

MEMOIRES OF THE LATE MR. P.J. SMYTH, M.P.

About the year 1820 an old gentleman, descendant of the McGuires of the Battle-axes renowned in history for their bravery and literary talents settled in Dublin. Mr. Smyth being a man of means bought a beautiful old mansion in the suburbs and devoted his time to the study of literature and was looked upon as a confirmed and rather eccentric old bachelor. Some years passed thus. Meeting a friend one day in the City, he invited him home to dine. During dinner the conversation turned on racing. As the Meath Hunt was going to take place the following week the friends resolved to pass a week in the country and visit some old acquaintances there. They did so. One day while following the hunt Mr. Smyth's attention was attracted by a quiet looking girl, daughter of a landed proprietor named Bruton in Ballyragget. He enquired her name, obtained an introduction, and much to his gratification he was invited to visit their home, where, to his surprise, he met a large family of boys and girls, who seemed to think of nothing but the fun they could get out of the stranger. During the evening another member of the family made his appearance, rather Barry, Parish Priest of Clara. He made his influence at

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and mitchell were to ride alone, but well armed, into Westbury, Mitchell, as a formal, to hand in his notice of withdrawal of his parole. This done the friends were to ride through the forest into Hobart which they hoped to reach before dark. Smyth was to see his friend on board, then return to Nant Cottage to take charge of Mrs. Mitchell and her family and remain with her until they were once more re-united.

After a night's rest the family met once more at breakfast. Little was said by anyone. The "grown-ups" felt that the time and task before the friends were too momentous to allow of useless words. Mrs. Mitchell and her husband felt their parting might be their last.

Silently the farewells were spoken. Mitchell and Smyth mounted their horses. Smyth on "Donald" and Mitchell on "Fleur-de-lis". The elder boy had walked through the fields into Bothwell, that he might be ready at the police court to hold the horses.

After riding along for some time in silence, they were surprised to see Mitchell's second boy riding towards them at a gallop. He handed them a note from the shipping agents in Hobart to say the ship had sailed and begged Smyth to give up the venture as there was too much danger attached to it.

This news although it was a shock to the friends did not deter them. They resolved that Mitchell should carry out the first arrangements, then take his chance of leaving the Island.

Smyth and Mitchell therefore rode leisurely along until they reached Bothwell, then down the main street until they reached the police barracks. Several constables were waiting about, one on guard at the door. They both entered the Courthouse, Mitchell walking first armed and carrying in his hand a heavy riding whip. Smyth followed holding his revolver in his hand. Mitchell then handed in his parole and offered himself for arrest. The Magistrate was ^{evidently} ~~simply~~ stupified and simply stared at the two friends. Before he had recovered his wits, they bade him a courteous "Good-bye" and went towards the door. He then found his voice and shouted "Stop them, arrest them, Help, help."

The constables only stared, but made no attempt to stop them. One held their horses at the gate and they mounted with all speed. The streets of Bothwell were crowded and on hearing cries of "Stop them in the Queen's name" they seemed to grasp the meaning of what the performance meant.

They rode with all speed until they left the town far behind them, and did not stop until they found themselves well in the forest. They then dismounted for a brief rest, changed clothes and horses, took an affectionate farewell of each other, Smyth promising to see Mrs. Mitchell as soon as possible and let her know the latest news.