

AN IRISH EXECUTION—CLEVER ESCAPE.

The crowd was immense. It outnumbered by tenfold any assembly ever collected in that place upon a similar occasion. It was generally supposed that the unfortunate culprit had become deeply penitent, and intended to make a full confession. In short, that he would preach his first, his last, and his own funeral sermon on the drop. He was known to be extremely eloquent, and from his early learning much seemed to be expected from him. Hence the vast numbers who flocked to the spot, and hence the almost irresistible pressure immediately beneath the gallows. The moment Rananah, who was dressed in his usual black frock coat and trousers had entered the press-room, he turned to the sheriff, and with a look of the most unmistakable repentance and grief, requested the permission to address a few words to the crowd as he there was. "It is sir," said he, "the last request of a dying sinner, one who trusts he will never deny nor refuse a poor penitent. The sheriff hesitated. Rananah became excited, and rapidly followed up his request, exclaiming, "Oh, sir, I have but one object now to wish for—justice to the world and forgiveness to myself. I implore you then, dear sir, as you stand in the presence of death, in the prime of life; you see death gazing upon you, hear it speaking to you—death in the health and vigour of manhood, like yourself; all its veins are full, its organs sound, its bones unbroken, and its senses free. I entreat you, sir, as you stand beside a living corpse about to be hurried by a brother worm, ten times more steeped in guilt than himself, over that precipice whose edge is the entrance to a journey the end of which no man can know—I entreat you deny me not. I was brought up and educated in the habit of addressing the people, and whether it was from an over-enthusiasm, or a fervent and nervous temperament, I know not, but I never could do so with even tolerable success, without accompanying my words by a certain extent with a brand upon my hands; even, submit me not to that rope must entail upon me. Let the space of time between that man's touch (pointing to the hangman) and the shadow of death be but like the lightning's flash. As I live upon the verge of death I will not keep you long; say five or six minutes, and I shall have done.—There I see I may speak to them as I am, and God will bless you." The sheriff yielded. "But remember," he said, "I can give you but a few minutes; the moment I pronounce your name, you must come down and prepare." "I shall be down, sir, perhaps before you call me," replied Rananah, stepping forward, and ascending the few steps which led from the press-room to the drop.—There was a general murmur through the crowd. Rananah, while he wiped his face and forehead with a handkerchief, drew his other hand in rapid circles toward his breast, exclaiming, "Draw near, my friends, draw near." The mass of human beings closed in, and the space beneath the drop became thronged to excess, and the police, in a moment, got so mixed in and jammed amongst the crowd that they could not move. "Good people," said Rananah, "I am sure I have some friends amongst you."—"You have, you have," interrupted those below him. "Draw near, then," said he, "and you shall hear the very few words I have to say?" and laying his left hand upon the iron rail in front of him, with one spring he cleared it like a bird, and fell into the crowd below, which was doubtless prepared to break his fall. There was a tremendous shout that rent the air far and wide. All was confusion and uproar. The policemen in the crowd were so pummed up by those around that they could not move hand or foot, and those who were free in vain sought an entry into the thick solid mass, even with the points of their bayonets. The sheriff rushed forward to the front of the drop, calling out to the police, "for God's sake, to secure him, dead or alive," and that he would give fifty pounds to any one of them who would do so. I was on horseback at one side, with a few police and ten or twelve infantry men, whom I had kept together, and saw a move through the people, something like the motion which a dog would make through a field of standing corn, and it was evident that Rananah was being conveyed away. I spurred on a rough thick and that with my men; but I might as well have faced a fortified wall. I then kept round the skirts of the crowd spreading my men to endeavour to prevent his escape.—By this time the sheriff had come down, and was making his way towards me. At this moment I plainly saw Rananah emerge from the far side of the crowd at some distance, clear a sort of wall about five feet high, and speed like a greyhound across the fields. "He's off, boys,"

TEETH, THE

roared; "there he goes like a deer—after him, fly like the wind.—Where's O'Shaughnessy? Oh! there he is; he has him already in view, and all's right; nothing can escape that man." "God help the first man that comes up with him," said a voice near me. "Ay, Jim, or the first four," said another; "for I saw him put a brace of double-barrel pistols in his breast before he took the slices off him." This was a pleasant prospect to the end of this chase. Rananah knew that worse than hanged he could not be. He feared that poor O'Shaughnessy, at least, was doomed, and perhaps three others, if they had the pluck to proceed after their comrade should be struck down. The mounted men made a burst for a field or two, but were soon pounded. I dismounted, and throwing off my swordbelt, &c., I followed at my best. O'Shaughnessy, however, was far in advance, and several others also before me, but the struggle of speed was evidently between Rananah and O'Shaughnessy who were at that time unquestionably the two best runners and jumpers in the province—perhaps in Ireland. Rananah, however, appeared to have the best of it, and was gaining perceptibly on his pursuer; he had thrown off his shoes before he started, while O'Shaughnessy had not spared a moment to dismount himself of a single article. Now he seemed to feel that he had no easy task to perform, he had found his match at last, and to business he must go in downright earnest, if he meant not to be disgraced for ever. I saw him, as he ran, tear off his pouch, and belts, and stock. With one rip he opened his jacket from his waist to his neck, and cast it behind him. He retained his carbine, however, and even at the top of his speed I saw him commence to load, for in his haste he had not neglected to retain some cartridges. Dead or alive, I saw that he was determined to have him. There was not half a mile to the lake beyond the residence of Mr. —, which, if Rananah once reached, good-bye to him.—There were, no doubt, goods there would be, save a few random articles, the fugitive, if even these could be ventured on with others by his side. O'Shaughnessy appeared to be aware of Rananah's object, and added new efforts to gain upon him, and for the next two or three fields did go in considerably, so that now scarcely more than three hundred yards remained between them.—Rananah continued to make straight for the demesne wall. At this period the cheers and shouts, yells and whistles, resounded from all sides, and in a manner which I never before heard anything to equal; crowds were seen on every hill, hedges and fences were everywhere broken through, and walls tumbled down in every direction. Whenever the eye turned it saw a man or men running. It was evident the greatest point of skill was now at hand, and as Rananah plainly set himself to face the wall, the cheers on all sides were redoubled. O'Shaughnessy was still closing on him, for Rananah seemed in some degree to moderate his pace, as if to gather strength and breath for the spring. "Tis impossible," thought I, "he will be mad enough to attempt that wall; it cannot be less than twelve feet high at the very least, besides the Scotch blocking and yet he makes straight for it." I was now almost certain of success, when to my utter consternation I saw O'Shaughnessy trip and stagger forward nearly on his face at the same moment that Rananah set himself for a tremendous spring. He made it, and almost with complete success, clinging with all his might to the top; still his weight and the projecting blocks of stone seemed against him; he struggled hard, but late appeared to have forsaken him, for after clutching for some moments his strength failed him, and he tumbled back into the field. But he was up and off again in a moment. He did not, however, attempt the wall again, but turned to the left, and ran along it. He appeared lame, as if hurt by the fall, and lagged considerably. O'Shaughnessy, of course, now gained fast upon him, and Rananah, seeing that the game was lost, sat down leaning against the wall, and holding out his hands towards us in token of surrender. O'Shaughnessy was now up with him in a few seconds, as were some others quickly after, who were all wiping their faces with handkerchiefs and the sleeves of their shirts when I came up.—The man had covered his face with the skirt of his coat, and appeared to be in pain. "Is he hurt?" said I. Here he suddenly threw back his coat, and stood up. "Frank how are you?" said Dan O'Shaughnessy, holding out his hand to his brother. "By I!—a!" cried Frank, "we're sold. It is my brother Dan." "I understand," I turned to look upon the man. O'Shaughnessy was right. It was not Rananah, and except in height and dress, which was of course, prepared for the occasion, he was not even like him.—Need I explain the ruse. The whole plan I had been deeply and well concerted; and Dan O'Shaughnessy, as the best runner in Ireland, had been hired at a hundred pounds to give the peeders a long chase, while Rananah was being conveyed safely away in another direction. Rananah had never seen or heard of after.

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