen Gerald Moore the night of the murder; had seen him go in the direction of the 'lodge' of Kinnacarra; had heard the report of a pistol; had found Skerin shot thro' the side; had also found Gerald Moore's handkerchief on the spot; and no one can conjecture what other things he would have seen and known, if the learned counsel had thought fit that he should have seen and known them.

Mr. Forde wiped his face with the tail of his broad-cloth body-coat, when the 'Crown' sat down to rest himself and to suck a 'Chaney' orange. And in truth Mr. Forde had good reason to take that little refreshment, because he had hard work to encounter when he turned to the cross-examination.

We remember to have met a Protestant clergyman once upon a time—he is now our dear

friend and a good Catholic layman; and this gentleman was not a little staggered in his still here-sy by a scene in a country chapel—and 'crossing' had much to do with it.

'In the Cross, oh! my soul, there are treasures of grace,' is a line babbed by the infant, and spoken by the child of sorrow, when parched hope crumbles, the green fades from his existence, and he lies on his face by the Cedron's side, amid the dark shadows of Gethsemani.

Mr. Forde then had almost made the sign of the Cross at Mr. Bonnell's first question.

'You are one of the class of apostates, called Soupers?'

'I'm a Protestant.'

'You have been once tried for petty larceny?'

'Yes—an' freed.'

'Oh! yes, certainly. You have been denounced by your former parish priest for drunkenness and debauchery?'

'I was spoke uv from the altar.'

'For an attack on the virtue of a child and an orphan?'

No answer.

'On your oath, had you not been the ragabond of the parish, before you became a saint and a servant of Mr. Joyce Snapper?'

'Don't answer that question,' said Mr. Solicitor-General.

Mr. Forde breathed more freely.

'Where were you the moment the shot was fired?' thundered out Mr. Bonnell, while the spectacles looked to Forde like the glaring eyes of a wild animal.

'I was—I was comin' from home.'

'Come, sir, I know you—and you are in my hands. The fellow who makes his broken health and rotten character sound by his apostasy, is a great lover of justice. Where were you the moment—the very moment the shot was fired?'

'I—I—was where I said I was.'

'Don't be confused,' said the Crown.

'Pray, sir, don't interfere,' retorted Mr. Bonnell. 'The moment—the very moment—mind?'

'I was about a quarter of a mile away.'

'Which side did the sound come from?'

'I don't know.'

'On your oath, do you know the man that shot Mr. Skerin?'

'No.'

'Do you know Shaun a dherk?'

Here the Court became still—so still, that one felt as though everything had suddenly become dark.

'I saw him sometimes with the master.'

'Who is the master?'

'Mr. Snapper.'

'Had you any conversation with Shaun a dherk before the murder?'

'I had often.'

'Did you ever speak of your hatred of the prisoner, Mr. Moore?'

'No.'

'Did you ever say, it would be well if he were out of the country?'

'I said he was a disturber, becase he puf the people up not to let the Bible readers in.'

'Did you ever say the master would 'lose a fall,' or send him to Botany Bay?'

The witness looked astounded.

'Come, answer the question.'

Shaun a dherk was not far from the witness table. Half-looking round, in his amazement, Forde saw the beggarman. His—the beggarman's—face was apparently assuring. Forde felt the question was only a guess of Mr. Bonnell—he therefore looked that gentleman in the face, and boldly answered—

sage of charity, a few weeks after the murder?'

'Yes.'

'That will do.'

'Pale as a ghost,' remarked Eddy Browne, as Forde passed him by on his way to the arms of the police.

There were various little passes of arms between the prisoner's counsel and the Crown;—also various questions as to property, and the means of acquiring the same which had been adopted by Mr. Forde, but we do not deem it necessary to chronicle them all.

When Mr. Forde had descended from the table, curiosity lifted up its ears to hear the name of the next witness, and expectation, if disappointed, was disappointed not disagreeably—for the next witness was Mr. Joyce Snapper.

Mr. Joyce Snapper was very nicely dressed, as was his custom; at least, it was his custom to wear what he thought and believed was beautiful and exquisite; but as we remarked before, fine clothes ruined Mr. Joyce Snapper.

Mr. Joyce Snapper, then, was very red, and, indeed, profusely perspiring, when he took his seat in proper form and in the proper place.

He knew the witness Forde. Forde was a most faithful loyal man; had never found Forde a liar, a cheat, or a dissembler.

In the cross-examination, Mr. Joyce Snapper swore, with the candour usual to such public characters, that he had no enmity to the prisoner; had never threatened to 'send him out of the country; he believed the Gospel—of course according to his own judgment of what it demanded,—that he believed was true Christianity, and a great guard to Christian morality; he had never taken gifts for the exercise of his influence, but confesses that he feared both the prisoner and the parish priest; had thrown down the houses of the cottiers; would have spared them if they had embraced the Established Church; their sincerity or insincerity was nothing to him; Gospel truth would have their children.

'I appeal to the Court,' cried Mr. Solicitor-General, 'against this vague course of the learned gentleman on the other side; the learned gentleman can put no such questions to the witness.'

'You are Lord Kinnacarra's agent?' demanded Mr. Bonnell, and seeming to pay no attention to the Crown.

'Yes.'

'You look upon the prisoner's late demesne and mansion as very beautiful.'

'Yes.'

'Miss Moore is said to be very beautiful?'

'Yes.'

'And amiable?'

'She is indeed.'

'And highly accomplished?'

'Undoubtedly.'

'And you wished to marry Miss Moore?'

Amid roars of laughter Mr. Joyce Snapper answered—

'Yes.'

'And you promised that Mr. Moore should suffer no inconvenience in the event of your entering the family.'

'Something of that kind.'

'And then Mr. Moore having held under an abatement—his real rent being a large sum annually less than appeared in his receipts—he was persecuted for a large sum which he had no reason to think was due?'

'Do not answer that question,' roared the Crown.

'That will do, Mr. Joyce Snapper,' remarked Mr. Bonnell.

The servant-maid, Ann McKay, was nearly consistent as to her story of Gerald Moore's return home. Mr. Jim Forde corroborated Mr. Forde's testimony. The police, surgeon, and Lord Kinnacarra all swore their share, and the case for the Crown finally closed at sixteen minutes to seven o'clock, p.m. when every one drew a long breath, and almost every one weighed the evidence, and cursed Snapper and the Fordes.

Shaun a dherk was very generally a favorite, because he had a free open hand, and promised difficult things to many, which he either did, or accident found them accomplished, when he had once promised them. But even Shaun a dherk's popularity was no proof against the praise of Snapper and against the sworn declaration that he was loyal.

Let not the writer be supposed to pass over another view of loyalty—the affection which a man has for the power which represents his country. This is a burning love that is inspired by his country's historic glory—by her eminence in the defence which she guarantees to the liberty which she bestows—the solicitude with which she watches over her children, and the yearning devotion with which ministers to them. All her beauties are represented by a 'sovereignty,' and all her claims are centered in it.

But there is a 'loyalty' far above the loyalty of a mutable feeling—the loyalty of unchanging Catholic principle. 'Protestantism,' as Browne says (after a hundred others), 'is the religion of rebellion; it springs from rebellion, and was nursed in the school of resistance and change. The only security it can ever give to a State is to stand by it as long as its 'private judgment' thinks proper. But the Church of Christ, as long as Caesar reigns, bows to him in the things which are of Caesar.'

The reader will have remarked that Shaun a dherk was not called by the counsel for the prosecution, and that the respected Mr. Jim Forde also was absent from the array of witnesses.—How Shaun a dherk convinced the learned gentleman for the Crown, that his testimony was of no value, or how those gentlemen themselves came to the conclusion, that he should not be sworn, it is not necessary for us to chronicle; but Mr. Jim Forde's absence upon the occasion is explained by a very natural desire to shun a very inconvenient complication.

Some time before the close of the 'case' for the prosecution, there was a bustle and a whispering immediately outside the dock. Mr. Jim Forde had ears to hear, and curiosity to inquire; and, although he was the next witness to be examined, he felt himself impelled and driven to take a look in the direction of the little excitement, and then to demand what was the matter. Mr. Jim always boasted that things were fore-shown him; and he had had an impression, somehow or other, that he was concerned in the movement which attracted his attention; and, therefore, he moved a few steps backward, so as to view the scene more closely.

Mr. Jim Forde did view a scene, which was, it appeared, by no means pleasant—for the worthy 'missionary' turned quite pale. And yet the affair was, to an ordinary observer, common-place enough. It was only a soldier—with

out his side-arms—just as soldiers come on full— a well-looking, though not young man—and Mr. McCann, the showman, who had his hands familiarly on the shoulders of the soldier, while he looked earnestly and joyfully, or triumphantly into his face.

Mr. Forde, as we have remarked, became quite pale when he saw this simple incident, but he did not lose his presence of mind. On the contrary, he immediately went to a policeman, and whispered a word or two into his ear. He then very quietly opened himself a passage, a few yards from Mr. McCann, and though he got many kicks on the shins, and was, in fact black and blue from these 'accidental' encounters with the brogues of his neighbors, he got safely across the street to a public house. This is all that have been heard of Mr. Jim Forde since that day; and how Mr. Frylie became acquainted with the fact of his retirement in sufficient time to a void the inconvenience of betraying his flight by calling him we have not been able to discover.

A short interval only elapsed when Mr. Bonnell rose to address the jury for the defence.—Mr. Bonnell was a fine specimen of a pleader—physically as well as morally; he seemed made for his profession. For a moment he looked towards the dock, and his eye rested upon the noble face of Gerald; he then looked around the court and jury, and finally directed his regards to the bench. It was the appeal of an assured advocate to the reason of his hearers, in favor of the fine young fellow, who had already made a deep impression.

We cannot pretend to follow the able counsel for the prisoner; but we will say that his speech made his road to the bench. It was 'extremely splendid—one made for himself and the prisoner, both. All such speeches are, and may have always been equally successful for both objects.—As we must have judges, may their lordships always have brains.

Mr. Bonnell commenced by a frightful description of Souperism. He explained its villainy in the purchase of bad consciences; its debasing influence in making hypocrisy a merchandise, he showed how the buyer was dishonored by trading on lies, and the seller damned by denying the authority of the Almighty; he detailed the starving families that lay at the foot of the cross to die, and the demons that gathered round them in their agony, to offer them the devil and a ladle of soup: he asked how a country could progress, where strife and demoralisation were thus engendered, and he called for the denunciation of souperism by every man who loved truth and Ireland—no matter what his creed. Boldly he then declared that this was a case of souperism—the soup being seasoned by disappointed ambition, called by a singular gentleman, who appeared in the case, 'disappointed affection.' It was a conspiracy, he said, and a conspiracy he would prove it. The justice of heaven had permitted the heart of wickedness to spread its snares, only that impiety should be taken in the toils. 'And now, gentlemen,' he concluded, 'we shall commence where the counsel for the prosecution concluded. There is a large and respectable array of my learned brothers on the side of justice; we shall endeavor to explain the phenomenon of a gentleman charged with rent which he does not owe, and impoverished by justice, for which law affords no remedy, able to defend himself from the knowingly false imputation of the awful crime of murder.'

Mr. Bonnell commanded the crier to call 'Mr. Boyce,' and that gentleman answered 'Here.'

'Come on the table,' said Mr. Connell.

'Yes,' answered Mr. Boyce.

Now, we must inform the reader that old Father Mick was just beside Mr. Bonnell; and it was quite a study to see the dear old gentleman during the learned counsel's speech. He looked pale—pale and much thinner than usual—the good old clergyman; and his fine white hair was not so nicely kept as it had been when Ailey Moore minded the oratory and the altar. He looked careworn and sad; but his face often brightened up during the address, and the old soul was in his full eyes. He wept frequently, poor man, when the counsellor depicted the poverty and trials of his parish; and, in fact, his face was quite a transcript for the tune of every thing Mr. Bonnell said.

But Father Mick looked sorely puzzled when he heard the name 'Mr. Boyce' called by the proper officer. He fidgeted, and looked out in the court, and took out his handkerchief, and took off his spectacles,—and finally he laid his hand on the good Mr. Bonnell's shoulder. Mr. Bonnell stooped towards him, and smiled very kindly and reverentially, and motioned him to sit down, but Father Mick seemingly continued to