

#### CATHOI RONICLE.

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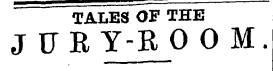
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Eamus in jus. PLAUT. Pomilius, Act v. Dogberry. Are you good men, and true? Much Ado about Nothing.

## BY GERALD GRIFFIN.

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF THE MUNSTER FESTIVALS," ETC.

#### THE JURY ROOM.

"Sweet masters be at accord !"-As You Like R.

It was during the Assize week of an important city in the South of Ireland, that a grave looking gentleman dressed in a sober suit of brown and Petershain top coat, was observed riding with a somewhat inquisitive air through the dense crowds announced a person of good sense and prudence. His dress was neither too good for the road nor too mean for the wearer's rank as indicated by his demeanour; his hat was decent, but evidently not his best; a small spotted shawl folded cravat-wise. protected his throat and cars from the rather moist and chilly sir of an early Irish spring. A pair of doe-skin caps, er over-sils, buttoned on the knees defended those essential hinges of the lower man from the danger of contracting any rheumatic rust in the open air; while gloves of the same material and top boots neatly foxed, evinced in the extremities of the weaver's person the same union of economy, and just sufficient attention to appearances, which was observable in all the rest of his attire. The countenance likewise was one which at the first glance, attracted the respect and confidence of the beholder. It was marked by a certain air of good will and probity of character, with due consciousness of the owner's position in life, and an expression which seemed intimate that he would not be willingly deficient in what was due to others nor readily forfeit any portion of what was fairly owing to himself. As is usually the case when a stranger makes his appearance amid an idle crowd, all eyes were fixed upon him as he leisurely walked his horse toward a small hotel which stood at a little distance from the Court-house. Giving the bridle to the hostler, with the easy air of one who seldom hurries about anything, and of the two feels less satisfaction in motion than in rest, he alighted, and after desiring, in what seemed an English accent, that the horse should not be fed, until he had leisure, himself, to visit the animal in the stall, he drew of his gloves, looked up and down the street, then up at the sky, where the clouds seemed just deliberating whether they would rain or no, took off his hat, inspected it all over thrust his gloves into the pocket of his great coat, and finally entered the coffee-room. It may seem trifling to mention all these motions of the traveller with so much precision, but not one of street, who doubtless would not have employed a thing so valuable as time in watching the movements of an entire stranger, if there were not something very important, though still a mystery to them in every turn he took. The coffee-room was at this instant the scene of a very animated discussion. It needed only a few minutes standing at the fire, and lending an ear occasionally to what went forward, to render the grave looking gentiman somewhat curious to know more of the affair at issue. Some asked with sparkling eyes "whether the Penal Code was to be re-enact ed?" Others, talked of the "enlightened age in which we live," and said very often that " the days had gone by when the people could be trampled on with impunity." Others who seemed of an opposite way of thinking, talked with equal vehemence of " the dark ages," of "the fires at Smithfield," and " the gunpowder plot," with sundry other allusions to by-gone massacres and confiagrations and asked ' if the Inquisition was about to be again established in all its terrible power." of the stranger whe looked vainly around for some Passing along a somewhat lengthy hall which di-time in search of a neutral face, to which he might side an enginy with some chance of his being a somewhat lengthy hall which brought him side as an enginy with some chance of his being a somewhat lengthy hall which brought him side as an enginy with some chance of his being a somewhat lengthy hall which brought him side as an enginy with some chance of his being a somewhat lengthy hall which brought him side as an enginy with some chance of his being a some dream a fight of stairs which brought him side as an enginy with some chance of his being a some dream a fight of stairs which brought him side as an enginy with some chance of his being a some dream a fight of stairs which brought him side as an enginy with some chance of his being a some dream a fight of stairs which brought him side as a some dream a some dream

side of the fire with half-closed eyes, a newspaper in those by some unaccountable neglect stood a jar at his hand, and an expression on his countenance as if he was rather amused than interested by what was going forward. On hearing the stranger's question, he civilly laid aside the paper, and turning his person toward the fire, said with a smile : "It appears you are but newly arrived, sir, or you would have no necessity to ask that ques-

tion." " You are quite right; I was never in the town be-

fortnight." "Bless me 1-some conspiracy discovered ?" "Not exactly."

"Some appalling murder, then ?—some clergy-man shot on account of tithes ?—or perhaps an affray

"Why, sir," replied the quiet looking gentleman still smiling, "after all your grand conjectures, I confess I am ashamed to tell you the exact truth it must cut so paltry a figure in the comparison. But if you be an Englishman as I suppose, [the stranger bowed] and on a tower of pleasure [the stranger shook his head] or business-[the stranger protruded his lips and lifted his eye brows with a half dissenting air)-or both perhaps united [the stranger no.ded his head as if to say, "you have gone nearer to the mark,"] and are desirous of carrying home with you some notion of the state of society in this country, [another nod of assent] the circumstance may be worth your hearing. You should know in the first place, that in every city town, and village in Ireland, from the mteropolis down to the pettiest municipality that is kept in order by a few police and a court of petty sessions, there are two parties, who between them continue to keep society in one continual uproar. Now in such a state of things, if there be any disgrace to neutrality, I confess there are some few besides myself who make a principle of incurring it. It is not that I am insensible to the good or avil being of the country that gives me bread, but I hate both bigo-try and balderdash, and as it seems impossible to meddle in public affairs and at the same time steer a clear course between the one and the other with any chance of being attended to, I content myself with doing whatever little good I can in a quiet way, and feel inclined rather to be amused by the vehemence efothers than to be induced to imitate them."

"Since you are so moderate," said the stranger. 'I will not fear wounding your nationality by saying that you have just uttered the most rational speech I have heard since I arrived in Ireland."

"Ab, you know that the compliment to my personal vanity is sufficient to cover any umbrage 1 might feel on the score of country. However, so it is. Well-out of such a state of affairs, it arises, who thronged the open space before the city and that every mole-hill between the parties is magnifi-Court-house. Everything in his appearance ed into an Olypmus-The local newspapers teem aced a person of good sense and prudence. with rumours, with national misdeeds upon the side and ready contradictions of the "foul calumny" upon the other, for as you may have observed since you entered the room, neither party is deficient in vigour of language. Then there are meetings and counter-meetings-letters from "Veritas" "Eye-Witness, "Victor," "Fair-Play," "Lovers of Truth," and "Lovers of Justice," the most of whom prove each other to deserve any character, rather than that which their signature assumes. "Veritas" is shown to be a hired official, whom nobody could trust; "Eye Witness" to have been fifty miles away at the time the occurrence took place! "Victor" to be a constant resident in the neighborhood he affects to have visited with the impartiality of a disinterested traveller: "Fair Play" to be a notoriously one-sided partizan, and the whole bunch of lovers of truth, and lovers of justice, to be remarkable amongst all their acquaintances for the total absence of these qualities I declare to you, though I love my country, and am not, in the habit of carrying any sentiment to an extreme, when I consider such a state of society, and the total absence of peace and happiness which it involves, I am often tempted to turn heretic to the "enlightened opinions of the age," and long for a good stout despotism, which would compel them all to hold their tongues. But what has all this to do with the question you asked me? you shall judge for yourself, and probably you will see no great apparent connection when I tell you that all you have heard, relates to a trial for breach of promise of marriage which has been this moment called on in our court house. "Breach of promise I" exclaimed the stranger. "It is a fact, I assure you. The parties are unhappily of the opposite factions-not that I believe either the lady or gentleman care much whether they break their eggs at the big or little end, and, indeed, it is generally supposed that the affair would have been long since arranged in the happiest manner for both were it left in their own hands. But the gentleman, against his better will has been led to act unhandsomely by his friends of one party, them was lost upon the intelligent observers in the | and the lady, against her inclination also, has been moved to commence law proceedings by her friends who are of another side, and so the town has been all alive in expectation of the result, and the courthouse is thronged with partisans who see a great deal-more in the case than a mere suit at nisi prius. Challenging has run so high that counsel have been already compelled to pray a tales." Stimulated rather by a general feeling of curiosity than moved by any particular interest in the suit at issue, the stranger, after politely thanking the quiet gentleman for his civility, put on his hat and walked out in the direction of the court-house. There was something in his appearance which opened a way for him through the crowd, and the police and bailiffs were seen to push aside all the country people with the butts of their carbines, and hold the little iron. gate-ways open as he drew nigh. After listening for some time to the counsel and witnesses who seemed bent up to harangue and swear their best in honor of the occasion, our traveller began to feel as if he had heard enough of it, and returning to the inward flagged hall, cast his eves about, and seemed These starming expressions whetted the ouriosity desirous to inspect the remainder of the building Passing along a somewaat lengthy hall which di-

listened to. His eyes at length alighted on that of a to a landing place on which he could perceive seve-middle-aged quiet-looking person, who sat on one ral doors, leading in different directions. One of the present moment. It would appear that if the grave-looking stranger had a foible it was that for which the tender hearted wife of Bluebeard was so near forfeiting her life. The silence of the place, the mystery of so much bustle and confusion, and the tempting air of that which stood invitingly half open, provoked his curiosity with a degree of force which he had not firmness to resist. He pushed in make up your minds to remain in until you can the door. All was silent inside. The room had a bare, and scantily furnished appearance. A painted deal table stood in the centre, on which were scat-tered some paper, pens and ink. Near it, irregularly placed, stood one or two wooden forms and a few chairs. On the side of the chamber opposite to the door by which he had entered, was a window, dim with dust, which looked out upon the narrow and ill-paved back street of the city. A neglected, though still tolerable fire burned in the capacious grate. In one corner was a large press or double cup-hoard inserted into the wall, the upper portion of which was locked. Not so the lower in which the inquisitive stranger only observed a few acts of parliament in stiched covers, barony books, and some torn law papers. Near this stood an enormous basket filled with turf for the purpose of replenishing the fire.

It needed not now, the aid of a conjurer to tell our traveller into what chamber of the building he had penetrated. It was the JURY-ROOM. Struck by the natural reflections, which the place was calcu-lated to excite in any mind, but more especially in one of a thoughtful and generous turn, such as that of the grave stranger, it was some time before he recollected the awkwardness of his own situation in the absorbing reverie which seized upon him. The many fellow beings, on whom the fiat of life or death had been passed within that room, the families who had been consigned to misery, the many occasions on which passion and interest had there taken the place of justice, to the condemnation, perhaps of the innocent or the absolution of the guilty, all those and other circumstances furnished matter which detained him in the mood of thought for a considerable time. Insensibly he passed to the institution of the much valued system, thence to the manifold schemes by which the " wisdom of ages" has sought at various times to defend the pure administration of justice from the intermeddling of human passion, and thence again, ascending higher in abstraction as he continued his musing, to the corruption of society in general, and the missry of man whom not even a device se beautiful as this great boast of the British constitution could protect against the evil of his own perverse and fallen na. ture.

By this time the night had already began to close The din of the city was hushed into a low murmur in which might be distinguished the call of the watchman in the street, the occasional rattle of a passing vehicle, and the ringing of some of the chapel bells summoning the people to the evening prayers, usual in the time of Lent. The same eveng silence had fallen within the circuit of th

personage arrived, the Foreman in the name of the Jury requested him to inform the judge that they had not been able to agree upon their verdict, nor was it likely they should do for a considerable time. He departed, and they awaited his return in almost unbroken silence.

In a short time his footstep was heard ascending the small stair-case.

"Gentlemen," said he, "his lordship desires me to tell you, that, such being the case, you must only agree upon what verdict you are to give. His lordship does not thing proper to detain the court any "Then we are to remain here all night, I sup-

pose;" exclaimed the Foreman.

"If you should agree upon your verdict long before morning," continued the sheriff in the same sedate tone, every accent of which was drunk with a thirsty stillness, by all ears in the Jury Room, not excepting the pair " in the cup-board, his lordship is pleased to my that you can send word to his lodgings in \_\_\_\_\_\_ Street." lodgings in \_\_\_\_\_ Street." What a prospect for all in the room, but more

than all, for our friend in the cup-board, who had not tasted food since morning, and was moreover in a position far from being the easiest in the world. There was however no help for it. Whatever difficulty he might have felt in revealing himself in the first instance, was increased a hundred fold by the suspicious mode of concealment which he had since adopted, and the dire fact of his having wilfully overheard a portion of the private deliberations of the Jury. There was therefore no other resource than hope and patience. The sheriff descended the staircase, the jurymen separated murning, into different corners of the room. The regulations of the court were too well understood to allow them to hope that they could be successful in any attempt to obtain refreshments from the officials in attend ance, and they only deliberated each within his own mind, in what manner they should pass the long winter night without either sleep or food. Sighing deeply, though inaudibly, our traveller resigned himself to his fate, without troubling himself further about devising means of escaping it. The discontented jurymen sought contort as they could, some occupying the few chairs that stood near the fire, while some, tying silk handkerchiefs about their heads, and turning the collar of their coat over their cars, stretched themselves at full length on the wooden forms, and courted slumber with indifferent Success.

It was now approaching midnight, and an uni versal stillness had fallen upon the city, interrupted only at intervals by the louder footfall of some elated passenger, or the merry convolue of a group returning homeward from some evening party. On a sudden, a rough sonorous voice was heard in the narrow street already described, which passed beneath the window of the Jury-room. "Oyst-c-rs! Oysters! Fine Burren oysters!

Choice Burren oysters !"

There was a general movement amongst the gen. tlemen of the Jury. The foreman raised his head rom the form on which he had laid his aching

of the table equipage, when they should be no longer needed. In a few minutes his sonorous voice was heard resounding through the deserted streets to the customary burthen of " Oysters !- fine Burren oysters !-- choice Burren oysters !"

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Supper now proceeded merrily, all party differ-ences being forgotten in the flow of social glee which was set in motion by the good cheer which was so unexpectedly acquired, Often in the mean-time did the unfortunate traveller call to mind the story of the highwayman and the first of the three beggars, and more than once was tempted to wish that the whole Jury had been sharers in their infirmity, in order that he might have an opportunity of partaking in the feast without detection. He had, however, a touch of the philosopher about him, which prevented his yielding to any useless repinings, and he contented himself with opening one of the doors of his retreat just so far as to enable him to see what was going forward, and to hear with more distinctness all that was said amongst the company ontside.

Having done sufficient justice to the systeman's feast, a glow of genial good humor succeeded in the breasts of all, to the auxiety and discontent which before had kept them silent and apart. More fuel was heaped upon the fire, the forms and chairs were drawn closer round it, and conversation became general and animated. It was at length interrupted by the Foreman, who, after requesting the attention of his fellow-jurors for some moments, addressed them as follows :----

"Gentlemen, although we have already fared so much better than we had expected, it remains for us to consider in what way the long interval is to be spent which we must pass between this and daybreak. The forms and the chairs which we possess offer little inducement in the way of sleep, and 1 do not see the advantage of reviving any discussion on the case which has been submitted to our judgment, being always unfriendly to the introduction of party questions in mixed company, where it can possibly be avoided. I therefore propose that we leave the question of the defendant's guilt or innocence between himself, his conscience, and his maker, and turn our attention to the passing our remaining term of confinement in such a manner as may be most profitable, under the circumstances, to ourselves and to each other."

This address was received with general applause, which having subsided after a little time, the Foreman was permitted to resume :---

"I have beard it remarked, gentlemon, by loarned men, that the word *Erin*, (which as you are all aware is the poetical name for Ireland) forms likewise the nceusative case of a Greek noun, signifying strife or discord. Whatever analogy the present state of our country may enable a satirical mind to imagine between the word and its Greek meaning, I am sure there is no one in this room but will agree with me in hoping that the time may yet arrive when no handle shall be found for such invidious sallies, when the rocks and shoals of party feeling which at present wreck the peace and happiness of society shall be covered by the advancing tide of good-will and brotherly affection, and when Irishmen, instead

place of justice, and the voice of the presiding judge was heard distinctly, though faintly in the act of delivering his concluding charge. Even this sound ceased at length, and nothing was heard except that general murmur which arises in a crowd when something occurs to relax the absorbing attention in which all have been enchained for a considerable time before.

"And wretches hang, that jurymen may dine!"

exclaimed the stranger, awaking from his reverie when he was startled by an alarming sound, which first brought to his mind the critical position in which he had placed himself. A door was heard to open and shut, presently the clattering of a bailiff's halberd and the tramp of many feet was heard upon the little flight of steps, by which he had ascended. The jury were coming ! What was to become of him? There was only one legitimate point of entrance, or of exit, and that was the door through which he came, and which the important twelve were now approaching, brimful of law and evidence. The window was on the first floor and looked out upon an uninviting stone pavement. What should he do? The consequences of being detected were unknown to him. He had heard much of the crime of attempting to tamper with a jury. The cup-board behind the turf-basket! It was not a very dignified resource, but it was his only one, and being a time not for deliberation, but for action, he managed to secrete himself just as the bailiff had threw the door open, and ushered the jurymen into the chamber .--Our traveller heard, with a feeling more easily imagined than described, the door shut fast again, and the key turned in the lock outside.

After a few moments of deliberative silence, the discussion commenced, and was not long in reaching a height which did not forbode a speedy unanimity of opinion on the case in hand. What amused the stranger, notwithstanding his awkward situation, was to hear how little they dwelt upon the nature of the evidence that had been brought before them. or on the points of law laid down by the judge in his charge. The chief points of contention, soon became restricted to questions of theology and history, between which and the guilt or innocence of the defendant, our traveller would have found it hard to trace any connection, were it not for the hints previously thrown out by the quict gentleman at the hotel. The allusions made, if not so broad

as in the coffee-room, were fully as much to the point, and as remarkable for their severity and lucid vigor. The lash was administered freely though politely on both sides, and the deeds of buried popes and kings were insinuated into the discussion, evidently more in aid of the immediate purpose than with any unkindly or vindictive feeling towards the ashes of the long mouldering delinquents. Hits, however, were dealt liberally against the living and the dead. St. Gregory the Seventh, and Harry the Eighth, Auna Boleyn and Catherine de Medicis, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, all came in for their share, and if the opposing parties were not always successful in the defence they set up for their friends, they seldom failed to make up for the deficlency by a well simed thrust at some cherished name upon the enemy's side. name upon the enemy's side. Perceiving that it was not likely they could agree.

joints, and advanced toward the window. After a moment's consultation with some of his fellowprisoners, he threw up the sash, and leaning forward said in a low but distinct tone, which could not fail to reach the cars for which it was intended ; " I say, oysters l"

"Who's that? Who calls oysters?"

"Oysters!" repeated the Foreman.

"Oh, I beg your honor's pardon !-- Would you want any oysters, sir? They're as fresh as daisies, your honor."

"Come hither-Do you think, if we took your oysters you could get us something to eat with them ?"

"To be sure I could your honor-but what good was that for me when I've no means o' gettin' 'em up there?"

This difficulty was speedily removed. A number of cravats and pocket handkerchiefs were ticd together, so as to form a line long enough to reach the street. A whip was now raised for defraying the expenses of the projected entertainment, and the amount as soon as collected, was made fast in the corner of a silk handkerchief, which formed one extreme of the line. The whole apparatus was then carefully lowered from the window until it reached the hands of the expectant vender of shell fish,

Like Iris' bow down darts the painted line Starr'd, striped, and spotted, yellow, red and blue

Old calico, torn silk, and muslin new. Having extracted the treasure from the handkerchief the oysterman disappeared, and during the succeeding quarter of an hour, the silence of an anxious suspense possessed all tongues with the exception of one or two, which gave expression to an ungenerous doubt as to whether they were likely ever again to see either their money or the value. At the end, however, of that space of time, those unworthy mur murers were put to shame by the return of the wellprincipled object of those suspicions. Admiring his integrity, the Foreman drew up the basket which he had carefully fastened at the end of the line of handkerchiefs. The feelings of our fasting tourist in the cup board may be more easily imagined than described, while he overheard from his lurking place, such exclamations as the following uttered in au eager and authentic tone:

"What beautiful oysters !"

"And abundance of bread! He's a thoughtful fellow. What's that in the bottles ?" "Montmellick ale and cider !" said the Foreman.

"And here's a knife!" cried one juryman.

"And pepper l" exclaimed.

"And a napkin, and oyster knife, and two glasses !" exclaimed several voices in succession.

"And the remaining change !" cried the Foreman, holding up a small brown paper parcel, in which a few shillings and some copper money had been carefully wrapped up.

This final circumstance completed the admiration of the Jury, and it was proposed by the Foreman and carried by acclamation that the surplus should be handed to the oysterman as a testimony of their eateem for his punctuality and disinterestedness .-Accordingly the line of handkerchlefs with the basket and money were lowered from the window, and the, grateful evsterman departer after, telling them that he would, roturn, in the course, of the

of maintaining a selfish struggle for partial or individual interests, shall labor heart and hand for the peace and welfare of the whole."

Renewed applause interrupted the current of the Foreman's discourse, and it was only after a few minutes that he was permitted to proceed.

"At ail events, gentlemen, there is nothing to hinder us from trying the experiment, and setting our countrymen an example, for one night at least, of the triumph of social feeling over prejudice and opinion. My proposal is, therefore, that we draw closer around the fire, and each in succession either pay a fine of one shilling, or relate some amusing and characteristic tale, such as he may have gathered in the course of reading or experience, and conclude by singing a song for the entertainment of the company; and, in order that this may pro-cerd with all freedom, I move that no one shall take off-nce at what may be said, but that every one be at liberty to tell his story after his own fashion, with a carte blunche for the full utterance of every thing that may come into his mind, excepting of course questions of mero controversy, for which this is not the time nor the place, and for the introduction of which a fine of one shilling is to be imposed. I say this, not that I hold a man's opinions to be a matter of indifference, but merely that no feeling of restraint or awkwardness should embarrass the chain of the narrative, and consequently diminish the amusement of the listeners."

A fresh burst of applause announced the unanimous assent of all present to this proposal, and preparations were immediately made for carrying it pto effect. A fresh supply of turf was heaped upon the fire, the chairs were arranged in semicircular fashion around the hearth, and the Foreman was placed in the only arm-chair in the room, with the additional dignity of president, and full authority to decide all points of order which might arise. It being decided that the entertainment should commence with the president, a general silence fell upon the circle, while he spoke as follows :---

"Having lately, gentlemen, in the library of a learned friend of mine, fallen upon an unpublished. manuscript containing a very curious and interesting story, which I presume will be entirely new to you, I shall endeavor to relate it as accurately as my memory will allow."

(TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.)

"I love you like anything," said a young gardoner to his sweetheart, as he gently pressed her hand. "Ditto," said she returning the pressure.

The ardent lover, who was no scholar, was sorely puzzled to know the meaning of "ditto."

The next day, being at work with his father, he said :

" Father, what is the meaning of ' ditto ?" "Why," said the old man, " this 'ere's one cabbage head, ain't it?"

"Yes, father."

"Well, that 'ere's ditto."

"Draft it," ojaculated the indignant son, " then she called me a cabhage head."

"I Lord, what a cow !" was the approving remark of a testotal judge of Vermont after swallewing a potent punch, which had been offered to him an a-