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[No. 5.

A NARRATIVE

OF THE

IRISH REBELLIONS,

AND

MASSACRE OF THE PROTESTANTS,

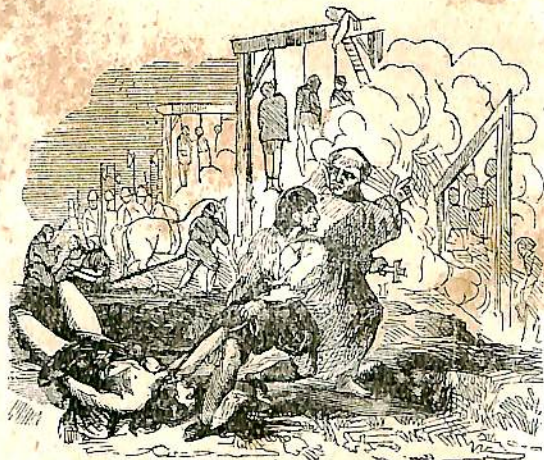
1641--42.

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NARRATIVE OF THE IRISH REBELLIONS.

At the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, Ireland was inhabited by the native Irish; and by English families who had been transplanted thither, ever since the reign of Henry II.; and was governed by a vice-roy or lord lieutenant. His authority, however, was not considerable enough to awe the Irish.

There were, among these, many great men, who, though they outwardly recognized the king of England's sovereignty; yet imagined they had a right to do themselves justice, whenever any supposed injury was done to them. Hence those lords frequently made war one upon another, regardless of the vice-roys, who had not force sufficient to check them; but were obliged to send for troops from England, whenever a rebellion broke out in Ireland; and as this was expensive, forces were never sent over but in the last extremity. Thus, as few of the lord-lieutenants were able to force obedience, they thence willingly connived at the destructive irregularities committed by the Irish lords, for fear of hurting the royal authority: but, contenting themselves with filling their purses; they left, to their successors, the curbing the insolence of the Irish.

This conduct swelled the lords of the country

with so much arrogance; that they acknowledged the royal authority no farther than was just sufficient to protect them from their enemies. Add to this, the aversion which the Irish naturally had for the English government; which aversion was increased on occasion of the change projected by Queen Elizabeth, in matters of religion.

The Irish being extremely ignorant, had thence a strong attachment to the Pope, a circumstance which disposed them to listen to the Romish emissaries, who were perpetually exciting them to rebellion. Hence Queen Elizabeth was obliged to keep a watchful eye over the transactions of that island; well knowing the great credit which the Pope, her mortal enemy, had in it.

Notwithstanding all her precautions, in 1567, a rebellion broke out in Ireland, headed by Shan O'Neal, a lord of great interest in the northern part of that island: but it ended with the death of that rebel, who was slain by his own people.

In 1569 fresh commotions broke out in that kingdom, excited by Edmund and Peter Boteler, brothers to the earl of Ormond; who being sent from England, persuaded them to lay down their arms. This rebellion had been fomented by the king of Spain, who, in conjunction with the Pope, endeavoured to spirit up another in 1577, by the advice of Thomas Stukeley, an English fugitive.

In 1594, the famous Hugh O'Neal, earl of Tir-oen, raised a mighty rebellion in Ireland, he having been promised assistance from the king of Spain; which obliged Queen Elizabeth to send a strong reinforcement to the above-mentioned island. This rebellion continued some years.

The earl of Essex was sent, in 1599, to Ireland,

at the head of 20,000 foot, and 1300 horse, who yet were not able to put out this flame; so vigorously was it fomented by Tir-oen; and it was not extinguished till after the arrival of the lord Mountjoy in that island, viz., till 1602, when Tir-oen came and submitted himself to him.

About the year 1607, the lord Mountjoy brought Tir-oen to London, and presented him to King James I., who received him very graciously; but Tir-oen returning afterwards to Ireland, he again attempted to raise a rebellion, but not succeeding, was forced to fly from that island.

No very remarkable transaction happened from this time till the year 1641, a little before which, the rebels of Ireland had presented to the lord justices of that kingdom, a remonstrance, demanding the free exercise of their religion, and a repeal of all laws to the contrary; to which both houses of parliament, in England, solemnly answered, that they would never grant any toleration to the Popish religion in Ireland.

On the 23rd of October, 1641, (the feast of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits,) there broke out a desperate and most formidable rebellion. The revolt was general. This was a rebellion, so execrable in itself, so odious to God and to the whole world; that no age, no kingdom, no people, can parallel the horrid cruelties, and the abominable murders, which were then, without number or without mercy, committed upon the Protestant British inhabitants, of every age, quality, or condition, throughout the land.

In Multifernan Abbey, a convent of Franciscans in the county of Westmeath, the horrid resolution was taken, how, most effectually to extirpate and

destroy the whole race of Protestants in Ireland ; which, was then concluded, should be perpetrated, either by total banishment, (the punishment inflicted on the Moors in Spain ;) or by death, or miseries worse than either. And so very closely, and under such a disguise of friendship, was this hideous conspiracy carried on by these men ; that visits of seeming kindness were never so frequently made to the Protestants, as at that very time. This was done, the more completely, to effect the inhuman and treacherous designs then machinating.

The Romish clergy were first in the secret, and had a great share in this detestable conspiracy, by means of the unbounded influence they had over the minds and consciences of their people.

That the papists were at the bottom of this conspiracy, was evident from the letter writ by Pope Urban, to the rebel O'Neal, October 18, 1642 ; and to the popish clergy and nobles of Ireland the February following. But most expressly was this unheard of scene of cruelty, publicly justified and approved of in the very words of Pope Urban VIII. to the Catholics of Ireland ; wherein the rebels, who engaged in this enormous and most detestable act, were promised to be publicly rewarded with a plenary indulgence, and a remission of all their sins.

This execrable conspiracy was first discovered by Owen O'Connelly, an Irishman ; for which most signal service, the parliament voted him five hundred pounds, and a pension of two hundred pounds *per ann.* until better provision could be made for him.

And so very seasonably was this plot discovered, even but a few hours before the city and castle of

Dublin were to have been surprised ; that the lords justices had but just time to put themselves, and the city, in a posture of defence ; and to seize the lord McGuire, and his accomplices in their beds ; in whose lodgings were found swords, hatchets, pole-axes, hammers, and such other instruments of death as had been prepared, for the utter extirpation of the heretics ; those wretches having come, the night before, into Dublin, to execute this treacherous and inhuman design.

On the 22d of October, 1641, Sir Phelim O'Neal, upon pretence of paying a friendly visit to the lord Charlemont, first seized him perfidiously in the castle ; killed his servants before his eyes ; and, a few days after, basely murdered that noble lord, and others, in cold blood ; as fully appeared in the trial of Lord MacGuire ; who was executed for high-treason, at London, in 1644.

And having thus begun to embrace their hands in innocent blood, they continued to hang, drown, burn, bury alive ; and, by other methods of torture, to massacre great multitudes of the British Protestants, who had not time to save themselves by flight.

The Jesuits, priests, and friars, having a great share in this detestable plot, they had no time to promote it ; and, when the day for the execution of it was agreed upon, they in their prayers recommended the success of a great design ; much tending, (as they said) to the prosperity of the kingdom, and to the advancement of the Catholic cause. They every where declared to the common people, that the Protestants were heretics, and ought not to be suffered to live any longer among them ; adding, that it was no more sin to kill an

Englishman than to kill a dog; and that the relieving or protecting them was an unpardonable sin.

As soon as the fire began to break out, and the whole country to rise about the Protestants; these immediately flew to their friends for protection, some relying upon their neighbours, others upon their landlords, others upon their tenants and servants, for preservation, or at least present safety; and, with great confidence, put their persons, their wives, their children, and all they had, into their power. But these, generally, either betrayed them into the hands of other rebels, or most perfidiously destroyed them with their own hands.

The Irish papists having besieged the town and castle of Longford; and the inhabitants, who were Protestants, having surrendered, upon condition of being allowed quarter; the besiegers, the instant the towns people came out, fell upon them: their priest, as a signal for the rest to fall on, first ripping open the belly of the English Protestant minister; after which his followers soon hanged up the rest.

In like manner was the garrison, at Sligo, treated by O'Connor Slygah; who, upon the Protestants quitting their holds promised them quarter; and to convey them safe over the Curlew mountains, to Roscommon. But he first imprisoned them in a most loathsome jail; allowing them only grains for their food. Afterwards, when some rebels were merry over their cups, who were come to congratulate their wicked brethren for their victory over these unhappy creatures: those Protestants who survived, were brought forth by the White-friars; and were either killed, or precipitated over the bridge into a swift water, where they were presently destroyed. It is added, that the above wicked

company of White-friars went some time after, in solemn procession, with holy water, in their hands, to sprinkle the river; upon pretence of cleansing and purifying it, from the stain and pollution of the blood and dead bodies of the heretics, as they called the unfortunate Protestants, who were inhumanly slaughtered at this very time.

At this time Dr. Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, was forcibly taken from his Episcopal residence at that place, where he had charitably settled and supported a great number of despoiled Protestants, who had fled from their habitations, to escape the diabolical cruelties committed by the Papists. But they did not long enjoy the consolation of living together; for Dr. Swiney, the Popish titular bishop of Kilmore, soon took possession of Bishop Bedell's house; said mass in his church, the Sunday following; and then seized on all his goods and effects. The rebels soon after forced him, his two sons, and the rest of his family, with some of the chief of the Protestants in his company, in December, into a ruinous castle called Lochwater, situated in a lake, near the sea shore. Here, himself, with his companions, remained some weeks, in expectation of death. Most of them were stript naked; by which means, as the season was very cold, and the house open, they suffered greatly. There they continued till the 7th of January, uninterrupted in the exercise of their religious worship; and were afterwards released. The bishop was then most courteously received into the house of Dennis O'Sheridan, one of his clergy, whom he had made a convert to the church of England. He did not long survive this kindness.

During his abode in this tabernacle, his whole

time was spent in religious exercises; the better to fit and prepare himself, and his sorrowful companions for their great change; as nothing, but certain death, and misery, were perpetually before their eyes.

However, though broken with age, being then in his seventy-first year, and afflicted with an ague, caught in his late cold and desolate habitation on the lake; finding his dissolution at hand, he received it with joy; like one of the primitive martyrs; just hastening to his crown of glory. For after having addressed his little flock, and exhorted them to patience, in the most pathetic manner, as they saw their own last day approaching; after having solemnly blessed his people, his family, and his children; and finished the course of his ministry and life together; he expired the 7th of February, 1641.

His friends and relations applied to the new intruding bishop, for leave to bury him, which was obtained with difficulty. He at first, telling them, that the church-yard was holy ground, and should no longer be defiled with heretics; however, leave was, at last, obtained, and though the church funeral service was not used at the solemnity, (for fear of the Irish Papists,) yet some of the better sort of the rebels were pleased to honour the remains of this holy confessor to his grave, for whom they, in his life-time, had the greatest veneration.

At his interment, they discharged a volley of shot, crying out, *Requiescat in pace, ultimus Anglorum*; that is, *May the last of the English rest in peace*. Adding, that as he was one of the best, so he should be the last English bishop found among them.

His learning was very extensive; and he would have given the world a greater proof of it, had he printed all he wrote. Scarce any of his writings were saved; the rebels having destroyed most of his papers, and his library. He had gathered a vast heap of critical expositions of scripture, all which, (with a great trunk of his manuscripts) fell into the hands of the Irish. Happily his great Hebrew MS. was preserved, and is now in the library of Emmanuel-College.

These cruelties were still more considerably extended; for in the barony of Tyrawley, the Papists, at the instigation of their friars, compelled above forty English Protestants, some of whom were women or children, to the hard fate either of falling by the sword, or of drowning themselves in the sea. These chusing the latter, rather to trust themselves to the mercy of the rebels; they were accordingly forced, by the naked weapons of those inexorable wretches, into the deep; where they, with their children in their arms, first waded up to the chin; and afterwards sunk down, and perished all together. In the county of Tyrone, no less than 300 Protestants were drowned in one day.

Dr. Maxwell at that time, lived near Armagh, being rector of Tynon, in that diocese; and, with his family, was a great sufferer in this rebellion. This bishop, in his examination, taken upon oath before his majesty's commissioners, declared, that the Irish rebels owned, to him, that they, at several times, had destroyed, in one place, twelve thousand Protestants, whom they inhumanly slaughtered at Glynwood, in the flight of those miserable people from the county of Armagh.

As the river Bann was not fordable, and the

bridge broken down, the Irish forced, at different times, a great number of unarmed, defenceless Protestants, (forty in a company;) and there, with pikes and swords, violently thrust above a thousand of them into the river, where they all miserably perished.

Nor did the fair and goodly cathedral of Armagh escape their barbarous hands; it being maliciously set on fire by their leaders, and burnt to the ground. And to extirpate, if possible, the very race of those unhappy Protestants, who lived in or near Armagh, the Irish first burnt all their houses; and then gathered together many hundred of those innocent people, young and old, upon pretence of allowing them a guard and safe conduct to Colerain; yet fell upon them, most treacherously, by the way, and cruelly murdered them all.

These desperate wretches, flushed and grown insolent with this success, (though by methods attended with such excessive barbarities, as were never practised by even the most savage heathens) soon got possession of the castle of Newry, where the king's stores and ammunition were lodged; and, with as little difficulty, made themselves masters of Dundalk.

They afterwards took the town of Ardee, where they murdered all the Protestants in revenge for their ill success before Tredagh or Drogheda, and so marched on, with the same rapidity and fury, to Drogheda, being then many thousands in number. The Irish hoped they should take that frontier garrison; and afterwards destroy all the Protestants, both there and in the city of Dublin, with those of the neighbouring counties round it. The garrison of Drogheda was in no condition to sus-

tain a siege; and the treachery of the Popish inhabitants, within the town, was almost as dangerous as the fury of the Irish rebels from without; these being masters of almost the whole country round, on both sides the Boyne; yet, so often as they renewed their attacks, they were as often courageously and vigorously repulsed, by a very unequal number of the king's forces; and a few faithful Protestant citizens, under Sir Henry Tichborne, the governor, assisted by the Lord Viscount Moore, ancestor of the Earl of Drogheda. The siege of Drogheda began November 30, 1641, and held till March 4, 1642, when Sir Phelin O'Neal, and the Irish rebels, were forced to retire.

In consequence of which, the city of Dublin, the magazines of all the arms, ammunition, and other provisions of the army; and the chief sanctuary of all the English despoiled Protestants, was now reduced to a very sad condition, and encompassed on every side.

The northern rebels being come down in great numbers, as far as Drogheda, within twenty miles of Dublin; and other rebels, from the county of Wicklow, infesting it on the other side; which filled the inhabitants with terror.

This was greatly increased, by the sight of vast numbers of English Protestants, all of them stript and miserably despoiled, who came out of the north. Many persons of rank and quality, covered with old rags, and some without any other covering, than a little twisted straw to hide their nakedness. Some reverend ministers, and others, who had escaped with their lives, came sadly wounded. Wives came, bitterly lamenting the fate of their husbands; mothers that of their children, barbar-

ously destroyed before their eyes; poor infants ready to perish, and to pour out their souls in their mother's bosoms. Some, over weary with long travail, came creeping on their knees. Others froze with cold, ready to give up the ghost in the streets. Others, overwhelmed with grief, grew distracted.

Thus was the city, within a few days after the breaking out of the rebellion, filled with most lamentable spectacles of sorrow. These wandered up and down, in great numbers, in all parts of the city; desolate and forsaken; having no place to lay their heads on; no clothes to cover their nakedness; no food to fill their hungry bellies.

All manner of relief was disproportionate to their wants. The Popish inhabitants refused to administer the least comfort unto them; whence these poor creatures appeared as so many ghosts in the streets. The barns, the stables, and out-houses were filled with them; whilst some lay in the open street; and others under stalls, where they perished miserably. The churches were the common receptacle of those of the meaner sort; these stood in them in a most dismal posture, as objects of charity, in such great multitudes, that there was no passage into them. But those of better condition, who could not condescend to beg, crept into private places; and some of these, having no friends to relieve them, wasted silently away, and died without noise.

And, so bitter was the remembrance of their former miserable condition, and so insupportable the burthen of their present calamity, (to many,) that they even refused to be comforted. Thus, being worn out with the vast fatigue of their

journey, and the cruel usage they met with; their spirits being exhausted, and their souls fainting, they lay sadly languishing. And soon after they had got to the city, great numbers of them died, leaving their bodies as monuments of the most inhuman cruelty, exercised upon them. The greatest part of the women and children, thus barbarously driven out of their habitations, died in the city of Dublin. Such numbers perished, that all the church-yards, within the city, were not large enough to contain them; so that the lords justices gave orders, that two large pieces of new ground, (one on each side of the river,) should be set apart for burial places.

The design of the rebels was, after they had possessed themselves of other towns, to seize the city and castle of Dublin; and thus extirpate all the English, root and branch; and not leave them posterity, or even a name, throughout the whole kingdom of Ireland.

By the relations of those times, it appears that one hundred and fifty thousand innocent, ungarded, unarmed Protestants, had the hard fate to suffer under the most inhuman and most detestable cruelties; were either massacred in cold blood, or sent to starve and perish in the woods, in the coldest and most rigorous season of the year.

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