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TURLOGH O'BRIEN;

OR,
THE FORTUNES OF AN IRISH SOLDIER.
CHAPTER XXVIII.—TYRCONNEL.

A considerable time elapsed, and found Garrett still alone, in the stately apartment in which our last chapter left him.

'It's two-and-forty minutes past the hour,' he muttered, as he glanced at his watch; 'I fear he has forgotten it, or, perhaps, the insolence which they say has grown upon him, prompts him to treat poor gentlemen, as I am, like lack-boys, or lackeys—as fit only to wait his pleasure, and dance attendance upon his caprice. S'life, but it's growing bitter cold,' he added, with a shudder, and, acquiring courage with the irritation of disappointment and discomfort, he ventured to take the embers of the fire together, and to throw on a fragment or two of wood;—how far this new accession of hardship might have carried him, it were not easy to say; his next proceeding would have probably essayed the darling sacrifice of seating himself at his ease, in one of the rich, luxurious chairs, which seemed made to receive a ducal, or a royal pressure only; he was, however, effectually startled, and recalled alike from his meditated enormity, and from his mutinous temper, by the opening of a door in the further end of the chamber, and the entrance of the Duke of Tyrconnel.

Few forms could be more imposing; his stature was commanding, exceeding six feet in height, and, at the time of which we write, though not actually unwieldy through corpulence, as he afterwards became, he was full and large in proportion which gave majestic effect to his towering figure; his complexion was a ruddy brown—his eyes of the darkest grey, and his features, though not prominent, were eminently masculine and handsome, and overclouded by a prodigious flowing periwig, of sombre brown. The expression of the countenance was grave, haughty, and even insolent—and there was a sternness in the compressed and down-drawn mouth, and a certain inflexibility and domineering pride in the whole character of the face which, accompanied with the grand and massive proportions of his figure, and the gorgeous accessories of his splendid attire, rendered the *coup d'œil* absolutely overawing.

As Garrett, standing with his hat in his hand, watched the stately and measured approach of the new-made duke, he marked with wonder the change which a very few years had wrought in his face and form, and thought he could read at a glance in the impressive countenance before him, alike the man of action, of passion, and of policy; he saw the arrogance, the ambition, the arch-dissimulation, and the cruelty of that intemperate and wily spirit, as he bowed and cringed before him, with all the servile idolatry due to so portentous an incarnation of successful scheming and daring.

The Duke advanced gravely, and somewhat slowly, some way into the room, before he addressed his visitor, who stood before him in an attitude of awkward subservency, and with an expression, half uneasy, and half sycophantic, his whole bearing contrasting strikingly enough with the lofty carriage and perfect breeding of the haughty favorite.

'Mr. Garrett, of Lisnamoe?' said Tyrconnel, inquiringly.

'The same, my lord duke,' replied Garrett, again bowing profoundly.

The duke seated himself, but without inviting Garrett to do so; and affecting to be dazzled by the light which fell full upon his face, he carelessly drew the table on which the candles stood, backward, until his features were in shadow—and then crossing one leg over the other, he leaned back in his seat, and once more fixed his eyes upon his visitor.

'Mr. Garrett,' he at last said, in a cold and laughty tone, 'you have a request to make, if I have rightly understood your purpose from my brother; you solicit a grant of land, is it not so?'

'The same estate, your grace,' said Garrett, 'about which I applied to you, my lord duke, when the court of claims was sitting.'

'Willoughby's property—I know it,' said Tyrconnel.

'A great estate—a considerable property—your grace,' said Garrett.

'A very great estate, sir—I know it,' repeated Tyrconnel, with deliberate emphasis, and a pause of some two or three minutes ensued, during which Garrett in vain strove to read the dark, bold, inscrutable countenance of the dangerous man before him.

'You have got some securities of mine in your hands,' said Tyrconnel, abruptly.

gravely, fixing his eyes once more upon the applicant.

Garrett was astonished—a faint incredulous smile, hovered in his look of amazement—he hardly knew in what spirit his patron spoke, and he hesitated in some confusion.

'I say, sir,' repeated Tyrconnel, with a stern voice, and a menacing look—'I think I am sure, those bonds are paid; bethink you, sir—for I must know how this matter stands, before I enter upon that other business in which you are so nearly concerned; my belief, sir, is, that the bonds are paid.'

Garrett looked in the speaker's face, for some peculiar significance to guide him in this strait, but he saw nothing there but the insolent sternness of one who suspects the honesty of the man he looks on, and cares not to disguise, or qualify that suspicion. Tyrconnel looked as if he actually believed what he said.

'Your grace must pardon me,' said Garrett, with an air at once cringing and deprecatory, 'if I cannot immediately—just at this moment, call to mind—'

'Speak,' said the duke, in a peremptory tone, 'if you admit this settlement, why, then, in God's name, dispute and so we part as litigants—for I promise you I'll not pay money twice over; your memory may serve you better than mine does me, sir—you have a perfect right to trust it, but I'll not be bamboozled into paying my debts twice over, as I've said.'

Thoroughly alarmed for the fate of his application, Garrett now lost not an instant in recalling his false step.

'I crave your pardon, my lord duke,' he said, with eager submission; 'your grace has misunderstood me—I have misconveyed myself.'

'I thought your memory might have served you so far,' said Tyrconnel, with the haughty displeasure of an injured man.

'My lord, I am far from disputing the settlement of which your grace has spoken,' urged Garrett.

'So you do remember it?' persisted he.

'Yes, I remember it—quite recollect it all, most clearly, your grace,' replied Garrett, who would have sworn he remembered the conquest, or the flood at that moment, if only he could, by doing so, have restored the all-powerful favorite to good humor.

'Then bring the bonds and receipts for the consideration, sir, to-morrow morning, hither, and deal like an honest man,' said Tyrconnel, with extreme sternness. 'You have done strangely, methinks, in retaining them in your possession for so long; let this be mended, sir, and promptly—to-morrow morning, before ten o'clock you hear me, sir?'

Garrett protested that he would be punctual, and inwardly thought that the duke must possess either the most treacherous memory, or the most matchless impudence in all Ireland.

'You have made sacrifices for the king, Mr. Garrett,' resumed Tyrconnel, with haughty condescension, after a brief pause; 'you have zealously attached yourself to his cause, and have, moreover, relinquished your heresy, and become, I understand, a Catholic. I am acquainted with your claims—and you may reckon upon my interest with the king in your behalf, should this Willoughby be convicted; his estate cannot better be bestowed; nay, sir, there is no need of formal speeches, I'm pressed for time; remember ten o'clock to-morrow morning.'

With a low and grateful reverence, and a countenance glowing with the irrepressible exultation of gratified avarice, Garrett, who, thro' this somewhat singular interview, had continued standing, withdrew, but ere he disappeared Tyrconnel on a sudden recalled him.

'Another word, Mr. Garrett,' he said, in a low tone, glancing almost unconsciously in turn at the two doors of the chamber.

Garrett returned, and stood once more hat in hand before the unprincipled great man. Tyrconnel looked at him thoughtfully, and, it seemed, with embarrassment. He then averted his gaze to the hearth—then, again, glanced rapidly toward the doors of the apartment—and pushing the small table on which the candles stood still further back, he said—

'It is some years since I last saw you. Mr. Garrett, in London: I need not remind you of the nature of the commission you then undertook; you have, I presume, sir, fulfilled it faithfully?'

'Faithfully, your grace, most faithfully,' replied Garrett, with more assurance; for he felt that upon this topic, at least, he had the duke at some advantage; 'in strict accordance, in every tittle, with your grace's wishes.'

'And—and—the person—the lady—Lady Willoughby, herself,' said Tyrconnel, with an effort; 'does she still live?'

'Faith she does,' replied Garrett—with an ungainly shrug, and a shake of the head; 'and I was well nigh adding—if it be no harm—I grieve to say it.'

'How does she?' pursued Tyrconnel, curiously

—for he obviously resented the growing familiarity of Garrett's manner.

'Why, about as well, I suppose, as a cast-off lady-love generally does,' rejoined Garrett, carelessly; 'a good deal down in the mouth, sallow, and hippish—always dying, but still alive.'

Tyrconnel looked down suddenly down the floor, and then as suddenly shot a black and frowning glance upon the speaker. He paused, however, and raising his jewelled hand for a few seconds to his forehead, recovered his calmness, to all appearance, except that his face was still a little flushed.

And gossip (scandal) has it grown silent? he asked, in a low tone; and, fixing his eyes once more upon Garrett—'or is it, at all events, still at fault—still on the wrong scent?'

'That it is, by my troth,' said Garrett, with a chuckle, which had in it a mixture of familiarity and glee, indescribably villainous and offensive; half the world, the old gentleman included, make me a present of the sin, as your grace did of the mistress.'

'Keep your own place, sir—be advised, keep your own place,' interrupted Tyrconnel, in a tone so peremptory that Garrett almost started; and still more hotly and arrogantly, he continued—'you are disposed, methinks, to forget yourself, and your position, and whom you are speaking to. S'death, sir, you shall know where you stand, and how you stand. You presume, sir—presume, because I have employed you,' he continued with increasing intemperance—for when his passion once broke bounds, its course was headlong and torrentuous beyond all parallel—and the suspicion, however faint, that Garrett imagined that he stood within his power, incensed his pride almost to madness; 'you presume, because I have used you—used you like the scoundrel pander you are willing to make yourself. By—, if I thought you dared presume upon your fancied usefulness, I'd teach you to know and remember me, while life is left you.'

It was hard to determine whether, in this sudden explosion of invective, there was more of passion or of policy; his face, indeed, was charged with the blackest tempest of ire—but at the same time, the faintest approximation to a smile curled his lip, as his eye rested upon Garrett, with a glance half intimidating, half obsequious. If the display were premeditated, however, it was well judged; for though Garrett manifested, at first, alike by his attitude and his countenance, the impulse of that physical courage in which he was by no means deficient—yet a moment sufficed to extinguish its angry fires, and to leave him cowed and submissive before the domineering duke; and with an air so meekly cringing and humble, that it seemed ready to fall down and worship before the great man's shoetie, in all the profoundest abasement and idolatry of sycophantic awe.

He stammered—he pleaded—he retracted—he explained; in short, he apologised, and that so humbly, that Tyrconnel at length condescended to nod his satisfaction, and to tell him haughtily that he might withdraw, under the assurance of his renewed favor.

With many a profound and ceremonious bow, Garrett retired through the door by which he had entered.

Tyrconnel rose with a gloomy look, and leaning upon the mantel-piece, rested his forehead upon his hand for a time, in anxious abstraction.

'Ill-fated, unhappy—most unhappy woman?' he muttered slowly and sullenly. 'The thought of her has troubled me sorely—more than once; but what need to vex one's self about the past?'

Such follies—affairs of the heart, and ah that—are pretty well over with me; and by my faith, were I to turn monk for my sins, I have weightier matters than a foolish intrigue to think of.'

He sank again into silence, and his thoughts shifted gradually to other and more practical matters. He walked moodily to the window, drew the rich damask curtains, and looked forth upon the stormy skies, across which the black scud was drifting.

'Threatening—changing; now the stars peep out; and now they're wrapt in storm and vapor,' he muttered in gloomy abstraction, and slow and broken sentences. 'Now the happy lights of heaven appear; and now all's lost in murky tempest. Just so—just so; a chequered, almost cheerless struggle; a day's despair for every hour of hope. How will this end—how will it all end? Oh, God! that I could see two years onward to the unrolled book of fate! Where will be all this state and ceremony then!—this goodly pomp and order, where will be the aspirants and favorite?—where these portly priests, and gilded soldiers, and all the scheming and the splendor of this court!—and the king himself? Aye, aye, well-a-day; and I—what are these orders, and these baubles, and this dukedom? While I walk among these peers, and bishops, and judges; and generals, and all the rest, and see the poor king smiling, I behold ruin through all this frippery and state. 'Tis horrible mas-

querade. Fools—fools! a week may turn this pomp to beggary—this music and jollity into howling and gnashing of teeth; away with this hollow mummery; off with your disguises; fly to your prayer books and confession. We tread a stage, God knows, crazed and rotten in every plank; and, heavens! what an abyss beneath! Yet see how they tread it!—as if it were rock—living rock—adamant; down to the earth's centre and foundation, adamant. Even that scheming rascal, Garrett; I dare swear he would think himself sorely wronged were we to limit his grant to one for life or a term of years.'

He turned from the window, 'And yet,' he added bitterly, after a pause, 'these are the men who call me rash, headlong, violent, impolitic.—Idiot! had it not been for my rashness, where would all this and they have been now? Where would the army, the militia have been, all Protestant as they were? In open mutiny. For these creatures of court favor—of my favor—indeed, there is but one chance; but I—I have another and a deeper game to play; I bide my time. Would to God the king were back again in France, and I once more the pilot of affairs! Well, well; all in good time.'

The duke stood for a moment before the full length mirror, to re-arrange the equipments of his stately dress. The anxious disquietude was smoothed athwart his features, and all their bold haughty gravity returned, as he quitted the room to take his place once more among the splendid and stately groups which filled the great saloon of the castle with all the gorgeous gaiety of courtly pageantry and mirth.

CHAPTER XXIX.—THE VERDICT.

The courts of law, at the time of which we write, were held in an old and gloomy building adjoining Christ Church; so crazy and decayed, indeed, that it was found necessary, a very few years later, to take down and rebuild the whole structure.

A strong guard of musketeers occupied the entrance; barristers, in their gowns and falling collars, and solemn black perukes, flitted back and forward through the dark passages, like ill-omened apparitions—the sable familiars of the place. The body of the Court of King's Bench was crowded. The entrance and mustering of the jurymen, the fussy arrangements of the sheriff, the continual pressure of the crowd, and the occasional interference of the guard or the tipstaff filled the old chamber up to its very roof with din and uproar.

Miles Garrett, his eye unusually bright and restless, and his face pale and clammy with anxiety, stood in one of the less-frequented passages of the building, his elbows leaning upon a high window-sill, and one hand shading his brows.—He turned quickly about as a step approached: it was that of Thomas Talbot.

'So,' said the latter, coolly, with a sort of sneer, 'early upon the ground, Garrett! You're a keen sportsman, by my faith! Is the quarry yet in sight?'

'It's hardly yet time,' said Garrett, consulting his ponderous gold watch. You can see for yourself, a few steps further on, through the arch into the court.'

'What of the witnesses?' asked Talbot, with a cautious glance down the passage; 'what of the dragoon, O'Brien?'

'Safe, waiting in Londonderry for despatches,' answered Garrett.

'Keep your eye on the Roundhead rascal—where have you got him?'

'There,' replied Garrett, pointing to a small door opening off the lobby.

'Don't let him falter. If need be, give him some brandy; he must be kept up,' said Talbot. A step approaching warned him to be gone.

'We must not be seen together—I'll go into the court,' he said, hastily, and strode down the passage, humming a song as he went.

Meanwhile, in the court itself, the bar had mustered. The attorney-general, Sir Richard Neagle, and the solicitor-general, had unfolded their ponderous briefs, and fussily began to look through them, whispering from time to time in question or consultation together, and sometimes referring, in short decisive whispers, to the juniors behind them, who instantly dived into text-books or reports of state trials, and in eager, half-frightened whispers, communicated the results to their leaders.

The crowd every moment grew denser—many a richly-dressed gentleman, in plumed hat and gold-laced suit, standing among the ignoble throng; and here and there some Protestant merchant, anxious and frightened, but too curious to leave the scene unsatisfied; and in the background, over the grim expanse of heads, gleaned the balderds and muskets of the militia who kept guard. All was expectation, fuss, and bustle, squeezing, and jostling. Men gaped, and gossiped, and fawned, and fidgetted, and consulted their watches in restless impatience; and there was such to-ing and fro-ing, such chatting, and laughing, and uproar, that the very cobwebs, depending from the oaken roof, shivered and trem-

bled in the clack and buzz.

In the midst of all this weary waiting, and noise, and clatter, was heard, at length, the entrance of the court official, settling the cushions, and arranging the pens and paper for the bench; and at last the loud cry of 'Silence in the court!' announced the approach of the judges; and, in all pomp of scarlet and ermine, with collar, and ruffles of lace, and a portentous flowing black wig, Chief Justice Nugent, now Lord Riverston, with his sharp-hooked nose, severe eye, and thin ascetic lip, sailed awfully in, and, bowing to the bar, sat silently upon the bench.

Mr. Justice O'Neile followed. As this was what is called a trial at bar, all the judges sate, and as three judges then formed the full bench, in each of the law courts in Ireland, and as it happened that one of these three seats had been suffered to remain vacant, the full court included but the two judges we have named. Sir Hugh Willoughby was now called in due form, and a hushed silence of breathless expectation awaited his appearance.

There came the venerable old man, slowly pressing through the crowd, accompanied by a friend, and a guard of two men. A low hiss followed him as he advanced, but this insult was but a partial demonstration, for those immediately about him pressed back and made way for him, as he moved onward for his trial.

When he took his place at the bar, and looked calmly round him, it were hard to say whether the lines of nobleness or affliction most prevailed in his faded features.

'Where is Tisdal?' whispered old Sir Hugh, somewhat anxiously, in the ear of Caleb Crooke, his solicitor.

'I know not,' answered he, glancing inquiringly around. 'Would he were here,' and he whispered to a messenger, who bustled away to find him.

Aye, where was Tisdal! Soon enough is old Sir Hugh to see and to hear that trusted villain, though he may not; yet, reader, if you glance with us into the dark, mildewed closet, not twenty yards away, what see you there? Tisdal! aye, Tisdal—though you scarce know him in his desperate solicitude. See his arm extended on the table—the fingers clutched together as in a death spasm; see the elbow of the other arm upon his knee—his head thus propped, and his hand locked in the shaggy hair, as though he would wring and wrench the very scalp off; see the terrors of his death-like face—mark how he shakes, how the strained sinews vibrate—hear those sobs and shudders; and then turn back your gaze from that lost demoniac being, to the high, serene aspect of the forsaken old man, and say which is the happier of the two.

The jury are sworn—Mr. Attorney-General Neagle rises grimly to his stern duty, with a rustling of silk, and a crumpling of papers—the crowded court becomes hushed, the clear voice of the advocate alone is heard, and the work of law begins.

The speech of an attorney-general, in those days, if he did his duty, was expected to be a very different thing from the address of the same functionary in modern times. It was, from beginning to end, a piece of coarse invective and impetuous railing, in which the guilt of the accused was not only taken for granted, but heightened and exaggerated by the fiercest and darkest coloring. Sir Hugh was often on the very point of yielding to the impulses of the wrath and scorn inspired by this unmeasured oratorical discipline, and interrupting the prosecutor in his harangue, by indignant recriminations, which would have opened a new field for the rhetoric of the advocate; and in all probability seriously diminished whatever chance Sir Hugh might still have had of escape.

The urgencies of his friends, however, were seconded by the feelings of astonishment and perplexity with which other portions of the speech filled the mind of the old knight; and he was forced to listen, with breathless wonder, which hovered between horror and incredulity, as the florid barrister informed the jury that he would prove the prisoner to have been in the constant and daily habit of holding treasonable language with his friends and followers—and that too, of the most atrocious kind; and that, moreover, he had declared to one much in his confidence, but who, prompted by the compunction of his wounded conscience, had since confessed the conversation that had the castle of Ghindarragh been tenable when the king's troops arrived, on the night of the affray, he would have held it against them, 'in life name of that unnatural prodigy—that viper—that, in a measure, paricide usurper, William of Orange—wbc, gentlemen of the jury, were he, through the peridy of the disaffected English colonists, in this ancient kingdom, to force an entrance, and establish his wicked authority here, would, so help me heaven as I believe it, pour out his wrath and vengeance upon the head of every loyal man in the kingdom; may I punish you, gentlemen; and myself, for calling to account this hoary rebel.'