



Publication Office—No. 109 Gravier street.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THEM THAT BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

Terms—Four Dollars Per Annum, in Advance.

VOLUME I.

NEW ORLEANS, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 6, 1868.

NUMBER 44.

MORNING STAR AND CATHOLIC MESSENGER. NEW ORLEANS, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1868.

UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH.

It was three o'clock on a fine warm afternoon in the latter end of April. The garden at the rear of the comfortable, whitewashed, thickly thatched cabin was abundantly stocked with early cabbage and potatoes; everything bore the look of humble prosperity; from the blue smoke curling up from the freshly-made fire on the kitchen hearth, to the green meadows where the cows were lying peacefully ruminating. A broad river, glistening in the sun's rays, rolled smoothly beside the boundary wall of their pasture.

Yet Kate Moran stood at her father's door, looking sadly across the river to the mass of shipping, houses, and spires which rose on the other side. "Mother, I can't keep my eyes off that dreadful place!" said she, turning as she spoke to an elderly woman, who sat knitting on a bench near the fire.

"Musha, acushla, what good'll that do ye?" said she, rising and going over to the door also. "Come in now!" putting her hand on her daughter's shoulder caressingly. "O! mother! To think o' the poor fellow bein'— Here she fairly broke down, and burst into a wail of distress.

"Whist, now!" cried her mother. "Here's your father comin', and don't let him see ye cryin'."

Kate ran hastily into a bedroom as her father entered the kitchen. "There's no chance for the poor creature, Pat?" asked his wife, as a broad-faced, good-humored looking man came forward, and sat down on the settle.

"Chance?" said he, roughly, while his face clouded. "Sorrow chance! He'll be hung, as sure as I've this pipe in my hand." "Lord have mercy on his soul," moaned his wife.

"Oh, musha! amen!" said her husband, sighing. "I'm goin' in with the coil to the fair to-morrow, an' to see the last of him. It's never I thought to see poor Mick Welsh's son on a gal-lows!"

The sun was setting over the opposite hill, where the tall, many-storied houses rose in terraces and steep lanes, and was shedding the last beams of his radiance on the large, dark stone building which crowned the height. The red light seemed to be concentrated on one part of the building, where there was an iron gateway, spiked and double-locked. Far above, in the dark massive wall, was a small black door. And beneath this door, and around this gateway, men were busy putting up strong timber railings; while a crowd, talking and gesticulating, constantly pressed in upon the workmen, and were driven back by officials in uniform and a few soldiers.

Inside the massive walls other workmen were busy, but their work was common-place enough. Something was wrong with the great main sewer of the jail. Masons and bricklayers had been laboring for some hours; and now, when the city clocks and bells were striking six, they were taking up their tools, putting on their coats, and leaving their work till next day.

There were no rough jests among them. One man laughed as a companion slipped down into the slimy ditch where they had emerged; but his merriment was checked by an involuntary look from the others toward the far side of the yard, where a man in a felon's dress, and with mangled hands, was walking slowly up and down.

"Lord, have mercy on his soul!" muttered an old mason, compassionately. "Poor Tim Welsh! As honest a boy as ever father reared."

Whether the prisoner had caught the sound of his name or not, he raised his head and looked sadly towards them.

"Lord help him!" said two or three of the men; "his only crime is loving Ireland too well."

An official came across the yard to look at their day's work, and after asking some questions, walked away, saying: "Come along now, the gate is open."

played ball with, of Katie Moran, whom he had danced with at the fair only two months ago. Mechanically he walked across the square to the place where the bricklayers and masons had been busy; thinking, as he did so, half unconsciously, how large the opening was, how long the great sewer was, and where it emptied itself. Suddenly a thought occurred to him, making his pale, thin face flush, and his fettered hands tremble with excitement. He turned sharply away lest he should excite suspicion, and loitered with his former heavy, weary step towards the doorway of the inner court-yard.

"Goin' in, are you?" said the turnkey. "Yes," replied the prisoner.

The official stalked on before him into the adjoining square, then opening a door, passed through a long stone corridor, and stopping before a cell door, unlocked it. "If you want anything, you can call."

"Thank you," answered the condemned man. If the official had been better skilled in reading faces, he might have looked to the fastening of the cell door a little more carefully.

Tim Welsh had noticed that the bolt of the lock was very shaky, and he knew that a shaky bolt can be forced back.

It would not be dusk for a long while yet, but he could not wait; the one chance—desperate, hopeless as it seemed—must be tried quickly. While the turnkey's steps re-echoed in his hearing, he still secured, unscrewed the iron leg of his bedstead, and, standing forward, waited until he heard the great doors at the end of the corridor clash; then, putting the leg of the bed between the bolt and the wall, he strove with all his strength to force it back. But it resisted, and he dared not make a noise.

In despair he replaced the leg, and sat down to recover breath. Soon he heard another turnkey coming. He went to the cell door and called. "What is it? What d'ye want?"

"A drink of water, please; I'm very thirsty." When the turnkey had brought in the water, and retired, Welsh, who had been watching the lock, saw that, though gone to its place, it was not half as far home as before. He drank the water to cool his burning mouth and parched throat, and, seizing the iron leg again, listened as before until the doors clashed, when, placing the instrument in the old place, he—first gently shaking the bolt—gave it a vigorous blow, the sound of which was lost in the noisy echoes from the shutting doors. The bolt shot back, he pulled the door open and peered around; re- turning to his bed, he replaced the leg, and made up a bundle under the clothes, as well as he could, with the aid of the bolster; then, closing the cell door softly after him, he ran lightly down the gallery to the door that opened into the yard. The key was in it; he turned the key, and, glancing around for the second time, shut it after him and darted across to the arched doorway, where a sentry paced.

How to get past this soldier was the question, while he trembled in mingled horror at the sound of the "rap-rap-rap-tap-tap" coming freshly to his ears, and the thought of probable execution and more probable recapture. At this moment the sentry turned back on his beat, and the prisoner, crouching in the doorway, stole swiftly along by the wall to the opposite side of the yard, and slunk in beside a buttress. The open sewer was on the same side but further down. Trembling in every limb, he lay huddled up, not daring to move, lest he should attract attention, until the sentry turned for the third time. Then he fled along by the wall, and dropping into the sewer crept into the darkness there.

"Safe for awhile, anyhow, glory be to God," he gasped.

But as the poor creature pushed his way onward, through the foul air, in a stooping position, with his fettered hands pushed out before him to feel his way, a deadly sickness came over him. Still the faintly glimmered prospect of escape kept him up.

Fortunately there were but few rats. Five or six times he felt them biting at his feet, from which his coarse stockings had long been cut to pieces, and heard them squeaking as they scrambled up the dripping walls. "Will I ever smell a fresh breeze again, Lord help me!" he groaned. As he crawled along under the principal streets, he could hear the carriages rolling over his head, and at one grating to which he came he heard the words of a song, chorused by some men near a public house. At length, after he had been more than eight hours on his way, he heard the rolling of the river, saw a faint gleam through the puffy darkness, felt a faint fresh breeze from the flowing tide. A few more steps—falling in his eagerness—and the glimmer grew clearer, the breeze grew fresher, and he reached the river bank.

It was just four o'clock, and the clear solemn light of the dawn was shed over the sleeping city; the gardens were fresh in early fruit and flowers; the noble river rippled serenely on, and the cottages, trees and meadows lay far on the other side. Very far off they looked, and the river—cold, broad and deep, lay between; yet the undaunted fugitive, fettered, aching, sick, exhausted, muttered another prayer, and plunged in.

The cold water gave him temporary strength; keeping his eyes fixed on the goal of his hopes, he swam on, almost entire, by the movement of his legs and feet, as his hands were nearly useless to him.

But the bracing effect of the cold shock was soon followed by a distressing numbness. His almost efforts barely sufficed to keep his head above water and propel him slowly onward. Slower and fainter became each stroke, and a wave of the rising tide rushed over his head, when, with a grunting moan he made a last effort, and his feet touched the bottom. He now stood upright, and slowly waded to the low muddy shore, where he sank down on the sedge and sea-pinks, and swooned away.

"I must be stirrin' myself," said Pat Moran to his wife, about half-past four o'clock in the morning. "I've a power to do. I've to take the coil to the fair, an' the turnip-field to plow afore I go."

Just as the first beams of golden sunlight were resting on the cabin chimneys, and on the high buildings of the city hills opposite, he led his two horses from their stable to the field by the river, where the plow lay, and having yoked them he began turning up the furrows afresh.

"It's a fine mornin', glory be to God!" he soliloquized. "Only for the poor sowl that's to see the last of it, 'twould be a fine mornin' for me, then," he cried, suddenly catching sight of something which looked like a heap of muddy clothes. "Lord save us!" And without losing a moment he ran down to where the unconscious man was lying, face downward, on the sedge.

Pat Moran's first impulse was to run for help; his next to raise the body gently and drag it further up. The motion aroused the half-dead creature.

"Who, in Heaven's name are you, an' what brought you here?" inquired the farmer, looking in terror at the handcuffs.

"I'm—aren't you Pat Moran?"

"Yes."

"Pat, you knew my poor father. I'm Tim Welsh, the poor fellow that's to be hanged to-day. Won't you try and save me, for the love of God? I've come through the sewer. I'm all night creepin' through it. I swam the river, an' I'm almost gone! Won't you try an' save me, Pat Moran, and the Lord'll remember it to you and your children forever."

"Tim Welsh! Lord be good to me. What am I to do with you? I'm done for if you're found with me, an' how can I save you? What am I to do? Sure 'tisn't in the regard of sayin' that I wouldn't do a good turn for ye, Tim; but the country'll be roused after you, and where'll I hide you, or what will I do at all?" This groaned the farmer, as he opened the little gate and led him into the kitchen, where Kate was baking a griddle-cake for breakfast.

"Father, dear—oh, Lord! What's that?" she cried, as the tottering figure in the soaked, discolored garments, came into the cheerful light of the turf fire.

"Whist, Kate! It's Tim Welsh," he whispered. Kate sprang up from her knees, and her face grew white.

"Kate, darling, what are we to do with him?" said her father, trembling, as he recounted the manner of Tim's escape.

"Hide him, father," she cried, with all a woman's impulsive generosity. "The Lord pity you!" she added, bursting into tears at the sight of the wretched object before her.

"I'll do what I can, Tim. Give him a bit to eat, Katie. I'll spake to some some one I can trust."

"Pat, my life is in your hands," broke in the fugitive.

"Never fear, avick. I'll do my best for you." He hurried away a few hundred yards to the house of one of those holy men to whom Irishmen of all grades turn in every need, and who never apply in vain—the Sogarith Aroon. After receiving advice, and more material assistance, Moran proceeded to put in practice the course he had decided upon.

The farmer left the horse and ran on to the blacksmith's forge, where the smith and his son were getting to work.

"Martin, I'm in a great hurry, goin' to the fair, an' I want you to run over with somethin' to cut a chain for me; 'twont take you five minutes. Martin, you never did a better day's work in your life if you'll come as fast as your legs'll carry you."

after him! I must try though, I must try.— Heaven mend me! If I didn't leave the horses all this time, an' never— he ejaculated, dashing sight of his forgotten team, who had dragged the plow after them to the adjoining meadow, and were grazing there.

A sudden thought struck him, and he hastily returned to the house with his face flushed.— As he entered the kitchen, he ran against the smith, Martin Leary, who was staring about him.

"Martin, you are true an' honest, I know, an' you'd do a good turn as soon as any man I know," said Pat Moran, abruptly.

"There's my hand on it," returned the smith, bringing down his black fist on the other's shoulder. In a few words he was told what thought that had just occurred to Pat Moran.

"Here! Let me at it!" cried the smith, enthusiastically grasping his chisel and hammer. Thereupon the farmer led him into the little room, where Kate was administering hot tea and smoking griddle-cake to the poor fellow, who ate and drank almost mechanically, with his eyes fixed on the pretty face and busy hands that ministered to him.

"Here, Tim, is some one to do you a good turn. Hold out your hands, me boy! Peggy," turning to his wife, who was devoutly saying her beads in a corner, "go an' get me old clothes, an' a pair of shoes for that fellow— lay in the kitchen-garden! Run!" She did as she was bid, and when she returned with the clay, was desired to keep out of the room for a few minutes.

"Mother, dear, what are they doing?" she inquired.

"Sorra bit o' me knows, acushla. On'y your father has some plan in his head. Oh! Kitty, agrah, I'm tremblin' to think of the trouble he may be getting into. Ooh, Pat, dear, what are you goin' to do at all?" she cried, addressing her husband, who came out of the bedroom, dressed in his best blue swallow-tailed coat, corduroys, and new gray stockings.

"I'm goin' to show this new sarvant boy where he's to plow, afore I go to the fair," said the farmer, with a wink to the two women, who stared open eyed at the change of the condemned man with the fatal prison garb dripping with mud and sand, and fettered wrists, into a careless, easy-going looking young leecher, into a suit of well-worn and patched frieze and corduroy, his brogues, a rakish "canbeen" slouched over his eyes, and a black "bludden" between his lips.

"Now come on! 'Tis time you were at your work. His name's Maurice Slattery, Kate; an' he's with this month back."

"Oh, father, dear!" "Oh, Pat, acushla!" cried the wife and daughter, with admiration.

The young man, taking the pipe from his mouth, said solemnly, "May God forever bless you, Pat Moran, an' you, Mrs. Moran, an' you, Kate, an' you, Martin Leary!" and he grasped their hands all round.

"Come, 'tis six o'clock," said the farmer.— "You know where the plow is, Maurice Slattery. You've a new piece of iron to melt, Martin. An', Kate, you've to bury them clothes. Come an' I'll show you where."

Half an hour afterwards he was riding slowly to the fair on his gelding horse which was to be sold, casting cautious glances backward at the field by the river, where he could see his horses plowing, and his new servant boy toiling quietly after them.

Such confusion and excitement had not been known for years in the old cathedral town.— Police there were none in those days; but the whole garrison had turned out in search of the escaped felon. Groups of red-coats perambulated the streets, the roads leading to the country, and even the lanes and meadows. Hundreds of country folk, who had come in to see the execution, also crowded the town. The throng on the prison-hill was so dense that the farmer could scarcely proceed a step. They were all talking vociferously in Irish or English, every one giving his or her version of the wonderful story. Some declared that the prisoner had not escaped, and that it was a device of the authorities to conceal some foul play.— When Moran had elbowed his way with great difficulty almost to the prison gates, he looked eagerly for the objects of his search, some of Tim's own people, whom he discovered sitting and standing together in an excited group.

"Pat Moran, d'ye believe this?" said one of the men, hoarsely, clutching the farmer's coat.

"D'ye believe that poor Tim has got out of their cursed trap?"

"John Welsh, Tim did get out!"

"Whist! Lord save us!" they all broke in with one voice.

"I'm safe to say more, I'm tremblin' that some o' them fellows with the brass buttons will hear me," glancing towards the turnkey, dimly visible behind the iron grating; "but you, John Welsh, an' you, Mick Power, come with a car to-night to the cross-roads beyond the ferry, at twelve o'clock, an' there'll be a friend to see ye. Whist, for your souls!"

was carried above ground to the mouth of the sewer where it emptied itself into the river. A venturesome spirit even crept up a few dozen yards of the black passage, but speedily returned, vowing that nothing could live half an hour in it. Nevertheless, they sought for footmarks on the river brink; but the friendly tide had been before them. Still, on the supposition that he might have lived to reach the river and swim across, a party of prison officials and soldiers was ferried over, and marched in a body to farmer Moran's house.

Kate was busy feeding chickens, and her mother peeling potatoes, when they both caught sight of the gleam of scarlet and white cross-belts, and heard loud tones and footsteps.

"Lord, be good and merciful to us evormore, amen! Protect and save us!" muttered Peggy Moran, dropping the potato she was peeling, and turning with a face of terror to her daughter, who whispered, without turning her head: "Mother, darlin', don't pretend anything, for all sakes. Chucky, chucky! Chucky, chucky, she went on, raising her voice gally, as she scattered the food.

"Sarvant, sir," she said, wiping her hands, and courtesying to a tall, stout officer, who strode up to the door, scattering the chickens by the clanking of his spurs and sword.

"Is this farmer Moran's, my good girl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where's your husband, Mrs. Moran?" said the officer, turning to the poor woman, who was endeavoring to look calm.

"At the fair, sir. Oh, sure, 'tisn't got into any harm Pat has, sir?"

"What harm should he get into—about this runaway prisoner, you mean?" said the officer, trying to startle her into some admission.

"What man, sir?" cried the woman. "Law, mother! That's what that boy was telling us!"

"What boy?" said the officer, now off his guard.

"A boy, sir—oh! a rascal little chap—a gossoon—run in here a while ago, an' said the man that's to be hung's got out an' run away—an' sure we didn't believe him!" said Kate, with such an air of self-possession and innocent inquisitiveness, that the officer was completely deceived. A boy had come in as she had said, and told the wonderful story, so she spoke the truth in that part of her assertion.

"Well, Mrs. Moran," said the officer, "you've no objection to have your premises searched, I suppose? It is suspected that the prisoner is hidden somewhere about here."

"Musha, what put that into your heads?" said Peggy Moran, angrily. "Faith! it's some thin' else we'd be thinkin' of, and not meddlin' with the law; but you're welcome to search away, sir, as long as ye like, on'y it's a queer thing to have an honest man's house searched like a rogne's!"

"I must do my duty," said the officer.

"Sure the gentleman won't do us any hurt, mother," said Kate. "Please don't let 'em trample the potatoes, sir!" she called out as the men turned into the little garden.

Pat Moran's words were almost fulfilled, that the pursuers would root up the ground in search of the fugitive. Not a bush or a hollow about the ground, nor a loft or cranny in the house or out-buildings but was thoroughly investigated. At last, with a sickening feeling of apprehension, Kate saw the band disperse themselves over the fields, and three soldiers run across the plowed field to question the man who was plowing.

Welsh's blood ran cold as he saw them coming; but recollecting that they did not know his face, he glanced over his shoulder, and shouted in a feigned voice to the horses.

The soldiers were young and careless. They merely asked two or three questions in an irrelevant way, staring up at the sky and down at the clay, as if they expected to discover the prisoner transformed into a spirit of earth or air. Then they ran off again; and Welsh breathed freely until he spied six other soldiers advancing towards him, with the officer in charge, and two others in dark frock-coats with shining buttons and red collars.

"God help me! Sure I can only die! he murmured.

"How long have you been plowing?" said the officer.

"Since daybreak, sir. Won't an' hard work I have had, every one runnin' to me since breakfast, asking me did I see the man that run away, steady there?" The laborer sulkily keeping his back towards the prison warders.

"He is supposed to have swam the river," said the officer; "and if so, and you have been here since daybreak, he could not have got over without you seeing him."

"Sorrah, haporth, I see sure, if he did; an' he must be a brave swimmer to come across that river this time o' year, an' the water like ice," said the plow-boy, with an incredulous grin; "sure he might land down farther, it's a great deal nearer, but any how I see nothin'. Consume ye, straight!" he growled at the horses, and, bending double over the plow, furrowed on. The officer called his men hurriedly back to the country road.

(Continued on Eighth Page.)