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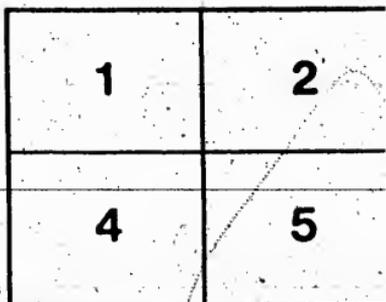
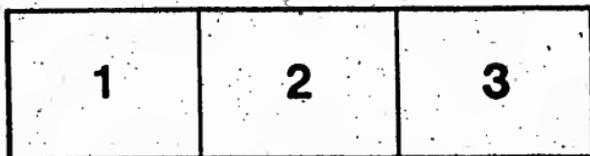
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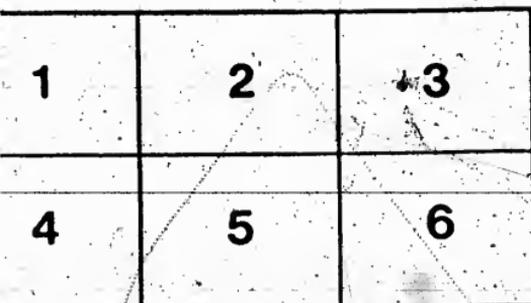
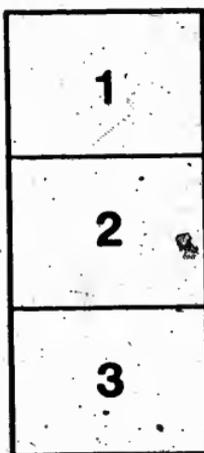
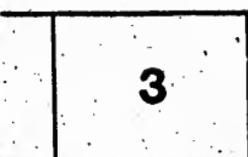
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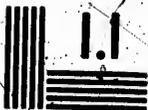
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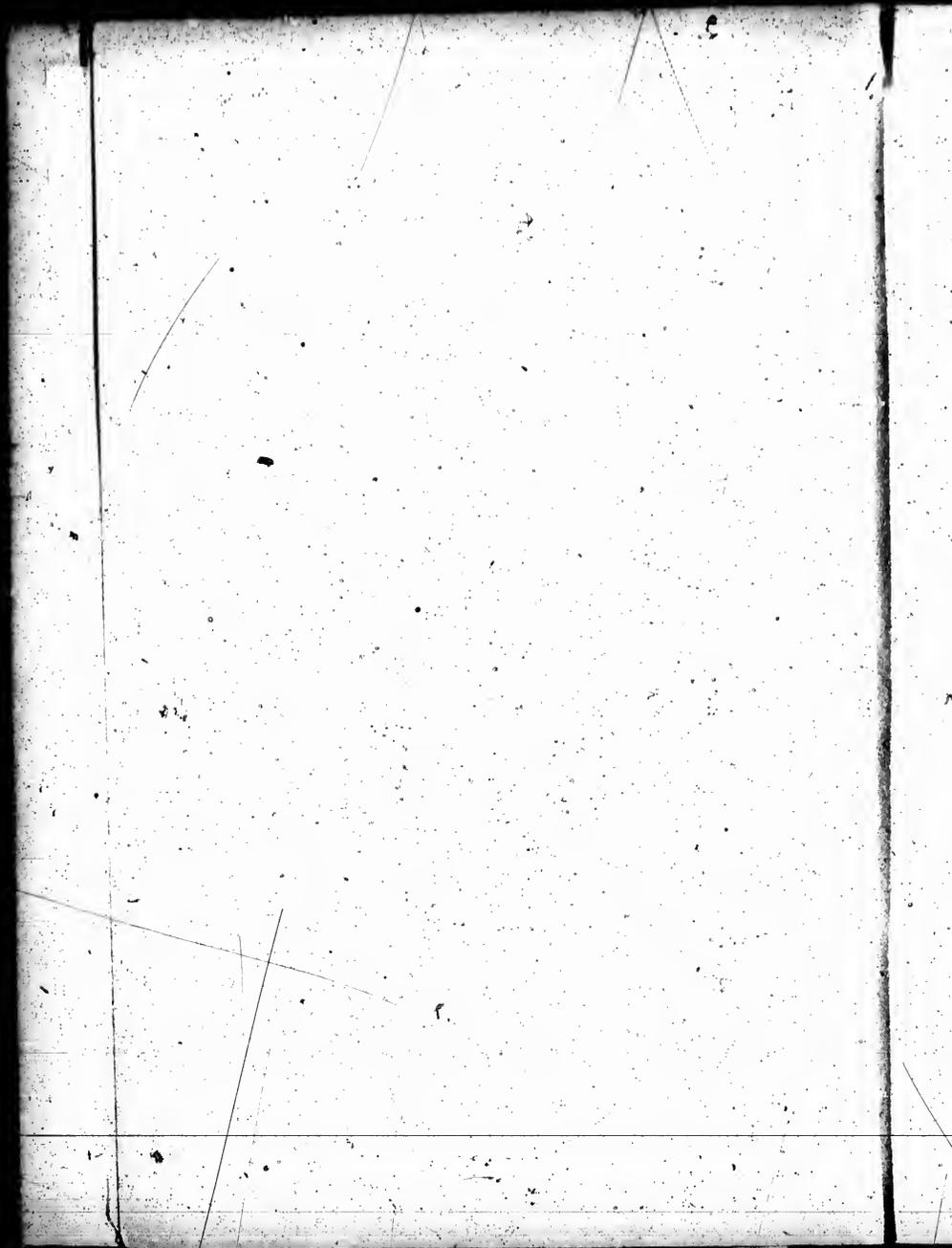
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CHICAGO
DE
Ireland.

RED HAND OF ULSTER;

OR,

THE FORTUNES OF HUGH O'NEILL.

BY MRS. J. SADLER.

"Come, let us make a chronicle for the O'Neills."



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RED HAND OF ULSTER.

CHAPTER I.

“HAS, then, the Red Hand of Ulster withered?” were the emphatic words of Ireland’s young patriot-orator, when reproaching the degeneracy of the present race of Ulstermen. And what thrilling memories do they conjure up,—memories of long-departed glory, and of the patriot struggle renewed from generation to generation! Well might Meagher put that question, when seeking to arouse the men of Ulster; for of old, that terrible RED RIGHT HAND was emblematical of the power and the strength wielded by the chieftains whose device it was—the hereditary princes of Ulster—the great O’Neills. Long, and fierce, and ever renewed, was the resist-

ance of that noble house, to the oppressive rule of England; and for ages after the invaders had established themselves in the other provinces, the green hills of Ulster were to them forbidden ground, and its frontier a threshold which they might not pass. Yes! well may the true child of Erin look back with melancholy pride to the days when the banner of O'Neill, with its RED RIGHT HAND, floated over the castle-keeps of Tyr-owen; for the final subjugation of our land can only be dated from the day when that snowy flag was re-placed by the blood-stained banner of England. The Catholic, too, may refer with mournful tenderness to that time; for the chieftains of Tyr-owen were as valiant defenders as the church has known; and while their Red Hand ruled in Ulster, that fair province was a sealed book to the Reformers, offering ever a safe and secure asylum to the persecuted children of the church. But the Red Hand of Ulster hath, indeed, withered; and fallen forever is the stately tree which held it aloft to the world's view. Yet this very fact, mournful as it is—invests with a still

deeper interest the scanty records, which we have of the O'Neills, and makes us think of their old banner with a mixture of sorrow and of pride. Even within the last three centuries, (to go no farther back,) we find matter enough to excuse the pride and justify the sorrow. It was the banner that waved over Shane, the Proud, when he drove the English like sheep before him, from off the soil of Ulster; it fluttered on high above the well-trained bands of the great Hugh, when they conquered on many a bloody field; and again, it was borne before him, who, latest of his name and race, led on the bands of Erin—the pious, the sage, the valiant Owen Roe. No wonder, then, it is, that the banner of the O'Neills is identified in our minds with that Ulster which they so royally ruled, and so gallantly defended.

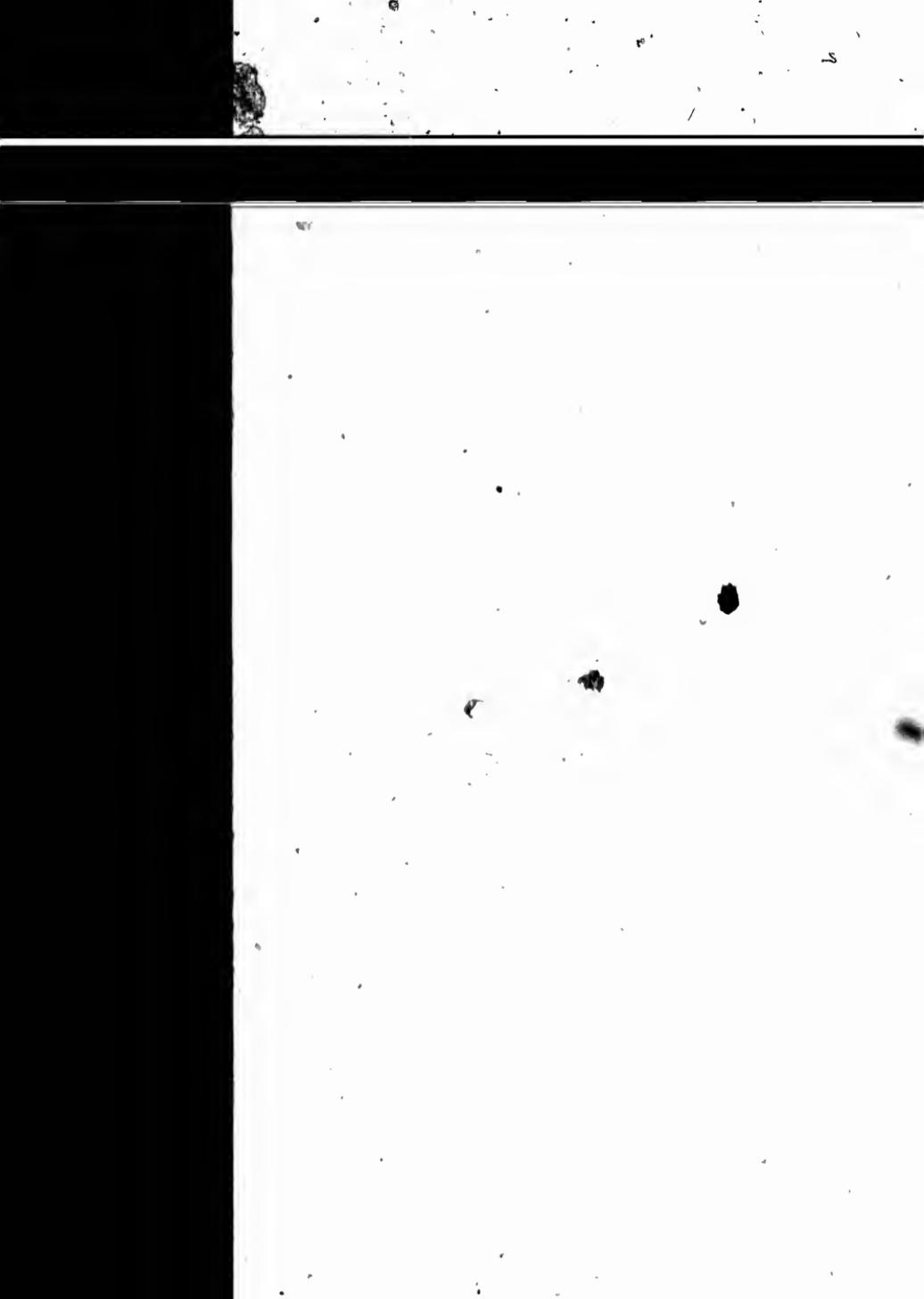
As the eye glances over the records of this illustrious house, it naturally rests on the achievements of him, who of all the chieftains of Tyr-owen, most forcibly attracted, and longest retained the world's admiration. I speak, of course, of that Hugh O'Neill,

known to the English as Earl of Tyrone, who, for a period of fifteen years, kept at bay the power of Elizabeth, and whose genius first conceived or attempted to carry out the idea of a national confederacy.* Him, then, do I place before the great and good Owen Roe, and immeasurably before the fierce and haughty, though valiant Shane, or any other of their line of whom history tells, and present him at once to the reader, as the greatest of all the O'Neills. Together we will run over some of those scenes which mark the progress of his eventful life, passing briefly from one to the other, as though they were represented on the magic glass of the great Florentine of old. We will exult for a while in the glories of Clontibret, the Blackwater, and the yellow Ford, and, following the great earl into his life's decline, we will look

* "Never," says a French writer on Ireland, "has Ireland produced a man more capable of freeing her from the yoke of England, than was Hugh O'Neill. Pliant, insinuating, prudent as well as brave, a skilful diplomatist, and a good general; in him were united qualities of the most opposite nature, and apparently incompatible with each other."

with melancholy interest on the sadly humiliating scene enacted within the walls of Melifont, when the curtain may be said to have fallen on Ireland's hopes of independence, leaving her, at least, to centuries of rayless gloom.

It were long to tell how the orphaned youth of Hugh O'Neill was protected and fostered by the English queen, to the end that he might be used as an instrument to divide, and consequently weaken, his sept. Being the son of a younger brother of Shane O'Neill, he was early pitched upon to be set up as a rival to the ruling chief, and inherited, with his father's English title of Baron of Dungannon, the preëminent favor of the queen, together with certain lands belonging to his branch of the family. He was educated in England, and his young mind carefully trained in the way in which Elizabeth would have him go, and when he grew to manhood, it appeared to those most concerned, that their work was complete, and his political principles as orthodox, as English heart could desire. He was a young man of rare abili-



ties, (a fact which was early discovered by the queen, and made her all the more anxious to bind him to her interests,) and excelled in many of the accomplishments then most highly regarded at the English court. His mind was well stored with the priceless treasures of knowledge, and, above all, he seems to have studiously applied himself to the military science of the period. . . In this branch of study we may well suppose he was warmly encouraged ; his preceptor little dreaming of the purpose to which his knowledge was one day to be applied. At three or four and twenty, then, the young Baron of Dungannon was a polished English noble, of engaging person and faultless manners, having a tongue that neither man nor woman could resist, and a power of dissimulation rarely if ever equalled. This latter quality he had, however, the double art to conceal, under the appearance of candor, which deceived even the piercing eye of Elizabeth Tudor, who looked upon the young O'Neill as her willing agent "in all she hoped to do,"—in fact her servant to command. At stated times, Baron Hugh

visited Ireland, but vain was the hope on every visit renewed, that he would pick a quarrel with Tirlogh Lynnoch, the chief of Tyr-owen. On the contrary, while he stayed at his castle of Dungannon, he occasionally paid his respects in person to the old chieftain, and manifested none of that jealousy which might have served as the basis of English hope. We are surely warranted in believing, that, young as he was, Baron Hugh penetrated the motives of the queen in protecting him, and took a secret pleasure in thus slyly baffling her views. Of this, a stronger proof soon came to light, for, while the queen cast her eyes around the noble dames of her court and kingdom, hoping to secure him by an English wife, O'Neill had quietly gone over to Ireland, and wedded the daughter of the O'Donnell, a lady who appears to have been in no way distinguished by either personal or mental attractions, and hence we may safely conclude, that the politic young lord, in forming this alliance, had a two-fold object, that is to say, that while he effectually frustrated any matrimonial

plans which the queen, in her selfish wisdom and foresight, might form for his guidance, he at the same time laid the foundation of his power in Ulster, by marrying a daughter of that princely house, only second to the O'Neills in power and extent of territory. Moreover, there had been in times past a protracted enmity between these two great families, and, when he succeeded in obtaining the hand of the lady, Judith O'Donnell, he had done much, as he well knew, to promote a lasting peace, and to heal one gaping wound of the many which festered in the heart of Ulster. Shortly after his marriage he hastened to London, so as to be himself, if possible, the bearer of the news to the queen, and, with much difficulty, obtained her pardon. True, this marriage was a severe blow, since it tended to unite those whom Elizabeth and her cold-hearted advisers would have sedulously kept asunder, but then it would not have mended the matter had she punished the offending baron by banishment from court, or even by imprisonment; so she swallowed her anger as best

she could, deeming a show of forgiveness her very best course. But she determined to exact the price of this clemency, even to the uttermost farthing, and so she soon after proposed to O'Neill to go home and raise, on his own paternal domains, some troops for her army. The suggestion was speedily acted upon; for it corresponded with some of the baron's ulterior speculations; and, in a very short time, he wrote to the queen, signifying that he had six companies of soldiers, ready drilled and duly prepared for whatsoever service her highness might please to command. This prompt compliance was highly pleasing to Elizabeth, who answered the baron's letter by a courteous request that he would meet the Earl of Ormond in Dublin as soon as might be, and prepare to cooperate with that general in carrying on the Geraldine war. Whether his destination was really a matter of indifference to O'Neill, or whether, at that time, he did actually lend himself, in the heedlessness of youth, to Elizabeth's anti-Irish schemes, history pretends not to determine, but there is reason to suppose that, had this proposal been made to

him a few years later, (that is to say, after he had conceived the project of freeing Ireland, by concentrating her own divided strength,) he would have rejected it, if not with scorn, at least decidedly, and in all probability his soldiers would have fought for rather than against the great southern earl. Every admirer of Hugh O'Neill's character and genius must deplore this grand mistake, which may well be regarded as the fatal error of his life. Had the princely, the kingly Geraldine, succeeded in keeping the English at bay, and been subsequently joined by the great northern chiefs, there can be little doubt that Ireland would have triumphantly burst her chains, and become to Elizabeth what Calais was to her sister Mary. "But so it was not written in the book;" Geraldine fell—the protector of the ancient faith—the noblest and most persevering, aye, and the most powerful upholder of Erin's cause that had then arisen for centuries—and we grieve to say that Hugh O'Neill, with his north men, had no small share in Desmond's final overthrow.

But though O'Neill fell in so far with the

queen's designs, he forgot not to prosecute his own, and his maiden sword was fleshed with Saxon rather than Milesian blood. Just about the time that he received her majesty's commands to join Ormond, consternation was spread throughout the whole of Ulster by the news that an army of adventurers from England, led on by no less a person than Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, (aided and assisted by many other noble personages,) had actually landed on the coast of Down, with a view to take possession of all that country. This territory, now menaced by the English, belonged to Brian MacArt O'Neill, who had, some years before, repelled with his own clansmen only, another, but much smaller force of these would-be colonizers of Ulster, led on by a certain individual named Smith. This worthy, with the greatest part of his followers, had fallen victims to the well-grounded wrath of the stout kerns of Clan-hugh-buidhe, but now the matter wore a more serious aspect, and the gallant chief of the district was fain to call upon the other chieftains of his name for aid. The

call was quickly responded to by all, without one exception, and, ere the English had yet obtained any footing on the soil, Tirloch Lynnoch himself was on the ground with his large force, and Hugh of Dungannon swept up at the head of his cavalry, proud that an opportunity offered to strike his first blow for Ireland and Ulster. Thither, too, flocked many a smaller band, each led on by some chief of the O'Neills, until Brian MacArt, as he rode forward to welcome the last whom he had a right to expect, cried—"Enough, enough, my gallant kinsmen! Methinks even half our number were able to cope with yonder pirates, and surely, since the O'Neill himself is here, with our royal standard, we have nought to fear. The Red Right Hand is now, it as hath been, the terror of the enemy!" And he pointed to the snowy banner, with its huge red hand, which waved as though in conscious pride above the head of the chieftain. Uncovering his own head, Brian O'Neill shouted, in a voice that echoed from hill to hill, the fierce war-cry of the clan, "*Lhav dhearg aboo!*" An electric

fire seemed to shoot from heart to heart, and the thrilling cry was raised in thunder tones by the whole Irish army; for every man there was either an O'Neill, or the tributary of one. Ere yet the wild excitement of the moment had entirely subsided, they were called upon to meet the invader. After a fierce but not very protracted struggle, they so harassed and beset the English that the nobles, one by one, gave up the cause as lost, and returned to England, taking with them what remained of their followers, until Essex was at length compelled to sue for peace, and finally the remnant of the army was withdrawn, and Essex, the arch-contriver of the invasion, returned to England a disappointed and a broken-spirited man, for he had embarked the greater portion of his fortune in this precious enterprise. Hugh O'Neill was necessarily delayed by this affair, and, on his return to Dungannon, received a harsh reprimand from the queen for the conspicuous part he had taken in repulsing her faithful Essex, commanding him to set out instantly for Munster, under pain of her

heaviest displeasure, and as the only reparation he could now make for his recent misdemeanor. So the baron despatched a deprecatory answer to the angry queen, assuring her that only his kinsman's earnest supplications had induced him to join the Irish, "which I the rather did," said he, making use of an apt evasion, "as I knew not that these adventurers had your majesty's sanction, nor do I yet believe that they had. Well knowing, then, that your highness is solely offended by my untoward delay in executing your royal behest, I will speedily make amends by joining my Lord Ormond at once, and I hope to convince your majesty, ere long, that your favor hath not been thrown away."

Again was Elizabeth constrained to accept the wily chief's apology, and the baron kept his promise so well, that, as I have already said, at the close of that long protracted Geraldine war, his services were fully acknowledged, to the grievous detriment of Munster and Ireland.

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due the brave clans of the Desmond country, the very power of the O'Neills was threatened in the north by the gradual encroachments of a subject sept, the McDonnells of Antrim, or the Glynns. These were originally a horde of adventurers from the Scottish Isles, who, having obtained a footing on the northern coast, had spread themselves all along that rocky region around the Giant's Causeway, where they maintained themselves so long and so resolutely, that, in course of time, they came to be considered as an Irish clan, and their right to the soil on which they dwelt was tacitly acknowledged even by the liege lords of Ulster—the O'Neills, whose tributaries they became. The bold and enterprising spirit of their race dwelt ever in these sturdy Islesmen, and their country being little favorable to agriculture, they devoted themselves entirely to those warlike pursuits which best suited their fancy. They were a fearless and a hardy race, and were in the habit of hiring out their services to the neighboring chieftains in their unhappy intestine broils, so that there was scarcely a clan

within the bounds of the promise for whom the McDonnells had not in turn fought. Many a strong castle they built to fortify themselves in their possessions; and of those ruins which now add so much mournful beauty to that wondrous coast, by far the greatest number were the work of these Islesmen. Of these, the strongest and most important was Dunluce Castle, which, however, is supposed to owe its origin to a time prior to their invasion, having been probably taken by them from the native chief in whose possession they found it. Be that as it may, Dunluce was the principal stronghold of the tribe, and the usual residence of their chief.

These Scots, then, had, in course of time, particularly within the last years, waxed haughtier and more presuming, and, finding that Tirlógh Lynnoch was a weak and irresolute old man, they took advantage of Hugh's absence to declare themselves independent, and even boasted that they were the equals, or rather rivals, of the O'Neills. Hugh heard all this, and, amid the bustle and wild excitement of the southern war, he pondered

over the means of reducing these rebellious Islesmen to obedience. His resolution was speedily taken, and forthwith he wrote to the queen a highly colored account of their insurrection, as he called it, proposing to her majesty that, as the Geraldines were now, he might say, subdued, both he and Ormond should proceed to quell this new rebellion against her royal authority. He, of course, had Ormond make a similar suggestion, and the consequence was, that the queen gave them full power to act against the northern rebels, specially thanking O'Neill for his dutiful regard to her interest, and the establishment of her lawful authority in Ireland. So the Desmond war was no sooner at an end, than O'Neill, with his English allies, marched northward, and, dividing into two columns, they proceeded on either side of Lough Neagh, towards the disaffected region. Ormond, with his forces, passed on into the Glynnns, was met by the McDonnells, whom he entirely defeated, and, after taking Dunluce, and some other of their castles, compelled their chief to submit, and acknowledge himself the tributary of Tirlogh Lynnoch.

O'Neill, with some others of the English generals, proceeded to harry and overrun the territory of the chiefs who had made alliance with the McDonnells, of whom the principal was O'Cahan, lord of Arachty O'Cahan, now called Londonderry. Here they conquered all before them, and from O'Cahan alone the English general drove away two hundred head of cattle. Thus were the Scots and their allies forced back into obedience, and though the queen's authority was nominally established, it was in reality the chieftain of Tyr-owen who recovered his supremacy. True it is, that many of these conquered chiefs were summoned and went soon after to Newry to make their submission to the queen's deputies; true it is, that Sir John Perrot, fancying the independence of Ulster at an end, lost no time in dividing the country west of the Bann into seven new counties, and gave them English names,* appointing them sheriffs, coroners, peace officers, and all such appendages of British law; but still the queen had as little to do with

* Armagh, Monaghan, Tyrone, Coleraine, (since Londonderry,) Donegal, Fermanagh, and Cavan.

Ulster as before, and though Hugh O'Neill appeared to agree with all these arrangements, being, in fact, a party to them, he solemnly swore within himself that these things should not be while he lived, or had power to prevent them. "Elizabeth Tudor," said he within himself, "may imagine the spirit of Ulster extinct, and commission her agents to send hither the bloodhounds of their law, but she shall find that O'Neill is still master here, and that the children of Heremon are not to be drilled, and tried, and stripped of their inheritance at her pleasure!" But still he smiled and bowed when his opinion was asked, and replied to Perrot—"O, by all means; why should not this Ulster be civilized as well as the sister provinces? Pity it is that so fair a country hath been so long suffered to remain under the barbarous control of the native chiefs."

But, with all this show of loyalty, a great and marked change was slowly taking place in O'Neill's mind. Daily he became more convinced that England, or any other foreign rule, was not for Ireland, and; his eyes once



opened to the fact, he went on and on to new conclusions. "Vainly," he thought, "shall I labor to keep Ulster clear of them, while their power is paramount all around its borders; nay, have they not a stronghold within the heart of the province, while Bagnal rules it here in Newry?" Then came the question, "How is all this evil to be remedied?" And from the depth of his own soul came back the answer, "The land, if it be possible, must cast off this unnatural incumbrance. Never will prosperity or peace smile again on Erin, while she is the slave of British power." But how was this deliverance to be effected while the chiefs and people were broken up by old hereditary quarrels into little isolated bands, only good for slaughtering each other? The thing was morally impossible, and, recognizing in all its force the principle that "union is strength," O'Neill for the first time saw, with a bitterness of sorrow never known before, that he had fatally erred in lending himself to the defeat and ruin of Desmond. "Alas," he internally exclaimed, "how can

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Ireland hope for freedom while an O'Neill aids the common foe against a Geraldine—yea, the noblest of the race! O, that I could but recall the past, and how different would be my course! Ay, truly would I barter my fondest hopes of earthly happiness to see the banners of Geraldine again floating from the towers of Adair and Killmallock, for then it were a glorious sight for Innisfail to see the red hand of the O'Neills waving beside them; but, alas, alas, the banner of Desmond is trampled and torn, and that lordly line, the strength of Ireland and the church, is broken and crushed, no more to rise! The stately head of Earl Gerald, that head which had grown grey in struggling for the nation's rights, is now bleaching on a pole—a spectacle for the brutal mob of London." Sinking again into bitter reflection, he considered over what was best to be done, and very soon he had formed a plan which, if fully realized, would have indubitably freed Ireland from the thrall of the stranger. With a slow but assured step the young baron proceeded to

the chapel adjoining the castle, and there, before the altar, in the stillness of the twilight, he solemnly vowed to devote all the energies of his soul to the formation of such a confederacy amongst the native chiefs as would ensure a prospect of success to the national cause. As he knelt before the small Gothic altar, with the faint light of declining day casting its softening tinge around, nothing could be more noble than the contour and expression of his upturned face—his long hair falling back from the smooth, passionless forehead, and the calm depth of his hazel eyes lit up with the lofty purpose which then, for the first time, took root in his soul. Long he knelt with his arms folded on his breast, and his head bowed down in meditation, and when he arose, the night had gathered around, but he heeded it not, for his thoughts were fixed on the greatness of the task before him.

Early on the following morning he set about making the first trial of his project, and, without acquainting any one of his intention, he proceeded alone to Dungiven Castle,

and, not finding the O'Cahan there, he rode along the banks of the Roe to Limavady, another stronghold of that powerful sept, and, once face to face with the chieftain of Arachty, he not only obtained his forgiveness, but enlisted all his sympathy on the side of nationality. Not that he succeeded without difficulty, for in reality he was obliged to put in requisition all his power of persuasion. It was not strange that O'Cahan regarded his first advances with suspicion, and that he was slow to entertain any schemes for Irish independence, coming from one who so lately appeared in the guise of a British officer, harrying and hunting his countrymen on their own soil. But when O'Neill candidly acknowledged his error, and described the chain of reasoning which had brought him to see its full extent—when he spoke with resistless eloquence of the hopes that might reasonably be entertained if the native chiefs would only unite their strength, then O'Cahan, who was of all men the most unsuspecting, began first to believe that the baron of Dungiven was,

after all, worthy of trust, and, his prejudices thus overcome, there was of course no difficulty in bringing him to adopt the patriotic hopes and views of O'Neill. This point once gained, the latter made a still bolder step, and journeyed on, still alone, through the rocky region between Limavady and the Castle of Dunluce. Even O'Cahan had attempted to persuade him from venturing alone into the wild fortalice of the McDonnell, and finally proposed to bear him company; but to this O'Neill would not consent, well knowing that a show of confidence would be of all things the most likely to smooth down the fierce chieftain of the Glynnns. Alone then he set out, (leaving his horse at a cabin within a mile or two of Dunluce,) and alone he stood before the heavy portcullis of the castle. Seizing the horn which hung there, he blew a loud, clear blast, and ere yet its echoes had died away, a deep voice spoke from behind, demanding his name and the purpose for which he sought admission. Turning quickly, O'Neill beheld the McDonnell himself, whose features were

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not unfamiliar to his eye. Alexander, or, as he was generally called, Sorley Buidhe, (or the yellow-haired,) McDonnell, was a man of large and strong frame, with a face on which stormy passion had impressed its fierce characters, and yet the features, if their expression were less fierce, might be considered handsome, for, though large, their outline was noble and commanding, and the whole singularly regular. But then the dark eye had an almost painful intensity in its glaring light, and gleamed out wildly from under a pair of shaggy eyebrows of the same light color from which he derived his surname. The chieftain was attired in a hunting costume, and from his close cap floated a small heron's plume, doubtless to denote his Scottish descent,—that being the well-known appendage of the Scottish chiefs, whether of the mainland or the isles. No sooner did his eye fall on the well-known face of O'Neill, than, even before the latter had time to speak, an angry scowl gathered on his brow. His hand involuntarily, as it were, sought the skean which hung in a sheath

from his leathern girdle, as he repeated, in a higher and more excited tone,—“I have asked a question—answer it quickly—what dost thou here?” He spoke in Irish, and O'Neill replied in the same language.

“I have come to make a friendly alliance with the McDonnell, and to pledge him to our future friendship, in that rich and genial usquebaugh of which I have heard so much.”

“Man! thou dost but mock me!” cried McDonnell, with rising fury, “and I warn thee to practice no jokes on Alexander McDonnell, or thou mayest fare, and that instantly, as did thy kinsman Shane. It behooves an O'Neill to keep a civil tongue while within arm's length of a McDonnell.”

“And yet,” returned O'Neill, no whit disconcerted, “and yet I have come hither without even a moment's fear; here are now no Pierces to excite a McDonnell to dishonor or treachery.* I have come, then,

* The treacherous murder of Shane O'Neill, by the McDonnells, was said to have been instigated by an Englishman named Pierce.

alone to visit thee, and my purpose is as I have stated it."

"Nay," said the chieftain, in a somewhat calmer tone, "thou wilt not make me believe that thou art without escort or attendants. This is but a trick of thine English cunning, and it will not go down with me. Even now thy crew may be advancing behind these very rocks."

"Now, by the great St. Columba!" said O'Neill, with some warmth, "but this is somewhat hard—and yet I blame thee not when I come to remember.—What proof can I give that what I say is true?"

"An' thou art sincere," exclaimed Alexander again, "thou wilt enter these gates alone with me, and suffer that they be secured behind thee. Then will I know that thou hast no base design."

"Open, then, in God's name," replied O'Neill quickly, "no cause have I to fear—and if I had before entertained any doubt of thine honor, would I, thinkest thou, have come hither to seek admission within these strong walls?"



Thereupon the Scot blew a peculiar blast on the horn, and instantly the huge portcullis was raised, giving to view the gloomy front of the castle, the narrow ledge of rock which connected it with the mainland, and the interior of the court-yard. On either hand was seen boiling below amongst the rocks the foaming surge of the ocean. McDonnell motioned in silence for O'Neill to go first, which he did with a step as firm as though he trod his own hall-floor. When he reached the opposite side, he turned and awaited McDonnell, saying with a smile as he approached,—

“Thou hast meet cause to be proud of this fortress, McDonnell—the lord of Dunluce is a lofty title.”

“Not so lofty surely as that of baron of Dungannon,” returned the other with an ironical grin. “The stamp of Elizabeth’s favor is not on title of mine; how, therefore, could it be of honor?” And he looked hard at O’Neill, but the latter only laughed.

“It is all fair, Alexander—shoot away, as thou wilt, at my English honors, so thou

sparest the name of which I am proud. Call me O'Neill—Aodh O'Neill—while I remain here, for we have matters to treat of, which would ill come from a Saxon lord. One day thou mayest perchance have a hand in obtaining for me that title which alone an O'Neill can covet."

Astonished by this language, McDonnell silently led the way to the hall, and when there, he reached out his hand to O'Neill—"Whatsoever may be thy purpose," he cried, "I can no longer suspect thee of treachery, for one who felt himself guilty would not thus thrust himself in the way of speedy revenge. Without knowing thy real object in this visit, I do bid thee welcome, freely confessing that thy air and bearing, still more than thy words, have conquered mine enmity."

Thus did O'Neill work his way into the good graces of all whom he sought to win over. Few men of his day had so deep a knowledge of human nature, and none could excel him in the art of making that impression which suited his purpose. During a

long conversation with McDonnell, he revealed as much of his plans as he deemed necessary — dwelling particularly on the advantages of union amongst the chiefs of Ireland, and enticing the Scot to join the confederacy, by a promise of lending him, at any time, some of his best troops. “For,” said he, “the work of conciliation and banding together the chieftains must necessarily spread itself over a long time, and while it is in progress, we may have need of each other’s assistance—if so, thou mayest reckon Aodh O’Neill as thy sure friend.” This voluntary promise was directly addressed to McDonnell’s darling passion, and did much, as O’Neill knew it would, to win his cordial consent. Above all things, he took care to warn his new friend, that policy required him to keep still in favor with Elizabeth, at least, until such times as he was strong enough to make his works manifest to the world. “And be not surprised,” he went on with a smile, “if, at my next visit to London, I come back with a fresh load of English honors.” McDonnell laughed. “If so,”

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he said, "I would advise thee to keep clear of my people, for no symptoms of good will on the part of their chief can make them look kindly on a Saxon name-bearer. Even now they could find in their hearts to send the English baron and general headlong into the chasm below, but an' thou goest any higher in rank, they could not resist the temptation, having an idea that these things would not be given without continued services from thee—so beware, I tell thee."

The evening was now drawing on, and after draining a plentiful draught of the far-famed usquebaugh of Scotland, O'Neill set out on his return to O'Cahan's Castle, having declined the pressing invitation of McDonnell to stay over night. The chieftain accompanied him some miles on his way, and during the ride O'Neill continued to ingratiate himself still farther with the fierce but generous McDonnell. When at length they parted on a wooden bridge thrown over a mountain stream, he seized O'Neill's hand, and, while he pressed it warmly between both his own, he cried, "By St. Columb of

Tona! and thou heldest the wand of power in Tyr-owen, Sorley Buidhe McDonnell would never raise a lance against thee, nor refuse thy tribute. I tell thee what, Hugh! we must send this poor old woman, who sits in the O'Neill chair, to spin the distaff at Strabane; it is shame for the clans of Ulster to own so pitiful a lord, and as I am a true man we will have thee chaired at Tulloghoge."

A slight flush mounted to O'Neill's clear cheek, he smiled, and his smile was one of triumph, but he only said: "For shame, Alexander! what would Tirlogh say to this?"

"Little care I what he would say," returned the chief, haughtily — "and mind my words, that another summer's sun shall not shine his last on these grey locks ere the Kinel-Eoghan will take unto itself its fitting ruler. Farewell!" Turning his horse's head with a jerk of the rein, he rode off at a round pace, leaving O'Neill to ponder on his parting words, which he did even in despite of his will. The tall shadows of the cliffs flung their length across the uneven pathway, as the baron journeyed on, and the

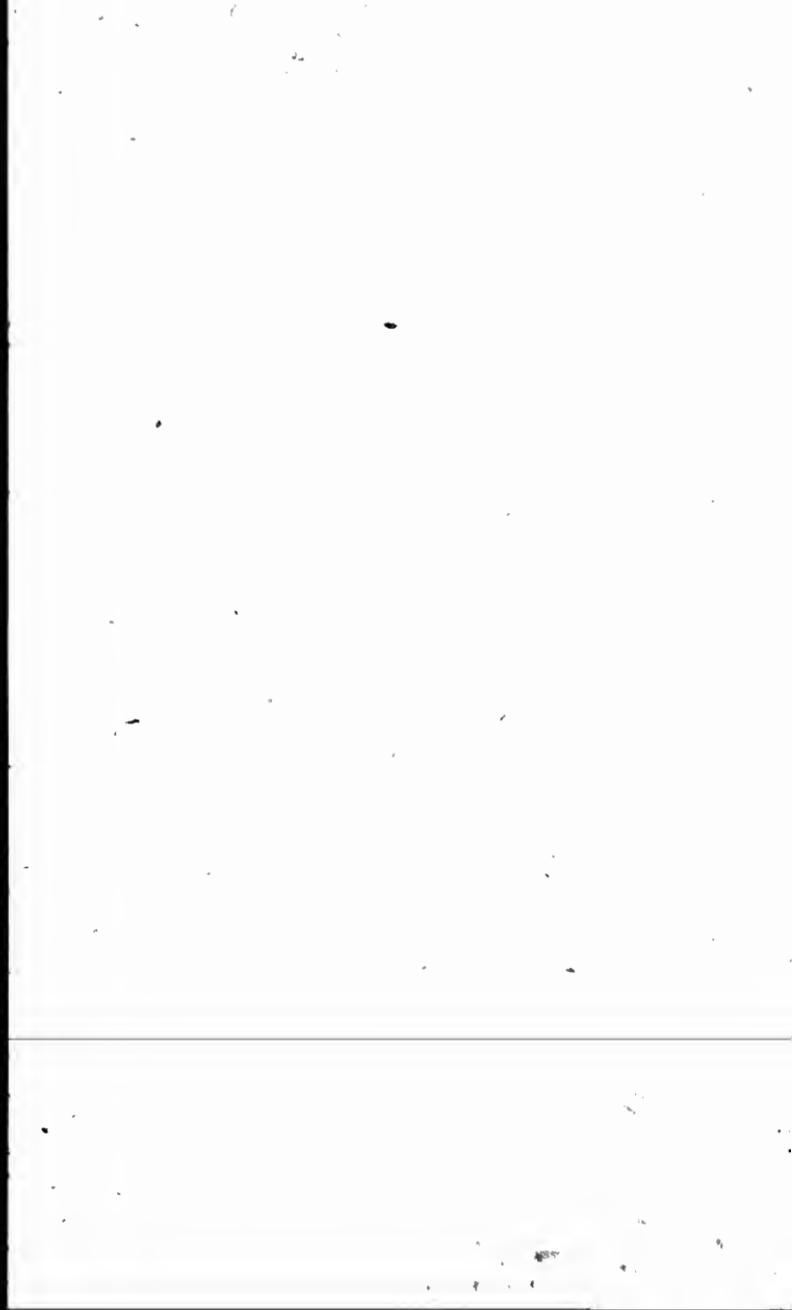
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sound of distant lowing gave indication that the kine were being driven from their pastures to the neighborhood of Dawns and castles, to be delivered of their fragrant burthen. Flocks of sheep were here and there seen whitening the green pasture-land, and far in the distance might be traced the windings of the silvery Roe; when descending from the hilly ground, northward, it runs along through the pleasant holmes and meadows of what was then Arachty O'Cahan, now the colonized county of Londonderry. It was almost dark when the baron alighted at O'Cahan's door, and received the fervent gratulation of the chieftain on his safe and speedy return.

 CHAPTER II.

"Talk of witches and fairies, that ride on the wind,
 And of ghosts, till they're all in amaze."—OLD BALLAD.

A SHORT time before the events I have been relating, O'Neill had rebuilt his house, at Dungannon, at the queen's suggestion, and



had imported a large quantity of lead, for the purpose of roofing it. He had latterly changed his mind as to the destination of the lead, and covered the house with some other material. Now, in the thickest part of a forest, which lay at no great distance, the baron had discovered the existence of a spacious cave, whose mouth was impervious to merely casual observation, because of a huge furze, by which it was entirely concealed. To this cavern, soon after his visit to the north, he caused an immense cauldron, or furnace, to be conveyed, and, having procured a number of bullet-moulds, he selected a few of his trustiest followers, including his foster-brother, Phelim O'Neill, and having himself given them the necessary instructions, he set them to work, converting the lead into good substantial bullets. Amongst the other injunctions given to the workmen, O'Neill charged them, above all, to keep their employment secret from all. "For," said he, "ye are all aware of the vicinity of Newry, where Bagnal is ever on the watch to find cause of complaint against me. Information of this work

would be worth a mine of gold to him—see then that the very birds of the air discover not the secret. I am now going to England for a week or two, but I leave the matter in your hands.” Then, as a sudden thought struck him, he hastily added, “Not even to your lady must this be known!”

“Oh, then, don’t be afraid, my lord!” cried Teague O’Hagan, one of the trusted few, “sure we know what the ancient proverb says, that *a wise head makes a close mouth*, an’, with God’s help, we’ll keep our lips glued together when we’re out of this, for fear a word would come out in spite of us!”

“Oh! no need of that, Teague,” said the baron, laughing, “only be careful at your going out and coming in, and take care to drop no hint of our secret to any one.”

All the four then joined in assuring him that he had no cause for fear, and the baron, having seen them fairly at work, withdrew. Being desirous, before he set out for London, to sound the chieftain of Tyrconnell, he took his wife with him on a visit to her father.

Unfortunately, the character of the ruling chief afforded little hope, for he was precisely such another as old Tirlogh of Tyr-owen, but still it was worth making the trial, for his joining the cause would be in itself a rational ground for hope, his power being paramount over many of the most warlike tribes of Ulster. So the baron and baroness set out for Donegal with a numerous retinue. They were cordially received, and a week passed pleasantly away, for the young brothers of Judith were noble and gallant boys, and the red deer were plenty in the forests of Tyrconnell. But, alas, after many conversations with Manus, O'Neill gave up his hopes with a heavy sigh, for, though he ventured not to make any definite proposal, yet he could not but see that the slightest allusion to a struggle with the English was sufficient to make O'Donnell's heart sink, and his color come and go like a very girl. "He is the veritable father of my worthy helpmate," said O'Neill to himself, "and, as such, cannot be roused to either feeling or energy." There was then no hope in Tyrconnell, for

the sons of the chief were little more than children; Hugh, the eldest, being barely turned of fourteen. So with a heavy heart the baron turned his back again on Donegal Castle, internally cursing the pusillanimity of its chief, so little worthy of that proud title.

But, leaving O'Neill and his phlegmatic spouse on their homeward journey, let us return to see how it fared with the bullet-makers during their lord's absence. As the night was the time when they had least chance of being disturbed, they worked but little during the day, and when the evening was closing in, they regularly repaired one by one to their secret forge in the forest. Then it was, that, by the light of bog-pine torches, they went merrily on with their work, having their store of metal in the farther end of the cavern, where, too, they stowed away the bullets as they grew cold. Night after night they whiled away the time with song and story, taking care to roll up to the mouth of the cave a stone which completely closed it up, so that even sound

could not escape if any were abroad to hear it. As Teague and Phelim had both followed their chief through his campaigns in the south, they had many a wondrous tale to tell of the Geraldine country, and that long war in which they had borne a part, most repugnant to their inclinations, for it required all their affection for O'Neill to make the clansmen of Tyr-owen range themselves under the English banners.

“ Well, God sees it was little honor for an O'Neill to help up the English red-coats, and they butchering and slaughtering the heart's blood of true Irishmen!—I'd go as far as any man for one of the name, but then it was against nature to do that, àn' I don't know that I'd do it even for him—ay, if he was the O'Neill himself!” * This was said by Brian O'Hagan, who, though a brother

* It will be remembered that there was no broken English spoken at that day, as the Irish, except when speaking to one who knew not their language, had far too great a hatred of the Saxon to use his tongue, even if they could speak it. As they spoke their own language with tolerable propriety, there will be found here, even in the mouths of O'Neill's followers, none of what are called Irishisms.

of Teague, had never seen service of any kind.

"I tell thee, Brian," cried Phelim O'Neill, with some indignation, "I tell thee that he did it against the grain, just to keep the Sassenach queen in the dark; and another thing, Brian O'Hagan, what if he did as much good there as harm?"

"Ay, I'll be sworn he did," said Teague, speaking from his station near the furnace, "and, glory be 'to God, some of ourselves had a chance of doing a small share of good as well as Aodh, God bless him. Eh, Phelim, had we not?"

"More than them that staid at home," returned Phelim, exultingly, while his honest face glowed with the remembrance. "Many a good turn we did the poor fellows under-hand, though above-board we were against them, and I'm sure the baron earned more blessings than I could tell in a month, from the priests and bishops that he helped away, when the *Sassum deargs* were all round them, raging like wild beasts. Och, then; Teague dear, was n't that the great

rejoicing for us all when we got the blood-hounds off the scent of the poor old friar?"

"Ay, him that stole back into the abbey and it on fire to bring away the crucifix that they forgot when they were forced to leave the place. Ay, Phelim, we were the lightest-hearted fellows from sea to sea after we got him safe off!"

"Arrah, what is it all about, boys?" demanded Brian and his untravelled comrade in a breath, "sure ye might tell us the whole story if ye had a mind to be civil."

"Why, it is n't a long one, after all," said Teague. Wiping the perspiration from his heated brow, he resigned his place at the cauldron to Phelim, and threw himself at full length on a ledge of the rock which formed a sort of natural bench along one side of the cavern. "A party of Ormond's troopers had set fire to a fine abbey, heathens as they were, and sure they turned out the poor monks without letting them take one thing or another with them—only one of them managed to slip into the chapel, poor man! and carry away the blessed sacrament, chal-

ice and all, and a miracle it was that he escaped out into the woods with it, and the cursed red-coats on the watch at every door. Well! it was afterwards we heard this, for the baron had been all that day stationed with his people at a ford where it was expected some of the Geraldines were to attempt crossing, and when we were released and came up with the *Sassum deargs*, sure enough we found them shouting and yelling round the abbey, and ye may be sure it went to our hearts when we saw the fine old ancient building in flames. Well, sure the baron himself was just as much grieved as any of us, for he got as white as a sheet and then red again, and any one could see that he could hardly keep in his anger, but what could he do? so he just turned his back on the pitiable sight and said not a word. I suppose the poor monks were on the watch in the neighboring forest, for the fire was very near taking into the chapel, when what should I see (and fifty of our people as well as I) but a small door open at one side of the altar—ye see the outside doors were all wide

open, and we happened to be over against the chapel. Then a hand and arm came out, and reached to a black crucifix that was hanging over the altar. Sure enough we all began to tremble, for we knew it must be one of the monks that was trying to get the cross, and we were in hopes that the *Sassum deargs* didn't see the thing at all, but, ochone! before ye could say 'God bless us!' there was a shout of 'Catch him—catch him!' 'To the flames with himself and his idol!' was echoed from others, and as good as twenty of the bloodthirsty Sassenachs made a rush to the open door, though the fire was just breaking into the chapel at the time from another direction. The poor monk, when he heard the shout, slapped to the door, (but not till he had made sure of the crucifix,) and he must have got it barred too, for when the devils tried to push it in, faith, they found a mistake, for they crushed and crushed, but it was no use. Well! they were fairly at a loss what to do, and sure ourselves set up a laugh at them, and that made them mad altogether, for off they

ran, and snatched up three or four burning pieces of wood, and piled them up against the door. And in the twinkling of an eye, ye'd say, there was a great smoke, and then the door began to crackle, and at last it broke out into a blaze right up the middle. Well! when we saw this, our laughing was soon over, and we all turned to ask leave from the baron to save the poor monk, but behold ye! he was n't to be seen, and we were just on the step to go after the Sassenachs, when there came the sound of a horn from the back of the wood, and then a loud cry of 'The Geraldine to the rescue!'—och! while ye'd clap your hands there was n't a red-coat about the abbey but what rushed out—them that were after the monk amongst the rest—the Saxon captain cried out to the men to fall into their places, and sure we were doing the same without saying anything about Baron Hugh's being away, but before we were all in our ranks, did n't we see him walking over to the English officer, just as if he had n't been off the ground at all? Phelim and myself were close together, and we

looked at one another, but said nothing. We had our own notions, for all that; and we weren't much surprised, when after cooling our heels for an hour at least, the devil a soul troubled us. Then for fear of an ambush we had to wait there till clear daylight in the morning, when we marched away to join the main body under Ormond, but the face of an Irish enemy, (as the Sassenachs called them,) was n't to be seen."

"Well! but who was it that gave the false alarm?" cried Brian, who, with his companion, Art, had listened in open-mouthed attention—"did ye ever find that out?"

"Arrah," said Teague, somewhat contemptuously, "don't ye see as plain as my hand that it was the baron himself, God's blessing light on him? We never put the question to him, but every one of us knew it as well as could be, and sure it would make you laugh till your sides ached again, to hear him condoling with the Sassenach captain, about the trick that had been played us. And the best of it all was that they blamed it on the monks, who had, they said,

an underground passage from the back of the wood into the abbey. But that was n't the first, nor the last time that Baron Hugh saved priests from death. Ay, and many a noble lady he contrived to steal away from the very clutches almost of the soldiers."

"But, Teague," said Art, "is it true that the spirits of the murdered priests are still seen by night in the old walls of their churches?—sure we heard here that some of yourselves saw something that way, up in Munster, there!"

"Well, sure enough," said Teague, and he laughed aloud, as did Phelim, too, "sure enough we did see a priest one night saying mass in a ruined church; ay, and we all of us waited till we heard the mass, too, for, God help us, it was n't often we had the chance. And glad enough we were, and the baron himself went and kneel'd beside the broken altar, and when mass was over, he had a long talk with the priest."

Here both Brien and Art crossed themselves devoutly, while an exclamation of horror burst from the lips of each, and their

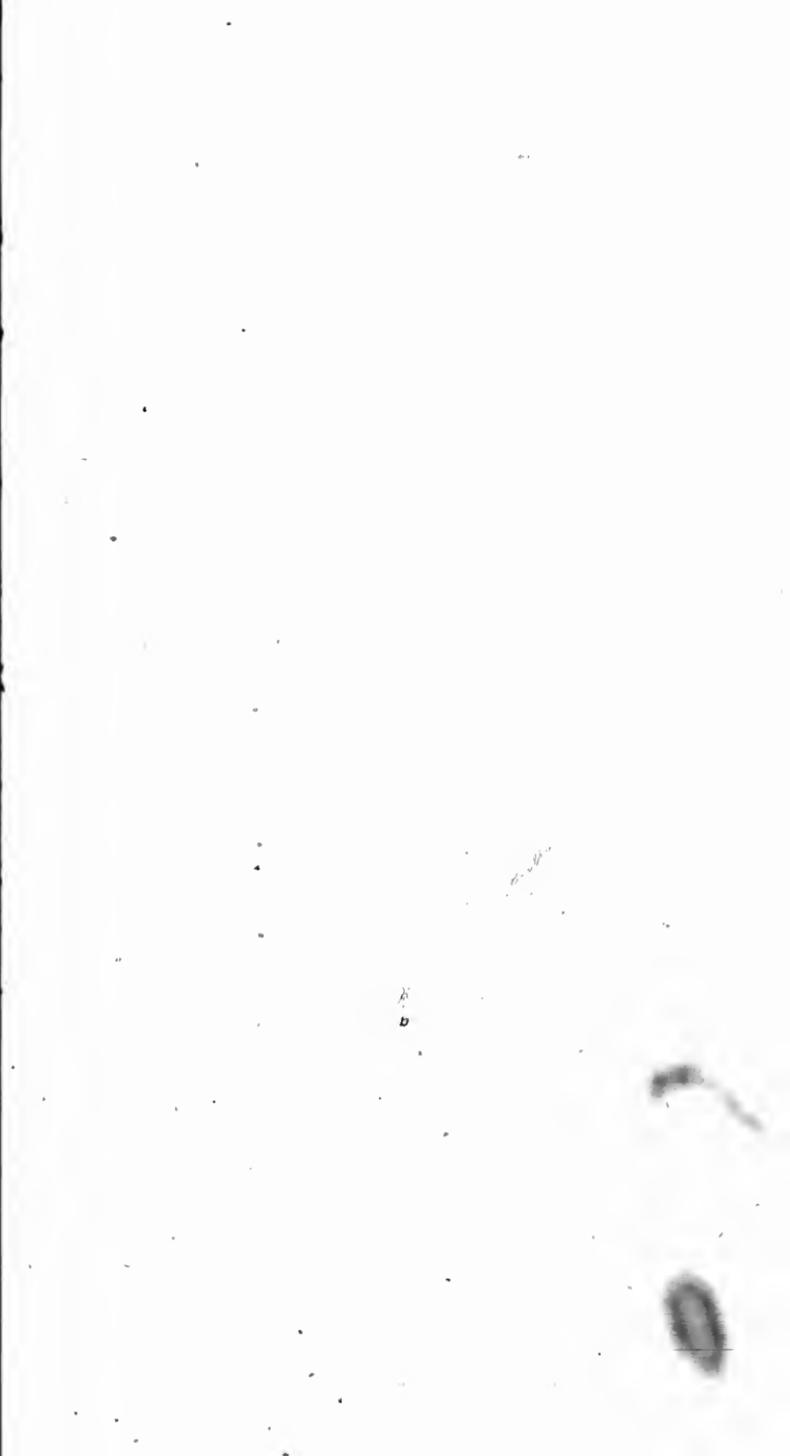
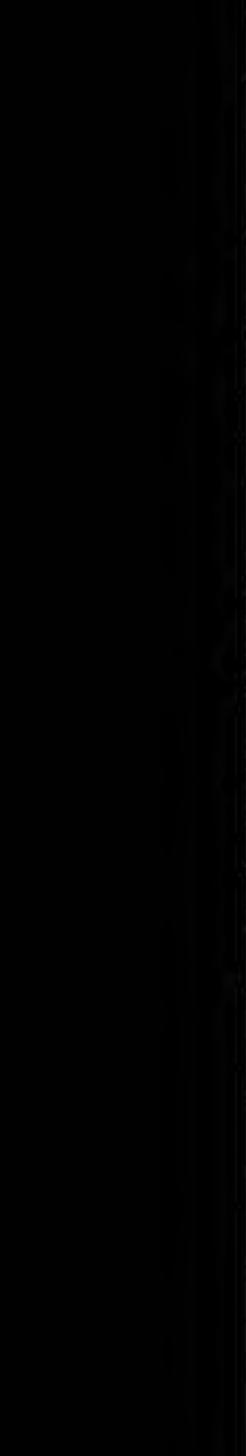
very teeth chattered with the cold chill of mortal terror, "The Lord save us, and it a ghost all the time?"

"No more a ghost than yourself, Brian," cried Teague, while Phelim and he laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks, "the poor priest was alive and well, but as he could n't say mass in daytime for fear of the Sassenachs, so he came in the dead of the night, (at least it was about one or two o'clock in the morning, and as dark as pitch,) to the old altar where he used to offer up the mass, and we just came up at the time. It was good luck for him that there were no English with us, for we had been sent round over night by a short cut to meet them at a place by daylight, where they were to attack a great castle belonging to Desmond. To tell ye the truth, boys, we were at first nearly as much frightened as ye were a minute ago, when we saw the light burning in such a lonesome place at that hour of the night, but the baron told us to wait a little until he went and peeped in, and he came back in a minute or two to tell us what it

meant ; for ye know he can read every thing that he sees like a book, and, as I said, we were glad enough, and heard mass with more devotion, I think, than any of us ever did before. The priest was a little surprised when he saw the baron kneeling beside the altar, but, of course, he went on with the mass, and when it was over, Baron Hugh soon banished his fears, and many a mass ye both heard the same priest say."

"Why, how is that, Teague?"

"Sure, because, Father Fitzgerald is the very man, for the baron dressed him up like one of us, and sent him home with letters to the baroness, and kept him ever since at the castle. And that other old friar that ventured back for the crucifix, as I told you,—well he's over there in the Abbey of Donegal, for he's of the same order ; and when the baron happened to find him out one day in Limerick, he sat down and wrote with him to the young chief, his brother-in-law, that is, Hugh Roe, the son of the O'Donnell, and sent one of our men with him to Donegal,



giving them directions how they were to go to avoid the English."

"Well, sure enough," said Brian, "he's not the man I took him for," and he drew a long breath as though relieved from some pressure, yet, if the truth were known, honest Brian, ay, and Art too, were no little disappointed to find that the ghost was no ghost after all.

Soon after, the conversation turned on a wonderful fortune-teller or wise-woman, as she was called in the Irish tongue, who had established herself in the neighborhood some weeks before. The mystery which shrouded this personage tended no little to increase the awe with which she was regarded by the simple clansmen of Tyr-owen, as well as by their wives and daughters. No one could tell whence or how she came into the country, nor yet the particular place of her abode. In fact, she appeared to have no fixed residence, but moved from one locality to another with a celerity that surprised and alarmed the people. Many were the wonder-

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ful stories told of her superhuman knowledge, and instances not a few were brought forward in support of her supposed power of diving into the future. Now it had often been a subject of debate, amongst the workmen in the cave, for what purpose their lord could be preparing such a quantity of bullets. "For, surely," said one to another, "if he was going out again with the English, he'd have no need to make any preparations of the kind." And, as it never entered their mind that *he*, of all men, contemplated war against the queen's government, so they were sorely puzzled to know what it could mean, and why the business was carried on with such secrecy. On the night following the conversation above related, Art proposed that they should some of them apply to the wise-woman, who, of course, could enlighten them on the subject, as nothing was unknown to her. To this proposal the others all agreed with the exception of Phelim, by whom it was vehemently opposed. "For," said he, with as much reason as right feeling, "what is it to us what Baron Hugh wants

the bullets for?—it is our duty to work away at them without troubling ourselves about what they are for, since he didn't think it right to tell us. What would he think of us if he knew that we marched off to a wise-woman to ask her anything about it? What could he think, but that we were prying into his business and into what didn't concern us? So, boys, let us hear no more of such folly, or we may live to be all sorry."

"Well, well, Phelim, agra, say no more about it," cried Teague, "for since it might displeas the baron if he heard it, we'll give up the notion."

But, notwithstanding this assurance, they did not give up the notion; and, during the day, the three were wont to meet and talk over the scheme. It is true, they would not on any account have revealed the secret wilfully, but, being of opinion that the wise-woman was already as well acquainted with the matter as was the baron himself, they concluded that applying to her for information could in no way be considered as violating the trust reposed in them. They

were in this frame of mind, wishing, yet fearing, to meet the spae-woman, when, as Brian and Teague were going together through the wood in the direction of the ~~one~~ to relieve the other two, who should they spy, sitting on the trunk of a fallen beech, but the identical personage of whom they had been speaking! Neither of them had ever seen her before, but her appearance was familiar to them by description, and even if it were not so, they could not possibly mistake her identity. Yes; there she sat, bent almost two double, with her small, withered face, and long, sharp nose, and a pair of black, twinkling eyes, that looked as though they could pierce a stone wall. Then there was her short, red cloak thrown over her humped shoulders, and, for head-gear, a kerchief of the same color tied loosely under the chin, scarcely keeping back her gray, coarse hair, which obstinately protruded in elf-locks around her face. She looked up as the men approached, and, seeing that they stopped suddenly, as though fearing to come up, she made a sign with her crutch for them

to draw near. A low, cackling laugh distended her toothless jaws as they obeyed, and she said, with an attempt at civility which sat badly upon her, "A fair good evening to ye both, Brian and Teague O'Hagan; methinks ye have tarried over-long, for the sun is even now sunk behind the hills, and your comrades, Art and Phelim, must be tired waiting." She spoke in good, pure Irish; and every word sank into the hearts of the awe-stricken listeners.

"The Lord be good unto us, Teague," said Brian, in a low, fearful voice, to his brother, "thou seest it is all true; she knows our names, and all about our work."

Before Teague could answer, the harsh laugh, or rather chuckle, was heard again, and the croaking accents of the witch made both the men silent in an instant.

"And what wonder is that, Brian O'Hagan? What is there on earth or in air hidden from the wise-woman of the woods? Ha, ha! It doth make me laugh to see the caution with which thy master locks up his secret; but he cannot lock it up from me!"

"We know that, dame; we know that," said Teague, soothingly, and to show thee that we do, we have been thinking, for some days, of going to ask your ladyship a question or two." He stopped and hesitated, but Brian nudged him with his elbow to go on, and Teague proceeded—"we want to know what the baron intends to do with all the bullets that he has us making?"

A louder and more scornful laugh burst from the witch. "And is it now ye ask that question, poor, foolish creatures that ye are? What, think ye, could he make the bullets for (so secretly, too,) but to shoot the English enemy!—ha! ha! ha! and he is gone to Tyrconnell, too, to look for help from O'Donnell. Ye knew not that, either, I warrant me. Be off with ye, poor fools. I do but waste my words on such as ye!" and, seizing her crutch, she arose, as though in a passion, shaking her hand menacingly at the men, who, on their parts, needed no second bidding; for their terror had risen to such a pitch that they were already hastening away with all their speed. It surely did not

lessen their fears when the wood rang with the loud, derisive laugh of the witch. As they took good care to keep their own secrets, so they never gave the slightest hint to their companions of their having encountered the wise-woman.

That very day, the baron reached home a disappointed man, as has already been shown, and a week only had elapsed when he was summoned to appear before the deputy, to answer various charges, one of them being that he was secretly preparing war stores. O'Neill was astounded by this accusation, and hastened at once to the cave, to ascertain whether the secret could have leaked out there. All, of course, protested that they had never breathed a word of it to any one, and that they had neglected none of the precautions enjoined them. With this assurance, the baron was, of necessity, obliged to rest satisfied, never dreaming that any of the men, hitherto so trustworthy, were now prevaricating. Whether the O'Hagans had any misgivings or not as to the result of their conference with the spae-woman, they kept

a total silence on that subject, justly fearing that their lord would not view the matter as they did.

On his arrival in Dublin, O'Neill found the deputy so strongly imbued with suspicion that he could scarcely hear him with patience, whereupon he made up his mind to proceed to London; and see the queen herself. His reception at court was at first anything but gracious, for malice had spared no pains to prejudice the royal mind against him. But, as Elizabeth made no direct charges, so the baron affected not to notice her coldness, and all her hints of disloyalty and disaffection were adroitly met and answered by details of the Geraldine war and the northern insurrection. Elizabeth talked of smooth-faced traitors, and O'Neill even outdid her majesty in the severity of his condemnation, carefully keeping his remarks confined to generalities, as though he never dreamed of such suspicions having reference to himself. The queen inveighed against the base ingratitude of certain Irish lords, whereupon O'Neill declared that her maj-

esty could have no idea of what it was, but, were she amongst them as he was, then she might know something of its extent. Ever, as the conversation progressed, the queen would open her eyes in astonishment, and fix them on the baron's face, as though seeking to pierce the veil which covered his real sentiments, but as often did she make a gesture of impatience, and break out anew into vehement invectives against deceit, and dissimulation and treachery, and what not ; for, on the features of O'Neill, those calm, passionless features, there was not a trace of confusion, even beneath the keenest scrutiny of her piercing eye. At last she took up a golden staff which rested against her arm-chair, and striking it violently against the floor, she cried, in her shrill, sharp voice :

“By the soul of the eighth Henry, our royal father ! but we give the matter up. My lord of Dungannon, thou art either an injured and calumniated man, or the greatest knave from here to Tyburn !”

“As I would fain believe,” returned O'Neill with a tranquil smile, “that your

majesty could never be brought to couple the latter epithet with my name, so do I venture to hope that my gracious sovereign looks upon me in the former light. I have heard, indeed, from the Lord Deputy, that certain absurd accusations had been lodged against me, but the tidings gave me neither surprise nor alarm, because I have been too highly favored by your majesty to escape the shafts of envy, while, on the other hand, I did make bold to imagine that your highness had many substantial reasons for rejecting the foul calumnies!"

"Ay!" said Elizabeth, abruptly, "we thought we had established some claims on thy gratitude as well as fealty, but we have been informed, that of late days thou dost eschew these claims, and despise the honors which are ours to bestow. Thou canst not deny that, baron of Dungannon!"

"I could never have the hardihood to say your majesty was in error, but, methinks, when I have acquainted your highness with the object of my visit—that is, over and above the rendering of my personal homage,

it will go far to shew whether this accusation is true or false."

"And of what nature may it be, we pray thee?" demanded Elizabeth, with some curiosity.

"As I am not ignorant of your majesty's princely liberality in rewarding the services of your loyal followers, so I had ventured to hope that thou wouldst have graciously deigned to confer on my humble self that earldom of Tyrone bestowed by your highness's late royal father, of happy memory, on my grandsire, Con. O'Neill. The title, as your majesty well knows, has lain dormant since his death; have I dared to ask too much?"—and he bent his knee before her, and bowed his stately head with so much apparent respect, that Elizabeth could not choose but believe him really covetous of the title, and, with a well-pleased countenance, she extended her hand, and laid it playfully on his shoulder. "Then arise, my lord; and be henceforward known as Earl of Tyrone—good faith! it were pity to let so fair a title sleep idly in the herald's office, and so accom-

plished a courtier, the grandson of its last possessor, having but the poor name of Baron of Dungannon. Arise! My lord earl, we shall see that the appendages of thy new grade are duly given thee, and land enough to support thy rank!"

O'Neill, of course, was profuse in his acknowledgments, but kept himself on his guard for what he well knew was to follow. Elizabeth, having, as she considered, bribed the chieftain anew, failed not to propose new conditions to be fulfilled by him. Thus, when she gave him a grant of a large portion of the district of Tyr-owen, it was that he might have yet a greater interest in opposing old Tirlogh, (with whom, nevertheless, she hypocritically charged him to live on good terms,) and one of her express conditions was, that he should keep an eye to the northern chieftains, and be ready to coalesce with her generals to put down the first appearance of disaffection. He was also to keep a sharp lookout for popish priests, and on no account to encourage their religion. To all these things O'Neill gave evasive answers, which,

though they did not quite satisfy Elizabeth, were the best she could obtain. And so she dismissed the wily chieftain, after having kept him a week under one pretence or another : he went home a belted earl, but the queen was just where she was before ; wishing, yet hardly daring to believe him devoted to her interest.

He was only a few days returned to Dunganon, when he sent his eldest son to be fostered by O'Cahan, praying that chieftain to make him a man after his own heart, and he could desire no more. This was the most flattering token of friendship that he could bestow, and O'Cahan, valuing it as it deserved, became thenceforward the unalterable friend of O'Neill, and the confidant of all his patriotic projects. He, in turn, brought over his friends and allies, to join the confederacy, while the warlike McDonnell, in his mountain territory, neglected no opportunity of forwarding the national cause. To bind him still more strongly, the earl sent his brother, Cormac O'Neill, to teach the clansmen of the Glynnns the science of war, as known to his

own people ; a service which was gratefully acknowledged by Sorley Buidhe, fully sensible, as he was, of the advantage it would give him in any future trial of strength or skill. Day by day, the league extended itself under the powerful agency of O'Neill, until it embraced within its circle by far the greater number of the chiefs of Ulster. Yet still there was wanting one mighty link to make it strong and binding, and that was the chief of Tyrconnell. Another great obstacle existed in the passive character of him who then ruled Tyr-owen ; and though the popular voice would have joyfully hailed the earl of Tyrone as chief, still he shrank from deposing the poor old man who nominally exercised the supreme power. But when, in the course of some months, he was urged by the chief tributaries of the sept, and by the publicly expressed wish of the clansmen, to assume the name of the O'Neill, he no longer refused, (provided Tirlogh Lynnoch would consent to the change,) well knowing how much more efficaciously he could then work for the national cause. A deputation

of the chiefs having waited on Tirlogh, he was induced to give his consent, and resign his office to Hugh O'Neill, who was there-upon solemnly inaugurated as the O'Neill. It was a joyous day for the principality of Tyr-owen, when, amid its proudest and most honored—amid its warriors, and priests, and bards, sat Hugh O'Neill on the chair of stone, on the rath of Tulloghoge, with the banner of his house—the snow-white banner, with its blood-red hand, waving above him, and he walked three times around and around, according to the immemorial custom of his predecessors, and then he was saluted as the O'Neill, a title which he would not have exchanged for that of king; for itself included the royal title of Prince of Ulster, compared to which all other names were, in his eyes, and that of thousands there, as nothing.

Now it was that O'Neill applied himself energetically to prosecute the work of redemption. He had now within his own domains a large available force; but, with the exception of the six companies kept up for the queen's service (!) the clansmen of Tyr-

owen, though "good men and true," were singularly untutored in the modern art of war, and consequently little able to cope with the soldiers of England. — To any other than O'Neill, this would have been a mighty obstacle, for, as it still behooved him to keep on terms with the government, how was he to set about drilling and exercising his people in the face of certain discovery? But no obstacle was too great for the earl's all inventive mind; so he boldly commenced and carried on the work after this manner. Under pretence of obeying the queen's instructions, by holding himself in readiness for the first emergency, he daily exercised his men—that is to say, the queen's six companies—but always contriving to substitute new, as soon as their predecessors were perfectly well trained. Thus, while ostensibly keeping the queen's soldiers in readiness, he was really drilling and training the whole male population of Tyr-owen, and, in the course of a few months, had the satisfaction of seeing them as expert in the use of their

weapons, and in the various military evolutions of the day, as any men could be made.

Such was the public life of Hugh O'Neill during these first preparatory years, and, if little has been said of his private life, it is that nothing could possibly present less of interest. By a singular dispensation of Providence, or, perhaps, through his own instinctive desire of baffling Elizabeth's views, he had chosen, while yet very young, (as has already been told,) a woman who possessed not one of those qualities which might be supposed to excite his admiration. About her person there was nothing remarkable, so that, if she could lay no claim to beauty, there was at least nothing repulsive in her appearance. And her mind was just as mediocre as her person. It might have been more so; for the lady Judith O'Neill (or the Countess of Tyrone) was precisely one of those who seem sent into the world to fill up a place which an automaton might do as well, neither acting nor caring to act, any part in the great drama going on around.

Yet she was a careful, if not a clever or judicious mother; and, as a wife, with a husband of a less elevated mind and character, she might have made a tolerably good one; for Judith was submissive as submissive could be, and had so high a reverence for her lordly husband that she scarcely ever ventured to raise her eyes to his face. In short, she was just a good, quiet woman, without any distinctive mark, and, as such, the very wife, of all others, the least suited to the courtly, and aspiring, and lofty-minded O'Neill. Such being the case, it was not at all surprising that, though he ever treated her with the respect and consideration due to his wife, and the mother of his children, yet she had never called forth, in his heart, that love, of which his warm, genial nature was susceptible. Often, when weighed down with the many cares of the precarious and difficult path he had chosen, an involuntary sigh would escape him as he thought of Judith's all but imbecility, and then his yearning heart would long for the communion of some kindred mind as the first of earthly

blessings. Yet, from a principle of duty, he ever repressed these rising regrets, as soon as he became conscious of their tendency, and the less attraction he found within his family circle, the more eagerly did he throw himself into the grand project whose nobleness captivated his mind.

Latterly, he had found an enlightened friend in his chaplain, who had studied in various continental colleges, and had seen the world, both in courts and cities. He was a man of singular piety, yet none the less attached to his country, for which, indeed, he cherished an affection commensurate with its sufferings. The companionship of such a man was a truly invaluable acquisition to the earl, deprived, as he was, of congenial society, and though he thought it unnecessary to open to the good priest all his plans and their extent, yet he found pleasure in discoursing with him on the condition of the country, and the state of public feeling, as far as that was or could be known. Now Father McNamara had a habit of making short tours through the country for the pur-

pose of administering the sacraments, and affording spiritual consolation to such as might require his aid, in the absence of their own pastors. In general, he confined himself to the territory of Tyrone, and that by the advice of the earl. Sometimes, however, his zeal would carry him into the adjoining districts, and, on one of these occasions, when he had ventured even within a few miles of Newry, he was seized by some of Bagnal's soldiers, out on a foraging party, and dragged into the presence of the marshal, who had him cast into prison, and heavily ironed, awaiting a more formal trial.

A less devoted Christian might have escaped; for he wore no peculiar habit, and might easily have framed some plausible excuse, but no such idea crossed the upright and simple mind of the good father, who, when questioned as to his calling, frankly confessed it. Even the object of his leaving home he did not attempt to conceal, and thus, of course, committed himself. The only thing he refused to reveal was the place of his abode, fearing to implicate his noble

and to all their inquiries on this subject, in answer to their fierce threats of vengeance if he continued obstinate, the only answer they could obtain was, "A priest of the Lord has no fixed home on earth; his dwelling is wherever a soul requires his aid." So he was thrown into prison as already mentioned, and looked forward to an early and perhaps cruel death. Priests were seldom visited in those days with lenient punishment, and their execution was almost invariably preceded by lingering torments.

CHAPTER III.

"Ne'er had a Naiad or a Grace,
A finer form or lovelier face."

SCOTT'S LADY OF THE LAKE.

"A perfect woman nobly planned

With heart brave and true."

THE mock trial was over, and, as might be expected, Father McNamara was condemned to death, but, as a special stretch of mercy, he was to be hung "by the neck until dead," without any preliminary torture. As it was then late, the execution was

deferred till the following day, and the priest was again consigned to the gloomy solitude of his cell. It was already drawing towards the twilight when a gallant troop of cavalry rode through the fortress town of Newry, and stopped before the marshal's quarters. Bagnal was just then occupied in writing an exaggerated account of the priest's capture and subsequent condemnation for the special eye of majesty, when a soldier entered with the tidings that the Earl of Tyrone waited without, desiring to see Sir Henry Bagnal. Now, if there was one man on earth whom Bagnal hated more than all others, that man was Tyrone, whom he both feared and envied. His first impulse was, therefore, to refuse him admission; but a voice of softest music spoke from the deep recess of an adjoining window, begging that the earl might be admitted.—“Have pity on my womanish curiosity, Henry,” said the sweet voice, playfully, “and deny me not what may be my only chance to see this so-much-talked-of chieftain. I have to examine these animals in a state of nature.”

“Admit him, sirrah!” said Bagnal; and when the soldier had left the room, he spoke in allusion to the lady’s last words,—“Aye, but this O’Neill is none of your wild Irishmen,—would he were, for then would he be far less dangerous. No, no, Arabella; here is a fellow, who, to all the natural cunning of his race, and their courage, too, adds the knowledge which may be gained, in courts alone—curse him!—and so great are his powers of persuasion, that a dozen words from him will wheedle Elizabeth out of her fiercest anger.”

“Well, truly,” said Arabella, with a laugh, “thou hast much increased my curiosity, though I am inclined to believe that thy fears do overrate his talents and accomplishments.” As she spoke, she moved her seat a little so as to have a better view of the expected visitor.

At that moment, the earl entered, and though Bagnal stood up to receive him, he chose not to return the courteous salutation of O’Neill. The latter, however, took no notice of the insult, but went on to state the purpose of his visit.

"There was a Roman Catholic priest tried and condemned this day, in Newry; is it not so?"

Bagnal replied curtly in the affirmative.

"And his crime, of course, is that of having exercised the functions of his ministry?"

"A grievous crime in the eyes of the law," said Bagnal, snappishly.

"Humph," said the earl, "that may be, but here in Ulster such a thing has never been attempted before; somehow the law of England has not found its way in here, and the priest, perchance, thought that, as he violated none of the laws by which the people of this province are governed, he ran no risk."

"We will teach him the law and the gospel, too, that is all," returned Bagnal, abruptly.

"Knows Sir Henry Bagnal who this priest is?" demanded O'Neill.

"No, nor does he care."

"He is my chaplain," said the earl, "and moreover, my valued friend."

“So much the more reason for his being got rid of; his death will leave a viper the less.”

“I thank thee, Sir Henry Bagnal,” said the earl, with an ironical smile, but still preserving his composure. “Thy courtesy exceeds my poor deserts.—Bethink thee, nevertheless, who I am—and then, mark me well, sir marshal, refuse my request or not, when I ask thee to spare the life of this just man. For myself I would not sue, were my life hanging on thy word, but for him do I repress all selfish feelings, and implore thee to forgive him. Sir Henry Bagnal, I give thee thus an opportunity to make Tyrone thy friend for me.”

Bagnal's dark face grew darker still, and his heavy eyebrows were drawn closely together, yet a smile curled his thin, pale lip; it was a smile of satanic exultation.

“The law must have its course; aye, even were it the mighty earl of Tyrone, and not this wretched priest, who was to suffer the penalty.”

Arabella Bagnal arose from her seat, and

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came slowly forward. From the moment of O'Neill's entrance, her eyes had never been withdrawn from his face, and, by a strange species of attraction, she felt herself drawn to sympathize in his feelings. She had marked the crimson spot which her brother's harsh and cutting refusal had called to his cheek, and she said within herself,—“ I shame to go forward as the sister of that man—of him who can thus wantonly outrage a heart so noble. Yet it must be done.” And, throwing back the rich drapery of the window, she stepped out, and, moving softly up to her brother, she laid her hand upon his arm, saying, with a winning smile, as he turned towards her,—“ Henry, this must not be. I knew not before of this matter, but, from what hath now passed, I have gathered its whole meaning. My brother, this man, this priest, is guiltless before God, and wouldst thou have his innocent blood on thy soul? Forbid it, earth and heaven, that so foul a stain should tarnish the soul of Henry Bagnal !”

There was something so elevated, so spir-

itual, in the expression of Arabella's face, and her cheek glowed with so deep a crimson, denoting the intensity with which she felt, that even her brother, hard, and cold, and soulless as he was, could not bring himself to refuse her at once, while O'Neill stood as though transfixed by the radiant vision which had broke so suddenly on his sight. Her words, too, and the rich, deep music of her voice, would have excited his admiration, even had not her beauty been of the very highest order.

"Nay, nay, Arabella," said her brother, after a moment's silence, thou speakest like a fool. I cannot, if I would, pardon this man. The commands of her majesty must be obeyed, and they are positive on this head."

The bright glow faded from Arabella's face, and her beautiful eyes were, on the instant, suffused with tears. Turning quickly to the astonished, and almost spell-bound earl, she said,—“My lord of Tyrone, here is no hope. After having refused me, his only sister, Sir Henry Bagnol may be deemed

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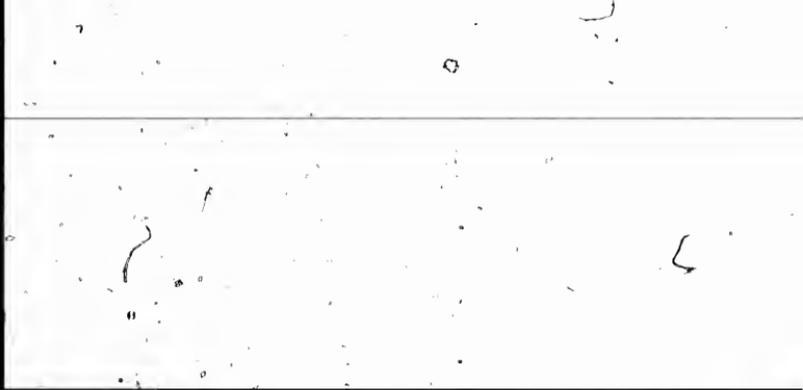
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immovable in his resolution. Would that this might lessen, in some degree, the disappointment which your lordship must of necessity feel."

The earl bowed low to the beautiful speaker, and said, with all that winning grace which characterized him,—“Lady, I speak not now of disappointment. I have done for mine honored friend more—a thousand times—than I would do for myself. I must, therefore, bear this heavy stroke as best I can; but what shall I say to thee, or how thank thee for thy generous mediation? Assure thyself, however, that its being unsuccessful in no respect lessens my gratitude. Lady, farewell; and may Heaven requite thee!” And, without vouchsafing even to look at Bagnal, he was quitting the room when the marshal said aloud, with bitter irony:

“What a pass things have come to when a double dignitary—an Irish chief and an English earl, cannot obtain so small a boon as the life of a miserable popish priest.”

O'Neill turned quickly on his heel, and



his glance of withering scorn fell on the heartless marshal, but the words which rose to his lips were arrested there by the sight of Arabella's pale countenance, as she stood, like some beautiful statue, close by her brother's seat. He met her look of melancholy interest, and he merely said, in reply to the taunt, "It is well, most generous and noble marshal. The presence of that tutelary angel forbids me to speak, as I ought to do." And he was gone before Bagnal had made up his mind for a further sarcasm.

That night, while the earl was debating with himself, whether he should not attempt to force the prison doors, and rescue the priest, or if it might not be a better plan to wait the time appointed for the execution, which was to be public, and then, by a desperate charge, gain possession of the prisoner, and fight his way out with his troop, the door of Father McNamara's cell was opened softly, and Arabella Bagnal entered, closing it carefully behind her. The priest was sitting on a stone bench, with his arms folded on his bosom, and looking as calm as though

in perfect ease and security.. Not a glimpse of light found admission to the cell, but Arabella carried a small dark lantern, which she set on the floor, with its light falling on the prisoner.

“My good father,” said the lady, in a respectful tone, “I am come to set thee free; go hence, in God’s name, and say to the Earl of Tyrone, that an English maiden hath saved thy life.”

“But, lady, or angel, or whatsoever thou art,” said the priest, in amazement, “how is this to be done? How am I to pass my jailors?”

“The thing is easy enough,” replied Arabella, as she deposited a bundle at his feet, “there is but one sentry, and him I have had my servant ply with wine, till he is fast asleep. In that bundle thou wilt find the uniform of an English soldier, so that, if any of our people be astir, at this hour, they may not suspect thee. Here, too, is the key of a small postern, which, at the bottom of this street, leads to the open country, and, once there, thou canst, ere day dawns, be far beyond the

reach of danger. I shall now retire, till thou hast donned that suit, when thou canst join me at the outer door." And she hastened away, without waiting for an answer. In a few minutes the priest stood beyond the prison wall, in his strange disguise, and near him the muffled figure of his deliverer.

"Lady!" he said, in a low, cautious whisper, "I ask not who thou art, but the God to whose service I am consecrated, knoweth, and will reward thee. To his keeping I commit thee, and no day shall pass during the remnant of my life, without my prayers being offered up for thy spiritual and temporal happiness!"

"Do as thou sayest," said Arabella, in the same low tone, "and for my name, the O'Neill will tell thee who to pray for. Farewell; the moon is about to rise, and thou hast need to set forth quickly." She was moving away, when the priest requested her to stay yet a moment while he asked one question.

"Speak, father, what wouldst thou know?"

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name which, more than most names, I honor :
knows he of my captivity ? ”

“ Yes, yes, but he will tell thee all
himself, go now. ”

“ Another word, lady, dost thou then
know him ? ”

“ Before this evening I would have
answered no ; now methinks I do, and more ;
I know him for what he is ! ”

“ Then, lady, receive my assurance, that
Ireland doth not contain one nobler—one
more lofty-minded than he ! ”

“ I believe it, father, I believe it, ” said
Arabella, with some emotion, “ but for thine
own sake, I will not tarry a second longer.
Farewell ; remember thy promise. ”

“ Till death, lady, so God be thy guide. ”
The words were scarcely uttered when Ara-
bella darted away down an adjacent alley,
and was lost to view in the thick darkness.

O'Neill had kept his men under arms for
the best part of the night, in a public host-
elry, and the dawn had not yet appeared
when the troop stood ready for march. The
earl had not yet given the order to set forth,

when a mounted express came from Bagnal, requesting, in terms more like command, that the Earl of Tyrone would await the marshal's coming, as something of importance was to be treated of between them. Little as O'Neill felt disposed to hold further conference with a man who gloried in shewing his animosity towards him, yet he thought it best to comply, as the matter referred to might possibly concern the priest. In the course of an hour, Bagnal rode up, accompanied by an officer only, and imperiously called for the Earl of Tyrone. The latter was not slow in making his appearance, and when he stood before the marshal, the latter surveyed him for a moment in silence, (it was then clear daylight,) his brow contracted by a dark frown. Seeing that his scrutiny called forth no unwonted emotion in the earl's countenance, he broke out into a fierce accusation, threatening him with all manner of severe punishment on the part of the queen. O'Neill listened with unfeigned amazement, and when the furious marshal paused, from want of breath, he said, with a

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quiet dignity which marked his vast superiority over the other, "As I am altogether at a loss for the cause of this last attack, I must only suppose that Sir Henry Bagnal has paid me this early visit by way of crowning his courtly hospitality of yester-evening. Perhaps thou, sir, canst give me some more rational explanation?" And he turned with a bow to the officer, who was about to speak in reply, when Bagnal angrily interposed with—

"Leave him to me, Fetherstone!—leave him to me. Now, O'Neill, or Lord Tyrone, or whatever thou art," he said with much politeness, "wilt thou, even thou, attempt to deny that it was through thine agency this accursed priest escaped last night?"

O'Neill caught eagerly at his last words; "How sayest thou, Sir Henry—has he indeed escaped?"

"Oh, perchance thou wert ignorant of it then," said Bagnal ironically, "thou wouldst have us believe thee so at least."

"Sir Henry Bagnal!" said Tyrone, with earnest solemnity, "I will not attempt to

conceal that I am rejoiced at the escape of this holy man, but I do solemnly assure thee that I know neither act nor part of how it was effected. May God requite whoever had a hand in it, but, believe it or not as seemeth good to thee, I can truly say that it was neither by contrivance nor deed of mine."

Bagnal would have once more broken out into a torrent of abuse, but his companion, wiser and more sagacious than he, judiciously interposed:—"My Lord of Tyrone! it is not for us to doubt thy plighted word, and though it did seem to us probable that thou—with thy followers being in town,—thou hadst deemed it thy duty to effect the priest's liberation; yet now we can think so no longer, seeing that thy word is pledged to the contrary. Come, Sir Henry! it is useless to tarry longer here;" and he looked so significantly at the marshal, that the latter, however unwillingly, turned away with him. They had only gone a little way when Fetherstone was seen to lean over in his saddle, and whisper something to Bagnal

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which had the effect of urging him on, and both rode away at a rapid pace. The purport of this suggestion was soon after understood, for although O'Neill lost no time in quitting the town, he had barely got a few miles on his journey home, when a large body of English cavalry barred his progress. Its officer, coming forward, told the earl that he was instructed to examine each of his men, lest the priest might be among them in disguise, and he drew out a written description of Father McNamara. Not at all surprised at this fresh insult, O'Neill ordered his men to halt, but they, when they understood the intentions of the officer, declared to a man that they would not submit to such a scrutiny. The earl was positive, however, in his commands, and the investigation took place, much to the annoyance and irritation of the warlike clansmen of Tyr-owen, who murmured all the while, and could not refrain from saying that such submission was degrading to them, with arms in their hands. At length, the officer was satisfied that the priest was not amongst

the troopers, and so, pocketing his paper, he bowed civilly to the earl, with a sort of half-apology. The earl bowed politely in return, merely saying :

“Greet Sir Henry Bagnal, well from me, and say that I may one day have it in my power to thank him for all his courtesy. On, men, on!” And, turning his back on the English troop, he rode away, followed by his men at a brisk trot.

On the following day, O'Neill had the satisfaction of welcoming back his chaplain. “A thousand welcomes,” he said, “my dear and revered friend; truly thine escape is scarcely less miraculous than was that of the young prophet from the lion's den, or the three children from the flaming furnace. But, I pray thee, tell me how it happened; for, though I was more than suspected of having had a hand in thy liberation, I need hardly tell thee that I was not so fortunate.”

In reply, Father McNamara related the manner of his escape, ending with the message of the lady, “whose name,” said he, “I know not, but I may truly call her the angel

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of my deliverance, and, of a truth, her countenance, seen by the dim light of her lantern, was fair enough to have belonged to an angel. Nay, thou dost smile, my lord; and thinkest peradventure that an old priest is no great judge of these matters, especially when his eyes were dazzled by his gratitude, for the damsel's generous and timely aid. But I tell thee, earl, that this lady, my benefactress, is of singularly noble and lovely aspect."

"I know what thou sayest is true, my good father, and I did but smile at the lady's referring thee to me, who saw her but once. That once, however, gave me enough of insight into her character to lessen the surprise which I might feel on hearing this story of thine. That lady, then, who hath such claims on thy good offices, is none other than the sister of the tyrannical and persecuting Bagnal—the lady Arabella Bagnal."

On hearing this announcement, the good priest could not sufficiently express his admiration; and the outpourings of his gratitude were only cut short by the earl, who said,

rather shortly,—“This is all very well, father, and, in God’s name, do all thou canst for her, pray, an’ thou wilt, that she may receive the divine gift of faith; but, I pray thee, keep the matter to thyself for the time to come.” And he quickly changed the conversation, with an air as though he would not have the theme brought on again. Although the priest was somewhat surprised by a rebuff so uncharacteristic of the courtly earl, he had far too much respect for his judgment, not to acquiesce at once; and with cheerful ease he glided into the subject brought forward, as though himself had chosen it.

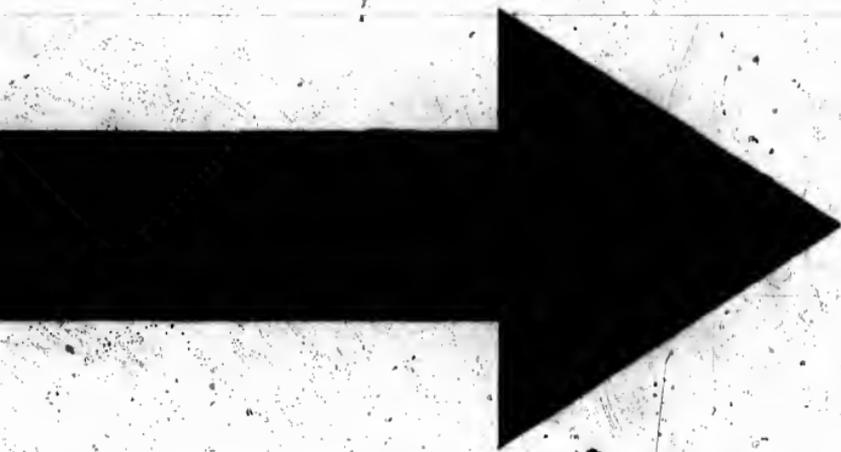
Next day, Father McNamara went, at the earl’s request, to Dungiven Castle, to see the young Con. O’Neill, and, ere he returned, a stranger arrived at Dungannon, who, on being introduced to the presence of O’Neill, proved to be the identical servant of Arabella, who had been employed to lull the jailer to forgetfulness by his friendly draught. He was the bearer of a letter to Tyrone, in which Arabella informed the earl that, on the jail

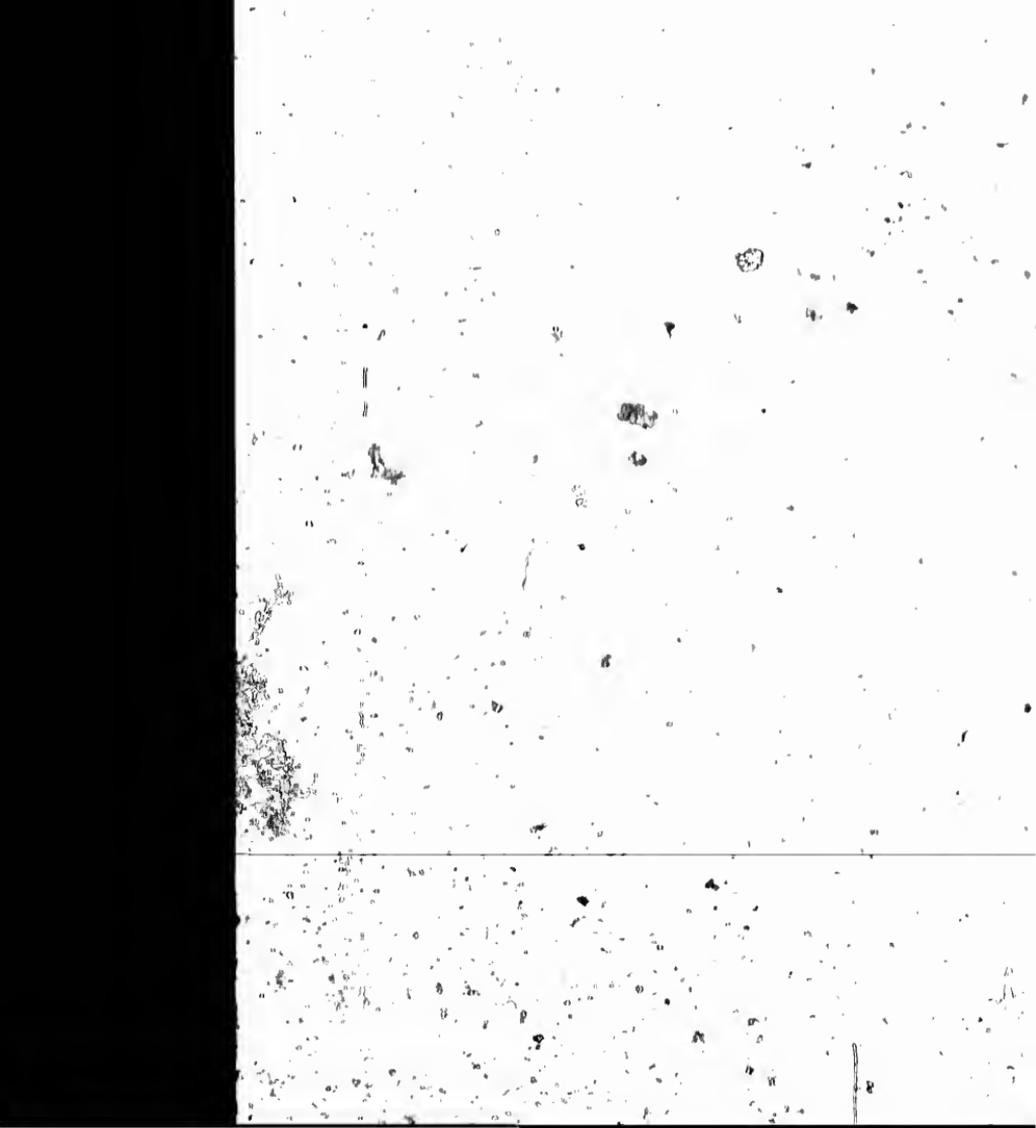
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er's story being heard, Newry was no longer a safe residence for her faithful Henderson, whom she therefore begged to recommend to his service. The fair writer merely expressed a hope that the good father had reached Dungannon in safety, but never made the slightest allusion to her own share in his escape. In conclusion, she gave the earl a certain caution touching his own affairs, charging him, as he valued his dearest hopes, to attend to the warning. In all else, the letter was so cold and reserved in its tone, that it seemed hard to reconcile it with the idea previously formed of Arabella's character. Whatever might have been O'Neill's opinion of the lady, her request was scrupulously complied with, and Henderson was appointed at once to an office of trust in the earl's household.

When the priest returned, Tyrone placed the letter in his hand, and merely saying, "Thou seest she will not suffer herself to be forgotten, since here is a fresh proof of her good will. Some such warning as that given some months ago might have saved me much

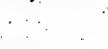
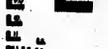
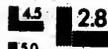






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trouble, as thou wilt speedily see. But 'better late than never!' " So he walked away, leaving the priest to decipher, at his leisure, the small, fair characters so lately penned by his benefactress.

It was not long till the English servant of Tyrone became a general favorite in the household. Ever ready to obey the orders of his lord and lady, and even to anticipate their wishes, he deservedly stood high in their favor, while with his fellow servants he was so obliging, so good-natured, and, above all, so good a listener to their tales of ghost, and witch, and fairy, (that is, when they could tell them in English,) that he was declared by all an invaluable acquisition in the family. He had not been many weeks in the castle of Dungannon when he obtained a half confession from Teague O'Hagan, touching the wise woman; for Teague had been wondrously annoyed by Henderson's incredulity on the subject of the mysterious woman's power, and intimate acquaintance with things past, present, and to come. So, in order to convince his new friend, honest

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Teague gave so many strong hints regarding that affair, that, coupling one thing with another, namely, some facts already in his own possession with this partial revelation of O'Hagan, Henderson quickly saw to the bottom of the whole, and laid by his acquired knowledge for use. One night, when they all, to the number of a score, were seated in a wide circle around the huge earth, Henderson horrified them all by a profane wish that he might be permitted to lay eyes on an Irish ghost, or fairy. A murmur of horror ran round the assembly, those who did not understand his English eagerly asking information from their fellows, whereupon there was heard on every side exclamations of "Christ, save us!" "Lord, bless us!"—"What it is to be a heretic!" "Oh then, listen to that, all of ye!" and such like. But Henderson only repeated his remark, requesting any amongst them who might have a supernatural visit, if possible, to introduce him to the visitor. All drew their seats closer together, and each looked shudderingly over his or her shoulder, but none

ventured to reply. At last, Henderson was summoned to attend his lord, and, when near the door, he turned on his heel, saying, with a laugh, "Now mind, every one of ye, what I have said!" "Then, by the grave of St. Patrick," cried Brian O'Hagan, after him, "but thou mayest be, after all, just as much afraid as another, and I pray Heaven this night that something catch thee ere thou hast gone a dozen paces beyond the hall."

For about a week all went on quietly in the castle, and still Henderson had no opportunity to test his courage on the beings of air. It chanced, however, that the earl invited several of the confederate chiefs to a banquet, and just when the laugh and song were loudest, and the harps rang joyously and triumphantly beneath the magic touch of the bards, then there was suddenly heard over all a wild, unearthly wail that echoed from hall to hall, and instantly the voice of gladness and of mirth was hushed. A dead silence fell on the assembled company, for the bravest and the gayest there was chilled,

and, as it were, spell-bound, by that fearful voice. But it went on—around and around the house it seemed to go, as though floating on the still night air. Even the earl himself was, for a moment, struck dumb with amazement, if not with fear, and before he had spoken a word, a whole troop of the servants rushed in, pale with terror, and scarcely one amongst them able to articulate a word.

“What is all this?” said the earl, at length, “why break ye in after this uncouth fashion?”

“Oh, my lord!” cried Phelim, speaking with difficulty, “don’t ye all hear it as well as us?—oh, sure it’s the Banshee—God be good to us all! and there’s death over the house of O’Neill as sure as my name’s Phelim!”

“What sayest thou, Phelim?” asked Henderson, suddenly coming forward, from another part of the hall—“Is that a Banshee?”

“An’ what else would it be?” retorted Phelim, snappishly, what else would it be

but the Banshee? an' it's thankful we may be that it is n't worse, an' its bad enough after all that passed the other night."

"And did any of ye see her?" inquired Henderson, without noticing the latter part of his remark.

"See here," said Teague, now speaking out, "ay, you may say we did, for myself saw her with my eyes, an' till the day of my death I'll never get over the sight, ochone!" Still the unearthly cry was heard, accompanied, at times, by that clapping of the hands which usually accompanies, even now, the voice of the keener. The affrighted servants made their way farther into the room, and the guests themselves seemed well-nigh as fearful. The countess, where she sat by her lord, and his young sister, who was seated near her, both clung trembling to O'Neill, who was, on his part, thoroughly ashamed of his weakness, though it was little more than momentary. He was endeavoring to reassure the ladies, and had just proposed to go look after the cause of this singular disturbance, when the cry was heard again,

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just at the door of the hall which stood half open. It was instantly followed by a louder shout of exultation in a different voice, then a torrent of angry words intermingled with horrible imprecations,—every one present started up and all eyes were turned in the direction of the door. The earl vainly tried to shake off the convulsive grasp of his wife and sister, and sat down again in compliance with their half-frenzied entreaties, when, lo! the door was thrown violently open, and Henderson was seen dragging along, by the back of the neck, a kicking, struggling female of diminutive height, from whose mouth was poured forth that torrent of abuse which had reached the ears of the company. Henderson was not scathless, for various parts of his garments were rent and torn, and his face was literally covered with blood from the scratches inflicted by the nails of the fierce creature.

“Why, in God’s name, Henderson!” cried the earl, “who or what hast thou there?”

“The Banshee, my lord,” returned Hen-

derson, though he could scarcely utter a word, from the violent exertions he was obliged to make to retain his hold—"Any of this noble company that wants to see a spirit can have a look for nothing. Look at her, my good lord, what a beauty she is!" and just then, having reached where the earl sat, he forcibly popped her down on the marble floor, in a sitting posture, holding her two arms behind.

"Why, truth to tell," said O'Neill, "the creature is attired after the fashion of Banshees, as everywhere described, but, for mercy, tell us, Henderson, how thou didst catch her."

"Ha, ha, my lord," laughed Henderson, while old and young crowded around to look at the miserable being, who had left off her horrible yelling, but still struggled to free herself, "ha, ha, faith, I might have hunted her till doomsday, around the house, but running that game was n't the thing for her purpose, the she-devil! and so she ventured up too near the door, so as to get a good peep at the noble company, and as soon as she thrust her ugly visage inside the great door,

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I just nabbed her by the nape of the neck, for your lordship must know that I expected what she'd do, and so planted myself inside the door. — But, hallo there, all of ye trembling creatures in the corner — come over here and take a look at your great fortune-teller. Come here, Teague O'Hagan, and Brian, and all the rest, and mayhap she'll tell your fortunes cheap."

But the persons thus addressed, seeing the turn matters had taken, were already escaping from the hall, and, so far from obeying the summons, they scampered off as fast as their limbs would carry them.

"And now, most noble earl," said Henderson, "an' your lordship will please to have her tied and locked up, it will be doing thine own self a good service."

"How!" said the earl, in utter astonishment, and starting as a strange idea crossed his mind, "how, Henderson? Is she, then, ———?"

"A stranger, found prowling around, under a suspicious appearance," returned Henderson, pointedly.

“Ha! is it even so? it is well, Henderson; I thank thee; she shall be attended to as the case requires.”

“Doubtless, thou dost thank him, an’ the great devil thank him, say I, for a foul-mouthed knave, as he is.” The voice in which the wretched hag uttered this imprecation made the very stoutest heart to quake, but Tyrone sternly commanded her to be silent, and ordered her to be instantly conveyed to prison.

“An’ thou wilt, thou double-faced traitor,” cried the beldame, in defiance of the injunction, “but, remember, that the law has a long arm, and it will reach both thee and this treacherous rascal, who has disgraced his English blood, by taking service under a vile Irish churl, like thee.”

“Seize her, men, seize her at once!” said the earl, to the men, who stood ready, “and see that ye keep her under watch and ward, for ye shall answer to me for her forthcoming. We will teach her to play the spy more successfully, hereafter.”

The ungainly features of the hag, such as

they have been described in a former chapter, were literally convulsed with rage, her eyes glaring like those of a tiger, and, as the men laid hold of, and forced her away, she was actually frothing at the mouth, while, in her efforts to shake them off, she put forth a strength, which, they said, must come from the devil, since it could not be natural to her deformed frame.

Her removal gave a sensible relief to all present, and now, that her real character was explained, whether with the object of her disguise, the affair served but as a good joke, to increase the mirth of the company, and loud and long was the laugh at the capture of Bagnal's respectable agent. It need hardly be said that this timely discovery of the witch's dangerous imposture was the result of Arabella's friendly warning, to be on the lookout for all suspicious strangers. Knowing and disdaining her brother's base machinations, she had taken this method of putting O'Neill on his guard. The earl, as before, lost no time in informing Father McNamara of this last instance of the lady

Arabella's greatness of mind, but, as on the former occasion, he cut short all further converse on the subject, by abruptly dismissing it.

On the following day, when the guests were all gone, and O'Neill alone with his family, he ordered the witch to be brought before him, and tried by every means in his power to induce her to confess the purpose for which she had been sent into Tyr-owen, and by whom sent. When all failed, he gave her to understand, in few words, that the whole disgraceful plot, and its author, were known to him. "But tell me, once for all, unhappy woman," he added, "what could induce thee to pass thyself for a spirit. Were there not other more practicable methods open to thee whereby to carry out thy purpose?"

"Ha! ha!" croaked the hag, in a tone of diabolical malice, "my voice lied not when it foretold death in thy house, and I have long ago seen the death-spot where it was not visible to other eye than mine. Now all may see it; look there, Hugh O'Neill, and see if death be not hovering above; there rests his

shadow!" and she pointed with a grin to the face of the countess.

O'Neill turned almost involuntarily, and for the first time he became aware that the cheek of Judith had of late lost much, nay, all of its roundness, while a dark circle around either eye gave note of inward disease. Whether it was that the words of the witch brought a deathlier paleness to her cheek and lip, or that she really was far gone in some wasting sickness, (perhaps even to herself unknown,) Judith looked at the moment as though her days *were* numbered, and the earl cried out, in pitying accents, "Why, Judith! can the wretched hag speak truth?—art thou, indeed, suffering from disease?"

"I know not, Hugh," said the countess, with a languid smile, "latterly, I have, at times, felt as though something unusual were going on within me, but I have never thought myself in any danger."

"But the Banshee knew better, my dainty madam," sneered the beldame; "and in return for her warning thou canst not do less

than engage thy husband to set her free. It were a pity to keep so useful a spirit in thralldom. Ha, ha, ha!"

"My lord knoweth best what it behooveth him to do," answered Judith, meekly, and the earl, catching up the word, went on:

"And, therefore, woman, I will send thee under an escort to the very walls of Newry. It would profit me nothing to retain one like thee in bondage, and so I will let thee go for this time. But bear this in mind, that, if ever thou art laid hold of again on any part, however distant, of the territory of Tyr-owen, it will fare hardly with thee. Silence, I command thee;" for she was about to speak in her usual malicious manner. He then ordered some half-dozen of his men to convey her to the gates of Newry, and had her instantly removed. It was evident that this generous forbearance excited no gratitude in her callous heart, and he would not give her an opportunity for farther vituperation. "But tell thy employer," said he, as a last charge, "that, for the future, my people will be on the lookout for his agents, and

they shall have orders to hang, without judge or jury, any spy whom they can lay hold on."

The beldame threw back over her shoulder a look of contemptuous defiance, but, nevertheless, the hint took effect; for, from that day forward, no spy of Bagnal's was ever discovered in Tyr-owen. And well it was for O'Neill's plans, for each day his sphere of operations became more enlarged, and his influence more widely felt throughout Ulster. Even Tyrconnell seemed at length to be awaking from its trance, under the influence and example of the chief's eldest son, who, though barely fifteen, gave already the most unequivocal proofs that he, at least, would never wear a foreign thrall with tame submission. Already had he, boy as he was, led some of the clansmen of his house against the English parties around his borders on the side of Connaught, and already did he wield over the people a more powerful influence than his father had ever obtained. Gladly did Tyrone watch the development of his brother-in-law's character, and noted

with pleasure the martial bent of his mind. Hope was already dawning brightly on his path, and her beams shot over from the wild north-west, when news was brought him that the gallant young chieftain was the tenant of a dungeon in Dublin Castle. It would seem that these precocious bursts of patriotism, which revealed the fiery energy of young O'Donnell's character, while they kindled bright hopes in the far-seeing mind of O'Neill, had not failed to attract the notice of the officials who held sway in Dublin. They had long regarded with complacency the supine indifference of the O'Donnell, and built thereon many a fair vision of estates to be gained when the queen would catch hold of Tyrconnell, no difficult task, either, they concluded, as the old man was but a silly dotard. And were all these golden expectations to vanish before a stripling, a hair-brained boy?—no, forbid it, prudence and worldly wisdom! So a vessel was sent off from Dublin expressly to carry off young Hugh, and, having anchored in the upper part of Donegal Bay, the captain caused the

news to be spread on shore that he had a cargo of the richest and rarest Spanish wines to dispose of. He had learned that the young chief was then hunting in the wild district of Farard, contiguous to the shore, and thereupon based his hopes. So Hugh Roe, with some of his young companions, went on board to visit the captain, who, they were told, received all comers with ready hospitality, and were so well received that they remained during the evening. But when the light of morning fell on the waters of the bay, the vessel was nowhere to be seen around the shore and the faithful clansmen of Tyrconnell became sensible, all too late, of her real character, and that their idolized young chief had been basely entrapped from amongst them. Soon it was generally known that Hugh Roe O'Donnell was a prisoner in the Castle of Dublin, and with him two cousins of the Earl of Tyrone, that is, Henry and Art, sons of Shane O'Neill, and a young northern lord, a son of the McSweeney. This outrage, as might well be imagined, gave rise to a storm of indigna-

tion, which gave a new and vigorous impulse to the action of the confederate chiefs, and in some measure made up to the cause the loss sustained in O'Donnell.

CHAPTER IV.

A FEW weeks after the capture of Hugh Roe, Tyrone was again summoned to London, and he at once prepared to set out; for the farther his secret operations were advanced, the more urgent became the necessity for avoiding an open declaration of hostility against the English. But how true is the saying that "man proposes, but God disposes"! for, on the very day that he had fixed for his departure, his wife was seized with her death-sickness, and for three days he was stationary by her bed; for O'Neill, with all his elevation of mind and soaring reach of thought, was ever strict in the fulfilment of even those smaller duties which make, after all, the sum of our life's obligations. On the fourth day, having

received the Viaticum from Father MacNara, Judith took a long farewell of her three children, (her son had been brought home for the melancholy occasion,) and then, having expressed her grateful sense of her husband's unwavering kindness, she calmly closed her eyes on the world. Her death was quiet and serene, as had been her temperament through life, and O'Neill, if he felt no very poignant sorrow for her loss, was, nevertheless, strongly affected by her early death, and mourned for the bereavement of his children. He had little doubt that the shock of her brother's being kidnapped away, and the knowledge of her aged father's affliction, had accelerated the work of disease, for, though Judith was never remarkable for any extraordinary depth of feeling, he had observed that this late disaster seemed sensibly to affect her already weakened mind. So the malicious prediction of the witch was fulfilled, and death had claimed his own before Tyrone had set out for England on his diplomatic mission. Having installed his sister, the Lady Bridget

O'Neill, as mistress of his household, and sent Con. back again to his home amongst the hills of Dungiven, he hastened to Dublin, and, without having even waited on the Deputy, crossed over to London, being anxious to account for his delay in answering the queen's summons.

It required all Tyrone's strength of mind to bear up against the furious torrent of wrath which his appearance drew from Elizabeth, and any one less acquainted than he was with the intricacies and peculiarities of her character would have despaired, not only of obtaining pardon, but even a hearing. Not so O'Neill; for, putting on a countenance of earnest attention, he stood patiently before the queen till the storm of her anger had exhausted its violence, and it was truly ludicrous to see the sudden calm which followed. "But hast thou nought to say in thy defence?" she then asked, lowering her voice by at least an octave.

"Much, my liege—much have I to say; but it would ill become a dutiful subject to break in upon his sovereign's discourse.

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One thought alone kept possession of my mind, while I listened to your majesty's repetition of the charges laid in against me since my last visit. I see, as plainly as we do the sun at noon, that these concealed enemies, of whom I have erewhile spoken to your highness, are resolved, if they can, to break the bonds of my allegiance; they think, by blackening me in your majesty's sight, to draw down upon me some punishment which would rouse me to resistance. But they shall not succeed; much will I bear rather than gratify *their* malice, even were my gratitude utterly extinct."

Nothing could well be better managed than this reply, for, by putting the question on that footing, he contrived to awaken the queen's former fears of his being moved to rebel against her authority, while, by his air of injured innocence, he turned the shaft of her anger from himself to them, whom he thus set down as endeavoring to make her their dupe. Again, few things could be more gratifying to Elizabeth than the well-feigned resolution with which he declared

that they *should* not succeed in driving him to rebellion, so that, on the whole, he had scarcely concluded when Elizabeth's aged-dimmed eye twinkled with pleasure, and the wrinkles around her shrunken mouth were puckered into a smile.

“God's death, earl! but thou art none so far wrong after all their lying clack; for, by our halidome! the proof against thee is never forthcoming. But, to tell thee a truth, we were ourselves displeased by thy taking upon thee that rascally name of the O'Neill—how didst thou so far forget thyself and the lofty title we had so lately given thee, at thine own asking!”

“And was it not the very best thing that I could have done, an' it please your majesty?” said the earl, with a plausible show of sincerity and candor. “The people were determined to change their chief, as Tirlogh Lynnoch was too old, and moreover anything but sound in his mind; so they pitched upon me as being near of kin, and by your highness's favor, of prosperous fortunes, whereupon I was fain to accept the

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offered post, to the end that it might not be filled by one hostile to your majesty's interests, as such are not wanting in the north. Hence I did bend my head to receive their honors; and, purely to maintain your highness's authority, I suffered them to style me after their primitive fashion."

"So every story hath two sides," said Elizabeth, "and, by our crown and sceptre, we are right glad to hear so loyal an interpretation put by thyself on this untoward matter. Now wilt thou do one thing for us, to prove the lie in the face of some black-hearted knaves we wot of?"

O'Neill merely bowed low, and laid his hand on his heart.

"Then permit my people to build a fortress on the Blackwater—a river which runs, we know, right through thy domains. This will convince thine enemies of their foul injustice, when they see an English garrison in the very heart of Tyr-owen."

"It shall be done, most royal lady! and I deem myself but too happy in being permitted to give your majesty even so small a

proof of my true allegiance." Eagerly did the queen catch at this consent; and some of her trusty advisers being called, they unfolded a map of Ulster, and proceeded to deliberate on the best spot for their purpose. O'Neill was all smiles when the queen had occasion to ask his advice, and gracefully begged to coincide with the opinion already given by her majesty. So the place was appointed, and orders almost instantly sent off to have the building commenced forthwith.

Before O'Neill took his leave of the queen, he took occasion to relate how his wife's chaplain (as he chose to call him) had been treated by Bagnal, and dwelt particularly on the fact that his respect for her majesty's official had alone prevented him from taking away this friend by force: A cloud darkened once more on Elizabeth's brow, but it could not long resist the earl's honeyed words, and it blew over like those which had gone before. "But we tell thee, my lord of Tyrone, that there must be no more of this. We say nought of Bagnal's conduct in that

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matter, (since it accorded with our repeated instructions,) but, by the soul of our royal father, we will have no popish chaplains entertained by any who call themselves our subjects. Look well to this, lord earl ! or—” and she shook her clenched fist at his face, to the manifest danger of his most prominent feature—“or—or we must teach thee that thou servest a queen who hates the abominations of popery as she does the hell from which they have their birth.”

It might be that there was something in the heightened color, and resolutely kept-down eye of O'Neill, which reminded the queen of her momentary error ; for, ere he had time or inclination to answer, she hastily added, “But we know we can depend on thine honor and obedience to see these our wishes carried out.”

“I have but to repeat,” said the earl, with another low bow, “that I shall ever bear in mind the wishes of my sovereign ; they are sacred in my eyes.”

On the following day, when O'Neill paid his visit to the queen, he found her in earn-

est conversation with a young man whose singularly fine person was encased in a travelling costume, scrupulously conformable to the approved fashion of the age in England. The most fastidious eye could find no fault, either in the perfect contour of his fine Roman face, or the wondrous symmetry of his form, while the assured smile which rested ever on his lip seemed to say that he challenged and defied all criticism. He was seated on a low chair near the queen, who seemed mightily pleased with his highly-wrought compliments, and not less so by the severe sarcasm which he had been flinging off against some of the reigning beauties of the court. The whole appearance of the man, from his closely-cut hair downwards, was so utterly unlike that of an Irish cavalier of the time,—it was so smart, (to use a modern phrase,) and so finical, that O'Neill was somewhat surprised, notwithstanding his experience of men and manners, when the queen called out, on seeing him,—“Thou comest in a good time, my lord of Tyrone! For here is another Ulsterman whom we wish thee to know.

Turn thee, Miles, and make the acquaintance of our good friend of Tyrone."

Upon this, the young man started to his seat, and, turning quickly, met the inquiring eye of O'Neill, as it rested upon him with no very encouraging expression. Yet the cavalier regarded him with evident admiration, and said, in a half-whisper to the queen,—"Of a truth, he doth well become his honors; he is a noble, even of nature's making."

"Whom have I the honor of seeing for the first time?" asked O'Neill, with a somewhat stiff bow.

"My name is O'Reilly, my lord earl—, Miles O'Reilly, at your lordship's service," said the young man with a respectful bow.

"How? One of the O'Reilly's of Breffni?"

"The same, my lord; a son of Sir John O'Reilly."

"Ha!" said O'Neill, after a short pause, during which he appeared to be recalling some half-forgotten memory—"O, Sir John O'Reilly, ay, I do remember, and a nephew of the O'Reilly; am I right?"



“Truly yes. Then,” said the earl, shaking off, by an effort, his coldness of manner, and shaking O’Reilly by the hand—“then I have pleasure in recognizing thee as a countryman, and cannot but hope that we shall be better acquainted.” He then turned to the queen with an ample apology for having spoken so long to any one in her royal presence, but Elizabeth graciously answered that he could not please her better than by showing civility to her young soldier. There were none present in the room, but some three or four of the queen’s ladies; and, turning short round, she said to them,—“Betake yourselves, damsels, to yonder window, where stands an embroidery frame. We love not to see young maidens idle; bestir your fingers, while we here talk of matters which concern us much.” Off went the ladies to their allotted employment, and the queen again addressed O’Neill.

“Now that we have got rid of so many prying eyes, and sent some four pairs of ears out of hearing, we would tell thee, our good friend, that we have a double interest in

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making thyself and O'Reilly known to each other. Over and above our hope that ye will aid each other in establishing law and order in that wild Ulster, we have something presently in view." O'Neill could merely bow in silence, when the queen turned to O'Reilly,—

"Since thou wouldst fain enter our service in a more direct form, we would have thee make thine apprenticeship, and preparatory studies under the eye of a skilful commander, like his lordship of Tyrone. He holds a perpetual command in our army, and, we are told, keepeth his men in such admirable discipline and good order, that they are ever ready for the field. If my lord of Tyrone will make room for thee in his house of Dungannon, and undertake to give thee the benefit of an occasional lesson in the art of war, we will take it as a good service. What sayest thou, my lord earl?

There was a certain sly twinkle in Elizabeth's eye that was not lost upon Tyrone, who well understood the hidden meaning of this manœuvre, but he had nothing for it

but compliance, and to do it with his best grace was the object. Nor was the task difficult for him; for to his wondrous power of disguising his feelings, no appearance was hard to make. There was not a ruffle, therefore, on his polished brow, nor a shade of discontent in his clear, calm eye as he declared himself highly honored by her majesty's choice of a preceptor for her young protégé. Of course, he was perfectly willing to give any instructions in his power to so promising a young nobleman. And he bowed courteously to O'Reilly, who, on his side, expressed himself doubly honored by the queen's gracious consideration of his interest, and the earl of Tyrone's polite condescension.

It was then settled, that O'Reilly should defer his departure till the next day, in order to be with Tyrone. So together they commenced their journey, and in due time they arrived together at the Castle of Dungannon. Here, then, was O'Neill placed at once under the most irksome restraint, for, though a marked change had taken place in O'Reilly's manners, and even in his style of dress, since

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he found himself again in Ireland, yet still it would have been madness to trust him. And yet there were moments when O'Neill fancied that O'Reilly, too, was but acting a part, for, on various occasions, when the outrages, perpetrated on the Irish people, were casually alluded to, in his presence, in a general way, he was seen to start, and change color, as though the subject affected him more deeply than he dared to show, for he never suffered a word of sympathy with their wrongs to escape him. Nor could all O'Neill's address draw from him the slightest explanation of his real sentiments. After all, this was easily accounted for, as he naturally looked on Tyrone, with his Saxon title of Earl, as the firm friend of the queen. It chanced, just at this time, that the English rulers of Ireland made themselves guilty of still another, and a fouler crime, one, indeed, which, if anything could, would have roused the land from Cape Clear to Fair Head. It is matter of history, how the McMahon, of Monaghan, then called Uriel, being a man of an easy and peace-loving disposition, had

so far given way to the encroaching English as to receive their laws, and the official appendages thereof, including sheriffs, bailiffs, etc. Now, one of his tributaries, viz., Brian McMahon, of Dartrey, having become refractory, and refused to pay his lawful tribute, the chief was obliged to levy it after the usual fashion, that is to say, by force of arms. This having come to the deputy's ears, he marched down to Uriel, and finding that the McMahon did not attempt to deny, nor yet to palliate what he had done, the worthy representative of majesty became (or affected to become) highly indignant,—declared the offence treasonable, and impaneled a jury to try the culprit. It may well be imagined how the brave men of Uriel regarded this impudent proceeding, seeing that their chief had done nothing but take his own where it was unjustly detained,—nor did they acknowledge any right on the part of any foreign authority to try him. But, nevertheless, the good deputy went on, got twelve of his own soldiers to act as jurymen, and the chieftain of Monaghan was

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found guilty of levying war against the queen, though his crime was just as we have stated it. Conviction was speedily followed by execution, and the noble McMahon was hung before his own hall-door,—the first victim of that English law which he had been fool enough to admit into his territories. The deputy thought, of course, that all was right, and drew off his men from the soil of Ulster as fast as might be, having perchance some misgivings as to how the country round might look upon the deed. The atrocious murder thus wantonly committed, gave him no qualm of conscience, for it was a good deed to make away with a native chief, and then, above all, his whole vast domains fell, as a matter of course, to the crown, and in virtue of conquest, a strong garrison was thrown into Monaghan Castle. So what wonder, with such advantages as these, that McMahon's execution was rather a meritorious action in English eyes. But so did not think the clansmen of Uriel, for no sooner had the deputy turned his back than they elected that identical Brian of

Dartrey in room of the murdered chief, well knowing that he was just the man to stand up for his and their rights. To be sure the whole territory of Monaghan had been divided by Fitzwilliam amongst some of his officers, (the largest share having fallen to O'Neill's enemy, Bagnal,) but little cared the McMahons for these grants; and Brian of Dartrey drove the English from his country, and held it, too, for many a long day after.

When these tidings reached Dungannon, O'Neill and O'Reilly were just returned from a visit to the fortress of Portmore, which, in obedience to the queen's commands, was then in course of erection. O'Reilly had been speaking of his uncle, the chief of Breffni O'Reilly, and O'Neill had managed to draw from him the fact that his adherence to the English cause was anything but pleasing to that nobleman.

"But it matters not," said he gaily; "Elizabeth Tudor is a powerful friend, and a rich rewarder."

"True," remarked O'Neill, "she is exceeding generous, especially to her Irish

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favorites." O'Reilly thought he recognized something altogether new in the tone of these words, and he looked hard at O'Neill, but the latter only smiled, and the smile went for nothing, so Miles began to hum a tune, and walked to a window, looking all the time as though he would give a trifle to have his doubts solved. Just at this moment, Cormac O'Neill, the earl's brother, entered the room, and without noticing O'Reilly where he stood, hurried up to the spot where his brother sat. In a few hasty words he related the story of McMahan's wrongs, and was proceeding to make such a comment as might be expected, when the earl laid his finger on his lip, and pointed to O'Reilly. At the same time he took Cormac by the arm, and led him to the upper end of the room. But O'Reilly was there as soon as themselves, and his fine face was burning with a crimson glow.

"O'Neill!" he said, in a voice of deep emotion, "have I heard aright? Hath Fitzwilliam dared to hang Hugh McMahan even as though he were a dog?"

“Ay, marry, hath he, Miles!” returned Tyrone, with a desperate effort to preserve an appearance of composure. “But he was found guilty by a jury of twelve.”

Miles O'Reilly turned from the unreadable countenance of Tyrone to that of his younger brother, and he saw its every feature working with pity and indignation strangely commingled. And he remembered the words which he had overheard from Cormac ere his brother stopped him. “This will make us sure of Brian and all Uriel.” The words were written in fiery characters on his mind, and he thought that now or never he would have the truth.

“My lord earl!” he said, laying his hand on O'Neill's arm, and looking keenly into his face, “I know and feel that in thy heart thou dost feel as I do—deceive me no longer, but tell me—I adjure thee in the name of the Most High—does not thy blood boil even as does mine own, and thine whole soul rise up in horror at this unmatched outrage? See, I have cast off the veil—I have committed myself—what hast thou longer

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to fear? Speak, prince of Ulster! shall this foul wrong go unrevenged?"

"Miles O'Reilly!" said O'Neill, solemnly, "I have read thy soul in that speaking face of thine. Nay, more, this is not the first time for me to do so—and that, do I trust, even apart from thy words. If thou provest a deceiver, never will I again trust the evidence of an honest countenance. I will then tell thee that I feel (as an Irishman ought,) this wanton insult and outrage, and, were the power mine at this moment, I will confess that Fitzwilliam should be made to rue the day when he set foot on the territory of Uriel."

"It is well," said O'Reilly, "but what meant those words of thy brother, that *this would bring over Brian and Uriel?* To what will it bring them over?"

"Nay," and the earl threw a warning glance on his brother, as though fearing his rashness of speech, "nay, Miles, thou goest too fast—it is clear that thou hast caught up my brother's words in a wrong sense."

O'Reilly shook his head doubtfully, and

merely saying,—“This is what comes of wearing short hair, and being called a royal favorite ;” he took Cormac’s arm, and drew him away, laughing as he went, though his laugh was anything but natural.

Left alone, with his own thoughts, O’Neill speedily forgot his speculations concerning O’Reilly in the overpowering feelings arising from the intelligence just received. However great was his indignation at the foul crime, it is certain, that, as a politician and statesman, he saw that it would do much to urge on the tardy preparations of the chiefs, and rouse them to a sense of their own individual danger from the insidious and ever-watchful policy of the English. Nor did the result belie his hopes, for no sooner was the tragical story made known than a tempest of fiery wrath swept through men’s souls all the land over, and fierce and deadly were the vows of vengeance breathed against the deputy and the ruthless government that so relentlessly persecuted the Celtic race.

About this time all eyes were turned, some in hope and some in fear, on the vast prep-

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arations going on along the Spanish coast for a grand invasion of England. Philip the Second, who then filled the throne of Spain, had never concealed the strong sympathy with which he regarded the sufferings of Catholic Ireland, and now that he was about making a final descent on England, it was hoped that he had these unmerited sufferings in view. O'Neill, who was well acquainted with European politics in general, shared deeply in these expectations, and even looked forward to receiving efficient aid from His Most Catholic Majesty in the great struggle which must soon come on. Just at the moment when his hopes were at the highest, came the direful news that the great Spanish Armada—the most magnificent armament that modern, or, perhaps, ancient times had seen—was a total failure, and that the winds of heaven had scattered that noble fleet like chaff, leaving little or nothing for Elizabeth's admirals to do. He was mounting his horse to set out with O'Reilly on a visit to the old castle of Benburb, when two couriers arrived almost in the same instant from two of the

chieftains whose territories lay on the coast, announcing that some of the Spanish vessels had been driven in on their respective borders. Tyrone heard the news with a sinking heart, yet was he gratified to hear that the shipwrecked Spaniards had been hospitably received. Fain would he have sent a message to each, expressive of his gratitude and warm approbation, but the presence of O'Reilly rendered such a step hazardous.

It is probable that O'Reilly partially understood the dilemma in which his companion was placed, for he said, with a sly smile, "Then our visit is postponed, is it not, my lord?"

"Certainly not, Miles," returned O'Neill, quickly, and then turning to his brother, who came up at the moment, he said, "Take these men in charge, Cormac, and see that they be well cared for. Let them not depart before the morrow, as their steeds require rest." And his look told Cormac (accustomed as he was to read his countenance,) fully as much as his words.

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family!" said the earl, with assumed cheerfulness, as he rode away by the side of O'Reilly.

When O'Reilly had taken a full view of the old storied castle, he could not but admire its commanding position, so admirably calculated for a protracted defence, with its rough dry stone wall rising from a precipice of one hundred and twenty feet, while below rolls the subject Blackwater. On two other sides this rock retains its precipitous character, so that the fortress is impregnable on three sides. Its immense height gives it, too, an extensive view over the surrounding country, so that the whole province of Ulster does not furnish a better site, or one more easily defended than this old dwelling-place of the O'Neills. As the earl and O'Reilly stood together, looking down on the deep, quiet river, did it ever cross the mind of either how that stream would become associated with historic memories, and that, so long as it rolls onward through the green valleys of Tyrone and Armagh, it shall bear down to posterity a glimpse of Ireland's van-



ished glory? No; little dreamed even he, the great magician who conjured up (alas, that it should be to fade again!) those dreams of glory and triumph for his country,—little dreamed even he of the Blackwater's glorious day, when he looked down from that embattled height, on the day in question, and thought only of the recent failure of at least one bright expectation.

On his return from Benburb, the earl left O'Reilly and Cormac together while he went to give his message to the couriers from the north. He had barely done so, when who should arrive but O'Cahan, of Arachty. He immediately spoke of the late disaster, and was proceeding to express his satisfaction at the generous hospitality with which the Spaniards had been received on the Irish coast. "It were well," said he, "if they had all been so fortunate as to fall into the hands of our people."

"I know not that," observed O'Cahan drily. "Philip of Spain might have but little cause to thank us were his mariners cast exclusively on certain of our coasts."

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“How is that?” asked O’Neill, with newly-awakened interest. “There is something to follow that saying of thine, or I am mistaken.”

“Thou hast not then heard of the reception given by O’Donnell to the Spaniards?”

“Surely, no!” replied Tyrone. “But, though I expect to hear little good of Manus, I cannot fear that he treated them badly, or with small courtesy.”

“Nay, he gave them, as far as that goes, just the same treatment one would give an invading foe. Acting on the advice of certain Englishmen whom he chooses to harbor, he set upon the unfortunate and half-drowned strangers, as they crawled ashore, and slew a great number of them; (at least his people did for him;) others he kept alive until he sent them to Dublin chained together as a right welcome gift to Fitzwilliam, and I know not but he shewed greater mercy to those whom his battle-axes deprived of life. Now, O’Neill, what thinkest thou of such hospitality as that?”

Tyrone made no immediate reply; for

indignation, not unmingled with shame for once deprived him of the power of speech. Every trace of color left his cheek, and he closed his eyes for a moment as though to shut out so foul a spectacle. When he did speak, his voice was husky with strong emotion, and, stopping full in front of O'Cahan, (for he had been walking to and fro,) he exclaimed, in a higher tone than he generally was heard to use, "O'Cahan, I do say to thee, as a man and an Irishman, that this O'Donnell is more odious in my eyes than the greedy and grasping tyrant, Fitzwilliam. Pitiab!e it is, that so base a creature should rule in Tyrconnell; and shame on the men who executed his will. But, alas, the spirit of the kinel-conal is immured in the dungeons of Dublin; O, would to Heaven that Hugh Roe could have been there but for one hour!"

"Ay; so said I, when this shameful story was told me!" said O'Cahan; "for then had not this foul stain fallen on the national character. But what of this young jackanape whom Elizabeth hath stationed here?"

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O'Neill replied that, notwithstanding the lightness and volatility of his character, and his early-formed connection with English interests, he was not altogether without hopes of making something of him, "which," said he, "I the rather desire; forasmuch as I know him to be capable of better than he hath yet produced. Nature hath done much for him." The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of O'Reilly himself, who was in a few minutes conversing as familiarly with the stately chieftain of Arachty, as though they had been for years acquainted.

That same evening O'Neill was surprised by the appearance of a numerous company of Spaniards, who, having heard of him as the great chieftain of Ulster, and as a man of noble and generous disposition, had come to crave his hospitality, and the means of returning to their own country. There was but one drawback on the pleasure which Tyrone felt in receiving these Spaniards, and that was the presence of O'Reilly. Yet his welcome was a kind and cordial one, and highly flattering to the strangers, amongst

whom were some officers of high rank. Having consigned the common sailors and soldiers to the special charge of his brother, to see that the domestics did not neglect them, he himself conducted the officers to the apartment where O'Cahan was still listening with attention to O'Reilly's animated sketches of English life. Great was the surprise of both when Tyrone introduced the Spanish officers, and Miles O'Reilly started from his seat, his cheek glowing with a crimson flush. Finding that none of the Spaniards could speak either English or Irish, O'Neill was obliged to interpret between them and O'Cahan, who spoke neither French nor Spanish. But though O'Reilly could (if he chose to do it) have conversed with them in French, he now affected to be in the same predicament as O'Cahan, and taking up a volume of old English poetry which lay on a table hard by, he bowed politely but coldly to the Spaniards; and left the room. O'Neill took the first opportunity of speaking with him apart, and said, "Thou seest, Miles O'Reilly, how

it is with me ; blame me not, therefore, since thou well knowest that under such circumstances no Irish, no Milesian prince, could either refuse hospitality or. grant it in a churlish manner."

"My lord!" cried O'Reilly with sudden animation, and he took the earl's hand as he spoke—"my lord, I can only say, that, fettered as I am, yet, were the halls of Breffni's chieftain mine, and they to apply to me as they have to thee, they should be received to the best of my poor ability. This do I say in all sincerity, but suffer me now to add that, as I am in no way called upon to do the honors here, and as I still call myself the queen's soldier, I would as soon be absent during the stay of these foreigners. I will, meanwhile, take a survey of the neighboring districts, that is, if thou wilt furnish me with a letter to the chiefs whose territories I would fain explore."

"It shall be done, Miles ; and I will send one or two of my trusty gallow-glasses to act as guides. But why this sudden notion,—is it truly because of the arrival of these Spaniards?"

“Ay, marry, is it, my Lord; but more than all, because I love not to be regarded as a spy, or place others under restraint by my presence. When they are gone, I will return hither, to perfect myself in the duties of my profession.” And waving his hand with a sportive air to O’Neill, he bounded from the room. In a few hours after, he left Dungannon, attended by two of O’Neill’s men. The earl failed not to repeat this conversation to O’Cahan, and both arrived at the conclusion, that either O’Reilly was one of the greatest knaves above ground, or a young man who deserved all that warmth of interest which he could not fail to inspire in all who knew him. “The truth is,” said O’Neill to his friend, “O’Reilly is at heart good and noble, but he hath been spoiled by court favor, and the admiration everywhere awarded to his rare personal attractions. God grant that we may not have cause to rue his visit,—that is all I shall now say.”

During the two weeks that the Spaniards remained O’Neill’s guests, he gathered from them much useful information. For the first time he learned the intense interest

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with which their sovereign regarded the condition of the Irish Catholics, and the plans which he had at various times formed for their assistance. But nothing could be done, he had always said, until they themselves would make a vigorous effort to break their shackles, for then only would foreign aid avail them. Right willingly then did O'Neill explain to them the progress he had already made, in organizing the people for some such movement. He showed them his secret hoards of ammunition, and various other matters required in war, and gave a clear though brief sketch of the actual prospects of the cause. To all this the Spanish noblemen listened with pleasure and surprise, and volunteered their services, in representing the whole affair to Philip on their return to Madrid. They assured O'Neill that the men and money of which he stood in need, should not be withheld, if God spared their king. On these terms they parted; Tyrone himself conducting them, with a company of his cavalry, to the mouth of the Foyle, in O'Cahan's country, where they soon found

an opportunity of embarking for France, whence it was easy to make their way home.

Father McNamara, who had passed many years in the classic halls of Salamanca and Valladolid, had enjoyed no ordinary pleasure in discoursing with the noble Spaniards; and he was sitting with the earl, (who had but just returned,) conversing on the probability of their reaching Spain in safety, when a small billet was handed to the latter. It was addressed to the earl of Tyrone, and when opened was found to contain but these words, "Beware of insidious friends!" Neither date nor name was seen; but, as the earl glanced over the solitary line, a deeper color mounted to his cheek, and handing the note to the priest, he simply said, "Those beautiful characters are not unknown to either of us; may I not look upon the writer as my guardian angel in mortal form?" He arose and walked away, but not before the chaplain noticed a sort of trepidation in his manner very unusual in him. What prayer was it that ascended from the heart of that pious priest, when his lips moved, and his eyes turned upward with a supplicatory glance?

In the course of the following day, O'Neill had a visit from a cousin, a natural son of Shane O'Neill, whom he had not seen since his inauguration at Tullaghoge, and then Hugh na Gaveloch (of the fetters) had been one of the most forward in paying homage to the new chieftain. On the present occasion, nothing could equal the warmth of his professions of friendship, yet, even had the warning of his concealed friend never been given, Tyrone had had, in times past, sufficient cause to distrust the man. He was, therefore, on his guard; and when, in the course of the evening, na Gaveloch brought round the political topics of the day, and talked, though after an ambiguous manner, of the execution of McMahan, and the kidnapping of young O'Donnell, the chief politely told him that those were topics which no good subject was at liberty to discuss. "So rather tell us some passages of a merry nature, that may set us all a-laughing." Hugh na Gaveloch grinned from ear to ear, for he seldom laughed—"He, he, he!" he chuckled out, "my noble cousin is

pleased to make merry at my expense, but, surely, all his guests are not called upon to make food for merriment—methinks they are at times entertained with graver matter.”

“But men’s moods will vary, Hugh,” said the earl jocularly, “and mine is now for mirth. Pri’thee, slide into the same humor, and it will benefit thee not a little.”

“Truly, yes, cousin,” chimed in Cormac, who was also present, “a good laugh would go far to take from thee that gloomy cast of countenance, and I warrant thee, it would shorten thy face by half an ell.”

“This is all passing well, cousins mine,” retorted the dark-browed na Gaveloch, with a bitter sneer—“but I came not hither to be made a laughing-stock, even for the great earl of Tyrone—the mighty leader that is to be! Dost thou hear anything, Cormac Mac Baron?”*

“That do I, thou black-hearted knave!” cried Cormac, starting to his feet, “and if my brother only gives the word, I will take

* The son of the baron.

thee by the neck and souse thee within an inch of thy life's end, in the duck-pond!" He was actually springing towards na Gaveloch when the earl caught him by the arm.

"Nay, brother, it must not be so—the man is my guest." Then, turning to na Gaveloch, with ineffable dignity, he said: "Go hence, Hugh na Gaveloch (mind, I call thee not O'Neill!)—go hence untouched—unharméd, and I pray thee make no more visits here while I am master of this house. See that this man depart forthwith!" he said to Phelim and Henderson who just then entered.

Na Gaveloch arose, and walked in silence to the door, his whole frame trembling with anger, and his face of a ghastly white, but when he had reached the threshold he turned back, and shaking his clenched fist at Tyrone, where he sat, apparently unmoved, he said, in a voice hoarse with passion, "Thou art cunning as a fox, Hugh O'Neill, but even the fox may be caught!" The earl only laughed and kept a faster hold on his brother, who struggled to escape. So Hugh na

Gaveloch made his exit, having gained little information by his visit.

CHAPTER V.

—————" I have heard many say
 Love lives on hope ; they knew not what they said ;
 Hope is love's happiness but not its life ;—
 How many hearts have nourished a vain flame
 In silence and in secret, though they knew
 They fed the scorching fire that would consume them !"

L. E. LONDON.

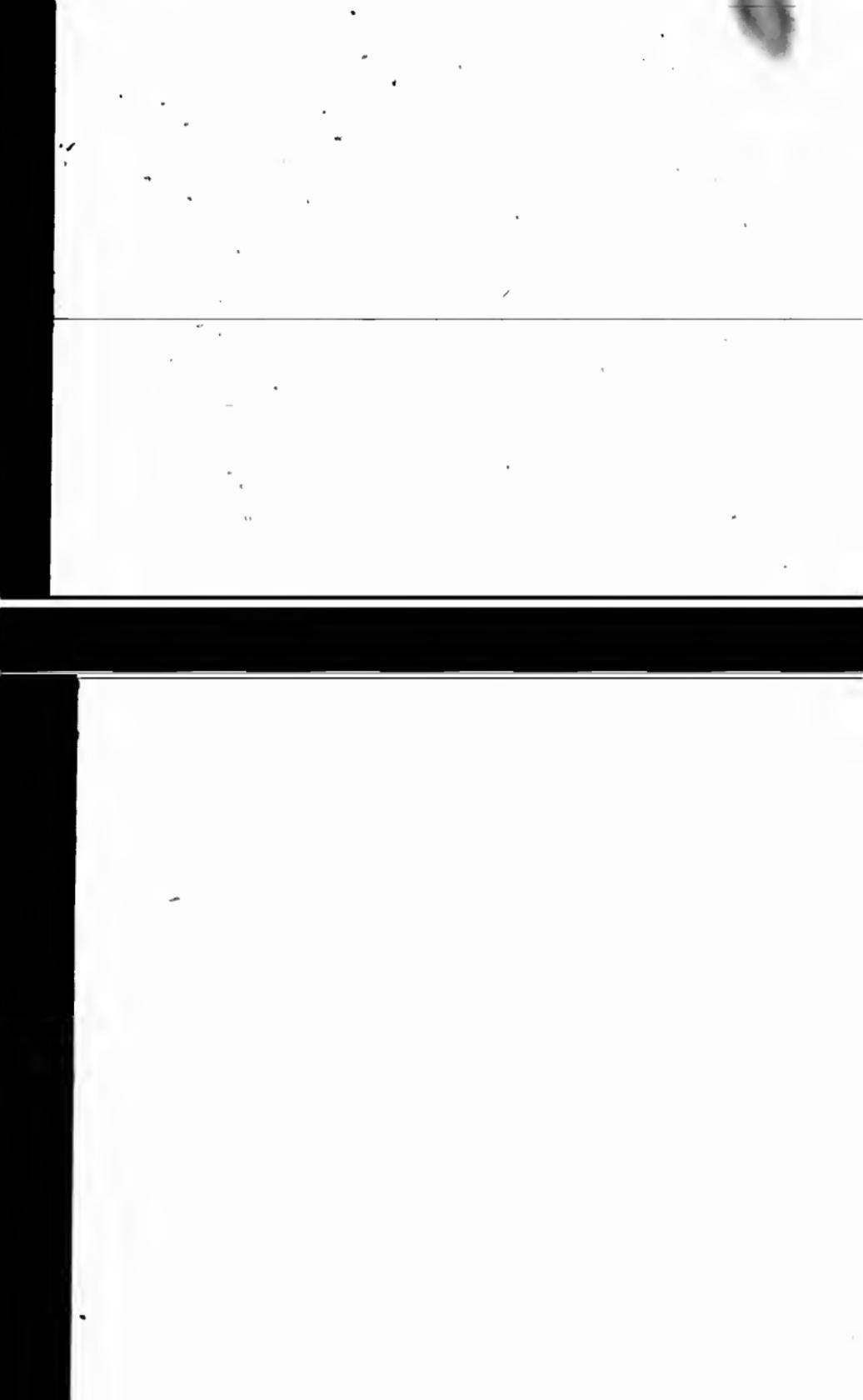
ON the following day the earl, taking advantage of O'Reilly's protracted absence, set out to visit certain chiefs who had not yet joined the confederacy. Of this number was the Magennis, lord of Iveagh, (now the county of Down,) who, being a powerful chieftain, and, moreover, a man of strong, sound mind, his adhesion would have been of vast importance to the cause. O'Neill then paid him a visit, and was attended in a manner suitable to his rank, being desirous to show Magennis that the reports everywhere spread of the number and high training of his troops was nothing exaggerated.

His reception was in the highest degree flattering to his hopes; for the chieftain of Iveagh was kind even to cordiality, and respectful almost to reverence, and on having the matter fully explained as Tyrone only could explain it, he at once expressed his willingness to join in so noble an enterprise, and promised to lose no time in making his preparations. Whilst they were engaged in this absorbing topic, the door was thrown open and a sweet, laughing face peeped in, while a clear, merry voice called out, "Father, my mother prays thee to bring the O'Neill to our evening meal—of a truth, ye must have been strangely occupied, for it hath been announced at least half an hour since. Am I to go back alone?"

"Nay, daughter," said the chieftain, "I would thou wert not so wild in thy speech and bearing; but we come;" then, turning to his noble guest, he asked, "May I not say so, most noble O'Neill?"

"Surely, yes," said the earl, arising from his seat, but his eyes followed the fairy form which was even then flitting across the wide





hall before them—"but who is that graceful creature, Magennis? Is she thy daughter?"

"Even so," replied Magennis, with a gratified smile, as he looked after the beautiful girl, "it is my daughter Catharina, one of the wildest and merriest lasses in all Ulster. I pray thee take no heed of her misdoings, or of her lack of gravity; for she is but young, only sixteen."

"Nay, my good friend," returned the earl, in all sincerity, "he were indeed a merciless judge who would condemn word or act of so fair a creature." During the few hours that Tyrone spent at the castle of Magennis, he discovered, in the beautiful Catharina, the germ of many excellent qualities, and, when the time of his departure was come, he, in taking leave of the chieftain, congratulated him on this rich domestic treasure. Right glad was Magennis to hear these praises of his child from one whose judgment carried such weight, and doubly so as he had a design in view which O'Neill's undisguised admiration of his daughter seemed to favor. Having made his proposed visits, and gained

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two or three influential noblemen to the cause, O'Neill returned home, whither he had scarcely arrived when he received a letter from Magennis, to the effect that nothing would give him more pleasure than an alliance with the O'Neill. "If my daughter be as pleasing in thy sight," he wrote, "as thou didst give me to understand, thou mayest have her in welcome, and a dowry at which even a prince may not sneer. The truth is," he added, with more candor than delicacy or prudence, "the truth is, that thy fine speeches have turned the girl's head, and she will have it that there never was another like to thee."

This was a most painful embarrassment for O'Neill, who, with all his admiration of the fair daughter of Magennis, had never, for a moment, thought of her as a wife. True, he had been for the moment fascinated by her fairy loveliness, and the sylph-like grace of her motions, and not less by the playful sallies of her wit; and then the alliance of Magennis was in itself much to be coveted, particularly now, when it behooved him to

gather around him a nucleus of native nobility and wealth. But then, when he asked himself, Could he conscientiously offer his hand to the lady Catharina? from the depths of his heart came an answer back,—a negative so forceful and so decided as to startle even himself. In vain did policy remind him that he was, in all probability, about to make an enemy for himself, and still worse for the national cause; again came the deep, internal voice,—“It must be done; there is no alternative.” So he sat down and penned a letter to Magennis, in which he expressed his deep regret that it was not in his power to accept the proposed honor, of whose value none could be more sensible, and, in order to propitiate the haughty chieftain, or rather to deprecate his anger, he laid open to him the secret cause which forbade him to accede to the proposal, flattering as he knew and felt it to be. In conclusion, he hoped that this would in no way interfere with their newly-formed friendship, as it would sharpen the pain he felt even to acute anguish, were so powerful a chieftain to keep aloof from

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the great cause through any misunderstanding with him. Several days passed before any reply came from Magennis, and, when it did come, it was couched in a few cold but emphatic words,—“ Even though not allied, by any enduring tie, to O'Neill, Magennis of Iveagh is none the less a lover of his country, and a hater of the foreign oppressor ; his promise once given is not lightly broken.”

Considerably relieved by this answer of Magennis, the earl could now afford to think of O'Reilly, whose absence had now extended to several weeks, and yet no word from him, nor had he sent back the two attendants given him. While his mind was still occupied with fruitless conjectures concerning O'Reilly, a flourish of martial music was heard outside, and quickly he was informed that a messenger from the lord deputy desired speech with his lordship. This courier was escorted by a party of some score of dragoons, and was the bearer of a despatch to the earl of Tyrone. Sending the courier and his escort to receive refreshments, O'Neill hastened to open the packet, which he found to

contain a formal citation to appear on a certain day before the deputy in council, to answer various charges brought against him by one Hugh O'Neill, surnamed na Gaveloch. There was also a copy of the deposition, in which the accuser offered to make good his charge, either by meeting the accused in single combat, at a place and time appointed by the lord deputy, or otherwise to give public testimony in any court of justice. Fitzwilliam had rejected, it would appear, the offer of deciding the matter by an appeal to arms, but Tyrone was summoned in the most authoritative manner to appear at the appointed time in order to stand his trial. In conclusion, he was warned, on peril of the heaviest penalty, not to fail.

When O'Neill had gone quite through the precious documents, his first emotion was that of indignation, not so much against Fitzwilliam as the wretch na Gaveloch; but very soon the stern look had vanished from his eye, and a smile of singular meaning played around his mouth. Under the impulse of the latter feeling, whatever it might be, he drew to

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him his writing apparatus, and addressed to Fitzwilliam the following pithy letter:

“This is to let the lord deputy know that the O'Neill does not choose to accept his courteous invitation. If Hugh na Gaveloch have any thing to say to him, let him come forward here on the soil of Ulster, and substantiate his charge; the O'Neill will be prepared with a fitting reply. To Dublin he will not repair at this present time, as matters of importance require his presence at home,—and, for the threatened punishment, in case of default, he hath a back to bear it. Given at Dungannon, under my hand and seal.”

What a storm of conflicting passions did this unlooked-for answer call forth in Dublin—some were filled with rage, (and amongst these was Fitzwilliam himself,) while others slyly exulted in that the wily earl had, at length, committed himself. In the midst of all this tumult, na Gaveloch set out for the north, acting on Fitzwilliam's suggestion, or rather command, and, being arrived at his own residence, sent to inform the earl that he

was ready to make good his accusation before any lawful authority. The result was very different from his calculations, for, on that same evening, he was arrested by O'Neill's order, and cast into prison, to be tried for a treasonable conspiracy against his lawful chief. In vain did he threaten the avenging power of the government, and refuse to be tried by the ancient laws, as being an English subject; no such subterfuge could save him from his well-merited punishment, and he was condemned by the highest authority in Ulster. But, however just was the sentence of death pronounced upon him, and, though the people, with one accord, acknowledged its justice, yet could no one be found to execute it: every one shrinking with horror from shedding the blood of one who bore, (however unworthily,) the honored name of O'Neill. Executions of this kind were so rare, that there was no regular official for the purpose, and for some time it was thought that the culprit must receive some milder punishment. But those who thought so, little knew of the stern inflexibility of their chief,

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when believing his resolve a right one, and ere two days had elapsed, after the sentence was pronounced, the wretched na Gaveloch suffered the prescribed penalty. Some writers say, that, sooner than have justice robbed of its right, the chieftain, himself, was compelled to execute the judicial sentence; but this fact is by no means well attested, and, such being the case, I am fain to believe that he was not reduced to so grievous a strait as that of becoming the executioner of his base kinsman.

A few days after, when another messenger arrived from Fitzwilliam, with a still more imperative summons, Tyrone put an end to the matter, as far as himself was concerned, by these laconic lines: "The wretch, whose malicious accusations were so readily received against me, has already suffered the extreme penalty of the law, for treason against his chief. For the rest, send me no more such messages as these, or it may fare hardly with those who bear them." And, sooth to say, he was troubled no farther at that time, for, so astounded were Fitzwilliam, and the clique

who governed with him, by this bold step of O'Neill, that they feared to exasperate him farther. It was, by them, supposed that Tyrone would never have ventured to do as he had now done, had he not felt himself in a condition to resist every measure which might tend to bring him to trial. Even the queen, herself, when the subject was laid before her, was inclined to the same opinion, and commanded that no further notice should now be taken of the affair; "for," said she, in her coarse way, "it would only rouse the crouching mastiff; let us, then, wait a little, and we may, after all, catch him napping."

O'Neill was far from being deceived by this apparent forgetfulness, for none better than he knew the wiles of English policy; and, in fact, the very impression that his conduct had produced was the very one he had had in view. Meanwhile he redoubled his exertions, and day after day saw his preparations striding on towards maturity. No aid had as yet arrived from Spain, though repeated promises were given, through the agents whom Tyrone sent thither, nor was

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there yet any sign of a re-action in Tyrconnell, for Red Hugh was still a prisoner in Dublin. Yet, so widely had the league spread over the land, and so active were its various members, in making the needful preparations, that even O'Neill, with all his cautious foresight, felt justified in hoping that he might soon hazard a public attempt, well knowing that many who now hung back, would rush forward at the first clash of arms to range themselves under his standard.

Being desirous to confer in person with the heads of the confederacy, he sent to invite them all to assemble at his house, on a certain day of the following week. That same evening, as he sat, lost in thought, while his sister, in her girlish glee, romped around the wide chamber, with the two children, Father McNamara made his appearance, and, after chatting over some trifling matters, he beckoned the earl to the further end of the room, where a door opened into a small cabinet. A small silver lamp burned on the polished oaken table, (which, with one high-backed chair, formed the furniture of the

place,) and, by its pale light, the earl saw that something of importance weighed on the priest's mind.

"In God's name," he said, earnestly, "tell me, father, what hath happened?"

"Nay, nothing of evil import, my son," returned the priest with a smile, "it would seem that God, in his mercy, hath deigned to hear our prayers, for this day I have received, through that faithful Henderson, a message from the lady Arabella Bagnal, requesting me to meet her at a place which she hath named, without the walls of Newry, on a matter which concerneth her soul's welfare. To-morrow I set out, with God's help, as the day following is the one appointed by the lady for the meeting."

"It is well," replied the earl, after a brief pause, "but the intelligence doth give me no surprise, seeing that I have had from the first an inward assurance that a being so noble, so elevated above all prejudice, having, besides, the advantage of thy prayers, could not but arrive at the truth." And, to the great surprise of the good priest, he suddenly

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put an end to the conference, by leading the way into the room which they had left. When there, he afforded not a moment for any private conversation, occupying himself almost entirely with the children. Nevertheless, he earnestly requested that Father McNamara would give them his company for a few hours, "for," said he, with a cheerful smile, "we have much of interest to talk over at this particular juncture." The priest signified his consent by a silent bow, for he was turning over and over in his mind the almost impenetrable character of his noble patron.

Next morning, the priest set forth alone, without a single word of greeting from the earl to the lady Arabella, and in his heart he felt grieved and disappointed, for he had been pluming himself on producing a far different effect by his late communication. "But even so it ever is with hopes based on mortals," murmured the good chaplain to himself, as he journeyed on; "they are, as it were, written on the sand of the sea-shore, to be washed away by the first swell of the

waves. Alas! alas!" and on he went with a desponding heart, notwithstanding his hopes of the lady's conversion.

On reaching the place of meeting, Father McNamara found that the lady was not yet arrived, and he entered into conversation with the good people of the house. He ascertained that the woman was a good and pious English Catholic, who, having been long in the service of the lady Arabella, was, under God, one great means of prepossessing her in favor of the religion she professed, and not only professed, but illustrated by her rare virtues. Her husband was an Irishman, of O'Hanlon's clan, who, having been some time employed about Bagnal's house, saw and loved the pretty Dorothy. They had been but a few months married, and, by Arabella's liberality, were enabled to erect a neat cottage some two or three miles from Newry, on a waste moor, which stretched along by the side of a venerable forest. Though Murtough O'Hanlon was, on the whole, a good young man, yet his prudent wife feared to trust a secret of so

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much importance to his discretion, and had, therefore, contrived to have him leave home on that day to transact some business in the town.

It was still early in the day when a low tap was heard at the door, and, on its being opened, Arabella Bagnal entered, accompanied by an elderly lady, whom she introduced to the priest as her cousin, Mrs. Eleanor Wilmot. Father McNamara was at first exceedingly reserved in his manner and conversation, owing to the presence of this lady; but Arabella speedily dissipated his fears by informing him, with a smile, that, though her cousin was a staunch Protestant, yet had she no hatred for popery or popish people, and was fully cognizant of her intention. Nevertheless, the kind old lady withdrew with Dorothy to an inner chamber, in order to leave the conference unrestrained on either side. Arabella then told the priest as briefly as possible, that, having been induced, by some secret inspiration, to examine the old religion at length, she had contrived to procure some works purely explanatory of Catho-

lic doctrine, and had thence learned to view it as it really was, not as prejudice and error made it appear. The consequence was, that she was ready to embrace its doctrines at every risk, and begged Father McNamara to take the necessary steps for her admission into the church. On hearing this simple, unvarnished statement, which Arabella put forth with a touching earnestness, and modest candor which belonged peculiarly to herself, the good priest felt his heart glow with gratitude to that Almighty Father, who had so visibly moved this pure soul to seek the truth, and the tears rolled unheeded from his eyes, as he raised them to heaven in humble adoration. Father McNamara knew well what a fearful risk he ran by being instrumental in receiving a convert; yet he shrank not from it, and carefully concealed the fact from Arabella, who seemed to be unaware that any greater danger accrued to him from baptizing her, than from any other function of his ministry. As this part of their conversation drew to a close, Arabella had opened the door to look out upon the

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moor, and proposed to the priest that they should adjourn to the open air, as the cottage, being small, was exceedingly close, while the atmosphere without was charged with balmy odors, and fresh with the breath of spring; besides, there was no more danger of being discovered than if they remained in the house. The good priest made no objection, and together they walked to and fro, just at the end of the cottage, where it was shaded from view by an advancing group of old oak trees, the farthest projection of the forest. Insensibly, perhaps, to both, the conversation glided from religious to more worldly matters, and the priest, in his paternal manner, noticed a certain air of melancholy visible on the features of Arabella. "How is it, my daughter," he said, "that I find thee bearing so dejected an aspect? Surely thou art not appalled by the danger attending thy proposed change of religion?"

"Nay, father, not so!" returned Arabella quickly, while a soft blush mounted to her face,—“thou needst not fear my resolution; for, by God's grace, it is strong enough

to bear me through all ; but we worldlings " —and she sighed as she spoke—" we worldlings are, like Martha of old, troubled about many things, alas ! many things, that concern not our salvation."

" I would, then," said the venerable priest, and he, too, sighed, " that it were mine to administer consolation to one whose generous interference saved my life. But I dare not even inquire into this secret sorrow, whatever it may be, lest, perchance, mine inquiry might not be pleasing to my benefactress."

" And yet thou mightest have freely put the question, my reverend father," said Arabella again, " for I will tell thee even without asking. My brother hath entered into a treaty of marriage for me which I have no mind to ratify, and he waxeth wroth at my repeated refusal."

" And is the husband whom he would give thee so very objectionable ? " demanded the priest.

" Nay, I know not what is his true character, though he hath been my brother's guest some time. He is young and handsome as maiden

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"And his religion,—he is, of course, an orthodox Protestant?"

"Now that," returned Arabella, is just the grand point in which he baffles all my penetration. He is a regular church-goer, and, when with my brother, talks of little else but the abominations of popery, and the light, forsooth, which the Reformation hath cast upon the world. To hear him, then, surely one would think that he believed Master Cranmer and his colleagues the greatest benefactors that ever mankind had. But, nevertheless, I have heard him, at sundry times, when he thought himself out of my brother's hearing, treat these very men, and that great event, as scourges sent upon the earth for man's punishment. Ay, and truly he talked then with singular bitterness. On the whole, I love not, nor respect the man!"

"It is somewhat strange," said the priest, musingly. "Can there, then, be two such characters?"

Arabella eagerly caught him up,—“How,

—what? Knowest thou any thing of him?"

"Nay, daughter; I say not that I do; but the description thou hast given doth bear a singular likeness to that of a certain Anglo-Irishman who dwelt some time in the castle of the O'Neill."

"Ha! I have heard him speak to my brother," cried Arabella, "of a person who had been placed as a spy on the earl's actions. I pray God that nothing bad may have come of it; for it hath been rumored here of late that my lord of Tyrone hath lost the queen's favor, and is regarded as a suspicious plotter. Tell me, father, for thou canst, if this be all true? She spoke with eager haste, and, when the priest glanced at her face, he saw it suffused with a bright blush. Her very lips, too, were trembling with emotion, and, in her eagerness to have the question answered, she advanced a step nearer to the priest."

"My daughter," said he at length, without seeming to notice her emotion, "what thou hast heard is but too true; treachery hath been busy at Dungannon; and, had it

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not been for a certain kind, though unknown friend, who twice warned him of the impending danger, my noble friend might have fallen into the trap, notwithstanding all his prudence and penetration."

Arabella clasped her hands, and glanced upwards with a beaming look of gratitude. "My God! I thank thee!" she murmured in a low tone, and yet it was overheard by the priest.

"Why, daughter," he almost involuntarily said, "how doth this matter concern thee?"

"O, much; much doth it concern me!" she exclaimed, as though unconscious of her words; but, suddenly recollecting herself, she blushed to the very temples, and, turning away her head, would have returned into the cottage; but the priest, in his anxiety for her peace and happiness, was determined to sift the matter farther.

"Daughter!" he said, with an earnestness that produced a solemn effect, "daughter! as thou hopest for peace and rest, confide to me the secret which I see oppresses thy heart—thy soul! Remember that thou

thou wilt shortly become my spiritual daughter. I will endure thee, then, lay open to me this secret cause of sorrow and uneasiness."

Arabella had turned at the sound of his voice, but she now hid her face with both her hands, and leaned against a tree as though unable to stand.

"I dare not, father!" was her murmured reply. "Thou wouldst look upon me with honor as a guilty thing, and yet God hath witnessed how I have struggled against this fatal passion. This, this it is,—this overpowering sense of guilt, which doth weigh me down, and not my brother's persecution, for God," she said, somewhat proudly, "hath given me a soul to brave injustice and oppression. But this dread feeling of shame and of remorse,—O, it is horrible!" And a cold shiver ran through all her members.

"In the name of God whose voice now speaks within me," said the priest solemnly, "I once more adjure thee, maiden, to tell me what this may mean. I will help thee to tear open the long-festering wound, so that we may apply the remedy. Was I,

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then, mistaken when I fancied that thou didst love the earl of Tyrone?

Again did Arabella hide her face, now suffused with the burning blush of shame. "Alas! no, my father. Would that thou hadst been in error!"

"Then, wherefore, my child, this overpowering sense of guilt for that which is, after all, but a natural feeling? Surely, there is no such fearful guilt in loving one who is worthy of all love. I can understand the feelings with which a modest maiden doth acknowledge her love for one who hath not sought her; but thy feelings,—this wondrous agitation, I cannot reconcile with its simple cause."

Arabella uncovered her face, and looked with astonishment at the priest. "But think, father, of the guilt by which we are separated,—thou surely canst not forget the impassable barrier which lies between us, nor regard her as guiltless who hath confessed her love for the husband of another; O, no, my father, say not so; say not that thou holdest this heinous sin so lightly, or I dare not enter

thy church with the hope of finding there the beauty of holiness. No, no; thou canst not mean to extenuate my fault?"

"Assuredly not," said the father, with a benignant smile; "for, wert thou guilty of so foul a crime, I could not dare, as a minister of God, to pronounce it a trifling matter; but thou art wrong, my dearest daughter. No such barrier doth now exist; many a month has past since the countess of Tyrone was laid in the grave. May her soul rest in peace."

"Now, then, my most merciful father, do I thank thee once again!" and Arabella fell on her knees, in apparent forgetfulness of all but God;—"now hast thou shown thy great mercy in taking from my soul this fearful weight of sin and sorrow."

The priest was about to raise her from the cold, damp earth whereon she continued to kneel, but he was forestalled by another, who, springing from behind the identical tree against which Arabella had so lately leaned, snatched her from the ground, and pressed her to his heart. The intruder was

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closely muffled up in a large cloak; (then seldom worn by the Irish) but even before he had spoken a word—before even Arabella had recovered from her fright so as to be able to speak—the priest called out in a joyful tone, “My lord the earl!—now God be praised!”

“Arabella,” said the earl softly, as the shrinking girl hid her face on his shoulder, “wilt thou forgive me for having stolen unawares on thy privacy, and thus become an unsuspected sharer in thy confidence? Nay, raise thine head, sweet one, nor fear that I shall be a severe censor. And yet thy crime, as confessed, doth assuredly merit a grievous punishment: say, father, what shall it be?”

“Nay, my lord,” said Arabella, as she extricated herself from the earl’s embrace, “I do not take this conduct kindly,—it is surely unworthy of thee!”

“Then let me, too, have my punishment decreed by our revered father. I will submit to whatever he awards,” cried Tyrone, almost wild with delight and surprise.

Whatever was the penalty awarded the offenders, they quickly entered the house with the priest, and scarcely half an hour had passed when Arabella, with her companion, set out in one direction to return to Newry, while the earl summoned some ten or twelve of his men who were concealed in the wood, and having mounted the priest on a horse which they had brought for the purpose, turned his face once more towards Dungannon. At parting, he had merely pressed the hand which Arabella held out to him; but he said, in a low, impassioned tone, which called the eloquent blood to her beautiful cheek, "Two weeks hence, then, my beloved, we meet, with God's help, to part no more. Till then, may angels guard thee."

As they rode home side by side, Father McNamara could not refrain from expressing his surprise at the close disguise under which the earl had kept both his sentiments with regard to Arabella, and his intention of taking such a step as he had that day done.

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because I wished first of all to ascertain whether the lady Arabella would favor my suit, and, for the rest, if I followed thee here this day, my hopes extended no farther than to see her, and offer my vows for her acceptance. I was just on the point of entering the house when I had the good fortune to see you both appear, and I need scarcely say what my feelings were while I listened to the unwilling confession of the admirable girl!—so now this matter is ended, I trust, to thy satisfaction.” The priest’s reply was a cheerful affirmative, as may well be believed.

The third day after this *rencontre* was the day appointed for the assembly, and it had scarcely reached its noon when there were present upwards of a score of chieftains, of whom the greater number were of high consideration. Several others had sent apologies, signifying, nevertheless, their good will to the cause, and their intention to contribute their full quota to the national army. Of this latter number was Magennis, and Tyrone received the message with singular

pleasure, inasmuch as he had doubted whether the chieftain of Iveagh would, in the end, be found where duty called him. Brian McMahon was there in person, and so also was the venerable O'Reilly of Breffni, whose patriotism not even advancing age could chill or damp. On the whole, it was a cheerful sight to see so many powerful chiefs assembled for a common object, many of whom were, within a few years, nay, a few months, the mortal enemies of each other. O'Cahan was there from Derry, and McDonnell from the Glynnns, and even some of the tributaries of the degenerate O'Donnells, were there to shew that Tyrconnell was not altogether paralyzed by the slavish spirit of its toparch.

And O'Neill moved amongst them, his fine face radiant with smiles, and his approach everywhere greeted with respect; the actuating spirit was he of all that noble assembly. He was scrupulously attired in the Celtic costume, with his nut-brown hair falling almost to his shoulders, as though in studied defiance of that legal enactment of

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Henry the Eighth's time, which forbade the Irish to wear the *coolun*, or long hair. Already had he explained to the assembled chiefs the actual position of the confederacy, and was still depicting, in his clear and forceful way, the evils under which the country labored, and the sacred obligation under which her children lay of using their best endeavors to root out the baneful source of her sufferings, when suddenly a door opened near him, and Miles O'Reilly entered. No immediate notice being taken of his appearance, the young man drew back behind the earl, and stood with folded arms during the remainder of the address. When Tyrone had concluded his address, amid an enthusiastic burst of applause, he turned to O'Reilly, and shook him by the hand, with as much apparent warmth as though his presence afforded no cause for apprehension.

"I perceive," said O'Reilly, "that I have come at a time when, of all others, I am least welcome—but I pray thee take no heed, for I will but speak to my good uncle, whom I see yonder, and then withdraw."

He then crossed over to where the O'Reilly sat, and the old man, contrary to his expectations, arose to greet him. It was clear that he understood his appearance as indicating a change in his political sentiments, and, holding out his hand, he said, kindly :

“ Bless thee, son of my brother, bless thee. I had little expected to see thee here, and the sight hath gladdened mine aged eyes, for it was a sore, sore trial for me to believe thee on the side of the Sassenäch. But why wearest thou that English doublet, Maolmordha? Take it off, my boy—take it off, for it becomes not thee, and still less this assembly of Erin's true sons!”

“ It shall be done, my uncle!” returned his nephew, with kindling enthusiasm, “ I know, and have long known, that it is the livery of slavery—aye, and before this noble company do I vow that henceforward it shall be my pride to act as an O'Reilly should.” Before any reply could be made he had quitted the hall, and ere yet the astonishment so visible in every face had vented itself in words, he reappeared in the national

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costume. Taking his place then beside his uncle, he bowed, with graceful ease, to the assembled nobles, and craved permission to say a few words. All seeming to listen with attention, he drew a rapid sketch, (using the Irish language, as a matter of course,) of his earlier youth, and of the wiles which had been used to draw him from his natural connexions. He showed how his youthful mind had been gradually indoctrinated with English thoughts, and feelings, and opinions, and how he had been sent to Ireland, as he well knew, as a spy on O'Neill's actions. He then told how various events, (such as the atrocious execution of McMahan, and the capture of young O'Donnell,) had wrought a remarkable change in his opinions. "A change which was made perfect," said he, bowing gracefully to O'Neill, "by my acquaintance, short as it was, with him who may be justly considered the mover of this great enterprise of yours."

O'Neill had listened with surprise and pleasure to this most welcome explanation, and, when O'Reilly ceased to speak, he was

the first to go forward and offer him his hand, expressing, at the same time, his very great satisfaction. "For," added he, "truth and sincerity are so legibly imprinted on thy brow at this moment; that I, for one, do confess all doubt at an end, and heartily bid thee welcome to our assembly. Henceforward I trust we shall labor together for our country and our faith,—both so cruelly manacled by the relentless tyrants who hold us in thrall."

His example was quickly followed by all present; and even the sinewy hand of McDonnell grasped the delicate fingers of O'Reilly, though confessing, as he did so, that but a few minutes before he felt strongly disposed to throw him from the window or lose a fall for it, "when I saw thee," said he, "in that monkey-uniform, having the hardihood to appear in such an assembly as this."

O'Reilly answered only with a good-humored smile, taking the words of the Scot as kindly as they were meant. The business of the meeting was then proceeded with, and though Miles O'Reilly, with becoming

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modesty, refrained from taking any active part, yet it was easy to see that not one present was more interested than he.

The meeting was followed up by a banquet, and it was not till the following day that any of the confederates left the castle. It was long past noon when the last took his departure, leaving Miles O'Reilly alone with his host. The young man had been pressed by his uncle to go home with him to Breffni; but he had excused himself for the present, on the plea that by staying at Dungannon he might be employed by the earl in some useful service; "for, thou knowest, uncle," he said, with a smile, "that I, who have come in but at the eleventh hour, have much misspent time to redeem." So Philip O'Reilly set out alone, nothing loth to leave his nephew on so fair a pretence.

In the course of the evening, the conversation between O'Neill and his guest was exclusively on the movement in progression, and Tyrone was more and more satisfied with the views and intentions of his young friend. It chanced that Father McNamara was absent

at the time, so that they were left altogether unrestrained, and the earl availed himself of the opportunity to obtain as deep an insight as he possibly could into O'Reilly's character. There was one thing struck him more than any other at that particular time, — he observed that Miles indulged in a species of wild gaiety which could not be real, even allowing for the natural buoyancy of his temper. In the midst of the most serious discourse, too, he would break off into some fanciful flight, while, all the time, there burned on his cheek a deep red spot which much resembled the seal set by fever on its victims. To the penetrating eye of O'Neill it was sufficiently obvious that some corroding care lay deep in the young man's mind, which he would fain have concealed under this ostentatious gaiety. But when he hinted his suspicions to that effect, O'Reilly replied, with a forced laugh, "Truly, thou wert never more mistaken, mine honored lord; no man in all this northern province is freer from care than I; come, let's throw it to the winds; let's enjoy life while we may."

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The earl shook his head, being far from satisfied with this answer, but he could not press his inquiries farther, and, though perfectly convinced that some great change had been effected on O'Reilly's mind,—probably his heart,—during his absence, he was compelled to keep his thoughts to himself, fearing to wound where he would have wished to heal. What tended still more to confirm his suspicions, was the impenetrable silence preserved by O'Reilly on all that had occurred during his absence.

Next day, he abruptly told his host that he must again leave him, saying, with a peculiar smile, "The attendants whom thou wert so good as to give me, I have left at Shane's Castle, where I have been to visit thy cousin, and there I will find them as I pass that way on my journey."

"But why this abrupt departure, O'Reilly, and whither art thou bound, if a friend may be permitted to ask?"

"Nay, my good lord, the business on which I go may not be spoken of till its issue is decided—enough to tell thee now

that the happiness of my whole life is at stake, and if my hopes are blighted, I shall bury the fatal secret in my heart; if, on the contrary, I am successful then shalt thou have, in a few days, a full explanation. In either case, farewell for the present. We shall meet again, one of us either the most miserable of men, or blest as man seldom hath been." And, wringing the hand which the earl silently held out to him, he flung himself on his waiting steed, and was in a few minutes out of sight. The earl, as he slowly reëntered the castle, endeavored, but vainly, to find a clue to this mystery, until wearied with fruitless conjecture he dismissed the subject from his mind, committing it to the all-disclosing hand of time.

CHAPTER VI.

So stately his form, so beauteous her face,
That never a hall such galliard did grace.

* * * * *
One touch to her hand, one word to her ear,
Soon they reach'd the hall door where a charger stood near,
So light in the croup the lady he swung,
So light in the saddle before her he sprung.

"She is won—we are gone—over break, brush, and scraur;
They 'll need fleet steeds to follow," quoth young Lochinvar:

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O'NEILL took an early opportunity of imparting to Father McNamara the change which had taken place in O'Reilly's views, giving him a full account of the part he had taken at the late assembly. The priest was at first startled by the unexpected intelligence, and hesitated not to express his fears that O'Reilly was still doing the work of England by intruding himself thus into the very heart of the confederacy. But O'Neill, in whose judgment he had confidence, very soon reasoned him out of this fear, and when he wound up his arguments by exclaiming with the energy of conviction that he would stake his life on O'Reilly's sincerity, the priest could say no more. The earl next related the singular conversation which had preceded O'Reilly's departure, and expressed himself wholly at a loss to understand it, "unless," said he, with a smile, "that mischievous urchin, Cupid, be at the bottom of it,—his conduct is, of a surety, incomprehensible."

"Left he the men behind?" interrupted the chaplain, as though almost unconscious of the earl's concluding remark.

"So he told me," returned Tyrone, "and that, too, is as strange as any. - Say, father, what are we to think of all this? There is something in this that I cannot fathom, though I am inclined to think that some fair damsel hath played foul with his senses."

"Your lordship hath condescended to ask my opinion," said the priest, "but suffer me for this one time to borrow a little of your own caution. I would rather not say what I think of this matter for a few days yet, for, if my suspicions are ill-founded, I should bitterly regret having given them expression. And, now, to change our theme—on what day hath your lordship promised to visit Newry?"

"Ten days hence," replied the earl, "but why put the question now?—I would give somewhat to know what thy thoughts are of O'Reilly."

"Ten days," repeated the priest, slowly and musingly, "and why defer it so long, why not go to-morrow?"

The earl laughed. "Nay, my good father, such precipitation might mar the plot; better wait for the appointed day."

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“But I say not so, my lord earl; and I will, for once, tell thee, above-board, that thou art in error. Old priest as I am, I have dived farther into this matter than thou with all thy foresight; nay, in part, I have information from the lady herself, and I solemnly warn thee that to-morrow’s sunrise should see thee setting out for Newry, ay, and with such a force as thou hast never gone before!”

“Father!” said the earl, after a momentary silence, “I have ever found thee a wise and judicious counsellor, and I will not now go against thy bidding. I will do as thou sayest in the name of God.”

“It is well, my son! and while thou art absent, I shall pray our Heavenly Father that there arise no necessity to spill human blood, for, alas! I see on thy perilous way much wrath and jealousy which thou perchance seest not.”

On the day which followed this conversation, Arabella was alone in an apartment of her brother’s fortress-dwelling which he had fitted up for her especial use, and in a

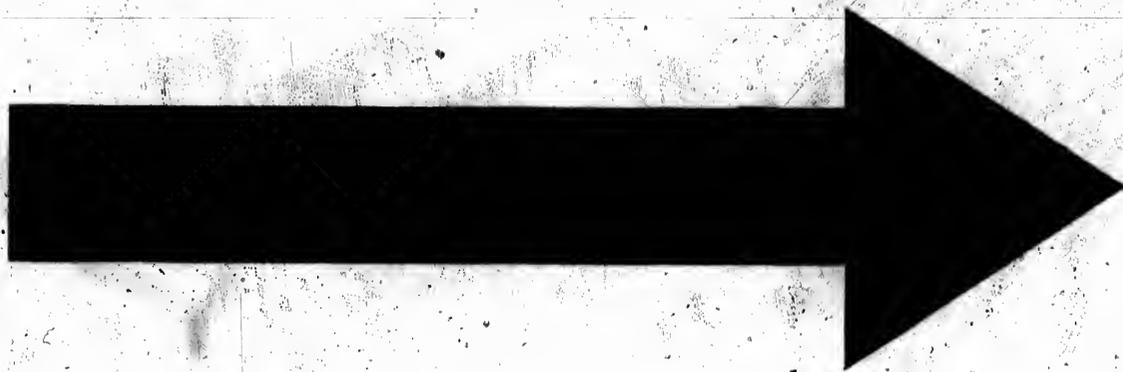
style not only of elegance but of luxury. It was furnished something in the fashion of our modern drawing-rooms, allowing for the difference of the various articles of furniture. The room was not large; and the light, which should have entered by two large windows, was shaded into a soft twilight by heavy draperies of rich crimson velvet. With the same costly material were cushioned two curiously-wrought couches of dark, shining oak, and some two or three of those tall, narrow chairs, in which we see represented on canvass so many fair forms of that day. On stands in the niches around the room, stood vases of rare beauty, filled with the flowers of the season—"the sweetest and the last," for it was then autumn. Over one of these fragrant treasures, Arabella was bending, inhaling its refreshing perfume—herself the loveliest flower of all. Her exquisite features wore still that look of dejection—no, not now dejection, but care—and her mild eye was turned from time to time towards the door, with what might be called a fearful look. After a little while,

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she opened the door of a small closet near, and said to her cousin who sat there at work—"He may not come to-day, after all, for it is now late—an hour past noon."

The old lady shook her head doubtfully,—“Let not thy hopes carry thee so far, my sweet cousin. He will come, if life be spared him.”

“Hush! here he is! Here they are!” and Arabella had barely time to close the door, and resume her stand near the vase of flowers, when, with a loud, coarse laugh, her brother threw open the principal door and entered, followed by a young man dressed in the very extreme of fashion—of English fashion; in short, the very counterpart, both in person and equipment, of what Miles O'Reilly was on the day when that personage met, for the first time, the eyes of Hugh O'Neill; and no wonder that the likeness was complete; for this was no other than O'Reilly himself. The smirking, and somewhat conceited smile with which Miles had been listening to Bagnal, as they came along the outer hall, instantly vanished from his face as his eye



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met the grave, cold look of Arabella when she returned his deferential salute. She was habited in a close fitting garment of black velvet, fastened from throat to waist with pearl-studded clasps of gold, and her rich dark hair was gathered high on the back of her head into a round twist, giving to her small head, and beautifully-chiselled features, the air of a Grecian statue. Not a smile was seen to light her face, even when her brother affected a gaiety—a boisterous gaiety—that was any thing but natural to his dark disposition.

“So, so, Bella,” he exclaimed, with a laugh, “coy as thou dost choose to appear, thou hast been preparing flowers for the wedding, eh? Is it not so, my pretty sister?”

“Flowers are no new ornaments in my apartment, my good brother,” said Arabella, quietly; “but sit ye down; methinks ye both look as though something of wondrous importance brought ye hither!”

“Ay, marry, sister,” cried Bagnal, as he stretched his length on a couch, and motioned his companion to an adjacent chair,—“Ay,

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marry ! thy quick penetration hath not erred, for we come to learn thy decision, or rather receive thy consent to wed my friend O'Reilly."

"Indeed !" exclaimed Arabella, and she turned a searching look on each in turn, while a strange expression of irony took possession of her features. "And methought I had settled this question ere now. I dreamed not that the noble gentleman here present could stoop to sue after being so repeatedly refused."

"But knowest thou not, my dainty sister, cried the marshal, with rising anger, "that no such answer will pass current with me ? O'Reilly have I chosen for thy husband, and thankful shouldst thou be for such an offer."

"Thankful I may be for his preference, but marry him I never will !" returned Arabella, with a firmness that showed the strength of her resolution. "In vain have ye practised on me in various ways ; vainly have ye deceived me on one great point ; ye cannot, dare not, coerce my will ; and again I say I will never be his wife !"

Bagnal was speechless with fury; but O'Reilly, who was ever subdued into respectful silence by the majesty of Arabella's presence, now came forward, and, kneeling on one knee before her, he looked up into her face with a glance of even piteous supplication, while his chest heaved, and the color on his cheek came and went, so violent were his emotions of fear, and hope, and love, and sorrow.

"Lady, is there no hope—none? Can nothing move thy heart? Or is it possible that one so angelic in form and mien can have so passing little of woman's softness? Think, (but thou canst not, for thou knowest it not,) how I have loved and do still love thee; ay, with all thine obduracy!

"I pray thee rise, gentle sir!" said Arabella; "for thou humblest thyself in vain. I cannot, may not, love thee, even if I would!"

On hearing this, Bagnal sprang forward with a menacing gesture, but, ere he could reach Arabella, O'Reilly started to his feet, and, catching hold of the angry marshal, led

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him back to his seat, whispering some words which seemed to calm him down amazingly. Going back, then, to Arabella, he seized her hand, and drew her to a window at the farther end of the apartment. When there, he said to her in a low tone :

“ Would'st thou know how far this overmastering passion hath subdued me, reason, soul, and all ? ”

“ Nay,” said Arabella, with her cold, sarcastic smile, “ I would rather dissuade thee from making any farther confession, since all must be so unavailing.”

“ But thou shalt know it,” said O'Reilly, speaking through his shut teeth, and laying his hand on her arm at the same time, as though to detain her. “ For thee have I acted a part which my soul abhorred ; for thy sake have I reviled and calumniated the faith in which I was nurtured ; ay ! and knelt in the conventicles of heresy, while in spirit and in truth a Catholic. Ay ! smile as thou wilt, since my hopes are now blasted. I will play the hypocrite no longer ; but, methinks, after all, that this last and

greatest proof of my all-absorbing passion should move thee, at least to compassion."

"Thou art mistaken, then," returned Arabella coldly; "it rather moves me to contempt. I suspected this long ago, and I tell thee, that one suspicion did much to turn my mind against thee. He that prevaricates in the great affair of religion, for any human motive, is unworthy of being loved!" So saying, she threw off his grasp, and walked back towards her former place, while O'Reilly followed with a countenance so desponding, so blank, as it were, that Bagnal saw at a glance how this last trial had ended. Darting forward then, he confronted his sister in her stately march across the room. "How now, mistress," he tauntingly cried, "whither wouldst thou go?"

"I would quit this room, brother, with thy permission, as my presence here is no longer required."

"But it is required!" her brother exclaimed, stamping on the ground in a burst of passion; "for thou shalt not go hence till thou hast consented to marry O'Reilly!"

"Then I will stay here while life is left me," returned Arabella, with surprising calmness, "for, were ye to tear me asunder, I will not consent,—I could not!"

"And why, my saucy sister? Is it, forsooth, because thou art resolved to have thine own way?"

"It is, Henry Bagnal, for the best of all reasons,—that I am already a wife; and, were I not, still would I not consent to marry *him!*"

"Thou a wife!" cried both her hearers, standing aghast at the announcement; for both knew Arabella too well to suspect her of either fabricating a falsehood, or using a prevarication. "In the name of all the devils," shouted Bagnal, "when, how, or where, didst *thou* become a wife? or who hath dared to wed thee without my consent?"

"The *when, how, or where,* is of little moment," said Arabella proudly, "and for him who hath *dared* to receive my vows, he may soon answer for himself."

Bagnal now turned to O'Reilly, who, pale

as death, had thrown himself on a seat, and asked, "What is now to be done?—Methinks it were well to put this obstinate wench under lock and key. Confinement and low allowance may bring her to confess the name of her partner in guilt!"

"In guilt!" retorted Arabella, with a scornful accent; "have a care what thou sayest, Henry Bagnal! He whom I have chosen from all mankind, stands as far elevated above the crowd, by his nobleness of mind and rare virtues, as by his rank."

"Then tell us who he is, lady!" said O'Reilly, coming forward, "and we may perchance adopt thy views of this paragon!" There was a biting sarcasm in his tone that moved Arabella more than all she had yet heard.

"I recognize no right which thou hast to question me, and will thank thee not to interfere!"

Upon this, Bagnal lost all control of his passion, and seizing Arabella, he shook her violently by the shoulder, O'Reilly, under the influence of his own anger, standing by

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without offering to prevent this unmanly violence. At this moment, two doors of the apartment opened; from one rushed in Mrs. Wilmot, alarmed by the loud voices she heard, while by the other entered Hugh O'Neill. "Oh my lord!" cried cousin Eleanor, "at what a moment dost thou come!"—while Arabella, breaking away from her brother's relaxing grasp, threw herself into the arms of Tyrone, and sobbing out, "Thank God thou art here!" she clung to him as a timid child to its mother's bosom.

Vainly would I attempt to describe the scene which followed,—the stormy anger,—the rage even of Bagnal, and the mingled pain and jealous resentment of O'Reilly, on discovering who was his successful rival. Grieved he was to find that the man whom of all others he had admired, and even loved, was the same who had carried off the prize himself had so eagerly, so wildly sought, while his envy was increased from anger to a species of fury by the sight of that tender and trustful love which Arabella took no pains to conceal. Mrs. Wilmot, good soul!

was dissolved in tears, and O'Neill alone was calm and collected, like some rock of the sea, which rears its head proudly over the dashing waves, and calmly confronts the wildest outbreak of the storm.

With a smile of cool contempt he listened to the alternate reproaches and menaces of O'Reilly, and to the more vindictive reviling of Bagnal; but, availing himself of a moment when neither was able to continue the attack without taking breath, he drew Arabella's arm quietly within his own, saying, as he did so, "Let us go, my Arabella; we have many a mile to cross ere we reach our home." Arabella whispered some directions to her cousin, who instantly quitted the room. Here Bagnal stepped between O'Neill and the door, and called aloud for some of his people. But no one came, and the earl laughed for the first time since his entrance.

"Thinkest thou, then, that I came hither on such an errand without being prepared to carry out my purpose? Sir Henry Bagnal, the gates of Newry are guarded by the stout

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clansmen of Tyr-owen. A force, such as thou canst not resist, awaits me without these doors, so that thy sentries are useless. Even in the hall, beyond that door, stand some twenty or thirty of my gallow-glasses, and it were worse than madness in thee to resist. Thy troops, having no orders from thee, and seeing me and mine so often admitted on peaceful terms, have suffered us to enter unmolested; and now, that my men have, unawares, taken possession of the gates, we can defy all opposition. Move from my way, then; that I may pass, with my wife!"

The news which he had just heard might well blanch the cheek of Bagnal; yet still he moved not from his position, and said, in a haughty tone,

"I must first know whether this marriage be legal; I would know who it was that performed the ceremony."

"I have no objection that thou shouldst know," returned Tyrone, with the utmost composure, "it was my chaplain, the same who some time since escaped from thy friendly grasp, much against thy will!"

“Ha!” cried Bagnal and O’Reilly, simultaneously, and both laughed exultingly; “then the marriage is null and void, which thou canst not deny; for how could a popish priest marry two parties, one of whom was a Protestant?”

This latter question came from Bagnal.

“Nay, ask Arabella if it be so,” said the earl calmly, whereupon the lady, without heeding the question, replied, “I am, and have been, for some time past, a Catholic; thou seest,” she added, turning to O’Reilly, with a significant look, “so much for what thou didst confide to me a little while ago.”

“My God!” cried the unhappy young man, and an ashy paleness overspread his fine features, “my God, how justly do I merit this galling wound!”

Seeing these symptoms of relenting softness, O’Neill approached and offered his hand to O’Reilly, saying, in a low voice, “Why should we not still be friends, O’Reilly? Arabella had blessed me with her love, as she can tell thee, ere she had ever looked upon thy face. Neither didst thou

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reveal to me, on quitting Dungannon, thy purpose, nor even the place of thy destination. How am I, then, to blame?"

But one glance at Arabella, (who was now putting on a travelling cloak, brought her by Mistress Eleanor,) was sufficient to harden O'Reilly's heart against the generous attempts of the earl to effect a reconciliation, and, while withholding his hand, he said, with sullen and dogged resolution:

"Never! never shall our hands meet again in friendship; rivals we have been, although unknown to each other; foes we must henceforward be!"

Bagnal, who had watched this little episode with suspicious eyes, now called out, "Ha! is even the great earl susceptible of fear? If thou hast any secret of his, O'Reilly, which he would fain have concealed, we can bravely repay him for this day's work. So let him go hence, in the name of all that's bad!"

"Nay, Bagnal," said O'Reilly, hastily, "I did not say, I did not even hint, that I had any secret of his in my keeping; I said

we were to be henceforward foes, and that alone." Nevertheless, seeing that O'Neill had opened the door, he glided up to Arabella, and said, in a low, hissing tone, "An' thou lovest that man, thou hast cause to tremble; for, great as he thinketh himself, he is at O'Reilly's mercy."

"Not so much as he may suppose," said O'Neill, in the same low tone; for he had overheard the threat. "And yet, O'Reilly, I defy thee not; for it doth grieve my soul to think of thee but as a friend. Mistress Eleanor," he said aloud to the old lady who stood near Arabella, muffled as for a journey, "Mistress Eleanor, the halls of Dungannon have room for thee, if, as I well believe, thou wouldst fain accompany thy kinswoman." The offer was gratefully accepted by the worthy duenna, and Bagnal called out, with a forced laugh!

"Ay, let her go—to the devil, if she lists such a journey; for, I trow, those same halls of Dungannon are a portion of his imperial dwelling. Take her an' welcome; good my lord! and may the treachery of the garrison

go with her, and my precious sister, (I beg her ladyship's pardon,) the countess of Tyrone." The keen irony of tone, and his low bow of mock respect, more insulting still, was only answered by a contemptuous look from the earl, and a mild "farewell" from Arabella, and they passed through the doors, followed closely by the hooded and cloaked form of Eleanor. But though the hall was indeed filled with O'Neill's people, he was not suffered to pass out unmolested, albeit that Bagnal, himself, when he peered through the door, was fain to restrain his tongue. The earl and his bride had nearly reached the door when they espied, seated on the first step of the spiral staircase, the ungainly form of the witch, Elspeth.

"See here, O'Neill," she cried, as he approached, "thou hast taught thy boors to despise my power—nay, they laugh at me, but," and she swore a horrible oath, "I will make thyself tremble at my name. How now!" she shouted again, starting from her seat with the alacrity of youth, for just then she caught a glimpse of Arabella's face, as

she walked on the farther side of the earl ;
“how now, who hast thou there?” She
would have approached close to Arabella,
but O'Neill kept her back with his hand.

“Ha, ha!” she shouted, and clapped her
hands wildly together, “then my dream
was not for nothing ; the Irish wolf-dog bear-
eth away the fairest hind of the herd. O,
woe the day ! woe the day ! Bagnal ! Sir
Henry ! knowest thou of this ?” She screamed
at the top of her cracked and dissonant voice,
keeping all the while right in front of
Arabella.

“That do I, Elspeth ! my worthy woman !”
answered the marshal from within the still-
open door. “It is his day now ; ours is to
come ! !”

“Is it so ?” shouted Elspeth again, “then
art thou a very craven ; that do I tell thee to
thy face, Harry Bagnal ; else wouldst thou
not bear this foul wrong so tamely. But,
by the wand of the mighty Egyptian, it shall
not end so !” And, before any one dreamed
of her purpose, the infuriate hag, drawing a
dagger from beneath her short grey cloak,

aimed a blow at the earl as he passed her, which would inevitably have been fatal had not her arm been struck down on the instant by a stalwart hand from behind. At the same moment, her arms were pinioned at her back by the sinewy grasp of one of O'Neill's followers, being none other than our old acquaintance, Teague O'Hagan, who had an old grudge towards Elspeth. "Now," he said with a laugh, which was echoed from his comrades around, "Now let us see how your witchship can wrestle. O, then, faith, there never was witch or banshee that could kick and plunge as thou dost. Look here, now, boys; my name's not Teague O'Hagan but she can use her old feet and hands just as if she was real flesh and blood. That's it; another like that; but would your lordship and the lady," addressing O'Neill, "be pleased to pass on; for I'll just tie the banshee to the post here."

"But I pray thee, do not harm her, friend," said Arabella, a request which the earl enforced by a positive command.

"No, not the devil a harm I'll do her,

my lord ; I 'd scorn to hurt a woman, let her be ever so bad. O, never fear, my lady !”

The earl, with his two companions, hurried away, and honest Teague failed not to secure the beldame, though her own wild screams and desperate efforts to get loose were backed by the remonstrance of the sentry, at the door, who had now summoned a sergeant's guard to his post. “Have patience, now,” said Teague, in English, “and don't bother your heads about her ; sure she's a wise woman, and can loosen the hardest knot I'll tie, with a word of her mouth. There, now—stay—just another knot—musha, she has no patience at all, boys ! but may-be she wants Henderson to do the business ; we all know he's an old friend of her's !” This drew forth another volley of curses from Elspeth, and a fresh burst of laughter from the soldiers of O'Neill, amid which admixture of sounds the latter quitted the hall, honest Teague making a low bow to Elspeth, as he went, and saying, “Which of us is the greatest fool now—thou or I ?” So saying, he hastened after his companions, and in a few

minutes the whole long line of cavalry was in motion, and passed the gates without opposition, the earl, who was one of the last, taking a courteous leave of some officers, who stood near, in a group, marvelling much, no doubt, at the gallant show made by these wild Irish clansmen.

And thus did O'Neill bear off in triumph the fairest lady in Ulster, as it was fitting he should. As they journeyed along on their homeward track, Arabella gave her husband a full detail of the rise and progress of O'Reilly's unsuccessful wooing, and remarked that her brother must have had some suspicions from the first touching her sentiments of him whom he ever considered as his enemy. "For," said she, "I can now understand that considerable pains must have been taken to keep me ignorant of the lady Judith's death." In this opinion, good Mistress Eleanor coincided, having, as she said, been present on various occasions when Sir Henry had spoken of the earl's wife as still living, though he must have been well aware of her death.

One thought alone threw a gloom over Arabella's mind, and that was the remembrance of O'Reilly's menace. In vain did the earl combat this apprehension ; for, as the little she did know of Miles was any thing but creditable to his character, so she could not be persuaded but he would put his threat into execution. Yet, ere half the journey to Dungannon was made, she had so far suppressed all visible signs of uneasiness that none of the party seemed gayer than she.

For many days there was a joyous festival in and around the baronial dwelling of the O'Neill. The halls were thrown open and a cheerful welcome given to all comers,—to the poor and the rich, the humble clansman no less than his stately lord. The harpers of Tyr-owen made the clairséach vocal with the sounds of joy, and the heart of the English bride was moved to a brighter, more sparkling sense of happiness, while, leaning on the arm of her noble husband, she drank in the glad, triumphant melody. And when, changing their measure and their theme, the bards launched out into the praises of the

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princely line of O'Neill, and sang the ancient glories of the race, she felt as though she, too, should have been born of the house of Niall; and then came home to her throbbing heart the full extent of the dignity to which she had been so lately raised. "I have been wont," said she, in an undertone, to the earl, "to look back with pride to the chivalrous feats of my knightly ancestors; but what is the noblest of them all to this Niall of the Nine Hostages, and that other Con of the Hundred Battles, of whom these inspired minstrels sing so gloriously?"

"Nay, my Arabella," returned Tyrone, in the same suppressed tones, "I will not have thee view the matter thus; thy forefathers, though neither kings nor princes, may have been good men and true,—loyal gentlemen and good Christians,—and, as such, in no way less honorable to their descendants than those to whom fortune gave crowns and golden collars."

"And yet," observed the countess with a smile, (it was a melancholy smile too,) "and yet how little cause hast thou above all men

to judge favorably of our race, since its present representative hath ever acted towards thee so base a part."

Just as she spoke a young man of singularly engaging aspect, separating himself from a group of chiefs who stood around an aged harper, advanced towards the earl and countess where they stood, and Tyrone, in reply to his wife's remark, said in a playful tone:

"No more strictures, an' thou lovest me, on men of Norman blood, for here comes, as though to shame thee, one of the truest-hearted and most patriotic of Ireland's sons, although of unmixed Norman lineage." And well might Tyrone say so, for it was Richard Tyrrell who now approached—the same who upheld the national standard when even the bravest and noblest of the native chiefs shrank despairingly from farther resistance; and who, on many a bloody field, in after times, displayed a heroic devotedness rarely surpassed. Oh! could O'Neill have looked forward some years into the future—could he have seen in perspective

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the brilliant victory of Tyrrell's Pass, and the unconquerable love of freedom which nerved the arm of the youthful hero, how doubly kind would have been the greeting with which he met that young Norman of the Pale. There was, as I have said, something uncommonly prepossessing in Tyrrell's countenance, yet it was not that the features taken individually could be called handsome, but rather because of the high and even noble expression stamped on all, collectively. His eyes were of the darkest blue, but, when animated by any very strong emotion, they sparkled as black eyes only do, so that their hue might be said to vary with the transitions of the mind. His black hair was divided in the middle of the head, and hung down on either side, after the manner of the native Irish, and, indeed, the whole air and bearing, not less than the dress of the young man, was that of a Celtic chief, proud of his country and lineage. Like the Geraldines of the old time, Richard Tyrrell was "more than Irish" in thought, in feeling, and in sympathy, albeit, that his

face was stamped with the strong, bold lines of his Norman ancestry.

"In faith, sweet lady," he said, on coming near, "I should crave thy pardon, as the fair embodiment of English blood, for I have been listening to the old-world strains of yonder bard, till I had well nigh forgotten that I, at least, had no part in the glories of which he sings."

"Nay, good master Tyrrell," returned Arabella, with a gracious smile, "I cannot censure the fault, if it be one, for I have just confessed to my lord here, that I, too, have been well nigh charmed by these thrilling sounds, into a thoroughly Irish state of feeling."

The conversation now turned on O'Reilly, and Tyrrell, to whom all shifting and prevarication was unknown, could only see in his conduct the struggles of a naturally noble nature, with the prejudices and artificial feelings derived from his foreign training. Arabella shook her head, but said nothing, for, having, as she believed, sufficient cause to suspect O'Reilly, she would not

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express her opinion. But Tyrone could not for a moment believe him capable of actual perfidy, and freely gave it as his conviction that though Miles might stand aloof from the national party, when the grand struggle came, still he would never stoop to turn informer—"No—no," said he—"volatile and somewhat inconstant, he may be—ay, and passionate in love or hate, but a traitor—a voluntary, wilful traitor—oh no! I can never believe it."

A new subject was then started on the approach of old Tirlogh Lynnoch O'Neill, who had come from his far-off home to honor the nuptials of his cousin, generously forgetting on so joyous an occasion that he had superseded him in his high office. The fact was, that Tyrone, in prosecution of his grand design, had spared no pains to conciliate the chieftains far and near; and Tirlogh Lynnoch was not hard to propitiate, being of an exceedingly placable disposition. Indeed this virtue he carried to excess, as was afterwards seen by the influence acquired over him by some Englishmen whom he was persuaded, like O'Donnell, to receive.

The wedding festivities were all at an end, and the numerous guests had departed, with the single exception of Tyrrell, when one day the earl entered with an open letter in his hand, saying aloud as he crossed the threshold :

“Here now, Arabella, Tyrrell and all who were disposed to fear that O'Reilly might turn informer,—listen whilst I read !” He was instantly surrounded by a group of eager auditors, even Father McNamara, (who chanced to be present) coming forward with the rest.

“O’Reilly said the letter, “thou art neither to consider this epistle as a mark of forgiveness, nor yet the outpouring of wrath. Through thee have I lost what alone would have made life a blessing, and that life shall be devoted to oppose thy views. I care not though my conduct be condemned by thy party ; with them I have never leagued save for one hour, and the bond then formed was quickly cancelled. Thou hast won Arabella Bagnal—keep her, but so shall I keep my faith with Elizabeth of England, to whom my earliest vows of allegiance were given.

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Ireland and her people are now little or nought to me—England and the English *all*, for their strength will shortly be arrayed against thee and thine—against thee whom I have learned to hate; and thy foes must be my friends. Yet think not, fear not, that Miles O'Reilly will ever betray his knowledge of thy persevering efforts to organize the people; to avail himself of that knowledge were treachery, foul, mean treachery, which must never be linked with his ancient name. Say, then, to her who is now thy wife, that my words at parting were but an idle threat, spoken in the excruciating anguish of the moment, but never to be acted upon. I would not that *she* should look upon me as a traitor, despised and rejected though I be." This was the sum and substance of the letter, and it caused an entire revulsion in the feelings of all present with the exception of the earl, who, although both pained and gratified by its contents, still read them without surprise, for this was exactly what he had expected from his knowledge of O'Reilly's character.

“So we are still to have him for a foe,” was Tyrrell’s exclamation; while Arabella said, with a musing air, “Who ever heard of so strange, so inconsistent a character, and yet he is far from being so bad as I, in my uncharitableness, had believed him.”

“Nor is his character so inconsistent, my sweet wife,” said Tyrone, with a smile, “it is only that his passions are too strong for either his reason or his patriotism to withstand; and thou, above all, should never speak hardly of his desertion, since we are to attribute it, as he himself doth, to his loss of the dainty morsel on which his heart was set.”

It might have been some six or eight weeks after this, that a stranger, of noble bearing, arrived, in the dusk of evening, at the castle of Dungannon, and asked to see the Prince of Ulster. The title, though O’Neill’s hereditary distinction, was seldom applied to him by the neighboring chieftains, and never by the English. It was, therefore, with some curiosity that he advanced to meet his visitor.

“Have I the honor of seeing his highness,

the Prince of Ulster?" inquired the stranger, speaking English with considerable difficulty.

The earl's reply was in the Spanish tongue, for the thought at once struck him that the noble-looking stranger was of that nation. He was, and the bearer of a special communication from King Philip to the Earl of Tyrone, written with his own royal hand, urging him to speed onward in his operations, and assuring him of speedy succor, such as a king might send. "We have long watched with interest," wrote the monarch, "the struggles of thy nation, to preserve our common faith, but we have hoped in vain for a leader to appear amongst ye, having those powers and abilities which might ensure success, and give a certain and fixed character to the national movement—but now we are rejoiced to recognise in the princely O'Neill many, very many of those qualities which mark out the agent of a great design; in thee, noble prince, whom we willingly hail as the offspring of a kindred line; in thee, then, do we acknowledge the true and rightful captain of the Irish nation, and we

pray God that thou mayest be a second Moses, destined to lead that faithful and long-enduring people from the iron bondage of the heretic. In proof of our intention to aid thee, both with men and money, we do, hereby, empower our trusty servant, Don Antonio Marisco, to give thee a full statement of the force now in preparation for the Irish service.

Given at Madrid,

Under the royal signet of Spain."

It may be well supposed that this embassy gave to O'Neill renewed hope and spirit, especially when he learned from Don Antonio the amount of succor which he might reasonably expect. As the Spaniard had travelled, unattended, from the nearest seaport, fearing to excite observation, so Tyrone was enabled to keep him at Dungannon, unnoticed, for some weeks, during which time they had ample opportunity to treat of the all important question which formed the business of the Spaniard's mission. At his departure, he was escorted by a troop of cavalry to Derry, and was charged with a

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letter of acknowledgment from O'Neill to his Most Catholic Majesty, in which he assured him that he would take no decisive step till the promised reinforcement should arrive.

CHAPTER VII.

"Yet not revenge nor hatred fired his breast,
But patriot zeal, and firmest sense of right,
And pity for his people, long oppress'd."

* * * * *

"Awake! arise! what, ho! 'tis Desmond calls;
Sound the loud trumpet down the echoing vale!
See, fluttering from high, Shanid's towering walls—
Our ancient banner meets the western gale."
That well known cry, prolong'd from dale to dale,
Roused answering wood, and shore, and peopled hill;
"Desmond is come again." The rapturous tale
Woke in each listener's heart the welcome thrill
Of ecstasy returned, and old devoted zeal.

GERALD GRIFFIN'S "SHANID CASTLE."

But this specious promise of Spanish aid was soon after followed by intelligence of a different kind,—intelligence which made O'Neill's heart bound with joyous expectation. It was late one winter's evening when a messenger arrived from Feach MacHugh O'Byrne, of Wicklow, announcing that the

young lord of Tyreconnell had at length succeeded in effecting his escape from prison, and was then his guest, together with one of his companions in captivity, the other two having perished at different times, when escape had been unsuccessfully attempted. Now this Wicklow chieftain had long been in secret communication with Tyrone, and, being privy to his longing desire for O'Donnell's release, he sent to him the intelligence rather than to Donegal. This was, indeed joy for O'Neill, who speedily despatched a trusty follower of his own, who was well acquainted with the country, to conduct the noble youths to Dungannon. It was indeed none other than our friend Teague O'Hagan, who had the honor to be chosen for this mission of so great a trust; and when he said farewell to his comrades, Henderson took occasion to whisper in his ear, "Beware of meeting witches or banshees on the way, worthy Teague, or, I trow, it may go hard with thee! no telling of fortunes, good friend!" To which friendly warning honest Teague replied by a significant "nod and

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wink, and wreath'd smile," all perfect in their kind, and expressive of that modern cant phrase "I'm up to trap."

So, being well provided with griddle cakes, and sundry other provisions against the attack of hunger, Teague set forth on his journey, crossing himself devoutly as he passed the threshold, for such was the uniform practice in O'Neill's country, where the cross-despising doctrines of the Reformation had obtained as yet no footing. And Teague sped well on his errand, for in a wondrously short period he appeared again at his chieftain's door, a proud and a happy man, for he had with him the long-lost son of O'Donnell; and when he marched into the presence of his lord, he said, with a triumphant air, pointing to the young chieftain, who, crippled in all his limbs, slowly advanced up the hall, "There now, my lord, there he is, and if I hav'nt the other young chief with me it's because he staid behind on a visit."

"So here I am, O'Neill!" said O'Donnell, with a forced smile, after he had returned the cordial embrace of the earl, "but I must e'en sit down, for the iron chain of the Sas-

senach hath sunk deep into my flesh, and the frost hath finished the work, so I come back to the north a cripple, a boccach, Hugh!" and he laughed a fierce, wild laugh.

O'Neill could scarcely articulate a word, and his eyes filled with tears as he ran over the strangely-altered lineaments of his young friend, and read in his pale, haggard countenance the sufferings of so many years. And then to see his young limbs—erst so lithe and supple, now maimed and cramped by the heavy chain which had weighed so long on every member—oh, it was too much, and he could only press his outstretched hand, in silence. "Well, there will come a day of retribution!" cried O'Donnell, with all the energy of his disposition unsubdued, it would appear, but rather increased, by his weary captivity. "Time rolled over my head, even in their clammy dungeon, and the boy hath grown to be a man. Ay, a man," he repeated, emphatically, "ready to do and dare anything and everything, in justice, that may tend to break this hated yoke under which the land and the people groan!"

"Ever the same, Hugh!" cried Cormac

O'Neill, who, having heard of O'Donnell's arrival entered at the moment. "The four years passed in prison have not, then, chilled that ardent enthusiasm which gave so fair a promise in thy boyish days?"

"Nay, Cormac," said Hugh, when he had received and acknowledged O'Neill's congratulation, "nay, Cormac, it were strange if they had. Hatred of the Saxon and his odious tyranny was the passion of my boyhood, how then could the feeling be lessened or damped by what hath since occurred? No, by the blessed saints I swear," and he raised his enfeebled arm on high, while a hectic fire, the glow of intense feeling, burned on his thin, hollow cheek, "that the years which God may have appointed for my existence, shall be devoted, wholly, solely devoted, to the liberation of this down-trodden land, and the expulsion of the usurping and persecuting English. Hugh O'Neill,—Cormac, I know not what may be your view of these matters, but for me, I proclaim without fear or reserve, that this shall be the great business of my life."

The earl grasped his hand as he concluded, while a smile of unmixed triumph gilded his noble features. "This is what I expected, Hugh O'Donnell; the hopes which I have staked on thy return, are more than realized, and Tyrconnell will, at length, shake off the lethargy which hath so long benumbed its powers of action. This night will I initiate thee, my gallant young friend, into the projects which I have been for years endeavoring to mature, and in which thou art, I feel it, determined to bear so prominent a part. Now I would fain make thee acquainted with my wife. O'Byrne, has, I suppose, informed thee of poor Judith's death, and my recent marriage with the lady Arabella Bagnal?"

O'Donnell replied in the affirmative, and expressed his desire to be introduced to the countess, of whose rare perfections he had heard so much. As they went, the earl supporting him by the arm, while Cormac walked on the opposite side, O'Donnell breathed a pious prayer for the soul of his departed sister, adding, immediately, "Judith

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had her virtues, but she was too much of my poor father's disposition and cast of mind to awaken or maintain in a heart like thine that love which brightens the married life." Just then they entered the room where Arabella was seated, between her two step-children, conversing with Father McNamara, and all painful remembrances were speedily drowned in the general gush of joy which followed. Arabella was well acquainted with the history of O'Donnell's capture, neither was she altogether ignorant of the importance her lord attached to this young man's liberation, and hers were just the heart and mind to take a deep interest in such wrongs as his, no matter by whom inflicted—nothing could, then, exceed the friendly warmth of her reception. The priest, too, was rejoiced to see the noble youth again at liberty, of whose early promise he had heard so much. "For," said he to O'Donnell, "heresy hath begun to raise its head in the dominions of thy house—the Reformation (as it is called) hath wrought its way into Tyrconnell; and the learned

Monks of that great Abbey which thy pious ancestors founded and richly endowed, have been driven forth by armed soldiery, who now hold their place. Well know I that these things would not be, wert thou still there; and my heart doth whisper that thy auspicious return will set all right again."

"Ay, father," said the young chieftain, speaking through his shut teeth, while his eyes shot forth the indignation of his soul—"Ay, trust me, their Reformation is at an end in Donegal—they shall go head foremost out of the Abbey ere many days are past, or my name is not O'Donnell. Ha! let me have but a whisper with the men of Tyrconnell—let me have but a hundred of them, and, though these sacrilegious Saxons numbered six times as many, I'll teach them to meddle with the consecrated homes of piety—that will I!" and in the burning desire which he felt to wipe out the foul stain inflicted in his absence on his ancestral domains, he so far forgot his crippled condition as to walk several paces across the room. But very soon the remembrance was forced

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upon him, and sinking on a seat he shook his head with a mournful smile, as though he had said—"The time is not yet come."

While he remained at Dungannon, awaiting a perfect recovery of the use of his limbs, he received from the earl a detailed account of all those public events which had marked the period of his absence. Of these, the fate of the Monaghan chief most deeply affected the listener, and he could scarcely hear it told with patience, vowing that he could never have stood tamely by while so foul a deed was perpetrated. But when O'Neill, in the course of his narrative, alluded, although casually, to the erection of the neighboring fortress, by the English, O'Donnell started to his feet, and glared fiercely on the earl! "And didst thou permit them, thou, Hugh O'Neill, to plant their English cannon on the Blackwater? By all my hopes, but thou wilt be well served when they are turned against thyself, and mow down, in scores, thy chosen warriors! It was tolerated, I suppose, with good intent; but I understand not this matter of policy, and would sooner cut

off my right arm than consent to such an encroachment!" So chafed was his fiery spirit, by what he looked on as O'Neill's fatal error of judgment, that the latter had extreme difficulty in convincing him that, at the time, it would have been in the highest degree unsafe to oppose the design of Elizabeth. "And," said he, by way of deprecating this storm of anger, "there will be no very great difficulty in taking it from them, which, with God's help, I propose to do, as the first step towards freedom!" This assurance was the very best apology O'Neill could offer, and it quickly brought O'Donnell back to good humor.

Ere yet the young chieftain bade adieu to Dungannon, he strenuously urged his host to make an immediate attack on Portmore. "I know," said he, "that such a step would break the ice, and call forth the torrent of Elizabeth's wrath; but let her do her worst; before her troops can reach here in force from any point, thou shalt have the men of Tyrconnell here in such numbers, that together we can sweep the province. Put it

off no longer, Hugh, for the sooner it comes the better!"

In order to excuse himself from taking what he considered so rash a step, O'Neill mentioned his hopes from Spain, and rested particularly on the promise he had voluntarily made to Philip, of resting on his oars while awaiting the promised aid. Even this scarcely satisfied the impetuous O'Donnell, who was of opinion that foreign succor would never be given till some success had been actually obtained; but the promise must not be lightly broken, so he was forced to acquiesce in the policy of O'Neill.

In a day or two after, he set out for Donegal, being now almost entirely recruited in health and strength. He was escorted by a troop of the cavalry of Tyr-owen; but being desirous to pay a passing visit to Maguire of Fermanagh, (an old friend of his family) that chieftain sent back the escort with a courteous intimation, that he would send O'Donnell home with an attendance becoming his rank. And so he did; for he manned a handsome boat with a gaily attired

crew, and thus conveyed his honored guest over the broad bosom of Lough Erne, and down the rapid Shannon, till he landed him at Ballyshannon, one of the principal towns of Tyrconnell.

But few days had passed after the departure of Hugh Roe, when O'Neill received the surprising intelligence that he had already driven the English, some hundred strong, from the Abbey of Donegal; compelled them to leave behind the treasures of which they had possessed themselves, and reinstated the monks in their ancient dwelling. This news was speedily confirmed from under his own hand, for he wrote to O'Neill a few hasty lines, descriptive of his reception in Tyrconnell, and above all, of the expulsion of the Sassenach. "Tell Father McNamara," said he, "that I have redeemed my promise; and even now doth the sacred hymn float again over the waters of the bay, from the stately walls of its abbey, where so lately the ribald song, and the blasphemous oath was only heard. We have hunted the sacrilegious intruders like

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a band of wolves,—ay, marry, but not like wolves did they resist; for no sooner did I appear before the abbey, (with a few hundreds of men hastily gathered together) and send them a civil message that I gave them twenty-four hours to clear off not only from the abbey, but from Tyrconnell itself, than they very submissively obeyed. Nor did they take a single article of value belonging to the abbey; for I had sent them word to leave all as they found it, if they did not wish to have their ears cropped, or some such ceremony performed, and they chose to take the hint. Now, when I, a young and inexperienced man, can effect such a thing at once, what, I ask, could not the O'Neill do? In God's name, then, hoist thy standard,—call together the men of Tyr-owen, and let them see the might that abides in the RED RIGHT HAND. Wait no more for aid which may never come, but follow my example, and pounce at once on that black-looking Portmore, whose very name I cannot endure. Do so, and God will bless the work—strike for faith and freedom."

In an additional line (which we would now call a postscript) he said that his friend Maguire was preparing with all speed to attack the English of Connaught, who, scattered as they were, in parties here and there, were continually crossing his frontier line, and committing all sorts of depredations, to the great detriment of his people.

“So,” thought O’Neill, “events are thickening, whether it be for good or evil. The arrival of O’Donnell hath set fire to the train, so long and carefully laid.”

It was natural to expect that Tyrone would at once have thrown his powerful influence into the scale, and that he who had so long looked for the rising of Tyrconnell, would now be ready to coöperate with its energetic young chief. Such, at least, were O’Donnell’s expectations, and it is not easy to imagine his astonishment, his indignation, when O’Neill, on being commanded to assist Bagnal against Maguire, moved forward with a body of cavalry, and formed a junction with the English forces on the north-eastern side of Maguire’s territory. The

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English and Irish armies met, and the latter would have been victorious, had not O'Neill himself, being taunted by Bagnal, led his troop across the intervening stream, and charged the Fermanagh infantry with so much force, that they were driven into disorder, and Maguire was forced to retreat. In this encounter, the earl was severely wounded in the thigh, and for many days was obliged to keep his bed from the weakness attending his great loss of blood. Yet this wound was welcomed by him, for it gave him a pretext to remain at home, which at that juncture he would not otherwise have done. On the night following the defeat of Maguire's troops, (with whom were a small number of the clansmen of Tyrconnell) O'Neill, hearing that Hugh O'Donnell had arrived in the Irish camp, sent his foster-brother Phelim across the river, with a letter to the young chieftain, in which he entreated his pardon, and that of Maguire, for his apparently unaccountable conduct. He explained at some length, that he could not have done otherwise than he did, because

he had been disappointed in a large supply of ammunition, which he had ordered and expected from France. "Thou mayest also have observed," said he, "that I only brought to the English camp a small body of men; and as to my personal share in the encounter, I could not avoid making that charge, unless I instantly threw off the mask, having been maliciously twitted by Bagnal with having a good understanding with the enemy. What I have now to say is, that thou and Maguire must draw back into his country, affecting to continue the retreat, which conduct will materially farther my views. Doubt me not, Hugh O'Donnell, and tell Cuconnacht Maguire that he will soon have substantial proof of my real intentions. Doubt me not, then; but for the sake of God, our Church, and our country, do as I say!" Notwithstanding the anger that both felt for Tyrone's unexpected junction with the English, yet O'Donnell persuaded his friend to adopt the advice so solemnly given, "For," said he, "I have no doubt that his motives and intentions are good,—

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nor can his prudence be called in question,— it is his crooked and inextricable policy that I object to, and the scandal of these manœuvres of his, doth gall my very soul. He is wise, however; so let us, for this time, take his advice, and see what will follow, keeping ourselves ever on our guard against surprise.” So they fell back into the heart of Fermanagh. The consequence was, that the English speedily took possession of Enniskillen, Maguire’s chief stronghold, which from having the entire command of Lough Erne, was indeed one of the most important places in Ulster. This was a grievous blow to O’Donnell, who could ill brook seeing the capital of Maguire’s country in the hands of the enemy; and as he had been recently invested with the chief authority in Tyrconnell, (his father having resigned in his favor) he lost no time in calling out his clan, whom he led at once to the shores of Lough Erne, and blockaded Enniskillen on the land side, so as to cut off all communication with the English posts. Yet the combined forces of Fermanagh and Tyrconnell, numerous

and efficient as they were, made but slow progress in besieging so strong a fortress, and the summer months passed away while they lay before it. The two chieftains placed their main hope on the provisions of the garrison becoming exhausted; and there was every probability that famine would soon do what they had not military science enough to accomplish, when intelligence arrived that a powerful army was about to march from Dublin and Connaught for the relief of Enniskillen, commanded, too, by two of the most experienced and able generals in the Anglo-Irish army. Consternation and alarm spread throughout the Irish ranks; and even the chieftains became fearfully anxious, when news was brought to Hugh O'Donnell, that some Scottish auxiliaries, for whom he had negotiated had reached the Foyle, whereupon he set out with all speed for Derry to receive and conduct them to the camp, where their presence was so much needed.

But, alas, O'Donnell was scarcely gone when Maguire learned that the English were

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rapidly advancing on Enniskillen, and his brave heart sank within him as he contemplated the necessity of giving up the siege. What chance had he with only a few thousand half-disciplined troops, to meet and resist the attack of two numerous armies of tried and well-trained soldiers, coming on him from different quarters, and led on by two commanders of known ability. Another day passed away in this fearful state of suspense, Maguire looking anxiously northward for the appearance of O'Donnell and the Scots, and unwilling to raise the siege while even a chance remained. But vain his expectations; nor spear, nor banner, was seen on the northern horizon, and, with a heavy sigh, he was turning into his tent, to give orders for raising the seige, when, hark! what martial music burst upon his ear, it is, it surely is, the ancient march of the O'Neills, and anon from the far north-east came a gallant show of cavalry, arrayed in the Irish costume. "They are, they must be from Dungan- non!" cried Maguire, addressing some of his officers, "but have we any reason to hope

that they come otherwise than as foes? Good God! if it be so, how are we to act, with the English army, perhaps, within a few miles distance?" And, in his grievous uncertainty, he walked out alone to meet the approaching column, determined to know the worst at once. Great, then, was his surprise, and greater still his exultation, when he was accosted, in cordial accents, by Cormac O'Neill, who, guessing at the tenor of his thoughts, hastened to inform him that he was sent by his brother with this body of cavalry, (consisting of four hundred of the chosen men of Tyr-owen,) to the assistance of the besieging army. A proud and a happy man was Cuconnacht Máguire that day, when he conducted O'Neill and the other officers from Tyrone to his tent; and a deafening cheer rent the air when the soldiers of O'Neill mingled with the Clan-connal and the men of Fermanagh, as brethren in arms.

There was, however, but little time for congratulations or idle compliments, for the English were known to be almost in sight;

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and Maguire, having taken counsel of O'Neill, resolved to move from his present position and advance to meet them, when he might choose his ground, and still keep between them and Enniskillen. The Irish army, therefore, took up its station on the banks of the river, at a ford not far from the town, and had scarcely time to form in good order when the united English force appeared on the opposite side. Steering right onward for Enniskillen, the English generals would have forced a passage, but this they found impracticable, owing to the determined and unflinching stand made by the Irish. During all the long hours of the summer day was this fierce warfare kept up—the English, with desperate resolution, charging and recharging, one battallion relieving the other; while the Irish, with courage that never wavered, maintained their ground, and beat back, time after time, the advancing columns of the enemy. At length, the English troops were seen to waver in coming to the charge, and instantly the Irish, crossing the river, fell upon them with such

overwhelming fury that they fled in every direction, leaving behind, at the close of day, baggage, ammunition and all. Amongst the rest they were compelled to abandon the plenteous supplies intended for the relief of the garrison; and, from the prodigious quantity of biscuits found in the spoils, the scene of battle was called henceforward the Ford of Biscuits.

When O'Donnell arrived, next day, with his Scottish allies, and found how matters had gone, his gratitude to O'Neill knew no bounds, seeing that but for his timely aid Enniskillen would have been, perhaps, irretrievably lost, and a powerful English army, flushed with victory, careering over the province.

"I knew we might depend on his wisdom," said Hugh to Maguire and Cormac O'Neill, "and now I will answer for his truth; so, Cormac, greet the earl from me, and say that I will go myself, to tell him so, in a day or two at farthest."

Being unavoidably detained for some days, at the Castle of Donegal, by the duty of hos-

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pitality towards the Scottish chiefs, the young O'Donnell was surprised by the arrival of a government courier from the new Deputy, Russell; and as this embassy was attended with all formality, being escorted by at least a score of horsemen, there was reason to believe it of importance. Hugh Roe was, at the moment, engaged in exhibiting some venerable armorial remains, to the two Scots, in that identical room, or rather hall, of his ancient castle, which, even in our day, is famous for its magnificent proportions, as well as the rich and curious mantel-piece which adorns its lofty fire-place.

"A messenger from Dublin!" said he. "Why, bring him in, then, in God's name, till we hear what he hath got to say."

Instantly the ambassador made his appearance, and was found to be a subaltern dragoon officer. On being introduced alone, this personage ventured to say, in a hesitating tone, "Might not those who came with me be also admitted, at least to the hall?"

"Sir Englishman!" said O'Donnell, in his imperfect English, and he spoke with stern

emphasis, "Sir Englishman! I am O'Donnell; these fears are, then, an insult. Speak the purpose of thy visit—we listen."

"Noble O'Donnell!" said the young officer, awed by the haughty impetuosity of the chieftain's manner, "I came, first of all, to inform thee that the late Deputy Fitzwilliam hath been recalled, and hath been replaced by Sir William Russell."

"And, holy St. Patrick! what is all this to me?" cried O'Donnell, angrily, "what have I to do with one English Deputy more than another; is this meant as a mockery? if so, I will spoil the sport ere it be long!"

"Nay, most noble chief," put in the Englishman, more and more disconcerted, "I have been sent hither by the lord Deputy, at the queen's special request, to offer thee a free pardon for all the past, on condition that thou wilt give up all future correspondence with the Earl of Tyrone, who is considered a most dangerous and designing man—"
 He was going on, when O'Donnell cut him short, by turning abruptly to McLeod, of Ara, who stood at a little distance. "Hear-

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est thou that, Dugald McLeod?" he cried, in a tone of strong excitement, "is not that a modest proposal?" The Scot only answered by a smile, guessing in part what was to follow.

"Come hither, Feargus McSweeney," said O'Donnell, opening a side door, "and bring with thee a score or so of good mounted spearmen. Now," he exclaimed, turning, at length, to the wondering messenger,— "now, friend, as thou seemest to be a good, quiet sort of man, I will give thee a friendly warning, never come to Donegal with such a message again, or, by the oak of Kildare, it shall go hard with thee. For this time I forgive thee; but, mark my words,—and let the man thou callest the deputy mark them, too,—I will crop off the ears of the first who bringeth hither another offer of pardon. O'Donnell neither sues for their pardon nor their friendship; the offer of either he deems an insult. Off, and remember what I have said."

"All ready!" cried Feargus, at the door.

"Then mount your horses quickly, and

leave these Sassenachs at the frontier; take not your eyes off them till they are on the soil of Connaught. The earth here hath begun to loathe such burdens, and will none of them." The Englishman slunk out of the room, glad to escape on any terms.

In two hours after, Hugh Roe was on his way to Dungannon, accompanied by McLeod and McDonald, whom he wished to introduce to O'Neill. On reaching the door, the impetuous youth threw himself off his charger, and was in an instant grasping the earl's hand with all the warmth of his character.

"What dost think I have to tell thee, Hugh?" he laughingly said, when Tyrone had kindly welcomed the Scots. "Wilt thou believe that the deputy, (it seems there is a new one,) hath sent to offer me a pardon?"

"A pardon!" cried Tyrone, in real amazement—"is it to thee they have proposed a pardon?"

"Ay, marry!" returned O'Donnell, with a fierce smile, "they would seem to forget how great wrongs I have individually suf-

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ferred at their hands, and impudently set me down as a guilty man. By the holy wand! it is too much; but, forsooth, they even set a price on their forgiveness; I was to have forsworn all future communication with a certain chieftain, who hath, it seems, grievously disappointed them in their speculations, and is, therefore, as they say, a dangerous person."

"And thou needst not tell me who that is, friend Hugh," replied O'Neill, "for it is but this morning I have received a summons from this new Deputy, Russell, to repair to Dublin, to answer, it would seem, some recent charges. I have also had a friendly warning from my old companion-in-arms, Ormond, intimating that Russell hath come over with positive instructions to proceed against 'that traitor, O'Neill.' To-morrow I purpose, with the divine permission, to set out for Dublin."

"Nay, surely, O'Neill," said O'Donnell, earnestly, "thou will not thrust thyself into their power, now that their suspicions are too deeply fixed to be removed. Why,

Hugh, thou canst not have forgotten the recorded fate of the Southern Earl who was so imprudent as to go to London to justify himself; and then think of poor Brian O'Rourke, who hath, in our own day, been executed in that accursed city. Nay, if there, I implore thee; cast all fear of them to the winds; unfurl thy banner to the breezes of the north, and let us commit our cause to the last great ordeal."

"And that we must speedily do, my gallant friend," returned O'Neill, with grave solemnity—"seest thou not that they have now a chain of forts right across the island, over-looking the north—at least their chain would have been completed had we suffered them to retain Enniskillen. And, that is true, while I think of it, let me ask—hath Maguire taken possession of the fortress?"

"Even so, he hath. Thanks to thy well-timed succor, Enniskillen—the key of Lough Erne—is again our own."

"It is well; now let me proceed, if I go, now, to Dublin (for I mean not to venture farther) it is to gain even a few days,

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for I have had still another dispatch from Madrid, announcing that a portion of the promised reinforcements will be here in a week or two at farthest. My visit will probably end in a total break with the government, so that preparations must speed on here in the north with lightning rapidity." Then turning to the Scottish chiefs, he said, in a cheerful tone, and with that insinuating grace which none could so well command— "Long hath this warfare been carried on between the Celts and Saxons, and the Gael of the Islands and Highlands are our born allies in the contest. My young friend, O'Donnell, hath been fortunate in so early enlisting on our side auxiliaries so valuable, and I well hope that the God who overruleth the battle as well as the peaceful hour, will give victory to our arms; for, assuredly, we fight for our holy faith, still more than for our oppressed country."

On the following morning, after having heard mass in the castle-chapel, the chiefs set out in opposite directions,—the one on his perilous visit to Dublin, while the other,

with his friends, returned to Donegal. In taking this step, O'Neill acted in direct opposition to the wishes of all who loved him most, Arabella and Father McNamara included, but, having set it down in his own mind as actually necessary, he would not be dissuaded from the journey. His attendants, though not numerous, were richly equipped, and wore, like himself, the national dress. For himself, though scrupulously attired, after the fashion of an Irish chief, he took good care to wear, beneath his close-fitting jacket and short cloak, a light, but firm coat of highly-tempered steel, and on his head was a small steel morion, from which floated a plume of white feathers tinted with green.

On arriving in Dublin, he learned that the council was then sitting, and to the council-chamber he at once repaired, being desirous to leave Dublin as soon as might be. The way was not unknown to him; for, in other days, when Perrot held the reins of government, he had often taken his place at the council-board, an honored member as any who sat there. So, merely pausing at the

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door, to have his name announced, he walked alone into the room, not stopped till he had reached the bottom of the long table—at one end of which the deputy was seated, on an elevated seat. Holding his steel cap in his hand, O'Neill bowed first to the deputy, and then to the council collectively. Several of the most influential members returned his salute, while Ormond, and a few others, came forward and shook him by the hand. The deputy looked on in silence, his sharp features expressive only of unqualified surprise that any of the nobles present should show such favor to an Irish rebel, as in his heart he considered O'Neill. Waiting, however, till order and quiet were restored, and the members again in their seats, he addressed the earl, without, however, requesting him to be seated.

“My lord of Tyrone, thou hast done well to answer the summons, as otherwise we should have been compelled to insist on having thee appear.”

“And now, that I am here,” said Tyrone drily, “I would know from your lordship why

and wherefore my presence was so peremptorily demanded. Certain vague charges have been brought against me, as I am told. I have come thus far to hear them from the fountain-head !”

“Nay,” said the deputy, involuntarily impressed by the grave dignity of O’Neill’s bearing, and the nobleness of his aspect. “Nay, my lord ! these charges are more serious than thou wouldst seem to think.” Then, from a paper, which he had taken from a portfolio before him, he went on reading—

“Thou, Hugh O’Neill, Earl of Tyrone, standest charged before this honorable body, and the queen’s highness, with having, in the first place, held treasonable communication with certain native chiefs, the known enemies of law and order ; secondly, that thou hast countenanced, and given refuge to popish priests, and neglected every means of discouraging that idolatrous worship within thy domains ; lastly, thou art accused by the marshal, Sir Henry Bagnal, of having forcibly and fraudulently carried off his sister, the lady Arabella Bagnal. These heavy misdemean-

ors are all laid to thy charge ; it is for thee to disprove them."

Not a muscle of Tyrone's face was moved, not a trace of surprise was visible on his countenance, as he replied, with the utmost coolness, keeping up, however, a slight show of deference :

"So please you, most worshipful sir! I will answer the last first, and that I can do in few words. Summon hither, if thou wilt, the Countess of Tyrone, and she will tell thee whether fraud or force was employed in my wooing of her. That charge is so idle, that methinks there are few of your honorable councillors who cannot prove it false, even from public report. It is, therefore, unworthy of being answered by me. To the second count, I reply, that I am myself, (as all the world doth know,) a staunch Catholic, and if the queen doth expect me to join in the hue and cry against the priests of my own church, the ministers of my own worship, I can only say, that her majesty must be grievously deceived by interested persons. The first charge doth appear to me the most

serious of all, and with your lordship's good leave, I will take some hours to consider my answer, as it behoveth me to put it in a satisfactory form, so as to carry conviction to the mind of the gracious queen, Elizabeth. Should my presence be again required, ye all know where I live." And, bowing around to the councillors, he made a formal salute to the deputy, and left the room, being accompanied to the door by Ormond. Russell would fain have ordered him under an immediate arrest, but this the majority of the council opposed; and the fact was, that they finally refused to have the earl arraigned, which refusal shows, beyond all doubt, the mingled fear and love with which O'Neill was even then regarded.

CHAPTER VIII.

"From life without freedom, O! who would not fly?
 For one day of freedom, O! who would not die?
 Hark, hark! 'tis the trumpet — the call of the brave,
 The death-song of tyrants, and dirge of the slave!
 Our country lies bleeding, O fly to her aid,
 One arm that defends is worth hosts that invade!"

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ACTING on Ormond's advice, backed by his own judgment, O'Neill lost no time in quitting Dublin; and well he did so, for it was only a short time after he had passed its gates that orders reached the wardens to stop him. Finding that he had escaped, the deputy, in his late repentance, sent similar instructions to the various posts along the chieftain's road homeward; but each of them in turn came too late; he, with his troop, having, in all cases, ridden through the towns before Russell's messenger arrived. The earl had almost reached Dungannon when he was informed of this narrow escape; and it gave him plainly to understand that he had nothing for it but to raise the standard of revolt, and test the strength of the confederation he had been so long forming. His first step on reaching home was, therefore, to write to each of the chieftains who had joined the league, and in that circular he told them:—"Even I, with all my knowledge of these English, can no longer manage to keep terms with them; and since they seem determined to make Ulster, too,

their own, we are at length called upon to fight for our hearths and homes. In our free valleys, and on our quiet hill-sides we have hitherto been enabled to protect the faith of our fathers!—to its ministers we have afforded an asylum—when everywhere else they were proscribed and hunted down like beasts. Shall we let ourselves be stripped of this glorious privilege? Shall we, too, lie down and let the advancing hoof of the Saxon war-horse trample on our pride as men? Chieftains of Ulster! from ye do I look for an answer! let us forward, in the name of God, our holy church, and our bleeding country! Ere this reaches thee, I shall have taken the first step in advance; be ye, therefore, prepared for what is to follow!”

Great was the joy with which the chiefs received this summons — in their minds, too long delayed. In fact, many of them had long since began to doubt the sincerity of Tyrone; and no great wonder, considering, that within the last few months he had taken sides with the hated English, against an Irish

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chieftain, struggling to maintain his independence, and recover his capital from the grasp of the foe. But they had been again conciliated by O'Neill's well-timed succor, extended to Maguire; and now all were ready, ay, eager to second his views. Even O'Hanlon, who had long been leagued with Bagnal, now threw off the shameful connection, and sent notice to the earl that he was willing to aid him in the approaching struggle.

It was a day of public rejoicing for miles around Dungannon, when the long furled banner of the O'Neills was flung to the breeze, and waved in haughty defiance from the highest point of the castle. John Mitchell, in his spirited *Life of Hugh O'Neill*, has given a striking picture (and in few words) of that most decisive moment. "At length," says he, "the time had come, and Dungannon, with stern joy, beheld unfurled the royal standard of O'Neill, displaying, as it floated proudly on the breeze, that terrible **RED RIGHT HAND** upon its snow-white folds; waving defiance to the Saxon queen, dawn-

ing, like a new Aurora, upon the awakened children of Herámon."

Nor was that warlike banner unfurled in vain, for when once roused to action, and convinced that the time for procrastination and temporizing had passed away, no man was more prompt, more rapid in his movements than Hugh O'Neill. Before the English, then, were aware of his intentions, he appeared before that fortress of theirs which had so long commanded the Blackwater, and with a force which defied all opposition—drove the garrison from their hold almost without resistance, and swept the country before him towards the south, clearing it of all the scattered posts which the English had either by stealth or openly established there. The next great point was to free McMahon's country of that eye-sore which had been for years corroding its fair soil. The English had still possession of Monaghan Castle, which, being a fortress of great strength, gave them a firm hold on the surrounding district. Having been joined, then, by the united forces of Monaghan and

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Fermanagh, O'Neill sat down before the gloomy stronghold, determined to take it, at whatever cost it might require. Nevertheless, from the exceeding strength of the place, and the desperate resolution of the garrison, the task proved tedious in the extreme, and ere yet there was much appearance of success, O'Neill was summoned to Dundalk to meet certain commissioners, charged with negotiations for him and the other chiefs—his allies. Russell had, it appeared, been taken by surprise, notwithstanding that O'Neill, after the taking of Portmore, had written a satirical letter, reminding him that he had promised to send his answer to the charge of holding secret intercourse with the northern chiefs, and begging to know whether this first step after his return to the north, was a satisfactory reply. So the deputy, bitterly reproaching himself for letting the "arch-traitor" slip through his fingers, and not being prepared to put down at once so formidable a rebellion, would fain have recourse to diplomacy; and hence the summons I have mentioned.

But O'Neill had no mind just then for any more "hair-breadth 'scapes," and, therefore, positively declared against setting foot in any of the towns of the Pale. "I will not be summoned," said he, "after this fashion—I owe no allegiance to your queen or laws, and in any further parleying I must be treated as an independent chief. For your earlships—keep them for those who value them, and address me for the future as the O'Neill—the only title I will acknowledge; too long have I lent myself to such idle mummery—it is now at an end."

So the commissioners were fain to come forth from the "walled town," and then the principal chiefs of the north met them on the open plain, in presence of the two armies. In this meeting, O'Neill spoke rather as a conqueror than as one asking or seeking pardon. In the first place, he stipulated that no further attempts should be made to introduce the Reformation into Ulster; "For," said he, with a scornful smile, "we Ulstermen will none of your new-fangled religions, so keep your preachers out of our

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territories, an' ye value their lives; Papists we are, and Papists we will be. And, as for your daily and hourly incroachments on our domains, all this must cease; no more English garrisons are to be kept up in Ulster; but, for the present, we will, except Newry and Carrickfergus. But, as we are resolved to keep out your home-made religion, so, with God's help, we will have none of your laws; neither judges, sheriffs, nor bailiffs are to set foot within the limits of the province, save and except the garrisons aforesaid, where ye may 'hang, draw, and quarter' each other, an' ye are so minded. Having the fate of the McMahan before our eyes, we have a wholesome hatred of judge and jury, such as ye make them. Moreover, I have further to demand that the Marshal, Sir Henry Bagnal, be not suffered to intrude himself on the domains of any one chief of this province, seeing that he doth impudently lay claim to a large portion of the district of Uriel. Furthermore, let said Marshal Bagnal be obliged to pay me a thousand pounds of silver, being his sister's dowry, unjustly

and unlawfully retained by him. I have done; and on no other terms than these will I consent to make peace. My friend, O'Donnell, will now make his proposals."

O'Donnell then stepped forward, and, with contemptuous brevity, put forth precisely the same conditions regarding religion and the evacuation of Ulster by the English, (he scarcely tolerated O'Neill's reservation in favor of Newry and Carrickfergus,) also, that no further countenance or aid should be afforded by the English to a usurper, who, under the style and title of "the Queen's O'Donnell," had latterly given him considerable annoyance. "I will make short work of him, if I catch him," added he, fiercely, "and his Saxon abettors shall fare no better, I warn ye."

Though the commissioners affected to consider some of these conditions as "not unreasonable," yet they proposed such others in return that the chiefs put a sudden stop to the negotiations and returned to the camp. O'Donnell set out with his troops for Connaught, where he swept the land from sea

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to sea, driving the English to take refuge within their strongholds. O'Neill returned to Monaghan, and was grieved to find that, short as his absence had been, it had given an advantage to the enemy, for Bagnal had suddenly appeared before the castle, with a large force, and, having relieved the garrison, succeeded in repulsing the besiegers. On reaching home, he received the information that himself, with the other leading chiefs, were being formally tried in Dublin, a jury having been empanelled for that purpose. "And thank God, Arabella," he said, with a cheerful smile, in answer to his wife's expression of anxiety, "and thank God it is not here they have their jury; so long as their courts and trials are carried on in Dublin they may try us an' welcome, for all we care." Soon after, it was formally announced that the great chieftains of the north, that is to say, "O'Neill, O'Donnell, Maguire, and McMahan, together with O'Rourke, of Breffni O'Rourke," (now Leitrim,) had all been solemnly convicted as traitors. But little cared they for the trial or the condem-

nation ; they neither acknowledged the English law, nor feared its power, and the whole was looked on by them and their people as a good farce.

But the brunt of the struggle was now coming on, and it behoved the earl to prepare for its approach. The English army, commanded by Russell himself, and General Norris, (one of the ablest commanders of the day, on the side of England,) was known to be on its march northwards ; and, notwithstanding a brave stand made by a body of Irish troops, at the Moyry pass, the English generals succeeded in reaching Armagh. As O'Neill had, by no means, a sufficient force to meet this formidable army in an open field, so he adopted the plan of destroying all the surrounding villages within several miles of Dungannon, nay, even his own dwelling he gave up to the flames, (like the people of Moscow, at a later period,) lest it might afford a shelter to the English. His wife and family he sent off to Dungiven Castle, as a place of safety, and then retired with his forces to the shelter of the woods, hoping to

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draw the enemy into the bogs and morasses, with which the country was then so thickly studded. Thence he harassed them in every direction, maintaining a kind of guerilla warfare, bursting out on them when least expected, and making use of every manœuvre to draw them after him into the woody country. But Norris was too wily to fall into the snare; and the entire command soon devolved on him, as Russell found it necessary to return to Dublin, where affairs required his presence. He had, however, so arranged, before his departure, that a strong garrison was left in Armagh, which city he justly considered as of great importance. Left to his own responsibility, Norris turned his eyes towards Monaghan, which had been re-taken, some time before, by O'Neill's brother, and was now in the hands of its lawful chief, MacMahon. As that strong castle formed the next link in the chain of fortresses through the heart of Ulster, (Armagh once secured,) so Norris was determined to make a vigorous effort for its possession. Gathering together, then, all his available

force, he commenced his march towards Monaghan, and as he saw nothing of O'Neill on the way, he was in strong hopes that he might succeed in eluding that chieftain's vigilance. On and on he marched, then, with the very flower of his army, all flushed with the prospect of an easy conquest, and had reached within five miles of the town of Monagan, when, on the opposite side of a narrow streamlet, there running northward, through a series of small hills, he beheld, with no agreeable surprise, the Irish army, drawn up in good order, commanded by the Earl of Tyrone in person. The stream, as I have said, is there very narrow, proceeding solely from a spring up amongst the hills, which, sending its waters across the valley, gives its name to the place, called thus *Cluain-Tiburt* (the lawn of the spring,) since conjoined into Clontibret, by which latter name it is now known. The ground slopes gently from the hills on either side, but somewhat more abruptly on the left bank, which was thus chosen by O'Neill, with his usual good judgment. As the Irish were

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planted right in his path, so Norris, on coming up, at once decided on forcing his way, especially as he felt himself strong enough to make the attempt, with an almost certainty of success. But this was easier said than done, for, however resolved was the English general to gain Monaghan, O'Neill was just as determined that he should not, "Unless," said he, when addressing his army, "unless he walks over our dead bodies, Monaghan must not fall again into their hands!"

This was greeted by a wild cheer from every rank of the army, the very horses of the cavalry prancing and neighing, as though sharing in the impatience of their riders. On, then, came the English infantry, and in gallant style they came across the narrow brook, and sought to break their way throughout the Irish ranks; but firm as rocks stood the men of Ulster, and bravely did they repel charge after charge. Yet the English fought with all but superhuman courage, and not only their general, but his brother, Sir Thomas Norris, was badly

wounded in these useless attempts to break the lines of the Irish infantry. The cavalry on both sides had hitherto stood inactive, but now, when Norris's infantry were fairly exhausted with their vain efforts, his cavalry dashed out in a body, and made a furious rush on the mounted gallow-glasses of O'Neill, who, under his own command, had been awaiting the decisive movement. The leader of the English horse was an Anglo-Saxon of the Pale, named Seagrave, who, as though resolved on deciding the matter by single combat, at once singled out the noble form of the Irish commander, and spurred right against him. O'Neill, on his side, perceiving his object, met him half-way, and a desperate conflict commenced, while both armies, as is generally the case on such occasions, suspended hostilities for a moment, awaiting in breathless suspense, the result of the contest. If the English hoped everything from this *rencontre*, they were, to all appearance, perfectly justified; while the Irish, on the other hand, might well have feared, for this Seagrave was a man of

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almost gigantic proportions, and noted throughout the army for his ponderous strength. O'Neill, as we have earlier said, was only of moderate height, and his form, though singularly well built, and of rather square conformation, was no apparent match for the bulky Saxon. But appearances are often deceitful, and those who knew O'Neill best, fearfully anxious as they were, on his account, had still but little fear for his eventual success, for they knew that his personal strength far exceeded what might be expected from his appearance, while his skill was scarcely to be equalled. At the first onset the lances of the two champions were shivered to atoms on the breastplate of the other, and both recoiled for a moment. But the Saxon almost instantly returned to the charge; and, relying altogether on his vast strength, threw himself with all his force against O'Neill. The latter being somewhat shaken by the force of the shock, grasped his powerful adversary in his arms, and pulled him with him to the ground. Then it was that the armies on either side held

their breath in dread suspense; over and over rolled the combatants; now one, now the other, being uppermost; but suddenly a groan was heard, it was the death-groan of Seagrave; for, in a moment, O'Neill was seen drawing out his short sword, which he had plunged through the Englishman's groin, and extricating himself, with difficulty, from the huge weight of his cumbrous antagonist, he started to his feet, whereupon a cry of mingled rage and dismay burst from the English ranks, answered on the instant by a loud, fierce yell of exultation from the opposite side. Taking advantage of the grievous disappointment, and consequent wavering of the English, the earl jumped upon his horse, rode a step or two back, and waved his hand as a signal. The effect was like magic. "The still thunder-cloud," says Mitchel, "burst into a tempest! those equestrian statues became as winged demons! and with their battle-cry of *Lhav dhearg aboo* (The Red Hand for ever!) and their long lances poised, in eastern fashion, above their heads, down swept the chivalry of Tyr-owen

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upon the astonished ranks of the Saxon. The banner of St. George wavered and went down before that furious charge. The English turned their bridle reins, and fled headlong over the stream, leaving the field covered with their dead; and, worse than all, leaving with the Irish that proud red cross banner, the first of its disgraces in those Ulster wars."

So ended the famous battle of Clontibret, famous as being the first pitched battle which O'Neill had dared to stand, (fearing, ever before, that his army, in its heterogeneous state, could but ill compete with the English, uniform and disciplined as they were,) and its effects were two-fold. In the first place, Norris was so disheartened by this unexpected defeat, that he retreated southwards with all speed, leaving Monaghan (the real *bone of contention*) in the hands of the Irish. A still more important advantage was, that the news of this brilliant victory infused a new spirit into the minds of men from one end of Ulster to the other, calling forth the most unbounded confidence in O'Neill, and

encouraging the timid and the sluggish to come forth and aid in a struggle which promised such glorious results.

The earl had barely time to pay a passing visit to his family at Dungiven, (whence he took with him his son Con., who, under the careful eye of O'Cahan, had grown up into a fine, bold-spirited lad of some sixteen or seventeen,) when he was again summoned to meet the English negotiators at Dundalk. "Ha! ha!" he said, to O'Cahan, with a significant smile, "Clontibret hath renewed their fears; and, having presently no spare forces to recruit Norris, they would engage me in a parley which they know will end in smoke, merely to gain time. Well, Brian, mine old friend, we will e'en humor them, for I, too, will profit considerably by some few weeks, or even days of delay."

"Meanwhile, what am I to do?" inquired O'Cahan, eager to be made useful.

"Take good care of my treasures, Brian," said O'Neill, more seriously, pointing as he spoke to the beloved group, where they stood looking on dejectedly, "and above all,

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make ready the stout men of Arachty, for soon we shall have a grand muster of all our force; Clontibret will not long stand alone, my friend, for these English are at heart thirsting for revenge."

Again, then, O'Neill met Sir Henry Wallop and his brother commissioner, in the neighborhood of Dundalk, taking good care, however, to keep a considerable streamlet between himself and them during the conference. Here it was proposed to him to lay down his arms, and throw himself on the queen's gracious clemency, to which very reasonable request the politic earl listened with the utmost attention, as though it merited the most mature consideration. "Well," said he, when he had heard all, "I am quite willing to give up the alliance of all the chieftains ye have named, and to live henceforward on the best terms with your government, if ye will only secure to me that my people shall not be subjected to any incroachments on their rights, as they now stand. Only assure me, on good authority, that we, in this northern province,

shall be left undisturbed in our own rightful possessions, and suffered to worship God in the venerable and revered faith of our fathers; keep your English laws and your English notions of religion to yourselves, within your proper jurisdiction, and I promise, in the name of all the northern chiefs and toparchs, that you shall have no disturbance from us. For my part, I will be again the queen's liege-man and her very good subject, provided these things are accorded us."

The English negotiators seemed highly pleased with the good dispositions (as they thought them) of the earl, and became quite friendly in their demeanor, whereupon O'Neill took occasion to play off a good jest at their expense, well knowing how specious and deceptive was their apparent good-will towards him. Assuming, therefore, an exceeding openness and sincerity, together with a most confidential look, he advanced a step nearer, and said, in a lowered voice:—

"I would that all my brother chiefs were equally well-disposed towards peace; but, alas, they are not now, there is that wild

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O'Donnell, to wit, and nothing will ever tame him down to the quiet performance of his duty as a subject of the queen. I am credibly informed (nay, draw somewhat nigher,) that he still holds treasonable communication with Spain; ay, and hark ye, a Spanish ship hath just now arrived in one of his ports. So let the deputy look to this; I have done." And so he took a courteous leave of the two envoys, who returned to Dublin, hugging to their hearts the flattering notion that they had room to hope for a favorable change in the earl's tactics. Alas! their hopes would have vanished like the morning dew, had they heard the merry laugh which echoed through the vaulted halls of Donegal Castle, when, in a day or two after, Tyrone paid a visit to his friend and confederate, and told him how he had described him to the Englishmen. "Unluckily," said O'Donnell, "the part appertaining to the arrival of the ship, is the only part of the charge which is not true; our negotiations in that quarter have hitherto brought but little in the way of help. But go on, Hugh, tell

them, at your next meeting, an' thou wilt, that half a dozen foreign vessels have been landing men and arms in Tyrconnell, so as the news will be likely to benefit thy negotiations."

Rejoiced by the encouraging report of his agents, Russell instructed them to make peace with O'Neill, on almost any terms, and then with his help, they could at once crush the other chieftains, and be afterwards at liberty to deal with himself as their own interest required. But none of these schemes were hidden from the all-piercing penetration of O'Neill; and so when the commissioners came again to Dundalk, and invited him to meet them there at an early day, to conclude a peace, he returned no answer. The day came, and anxiously did the two plenipotentiaries await his coming, but they waited in vain. "From morn till dewy eve" did the day pass away, but no O'Neill was forthcoming. So they wrote again, urging him most earnestly, to come forward and avail himself of the powers vested in their hands, and eagerly awaited the result—it

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was the same as before. On the following day, however, just as they were preparing to set out for Dublin, came a letter from Tyrone, apologizing for his absence, but declaring that as he had no mind to make peace on any terms, likely to be proposed by them, there was no manner of use in pretracting the negotiations. "Furthermore," said he, "the terms of the truce have not been kept by your people. That incorrigible Bagnal hath been again marauding in the environs of his fortress, and doth still refuse, to give up certain cattle, and other spoils, which he hath taken. So here, let this idle parleying end, for war alone can settle the difference between us."

The truth was, that all this time O'Neill had been preparing a force to attack Armagh, which city was occupied by a strong English garrison. But the garrison was not the sole obstacle; for without the city, at the distance of a very few miles, lay General Norris, with the main part of his army, having formed an encampment in and around the old church of Killoughter. Here, then, was

work for O'Neill's inventive genius, for it behoved him to get Norris's army dislodged, ere he could hope to gain Armagh. There was, however, no time to be lost; so making up his mind at once for a vigorous push, he fell upon the English when least expected, with a fury that baffled all resistance, and not only expelled them from Killoughter, but made the country around so hot for Norris, that the latter was glad to fall back on Dundalk, having first succeeded in visiting Armagh, whose garrison he strengthened by five hundred or so of his own men. But now the strong walls of Armagh were before O'Neill, and within the city, a brave and determined force; his people, too, were but little accustomed to the storming of stone walls, and far too impatient, to await with calmness, the result of a protracted siege. "They better loved a rushing charge in the open field, or the guerilla warfare of the woods and mountains, and soon tired of sitting idly before battlements of stone." But O'Neill was never at a loss for a stratagem, and now, he hit upon one which I cannot

forbear relating, although my limits are drawing to a narrow compass. It seems, then, that Norris, knowing the scarcity of provisions in the garrison, had sent a fresh supply, under the convoy of three companies of foot, and a troop of horse; but O'Neill, coming upon them by surprise, had captured the provisions, and made prisoners of the escort. Now it occurred to him, that this circumstance might be turned to good account, so he caused the English soldiers to be stripped of their uniform, which he then transferred to an equal number of his own men, and these he sent off by the earliest light of day, as though they were marching to relieve Armagh. "Then," says the biographer of O'Neill, "having stationed an ambuscade before morning, in the walls of a ruined monastery, lying on the eastern side of the city, he sent another body of troops to meet the red-coated gallow-glasses; so that when day dawned, the defenders of Armagh beheld, what they imagined to be, a strong body of their countrymen, in full march to relieve them with supplies of pro-

visions; then they saw O'Neill's troops rush to attack these, and a furious contest seemed to be carried on. But apparently the English were overmatched; many of them fell, and the Irish were pressing forward, pouring in their shot, and brandishing their battle-axes, with all the tumult of a heavy fight. The hungry garrison could not endure this sight. A strong sallying party issued from the city, and rushed to support their friends; but when they came to the field of battle, all the combatants on both sides, turned their weapons against them alone. The English saw the snare that had been laid for them, and made for the walls again; but now, Con. O'Neill and his party issued from the monastery, and cut off their retreat. They defended themselves gallantly, but were all cut to pieces, and the Irish entered the city in triumph. Stafford and the remnant of his garrison, were allowed to retire to Dundalk, and O'Neill, who wanted no strong places, dismantled the fortifications, and then abandoned the town."

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place, to be left long deserted, and a few weeks only had elapsed, when tidings were brought to the earl, that it was again in possession of the English; a party of Bagnal's soldiers having made their way thither from Newry, and had hastily thrown up some fortifications on the dismantled walls, so as to make the place in some manner defensible. This news was exceedingly annoying to the earl; but as matters of more importance demanded his attention at the moment, he could but ill spare a force equal to the taking of the place, even in its half-fortified condition, so he kept the matter to himself, and left the garrison in peaceful possession for some time longer, hoping that the fortunes of war, would soon make him master of the re-fortified city.

A change of deputies took place about this time; and Lord De Burgh, who was sent to replace Sir William Russell, was a much more formidable opponent than his predecessor, having served with success in the Low Countries, against Philip of Spain. This was well known to O'Neill; and no sooner

was his daughter's marriage celebrated, and the alliance of O'Donnell secured, than he applied the whole energies of his capacious mind to meet and forestall, (if possible,) the vigorous measures, which he well knew would follow the arrival of De Burgh. The latter had come over, vested with full powers to carry on the northern war, and with implicit instructions to be on his guard against the deceptive policy of O'Neill. Yet, notwithstanding his determination to fulfil these instructions to the letter, De Burgh found it absolutely necessary to make a month's truce with the earl, in order to hurry on his preparations.

That month was turned to good account by O'Neill, who sent messengers in all directions to stir up the confederates—east, west, north, and south. All was bustle and preparation within his own immediate district; men were drilled and exercised; weapons burnished and whetted, and ammunition prepared. Not a day, not an hour was lost during all that month; and yet, at its close, the news came somewhat suddenly that two great divisions

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of the English army were marching upon him—one with the warlike De Burgh, in person, and some Anglo-Irish lords of the Pale, coming direct by way of Newry and Armagh, while the other, commanded by Sir Conyers Clifford, was making a circuit from Connaught by the western shore of Lough Erne. Now, then or never was the time for a grand, a simultaneous resistance; and, as though to stir up all the Irish, it soon became known that another smaller corps of the English army was then assembling at Mullingar, to march northward immediately on being completed. On hearing this last announcement, O'Neill summoned his officers together; (they were, many of them, chiefs of clans,) and laying before them the necessity of preventing the junction of all these divisions, asked who would undertake to meet and engage (with such a force as he could alone spare) this detachment from Mullingar. The word were scarcely spoken when Richard Tyrone started forth from amid the throng—his dress all travel-stained, for he had but that hour reached the camp with his followers.

"That will I, my lord!" he gaily cried; "only give me two or three hundred of these well-trained Tyrone men, and as this young Barnewell has but a thousand men, they say, I will undertake to keep him back, so help me God and our blessed Lady!"

"Nay, Richard," said O'Neill, warmly pressing the young man's hand, and regarding him with a paternal smile of warmest approval; "nay, my brave young friend, thou shalt have four hundred, and if, with these, thou canst keep a check on this Westmeath force, I will call thee the bravest lad on Irish ground!"

"And I would venture much farther than I now do," returned the generous Tyrrell, "to be so styled by thee, whose good opinion I covet more than any other earthly thing."

In an hour after the gallant Tyrrell was on his march, with his four hundred men, and having reached a certain part of the country, which he knew it would not be safe to let Barnewell pass, he quietly awaited the English. In due time these latter marched forth from Mullingar, but were soon informed that

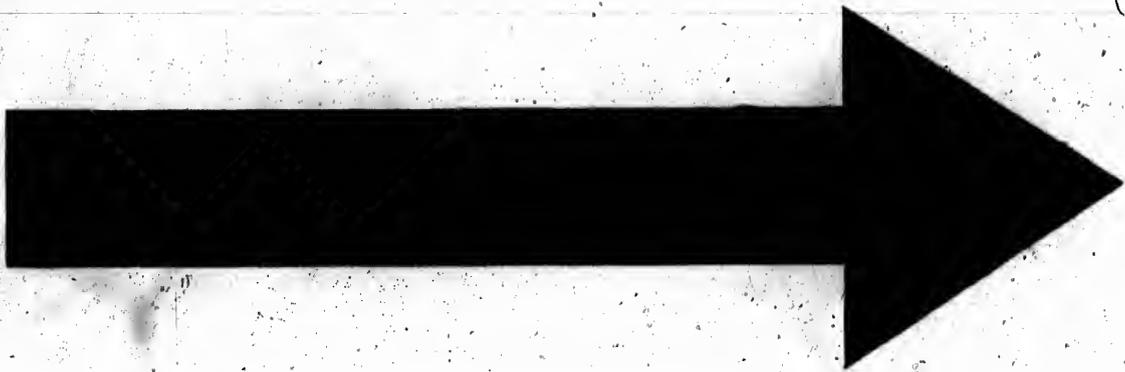
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an Irish detachment awaited their approach. Exceedingly disconcerted, their commander inquired the number of the enemy, and on hearing that they were but four hundred strong, "Pshaw!" cried he, contemptuously, "let us on, my lads; what have we to fear from such a trifling body as that? By St. George we shall soon make short work of them."

He went on, accordingly, till within sight of the Irish, and the sight did but increase his contempt. Eagerly he spurred forward, calling on his men to follow; and seeing that the Irish retreated before him—"Ha! ha!" he shouted, waving his plumed cap in triumph, "see, they are afraid even to stand a battle. Hurrah for merry England, and down with all rebels! Ay, there they go, but they shall not escape us; ride for it men, ride for it, I say!"

But this retreat of Tyrrell was only a feint, in order to draw the enemy into a narrow defile of the woods, which he, in his perfect knowledge of the country, had chosen for the battle. At the entrance of



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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this pass he stationed a party in ambush, under the command of his lieutenant, while he, himself, continued his flight with the main body, so as to draw the foe still farther into the defile. On flew the lightly-mounted gallow-glasses, as though in a fearful panic, and after them rushed the Anglo-Saxons, headed by their chief. No sooner had the last of them entered the gorge than O'Connor, Tyrrell's lieutenant, blew a stirring blast on the bugle, and fell on them furiously in the rear, while Tyffell, with his band, turning short round, attacked them face to face; from trembling fugitives, (as they seemed to be,) becoming, on the instant, fierce assailants. The enemy, thus surrounded, resisted to the last, but resistance was only certain destruction, and so entirely were they cut off, that, (according to MacGeoghegan,) only one man escaped alive, and that by wading through the bogs, to Mullingar, besides Barnewell, who was reserved as a prisoner for O'Neill, Tyrrell being anxious to give this proof how well his task had been performed.

In memory of that bloody battle, that

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defile received the name of Tyrrell's Pass, from the young chieftain who planned and achieved the victory. . But now he collected his men without loss of time and set out for the Irish camp, for it was generally known that De Burgh had reached Armagh, and was preparing for a grand descent on O'Neill's country. One consolation was, that the deputy found himself thrown altogether on his own resources; for, of the two divisions which had actually set out to support the main branch of the army under his command, the one was, as we have seen; cut off by Tyrrell, while the other, which was to have come from Connaught, had, unluckily, to pass through the mountain fastness, then under the guardian care of Hugh O'Donnell. So, when Clifford was marching on, little dreaming of opposition in these wild regions, what should start forward, right in his pass, at a little distance in front, but two thousand of the fierce Clan-connal. Here was an unwelcome *rencontre*, and, as Clifford's force numbered no more than seven hundred men, so he wisely walked back as he came, having

no very great desire to fall into the hands of the "red-hot chief of Tyrconnell." So much, then, for De Burgh's auxiliaries that were to have been; but he, himself, moved fearlessly onward, expecting a brilliant victory, for his army was still both numerous and well-appointed. He went forward, but it was to meet his fate, and that of his army, on the Blackwater.

CHAPTER IX.

"There's a far-famed Blackwater, that runs to Lough Neagh.

* * * * *
 From the banks of that river Benburb's towers arise.

* * * * *
 The shrines of Arnagh gleam far over yon lea,
 Nor afar is Dungannon that nursed liberty,
 And yonder Red Hugh
 Marshal Bagnal o'erthrew,
 On Beal-an-atha-Buidhe."

DAVIS.

It will be borne in mind that the first step of O'Neill's conquering career was the taking of that castle at Portmore, which, built on his own grounds, had for years thrown its hateful shade on the fertile banks of the Blackwater. But this place was too

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important to be entirely given up by the English; and now, when Lord De Burgh found himself on the borders of Tyr-owen, his first object was to regain possession of that deserted fortress. But this, his design, was anticipated by the earl, and when the deputy would have passed on to the castle, he found that the woods in the neighborhood were occupied by a strong force of the Irish. But O'Neill was not there in person; and so, when De Burgh attacked the defenders of the pass with overpowering numbers, he succeeded in driving them back, and planted some of his own men in their place. Before O'Neill could get his people brought up again to the contest, the English had crossed the river, seized the castle, and filled it with some of their best and most experienced soldiers. Loud were the exultations of the Saxons, and merrily did they celebrate their easy victory; for the enemy was no where to be seen; and it was natural to suppose that O'Neill had fallen back, disconcerted by this opening defeat. But just while the shout of triumph was

ascending loudest, the heads of more than one, two, or three columns of the Irish army were seen emerging from the woods, a short way up the river, on the same side whereon the castle was situated. They were seen to take up a strong position, right between Portmore and the village of Benburb, but somewhat nearer to the latter; and as they defiled from the woods they formed into the order of battle, going through the various evolutions with a rapidity and exactness which called forth the admiration of the most experienced officers in the English army. It was evident that O'Neill was about to offer battle; and now, too late, the deputy and his colleagues discovered that Tyrone, according to his usual system, had allured them to cross the river, by giving them that cheap victory in the pass, in order that he might take up a good and advantageous position. There was nothing for it now, however, but to make the best of a bad bargain; so De Burgh sent forward one wing of his army, under the Earl of Kildare, to dislodge the Irish. Seeing that the latter showed no disposition to move, the deputy

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himself moved forward to Kildare's assistance, at the head of all his remaining strength. It is evident that De Burgh had miscalculated the numbers of the Irish, for when, after some hard fighting, he succeeded in beating back their columns beyond the village of Benburb, he came full upon a vastly superior and much more numerous force, consisting of the chosen troops of Tyr-owen and Tyrconnell, together with those redoubtable MacDonnells of Antrim, all three commanded by their chiefs, in person. If De Burgh had seen a hideous spectre he could not have been more surprised—nay, we might say terrified; but it was not for him to show any undue alarm; so, without waiting to be attacked, he fell upon the allied chieftains with a force and fury meant to be irresistible. Alas! in the very first heat of the combat, he fell mortally wounded, and was carried from the field. And now, the fierce, hot blood of the Ulster clans was roused; on, and on, and on, they dashed—sweeping away all opposition, their chieftains taking the lead, and urging them on by

example as well as voice. Down went, in succession, before those rushing hordes, the proudest and bravest of the opposing army; Kildare, that unworthy branch of the Geraldine tree, was struck down, despite the devoted defence of his two foster-brothers, who covered him with their own bodies till both of them were hewn down—Sir Francis Vaughan (the deputy's brother-in-law) and many other officers of high rank. Nothing could resist the sweeping torrent of Irish battle-axes, and when, at length, the victors paused to take breath, there was no longer any show of opposition. The English army (or rather its poor remains) was evidently preparing for a hasty exit, and some of the Irish chieftains were for intercepting their retreat; but to this O'Neill would not consent, saying, with that clemency which marked his character, "Let them e'en go, there hath been slaughter enough for one day. Let them go, in God's name, for our victory is complete as it is!"

So the English were suffered to march away without further molestation, and

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O'Neill turned his attention to the recovery of the fortress whose possession had cost the enemy so dear. For the present he allowed his army to rest, but in a few days he sent a large party to attack the fortress. It chanced, however, that the commander of the garrison was a veteran officer of skill and courage, and so well did he conduct the defence, that day after day passed away and found the Irish still lying before the castle. Never was siege more fiercely carried on; but, never, on the other hand, was defence better kept up, and at length O'Neill was obliged to leave matters as they stood, hoping soon to return with fresh vigor and better success to the charge.

News soon after reached the north, that Lord De Burgh, and also Kildare, had died of their wounds—received at the battle of Benburb, and that a Lord Lieutenant had been appointed, being none other than the Earl of Ormond, which gave O'Neill no little satisfaction. One of the first fruits of Ormond's friendly influence, was the offer of an eight weeks' truce, which Tyrone did

not choose to decline. The two earls met at the old rendezvous, Dundalk, and O'Neill being asked what his demands were, replied nearly in the same terms as before: "What I and my brother chiefs require, your lordship cannot but know; we seek liberty of conscience, and that the persecution wherewith our faith hath been so long pursued, shall henceforward cease, not only in Ulster, but throughout the Catholic land of Ireland. Ourselves, and our territories, and our people, are in no way to be meddled with. These are our terms; also, that full reparation be made us for the spoils carried away from our lands, at various times, by the garrisons of the different English posts!" Ormond, whose ancient friendship for O'Neill, time had in no degree lessened, made it a point to transmit these proposals to the queen, in their most favorable light; and yet, when at the end of the truce the royal answer arrived, it was found such as to put an end to the negotiations. A pardon was, indeed, offered to the Earl of Tyrone, but on such conditions that it was rather looked

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upon, by him, as an aggravated insult. Amongst the conditions of this pardon, were these: "That he should, forthwith, break up the great Northern League, disband his forces, and send away all foreigners from his country; that he should repair the Blackwater fort and bridge; renounce the title of O'Neill, and all jurisdiction belonging to that chieftaincy; admit a sheriff into Tyr-owen; pay a fine; deliver up all traitors; (that is to say, all who should presume to profess the Catholic religion, or bear arms against the English;) that he should discover his negotiations with Spain; and give his eldest son as a hostage for the due performance of these conditions." Others there were, too, but these were the principal.

"By mine honor," said O'Neill, turning to Tyrrell, who accompanied him, "by my knightly honor, but these are strange proposals, considering that they are made to a victor. Of what avail would be our recent triumph were all or any of these modest conditions to be fulfilled? Nay, my lord

Ormond," he said, again addressing that nobleman, "it is but waste of time making such idle proposals as these. Twice already have I rejected them—even when unsustained by recent success; and yet they were never so audacious as these now are. Methinks it is a strange anomaly that my success doth but make the enemy bolder. No, mine ancient friend, to not one of these conditions will I agree. The chieftains of the north are up in their might; victory hath descended on our arms; we will keep them in our hands, so help me the just and righteous God! until we have obtained freedom for our faith, liberty for ourselves, and a total cessation of English meddling in our concerns. This is my final answer, and so thou mayest say to the queen."

"Then thou art resolved to hold out?" said Ormond, anxiously.

"How can I do otherwise? I put it to thine own sincere judgment."

Ormond did not reply; for if he had, he must have acknowledged that O'Neill was right; but, with a quivering lip and moistened

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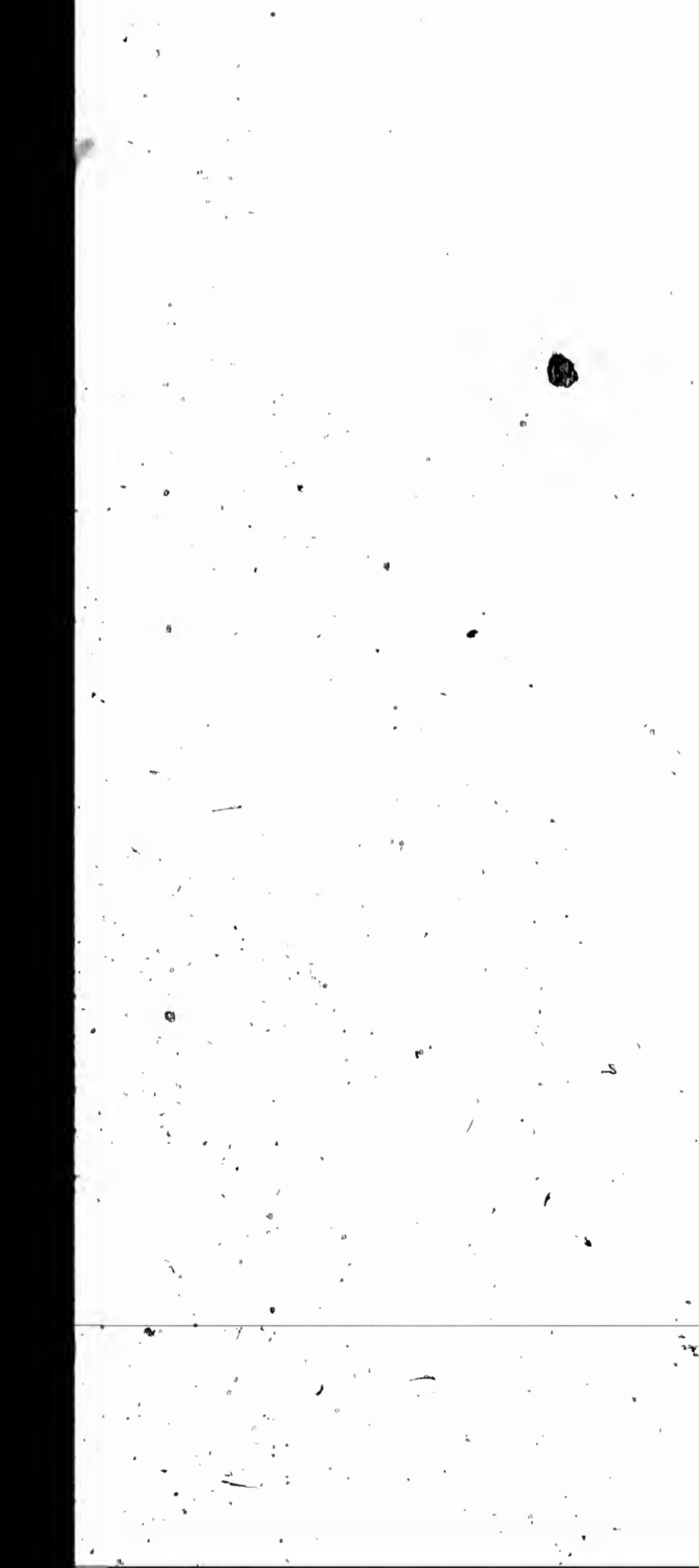
eye, he grasped the outstretched hand,—
“Then, farewell, my friend, our lots, it
appears, are widely different — mine to
sustain the English power—thine is, what?”

“To battle against oppression and injustice, while God giveth me power!” returned O’Neill, as he warmly shook the earl’s hand. “And now, Ormond, God be with thee; when we meet again it may be on the tented field, as foemen.”

“But ever friends at heart—shall it not be so?”

“So far as the promise concerneth me, I answer, from my soul, yes!”

Upon which the two old friends—the great Norman Butler of the Pale, and the still greater Milesian chief—separated with mutual good will, and set out, the one for Dublin, and the other to prosecute the war, already so well begun. Yet Ormond’s friendship could not rest there; so he made use of all his credit at court to obtain an unconditional pardon for O’Neill. Having succeeded, he wrote to inform Tyrone of his success, urging him to make peace. “For,”



said he, "thou hast no longer an excuse; the queen is willing to leave all the country north of Dundalk, that is to say, all Ulster, in the hands of the native Irish—nor sheriff, nor preacher shall be sent to trouble thee." But all would not do; the eight weeks of the truce were expired, and the letter found O'Neill reviewing two divisions of his army destined to besiege Armagh and Portmore. "It cannot be," was his brief answer. "My word of honor is plighted to the confederate chiefs. I it was who induced them to take up arms for God and our country, I cannot, and will not ask them to lay them down; having no sort of confidence in these specious professions, the dictates of English policy. I thank thee, Ormond, but I cannot do as thou wouldst have me."

So he marched on at the head of his troops, and had well nigh reached Armagh, when a second messenger from Ormond was shown into his presence, and forthwith offered him, on bended knee, a huge sealed packet.

"Why, what have we here?" said the earl, with surprise; then, having examined the

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seal, he speedily recognised the royal arms. "Oh! oh! the pardon, as I am a living man!" he gaily exclaimed, to those officers who gathered around him; "let us make merry over our good luck;" and he laughed right merrily.

"But what shall I say to my lord of Ormond; will your lordship favor me with some letter or message?" inquired the courier with a low bow.

"Say to the lord lieutenant," returned O'Neill, "that the Earl of Tyrone had no time to pen an answer, being on his way to attack Armagh. This is sufficient answer, friend; so go thy way."

Thus haughtily did he slight the "special pardon," which he well knew meant nothing in reality, and he went on as though it had never been accorded, treating with Spain and arousing his countrymen to a more martial spirit.

Up to this time, O'Neill had been buoying himself with the hopes of Spanish succor, but now he became sadly convinced that the malice and treachery of the English

government was at work even there, where it might be expected to have least influence; for he received positive information that the paid agents of Elizabeth and her ministers, were going about in secret through the Catholic countries of Europe, (Spain more especially,) representing the cause of the Irish Catholics as without even the slightest prospect of success, and even inventing accounts of defeats which they had never sustained. Deeming it useless, then, to lie back waiting for aid which might never come, he set vigorously about the formation of a national army, which, as yet, he had not called together. To this step he was the more imperatively urged, as he had found out that a powerful army had been placed under the command of his old adversary, Bagnal, who was now making final preparations for a grand attack. To do them justice, the chieftains of Ulster came forward on this occasion, at the call of their leader, in a manner the most creditable to their courage and patriotism; and it may possibly interest the reader to know what share they respec-

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tively had in making up the Northern army.

“Of the O’Neills, we find that Neal Brian Fertough, in Upper Claneboy, furnished eighty foot, and thirty horse; Shane McBrian, of Lower Claneboy, sent eighty foot and fifty horse; McRory, of Kilwarlin, gave sixty foot and ten horse; Shane McByran, Carogh, from the Bann side, fifty foot and ten horse; Art. O’Neill, three hundred foot and sixty horse; Henry Oge O’Neill, two hundred foot and forty horse; Turlough McHenry O’Neill, of the Fews, had three hundred foot and sixty horse; Cormac McBawn, (Hugh’s brother,) three hundred foot and sixty horse; while the earl himself, of his own household troops, had seven hundred foot and two hundred horse. Then White’s country, (Dufferin in the county Down,) sent twenty footmen; MacArtane, Sliaght O’Neill, also of Down, one hundred foot and twenty horse; McGennis, of Iveagh, brought two hundred foot and forty horse; MacMurtough, from the Maine water, sent forty footmen; O’Hagan,

of Tulloghoge, sent one hundred foot and thirty horse; McDonnell, of the Glynnns of Antrim, led four hundred foot and one hundred horse; Maguire, of Fermanagh, six hundred foot and one hundred horse; the MacMahons, of Monaghan, contributed five hundred foot with one hundred and sixty horse; O'Reilly, of Breffni O'Reilly, eight hundred foot and one hundred horse; while O'Cahan, from the banks of the Bann and Roe, led on five hundred foot and two hundred horse. All these chieftains were tributaries of O'Neill.

“From Tyrconnell, Hugh Roe O'Donnell; and his brother Rory, brought three hundred and fifty foot and one hundred and ten horse; O'Dogherty, of Innishowen, led three hundred foot and forty horse; MacSweeney, five hundred foot and thirty horse; O'Boyle, one hundred foot and twenty horse; and O'Gallagher, of Ballyshannon, two hundred foot and forty horse. These last were all tributary to O'Donnell. These two great Divisions were led on by Hugh O'Neill and Hugh O'Donnell, who seem to have been of equal

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rank and authority, and to have acted independently of each other, but always in harmony; their only contest being which should pierce deepest into the columns of the Saxon." *

Availing himself of this well-organized force, O'Neill made a strenuous effort to take Portmore. Again did he place a strong force before it, and, finding the garrison still determined to hold out, he also came to a resolution that they must yield, if even months were required to bring about that end. He also laid close siege to Armagh, and then encamped, with the remainder of his army, at a place called Mullagh-bane. Here he was attacked by Bagnal, who had beaten in all the outposts, and being vastly inferior in numbers, sustained a signal defeat, the first he had yet encountered. But, as this catastrophe was entirely owing to the small number of his army, detached and scattered as its main strength was, so he was but little disheartened, and having hastily sent off messengers to O'Donnell, and another

* Mitchell's Life of Hugh O'Neill, pp. 136, 137.

powerful ally, McWilliam, a Connaught chief, he calmly applied himself to reorganize the force under his command, awaiting the arrival of his allies. Gradually he moved around, so as to get between Armagh and Portmore, having information that Bagnal meant to relieve the garrison at the latter place. Finding that the English were actually in motion, O'Neill looked eagerly out for his friends, as without them he could not have offered or accepted battle. Great was his joy, then, when his scouts brought word that they were within a mile or two, and soon after his satisfaction was complete, for O'Donnell himself, (a host in his own person,) dashed up at the head of his chosen troops, having also with him the Connaught auxiliaries. "Now, then, for Bagnal; were he twice as strong, I fear him not!" said O'Neill, exultingly, as he embraced his faithful ally. The Irish army then took up its position about a mile in advance of Portmore, on the way to Armagh, where the plain was narrowed to a pass, enclosed on one side by a thick wood, and on the other by a bog. To

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arrive at that plain from Armagh, the enemy would have to penetrate through wooded hills, divided by winding and marshy hollows, in which flowed a sluggish and discolored stream from the bogs; and hence the pass was called *Beal-an-atha buidhe*, "the mouth of the yellow ford." The place was a wild one, but it was admirably chosen, as O'Neill's battle-grounds ever were, and doubly so, as this very spot had been foretold, in ancient prophecies, as the scene of a great battle, in which the Irish, the Catholics, were to be victorious over the heretic stranger. This was, in itself, the greatest possible advantage to O'Neill.

Brightly rose the morning sun, on the tenth of August, over the dark green woods of Tyr-owen, and its rays were mirrored like mimic fires in the transparent waters of the quiet river. Even the marshy soil in the vicinity of the Yellow Ford, was lit up into a cheerful hue by the roseate beams from the eastern sky. But brighter than all were the gleaming spears, and the polished corslets of the English soldiery, as they marched along

the road from Armagh, flushed with the all but certainty of success. Proudly floated the red-cross banner of England at the head of each division; and the air was filled with the triumphant sound of their martial music. Bagnal himself had never looked so gay, for even his dark countenance was lit up with the fire of expectation.

"To-day," he thought, "will this hated O'Neill receive such a blow that he can never recover himself. Such a force as this of mine he cannot resist; and who knows," and a fiendish smile glared over his sallow features, "who knows but yonder sun, at its setting, may look upon his bloody corpse; that plodding brain may be at rest for ever, and my most dreaded enemy removed from my path." And his step grew lighter, and his mien still more haughty, as these thoughts passed through his mind.

Meanwhile the Irish army was lying quietly in wait—more quietly than was their wont. Mass had been said at the dawn of day by Father McNamara, in the presence of the whole army, and the example of their chiefs

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had aided the exhortation of the good priest, in impressing a serious feeling on the mind of each. They were made to understand that the cause for which they fought was that of religion, not less than patriotism; and that the long-suffering church of Ireland looked to them, that day, as her champions and defenders. It was an affecting sight to see even the fiery soul of O'Donnell subdued to woman's meekness, as he knelt before that rustic altar, in lowly adoration. Near him was O'Neill—his fine face now intersected by the lines of care and deep thought, yet impressed, for the time, with the softening influence of the hallowed scene, into a look of rapt devotion. And there, too, knelt McDonnell, the proud, fierce leader of the Antrim Scots, with many another chieftain, famed in Irish story. When mass was ended, and the priest had pronounced his blessing, O'Neill proceeded to dispose of his troops as his good judgment and military skill dictated. He stationed at the woods, on either side of the Armagh road, a force of five hundred light-armed *kearns*, and then fell back with

the main body, to a little distance. Silent as death they awaited the approach of the English, who marched on, never dreaming of their danger, till, on either side, was poured into their ranks a death-dealing volley, that, for a little while, threw them into surprise. But the confusion was not of long duration, for it was Bagnal's own division, headed by the marshal in person; and very soon he succeeded not only in restoring order, but, having attacked the Irish, on either side, his men fought with so great fury and desperation that they dislodged O'Neill's marksmen, and finally drove them back from their position in the defile, to the main army, on the plain beyond. Then it was that Bagnal moved forward in good earnest, seeing that the Irish kept their ground, and made no preparations for charging. On, then, he urged his legions; but just as the foremost came within a short distance of the troops of Tyrone, down went they—horses and men, into pits which had been hollowed out, and carefully covered over, by O'Neill's orders. But the confusion was only momentary, for Bagnal still urged on

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his cavalry, who, making a short circuit, so as to avoid trampling over their comrades, made a rushing charge on the Irish lines, where they stood behind their entrenchments. Some of these latter were speedily carried, and the English swept on, shouting "Saint George for merry England!" But just then a motion was visible in the Irish centre, and instantly arose, as though from ten thousand voices, the wild, fierce cries of "*Lhav dhearg aboo!*" "*O'Donnell aboo!*" and the clans, whose battle-cries these were, rushed forth against the advancing English, led on by their respective chiefs. Terrible was the meeting. Down went the waving plumes of Bagnal, to rise no more, and over his body rushed on the infuriate avengers. The fall of their general was a grievous blow to the English, and in a few minutes that division, which he had so bravely led to the charge, was driven back in irretrievable confusion. Just as O'Neill was sweeping forward, at the head of his triumphant clansmen, who should he meet, face to face, clad in an English uniform, and brandishing an English weapon,

but Miles O'Reilly. "Ha!" cried the latter, "we have, then, met at length, as open foes; defend thyself!" and aiming a deadly blow at the chieftain, who instantly paused before him, he seemed under the demoniac spirit of revenge, to forget that the tide of battle was hurrying past. O'Neill warded off the blow, but instead of returning it, he would have spoken words of deprecation, and turned away to seek some other adversary; but the unhappy young man seemed determined to make him fight, and calling out: "Ay, then, thou wouldst spare me now, thou, whose successful rivalry has made me what I am—traitor to my faith and to my country—by my sufferings of six long years! but thou shalt fight!" and again he would have struck him, with still more ferocious determination, when some of O'Neill's clansmen, rushing between them, would have hewed down the assailant of their chief with their tremendous battle-axes, but his voice rose louder even than the din of battle, commanding them, in stern and authoritative tones, to desist; and ere yet they had decided to obey

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even him in such a conjunction, another and more rapid charge was made by O'Donnell, and his fierce gallow-glasses, commanded by McSweeny, and with them rolled on the cavalry of Tyr-owen, carrying their chief with them, not against his will either, for the natural goodness of his heart made him seek to shun a mortal contest with O'Reilly.

“*Bataillah-aboo!*” shouted the fiery troopers of McSweeny, as they burst like lightning on the foe; and their terrible war-cry was death to the English, for, as that impetuous torrent broke on through the opposing legions, down went in succession the veteran bands of England. “By this time,” says Mitchel, “the cannon were all taken; the cries of ‘Saint George!’ had failed, or turned into death-shrieks; and once more England’s royal standard sunk before the Red Hand of Tyr-owen.”

O'Neill and O'Reilly met no more—spurred on by his evil passions, the latter had performed strange feats of valor; more than once, in the course of that bloody day, did he find himself directly in front of the



clansmen of Breffni, and as often had the wretched young man slunk away from before the venerable form of his uncle, where he fought at the head of his clan ; all his hardihood could not nerve him to turn his arm against his own kinsfolk, and the men of his native hills, but not the less resolutely did he seek to support the failing spirits of the English, and twice did he succeed in rallying them for yet another stand. O'Neill watched him with pitying interest, as his tall, commanding form flitted from rank to rank of the English, appearing as their very genius, (for most of their higher officers had sunk dead or wounded, on the field,) and he could not help regretting that so much courage, such chivalrous valor, was so wrongfully applied. But, at last, he missed him—his plume of crimson hue was no longer to be seen ; and the earl was just looking around, over all the wide desolation of the scene, when he came suddenly upon an English cavalier, who lay dead before him, right in his path. English ! no, not English, although in Saxon costume, for the cold, pale features of the dead were

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those of Miles O'Reilly. A ball had pierced his temple, gone right through the brain, and stilled forever the impetuous passions which had so wildly and so banefully governed him. It was with no pleasurable feelings that the earl drew in his horse, and gazed down upon the inanimate face, where beauty was still imprinted, as on the chiselled features of some exquisite statue. Nay, a tear fell from the chieftain's eye, as he muttered, "Dead, dead! is it then so? alas! and is this the untimely end of so many rare, even noble qualities; so many gifts of mind and person? O! passion, thou terrible enemy of the human race; this is thy work!" He had not yet left the spot when he was told of Bagnal's death, and his generous heart, though full of gratitude for the triumph of his country's cause, could still afford to pity the fate of those two men, who had, for years long, pursued him with unrelenting animosity. Soon after the fall of O'Reilly the English were completely routed; all that escaped fled in the direction of Armagh, but behind were the avengers—the avengers of "ages of bondage and slaughter,"

of wrong, and insult, and persecution ; and by the time they reached the city they were only fifteen hundred. These were admitted within the walls, and, for the moment, were secure.

While yet the first shout of triumph was sweeping over the land, O'Neill, with his conquering army, sat down before Armagh, and so disheartened were its defenders that their resistance lasted but a very few days, when they gave up the place. Many of the Irish chieftains were of opinion that an example should be made of (at least) the officers ; but O'Neill, who was ever opposed to unnecessary bloodshed, easily convinced them that it would serve no good purpose to slaughter unresisting men ; and the whole garrison were sent in safety over the borders of the Pale, minus only their arms. The Castle of Portmore was now given up without a struggle, and its garrison was sent off at the same time with that of Armagh. "Thus," says Camden, "Tyr-owen triumphed according to his heart's content, over all his adversaries." To which testimony of the English chronicler,

Mitchell, adds, " All Saxon soldiery vanished speedily from the fields of Ulster, and the Bloody Hand once more waved over the towers of Newry and Armagh."

From this time forward O'Neill was every where, throughout the island, regarded as the national leader ; his genius and his prowess were the pride and hope of all, and his deeds were the theme of a thousand bards. For long after the decisive battle of Beal-an-athabuidhe all went well with the great cause ; all Ulster was freed from foreign thrall ; and the victorious career of Red Hugh O'Donnell had well nigh liberated Connaught. Munster, too, and, in fact, the greater part of Ireland, had risen on behalf of freedom. The queen, in alarm, had sent over her favorite, Essex, with a powerful army, hoping to quell the rebellion, which had now attained so formidable a height ; but the history of her favorite's luckless career in Ireland needs not to be told. In fact that gallant and accomplished, but most unfortunate nobleman, was no match for the keen, sharp wit of O'Neill, and his consummate skill in diplomacy.

After wasting months and months in idle and objectless marchings to and fro, and skirmishes with the various petty chieftains who bordered his way, Essex, at length, (having received imperative orders to march, at once, against the "arch-traitor, O'Neill,") led his forces to Dundalk, where, on the appearance of the Irish army, he manifested but little desire to meet them in battle, and willingly consented to a parley, which O'Neill demanded. The truth was, that the wily chief thoroughly understood the shallow mind and superficial character of Essex, and well knew that he could easily overmatch him in negotiation, at a much cheaper rate than trying a battle. This meeting, (which fully justified O'Neill's calculations,) has been much celebrated, as in it the courtly bearing and superior ability of the great Irish leader shone out to peculiar advantage. It took place at a certain ford, named Ballaclynch; and the two earls riding to the opposite banks, O'Neill, who was ever exact in the observance of all courtesy, spurred his horse into the middle of the stream, and thence

discoursed Essex, who remained on the bank. This, when coupled with the unchanging suavity of his manners, and the sympathy with which he spoke of Devereaux's own prospects at court, so won upon the young courtier, that he laid open to O'Neill the whole budget of English policy, (in so far as he knew it,) jumbling up these state secrets with his own private affairs. Some officers of distinction were then called forward, on either side, and a regular parley was opened. O'Neill's demands were still the same as on all former occasions; nor did Essex consider them unreasonable or unjust, promising to intercede with the queen, that they might be taken into consideration. A truce of six weeks was then agreed upon, and the negotiating earls took a kind and courteous leave of each other.

So far from approving of Devereaux's negotiations, the queen was enraged beyond measure at his presuming to hold a parley with O'Neill; and the result of his campaigning was doubly grievous to her, as Sir Conyers Clifford, a general of tried ability and great

experience, had been slain, and his army entirely routed in the recent battle of the Curlew mountains, by Hugh O'Donnell and his Connaught auxiliaries. In this emergency, when there appeared the most imminent danger of "the Emerald gem" being torn from her crown, Elizabeth cast about for some man whose abilities equalled his courage and devotion to her cause, on whom she might rely in a strait so hazardous. At length she pitched upon Charles Blount, (Lord Mountjoy,) as being alone likely to compete successfully with the all-conquering O'Neill. And surely it was the evil genius of O'Neill that suggested to her this choice, for Mountjoy was but a short time in Ireland when it became evident to O'Neill that he had now a dangerous opponent. From that day his star was on the wane, and not all the efforts of his powerful mind; not all his consummate skill and prudence; not all his chivalrous and unfailing courage, could avert the doom that fell upon the cause. What, though Philip of Spain sent, at length, that succor that years before he should have sent—

coming now all too late ; convinced that with even moderate assistance from abroad the Irish Catholics, under their great leader, might have cast off the yoke that weighed them down. Alas ! their coming did nought to serve the northern chieftains, for their leader acted imprudently, some say, treacherously, and suffered himself to be shut up, with his men, in Kinsale. After a long and toilsome march O'Neill, and O'Donnell, with some other chiefs, succeeded in reaching Kinsale, but it was only to encounter a decisive defeat ; and there might be said to end the long-protracted struggles of O'Neill. Nay, even the sanguine and ever-hopeful spirit of O'Donnell was broken by that crowning disaster ; and leaving the now shattered troops of Tyrconnell under the command of his brother, Roderick, he took a hasty but affectionate leave of O'Neill, and crossed over to Spain, determined to make a vigorous effort to obtain efficient aid.

It were sad to tell how O'Neill led his broken and dispirited army back to the north in the most inclement season of the year ;

(the Spaniards, having capitulated, were suffered to return to their own country;) how, one by one, his allies were subdued, or gave up the contest in despair, until there remained, out of Ulster, but the ever-faithful Tyrrell and O'Sullivan Beare, who still ventured to hold out. Tyrrell, indeed, still held the greater part of Meath; and it is even said that he kept Mountjoy a whole winter engaged. But O'Sullivan had only his own strong fortress of Dun-buidhe, which, for its position on Bantry Bay, was considered of great importance. This castle was taken after a long and determined siege, and Tyrrell alone was in the field for Ireland and O'Neill. In Ulster, the chieftain himself did all that man could do to avert the threatened ruin to the cause. Yet was he now beginning to sink under the weight of care, and sorrow, and disappointment. Age, too, was advancing with rapid strides, its approach accelerated by the sorrows of the last years. Even in his private life the hand of affliction had pressed heavily upon him, for he had seen that beloved one, with

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difficulty won, but ever faithful and fondly cherished—he had seen his Arabella laid in an untimely grave, and several of his children had in succession followed. Within the last few years he had married the daughter of Magennis—that same Catherina who, in the summer of her youth, he had so much admired. She had remained for many long years unmarried, retaining ever a too vivid remembrance of him to give her hand or heart to another; and when time had somewhat blunted his poignant grief for Arabella's loss, he was not sorry to secure the alliance of the chieftain of Iveagh, (it was now her brother, for the father had been some time dead,) to the still lovely though faded Catherina, an offer which was by her accepted with melancholy pleasure. She was many years younger than the earl, but her love being founded, from an early period, on the great qualities for which he was so remarkable, had in it but little of the leaven of passion, and she was well prepared to smooth the pillow of his declining years, and minister to his comfort.

Dark was the doom that fell upon Tyr-owen and all Ulster when O'Neill's wand of power was broken—for utterly broken it was when English bribery and treachery had rent asunder that mighty confederacy, the creation of his genius, which, at one time, gave all but a certainty of final success. Defeat after defeat came upon him; the war was carried into the very heart of his country, that not alone by the English, but by more than one traitorous Irishman. All around his borders there were raised up enemies in those who should have been steadfast friends. Thus he had on one side a *Queen's* Maguire, on another a *Queen's* O'Reilly, on another a *Queen's* O'Donnell,—all of these shameless traitors being raised up by English policy to oppose at once their own rightful chieftains, and the dreaded power of Tyrone. English armies poured in on every side, and broke in revengeful fury over the territories of O'Neill, and all who still remained faithful to him, until the fair fields of Tyr-owen, and, in fact, the greater part of Ulster, so lately teeming with fertility, and covered

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with numerous flocks, were made, (as the vallies of Desmond had before been,) "*a howling wilderness.*" Famine stalked over the land, followed by her grim hand-maiden, pestilence, and soon the haughty spirit of the brave clansmen was crushed beneath these accumulated horrors. The picture drawn for us by Irish historians, (and even some English,) of the dreadful sufferings of the northern clans, during the days that preceded O'Neill's submission, is too painful, too gloomy in its coloring to be transferred to my pages even did space permit. I shall, therefore, pass it over with the brief notice already made. But who can describe, nay, imagine, the anguish with which O'Neill looked upon those scenes? How must he have felt, on witnessing the deplorable condition of those, whose only crime was their fidelity to him, their country, and their God? Bowed down at once by the weight of their misery and his own sorrows, he came to the resolution of purchasing peace for them, (since it was all he could now do,) by submitting to that power, against which he

had so long struggled. Having acquainted the deputy, by letter, with his intention, the proposal was eagerly, not to say willingly, accepted, and Drogheda was appointed for the place of meeting.

This resolution had only been taken, when the news reached O'Neill that his most faithful ally, and the truest son of Ireland, Hugh O'Donnell, had died in Spain, of a fever, brought on by grief and disappointment on finding that there was no hope of obtaining aid. "He is dead then," said O'Neill, with a sigh that convulsed his very heart; "even his high, hopeful heart was at length crushed and broken. Thus have perished many, many of those who struggled the most manfully for our common rights; many others have given up our cause in despair; while others, still, have sold it for vile lucre; what have I then to do, old and broken-spirited as I am, but to procure a modicum of peace for my poor people as I best can?" And forth he went on his humiliating errand.

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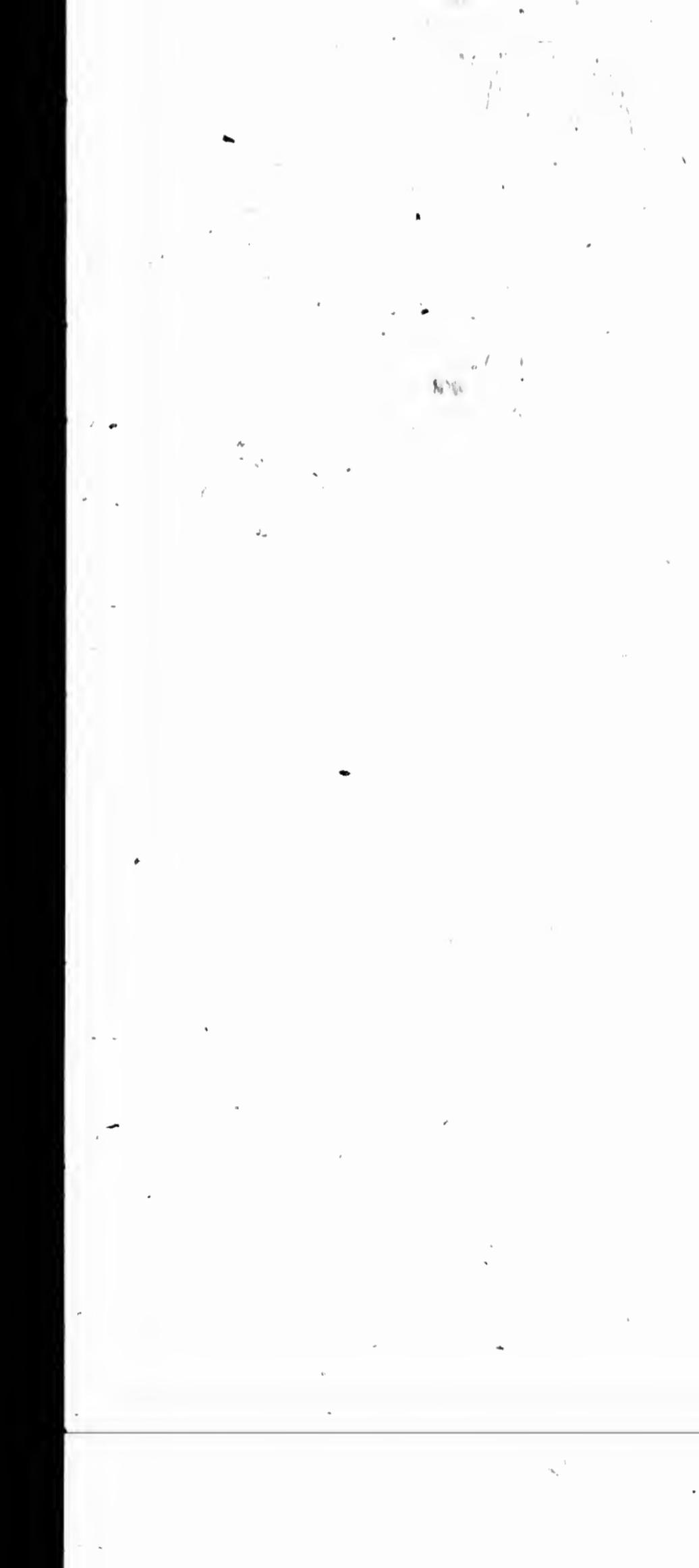
CHAPTER X.

My heart is in woe,
And my soul is in trouble ;
For the mighty are low,
And abused are the noble.

The sons of the Gael
Are in exile and mourning ;
Worn, weary and pale,
As spent pilgrims returning.

Translation from the Irish, by SAMUEL FERGUSON.

THE place of meeting had been finally fixed on as Millifont Abbey, about four miles from Drogheda. This noble monastic institution, one of the most magnificent in the British Islands, was then in all its original splendor, at least to outward appearance ; but, alas ! it was no longer the abode of religious peace and calm contemplation, having been, at the suppression of monasteries, bestowed on the Moore family, (ancestors of the Marquis of Drogheda,) and at the time of O'Neill's memorable visit it was a favorite residence of theirs. Deseccrated and defiled, the sacred walls and the lovely glen were now made to echo only the noisy glee of revelry ; for its proprietor, being



himself a soldier, made it a point to gather around him a crowd of military guests. The beautiful Chapel of St. Bernard was converted into a banqueting-room; and the statues of the twelve Apostles, which had erewhile graced the walls, were brought to Sir Edward's hall, and clothed in derision as British soldiers, each with a musket over his shoulder.

Such being the condition of the monastery, what must have been the feelings of O'Neill as, followed by a few of his faithful clansmen, he wound his way through that lovely vale to the abbey, on a wild day of March? What must he have felt; he who had so long struggled for the rights of the church; he who had so carefully protected the asylums of religion from the ruthless grasp of the defiler? But spies were all around him, and he dared not even breathe a word of his feelings to those who were with him. Dashing away, then, the unbidden tear, he quickened his footsteps, and presented himself before the deputy, whom he found awaiting him at the gate of the abbey.

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However humbled and depressed O'Neill felt himself, yet his power had not so entirely departed but that the government deemed it still necessary to treat him with respect, viewing him rather, ~~we~~ may suppose, as a *lion couchant*, who might easily be aroused into dangerous action.

Sixty years had left their furrow on O'Neill's brow and silvered his dark locks. Sorrows, many and complicated, had dimmed the lustre of his eye, and made his cheek pale and hollow, yet his form was still erect; and when he stood before the conquering deputy, in the Abbey of Mellifont, he demeaned himself with as much dignity as though misfortune had never chilled his heart. That piercing glance, for which he had been remarkable, was still his; and though in heart and soul he felt himself humbled—humbled for himself and for his country, yet he sedulously concealed the feeling, and returned the salutation of Mountjoy as though he were still a victor. Yet his costume was void of all military pretensions, he being simply clad in the

dress worn by Irish noblemen of that day, in times of peace.

Mountjoy was a tall, stately man, in the prime of life, yet he bowed to the grey-haired chieftain with an air of respect, while advancing a step beyond the door to meet him, he said, "Oft have we met in hostile guise. I trust, my lord earl, that we meet now as friends?"

"Oh, assuredly!" replied O'Neill, with that courtesy which never forsook him, yet in a tone wherein a keen observer might recognize more than a little bitterness. "The queen's deputy is, of right, the friend of O'Neill. But the air of these halls," and he looked around with a kind of shudder that spoke his inward emotion, "the air here is cold and damp, and it doth chill the marrow in these aged bones. Let us, an' it please your lordship, proceed at once with our business."

"Nay, my good lord," said Mountjoy, "I meant not to detain thee in such a spot as this, nor requires our affairs so much haste; let us enter; here is the host, Sir Edward

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Moore." That gentleman bowed profoundly. "He will be happy and proud to entertain so distinguished a guest."

Sir Edward declared that he would consider himself highly honored by having the Earl of Tyrone abide even for a short time under his roof, but O'Neill shook his head.

"Thanks for your courteous invitation," he said, "but I came hitherto perform an act which requires so great an effort as to unfit me for social converse. My lord Mountjoy, I came hither to acknowledge myself the queen's dutiful subject; but why equivocate? I came to tender my submission to her majesty; art thou prepared to receive it, as her representative?"

Mountjoy bowed a silent affirmative; and Sir Edward having thrown open a side door, the whole company entered a large apartment on the ground floor.

"I opine," said the earl, "that it will suffice for me to offer my submission before this goodly company. That is all that is necessary—at least I think so."

Mountjoy, as though unwilling to answer

the question, took from a page a letter of instruction, lately received on this subject, in which the queen herself prescribed the conditions and details of this important ceremony. The deputy proceeded to read aloud what was there laid down. In the first place, the chieftain was to make a formal submission on his knees (!) in presence of a certain number of witnesses, and to give in his consent, to receive English law and civilization into his territories. Tyrone was henceforward to be "shireground" as a quiet, respectable county. Its proprietor was at once and for ever to give up his hereditary title of *the O'Neill*, and to eschew *in toto* the barbarous customs of "Irishry."

A ghastly paleness overspread O'Neill's face as he listened, and a deep sigh escaped him, albeit that he kept his lips firmly compressed together, so as to smother all undue emotion. "And what am I to receive—or rather my people—in return for all this?" he asked in a subdued tone.

"In return," went on Mountjoy, "thou, Hugh O'Neill, are to retain the title of Earl of

Tyrone, together with all the lands erewhile bestowed upon thee by the royal bounty. Thou art to have a free and full pardon for past offences, and permission to live in any of thy castles, wheresoever thou dost think fit."

"Yes, yes," said the earl, with an impatience that could scarce be repressed, "but what of my people; the fate of an old man like me is not of much moment; but what guerdon are they to have? is our religion to be free or tramelled with bonds? for, if the latter, I will never consent."

"Thou and thy people—the whole province—will be left to pray as ye list, and practice whatsoever mummeries ye may," rejoined Mountjoy, snappishly, for it pleased him not that so much had been accorded to O'Neill.

"Then I submit," said Tyrone at once. "If we are to have our cherished faith in freedom, we cannot be utterly miserable; it will console us; and as that freedom was one of the greatest objects of my—of our ambition—all is not lost; I shall have still much fruit from my labors."

But it required strength from above to enable him—the victor of so many fields—the dictator of a whole nation—to kneel before a fellow-man, having no other authority than that deputed him by the queen of England. Turning away, then, he walked to a window, where he remained a few minutes, with head bent down in evident supplication, while a dead silence reigned in the room. When the earl once more approached Mountjoy, his face was composed, though pale as death, and he was heard to murmur, “My God, accept this sacrifice! it is for my people!” and without raising his eyes from the ground, he bent one knee before the deputy, at the same time presenting to him the hilt of his sword, unbuckled for the purpose. He would have repeated the words of submission, but this Mountjoy had the grace to spare him, and extending his hand, he said:

“Arise, my lord of Tyrone! it is enough.”

“Enough,” repeated the earl, slowly, while many a deep sob was heard from his afflicted followers. “Ay; it is enough; methinks even the queen can ask no more.

And now, my lord, as this matter is ended, I crave permission to withdraw."

On leaving Mellifont, the earl returned to his home, where he hoped to be left in peace, now that he had forsworn war. But such was not the purpose of the higher powers, for very soon after, he was summoned to accompany Lord Mountjoy to London, as was also Roderick O'Donnell, the present head of his sept. The queen, it appeared, would not be satisfied that these two great lords had indeed submitted to her authority, unless she heard the confession from their own lips. So O'Neill and O'Donnell were carried in a sort of triumph to London, attached, as it were, to the triumphal car of Mountjoy; and so delighted was the queen to receive their homage, that even in the palmiest days of his court-favor, she had never lavished more abundant kindness on O'Neill, while on O'Donnell, she bestowed the pompous title of Earl of Tyrconnell. (How contemptuously would his brother Hugh have rejected such a title!) In this visit all the promises on both sides

were ratified, and the two earls returned to Ireland, as the acknowledged vassals, it is true, of Elizabeth Tudor, but in the hope that they had at least secured religious liberty for themselves, and those who looked up to them for protection.

But alas! the princely possessions of O'Neill and O'Donnell could not possibly be left in the hands of "Popish traitors," and though there is not the shadow of proof that either one or the other entertained the slightest idea of having recourse again to arms, yet it suited the rapacious government to lay such designs to their charge, and a plot was speedily concocted, after the fashion of the Meal-Tub plot,—the Titus Oates of this one being a certain St. Lawrence, of accursed memory. The plot was a specious one, and well devised; and being laid to the especial charge of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, those noblemen were summoned before the council. It was feared, however, by those who coveted their domains, that in the event of a trial their innocence might be established; so they were both warned, by anonymous letters,

from pretended friends, not to appear before the council; and both having a wholesome fear of British justice, (as administered to McMahan,) before their eyes, they came to the resolution of effecting their escape from that hapless land; where spies and traitors haunted their every step, and where their patrimonial inheritance laid them ever open to the wiles of cupidity and avarice. There was nothing for them but flight; and hastily gathering together their nearest and most beloved relatives, they hastened on board a foreign ship, then anchored in Lough Swilly, and sought a refuge on the continent. Maguire, of Fermanagh, (with some of his connections,) was also of the party; he, too, being an object of suspicion; we should rather say that the noble country, "along Lough Erne shore," (as the old song has it,) was an object of desire to the greedy adventurers, who thirsted for estates in the fair province which had been to them for so many years a land of promise. Alas! what a sight was that for the faithful clansmen, thus of necessity deserted by their chieftains;

and well might Ireland, throughout all her extent, bewail that fatal hour. "It is certain," say the Four Masters, in their Annals, "it is certain that the sea hath not borne, and the wind hath not waisted, in modern times, a number of persons more eminent, illustrious, or noble in point of genealogy, heroic deeds, valor, feats of arms, and brave achievements, than they. Would that God had but permitted them to remain in their patrimonial inheritances until the children should arrive at the age of manhood! Woe to the heart that meditated; woe to the mind that conceived; woe to the counsel that recommended the project of this expedition, without knowing whether they should, to the end of their lives, be able to return to their ancient principalities and patrimonies!"

What we know of the subsequent life of this great chieftain is beyond measure melancholy. Not he it was that sought a quiet resting place for himself and his family, forgetting alike the country which had, for the most part, proved so ungrateful for his devoted services, and the world which he

had found so full of misery for many a long year past. No, O'Neill's love for Ireland was to end only with his life; and we find him, for the few years that he yet spent on earth, wandering about from court to court, beseeching and imploring the Catholic princes of Europe to do something for his suffering country. Alas! he was every where received with the respect, nay, veneration, due to his illustrious birth and high reputation, but nowhere could he obtain any efficient aid—all fearing to risk so large a force as the undertaking would require in a cause so precarious. Now it was before the Majesty of Spain that the old man bowed; but still with that dignity, that princely mien, which was his to the last, pleading the cause of Ireland—the cause of a kindred nation long suffering and never entirely subdued. Then it was at the footstool of the Papal throne, beseeching the Holy Father to have pity on his persecuted children of Ireland, reminding him, with glowing fervor, of their unchanging devotion, their unalterable adherence to the chair of Peter, and describing, with an earnestness

that showed the intensity of his feelings, the cruel torments inflicted by the English reformers on the faithful children of the church in that unhappy country. And Paul listened with a quivering lip, and eyes filled with tears, for the good pontiff loved the Irish Catholics with an affection corresponding to their devotedness; and his paternal heart yearned over their unmerited and long-protracted sufferings. Fain would he have done as his wishes dictated, but from his small territories he could not possibly spare a number of men sufficient to render any signal service. "Only let Philip of Spain send some ten thousand men," he said, "and we will, with God's assistance, and with hearty good will, contribute our full quota. But thou knowest, our dear son, that what we could afford to give from our poor states would be of no manner of use against the mighty power of the Philistines, who hold that devoted island in thrall. They would be at once captured, or perchance cut to pieces, which would grieve our paternal heart, and give us cause to reproach ourselves.

May God stir up the heart of our royal son, Philip, that he may stretch out his hand over that poor, suffering land, with its millions of faithful believers."

But Philip, though professing, (and perhaps feeling,) all manner of interest in the condition of the Irish people, could not yet be persuaded to venture on sending an army to their aid, having ever before him the luckless termination of the last expedition, under Don Juan d'Aquila. And so it every where was; all felt, or affected to feel, for the persecuted Irish, but none would risk anything worth while for their sake, and still O'Neill kept moving about, from court to court, hoping ever, that some one prince might be moved to furnish some assistance. Everywhere he carried with him, and presented, as an eloquent appeal to their compassion, some account from Ireland, of some atrocity perpetrated; but vain, vain—all were ready to pity, but none to aid.

In the midst of his toilsome, yet fruitless wanderings, O'Neill was informed that his companion in misfortune, the Earl of Tyrcon-



nell, had sunk, at Rome, under the weight of his sorrows; and though this Rory had never been to him what his brother Hugh had been, yet the tidings had power to sadden his heart, as he thought of the thousands and thousands of hearts who would mourn afar among the pastoral hills of Tyrconnell, on hearing of their chieftain's death. And then, as imagination painted before him the lonely death-bed of O'Donnell, he felt the tear of sympathy trickle down his cheek. "And his brother, too," said he, in his own sad heart, "the bravest and noblest who ever ruled in Tyrconnell, poor Hugh died far away in the stranger's land; far away from that hapless land, for which he had so long and so valiantly fought. And such shall be my last hours, too. With a broken spirit, and a worn-out frame, O'Neill will lay him down for his last, long sleep, and in a foreign soil shall his grave be made. But thou, oh God! wilt be near me, and though before men, my mission hath failed, and the object of my life be still unattained, yet thou, who canst read the secrets of all hearts,

—thou who seest the entire devotedness of mine, to the work which thou gavest me to do—thou, I trust, wilt not hold its failure against me, but wilt have mercy on my poor soul.”

Though the king of Spain would not consent to send an expedition to Ireland, yet he proved that he really commiserated the sufferings of her princes and her people, for he settled an annual pension, amply sufficient to support their rank, on the exiled chiefs. Poor Maguire died some time after, at Geneva, being on his way to Spain; and in the course of a little time, all the sorrowing survivors of that melancholy band, took up their final residence in the Eternal City, being desirous of terminating their mortal career, at the centre of Catholic faith and unity. They all dropped off, one by one, within a few years of each other, until O'Neill was nearly alone. Cathbar O'Donnell, the young brother of Hugh Roe, survived his brother Roderick but a short time; and before O'Neill was himself summoned from this terrestrial scene, he saw the grave

close on his faithful Catherina, the devoted companion of his wanderings, together with her three children.

It is painful to imagine the forlorn condition of the aged chief for a little while previous to his death. It had pleased heaven (as though with a view to sanctify his soul, by every variety of suffering) to deprive him of his sight; and for months before his release, the eyes of his body were closed on this outer world. How busy must memory then have been, retracing ever, the endless changes of his long career. The glories of his meridian years were before him, but they brought no joy to his heart; he looked back in spirit, to the ensanguined fields of Clontibret, Benburb, and the Yellow Ford, with other scenes, where his arms had been victorious, though in a lesser degree; they were all bright with the sunny reflection from the past, but they excited only a mournful feeling, for their fruit was wanting. Thus, when reminded of those by-gone glories, he would shake his head, and say with mournful emphasis: "Ay! those were glimpses of

what Ireland might become, were her chiefs and people actuated by one common spirit of patriotism, and bound together by hatred of oppression; but alas! what are they now? what traces have they left? those fields of fight, so glorious in their day, are not my poor faithful people still in bondage? Marathon and Thermopylæ were not greater triumphs to the Greeks of old, than were Clontibret and *Beal-an-atha-buidhe* to the Irish, yet how different the results? Ah! truly these victories of ours are now but saddening recollections, and so will they remain until the day of freedom dawns on my hapless country. So long as Ierne is content to remain the bond-slave of the tyrant, so long will these be thought upon with anything but triumph."

"And yet," said one to whom he spoke thus, "and yet they are calculated to foster the hopes of Irishmen."

"Ay! there thou hast touched upon the only thought connected with them, that yields me aught of consolation," returned O'Neill, his pale cheek flushing with

unwonted color, and the tear of emotion rushing to his sightless eyes, "In ages to come, when a healthful spirit may awake in the souls of our people, they may happily view these triumphs of our day as beacons, pointing out the way to freedom. Then may the faded glories, which will linger ever above the banks of the Blackwater, and the hills around Clontibret, shine suddenly out as stars of hope; and though the Red Hand may no longer point the road to independence, yet some other sign of equal power may enkindle the fire of patriotism, and the banners of leaders, yet to be born, may wave over fields of conquest; oh, may they bear more permanent fruits than were vouchsafed to my successes."

At length the hour had arrived when the weary was to find rest; when that noble heart, so long animated by the highest and most generous feelings, was at last to become still and cold; and when the action of that variously-gifted mind was for ever to cease, at least so far as concerned this world. Blind, and old, and dependent on the bounty

of a foreign prince, the great chieftain of Tyr-owen—the star of the Hy-Niall race, was still himself, and died as a Catholic prince should. His death-bed was not lonely, for it was surrounded by cardinals, and the consecrated ministers of religion. Calmly he died, and at peace with all mankind; one of his last exclamations being an humble thanksgiving, that in the days of his power and of his triumph, he had never outraged the faith for which he fought, by any act of wanton cruelty; mercy had ever been the handmaid of his victories, and now on his bed of death he rejoiced that such had been the case. Even the Supreme Pontiff himself repaired in person to honor the death-bed of the illustrious champion of Ireland and Catholicity; and the last sounds that fell upon his closing ear, were the voices of the princes of the church, as they offered up, in concert, the prayers for the dying. The last words that hovered on the lips of the dying chieftain were, “Oh God! have mercy on my soul; and in thine own good time release my country from bondage!”

And thus he died—died as he had anticipated, far from the land of his love, but enjoying the plentitude of religious peace; for his worn and weary spirit had long been detached from this nether world. Peace to his soul! How applicable to this great, though unfortunate chieftain, the words of Davis, though relating to an Irishman of a far different stamp:

“For in him the heart of a woman combined
With a heroic life and a governing mind—
A martyr for Ireland; his grave has no stone;
His name seldom named, and his virtues unknown.”

Near him, in the consecrated earth of Rome, sleep Roderick and Cathbar O'Donnell, with several of the younger branches of their respective houses; but the eldest son of O'Neill, he who should have inherited the titles and possessions of his family, was some years after found strangled in his bed in Brussels. With this Henry O'Neill expired, the immediate family of the great Earl of Tyrone, and is it too improbable to be suspected that the gold of England had rewarded this deed, as her dark policy had instigated it?

How melancholy is the reflection so naturally suggesting itself to the mind that, let us go where we will or may, through the populous countries of the old world, or the rising states of the new, we can find no spot where some "Exile of Erin" hath not found a resting place. For centuries past, the noblest and best of Ireland's children have been driven forth, from their native soil, on one account or the other, by the "pitiless masters," who rule their old land. Every where they have attained fame and distinction; and in the brilliant success of many amongst them, they have raised up an enduring reproach to the English name. And yet, (how retributive is the justice of God!) they have, on many a field, wreaked vengeance on the Moloch who hath for so many ages trampled on their country. On every battle-field, whether of Europe or America, the pride of Britain has been humbled. Providence has so ordained it, that Irishmen, and the sons of Irishmen, have been arrayed against them, either as illustrious individuals or in imposing ranks.

Thus, in the intolerance of her bigotry and the grasping selfishness of her policy, she has cast forth from the land they loved so well, its O'Neills and O'Donnells, O'Reillys, Blakes, and Dillons; but their descendants, in the van of mighty armies, have revenged the wrong, ay, an hundred fold, as Fontenoy and many an American field can tell. And who can tell but that, when the hour of her final doom is come, the arm of Ireland may hurl against her the deadliest blow?

As a fitting conclusion to this passing sketch of O'Neill's career, I shall here transcribe at least a portion of that celebrated Ode, or Elegy, on the death of these Ulster princes, at Rome, which, written by O'Donnell's bard, and addressed to the surviving sister of those noble brothers, has been translated into English, by poor Clarence Mangan, in a style befitting his high reputation as a translator. It will be remembered that the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, with several members of their respective families, were buried in the same spot of earth—being all within a few feet of each other—on St. Peter's Hill.

" O woman of the piercing wall,
Who mournest e'er yon mound of clay,
With sigh and groan,
Would God thou wert among the Gael!
Thou wouldst not then, from day to day,
Weep thus alone.

'T were long before, around a grave
In green Tyrconnell, one could find
This loneliness;
Near where Beann-Boirche's banners wave,
Such grief as thine could ne'er have pined
Companionless.

Beside the wave, in Donegal,
In Antrim's glens, or fair Dromore,
Or Killilee,

Or where the sunny waters fall,
At Asaroe, near Erne's shore,
This could not be.

On Derry's plains, in rich Drumcliffe,
Throughout Armagh the great, renowned
In olden years,

No day could pass but woman's grief,
Would rain upon the burial-ground,
Fresh floods of tears!

O, no! from Shannon, Boyne, and Suir,
From high Dunluce's castle-walls,
From Lisadill,

Would flock alike, both rich and poor;
One wall would rise from Cruachan's halls
To Tara's hill;

And some would come from Barrow's side,
And many a maid would leave her home
On Leitrim's plains,

And by melodious Banna's tide,
And by the Mourne, and Erne, to come
And swell thy strains!

Two princes of the line of Conn.
 Sleep in their cells of clay, beside
 O'Donnell Roe;
 Three royal youths, alas! are gone,
 Who lived for Erin's weal, but died
 For Erin's woe!
 Ah! could the men of Ireland read
 The names these noteless burial-stones
 Display to view,
 Their wounded heart afresh would bleed,
 Their tears gush forth again, their groans
 Resound anew!

The youths whose relics moulder here,
 Were sprung from Hugh, high prince and lord
 Of Aileach's lands;
 Thy noble brothers, justly dear,
 Thy nephew, long to be deplored,
 By Ulster's bands.
 There were not souls wherein dull time
 Could domicile decay, or house
 Decrepitude!
 They passed from earth, ere manhood's prime,
 Ere years had power to dim their brows,
 Or chill their blood.

O, had these twain, and he, the third,
 The Lord of Mourne, O'Nial's son,
 Their mate in death;
 A prince in look, in deed, and word,
 Had these three heroes yielded on
 The field, their breath;
 O, had they fallen on Criffan's plain,
 There would not be a town or clan
 From shore to sea,
 But would, with shrieks, bewail the slain,
 Or chant aloud th' exulting *rann**
 Of jubilee!

* Song or strain.

When high the shout of battle rose,
 On fields where freedom's torch still burn'd,
 Thro' Erin's gloom,
 If one, if barely one of those
 Were slain, all Ulster would have mourn'd
 The hero's doom!
 If at Athboy, where hosts of brave
 Uldian horsemen sank, beneath
 The shock of spears.
 Then Hugh O'Neill had found a grave,
 Long must the north have wept his death,
 With heart-wrung tears!

What do I say?—ah! woe is me!
 Already do we wall in vain
 Their fatal fall!
 And Erin, once the great and free,
 How vainly mourns her breakless chain,
 And iron thrall!
 Then, daughter of O'Donnell, dry
 Thine overflowing eyes, and turn
 Thy heart aside,
 For Adam's race is born to die,
 And sternly the sepulchral urn
 Mocks human pride!

Look not, nor sigh for earthly throne,
 Nor place thy trust in arm of clay;
 But on thy knees
 Uplift thy soul to God alone,
 For all things go their destined way
 As he decrees.
 Embrace the faithful crucifix,
 And seek the path of pain and prayer,
 Thy Savior trod;
 Nor let thy spirit intermix
 With earthly hope and worldly care,
 Its groans to God!

RED HAND OF ULSTER.

And thou, oh mighty Lord, whose ways
Are far above our feeble minds
To understand,
Sustain us in these doleful days,
And render light, the chain that binds
Our fallen land!
Look down upon our dreary state,
And thro' the ages, that may still
Roll sadly on,
Watch thou o'er hapless Erin's fate,
And shield, at least, from darker ill,
The blood of Conn."

THE END.





