

county and had enacted deeds of cruelty that surprised all other incidents of war.

It was impossible to come up with them, for well mounted, and with plenty of horses requisitioned, or forcibly taken from the farms on their line of march and for miles on either side of them, they were enabled to proceed with great speed. Moreover they had full forewarning of the fate in store for them should they have to encounter the fury of the Wicklow men, and hence they let no grass grow under their feet until they reached Dublin. The Wicklow men made all speed to come up with them, but marching mainly on foot they were placed at a grievous disadvantage, and when they came to the headlands of Kilcool they had the mortification of seeing the last of the redcoats defiling, in the far distance by the base of the Sugar Loaf. There was nothing left for them to do but to follow after, and making a detour by Dublin, unite their forces with those coming from elsewhere and march on to Drogheda, now besieged by Sir Phelim O'Neil.

But everywhere on their forward way the signs of the raiding column were apparent. It was as if a legion of demons had been let loose over the land. Burned houses were plenty; the thatched roofs—slated houses were then unknown—having fallen down between the walls, were still smouldering, and a cloud of sickening smoke arising, darkened the light of day. By the side of the road where the trees grew, forms dangling from the boughs and swaying in the breeze told their own tale—mute and powerful. Here and there by the roadside and further afield when they rode over to get some information as to the track of the soldiery and their probable number, the forms of young girls and women lying across the threshold or in the bawn stark and dead told such a story of horror and woe as made strong men cry out in irrefrainable horror and vengeance. There seemed to have been no one left on the line of march, or, if there had, they must have fled in an agony of fear to the woods and the hills. Once, indeed, they came to a house—it was far inland from the road—which, for some inexplicable reason, the burner's torch had spared. Its white walls were still fresh and bright; the grey-brown coat of thatch, so pleasant and homely-looking, had been undisturbed. Wonderingly they rode towards it—curious, in the midst of the sense of horror that assailed them from all sides, to see why it, almost alone, had remained intact.

It was a bright picture in the midst of desolation, an oasis in the desert that men's hands had created. The roses grow in the garden; and clematis and wild flowers, protected by the heavy overhanging, but neatly-cut eaves of thatch, still grew up to and covered the windows. It looked, as they came near, the very abode of peace and innocence, an exception to the many similar houses scattered around which now showed but hideous blackened walls and the dull column of still blacker smoke arising.

They had been riding in silence, for with anger and agony in their hearts they could not give utterance to words; neither could the men who rode behind, save in their ejaculation of horror; but the sight of this unexpected house, left untouched, loosed their tongues.

"What can be the meaning of it, Maurice?" asked O'Byrne, as he reined up his steed and looked wonderingly towards it.

"I am puzzled to think. Perhaps they have not seen it. Perhaps it escaped their attention."

"No; not that. See!—their cavalry has been all around here. The tracks of their horses' hoofs are numerous enough."

"It must be that. It is some English settler—though I was not aware of any here. See! there is the owner standing at the door. Let us make inquiries."

Riding a little further to the front Maurice perceived the man referred to. He was standing at his own door, his hands in his pockets, his hat bent down on one side, with the attitude of one in deep and profound contemplation. Heaven knows he had food for such deep reflection as seldom occurs to human beings in the course of their travail through this world.

"Hello!" cried O'Byrne, as crossing a little garden the gate of which lay wide open, they came to a high hedge of privet, trimly and neatly cut, which prevented them from coming nearer, without making a wide detour.

"Hello!"

There was no reply from the man. He stood stock still as he was, sunk in the same profound meditation, and took no notice of the shouted salutation.

"Hello! I say! Do you hear? Can you tell me whether any troops are around?" Colonel O'Byrne called out again in a loud voice. But still there was no response. The man never lifted his head to take notice of the hail, nor stirred from his attitude of thought.

"The man has grown dazed from fear and terror," said the questioner. "Wait here, Maurice, I shall ride round to the gate and approach him;" and, suiting the action to the word, he galloped along the hedge till he came to a gate, and getting through this, trotted briskly up to the door. Dismounting, and throwing the reins over the bough of a tree, Maurice saw his friend pass up to the unanswering man, pass him by, and enter the house.

"Sulky dog!" thought Maurice, "the scoundrels probably knew their own. If he were a worthy fellow, his home would have been given to the flames. They could well have spared many a better man's household gods."

But whilst he thus thought, Hugh O'Byrne came again from the house into the open, and called aloud, "Maurice, come here!—ride quickly! Bring the men with you."

Motioning to the men to follow him, Maurice put spurs to his horse and trotted round. As he came near his friend, he leaped from his saddle and stood by his side.

"Come with me, Maurice," said the latter, and approached the door.

For a moment Maurice glanced curiously at the irresponsive, sulky owner standing at his doorway, but immediately started back in surprise, for the form standing there in seeming cogitation, his hands in his pockets, disclosed itself in its true light. There was no gleam of intelligence in that bent head. The man was hanging from

an iron crook in the frame of the door, the short rope round his neck causing his head to fall on one side, giving him at a distance the curious attitude of thought. His toes were within a straw's breadth of the threshold stone, and his hands were closely tied by his sides. His tongue, hanging out, was nearly bitten through by his teeth, and was swollen and black—a shocking and sickening sight!

Maurice started back in amazement. Notwithstanding all the scenes of murder he had witnessed, the suddenness and unexpectedness of this startled him immeasurably.

"My God! O'Byrne," he said, with uplifted hands, in the moment of his surprise, whilst a chorus of expressions of astonishment from the horsemen behind showed that they too had seen the sight and that it had come with equal unexpectedness upon them.

"That is not the worst, Maurice," said O'Byrne, with bent brow.

"There is worse inside—come in."

The interior was, like the exterior, unharmed. The large kitchen table contained the remains of a feast that had been spread for the marauders, and dishes containing remnants of fowl, legs of mutton, and other eatables attested the plentifulness of the repast, whilst the horn tumblers, with the relics of drink still evident in them showed that the meal had not been wanting in the livelier elements either. There was an air of comfort, not to say wealth, around the place that showed the owner to have been a man of substance.

A passing glance showed all this. But Maurice, pausing to take a look at the interior, as strange to him as would be those Flemish drinking kitchens with Boers drinking, which Van Dyk has so often represented, O'Byrne said:

"Maurice—Maurice, see here!"

Maurice, followed by some of the horsemen who, through curiosity, came in also, entered the inner room.

For some moments he could not well see, for the apartment was rather darker than the other, but the keen eyes looking over his shoulder saw what he did not, and he knew by the quickened breathing, as of men undergoing suffocation and pausing for breath, that the sight must be something strange. And presently, his eyes becoming accustomed to the gloom, he saw a female form—her hands were uplifted and rigid, as if in the last struggle for life, or in an access of horror she had thrown them up, and in the sudden flight of life they had remained in that position! The latter, indeed, was probably the case, for in the wide open and staring eyes there was a look of awful terror that seemed to make the pupils ready to burst. It was a sight to hold and enchain the gaze of the spectator in its stony terror; and, perfectly motionless, Maurice looked on unable to withdraw his eyes.

He would have been unable of his own motion to withdraw them so fascinated was he with the dreadful sight, if O'Byrne had not taken him by the arm and wheeled him round. Power for further awe was gone from him else he would have been still more shocked for, transfixed on a spear standing erect against the corner of the wall, was the body of a newly-born child; on a bed further in, with its head to the foot of the other, both occupying the entire length of the room, lay the dead body of a young girl, possibly a sister or attendant upon her, whose rigid hands were raised aloft. The spear-shaft, upon the summit of which the little newcomer lay, was a military one, and the soldier who bore it probably thought it served too ornamental a purpose in its present use to withdraw it. The white curtains surrounding the beds, once daintily and carefully kept—a young wife's care—were spotted here and there with crimson stains.

What awful scenes must have occurred in this apartment where the forms now mute and silent lay! What tragedies the eye of the recording angel must have looked upon—nameless, unspeakable! What sight the sun of noonday must have set its light upon!—never to be told in this world.

It was some time before any of those groups around the doorway were able to stir, much less to speak, so petrified were they with the sight before them; and when at last they did, it was with bated breath, as of men who stood in the veritable presence of death—as if they felt by some supernatural instinct that unseen beings from another world were crowding the room with them!

"Maurice, is not this shocking?" whispered O'Byrne.

"Aful!" whispered the latter in return.

"We should bury these poor things. It would be desecration to leave them here. Else the wild dogs may—"

"Yes," said Maurice with a shudder, "I think so."

The whispers were heard by the men beside them, looking on with white faces, who nodded assent; and some of them moved away to put the suggestion into operation and to look for the necessary implements wherewith to open the ground. But whilst they were thus engaged, some of the people who had fled to the hills and woods returned, finding that the soldiers had gone and that friends were around, and came to the house—the only one unburnt. The charge of the murdered family was committed to their care for more reverent burial in consecrated ground, and amidst wail and *caoine* from the new mourners the Wicklow-men moved off.

There was but little use in further following the retreating force. They must be by this time in Bray and sparring hard for Dublin. It was necessary in avoiding the city to make a wide detour, so they turned towards the Dublin mountains, and after some days' marching came towards the northern borders of Meath where that county intervenes between the counties of Dublin and Louth.

(To be continued.)

Some Moslem preachers, encouraged by their success in India are said to be contemplating a raid into the United States. Judging from the condition of matrimonial affairs among the non-Catholic population, the Moslem missionaries should find a wide and fruitful field in America.

In Cowly's county, Washington, which has been settled for forty years and has 7,000 inhabitants, is a section covering several townships that has never been trodden by the foot of a white man. It is a dense, impenetrable wilderness.