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THE IRISH WIDOW'S SON;

OR,

THE PIKEMEN OF NINETY-EIGHT

BY CON. O'LEARY.

(From the Boston Pilot.)

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued.)

That cheer was taken up by their comrades whom they joined, and many a loyal British heart quailed as it reached their ears.

The first division of the "rebels" was now engaged with the enemy. McCracken gallantly led them on.

They advanced to meet their foes in close columns of twenty. About 800 musketeers were appointed to the front. These were the best marksmen, and contained every man in Cormac's corps who bore a musket. McCracken readily recognized Cormac and his friends, and looked his welcome. It was all he could then do.

Whenever the insurgents came in sight of the British forces, they commenced firing in steady order, and continued till within a hundred yards of the army. The British troops met this onslaught by a steady increasing fire. Some disorder appeared in their ranks as they heard the cheering, and saw Cormac's party rush forward to join the insurgents' attacking column. Having approached the troops so closely, it was evidently McCracken's intention to dislodge them from their position in the churchyard. During the fighting necessary for the attainment of this object, the insurgents fought like lions. They were exposed for more than hour to the deadly effects of the cannon used so mercilessly on their ranks by the soldiers.

Cormac beheld some of the bravest of his followers fall dead at his feet. At one time a rush was made by troops under Colonel Lumley, to prevent the occupation of the churchyard. Cormac observed this, and instantly made a wheel with about fifty of his men. He led them on to a sharp engagement. In the thick of the fight he was completely surrounded by the troops, and the encounter became sanguinary. Hand-to-hand the men on both sides were engaged, and Cormac felt a fierceness within him he never experienced before. A dragoon made a slash at him with his drawn sword. Cormac narrowly escaped the blow, which had been aimed at his shoulder. His men got partly divided and confused, as the troops with which he was engaged were reinforced.

Phil Dolan kept near to Cormac, and wherever the flag of green waved, there the bloodiest conflict ensued. One of the field-pieces was ordered immediately to be brought forward. At the first discharge of grape shot, three yeomen—one of them belonging to Mackenzie's body—two artillerymen and five dragoons were left dead on the spot. On its second discharge, the piece was disabled at its own recoil. Nothing daunted, Cormac's noble followers pressed onward to the goal, encountering a vigorous resistance from the artillery, who kept up a constant and well-directed fire. A shot from a musket, aimed either at Phil Dolan or at the colors he bore, smashed the flag-staff, and the brave fellow fell. His father was the first to observe what happened, and sprang forward. In his way to reach his son, he aimed a deadly thrust at the musketeer with a pike, and literally transfixed him.

In an moment more, Phil had sprung to his feet, amid a loud and deafening hurrah. The gallant young fellow caught a sword from a wounded soldier, and, with the flag in one hand and the sword in the other, sprang forward toward the churchyard wall. A rush was made, and the British troops reeled, fell back, and vacated their position! The advantage thus gained was immense, and compelled the royal troops to withdraw their cannon from that point. No wonder that Maxwell, an English authority, was forced to exclaim: "That the rebels fought with great determination at the battle of Antrim, is not to be denied."

As the enemy evacuated that portion of the town, they concentrated themselves in the lower part; for the second division, under McCracken, had now entered by Bow Lane, bringing with them their remaining cannon, with which they opened fire on the infantry stationed at the castle gate. Here Lumley charged the pikemen at the head of his cavalry. Pat Dolan had about fifty men under his command, and the resistance this body offered to the General was severe and obstinate. His object was to cover the retreat of the cannon, from the churchyard to the castle gate. About eighty dragoons took part in this action, by galloping furiously against the pikemen. They were also exposed to a fusillade from behind the walls of the churchyard, occupied by the rebels. They broke the rebel column, but the rebels

soon formed again, and left seventeen of them dead upon the street, and about forty wounded. Fifty horses were killed, although the action only lasted a few minutes; some say two, others three.

The very flower of the English engaged in this fight. The officers who made the charge with Colonel Lumley, were Major Seddon, Capt. Baker, Cornet Dunne, Cornet Reid, and a Mr. Gamble, a friend of Mackenzie's, who belonged to the yeomanry.

Dunne and Gamble were killed on the spot; the former shot through the heart, and the latter perforated with pikes, his horse being shot under him. Quartermaster Simpson was likewise killed in this bloody encounter. Colonel Lumley and Major Seddon were wounded.

Both cavalry and yeomanry retreated; the latter taking possession of Lord Massarene's gate. Lord O'Neill and a clergyman had remained at the gate during the whole of this terrific struggle.

Pat Dolan was badly wounded by a shot in the left arm. Although the blood streamed down his clothes, he heeded nothing but the work in which he was engaged. It was the action of the pikemen, and Dolan thought nothing of his own safety. He was soon recognized, and received assistance from two of his men.

He was weak from the loss of blood, yet he showed his anxiety for those who had beaten back the British troops, by his earnest and oft-repeated inquiries concerning how the battle stood.

The Kings forces were now concentrated in the lower part of the town, protected by the town hall, and by the houses on either side of the street. The street is large enough for the action of cavalry, and the artillery could sweep it from end to end.

These positions offered a means of security to the soldiers, and almost defied any power to take them. Nevertheless, McCracken determined to make the trial. He made it, and succeeded!

The insurgents were again and again repulsed, whole lanes being made in their ranks.

In one of these terrific hail-storms from British cannon, the gallant Phil Dolan fell, pierced in four different parts of the body.

The spot on which he fell was frightfully exposed to fire, yet John Mullan sprang into the middle of the storm and caught the riddled flag. With the greatest difficulty he loosened the death-grasp of the dauntless young Irish hero, who grasped it with the gripe of death.

As the insurgents advanced up to the very muzzle of the enemy's guns, Col. Lumley, who was badly wounded, seeing the loss he had sustained in his charge against the valorous pikemen, ordered a retreat, and the guns to be abandoned.

In the retreat, many of the yeomanry were detached from their comrades, and, as they scampered into places of safety, a rush was made by a man from the rebel ranks, right into their midst.

It was poor Mike Glinty, who had discovered Mackenzie. With a yell like an Indian, he made a desperate thrust with a pike at the yeomanry Captain.

Mackenzie was quick enough to see that the aim was made at him, and, with a well-aimed blow, struck the pike from Glinty's hand. Mike sprang on his opponent, and hurled him to the ground. Both tumbled and wrestled for a minute, when a shot, delivered with unerring aim, reached Mackenzie's head.

John Mullan had observed the jeopardy of Mike, and, without waiting to reach him with assistance, knelt and fired. Mackenzie's hold loosened, and Mike sprang to his feet, shouting—

"Pip-pip-perish, did-dam-dam-nation. Hurrah for pip-pip-poor-r-r old!" and poor, faithful, true-hearted Mike fell, pierced to the heart.

When shot, he literally bounded in the air and fell dead, without uttering a groan.

Not so Mackenzie; death was not half so kind to him as to the poor natural. He lay deserted, writhing and moaning in intense pain, calling on some one to put an end to his existence; but no one heard him. After two hours' intolerable suffering, he lay an undistinguished corpse on the bloody streets of Antrim.

The soldiers continued their retreat, and half an hour afterwards McCracken was master of the town!

The clergyman who remained with Lord O'Neill, urged that nobleman to leave; but the latter, not taking his advice, was killed by a thrust from a pike.

The clergyman, in company with Mr. Staples, another captain of yeomanry, and member for the county, got into a boat, rowed across Lough Neagh to the county Tyrone, and informed General Knox, at Dungannon, that Antrim was lost to the King. After minutely relating to him the events that had taken place, the General assembled 1500 yeomanry, and prevented the rebels of the county Derry from joining with the successful insurgents of Antrim.

Those of the insurgents whom Orr held to-

gether, were taken to Randalstown, but nothing was likely to happen there just then, and the men separated.

Now occurred one of those mysterious and unfortunate turns of war that appear to be irreconcilable with the success of insurgents.

The rebels at Antrim were about being joined by others of their cause, according to the instructions of their Commander-in-Chief; but, seeing the cavalry in hot retreat from the pikemen of Pat Dolan and the musketeers of Cormac Rogan, they mistook the RETREAT for an attack, and became panic-stricken. The news of this ignominious disaster was speedily brought into Antrim, and demoralized the rebels in the very hour of their triumph.—McCracken, aided by the faithful Cormac, did all that man could do, but in vain.

With madness burning in his brain, he seized a pike, and, placing himself in front of his men, menaced with death the first man who even dared to flinch from his colors.

Terror, however, had taken possession of the men, and they actually bore down in the confusion of their retreat the very men who, but an hour before, had proudly led them to victory. They were met by a body of cavalry, and cut down without leave or grace. Only one hundred and fifty of their number were left dead on the battle-field, while nearly double that number were cut down by the cavalry.

Thus ended the battle of Antrim, one of the noblest episodes in Irish history, accompanied by an inglorious termination.

No wonder the brave heart of Cormac Rogan was depressed.

Now that he had time to reflect, and thought of Dolan's wound, the death of darling Phil, and the unlooked for end of poor Mike, would that Cormac could have wept.

John Mullan approached him, and the two young men fell into each other's arms.

CHAPTER XXV.—BATTLE OF BALLINAHINCH—CORMAC'S DANGER, AND HOW HE EVADÉS IT—ANOTHER MISTAKE.

"The danger is come, and the fortune of war inclines to the side of oppression once more; The people are brave—but they fall; and the star Of their destiny sets in the darkness of yore."

Disheartened, and almost broken-hearted, McCracken called a council of war. From the reports which had reached him, it was evident that the unanimity of action he had promised to himself as a means to succeed against the English forces, was broken and disturbed, notwithstanding want of faith or pluck on the part of the men, but through the blunders almost necessarily and inevitably occurring among the leaders, in consequence of their plans being made known.

McCracken was strongly advised to betake himself to a place of safety. He had nothing now left to him but to make his escape as speedily as possible.

Accordingly, for that purpose, he requested John Mullan and Cormac Rogan to accompany him. Cormac wished to be excused, as he had to see after Pat Dolan, and Mullan was anxious not to be separated from Cormac. In the middle of the deliberations, word was conveyed to those assembled that the insurgents in Ballinahinch had risen, and were then actually engaged in mortal combat with the English.

"That finishes our deliberations," said McCracken. "We must hasten every man of us to the assistance of our countrymen."

Scarcely had the words escaped his lips, when a body of English soldiers were seen approaching.

Cormac grasped McCracken's by the hand. "Let us separate," he said. "God be with you; take care of yourself;" and Cormac at once departed.

John Mullan also grasped McCracken kindly by the hand, and, with tears streaming from his eyes, urged upon him the necessity of concealment.

McCracken cordially returned the friendly grasp of Mullan, and the latter followed Cormac.

"To Sleamish," repeated one of McCracken's men.

McCracken consented, and the party separated.

Cormac being overtaken by John, after a short consultation, both agreed to proceed to Ballinahinch.

They did so, and on their arrival in that town learned, from a trustworthy source, that Pat Dolan had been taken into the house of a friend, and that everything conducive to his comfort and recovery had been attended to.

Peter Mullan and Ned Dolan were in attendance and administering to his comfort.

As John and Cormac proceeded on their way, they fell in with a number of people preparing to go to Saintfield, where the insurgents, it was alleged, were engaged in conflict with the British troops. This report turned out subsequently to be correct; but Cormac and John continued their route toward Ballinahinch, as they learned that another stand would be made there to retrieve the losses sustained in the flight at Antrim.

Cormac speedily made himself known to General Munroe, and introduced John Mullan as his companion and friend.

Munroe made known to Cormac that he had encamped, the night before, on Creevy Rocks, at Saintfield; but hearing of the disasters that followed the victory at Antrim, determined on securing Ballinahinch as a basis of operations. He had already learned how Cormac had distinguished himself, and wished to appoint him to a command. Cormac resolutely refused.—His own men were dispersed, and he would accept of no post save that of a soldier of Ireland.

Munroe had taken up a good position on a place known as the Windmill Hill. A portion of his forces had been left at Creevy Rocks to intercept the English soldiers. Learning that Generals Nugent and Barber were on their march to attack him, he posted some of his best musketeers in ambush behind the fences which skirted the Windmill Hill, and assigned that post to the command of McCance, an officer in the rebel army, and a man of determination of character and undoubted courage.

Both Cormac and John joined the musketeers, as they were likely to be the first engaged in action.

The main body of Munroe's men were drawn up on Ethnavaddy Heights, in a south-westerly direction, about a quarter of a mile from the town. The selection of these places bespoke the exercise of particular skill and caution on the part of Munroe.

The approach of the English forces was presently announced by a blaze, which kept constantly extending. They had fired the country in all directions as they passed along; a favorite piece of warfare with English forces, at all times when engaged with a power weaker than themselves, and especially when in the enemy's country.

Nugent evaded the ambushade, seeing which, both Cormac and John sprang out into the road, and narrowly escaped a shell fired from the artillery under Barber.

Two English officers, beholding Cormac and John thus partially separated from their companions (they were endeavoring to join the rebels on Ethnavaddy), rode forward at a gallop. Cormac instantly wheeled about, and, as the foremost approached, took deliberate aim and fired. Horse and rider came both to the ground; the shot had taken effect in the breast of the horse. The second turned to escape, but the unerring bullet of Mullan's musket reached him, and left him a corpse on the roadside.

Having joined the main body, Munroe entrusted Cormac with a message to McCance on the Windmill Hill, ordering him to retire from that position.

McCance refused to obey; and, shortly afterwards, Nugent, having been reinforced by additional troops from Downpatrick, formed between the hill and the town, and directed a fire on both sides.

McCance and Munroe answered bravely, and the men under both commanders fought with a wicked determination to win.

Parties of pikemen sallied forth in compact masses to besiege the cannon of Barber.

An English authority, speaking of these attacks and repulses, says: "The rebels were so furious in their charge as to lay their hands on the carriages of the battalion guns, and some of them were almost burnt to a coal by the explosion."

Again was Cormac despatched on the same mission to McCance; the latter still refused.

McCance persisted in his refusal, and yielded reluctantly, and with visible agitation, at the third order.

Toward nightfall, the British troops engaged in the most frightful excesses. They became beastly intoxicated, and, in their fury, spared neither sex nor age. They gave themselves up to pillage and murder, and indulged in these propensities of theirs till an advanced hour in the morning.

Munroe had thus placed within his reach, one of the grandest opportunities ever offered to a commander of '98 in Ireland. He and his men both saw the ravages of fire and sword committed on the weak, the poor, and defenceless; and yet, that General refused the advantages of a night-attack on the despoilers of his country.

Cormac joined his entreaties with those of the leading men, to induce Munroe to give the word, but all in vain. The whole British force lay at his mercy; yet the gentle-minded Munroe would not move a step to secure the victory thus placed by fate at his very feet. A false notion of gallantry was the cause of this mistake.

"We scorn to avail ourselves of the ungen-

It does not pertain to the duty either of the impartial historian or the author of a work like this, to pass opinions on those Irish generals; but as the persistence of McCance, who did not consent to retire till the third order was given, might partake of the character of obdurate blindness and disobedience, I consider it right to state that, having often visited the Windmill Hill, where McCance was stationed, I was always firmly convinced of the advantage, in a strategic point of view, which that place hold over Ethnavaddy. The author has often visited these battle-grounds, and, after an impartial investigation into all the circumstances, believes that had McCance been strengthened, instead of being ordered to retire, the history of '98 would have been differently fashioned from what it is at present.

erous advantage which night affords," exclaimed Munroe. "We will meet them in the blush of open day; we will fight them like men,—not under the cloud of night, but the first rays of to-morrow's sun."

A loud murmur was heard among all at this expression of his determination. Word was soon conveyed among the entire body of men under his command, and fretful imprecations were heard on all sides. In vain did Cormac and John urge upon those near to them the necessity of silence and obedience.

Cormac had already won for himself the good opinion of his comrades; but all his efforts, and the efforts of those in command, were unavailing. Over seven hundred of Munroe's men left the field. These were nearly all armed with muskets, and the loss was consequently greater. Those who remained were nothing daunted. Like a brave fellow who was hanged on Windmill Hill, who exclaimed that he came there to die, and it mattered little what spot was chosen, they were determined to fight against any odds, and bravely they adhered to that determination.

In the morning, Munroe commenced the attack by a discharge from eight pieces of cannon, which was promptly replied to by the heavy artillery of the enemy. Munroe and his forces were filled with enthusiasm, and, giving the order for a general attack, the men rushed forward and bore down all opposition. In the midst of a destructive fire from musketry and cannon, and in the middle of a storm of grape-shot, sharply poured into their ranks, pikemen and musketeers advanced onward and onward, till they were compelled to fight at the very mouths of the British cannon.

Cormac grasped the sword of an English Captain, who lay wounded on the field, and fighting his way forward, added to the general enthusiasm of the moment by word and deed. John was by his side, armed with a pike, and gallantly urged on all around him, to remember the fate of Orr.

"Remember Orr!" was shouted from every mouth, and the inspiring words flashed like an electric spark through the ranks of the "rebels."

After an arduous and almost superhuman struggle, Munroe gained the centre of the town; and, although exposed to a cross-fire in the market-square, he charged with such irresistible impetuosity, that the rebels were victorious, and the British sounded a retreat.

It is hard to write it, and harder still for brave Irish hearts to read it—that bugle-note of victory was the death-knell of Ireland's hopes for another century.

The rebels, unacquainted with the trumpet's notes, and being enveloped in the smoke, and surrounded by all the carnage of war, mistook the order of retreat to one of attack; and, believing that the English were about to be, or had been re-inforced, fled in great haste by the southerly direction of the town, while the British forces, with coward haste, were leaving by the northern outlet.

A body of the 22d Light Dragoons attacked the flying rebels, and the English infantry, recovering from their panic, joined in the massacre.

Cormac and John Mullan, instantly perceiving how matters stood, rallied a small number of their comrades four times, but only to be overborne by the pressure of the enemy.

Mullan had received a sharp wound in the shoulder, but heeded it not.

Munroe galloped up to Cormac, and, pointing to a horse whose rider had been shot, motioned him to fly.

Cormac heeded not the safety of himself. He saw those around him stagger from weakness, and did all in his power to further their progress.

Munroe was evidently making for Ethnavaddy, in order to rally his men. Some of them congregated there, but the hill was speedily surrounded by Royal troops, and out of seven hundred men, Munroe retreated with less than two hundred. Many of course had left in consequence of his unwillingness to make the night attack.

So terminated the battle of Ballinahinch, long afterwards the seat of Orangeism, and intolerance to the Irish cause.

Carnage! It was the fight for a nation's freedom! Long live the memories of those who fell in ninety-eight.

CHAPTER XXVI.—AFTER THE BATTLE—CORMAC'S NEW FRIENDS.

"The rich have spurned me from their door, Because I'd set thee free,— Yet do I love thee more and more, Acushla gal machree."

Looking back at that period when the people of Ireland, after the loss of their leaders, were forced into premature rebellion, some will be found thoughtless enough to pass their puny and adverse criticism on those who permitted their impatience to urge them into the field.

It is easy to judge at this date, with our increased knowledge, and the spread of science and improvement in the art and articles of war, and to pronounce how such and such an undertaking might have been successful, if this plan, and that other sort of action, had been adopted. Let us keep our criticism to ourselves. The