

now in cooler moments he marvelled how himself and his companions could have been so reckless. He had forgotten the rush of fire that swept over his brain as he witnessed last night the doings of the soldiery.

All these reflections followed one another rapidly—men's thoughts run rapidly in moments of peril—and the next moment the question presented itself to his mind: How had he escaped, and what were they going to do with him?

He looked attentively and sharply about him. He was seated beside a pillar, a rough-hewn piece of timber, his hands firmly fastened together, and the rope that bound them tied to the strong upright. Before him was the square, with its unstriving sleepers strewn around; and at the farther side was the long line of picketed horses, the soldiers to whom they belonged slumbering beside, each man's arm passed through the bridle ready to leap up, mount and saddle at the first blast of the bugle. So much he saw at a glance, for the dawn was come and the night gone. Happening to turn his eyes to the covering over head, he saw it was composed of loose boards or planking, through which his sight fell on such figurers as but seldom interpose themselves between newly awakened sleeper and the pale, faint light of the pure dawn. They were the forms of men suspended there, hanging from the rough improvised gallows, the victims of the previous night.

He paused in amazement and horror. It was not the first time in his life he had seen men hung for one reason or another, for military or civil offences, but the sight never came with such shocking effect as now. He had never seen them from such a position before, and so unexpectedly; the soles of their boots presented themselves first to him, the bodies seemed abnormally foreshortened, and there was a grotesque air on the faces, looked thus, as if they were peering down through the chinks of the platform gravely watching him.

He turned with a shudder from them, and as he did the noise of approaching footsteps fell on his ears, not coming in regular tread, as soldiers would come, but irregularly and in confused disorder. One of the party was speaking in loud tones, waking up the slumbering soldiers at the other side, who raised themselves on their elbows and looked over, but seeing who it was, laid themselves down again to sleep. Whilst he was trying to remember whose the voice was that was so familiar, the on-comers had passed the barrier, and came directly opposite him on the path, and into view.

"Sir Charles Coote!" thought Maurice, as that officer presented himself before him and stopped, the others of his party stopping, too.

"So this is where we find you," he said, addressing the captain; "a colonel of His Majesty's regiment aiding a rebellion!"

"Not a rebellion," said Maurice, "but a defence of his hapless subjects. The King would never—"

"Rebellion!" interrupted a quick, energetic voice behind Sir Charles; "do you call this rebellion? Are slaughtered men and murdered women signs of rebellion? Are yonder burned houses signs of rebellion? They are; but they are of rebellion on the part of armed forces—of armed rebels against peace and order!"

"Peace, fool!" cried a soldier, striking the speaker on the face with the butt end of his gun.

And then Maurice's eyes attracted to the speaker, saw to his surprise—even under the circumstances—that it was Friar Tully who spoke the bold words.

"Nay, let him speak," said Sir Charles in mild astonishment of the blow, "we shall shortly hear how he will speak from your platform. I would we had time to give him some previous exercises."

"Your work is there before you, inhuman scoundrel!" said the Friar undauntedly, pointing to the suspended forms, "before you and all around you. But the eye of God, who sees it, will note it, and measure its punishment. He, whose creatures they are, will call you to retributive account for them."

"I had intended hanging you—" said the officer coldly, but he was interrupted by the Friar:

"It may not lie in your power to end my life. The God who gave it to me, gave it for better purpose than to have it ended at your hands. You—I tell it you here before your soldiers, and surrounded by evidences of your savage cruelty and murders—you will face the judgment seat of God and account for your works before me!"

There was something wonderfully solemn in the words of the speaker, and in his slender form, as he stood before his captors, Coote paused a moment and stared at him, apparently revolving something in his mind. For a moment merely, for in measured words he then said:

"I had intended hanging you here, as a further warning to these deluded people, and as a sign to them of what you and your like have brought on them. I shall not do so now. You shall come back with us, and I shall have every muscle of your body torn to pieces on the rack before you are launched into eternity!"

"I dare your worst, tyrant!"

"Bear him hence," said the officer, "else he may tempt me to have his foul tongue torn out by the roots. Nay, by Heaven! at this moment"—he burst out as if altering his mind and resolving to have the punishment carried into effect at once—"But no! Take him away. We have not time now!"

The soldiers thrust him before them with the butt ends of their carbines, and Sir Charles Coote and some of his officers remained behind. The former again addressed himself to Maurice.

"What brought you here? How did you escape?"

"That I cannot tell."

"You mean you will not tell?"

"Yes."

"What brought you to Ireland?"

"I do not recognise your right to question me," said Maurice, "but I have no objection to say it was private business."

"The King sent you?"

"No."

"He sent you to Ireland to stir up massacre and rebellion. We know it! Your presence here last night alone shows it. The forces of the Government attacked and slain show it."

"No. I came here escaping from unwarranted imprisonment at your hands—I, an officer in his Majesty's guards. I saw how his Irish subjects were being massacred at your orders, and I sought to save them."

"I see," said the officer, with quiet sarcasm.

"I have seen soldiers fight with soldiers," continued Maurice, "but for the first time in my life I have seen soldiers war with helpless men and women, and—children."

"We have punished those whose hands are red with the blood of the innocent, and we shall continue to do so. But I did not come to argue with you. You have been caught in open rebellion. That is palpable. Yet as there is grace for every one who does a service, I shall forgive your offences if you write out a statement of who sent you to Ireland, and for what purpose."

Maurice looked at him wonderingly. The commander's bearing was so calm, and his words so conciliatory, he seemed in his easy courtesy so different from what might be expected in the man whose savage cruelties made the day hideous, that for the moment Maurice could not make out what he meant.

"Who sent me, and for what purpose?" he half repeated, half queried.

"That the King sent you, and for the purpose of aiding in the rebellion—for the purpose of extirpating the English settlers and the English garrison," said Coote, severely.

"He did nothing of the kind, nor did I come for any such purpose," replied Maurice, all his loyalty evoked by the insidious proposal. "My life would be—"

"Your life is of no value to us," interrupted Coote. "Your testimony is—nor that either, if the need is forced on us. We shall find—or cause to be found—the documents we need on your person after your death. But we should prefer to have them in your handwriting. We shall give you an hour to consider, and if by that time you are not in a mood to give them, we shall settle the matter summarily."

Maurice was about to reply, but was not vouchsafed time, for the commander of the raiding forces, with his attendant officers, departed—the latter evidently disappointed that the business on hand was thus unreasonably delayed.

Maurice, left alone, had time to think. He was weak and exhausted. He had eaten nothing during his long ride of the previous day and the weakness of body, consequent on the excitement and weariness, had extended itself to his mind. He was, therefore, much more composed and free from excitement and strain than he would otherwise be.

Knowing as he did how matters were proceeding between the King and the Parliament in England, he knew well why Coote was so anxious to obtain from him this compromising document. Once published in England, once read in Parliament, to show that Charles had lent himself to this rebellion of his Irish subjects, the fate of the king was sealed. Not alone the Parliament and the Puritans would be against him, but even his own followers would renounce him. The truest and most loyal of his cavaliers would sheathe their swords and withdraw from his banner. But the captive only thought for a moment of this, and then turned his mind from it. If harm and injury were only to come from his hands to his sovereign, then harm to him never should come. He was sorry they had not put him to the proof at once and ended the matter. An hour's further existence was but of little moment—was, indeed, but an hour of torture.

His thoughts reverted to the beautiful girl at Dublin Castle who had given him, at such risk to herself, his liberty and her love. How strongly limned on his brain was every whispered word, every movement of her graceful form, every smile tinged with anxiety that shot from her dark eyes! How painful was the thought that he should never see her again. It was the only thing that lent a pang to death. He would have preferred death on the battle field, but he was too much of a soldier not to expect it some time or other under untoward circumstances. But the eternal parting with her added a terror unknown before to it. Never to see her more, to hear the music of her voice, to see the entrancing glory of her face! Leaving her behind him, to be the guerdon of another more fortunate than he. Would he had never come to Ireland! Would that the night he had landed on her fated shores he had retraced his steps!

Which reflection brought back to him the incidents of that night, and among other things the warning voice that bade him return. Had some one really spoken in his ears, or was it merely the presentiment of his future fate that threw its shadow before and impressed him? Such things had been—had occurred to others—and why not to him? If he had obeyed the mysterious monitor, what a series of troubles would have been saved him!

But all the time the minutes were speeding on; the sands in the glass were running swiftly down; and the shores of the unseen and unknown world were coming almost within touch!

*(To be Continued.)*

The Holy Father has administered First Communion to Antoine de Obarette, the son of the well-known Legitimist General. The Holy Father is very fond of the boy, says the London *Register*, and the story goes that during the year of the Papal Jubilee he gave him leave to choose a present from the offerings exhibited in the Vatican. The child, instead of selecting one of the priceless gems or pictures presented to the Pope, took an almost worthless ornament, which might have been bought in the Palais Royal for a few francs.

The favour of this world is no sign of the Saints. The cross is their portion. The voice of the many is no test of truth, nor warrant of right, nor rule of duty. Truth and right, and a pure conscience, have been ever with the few.—Cardinal Manning.

The new Duke of Aosta, who would become heir to the Italian throne in the event of the death of the weakly and delicate Crown Prince, is a tall, handsome young man, with perfect cut features. He is exceedingly wealthy, having inherited from his mother a fortune of 6,000,000 dollars.