

# THE LOYALIST.

"GOD AND MY COUNTRY."

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## HARDRESS FITZGERALD.

In the Dublin University Magazine for February, among other articles of interest there appears a narrative of the singular adventures of Hardress Fitzgerald, an eminent Irish royalist, who contrived to elude the strictest search for his person, after the battle of the Boyne had all but annihilated his party. The narrative, from which we purpose to make a short extract, purports to be written by the hero himself, and commences with an amusing account of his living in disguise in Dublin; it then proceeds to state, that, becoming anxious to join the wreck of King James's forces in Limerick, he ventured on travelling across the county as a pedlar; how, while on the way he had an interview with General Sarsfield, and received from him certain papers to convey to the unhappy royalists; after which, on pursuing his journey, he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of some soldiers, and was brought before Captain Oliver, a leader in the ranks of his opponents. At this point we shall allow him to tell his story in his own words, which give one a fearful idea of the cruelties committed at that disastrous period in Ireland.

"Unbuckle your pack," exclaimed the corporal; "unbuckle your pack, fellow, and show your goods to the Captain—here where you are."

I proceeded to present my merchandise to the loving contemplation of the officers, who thronged around me, with a strong light from an opposite window. As I continued to traffic with these gentlemen, I observed with no small anxiety the eyes of Captain Oliver frequently fixed upon me with a kind of dubious inquiring gaze. "I think, my honest fellow," he said at last, "that I have seen you somewhere before this. Have you often dealt with the military?" "I have traded, sir," said I, "with the soldiery many a time, and always been honourably treated. Will your worship please to buy a pair of lace ruffles?—very cheap, your worship." "Why do you wear your hair so much over your face, sir?" said Oliver, without noticing my suggestion. I promise you, I think no good of you; throw back your hair, and let me see you plainly. Hold up your face, and look straight at me; throw back your hair, sir."

I felt that all chance of escape was at an end, and stepping forward as near as the table would allow me to him, I raised my head, threw back my hair, and fixed my eyes steadily and boldly upon his face. I saw that he knew me instantly, for his countenance turned as pale as ashes with surprise and hatred; he started up, placing his hand instinctively upon his sword-hilt, and glaring at me with a look so deadly, that I thought every moment he would strike his sword into my heart. He said in a kind of whisper, "Hardress Fitzgerald?" "Yes," said I boldly, for the excitement of the scene had effectually stirred my blood. "Hardress Fitzgerald is before you. I know you well, me. I know how you thirst for my blood; but in a good cause, and in the hands of God, I defy you." "You are a desperate villain, sir," said Captain Oliver; "a rebel and a murderer. Hold there, guard, seize him!" As the soldiers entered, I threw my eyes hastily round the room, and observing a glowing fire upon the hearth, I suddenly drew General Sarsfield's packet from my bosom, and casting it upon the embers, planted my foot upon it. "Secure the papers," shouted the captain, and almost instantly I was laid prostrate and senseless upon the floor by a blow from the butt of a carbine.

I cannot say how long I continued in a state of torpor; but, at length, having slowly recovered my senses, I found myself lying firmly handcuffed upon the floor of a small chamber, through a narrow loophole in one of whose walls the evening sun was shining. I was chilled with cold and damp, and drenched in

blood, which had flowed in large quantities from the wound on my head. By a strong effort I shook off the sick drowsiness which still hung upon me, and weak and giddy, I rose with pain and difficulty to my feet. The chamber or rather cell in which I stood, was about eight feet square, and of a height very disproportioned to its other dimensions—its altitude from the floor to the ceiling being not less than twelve or fourteen feet. A narrow slit placed high in the wall admitted a scanty light, but sufficient to assure me that my prison contained nothing to render the sojourn of its tenant a whit less comfortable than my worst enemy could have wished. My first impulse was naturally to examine the security of the door—the loophole which I have mentioned being too high and too narrow to afford a chance of escape. I listened attentively to ascertain if possible whether or not a guard had been placed upon the outside. Not a sound was to be heard. I now placed my shoulder to the door, and sought with all my combined strength and weight to force it open; it, however, resisted all my efforts, and thus baffled in my appeal to mere animal power, exhausted and disheartened, I threw myself on the ground. It was not in my nature, however, long to submit to the apathy of despair, and in a few minutes I was on my feet again. With patient scrutiny I endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the fastenings which secured the door. The planks fortunately having been nailed together fresh, had shrunk considerably, so as to leave wide chinks between each and its neighbour. By means of these apertures, I saw that my dungeon was secured, not by a lock as I had feared, but by a strong wooden bar, running horizontally across the door, about midway upon the outside.

[Contriving to make an opening, he reaches the door of the apartment in which he had been seized, and overhears an order given by Oliver for his execution, which he declared should take place in the evening ere the moon arose.]

There was a kind of glee in Oliver's manner and expression which chilled my very heart. "He shall be first shot like a dog and then hanged like a dog," shot to-night, and hung to-morrow; hung at the bridge head; hung, until his bones drop asunder?"

It is impossible to describe the exultation with which he seemed to dwell upon, and to particularise, the fate which he intended for me. A chill, sick horror crept over me as they retired, and I felt, for the moment, upon the brink of swooning. This feeling, however, speedily gave place to a sensation still more terrible—a state of excitement so intense and tremendous as to border upon literal madness, supervened; my brain reeled and throbbled as if it would burst; thoughts the wildest and the most hideous flashed through my mind with a spontaneous rapidity that scared my very soul; while, all the time, I felt a strange and frightful impulse to burst into uncontrolled laughter. Gradually this fearful paroxysm passed away. I knelt and prayed fervently, and felt comforted and assured; but still I could not view the slow approaches of certain death without an agitation little short of agony.

I returned again to the closet in which I had found myself upon recovering from the swoon.

The evening sunshine and twilight was fast melting into darkness, when I heard the outer door, that which communicated with the guard-room in which the officers had been amusing themselves, opened, and looked again upon the inside. A measured step then approached, and the door of the wretched cell in which I lay being rudely pushed open, a soldier entered, who carried something in his hand, but, owing to the obscurity of the place, I could not see what.

"Art thou awake, fellow?" said he, in a gruff voice. "Sur thyself; get upon thy legs." His orders were enforced by no very gentle application of his military boot.

"Friend," said I, rising with difficulty, "you need not insult a dying man. You have been sent hither to conduct me to death. Lead on! My trust is in God, that he will forgive me my sins, and receive my soul, redeemed by the blood of his Son." There he intervened a pause of some length, at the end of which the soldier said, in the same gruff voice but in a lower key, "Look ye comrade, it will be your own fault if you die this night. On one condition I promise to

get you out of this hobble with a whole skin; but if you go to any of your gammon, before two hours are passed you will have as many holes in your carcass as a target." "Name your conditions," said I; "and if they consist with honour, I will never balk at the offer."

"Here they are: you are to be shot to-night, by Captain Oliver's orders; the carbines are cleaned for the job, and the cartridges served out to the men. I tell you the truth."

Of this I needed not much persuasion, and intimated to the man my conviction that he spoke the truth.

"Well, then," he continued, "now for the means of avoiding this ugly business. Captain Oliver rides this night to headquarters, with the papers which you carried. Before he starts he will pay you a visit, to fish what he can out of you, with all the fine promises he can make. Humour him a little, and when you find an opportunity, stab him in the throat above the collar."

"A feasible plan, surely," said I, raising my shackled hands, "for a man thus completely crippled and without a weapon." "I will manage all that presently for you," said the soldier. "When you have thus dealt with him, take his cloak and hat, and so forth, and put them on; the papers you will find in the pocket of his vest, in a red leather case; walk boldly out—I am appointed to ride with Captain Oliver, and you will find me holding his horse and my own by the door; mount quickly, and I will do the same, and then we will ride for our lives across the bridge. You will find the holster pistols loaded in case of pursuit, and with the devil's help we shall reach Limerick without a hair hurt. My only condition is, that when you strike Oliver, you strike home, and again and again, until he is finished—and I trust to your honour to remember me when we reach the town."

I cannot say whether I resolved right or wrong, but I thought my situation, and the conduct of Captain Oliver, warranted me in acceding to the conditions propounded by my visitor, and with alacrity I told him so, and desired him to give me the power, as he had promised to do, of executing them. With speed and promptitude he drew a small key from his pocket, and in an instant the manacles were removed from my hands. How my heart bounded within me as my wrists were released from the iron gripe of the shackles—the first step towards freedom was made—my self-reliance returned, and I felt assured of success. "Now for the weapon," said I. "I fear me you will find it rather clumsy," said he, "but if well handled it will do as well as the best Toledo; it is the only thing I could get, but I sharpened it myself; it has an edge like a skean."

He placed in my hand the steel head of a halberd, and with a low savage laugh left me to my reflections. Having examined and arranged the weapon, I carefully bound the ends of the cravat with which I had secured the cross part of the spear-head, firmly round my wrist, so that in case of a struggle it might not easily be forced from my hand, and having made these precautionary dispositions, I sat down upon the ground with my back against the wall, and my hands together under my coat, awaiting my visitor.

The time wore slowly on; the dusk became dimmer and dimmer, until it nearly bordered on total darkness. "How's this?" said I inwardly. "Captain Oliver, you said I should not see the moon rise to-night; methinks you are somewhat tardy in fulfilling your prophecy." As I made this reflection, a noise at the outer door announced the entrance of a visitor. I knew that the decisive moment was come, and letting my head sink upon my breast, and assuring myself that my hands were concealed, I awaited in the attitude of deep dejection, the approach of my foe and betrayer.

As I had expected, Captain Oliver entered the room where I lay; he was equipped for his ant duty, as far as the imperfect twilight would allow me to see; the long sword clanked upon the floor, as he made his way through the lobbies which led to my place of confinement; his ample military cloak hung upon his arm, his cocked hat was upon his head, and in all points he was prepared for the road. This tallied exactly with what my strange informant had told me. I felt my heart swell and my breath come thick, as the awful moment was to witness the death-struggle of one or other of us approached. Captain Oliver stood within a yard or two of the place where I sat, or rather lay,

and folding his arms he remained silent for a minute or two, as if arranging in his mind how he should address me.

"Hardress Fitzgerald," he began at length, "are you awake? Stand up if you desire to hear of matters nearly touching your life or death; get up, I say."

I arose, doggedly, and affecting the awkward movements of one whose hands were bound.

"Well," said I, "what would you of me? Is it not enough that I am thus imprisoned, without a cause, and about, as I suspect, to suffer a most unjust and violent sentence, but must I also be disturbed during the few moments left me for reflection and repentance, by the presence of my persecutor? What do you want of me?"

"As to your punishment, sir," said he, "your own deserts have no doubt suggested the likelihood of it to your mind; but I now am with you to let you know, that whatever mitigation of your sentence you may look for, must be earned by your compliance with my orders. You must frankly and fully explain the contents of the packet which you endeavoured this day to destroy; and, further, you must tell all that you know of the designs of the popish rebels."

And if I do this I am to expect a mitigation of my punishment—is it not so? Oliver bowed.

"Well, sir, before I make the desired communication, I have one question more to put. What is to befall me, in case that I, remembering the honour of a soldier and a gentleman, reject your infamous terms, scorn your mitigations, and defy your utmost power?" "In that case," replied he coolly, "before half an hour you shall be a corpse."

"Then God have mercy on your soul," said I, and springing forward, I dashed the weapon which I held at his throat. I missed my aim, but struck him full in the mouth with such force that most of his front teeth were dislodged and the point of the spear-head passed out under his jaw, at the ear. My onset was so sudden and unexpected that he reeled back to the wall, and did not recover his equilibrium in time to prevent my dealing a second blow, which I did with my whole force; the point unfortunately struck the cuirass, near the neck, and, glancing aside, it inflicted but a flesh wound, tearing the skin and tendons along the throat. He now grappled with me, strange to say, without uttering any cry of alarm. Being a very powerful man, and if any thing rather heavier and more strongly built than I, he succeeded in drawing me with him to the ground. We fell together, with a heavy crash, tugging and straining in what we were both conscious was a mortal struggle.

At length I succeeded in getting over him, and struck him twice more. The weapon which I wielded had lighted upon the eye, and penetrated the brain; the body quivered under me, the deadly grasp relaxed, and Oliver lay upon the ground a corpse! As I arose and shook the weapon and the bloody cloth from my hand, the moon, which he had foretold I should never see rise, shone bright and broad into the room, and disclosed, with ghastly distinctness, the mangled features of the dead soldier. It is hard to say with what feelings I looked upon the unsightly and revolting mass which had so lately been a living and a comely man. I had not any time, however, to spare for reflection; the deed was done; the responsibility was upon me, and all was registered in the books of that God who judges rightly.

With eager haste I removed from the body such of the military accoutrements as were necessary for the purpose of my disguise. I buckled on the sword, drew off the military boots, and donned them myself, placed the brigadier wig and cocked hat upon my head, threw on the cloak, drew it up about my face, and proceeded with the papers which I found as the soldier had foretold me, and the key of the outer lobby, to the door of the guard-room; this I opened, and with a firm and rapid tread walked through the officers, who rose as I entered and passed without question or interruption to the street door. Here I was met by the grim-looking corporal, Hewson, who, saluting me, said, "How soon, captain, shall the file be drawn out, and the prisoner dispatched?" "To half an hour," I replied, without raising my voice. The man again saluted and in two steps I reached the soldier who held the two horses, as he had intimated.

"Is all right?" said he, eagerly. "Ay," said I; "which horse am I to mount?" He satisfied me upon this point, and I threw myself into the saddle; the soldier mounted his horse, and dashing the spurs into the flanks of the animal which I bestrode, we thundered along the narrow bridge. At the far extremity, a sentinel, as we approached, called out, "Who goes there?—stand and give the word!"—Heedless of the interruption, with my heart bounding with excitement, I dashed on; so did also the soldier who accompanied me. The sentinel fired.

"Hurrah!" I shouted, "try it again my boy," and away we went at a gallop, which bade fair to distance every thing like pursuit. Never was spur more needed, however; for soon the clatter of horses' hoofs, in full speed, crossing the bridge, came sharp and clear through the stillness of the night. Away we went, with our pursuers close behind. One mile was passed, another nearly completed. The moon now shone forth, and turning in the saddle, I looked back upon the road we had passed. One trooper had headed the rest, and was within a hundred yards of us. I saw the fellow throw himself from his horse upon the ground. I knew his object, and said to my comrade, "Lower your body; the fellow over the saddle; the fellow is going to fire." I had hardly spoken when the report of a carbine started the echoes, and the ball striking the hind leg of my companion's horse, the poor animal fell headlong upon the road, throwing his rider head foremost over the saddle. My first impulse was to stop and share whatever fate might await my comrade, but my second and wiser one was to spur on, and save myself and my dispatch. I rode on at a gallop. Turning to observe my comrade's fate, I saw his pursuer, having remounted, ride rapidly up to him, and on reaching the spot where the man and horse lay, rein in and dismount. He was hardly upon the ground, when my companion shot him dead with one of the holster pistols which he had drawn from the pipe, and leaping nimbly over a ditch at the side of the road, he was soon lost among the ditches and thorn bushes which covered that part of the country. Another mile being passed, I had the satisfaction to perceive that the pursuit was given over, and in an hour more I crossed Thomond Bridge, and slept that night in the fortress of Limerick, having delivered the packet, the result of whose safe arrival was the destruction of William's great train of artillery, then upon its way to the besiegers.

Years after this adventure, I met in France a young officer, who I found had served in Captain Oliver's regiment, and he explained what I had never before understood—the motives of the man who had wrought my deliverance. Strange to say, he was the foster brother of Oliver, whom he thus devoted to death, in revenge for the most grievous wrong which one man can inflict upon another!

## Communications.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LOYALIST.

Sir,—Although I have not for some time thought it necessary to solicit a small space in your columns, yet I have kept an eye on passing events, and especially on the conduct of your contemporaries. Among the latter I find the two greatest sticklers for popular rights and what they call "Responsible Government," are the Morning News and the New Brunswick Freeman. The News has shifted ground so often, and its tergiversations have been so sudden and uncalculated for, that its influence would be very limited even if it were ably conducted, but when such silly stuff appears in its editorial columns as his last articles on "responsible government," it is beneath your notice and totally unworthy of reply. Poor fellow! he does not know what "responsible government" means, any more than "the man in the moon" does! He says it is something they have in Nova Scotia, and therefore we should try it here! But the New Brunswicker is worthy of a passing notice, for it has till lately been conducted with considerable talent; and so far as it confined itself to the exposition of public abuses—personalities excepted—it merited a certain degree of approbation. But now on the eve of an election, when it stood a fair chance of carrying its point, it has foolishly and recklessly thrown overboard one half of its supporters, by advocating that ignis fatuus, "responsible government," and that without any apparent reason,

unless it is, as some assert, under the control of a despicable clique. I am astonished sir, as well as mortified, I would have pledged my existence that the New Brunswicker would have pursued an independent and straight-forward course; but it has put up the helm and commenced sailing on the other tack. Yes sir, after abusing our House of Assembly and showing up to the execration of the public their misdeeds; after vilifying and heaping scorn upon them for the last twelve months and showing reasons innumerable why they should be deprived of a portion of their ill-gotten and much abused power, it turns round and advocates a measure which—if I understand the New Brunswicker's interpretation of it—would place the Executive and Legislative Councils in the position of servants to the Assembly, thus giving the latter body the whole local legislation of the Province! It is useless to dwell on this subject, and I would therefore suggest to the Editor of that paper, that before he can expect the people of this City should mount his hobby so fearlessly as he appears to have done, he should take the trouble to explain what he means by "responsible government," and on what it is founded; and also give them a synopsis of its mode of operation and probable effects. Unless he can do this to the satisfaction of the public, I am of opinion that his ship will put to sea with a very small crew.

If you do not find my letter too long for your columns, I should feel obliged if you will give insertion to the following dialogue, which took place a few days ago in this City, between a loyalist of the old school, and a "responsible!"

Responsible.—"This old form of government has lasted long enough; here we are subjected to men appointed by a Governor who belongs three thousand miles away, and who knows nothing about our politics, nor what is good for the country. And there's these family compacts I only look at our Provincial Secretary and our Attorney General! they've held their situations so long that they think it has become their exclusive right to do so! no, no; we want responsible government," and that we must have."

Loyalist.—"I presume you do not deny the right of Her Majesty to appoint her representative? and as to family compacts, what have you to say against the officers you have mentioned, have they not discharged their duties properly?"

Res.—"Oh! I did not mean to say that; but they have been in office long enough, living on the fat of the land; and it is time some others should take their places; we want responsible government."

Loy.—"And so you would have Her Majesty discharge these old servants, who for a series of years have performed their duties, and shown themselves true and faithful; and fill their places with Tom, Dick, and Harry, who for aught she knows are rebels and traitors!"

Res.—"I see no harm, provided it is the wish of the people; what is it to the people of England whom we have in our Executive, provided it is in accordance with the wishes of the people in this Province? I say we want responsible government."

Loy.—"What do you mean by responsible government?"

Res.—"Why I mean that our Executive Council should be responsible."

Loy.—"Responsible to whom, to the Governor or to the people?"

Res.—"I shall decline answering that question, until you tell me the reason why you asked."

Loy.—"Well then, I'll tell you:—the Governor is either responsible to the British Ministry, or to the House of Assembly; if to the former, he must obey their instructions; if to the latter, then are we an independent nation; therefore it is evident he is responsible to the former, and if he disobeys their instructions, he is immediately recalled. Now if our council—as long as they discharge their duties faithfully—are not responsible to any one (or their opinions, they are a check upon the Assembly on the one hand, and on the Governor on the other; but make them responsible to the Governor, who in his turn is a mere tool in the hands of the British Ministry, and you will change our Government to a despotism. But make them responsible to the House of Assembly, and—the Executive Councilors being the nominators of the legislative Council—you destroy that balance of power which forms the beauty of our constitution, and makes our Government a republic."