

The Examiner.

AND SEMI-WEEKLY INTELLIGENCER.

THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC—MAY SPEAK FREE.—MILTON'S EURIPIDES.

New Series.

CHARLOTTETOWN, JULY 31, 1850.

Vol. 1: No. 52

SELECT TALE.

[From Blackwood's Magazine for February.]

The Siege of Dunbeg; or, the Stratagems of War.

(Concluded.)

"Address yourself to me, Master Teague," he cried; "for I promise your discourse will have no effect whatever on my men. You may blow them about like straws on a windy day, sure enough,—ha, ha, ha!—but you'll find it no such easy matter to work upon their fears, by telling them how you mean to thrash them—ha, ha, ha! But what do you offer, sirrah? or why do you stand there grimacing on my glacis, like Punch upon a platform?"

"Punch! you son of a hog!—grimacing on your glacis! you grandfather of churls! Oh, by my head, and by my father's head! (if I had but one of the six-pounders here,) if it wasn't that my heart is too soft entirely it is—it's a short summons you and yours should have at my hands! But I'm a merciful man, Sir Simon Brabazon, (small my thanks in troth,) and though my trade be war, I hate the sight of bloodshed. Ay, indeed, 'tis too full of humanity my heart is entirely; but for the sake of Lady Brabazon and your daughter, (oh, more glory to you, blessed Kieran, you've set me in the true scent at last!)—for their sakes I'll consent, for all that has come and gone to give you another chance. You see these cannon; may I never see glory—(holy Virgin! pardon a lie for it is told in a good cause)—may I never stand in the sight of the saints, if they arn't every gun of them charged to the muzzle with powder and ball—ay, two balls itself in some of them—six-and-thirty pound weight of iron ready to go thwack against your old rickety rampart at one touch of this blessed linstock: think of that! You see these men of mine: may I never die (and God knows this is true enough) if they arn't every mother's son of them so set upon blood and spoil, murder, and what's worse than murder?—On this the Kinel Dempsey gave a loud shout of approbation, and there appeared considerable indications of confusion in the garrison; female voices were heard loud in expostulation; and while Sir Simon turned round, apparently endeavouring to allay the storm, Captain Cormack also turned towards his friends, and gave a wink, as much as to say, "I'm doing it now." "Aye," he continued, "so bent on violence and violation"—here there was another burst of female outcries from within. "I'm doing it; I'm doing it!" cried Cormack, rubbing his hands and cutting a caper, as the distracted governor turned again to quell the threatened insurrection in his garrison. "So eager for all manner of devilment," continued Captain Cormack.

"Silence, I say!" cried the governor to those within. "I'll lose my life in your defence, Lady Brabazon: you know as well as I do that I'd die to defend you; but I'll be torn limb from limb before I surrender to this apostate villain!" This declaration was succeeded by another dolorous burst from the complaining females.

"You see the guns ready shotted to blow you into perdition," continued the urgent captain. "You see the men only restrained by my authority from perpetrating an indiscriminate massacre; and I put it to you once for all, will you surrender like a discreet man—and may I never see the saints, if I don't get you and yours the height of good treatment if you do; or will you, like a stubborn old boccough as you are, and be cursed, see your walls pounded into powder, your men made

mincemeat of, and your people in general abandoned to the cruellest ill usage? Will you, once?—tut! Colonel don't interfere—this is Brien Boru's summons that I was telling you of—will you, twice? Oh then did you ever see or hear tell of so stubborn an old traitor? he'll force me to crossness, he will, in spite of my natural turn for tender-heartedness and all manner of civility. Do you hear old man? I have asked you; will you, once?" No answer—a pause. "I have asked you, will you, twice?" No answer—a long pause, and Captain Cormack's face becoming fast bedewed with perspiration.—"Oh then, by the blessed Virgin! there's no use in standing on ceremony with you any longer, so here goes for the third and last time; and, by all the crosses between this and Banagher! if you lose this chance, you may settle your scores with heaven, all and sundry, big and little, men and women, maid and wife. Will you then, as I said before, will you twice?—(oh blessed Kieran, is it deserting me you are?)—will you twice, I say? (Holy Virgin turn his heart, or we'll be disgraced for ever!)—Well then, since what must be must, although upon my conscience, it goes against my grain, (for, blessed saints, what is to become of us!)—will you then, like a reasonable man, as I said already, surrender on honorable terms, or will you, like an unnatural old traitor as I say again, see your castle demolished, yourself cut in four quarters, and your wife and daughter—for, by the king of the elements! it is in right good earnest I am—your wife and daughter!"

"Monster!" exclaimed Lady Brabazon's voice from a window of the wall, just over the spot at which the guns were pointed.

"Madam, what does your honourable ladyship please to propose?" cried Cormack, turning with an air of grateful acknowledgement at the timely overture.

"Lady Brabazon, don't presume to interfere!" exclaimed Sir Simon, from his stand on the tower top, from which he commanded a view of the window now occupied by his lady. "If you interfere between me and the king's enemies, you will be guilty of both high and petty treason! Remember, madam, that I am here the governor, and that by me alone terms can be accepted or refused."

"Oh then! 'tis the fancy governor you are, all out!" cried Cormack; "'tis a pattern you are for discretion and consideration to all the wardens of Leinster, no doubt of it! Why, you stubborn, foolish old man, sure there's more sense in her ladyship's little finger than in your whole body! Ay, indeed, madam, it is not without reason I say it, for isn't the whole country full of the report of your ladyship's sense and beauty!—sure enough; and more's the pity to see so much discretion and loveliness thrown away upon this old boccough, whom, saving your ladyship's honourable presence, I take to be no better than a hog!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the lady, "do not add insult to cruelty. Listen to my resolution. I and my daughter have heard your abominable threats: we prefer death, a hundred thousand deaths, to the dishonor you are not ashamed to declare yourselves ready to perpetrate against defenceless women. But these atrocities you never shall execute. Before a stone of these walls crumbles before your cannon, we shall be beyond the reach of further indignity. Since misfortune has deprived us of other defence, your cannon-shot shall never come against the walls but through our bodies. Fire now, if you have the heart to fire against women!" To the indescribable amazement of all the spectators, but of none so much as Sir Simon, the window overlooking the part of the wall threatened by Cormack's battery was flung open, and two figures in the well-

known blue and amber robes of Lady and Lucy Brabazon, slung in arm-chairs, were lowered from the window till they hung right opposite the mouths of the cannon.

"Hilloa! hilloa! the woman's mad!" screamed Sir Simon. "They're mad both of them, as sure as God's in heaven. Lady Brabazon, you old fool! I wasn't in earnest, you know I wasn't; Lucy, daughter Lucy, you silly child—oh, gracious God! they'll be blown in pieces. Teague, Master Cormack, good O'Dempsey, for Jesus' sake one moment; I demand a parley."

"No parley!" shouted in ferocious tones Sir Phelim O'Neill, who had ridden up impatient of the delay. "Apply your match, villain; we hold our hands now for no flesh, of either man or woman." But Cormack, to whom this command was addressed, flung his match to the ground on the instant; and the bewilderment which he had worn for the last few minutes, gave place at once to an expression of decision and daring. At the same moment, O'Dempsey himself, starting forward exclaimed—"O'Neill, you shall not command the Kinel Dempsey to turn their hands to their own dishonour. Go back to your troop, and leave this work to me. By the brightness of heaven! no shot shall be fired at these walls, while those poor ladies hang there for our targets."

"And for the villain you call me," cried Cormack, "villain in your teeth, you bloody chieftain! The sons of Dempsey are no unmanly butchers. Up with the ladders, boys! Forward with the picks and crowbars! To the devil with the pump, and all belonging to it! We'll carry the castle by the strong hand—hurrah!"

The kindred sprang forward with picks and axes to attack the gate, while others raised the scaling-ladders against the walls. Foremost among the latter were O'Dempsey and the faithful captain. Each planted his ladder opposite the figure he believed his destined portion of the spoil. Sir Simon took no notice of the battering going on at the planks under his feet, but called to his sergeant—"Now, Watkins, do you cover the warden, and I shall let this villain of a lieutenant see whether he's to carry my wife, as well as my castle, by escalade." They fired together. Both leaders reeled on their ladders; but both clutched at the figures above them, grasped them, and the ropes by which they were suspended giving way, rolled together into the ditch. At the same moment, Lady Brabazon herself reappeared at the window. "Run, you wretches, run!" she cried to the Kinel Dempsey; "there's blood enough shed!—here comes the king's army; run, or you will be cut in pieces!" And, as she spoke, cries of "Butler aboo!—Saint George!—a Verdon!—a Verdon!" resounded from the woods. The Irish cavalry, under Sir Phelim O'Neill, wheeling to the right about face, and the assailants of the castle scrambling down from their various points of attack, disappeared as if by magic. Among the latter, James of the Chisel, who had overthrown two or three of the mock garrison, with a facility that caused him much astonishment, and had already intruded one-half of his person into an embrasure, was just in time to regain the means of escape. He descended with abundant celerity, and was on the point of joining the body of the assailants in their fight, when he perceived O'Dempsey and captain Cormack stretched beside the female figures in the castle ditch. The chief carpenter turned, cast a glance at the immovable army of the garrison over the parapet. "By Saint Kieran of Clonmacnoise! I believe in my conscience 'twas against a garrison of men of straw that we brought up our wooden battery. I'll not desert the chief, then, if there's

breath in him, nor my poor Cormack neither," he cried, hastening back to his fallen leaders. But both lay lifeless. The chief captain turned over the lady figures. "May I never die, if they arn't a couple of straw in petticoats!" he exclaimed.—"Oh, by haft shelve, this beats all your military tactics of King Brian Boru, my poor Cormack! The real stratagems of war were never practised since the breach of Troy till now! Farewell to you, sons of my heart! Bad luck to the hands that laid you low! I'm off for Kilkenny, if God and the Virgin give me an escape through mine enemies." So saying, *Shamus a' t'sisal* fled round the angle of the building; while the gallant array of horse, headed by the Earl of Ormond, galloped up on the castle green.

"How goes it, Sir Simon?" cried the earl, reining up on the edge of the gateway bridge. "Have you beaten the knaves off? and how do my gossips, your wife and fair daughter?"

"We are here to answer for ourselves," cried Lady Brabazon; "come forward, Lucy, the rogues are all run away. We are both very well, I heartily thank your lordship, but the poor child is a little frightened: show yourself, Lucy."

"My lord, we hope we'll be forgiven the trick we played on my father: I beg your lordship will intercede for us. He thinks we have sacrificed our lives in defence of the castle."

"By —, my good lord!" cried Sir Simon, "I know not whether my wife and daughter be talking to you from the window, or lying in the arms of those woodkerne in the ditch; but I shall see presently! Throw open the gates, Watkins, and give the pursuit!"

"The pursuit is already in good hands, Sir Simon," said the earl. "Young Verdon has had the execution of the rebels ever since they dispersed. A gallant young fellow, by my honour! Sir Simon, and has done such service to-day, and every day for the past week, in the cause of king and country, as will make him a viscount of the realm, if I have any influence at Whitehall."

"And if you can only prevail on Sir Simon to give up an old stupid grudge he has against Sir Theobald's father, my lord," cried Lady Brabazon, "we shall be quite prepared to back your lordship's efforts in his favour by providing him with a countess. Don't run away, Lucy—it is no sham siege this time."

"Ha! sits the wind in that quarter?" cried the earl. "By my word, I congratulate you, my old friend, on a most honorable alliance."

"I am no match for these women, my lord," replied the governor. "Whether I stand on my head or my heels, I know no longer; and by —, as it seems to me, these guns that they frightened us so damnably with are shams like all the rest of it. By the honour of a soldier, I am ashamed of the whole business, grudge and all. Only I hope the young gallant that you mean to make a viscount of is not to be a noble of straw, like the *Sugan* Earl of Desmond."

"If land in Ireland be worth rent after these disturbances," replied the earl, "he inherits the best half barony in Meath by Luke Taaff's death, who was killed yesterday, poor fellow, by the rebels at the bridge of Trim. But here he comes to answer for himself, and his sword, by my faith! very handsomely spotted."

As he spoke, Sir Theobald was seen riding up at the head of a body of horse, who had evidently been engaged in hot work. "Let fall the drawbridge, Watkins," cried the governor, "and come down with me, Lady Brabazon, and bring the minx with you. I will hear what our gallant has got to say for himself in the presence chamber."