



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. X.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1860.

No. 22.

THE LAST IRISHMAN.

(Translated from the French of Elise Berthel, by C. M. O'Keefe, for the Boston Pilot.)

CHAPTER XIV. (Continued.)

Lady Ellen preceded Richard to the staircase, while Angus followed Richard. They found Julia in her bed in her little room—her face and hands white and transparent as wax.

Notwithstanding his strength of mind, her brother found it impossible to restrain his feelings at this death-bed. Distracted with grief, he threw himself on his knees and exclaimed in a heart-rending tone—"My poor sister! my dear Julia, will you not forgive me!"

Richard was suffocated with grief—rendered speechless by excessive emotion, and Lady Ellen who knelt beside him, burst into tears.

"O, Richard, be a brother to my dear Ellen, protect her when she needs assistance, and love her as you loved me. And you, Ellen, be a sister to Richard; console him when he is afflicted. I shall participate in your feelings as I look down on you from the skies."

With a spontaneous movement the two young people joined hands in compliance with the wish of the dying girl. But Lady Ellen quickly withdrew hers, and, rising suddenly, retired behind the curtain to conceal her emotion.

Richard appeared to hesitate; but Angus advanced to him full of emotion. "Richard," said he, "I have neither gall nor anger against you; if my past conduct has not obtained your approbation, I am ready to humble myself."

"Now I shall die in peace," said Julia, sinking anew upon her couch. She closed her eyes and remained for some moments motionless.

Angus immediately knelt down, and began to recite the "Recommendation for a Departing Soul." All present joined in the prayer, even poor Lady Ellen, reared in feelings of antipathy to the Catholic ritual, forgot at this solemn moment, the antipathies of Creed, and invoked the common Father of all in favor of her dying friend.

An old woman, named Betty, the second nurse-tender, made her appearance at the door, and eagerly replied, "The boys, glory be to God, are after beating the soldiers at the Gap of the Good Messenger."

"And who are you?" cried the old woman, "who would hinder the honest neighbors?" At this moment a gleam of light fell upon the face of Richard O'Byrne.

With an imperious gesture Richard directed the terrified woman to retire to the end of the apartment. Betty hobbled down and seated herself beside Jenny, where both began to cackle with great animation.

"I am going to see my mother," she murmured, as she opened her eyes again and fixed them on her friends as if about to utter an adieu; then she closed them a second time: the light breath which slightly heaved her gentle bosom diminished gradually, and she finally expired without any effort, struggle, or convulsion whatever.

The fatal news was received with a burst of anguish. At the same time old Betty, who had shown a little before such odious insensibility, hastened to the window looking into the street, and uttered a plaintive, sweet, and lugubrious cry which was heard at a great distance.

"The good neighbors," said she, "will be coming to the wake, please your honors; Jenny and myself will have to wash the corpse, and light the candles; and sure your honors won't grudge the drop of whiskey to fasten the life in the poor old nurse-tenders."

Richard could not restrain a gesture of horror as he turned from the old woman in disgust; but Father O'Byrne, more familiar with the ancient customs of the Irish, gave some orders to old Betty, who immediately left the apartment.

"Brother and you, Lady Ellen, must remain here no longer," said the priest, in a voice of blended authority and sweetness: "the room will be filled in a few moments with strangers.—Bid a last adieu to the terrestrial tabernacle of the friend who has ascended to heaven, and follow me."

"Your reverence," murmured Lady Ellen in a transport of grief, "let me remain another moment."

"Angus," exclaimed Richard, in a tone of melancholy expostulation, "I shall never see her again!"

Richard and Lady Ellen threw themselves carelessly on separate seats at some distance from each other. The young girl continued to sob, and utter words from time to time, suggested by the memory of her friend.

"Such grief as this may be excusable in a lady, but no family affliction, however calamitous, should overwhelm a brave soldier—a man of enterprise, who cherishes the gigantic project of delivering his country from the yoke of England."

"Listen," said Lady Ellen, "she who has just died gave us both an advice: you are to give me protection, and I am to give you consolation when I see you overwhelmed with grief and affliction."

"As to me, Richard," replied the young lady, "the task which she imposed is not very difficult—before you had saved my life I liked you; and when I was abandoned by my relatives—by him to whom I ought to be the dearest object on earth, I was pleased to find in you a protector and a friend.

"Do I not deceive myself?" said he at last. "Has not sorrow rendered me insane!—is it Lady Ellen who has uttered these words?"

The Colonel seized the hand of Lady Ellen, and pressed it against his breast. "The object of Julia," said he, "was to put an end to the quarrels which, during ages, separated our respective families. May her will be accomplished. I promise you, for my part, to employ all my efforts to produce a reconciliation, so far at least as my duty to my country, my honor, and myself will permit me.

"Lady Ellen," said the priest in a melancholy tone, "my house must make you very sad—the scenes of death and desolation are not suited to a lady of your birth and disposition—let me implore you to accept the proposal of Parson Bruce. He offers you a retreat in the bosom of his family—your own happiness and the gloom that reigns in this house of mourning."

"I understand you, Mr. O'Byrne," replied Lady Ellen with a sigh, "though it is repugnant to my own feelings, I must accept Mr. Bruce's offer—I shall repair to his house immediately; but is there any news of Lord Powerecourt?"

"Nothing certain; but a peasant informs me that, at an early hour this morning, he met two cavaliers riding in a northern direction, whose appearance corresponds with that of Lord Powerecourt; and of the individual who accompanies him—they followed the Dublin road, and, being well mounted and going at a rapid pace, they are, in all probability, sheltered in the city by this time, and quite safe from the dangers of the insurrection."

"Thank Heaven!" said Lady Ellen with bitterness; the heroic sacrifice of Lord Powerecourt, who forsook his daughter to provide for his own safety, has been of some use. As to the other person whom you allude to, his fate is of little importance."

Richard was about to reply, when Jack Gunn, covered with dust and perspiration, rushed into the parlor.

"I am just come from the mountains, your honor," said the old trumpeter, making the military salute. "Would you please to hear my report?"

"Brother Angus, and Lady Ellen, it is impossible for me to spend more time at the obsequies of my sister. I must depart at once—the regular troops, who were beaten to-day, have since rallied and are preparing, under the cover of night, to force their way into the valley.

"Farewell, Angus," said he, in a tone of emotion; "let me hope that when we meet again we shall be of one heart and one mind."

"Richard! my Richard!" Lady Ellen replied in a tremor, "your words make me tremble!—Is it possible—! is there a chance that we shall never meet again?"

During the three days which followed Julia's death, the tide of fortune turned against the cause, of which O'Byrne was one of the chiefs. The rebellion, which commenced so formidably where O'Byrne was present, failed in the neighboring counties where inferior intellects had a command.

"His quick ear caught the sound of a female foot approaching, and immediately afterwards, a female voice exclaimed—"Good evening, Mr. Daly."

He turned his sightless orbs in the direction of the sound, as if expecting to penetrate the cloud which darkened them for years; but if they possessed the faculty of vision, he would not have been able to descry the features of his visitor.—She and her companion—for there were two—were carefully hooded and mantled in those large blue cloaks which are common in the interior of the country.

resist, was directed to march on Wicklow. At the same time, the coast was guarded by a fleet of Men-of-War, so as to hinder the rebels from communicating with foreign countries.

Though every moment brought him bad news, he still hoped that his example would animate his fellow-chiefs, and inspire the rebels with courage to strike a vigorous blow.

"I hope my brother," cried Father Angus, "will assist in waking our beloved sister. I hope revolutionary projects do not occupy his bosom to the exclusion of the natural affections."

Richard was about to reply, when Jack Gunn, covered with dust and perspiration, rushed into the parlor.

"Brother Angus, and Lady Ellen, it is impossible for me to spend more time at the obsequies of my sister. I must depart at once—the regular troops, who were beaten to-day, have since rallied and are preparing, under the cover of night, to force their way into the valley.

"Farewell, Angus," said he, in a tone of emotion; "let me hope that when we meet again we shall be of one heart and one mind."

Such was the state of things on the eve of the day appointed for the funeral of Julia O'Byrne; it seemed perfectly impossible that Richard could keep his promise: that very morning, he sustained a bloody conflict with an English detachment, at a considerable distance from the village, which reduced O'Byrne to dreadful extremities.—Every one was certain that he would not appear at the funeral, especially as the camp of the soldiers was visible from the town.

The evening of that day, a little after sunset, Daly was seated as usual before the ruins of Lady's Church. In this place, every corner of which was known to him, the blind man had no need of a guide.

He turned his sightless orbs in the direction of the sound, as if expecting to penetrate the cloud which darkened them for years; but if they possessed the faculty of vision, he would not have been able to descry the features of his visitor.—She and her companion—for there were two—were carefully hooded and mantled in those large blue cloaks which are common in the interior of the country.

In the absence of eye-sight, the power hearing enabled Daly to distinguish his visitor: "Is this Lady Ellen, then?" he asked, as he stood up—"you are welcome; Lady Ellen—you are welcome!"

(To be continued.)