

THE STORY OF IRELAND

(By A. M. SULLIVAN.)

CHAPTER XXXVII.—HOW COMMANDER COSBY HELD A "FEAST" AT MULLAGHMAST; AND HOW "RUARI OGE" RECOMPENSED THAT "HOSPITALITY." A VICEROY'S VISIT TO GLENMALURE, AND HIS RECEPTION THERE.

Before passing to the next great event of this era, I may pause to note here a few occurrences worthy of record, but for which I did not deem it advisable to break in upon the consecutive narration of the Geraldine war. My endeavor throughout is to present to my young readers in clear and distinct outline a sketch of the chief event of each period more or less complete by itself, so that it may be easily comprehended and remembered. To this end I omit many minor incidents and occurrences, which, if engrafted or brought in upon the main narrative, might have a tendency to confuse and bewilder the facts in one's recollection.

It was within the period which we have just passed over that the ever-memorable massacre of Mullaghmast occurred. It is not, unhappily, the only tragedy of the kind to be met with in our blood-stained annals; yet it is of all the most vividly perpetuated in popular traditions. In 1577, Sir Francis Cosby, commanding the Queen's troops in Leix and Offaly, formed a diabolical plot for the permanent conquest of that district. Peace at the moment prevailed between the Government and the inhabitants; but Cosby seemed to think that in *extirpation* lay the only effectual security for the Crown. Feigning, however, great friendship, albeit suspicious of some few "evil disposed" persons, said not to be well-affected, he invited to a grand feast all the chief families of the territory; attendance thereat being a sort of test of amity. To this summons responded the flower of the Irish nobility in Leix and Offaly, with their kinsmen and friends—the O'Mores, O'Kellys, Lalors, O'Nolans, etc. The "banquet"—alas!—was prepared by Cosby in the great Rath or Fort of Mullach-Maisten, or Mullaghmast, in Kildare Co. Into the great rath rode many a pleasant cavalcade that day; but none ever came forth that entered in. A gentleman named Lalor who had halted a little way off had his suspicions in some way aroused. He noticed, it is said, that while many went into the rath, none were seen to reappear outside. Accordingly he desired his friends to remain behind while he advanced and reconnoitred. He entered cautiously. Inside, what a horrid spectacle met his sight! At the very entrance the dead bodies of some of his slaughtered kinsmen! In an instant he himself was set upon; but, drawing his sword, he hewed his way out of the fort and back to his friends, and they barely escaped with their lives to Dysart! He was the only Irishman, out of more than 400 who entered the fort that day, that escaped with life! The invited guests were butchered to a man, 180 of the O'Mores alone having thus perished.

The peasantry long earnestly believed and asserted that on the encircled rath of slaughter rain nor dew never fell, and that the ghosts of the slain might be seen, and their groans distinctly heard "on the solemn midnight blast!"—

O'er the Rath of Mullaghmast,
On the solemn midnight blast,
What bleeding spectres pass'd
With their gashed breasts bare!

Hast thou heard the fitful wail
That o'erloads the sullen gale
When the waning moon shines pale
O'er the cursed ground there?

Hark! hollow moans arise
Through the black tempestuous skies,
And curses, strife, and cries,
From the lone rath swell;

For bloody Sydney there
Nightly fills the lurid air
With the unholy pompous glare
Of the foul, deep hell.

False Sydney! knighthood's stain!
The trusting brave—in vain
Thy guests—ride o'er the plain
To thy dark cow'd snare;

Flow'r of Offaly and Leix,
They have come thy board to grace—
Fools! to meet a faithless race,
Save with true swords bare.

While cup and song abound,
The triple lines surrounded
The closed and guarded mound,
In the night's dark noon.

Alas! too brave O'Moore,
Ere the revelry was o'er,
They have spill'd thy young heart's gore,
Snatch'd from love too soon!

At the feast, unarmed all,
Priest, bard, and chieftain fall
In the treacherous Saxon's hall,
O'er the bright wine bowl;

And now nightly round the board,
With unshath'd and reeking sword,
Strides the cruel felon lord
Of the blood-stain'd soul.

Since that hour the clouds that pass'd
O'er the Rath of Mullaghmast,
One tear have never cast
On the gore-dyed sod;

For the shower of crimson rain
That o'erflowed that fatal plain,
Cries aloud, and not in vain,
To the most high God!

(To be continued.)

TO THE RETURNING BRAVE,

Victorious knights without reproach or fear—
As close as man is ever to the stars!—
Our welcome met you on the ocean drear
In loud, free winds and sunset's golden bars.
Here, at our bannered gate
Love, honor, laurels wait.
Though you be humble, we are proud, and, in your stead,
Clate.

Fame shall not tire to tell, no sordid stain
Lies on your purpose, on your record none.
No broken word, no violated fane,
No winning one would wish had ne'er been won.
You were our message sent
To the torn Continent;
That with its hope and faith henceforth our faith and hope
are blent.

You of our new, our homespun chivalry,
Here is our welcome—in all women's eyes,
The envious handclasp, romping children's glee,
Music, and color, and glad tears that rise.
Here every voice of Peace
Shall bruit our joy, nor cease
To vie with shotless guns to shout your blameless victories.

But, though you are a part of all men's pride,
And from your fortitude new nations date,
Oh, lay not yet your sacred steel aside,
But save it for the still-imperilled state.
You who have bound a girth
Of new hope around the earth,
Should its firm bond be loosened here, what were your
struggles worth?

A redder peril dogs the path of war;
With fire and poison wanton children play;
And fickle crowds toward new pretenders pour
Who summon demons they can never lay.
Already we can hear,
Importunately near,
The snarling of the savage crew, half fury and half jeer.

Then hang not up your arms till you have taught
The ungrateful guests about our hearth and board
That in your swift encounter has been wrought
A keener edge to our reluctant sword.
You who know well the price
Of the great sacrifice
Your courage saved us once; pray Heaven, it need not
save us twice.

And those who come not back, who mutely lie
By Marne or Meuse or tangled Argonne wood,
Were it to lose the gain (let them reply!)
Would we recall their spirits if we could!
Open your ranks and save
Their places with the brave,
That Liberty may greet you all, her shields of land and
wave.

ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON.