



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. VIII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 1858.

No. 32.

THE BRIDGE OF TENACHELLE.

A LEGEND OF THE BARROW.
By Samuel Ferguson, LL.D.

The dawn of an autumn day was beginning to expose the havoc of a storm, the last gusts of which still shrieked through the stripped forests of Baun Regan, when two mounted fugitives appeared among its tangled and haggard recesses urging their horses over the plashy brakes and cumbered glades, at a pace which plainly told that they were flying for life or death. In the grey, uncertain twilight, as they flitted, wavering and swift, from shadow to shadow, it was barely distinguishable that one was a female; and, but for the deep panting of their exhausted horses, and the snapping and rustling of the leafy ruins under foot as they plunged down the thickly strewn alleys of the forest, they might have passed for the spirits of some stormy hunter and huntress, chasing the night shadows for their game, so ghostly, wan, and unsubstantial, seemed everything around them. But the assiduous hand of the horseman on the slackening reins of his companion, the whisperings of encouragement and assurance at every pause in their speed, and, above all, the frequent look behind, would soon have betrayed their mortal nature, their human passion, their love, and fear, and danger.

They were the lady Anna Darcy and the Earl of Kildare, who had fled together from Duamare, where he had been lately under arrest, and were now hastening to the Geraldine's country of Offaley. Their story is soon told; the noble prisoner had won the daughter of his keeper to aid in his escape, and to accompany his flight and fortunes.

By degrees, as the morning advanced, the evidence of their sufferings through the wet night they had passed became more and more apparent. The earl's plume hung dripping and torn over his brows; his cloak fluttered in rent shreds, or clung to his stained armour; his face was torn with briars, and his horse's flanks were as red from the high furze and goring thickets as from the spur; for they had attempted their passage by a horse-track of the deep forest, and had strayed in the tempestuous midnight from even that dangerous pathway.

It was a sad sight to look on such beauty as shone through the wretched plight of his companion, clad in so forlorn and comfortless a wreck of all that a tender woman needs upon an inclement journey. But, although the rain had beaten down her long hair till it hung heavily against her cheek, it had not weighed the rich curl out of it; nor had her eyes been dazzled into any dimness by the lightnings; her cheek was blanched, it might be, as much from the washing of the recent showers and chill dews as from apprehension; but neither fear, nor the violence of piercing winds and rain had subdued an unconquerable grace and stateliness that asserted its innate nobility over her whole person, relaxed although it was, and sinking under almost insupportable fatigue.

"I would give the best castle in Offaley," cried the earl, in deep distress and impatience, "for sight of the bridge of Tenachelle, with my ten true men upon the hill beyond. Hold up a little longer, dearest lady; had we crossed yonder ridge, we should see the Barrow beneath us, and that once passed, all would be well. Alas, for thy poor hands! how they tremble on those reins. Would to God that I could bear this in thy place."

"Better this," she replied, her faltering voice attesting how much she suffered, "better even this than what I fly from; and I am not yet so weary—although my hands are numbed upon this cold, damp bridle. I think more of my poor Sylvio's hardships!—and she patted the drooping neck of her palfrey, willing, perhaps, to hide a tear that she could not restrain, by bending aside. "Alas, my lord, the poor animal is failing momentarily. I shall never be able to urge him up the hill." While commiserating her palfrey's weariness, Lady Anna had turned her eyes from the face of her companion, and it was well that she did not see the sick and despairing pang that crossed his features, as he looked along the opening glade in the opposite direction; for, right between them and the yellow sunrise, there came down a party of horsemen, their figures and numbers distinctly marked against the sky, although still more than a mile distant; and, as the earl cast his eyes over the broad expanse of tree tops and green hills, he all at once saw them on the ridge of the horizon. "Lady Anna," said he, in a low voice strangely altered, "Anna, love, the road is here more level; let us hasten on."

"Hast seen any one, my lord?" she inquired hastily, rising herself at his words, and looking around in alarm. But the pursuers were already out of sight, within the shadow of the hill. "Is there any new danger, Gerald?" she again asked, as he put his hand to her reins, and shook out her palfrey into a canter in silence.

"None, dearest: no more danger than we have been in all the night—but, lash your horse,"

he cried with involuntary earnestness; "lash him now, love, and do not spare!" and then again, endeavoring to conceal the cause of his agitation—"If we be not at the bridge by dawn, my men may have been withdrawn out of sight, of the O'Moore's country; therefore, hurry on, for the sun is already up, and we may not find them there."

They strained up the hill at the top of the exhausted palfrey's speed, and the lady for a while seemed satisfied. "Why dost thou look behind so often, my lord?" she said at length, turning her head along with him.

"I see nothing but the tops of trees and the red sky."

"Nor do I, Anna," he replied: "but do not turn in the saddle; for, weary as thy palfrey is, he needs all thy care; hold him up dearest—on, on!"

"We are pursued, then," she cried, turning deadly pale, and the earl's countenance for a moment bespoke hesitation whether to stop and support her at all hazards or still to urge her on.

"We are pursued," she cried; "I know it, and we must be overtaken. Oh! leave me, Gerald! leave me, and save thyself!" The earl said not a word, but shook up her palfrey's head once more, and drawing his dagger, goaded him with its point till the blood sprang.

"Oh, my poor Sylvio!" was all the terrified girl could say, as stung with pain and reeling from weakness, the creature put forth its last and most desperate efforts.

They had struggled on for another minute, and were now topping the last eminence between them and the river, when a shout rang out of the woods behind. The lady shrieked—the earl struck the steel deeper into her palfrey's shoulder, and stooping to his own saddle-bow, held him up with his left hand, bending to the laborious task till his head was sunk between the horses' necks.

"Anna!" he cried. "I can see nothing for Sylvio's mane. Look out between the trees, and tell me if thou seest my ten men on the hill of Clemgaune."

"I see," replied the lady, "the whole valley flooded from side to side, and the trees standing like islands in the water."

"But my men, Anna? my men! look out beyond the bridge."

"The bridge is a black stripe upon the flood; I cannot see the arches."

"But, beyond the bridge," he cried, in the intervals of his exertion, now becoming every moment more and more arduous; for the spent palfrey was only kept from falling by the sheer strength of his arm—"beyond the bridge, beside the pollard elm—my ten men—are they not there?"

"Alas! no my lord, I cannot see them. But, Mother of Mercies!" she shuddered, looking around—"I see them now behind us!" Another shout of mingled voices, execrating and exulting sounded from the valley as she spoke.

The earl struck his brow with his gauntleted hand, yielding for the first time to his excess of grief and anguish, for he had raised his head, and had seen all along the opposite hills the bare, unbroken solitude that offered neither hope of help nor means of escape. Yet girding himself up for a last effort, he drew his horse close to the palfrey's side.

"Dear Anna," he said, "cast thine arms now round my neck, and let me lift thee on before me; black Memnon will bear us both like the wind—nay dally not!" for the sensitive girl shrunk for a moment from the proposal; "remember thy promise in the chapel on the rock."

And he passed his arm around her waist, and, at one effort, lifted her from the saddle; while she, blushing deeply, yet yielding to the imperative necessity of the moment, clasped her hands round his neck, and aided in drawing herself up upon the black charger's shoulder. The palfrey, the moment it lost the supporting hand of the earl, staggered forward, and, though relieved of its burden, fell headlong to the ground. The pursuers were now so near that they could see plainly what had been done, and their cries expressed the measure of their rage and disappointment; for the strong war-horse, although doubly burdened, yet thundered down the hill at a pace that promised to keep his start; and hope once more revived in the fainting hearts of the earl and the lady.

"Now, thanks to Heaven!" he cried, as he found the powerful charger stretching out under them with renewed vigor; "thank Heaven that struck down the slow-paced loiterer in this good time! Now, Memnon, bear us but over yonder hill, and earn a stall of carved oak and a rack of silver! Ah, the good steed! thou shalt feed him from thine own white hands yet, lady, in the courts of Castle Ley! Look back now, love Anna, and tell me what they do behind."

The lady raised her head from his shoulder, and cast a glance along the road they had traversed.

"I see them plying whip and spur," she said, "but they are not gaining on us. Red Raymond rides foremost, and Owen and the three

rangers; I know them all: but, oh, Mary mother, shield me! I see my father and Sir Robert Verdun; oh, speed thee, good horse, speed!" and she hid her face again upon his breast, and they descended the hill which overhung the Barrow.

The old channel of the river was no longer visible; the flood had overspread its banks, and far across the flat holms on the opposite side swept along in a brown, eddying and rapid deluge. The bridge of Tenachelle spanned from the nearer bank to a raised causeway beyond, the solid masonry of which, resisting the overland inundations, sent the flood with double impetuosity through the choked arches over its usual bed; for there the main current and the backwater rushing together, heaved struggling round the abutments, till the water was swelled and surged over the range-wall and fell upon the road-wall of the bridge itself with solid shocks, like seas upon a ship's deck.

Eager for passage, as a man might be whose life and the life of his dearer self were at stake, yet, for an instant, the earl checked his horse, as the long line of peninsula road lay before him—a high tumultuous sea on one side; a roaring gulf of whirlpools, foam and gushing cataracts on the other. The lady gave one look at the scene, and sank her head to the place whence she had raised it. As he felt her clasp him more closely and draw herself up for the effort, his heart shamed him to think that he had bleached from a danger which a devoted girl was willing to dare: he drove his spurs into his horse's flanks, and Memnon sprang forward on the bridge. The roadway returned no hollow reverberation now, for every arch was gorged to the keystone with a compact mass of water, and, in truth, there was a gurgling and hissing as the river was sucked in, and a rushing roar where it spouted out in level waterfalls, that would have drowned the trampling of a hundred hoofs.

Twice did the waves sweep past them, rolling at each stroke the ruins of a breach in the upper range wall over the road, till the stones dashed against the opposite masonry; and twice were both covered with the spray flung from the abutments; but Memnon bore them on through stream and ruin, and they gained the causeway safe.

The earl's heart lightened as he found himself again on solid ground, though still plunging girth deep at times through the flooded hollows; but they passed the embankment also in safety, and were straining up the hill beyond, when the cries of the pursuers, which had been heard over all the storm of waters ever since their entrance on the bridge, suddenly ceased. There was the loud report of an arquebuss, and Memnon leaped off all his feet, plunged forward, reeled and dropped dead.

Red Raymond's arquebuss was still smoking, as he sprang foremost of his troop upon the bridge. Behind him came Lord Darcy, furious with rage and exultation.

"Secure him first," he cried, "secure him before he gets from under the fallen horse—bind him hand and foot! Ah, villain, he shall hang from the highest oak in Glan Malir! and, for her, Sir Robert, she shall be thy wife—I swear it by the bones of my father, before that risen sun hath set! Come on!" and he gave his horse head.

Suddenly his reins were seized on right and left by his attendants.

"Villains, let go my reins!" he cried; "would ye aid the traitor in his escape?" and, striking the rowsels deep into his steed, he made him burst from their grasp; but, almost at the same instant, he pulled up with a violence that threw him on his haunches, for a dozen voices shouted, "back, Raymond, back!" and a cry arose that the bridge was breaking, and the long line of roadway did suddenly seem to heave and undulate with the undulating current. It was well for Lord Darcy that he reined in; for the next instant, and before his horse's fore feet had ceased to paw the air, down went the whole three arches with a crash, swallowed up and obliterated in the irresistible waters. Among the sheets of spray and flashing water thrown up by the falling ruin and the whirlpools of foamy froth from the disjointed masonry, and the tumult of driving timbers, and the general disruption of road and river, the musqueteer and his horse were seen sweeping for one moment down the middle of the stream, then rolled over and beaten under water, and tumbled in the universal vortex out of sight for ever.

Stunned, horrified, his horse trembling in every limb, and backing from the perilous verge abrupt at his feet, the baron sat gazing at the torrent that now rushed past him. The frightful death he had escaped—the danger he was then in—the sudden apparition of the river's unbridled majesty, savage and bare, and exulting in its lonely strength, all the emotions of awe, terror and amazement crowded on his soul together.—His daughter and her lover, it might be her husband or her paramour, lay within a gun-shot upon the hill before his eyes, for Anna had thrown

herself by the side of the fallen and unextricated earl; but he saw them not, he thought not of them. He got off his horse like a man who awakens from sleep-walking, and grasped the nearest of his servants by the arm, as if seeking to make sure of the reality of their presence.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "this is a perilous flood, Geoffrey; we must have the scarp of the ditch looked to. But how is this?—Ho, villains! where is my daughter? O fiends of hell, am I here!" and he started at once to a full consciousness of his situation.

He tore off his helmet and heavy breast-plate, but his servants crowded round him and withheld him from the river, for he cried that he would swim the torrent himself if none else would.

"Dogs," he cried, "take off your hands would you aid the rebellious girl—the traitor's leman—the leman of a Geraldine!—Raymond, re-load your arquebuss—red hound where is he? Ha! drowned? O slaves and cowards, to let him be lost before your eyes and stand idly by! Owen Garreboyle, thou art my foster-brother; Sir Robert Verdun, thou hast been my son in bounties numberless: will you see me robbed of my child in my old age, nor strike a stroke for gratitude or fealty? Is there no man here will venture in for the love of my father's son?"

At this last appeal his foster brother threw off his cloak.

"Give me your hands, comrades," he said to his companions, "for, though the Barrow, were a river of fire, I would go through it for the love of Mac Roger More."

"Not so," cried the distracted old man; "not so, my trusty kinsman; enough has been lost already without thee, my bold and loyal brother! But, Sir Robert Verdun, I had looked for other conduct from thee to-day; there is the lady that I would have given to thee this morning—there, sitting by her paramour upon the hill-side; and I tell thee I would rather let her marry him, Geraldine and rebel as he is, than bestow her on a faint-hearted craven, as thou hast this day shown thyself to be."

"You wrong me, my lord," replied the knight; "you wrong me vilely. I would rather be the merest Irishman in Connaught than son-in-law of such a cruel tyrant and unnatural father."

"Get thee to Connaught, then, ungrateful traitor! Go!" cried the enraged baron; and the knight, turning indignantly from his side, was soon lost to sight amongst the overhanging woods.

But, as he disappeared, there rose into view on the opposite hill a party of troopers, making at a rapid pace for the river.

"They are the traitor's men," cried Darcy, "they will rescue him before my eyes!—and my child—oh, would that she were rather dead!—Shoot, villains!—let fly a flight of arrows, and slay them where they lie!"

But he knew, as he uttered the unnatural command, that they were far beyond arrow-range, and that, even were they not so, no man of his company would bend a bow in obedience to it. A few shafts were discharged against the party descending the hill, but they fell short and disappeared in the water or among the rushes and underwood of the flooded holm.

"Gunpowder and lead alone can reach them," cried Garreboyle. "But the arquebuss is gone, and here is nought save wood and feather. Let them shout," for a shout of scorn and defiance sounded across the flood, as the servants of the earl relieved him from the fallen horse, and found him, past hope, unburt—"let them shout: we shall meet yet with a fairer field between us. My lord, they are mounted again, and going."

"Let them go," said Darcy, without raising his eyes to witness his departure. He sullenly resumed his armor, sprang in silence upon his horse, struck him with the spurs, and turning his head homeward, galloped back by the way he came.

REV. DR. CAHILL

ON CAPTAIN ROCK IN ENGLAND.

(From the Dublin Catholic Telegraph.)

If Dean Swift were now alive, he would rejoice to see strictly fulfilled in England his allegory of Gulliver's Travels. The profound and witty Allegorist described one country where the inhabitants were so gigantic, their dress and furniture so prodigiously large, that, though Gulliver was a fine fat Englishman, sixteen stone weight and upwards of six feet high, the ladies carried him in their muffs like a little kitten, threw him up in the air like a frog, and pitched him about their drawing-rooms, from one to another, like an apple. On one occasion he was nearly drowned in a cream-jug at breakfast. In other countries the people were so small, their beasts so minute and their houses so little, that Gulliver had to sleep in the open air: it took five hundred of their bullocks to draw him from place to place; and at luncheon every day he consumed about two hundred of their sheep!—How prophetic was this history of Gulliver!

What small and what large proportions does England of late assume, according to the size of the nations with which she is in connection! So large is England in reference to Greece or Portugal, that one of our three deckers fills the whole bay of Corinth; the Pass of Thermopylae, where Leonidas with one hundred Grecians stood, is not wide enough to admit freely even one Scotch corporal or English sergeant; and the mouth of the Tagus is too narrow for two English gun-brigs to ride abreast to Lisbon! And yet, on the other hand, the French people are so large in reference to our nation, that Napoleon the Third can, with ease, stow away our House of Lords in one of his surtout pockets, and place the House of Commons in the other. It is even stated in the very best circles in Paris that the Emperor, by way of experiment, has actually, within the last month, placed Lord John Russell and Lord Clarendon in two waistcoat pockets, and that Lord Palmerston was seen peeping out from the Emperor's fob!

The reckless conduct of England since the year 1815, has raised up throughout her entire domain an accumulation of injustice, of mis-legislation at home, while it has created irrepressible anger abroad: and modern circumstances, guided by all-ruling Providence, have brought about such a social, political and religious dislocation throughout the entire machinery of the State, as to derange all her institutions, lessen her prestige, degrade her name, and threaten her very existence. The countries which England lately despised and revolutionized, are every day becoming bound by national ties, knit into firm social or family alliances, and growing into naval and military power; while she, beyond all doubt, has lost her former ground, and has palpably fallen from her former admitted pre-eminence.—Paris and Rome are now inseparably connected. Austria and Naples are about to cement a family union; and Spain has already claimed and received from the Emperor the pledged assurance of permanent friendly protection. Compare this modern compact of nations with the present position of England, isolated from Southern Europe from her past conduct; her armies decimated, her treasury wasted, her subjects discontented. See her government at home and abroad, a succession of insult and mistake; her military routine a system of blundering; and her Indian legislation marked with bigotry, rapaciousness, and incapacity. Captain Rock could not desire to behold England in a situation more suited to his professional development, that is, England quarrelling with the surrounding kingdoms; all wrong; and standing before mankind like the sugar-loaf, with the small end downwards, and ready to tumble in irretrievable disaster.

The successful bombardment of Canton may for a while throw dust in the eyes of Englishmen, in order to divert the public indignation from our culpable conduct in India; but the tens of thousands of our countrymen who, in the coming year, will find a grave along the banks of the Ganges, when added to the tens of millions of pounds sterling expended in this disastrous struggle, will yet bring the people to their senses, and will remove the veil which now hides the flagrant mislegislation, and the furious bigotry which have led to our Indian melancholy catastrophe. The decline of our cotton market (an event not improbable in the presence of a growing market elsewhere); a money panic, such as England has lately felt; and then the presence of the National debt, will yet tell a tale which, more than all the reasoning of Aristotle, will convince the English people of the ruinous policy of England throughout all her dependencies. The old system of English law, which was founded in these countries on penal exclusion and on class patronage, has laid the foundation of the present misfortunes of England; like an old family coach trying to compete with the velocity of steam communication, she finds herself unequal to the surrounding kingdoms in her legislative or strategical character: and it is true to say that before she can recover her prestige (if she can ever do so) and resume her former Imperial position, she must make a radical, an organic change, as well in the framing of new laws as in the impartial administration of the old. It will require a man as indomitable as Castlereagh, and an intellect as commanding as the official genius of Pitt, to produce the changes which, by common consent, are essential to the future well-being of England. Let us take, from a heap of materials, some few facts, which are known to every one from our newspaper reports: and the investigation and the settlement of these cases will, like a decision in common law, settle all other cases of the same class. And we shall take these cases from different parts of the English empire, in order to demonstrate the wide-spread uniformity of her bigoted, her unjust legislation; and her irritating and partial-executive.

During our campaign in the Crimea, the English sappers visited the quarters of the Catholic soldiers; and distributed there the most offensive