

"Well, my dear friend," said Reilly, "put up your cudgel; I really don't covet a shirtful of sore bones; but after all, perhaps, you would have found my fist a match for your cudgel."

"Nonsense," replied Kelly; "but God be praised that you escaped the welting, anyhow; I would never forgive myself and you the friend of his lordship."

He then left the room, his terrific cudgel under his arm, and Reilly, after his absence, related to the bishop the events of the day, involving, as they did, the two narrow escapes which he had had. The bishop thanked God, and told Reilly to be of good courage, for that he thought the hand of Providence was protecting him.

The life they led here was, at all events, quiet and peaceable. The bishop was a man of singular, indeed, of apostolic piety. He spent most of the day in meditation and prayer, fasting beyond the power of his enfeebled constitution; and indeed it was fortunate that Reilly had accompanied him, for so ascetic were his habits, that were it not for his entreaties, and the influence which he had gained over him, it is not at all unlikely that his unfortunate malady might have returned. The neighborhood in which they resided was, as we have said, remote, and exclusively Catholic; and upon Sundays the bishop celebrated Mass upon a little grassy platform—or rather in a little cave, into which it led. This cave was small, barely large enough to contain a table which served as a temporary altar—the poor shivering congregation kneeling on the platform outside. At this period of our story, all the Catholic chapels and places of worship were, as we have said, closed by proclamation, and the poor people were deprived of means of meeting to worship God. It had soon, however, become known to them that an opportunity of public worship was to be had every Sunday, at the place we have described. Messengers had been sent among them, with information to that effect; and the consequence was, that they not only kept the secret, but flocked in considerable numbers to attend Mass. On the Sunday following the adoption of Reilly's disguise, the bishop and he proceeded to the little cave, or rather cleft, where a table had been placed, together with the vestments necessary for the ceremony. They found about two or three hundred persons assembled—most of them of the humblest class. The day was stormy in the extreme. It was a hard frost, and the snow, besides, falling heavily—the wind strong, and raging in hollow gusts about the place. The position of the table-altar, however, saved the bishop and the chalice and the other matters necessary for the performance of worship, from the direct fury of the blast, but not altogether; for occasionally a whirlwind would come up, and toss over the leaves of the missal in such a way, and with such violence, that the bishop, who was now trembling from the cold, was obliged to lose some time in finding out the proper passage. It was a solemn sight to see two or three hundred persons kneeling, and bent in prostrate and heartfelt adoration, in the pious worship of that God who sends and withholds the storm: bareheaded, too, under the piercing drift of the thick-falling granular snow, and thinking of nothing but their own sins, and that gladsome opportunity of approaching the forbidden altar of God, now doubly dear to them that it was forbidden. As the ceremony was proceeding, the bishop was getting on to that portion of the sacred rites where the consecration and elevation of the Host are necessary, and it was observed by all that an extraordinary and sudden lull took place, and that the rage of the storm had altogether ceased. He proceeded, and had consecrated the Host—*hoc est corpus meum*—when a cry of terror arose from the affrighted congregation.

"My lord, fly and save yourself! Captain Smellpriest and his gang are upon us!"

The bishop never once turned around, nor seemed to hear them: but Reilly did, and saw that the whole congregation had fled, and that there only remained the bishop and himself.

"Our day of doom," said he to himself, "is come. Nothing now can save us."

Still the bishop proceeded, undisturbed, in the worship of the Almighty; when, lo! the military party, headed and led on by the notorious Captain Smellpriest, came thundering up, the captain exclaiming:

"You idolatrous Papist, stop that mummerly—or you shall have twelve bullets in your heart before half a minute's time."

The bishop had consecrated the Host, as we have said, but had not yet had time to receive it.

"Men," said Smellpriest, "you are all primed and loaded. Present."

They accordingly did so; every musket was levelled at him. The bishop now turned round, and with the calmness of a martyr—a calmness and conduct that were sublime—he said:

"Sir, I am engaged in the worship of the Eternal God, and if you wish to shed my blood, I should rather

it were here, and now, than in any other place. Give me but a few minutes—I do not ask more."

"Oh," said Smellpriest, "we will give you ten if you wish it, and the more so because we are sure of you."

When the bishop turned around again, after having received the Host, his pale face had altogether changed its complexion—it burned with an expression which is difficult to describe. A lofty sense of the sacrifice he was about to make was visible in his kindling and enthusiastic eye; his feeble frame, that had been, during the ceremony of Mass, shivering under the effects of the terrible storm that howled around them, now became firm, and not the slightest mark of fear or terror was visible in his bearing: calmly and undauntedly he turned round, and with a voice full and steady, he said:

"I am willing to die for my religion, but I say to you, that the slaughter of an inoffensive man, at the foot of God's altar, will not smooth the pillow of your death-bed nor of those who shoot down a minister of God, while in the act of worshipping his Creator. My congregation, poor timid creatures, have fled, but, as for me, I will not! I dare not! Here now, I spread out my arms—fire."

"I also," said Reilly, "will partake of whatever fate may befall the venerable clergyman who is before you"; and he stood up side by side with the bishop.

The guns were still levelled, the fingers of the men on the triggers, when Smellpriest shouted out, "Ground arms! By—", said he, "here is a new case; this fellow has spunk and courage, and d—n me, although I give the priests a chase wherever I can, still I am a soldier and a man of courage, and to shoot down a priest in the worship of God would be unbecoming an English soldier. No, I can't do it—nor I won't; d—n me, I like pluck, and this priest has shown it. Had he taken to his heels, by—, he would have had half a dozen bullets in his rear; but, as I said, I like pluck, and d—n me, we shall pass him by this time. To the right about. As to the clerk, by—, he has showed pluck, too, but he d—d to him, what do we care about him?"

We must say a word or two here about Smellpriest. He was, in the true sense of the word, a priest-hunter; but yet, with all his bigotry, he was a brave man, and could appreciate courage wherever he found it. The reader already knows that his range of persecution was by no means either so wide or comprehensive as that of the coward Whitecraft. He was a dashing, outspoken fellow, with an equal portion of boisterous folly and mischief; whereas Whitecraft was a perfect snake, treacherous, cruel, persevering in his enmity, and unrelenting in his vengeance. Such was the difference in the character of these two worthies.

After Smellpriest had drawn off his men, the bishop concluded the ceremony of the Mass; but when he turned round to announce its conclusion in the words, *Te igitur*, there was not a soul before him, the terrified congregation, as we have said, having all betaken themselves to flight. Reilly then assisted him to unrobe, and placed the vestments, the chalice, pyx, and everything connected with the ceremony, in a pair of saddle-bags, which belonged to the parish priest, whose altar was then closed, as we said, by proclamation.

Reilly and the bishop then proceeded to the farmer's house, Reilly carrying the saddle-bags, and as they went along the following conversation took place between them:

"My lord," said his companion, "if I might presume to advise you, I think it would be more prudent for you to retire to the Continent for a time. This ferocious captain, who, subdued by the sublime tenor of your conduct, spared you on this occasion, may not, under other and less impressive circumstances, exercise a similar forbearance."

"But, my dear Reilly," replied the bishop, in a tone of deep melancholy, "I am not in circumstances to go to the Continent; I am poor; most of my available money I have distributed among the unhappy people, until I am now nearly as poor as themselves; but independently of that, I do not think it would be right to abandon the charge which God has intrusted to my keeping. The shepherd should not desert his flock, especially in the moment of danger, when the wolves are abroad."

"But, my lord," replied Reilly, "under the present circumstances of the country, your residence here can be of no service to them. The chapels are all closed, and public worship forbidden by law. This cannot, and I hope will not, last long; but, in the meantime, think if it be not wiser in you to go for a time into what I may call a voluntary exile, than be banished by a cruel edict of the law."

"There is great truth in what you say, my dear Reilly; and on thinking over the circumstances of the country, I am indeed of opinion that your advice is good; but unfortunately my present poverty prevents me from acting on it."

"But that shall not be, my lord; I have the means—"