

TALES OF THE JURY ROOM

By Gerald Griffin

THE TENTH JURYMANS TALE

ANTRIM JACK, AND HIS GENERAL

In the "year of the troubles" a term by which the memorable year '98 of Irish history is distinguished in the traditions of the peasantry, there was among the ranks of the insurgents, a man named O'Dwyer, who made himself formidable to the king's troops by the most extraordinary and skillful application of those arts of warfare, for the most part, irregular in the united Irishmen. This man was the son of a country farmer. He was first placed at the head of a small party among the rebels, and, though perfectly illiterate, in a very short time, partly by the force of his character, but a good deal by the success which attended every scheme he devised to entrap and annoy the military, was distinguished by the title of General among them. In this new capacity, his ingenuity and military talent became more conspicuous, and every day parties of the regular troops were either defeated in open contest, or cut off by some subtle stratagem. Nothing could equal his daring on those occasions when he chose to exhibit himself openly, and they were entirely unprepared for the craft with which he eluded their pursuit when driven to the expediency of concealment. In every circumstance, except regularity of discipline, he seemed completely superior to them; and after a long and weary contest, they felt the contempt which they had at first regarded as a mere bluff, and in the end the dearly bought, but wiser conviction, that he was so. He and his followers seemed never to tire. After having given him chase for the greater part of a day, and having hunted him to his fastnesses in the county of Wicklow, the military on returning to their encampment often set upon him in the act of cooking their victuals—first from behind the hedge—many of them wounded—some killed, and all thrown into such disorder, as to destroy all unity of purpose among them. On some occasions they were even obliged to give up their encampment, food and all, to their merciless and ever restless foes. Their circumstances, the harassing nature of the duty they had to perform, the losses they had already sustained, and the constant and relenting spirit of their enemy, made it no less a matter of feeling than of interest with the military to have him arrested. This feeling animated every man of them, and made them more zealous in their aim, than a mere sense of duty or the hope of profit by his capture would have ever done. Various were the expedients resorted to effect the most desirable end; but every one of them was completely defeated by his vigilance, and so great was his skill, that while they every day had to grieve over the loss of some of the most valuable of their own men, they could scarcely ever boast of having taken even a single one of his followers. As the troops became injured to this kind of warfare, they gradually acquired a portion of the tact and skill for which their enemy was so much distinguished, and this circumstance brought him latterly into much greater difficulties than usual; nevertheless, narrow as all his escapes were, he always hid and escape, and this often occurred when the soldiers, within their grasp, and there seemed no possibility of his deliverance. These straits, into which he was now and then put, usually alternated with attempts on his part to put them into the same difficulties, which were similar to the others in every respect, except that they were generally successful. This game, in which one side were all the losers, was played for some months, and at the end of this time, when every expedient seemed exhausted, and the military engaged in this service were fairly foot-fallen, and worn down with constant hardship, it was judged right by the commanding officers to persuade him to submit on terms, which, the nature of them being communicated to him by an emissary dispatched for that purpose, he at once agreed to accept. He dismissed his followers, laid down his arms, and was conveyed to Kilmainham gaol under a promise of security to his life and person. The Governor of Kilmainham prison, from whom we have indirectly obtained this account, describes him as a man of extraordinary muscular strength. His figure approached the gigantic, with shoulders enormously broad, great brawny arms, and large, though sinewy legs. His countenance, on which fear had never traced a line, was not remarkable for austerity, in its quiet mood, but it was usually full of a changing expression which flew from severe to gay with a rapidity and force that indicated a quick sensibility, and a current of strong and rapid thought. He could in an instant light it up with the most engaging signs of good will, and in the next hang on it a menace of dreadful meaning. He seemed sensible of this quality in himself, and often, during his stay in the prison, used to amuse himself by bringing it to the notice of those visitors who were prompted by the fame of his desperate character to see him. The accounts which were brought him by the Governor, of the different impressions of him, evident in the conversation of the

visitors, as they departed, seemed infinitely to excite his mirth. These impressions being extremely agreeable, or terrific, according to the mode in which he chose to exhibit himself. He was at all times a fellow of infinite humor, enjoyed conversation very much, and often carried forgetfulness to the hearts of the less fortunate inmates of the prison, with which many an evening hour was got rid of, which would otherwise have passed wearily. The qualities to which his deliverance seemed owing in many difficulties were, a spirit that never shrunk in any emergency, and that instinctive and instant perception of the best course in such cases, commonly called presence of mind, which so far outsteps all reasoning, and which he seemed to possess in the highest degree possible. These qualities, combined with the greatest fertility in strategical devices, showed a genius that would have been dazzling under a better education, and in a better cause. On one occasion, in the latter part of the contest we have described, after a hot pursuit in which all his followers were dispersed, his flight was directed as the evening fell across a narrow and deep ravine, filled with a light copse and short stunted bushes of hazel, in the bottom of which ran a wild and rapid torrent, crossed by one of those one-arched little bridges, which seem so much too large for their purpose in summer, and yet so much in danger of being carried away by the impetuosity of the mountain floods in winter. His pursuers, reinforced by fresh men that fell in by the way, were rapidly gaining ground on him, and had kept up the chase with so much spirit, that for the last half hour, notwithstanding the fact that he had a momentary glimpse of him. His fate seemed now certain. The soldiers but a few yards behind, sure of their prey, came down the hill towards the bridge, with eager shouts, and delivering themselves to the impulse of the steep descent, rushed onwards with all the impetuosity and force, which that circumstance aided by the utmost muscular exertion, could give, evidently with the purpose of taking him at the moment, when he would be most unprepared, and with the opposite ascent, and theirs would be at its highest. At this instant, instead of crossing the bridge, he slightly changed his course, and slipped under the arch. They almost immediately perceived their error, but the mistake was fatal. In the next moment, nearly, he had disappeared from them. A few shots from overheated and breathless men, as they caught the last glimpse of him at some distance, were not much to be feared, and the exploit ended in mutual up-braidings and disputes among the soldiers, as they returned, each laying the blame of the failure on some one, or all of the rest. This was an instant in which his escape was due singly to his own ingenuity and exertion, but of the many he had, the greater number were mainly owing to the good faith and attachment of his followers. There were many circumstances in his relation of these transactions, which showed that this attachment was of the strongest kind, and to this was probably to be attributed, the fact of his having been so often brought out of peril in which another would have perished. His deliverance from one of these dangers in particular, was attended with a degree of devotion, so extraordinary on the part of one of them, that very few instances on record will bear to stand by its side. The name of this person we cannot at present call to mind. He was originally from the country of Antrim, and after having enlisted and served some years in the army, deserted and joined the insurgents. He was a wiry and sinewy fellow, of great activity, and considerable muscular strength for his appearance. His frame was thin, but well knit, somewhat above the middle size. In his action and manner he was somewhat flighty, wild, and sudden, which made the men consider him not quite right in his mind, yet he never showed any signs of irrationality, and indeed whatever he was intrusted with, was executed with a ready and prompt tact, which was seldom exhibited by those who were supposed to possess much more ability. At such times too, his whole mind seemed absorbed in the business he was engaged in, and that to such a degree, as to make him apparently quite disregard any danger attending it, except in so far as his safety was essential to the success of what was given to his charge. This, together with the extreme, yet seemingly thoughtless tact, with which every thing was executed—a circumstance which was considered not inconsistent with the conduct of one whose mind was not entirely tendered rather to confirm the suspicion we have alluded to, which was also in some degree strengthened by his abrupt and rapid utterance when speaking, his indisposition to conversation when unoccupied, and the sudden and unbridled flights of a quick small grey eye, which darted from place to place, and from person to person, without any rest. By his obligingness, and a disposition far away from all selfish feeling, he endeared himself to the men, and the title of "Antrim Jack," from the county of his birth. The strongest feeling, however, of which he seemed capable, was exercised towards O'Dwyer, to whom he seemed to at-

tach himself with an unbounded and even wonderful affection, that showed itself in the most minute and circumstantial attention to his comforts and wishes, and even to his slightest feelings. These attentions were almost incessant in their occurrence, and were often so feminine in their nature, as to awaken a troublesome degree of rallery in the rest of the men, notwithstanding their good feeling towards him, and even sometimes to make it difficult for O'Dwyer himself to repress a smile. The effect of this of repeated rallery was, that eventually Antrim Jack, without any diminution of his affection, began to be ashamed of it as of something discreditable, and was driven to the uncomfortable expedient of performing most of his little offices of affection in secret, and indeed at length could only indulge himself in them, as it were by stealth, and unknown to his troublesome censurers, who when they found what a degree of soreness their quizzing produced in his mind, exchanged it out of good nature for nods and winks, and a kind of slanting jest, which, though less direct, was scarcely less irritating. There was one among them, indeed, who seemed beyond all the rest, with a good deal of boldness—a man named Farrell, who under a feeling of envy at the partiality, real or imagined, which O'Dwyer seemed to extend to Jack, directed his shafts with a most unsparring hand against this supposed effeminacy and child-like fondness. Though the other men showed an indisposition to torment him with these failings, (as he was led to think them) yet when the fire was once opened by Farrell, they could seldom refrain from flinging in with a good deal of forbearance and in general, with a silence only broken by a few short threats muttered abruptly, which, however, were not usually carried into execution, though there were times, when to judge from the light that flashed in his unsteady and fitful eyes, the disposition to break out into sudden vengeance, seemed almost ungovernable. On the very morning after the above mentioned affair at the little bridge, O'Dwyer appeared early in the field, with a band of adherents that looked fresh and hale, and more numerous than ever. The military had turned out on that morning with a number of picked men, swift of foot, and lightly equipped, a precaution their experience in pursuit in this kind of warfare had long shown them the necessity of. The disappointment of the night before only increased their eagerness for the coming contest, and the sight of their audacious and successful foe, gave them a keen longing to be at odds with his arm to arm again. After a sharp conflict, in which the rebels fought with that wild and impetuous daring, which sometimes distinguished them, they were completely routed, and obliged to fly in detached parties through the rocky passes of the country. The experience of the military had taught them not to look upon this as a victory, and accordingly they entered on a pursuit with all the energy that winged minds and hardy limbs could beget to muster. After very severe and prolonged exertion, however, they were obliged to give in without obtaining much additional advantage. The rebel general, with a few of his adherents, among whom either in success or failure Antrim Jack might be always numbered, having far outstripped them, reached a half ruined cabin at the skirts of a wood where he determined to pass the night which was already falling. In the course of this pursuit, O'Dwyer, while the soldiers were close behind, looked back, and thought he perceived distinct signs of a communication between Farrell and one of them. As he had observed a little jealousy on the part of Farrell towards Antrim Jack, he did not wish to give him the additional mortification of being reproved in his presence, and therefore set the latter out, on some pretext before he called him up to make inquiry about it. He thought this step the more necessary, as he had observed that Farrell's disposition was proud and passionate, and exhibited a good deal of low cunning and craft, together with a large share also of that shallowness of mind that so commonly attends it, qualities of mind that would make such a mortification more galling. "Farrell," said he, "what signs were those I saw pass between you and the soldier to-day?" "What soldier?" said Farrell. "The fellow that was next behind you." "When?" said Farrell. "In the beginning of the chase, when they were close to us, as we came through the scarp." "Oh, nothing, sir," said Farrell. "Come, come," said O'Dwyer, "tell me something to you, tell me what it was." "A pinch of snuff he wanted," said Farrell. "A pinch of snuff?" said O'Dwyer with surprise. "Yes," said Farrell. "Do you tell me that the fellow asked you for a pinch of snuff?" "Yes," said Farrell. "Nonsense!" said O'Dwyer. "Faiks, its thrue for me," said Farrell, "sure you don't think 'tis a lie I'm telling?" "I'm quite sure of it," said O'Dwyer. "Egad then, you needn't," said Farrell. "Well," said O'Dwyer, "you're a pleasant fellow. The king's troops chase you for half the length of a

day, and seek your life with might and main. You do your utmost to preserve it by flight, and in the very height of this pursuit, and when you are hardest pressed, the fellow who is nearest to you is unreasonable with a pinch of snuff! Do you want me to believe you man?" he said as the picture stared him in all its absurdity. "I do," said Farrell, "that's what he wanted." O'Dwyer paused, and then after some moments said: "And when he asked you for the pinch of snuff what did you say to him?" "I told him I wouldn't," said Farrell, "nor as much as would make a sneeze." "Well," said O'Dwyer, smiling, "you were true to your colours at any rate." "What?" said Farrell. "I say," said O'Dwyer, with more distinctness, "you did not desert your colours, you refused him the pinch of snuff." Farrell coloured slightly as his commander said this, and there was a pause for some moments. "Tell me, Farrell," said O'Dwyer, after looking into his face for some time, with a glance that few, even of the guilty could withstand, "did he offer you anything in return for the pinch of snuff?" Farrell coloured slightly, and said he did not. "Well, this was still more unreasonable, when a man asks a pinch of snuff of a person he had no right to expect it from, one would think he'd feel himself bound to give something in return. And you, O'Dwyer, continuing his searching glance. Farrell was silent. O'Dwyer paused for some time. "Well, Farrell," he said at length in an altered tone; "All I wish to say to you at present, is, be cautious how you hold any communication with these soldiers. Be on your guard, I warn you. I have some reason to know what the pinch of snuff was, that fellow asked you for; it is a kind of snuff that has made these soldiers sneeze more than once, and may perhaps make them do so again, you may go." Farrell was about to offer something in explanation, but was stopped by O'Dwyer, who saw there was no probability of obtaining any further acknowledgment from him. The circumstance was suspicious to say the least of it, but O'Dwyer, who always depended much upon his personal exertion, thought it unnecessary to take any further step than to watch him closely, and keep him as much as possible out of his own person. Farrell was evidently dissatisfied at the manner in which he came out of this examination. The bantering form in which O'Dwyer put his questions, and the altered and serious tone with which he concluded, perplexed him not a little. He remained long moody, sullen, and silent, and it was only some time after O'Dwyer went out in the moonlight, to take his customary glance from some elevated spot, before he retired to his cabin, and he could bring himself to take part in a conversation that occurred among the men, on their present condition and prospects, which the harassing nature of the day's duty made a natural topic. "I never was more in humor for a sleep in all my life, than I am after to-day's run," said one of them as he lay down and stretched himself across the place the fire had lately occupied. "Egad this place is desperately hot," he said, "I suppose some of us will be taught to dance a new step in the air, to military music—others will meet with as good luck as Ned Sheehy, of Dromin." "What happened?" "Why, he was known for a notorious night-walker, and like our general here, they were looking for him night and day, for months, and could never catch him. At last they put a few lines in the paper, to say that if the nearest relation of the late Jerry Sheehy, a cousin of his that was, say, any of them, at all at all would come to some office in Dublin, he'd hear of something to his advantage. Poor Ned was always very covetous for money, so he went there, and they pinned him. When he axed 'em what he had to learn to his advantage, they told him he ought to have been hanged long ago, but they'd only transport him for life." "Well, I don't think they kept terms with him," said the inquirer. "Why so?" "Because I'd rather be hanged than be transported for life. I don't think he heard anything to his advantage." "So Ned thought too; first he wanted them to hang him—at least he wanted to have a toss with them—he'd or harp whether it should be double or quit, hanging or nothing; but they would not agree to it, and so Ned abused them, and called them cowards, and they parted. He went to Botany Bay, poor fellow, and they went about more tricks of the same kind." "And which would you prefer, Will?" said Farrell to the last speaker, "hanging or transportation?" "Egad I don't know," replied the other, "I never gave my mind much to the matter—I wouldn't like either of them. Why do you ask?" "Because," said Farrell, "I have no fancy myself, for either one or the other, whatever Antrim Jack may do. I'll be off to-morrow." "I never doubted you," said Jack, "I never saw you but throwing cold water on everything we have in hand." "Why, what do you expect?" said Farrell. "Do you ever expect to have

the comfort of dying in your bed?" "Whether from any previous contemplation, or from whatever cause, if I would see as if this question had lighted on Jack's mind with a more serious feeling than any such inquiry could be expected to produce on a character such as his. He paused for some time, and then, with a countenance and tone that betrayed a deeply altered state of thought and feeling, he said: "I wouldn't care much, whether I did or not, if it wasn't for those I'd leave after me." "Who would you leave after you?" said Farrell in his customary tone of rallery. "I know what you mean by your question," said Jack in a melancholy tone, "you mean the general, and all I have to tell you is, and I don't care who knows it, that whatever end the general comes to, Jack will come to the same, and at the same time. If he's shot or taken, you'll find me somewhere near him. If it wasn't for him, I'd think but little of death. I know," he continued with an expression of feeling his voice seldom assumed, "I know it is a comfort, a great comfort, to die in one's bed. I was near it once, and I often thought since, when I had a narrow escape of being shot, or speared, or hanged, and it came into my mind afterwards, to think of death in different ways, which it seldom does. I often thought that a man can have no comforts so great as to die in his bed with his friend sitting near him. For all this, I tell you I would not value it much, but for what I mentioned, and as you asked me the question, Terr," he said with earnestness, "I'll tell you that I hope and trust with God's blessing—I hope and trust, and I have every hope of dying in my bed. I hope we'll all live long and happy and that we'll all die in our beds." Jack had seldom, indeed scarcely ever, made so long a speech before, and it was with some surprise that the men heard him avow himself under the influence of a feeling, which certainly his conduct would never have indicated the existence of. The hope with which he concluded—so deeply felt—so earnestly expressed—was deemed to be grievously disappointed. The candid avowal of his strong attachment to O'Dwyer, was not sufficient to protect him from Farrell's ridicule, and it was probably this circumstance that made the rallery upon his nerves than anything of the kind had ever done before. His eyes came extremely irritated. His face flashed, and he flew with incessant activity from one object to another—first he endeavoured to beat Farrell at his own weapons, but the complete coolness of the latter entirely disconcerted him. At length he lost all control, and seizing a rugged faggot that lay near, dashed it at him with such a sudden and dexterous aim, that notwithstanding an equally sudden motion of avoidance, it came upon his side with so much violence, as at once to take away his breath, and destroy utterly the equanimity with which he had hitherto proceeded. Farrell was now roused in his turn and snatching up the knotted weapon with which he had been assailed, proceeded to inflict summary chastisement. A scuffle ensued, attended with so much noise that it reached O'Dwyer's ears, who entered the cabin with a face of much anxiety. He separated the combatants before Farrell had effected his purpose, and with some severity of manner inquired into the cause of the dispute. After much questioning, however, he could not obtain a satisfactory account. "Who began this?" he asked at length, angrily. "Farrell, I saw you attacking Jack, what was that about?" "When he hit me a blow o' that root," said Farrell, "that would kill a horse." "Jack, what did you hit him for?" said O'Dwyer. "When he wouldn't let me alone," said Jack, "he's forever givin' at me." "What right had you to hit me?" said Farrell. "Wasn't that a purty instrument to hit a man with?" said he furiously, holding up the root towards O'Dwyer. "Dear knows 'twouldn't hurt a chicken what I done to him," said Jack. "For heavens sake, what was all this about?" said O'Dwyer with impatience. "Neville, you were looking on and can tell. How did it begin?" "Indeed," said Neville "twasn't worth a bean what was between them, 'twas a foolish falling out between friends—Terr there, was taken fun out o' Jack—Jack didn't like it, and gave him a touch o' that instrument, as Farrell called it, in the side—Terr took offence at that, and thought to have his revenge, and so they tangled in one another as you found 'em when you come in, and—"

"He's for ever at me," said Jack, "and I often tould him to let me alone." O'Dwyer was greatly irritated—"Farrell, said he, what do you mean by all this?—you're the most worthless fellow I ever met. This morning I wanted you to catch that fellow they sent into town with letters, and you came back without him. Then you tell me a lying story about a soldier asking you for a pinch of snuff, when I well know what he wanted; and now when our dangers are run to the very highest, you raise a quarrel, and make a noise that may bring the military upon us, who I find are not three hundred yards off. I wish to heaven," said he vehemently, "I never had anything to do with you."

TO BE CONTINUED

AN EMPTY SPOT IN HER HEART

Many years ago a respectable colored woman of New Haven, Conn., came to Father O'Brien to ask him to instruct her and receive her into the Church. When he questioned her on her motives and reasons for desiring to become a Catholic, she gave him the following account of her religious experience: She had always had "an empty spot in her heart." She had gone about from one sect to another, but could never find anything to fill that empty spot. She was quite discouraged in seeking for religion when she happened one day to talk with an Irish servant girl about her interior doubts and troubles. The girl said some things to her which caused her to ask in surprise where she had learned those things. She said that it was in her Catechism. The good woman found that those Catholic truths filled the empty spot in her heart. She thought it very strange that this poor girl could answer questions which learned ministers could not answer to her satisfaction. She concluded that a religion which could put such wisdom into the simple and unlettered must be the true. Accordingly she applied for instruction, was received into the Church, and declared that the empty spot in her heart was thereafter completely filled. MANY SUCH This good woman's experience is that of every convert to the true faith. There is an empty spot in every human heart, which can be filled only by accepting God's whole revelation to man as it is found in Catholic faith and practice. Man needs two things—light and strength. He needs a divine teacher and a divine helper. He needs to know the way, and he needs the strength to walk in it. Any priest who has ever given missions or instructed converts will testify that there are thousands of earnest sincere-minded people among us to-day who are seeking for the Catholic Church alone to have to offer and which alone can satisfy the religious craving of the human heart. In their search for the truth that satisfies, they are taking up with the fads—Dowisism and Ealdysim and Spiritism. And fifteen million Catholics distributed among them! The shame of it! In the face of these conditions it is the plain duty of every thoughtful Catholic to help spread the faith and so bring these souls, tossed about by every wind of doctrine, into that haven where alone they shall find rest for their souls. "But," you ask, "How are we to do this?" By imitating the example of this humble servant girl, who gave the truth-seeker the answer she had sought elsewhere in vain. And what did she give? The simple Catholic doctrine as found in the Catechism. That is all that was needed. Nothing more. All that is generally needed in work of this kind is a practical knowledge of those simplest fundamental teachings. The Catholic Church does not expect her children of the laity to be trained theologians, versed in all the arts of theological disputation, but she does expect them to know their Catechism. She does expect them to have at least an elemental knowledge of what they believe, and her reasons why. Nothing does her so much harm as losing innumerable opportunities to do good as the unwillingness or inability of many Catholics to give a plain-talk account of the faith that is in them. BUT WHERE IS MY PULPIT? "But," you say, "am I expected to stand on a barren and address the multitude on religious topics?" Why bless you, my child, not at all! There is no lack of opportunity in your ordinary daily life. Bound up with almost every question of the day there is some aspect of Catholic principle or belief to be explained. Take the perplexing problems of marriage and divorce. What an opportunity to explain the uncompromising attitude of the Church regarding the sanctity and indissolubility of the marriage tie. How she deserves the respect and gratitude of all loyal right-minded citizens for thus standing up all alone for the sanctity of the home against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil. Take the question of Socialism. How easy to explain the reverent attitude of the Church toward all lawful authority and her necessary unrelenting hostility toward a system which, if put into practice, would sweep away every vestige of authority, human and divine. Or the labor question comes up for discussion. Here you have readily at hand the incomparable Encyclical of Leo XIII. on "The Condition of Labor," pronounced by the late Hon. Carroll D. Wright, United States Commissioner of Labor, "the only satisfactory solution to the labor