



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XXV.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1875.

NO. 39.

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TALES OF THE JURY-ROOM.

Epams 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 EIGHTH JURYMAN'S TALE.

MR. TIBBOT O'LEARY, THE CURIOUS.

CHAPTER I.—(CONTINUED.)

Early on the following morning, Nash went into his master's room as usual, to take his clothes to brush. While he emptied the pockets and laid the contents on the table, Mr. O'Leary awoke by the jingling of keys and half-pence, turned his head and asked: "Well, Nash, are we likely to have rain?" "I never seen such a mornin', sir. The sky is all one cloud from east to west, an' so low that I could almost tetch it with my hand. I don't know from Adam, what we'll do about the platies; the men won't be able to give half a day with the weather, a clean loss of half a guinea at the last."

never had such a ride in my life. I wonder is he cracked in airmest Dear knows, if it wasn't that I'm chread which might happen to him, I'd be apt to let him folly his course alone. This day flogs all I ever hear." After riding about a quarter of a mile further, Mr. O'Leary suddenly pulled up his horse and said: "Tom, isn't that the avenue leading to Mr. O'Connor's?" "Tis, sir." "I think we might as well turn in and ask for shelter there, until this shower passes, at all events." "The Lord be praised, he's comin' to again." Nash added to himself, as he alighted and opened the gate. They followed the windings of the path for nearly a quarter of an hour, amid the wildest and barest scenery, at the end of which time they reached a cottage somewhat superior in appearance to the general description of farm houses in the country, with at least a sufficient degree of decoration about the doors and windows to intimate that the inmates were not compelled to be at all times toiling at the spade or the ploughshare. As the door, which was on that side of the house on which the wind did not then blow, stood open at the moment, our travellers alighted and entered the porch without ceremony. Here they stood but a few moments, when one of the side doors opened and a hale looking man, of respectable appearance, presented himself before the visitors. Mr. O'Leary apologized for their intrusion, talked of the rain, and mentioned his name, at the same time looking out and expressing a hope (which Nash could not help thinking either strangely inconsistent, or very insincere,) that it would shortly clear.

de rebus Hibernicis has thoroughly convinced me though I admit his conjecture to be plausible as his evidences are ingenious. During the delivery of this speech, Mr. O'Leary gazed from side to side, opened wide his eyelids in astonishment, and, from time to time, gradually moved his chair an inch or two nearer to the speaker. "What a woman!" he exclaimed in his own mind, and then added aloud: "I cannot help thinking, ma'am, that one who is so familiar with the theories of others, cannot but have formed some conjecture of her own, upon a subject which has deservedly occupied so much of her attention." "Why, I cannot but say I have been thinking of it," said Miss Moriarty, "though I have not yet ventured to mention it to any one, there is such danger of a person's being anticipated. However, for all I have heard of Mr. O'Leary, I am sure he would be incapable of taking so unwholesome an advantage." Mr. O'Leary acknowledged the exemption in his favour by a low bow, accompanied by a look of horror at the very idea of such baseness. "My idea, then, is, that they were built for none of the ends I have mentioned," said Miss Moriarty. "You are aware that mankind have, in all ages, been remarkable for a love of the arduous, and that no pursuits have been carried on with greater zeal, expense, or perseverance, than those which held our least hope of ever yielding any profitable result; and the most important practical discoveries in science have often been attained in the pursuit of some visionary and unattainable end. The search after the philosopher's stone led to the discovery of Glauber's salts—the study of judicial astrology produced those elaborate calculations in old times which are of such importance to the astronomer; and the desire to effect a North West passage conducted the voyagers of England to the magnetic pole. Now, my theory is, that some philanthropic patron of letters in old time, observing this disposition in his species, had those round towers built with no other view than that they should exercise the research and ingenuity of the learned in succeeding ages, and, by furnishing an insatiable subject of inquiry, perpetuate the study of Irish antiquities through all succeeding time." The astonishment and admiration of Mr. O'Leary had been reaching a climax, during the delivery of this ingenious speech, at the conclusion of which he again sprang from his seat, and seemed about to fling himself on his knees in an ecstasy of delight, but, recollecting himself in time, he drew back with a respectful bow, and remained in his chair. At the same instant, the master of the mansion returned in time to prevent any repetition of such ecstasies, and the conversation became more general and less abstruse. In some time after, dinner was announced, and served up with a degree of comfort which made the recollection of his own solitary meals at Chore Abbey, less tolerable, in the comparison to Mr. O'Leary's inward eye, than they had hitherto been. The worthy farmer's family was numerous, and did cordial justice to the cheer which was set before them. After the cloth was removed, and grace said, Mr. O'Connor turned to his guest, and made the following speech: "I don't know, Mr. O'Leary, whether you are a patron of those modern fashions which they have begun to introduce, such as not drinking healths after dinner, bowing as if you had not a joint below the shoulder, and such like; but for our parts, we still keep up the good old custom here, and I hope you will have no objection to join us?" "I can assure you, sir," said Mr. O'Leary, with equal cordiality, "that I am no friend to modern innovations, which very often savour more of self-sufficiency than of politeness. As the poet says: We think our father's foils, so wise we grow, Our younger sons, no doubt, will think us so." "Ah!" said Mr. O'Connor, shaking his head, "many a palmer those two lines cost me, when I used to write them in my copy-book at school." The glasses were now changed, and the next ten minutes were occupied with a confused babble of "Mrs. O'Connor, your health," "Miss Moriarty," "Miss O'Connor," "Mr. O'Connor," "Mr. O'Leary," "Mr. O'Leary, your health," and a perpetual ducking of about a dozen heads around the table, which would have had a somewhat comical appearance to any person not immediately interested. During their ride home, and for months after, Tom Nash observed an extraordinary change in the deportment of his master. He became more talkative than usual, began to show more solicitude about his dress, shaved every day, found fault with everything, staid little in his museum, talked much of repairs and alterations about the house, and acted, on the whole, as if some strange influence was at work within his mind. At length the secret came out, one morning, when Nash was in the act of carrying a bag of seed sets into the back parlor. "Tom," said Mr. O'Leary, "you must not put oats or potatoes into that parlor any more." "Why so, master? what hurt is it doin' there?" "No matter. She mightn't like it." "Is it old Nelly, sir?" "No, your mistress." "My missiz!" Nash exclaimed, dropping the bag of oats. "Yes—didn't I tell you I am going to be married!" For nearly a quarter of an hour, the master and man remained gazing in each other's countenances, without uttering a syllable. At length, the latter found words to say in a tone of the profoundest sympathy: "The Lord preserve us, master!" "Amen, Tom!" sighed Mr. O'Leary, and not another sentence was exchanged between them upon the subject, until Mrs. O'Leary, clad in Miss Moriarty, was introduced, amid rejoicings that resounded far and near, to the venerable mansion which, it was the owner's will and pleasure, should thenceforth call her mistress. For a considerable time after her marriage, Nash observed nothing in the demeanour or conversation of his master, which could lead him to suspect that he regretted the step which he had taken. Mrs. O'Leary was all that could be wished in every respect, either by master or servant, and, indeed, it surprised Nash's great deal more than he cared to let Mr. O'Leary understand, how she came to be so easily satisfied. "Matters continued in this even course, until they received a second visit from Mr.

Geoffrey Gunn, now "Counsellor," Gunn, who, on hearing the humorous antiquarian, repeat his happiness for the hundredth time, exclaimed: "I can tell you then, that if ladies are curious, they sometimes know how to keep a secret. Did you hear about 'Captain' and his wife?" "No—what of them?" "A most extraordinary story they tell indeed—They had been living together in perfect harmony, it seems, for more than twenty years, when she died, and it was for the first time discovered, that she had exactly got two faces—one behind, and one before." "Nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. O'Leary. "It may be so," replied his friend. "I do not answer for the reality of the story." "I know not how the truth may be, I say the tale, as 'twas said to me." "If it be true," said Tibbot, "I think the worst part of the affair, was the keeping it concealed from her husband." As he said this, he could not help observing that his wife looked uneasy and confused, and a strange doubt rushed into his mind, which re-awakened his original folly in more than all its former force.—The conversation ended; but for a long time after, Tibbot did not retain the untroubled peace of mind which had till now accompanied his steps. The extreme amiability of his helpmate, had won all his confidence, but it made him uneasy to perceive that Mrs. O'Leary did not behave towards him with an equal absence of reserve. There was evidently something prying on her mind, and the more pains he took to remove every thing that could in the least degree interfere with her peace and comfort, the more she seemed to feel it. "I don't know what to do about it, Tom," he said one day, addressing Nash, who was the only person in whom he could repose a confidence. "She scarcely eats a morsel, and instead of going off as I thought it would, it is only growing worse and worse every day." "Ah, murther!" said Nash, "don't be vexin' yourself about it. You don't know the women. They'd keep on dyin' that way from the age of fifteen to a hundred. The only way in the world is to let 'em alone an' leave 'em to themselves. The more notice that tuk of 'em, the worse they gets. They don't know their selves what is ails 'em half their time. Take it from me, 'tis never any good to be futtin' 'em, more especially if you let 'em observe it." Mr. O'Leary adopted Tom's advice, and found his account in doing so. For a considerable time after, he observed that the less he appeared to notice the anxiety which preyed on Mrs. O'Leary's mind, the more visibly it diminished. Years rolled away, and after a life spent in the most exemplary discharge of all her duties as a wife and mother, Mrs. O'Leary felt her death to be at hand. In disposing her mind with all the tranquillity which an untroubled conscience afforded, to enter on its final passage to a better world, her faithful spouse took notice that something of her long forgotten and mysterious melancholy, would occasionally cast a gloom upon her manner. At length, finding her end approach, she called him to her bedside, and after saying much to him in the way of consolation and advice, as to the care of the house and children, she added with an appearance of anxiety: "I have now but one request to add. It is that my head dress, such as it is, be not removed after my death; that you will not yourself uncover my head, nor suffer any one else to do so. I have a particular objection to it. Great and good minds, my dear Tibbot, are always superior to the mean vice of curiosity. I am sure I need say no more to you, except to add that the injury will be your own, if you neglect to comply with this, my last injunction." In the first access of sorrow, for the loss of so faithful, and so amiable a partner, Mr. O'Leary found nothing very arduous in the accomplishment of her dying wishes. After the first day, however, when nature had exhausted herself in fits of mourning, and intervals of quiet reflection would succeed the tumult of the widower's grief, he could not prevent the question repeatedly presenting itself to his mind—what in the world could be her motive for desiring that her head-dress might not be removed? In palliation of any negligence, which the worthy antiquarian might have committed in resisting such suggestions, it should be remembered that a great portion of his life had been spent in researches, having chiefly for their end the gratification of that foible, on which his excellent wife in dying, had imposed so grievous a burthen. By continually recurring, and meeting at each fresh assault a fainter resistance, it obtained at length, a complete mastery over his mind. It was in vain he thought of Blue Board, and a thousand other awful warnings of the kind. In the throes of his curiosity, desiring rather to gain an accomplice than a counsellor, he confided his agonies to Nash, and desired his opinion. "Be his an' be dat," said Nash, who, in a matter which appeared to him indifferent on the score of morality, considered rather what would be agreeable to his master, than what was most in accordance with the laws of chivalric honor—"dat I may never die in sin, but I'd have a dawny peep." "But then her last words, Tom—her dying wishes." "Aye, sure she never'll know it." "Well, said Mr. O'Leary, much shocked, "I am sure you do not consider the meaning of what you say. I wish indeed she had never given such an injunction, for it is probable I never should have thought for a moment about her head dress. Could I trust you, Tom, with what I suspect to be the true cause of her injunction?" "Could you trust me, master?" "I believe I can. Well then, Tom, I think the true reason is—" he looked around, and then whispered in horrified accents in his ear—"that my wife had two faces!" "Erra, how!" "I often remarked some mystery about her on that point. However, I who have all my life been so free from this ridiculous foible, must not yield myself to it now." "Wishes, the dear knows," said Nash, whose curiosity was now wound up to as high a pitch as that of his master. "I wouldn't have the late scruple in life about it. If it was anything that would bring her any harm, or keep any good from her, the case would be different." "That is true, Tom," said his master. "She told

me that it would be to my own injury. Now, were any other interests at stake, I wouldn't for the world—but as it can injure no one but myself—Come along, you must assist me in this awful enquiry." They entered the room in which lay the remains of the poor lady, Mr. O'Leary's mind filled with the story of Geoffrey Gunn, which had occupied his thoughts since he first heard it, a great deal oftener than he would have wished Mr. O'Leary to suspect. Having excluded, on different pretexts, every other individual, they proceeded to the task of removing the head-dress. A cold perspiration already stood on Nash's brow, as he lent his aid in the investigation, holding the candle in his hand, while his master, with a countenance expressing the most horrible anticipations, removed the mysterious head-dress. Imagine his amazement, when he disclosed to view— At this instant, some gravel was thrown from without, against the window of the Jury Room.—Almost all started, as if they held the chain of a galvanic battery, so highly were their nerves excited by the situation into which the Eighth Jurymen had brought his principal characters. "What can that be?" cried a Juror. The Foreman arose and lifted up the window. "Who's there?" he asked, after a pause. "Tis no body, only myself, your honor," replied a well-known voice from below. "I'm come to know if your honors are done with the bottles and things." Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the fleeting nature of all human gratitude, than the effect which this announcement produced in the Jury-room. All the good offices and merits of the poor oysterman seemed forgotten in the general burst of indignation which arose at his interrupting the story in so critical a juncture. "Tell the fellow to be hanged!" cried one. "T'would be a good deed," cried another, "to break one of his bottles upon his own head." "Give the scoundrel his glasses, and send him about his business," exclaimed a third. The Foreman, who, as chairman, preserved the greatest degree of moderation, here interposed, and caused the line of handkerchiefs to be once more lowered for the basket, observing that, in a world where so much intentional evil passed without any reprehension whatever, it was rather hard to make much account of what was purely accidental. The oysterman being satisfied, the Eighth Jurymen resumed his tale. Gentlemen, said he, I fear after all this indignation that you will be much disappointed at the conclusion of my story. All that Mr. O'Leary discovered on removing the awful head-dress, was, that the fine hair of which he had so often expressed an enthusiastic admiration, was only his wife's by purchase. The good lady had no more than the average quantity of hair, and less than the average quantity of hair, and, sharing the weakness of the lady, who, on a like occasion, charged her handmaid to give her the little red! she feared that it should be known, even after her death, that she was indebted for almost her only personal attraction to— a wig. The Eighth Juror having concluded his story, there was a general call for his song; which, in order to avoid the forfeit, he gave, after a little hesitation, as follows: 'Tis it is the Shannon's stream, Brightly glancing, brightly glancing, See, on the ruddy beam Upon its waters dancing! Thus returned from travel vain, Years of exile, years of pain, To see old Shannon's face again, Oh the bliss entrancing! Hail, our own majestic stream, Flowing ever, flowing ever, Silent in the morning beam, Our own beloved river!