

Printed by
SEALY, BRYERS & WALKER,
94, 95 & 96 Middle Abbey Street,
Dublin.

HIBERNIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.

BY

SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON.



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THE DEATH OF THE CHILDREN OF USNACH.
THE RETURN OF CLANEBOY.
THE CAPTIVE OF KILLESBIN.

INTRODUCTION.

The Publishers of this cheap edition of Sir Samuel Ferguson's works beg to announce that they have taken steps to ensure the copyright in America and elsewhere, and that any infringement of it will be punishable by law.

THE Tales from Irish History presented in this volume, were written by the late Sir Samuel Ferguson in his early youth, and appeared in the pages of *The Dublin University* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. They are here collected, re-arranged according to their chronological sequence, with a few emendations, and a short introductory historical sketch, which it is hoped may render them more useful and attractive.

These stories, "Hibernian Nights' Entertainments," are supposed to be told in the winter of 1592, by Turlogh O'Hagan, of Tulloghoge, hereditary Bard of O'Neill, to the sons of Shane O'Neill, or John the Proud, and their young kinsman, Hugh Roe O'Donnell, *Tanist*, or heir-apparent of Tyrconnell. These Ulster Princes had long been captives in Bermingham Tower, in the Castle of Dublin. Their escape had been planned; the hour of their liberation was not far distant. Their faithful friend and fosterer in the interval is supposed to beguile the time by recounting the romantic stories which are the subject matter of this volume. These narratives, even when the characters are fictitious, are full of local colour, and true to the facts of Irish History. An eminent literary critic expresses himself with reference to them as—"greatly struck by the skill of the composition, especially the mastery of detail—details of locality, of the operations of war, and of the Irish mode of life." This is presented in a picturesque and vivid form, calculated to interest readers of any age, and to be specially attractive to the young.

THE DEATH OF THE CHILDREN OF USNACH

is a tale of very early times. It belongs to what Sir Samuel Ferguson has called "the Conorian Cycle," because Conor MacNessa, King of Ulster at the commencement of the Christian Era, forms its central figure. It had great fascination for his own mind, and has left its impression on much of the poetry which he subsequently wrote. Conor was an able, but unscrupulous Prince who owed his throne to the generosity of his step-father, Fergus MacRoy. Conor had brought up in complete seclusion the beautiful Deirdre, whom he destined for his wife. She gives her heart to Naisi, son of Usnach, and

flies with him to Scotland. He and his brothers are induced to return to Ireland, notwithstanding the apprehensions of Deirdre. Fergus MacRoy had sought them on the shores of Loch Etive, and guaranteed their safety at the hands of Conor, who afterwards violated his pledged word. The sons of Usnach are slain, and Deirdre refuses to survive her husband.

Fergus, indignant at the treachery of Conor, quitted Ulster, and leaving Emania, near Armagh, sought refuge at Rath Croghan, in Roscommon, and attached himself to Maev and her husband Ailill, who ruled over Connaught. He took part with this Amazonian Queen when she made war on Ulster. This is the chief subject of the Irish Epic. The *Tain-bo-Cuailgne* is in Irish what the *Iliad* is in Greek, and the *Nibelungen Lied* in Teutonic legendary story. Of the heroes who fought on both sides, Sir Samuel Ferguson has written much. The *Tain Quest*; the *Naming of Cuchullin*; the *Healing of Conall Carnach*; Conall's combat with *Mesgedra* and other poems, deal with the cycle of Conor MacNessa.

The second story of the "Hibernian Nights,"

THE RETURN OF CLANEBOY,

is concerned with the assassination of William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, whose heiress, Elizabeth, brought that title into the Royal family, by her marriage with Lionel Duke of Clarence, third son to King Edward the Third of England. To understand it, and the subsequent tales, we must pause to take a rapid survey of the history of Ireland up to the fourteenth century. This, from the earliest date, is fully illustrated in existing MSS. written between the seventh and twelfth centuries of our era. These embody the primitive traditions of a race who have carefully preserved, and handed down by their Bards and Sennachies, through oral transmission, their local, and family histories and pedigrees. These were of unusual importance to a people among whom the clan system so long prevailed. The *Velts*, before the dawn of History, properly so called, were among the earliest Aryan immigrants into Europe. In Ireland *Firbolg*, *Tuatha de Danaan*, and *Milesian*, successively possessed the country. The latest wave of population was the Milesian, which came by way

of Spain. The descendants of Ir, son of Miled of Spain, who gave his name to the island, settled in the North-east while the tribes derived from Erimon occupied the North-west of Erin, and a third brother, Eber, is the progenitor of the Munster clans. Their system of law, known as the Brehon, was in substantial accordance with the primitive laws and usages of all early communities, but differed in some respects from the common law of Europe. Homicide might be compensated by a fine, or *eric*. The land, except to a small extent, in accordance with the peculiar tribal system of the Gael of Ireland, was held in common. The chiefs were elected by their clansmen, and could not transmit their dignities, as customary under the feudal system. The tribe at the election of a king or chief, selected his successor, or *Tanist*, also; not necessarily the son, but frequently a brother, uncle, or other member of the ruling family. This law accounts for much of the turbulence and bloodshed recorded in the history of Ireland.

The territories of the provincial kings may be said roughly to correspond to the four provinces—*Uladh*, or Ulster, *Lagenia*, or Leinster, *Mumhain*, or Munster, and *Connacia*, or Connaught. The elective *Ard Righ*, or chief king, had the territory of Meath assigned to him, and reigned, in early times, from Tara.

The Hill of Tara may be seen from the Kilmessan station on the Meath Railway between Dublin and Navan. Although upwards of 1321 years have elapsed since it ceased to be the kingly residence, the earthworks which mark out the Royal raths, and the great banqueting Hall, can still be traced. Here, on a memorable Easter Sunday in the early part of the fifth century, St. Patrick preached before the king, and illustrated, from the shamrock at his feet, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. This monarch, Laery or Leoghaire, was a son of King Nial, the captor of St. Patrick. From another son of Nial, Conall Gulban, the family of O'Donnell of Tyrconnell claim descent; of these was Hugh Roe, the captive of 1592. Conall Gulban's twin brother, Owen, was the ancestor of the O'Neills of Tir-Owen, Tyrone. To this illustrious house belonged Henry and Art O'Neill, the fellow captives of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, who were sons of Shane *an Diomas*, or the Proud. It was to the ancestors

of these young men, the sons of Nial of the Nine Hostages, that St. Patrick preached at Tara the Gospel of Christ.

On one of the plundering expeditions of King Nial of the Nine Hostages, the missionary Saint, then in his boyhood, was carried captive to Ulster, and was sold into servitude to Milchu. For years he herded swine on the mountain of Slemish, in the Co. Antrim. He escaped; but inspired with a fervent zeal to win souls to Christ, and a tender affection for the people among whom he had been enslaved, he returned voluntarily to Ireland, and preached to her pagan people with marked success. Erin became the "Land of Saints." The greatest missionaries the world has yet seen were trained in her schools and monasteries. When Europe was enveloped in darkness, the light of Christianity, of culture, and of learning, shone brightly in that Western Isle. From thence preceeded St. Columba, with twelve companions, who settled in the Caledonian island of Hy, or Iona, and was the apostle of Pictland. From Iona went forth the founders of Lindisfarne, whence St. Aidan converted Northumbria. Eastern France and Northern Italy were evangelized by the Irish St. Columbanus; Switzerland by one of his disciples, St. Gall. But in the 9th century, pagan Scandinavia sent forth plundering expeditions which ravaged the coasts of Great Britain, Ireland and the Continent. The Vikings, as these fierce sea-robbers were called, sailed up the estuaries and rivers, plundered the monasteries, cruelly oppressed the people, and established themselves firmly in the seaport towns, many of which they founded, settled in, and became in time more or less Christianized and peaceful. Their power in Ireland was shattered in 1014 by the Irish King Brian Boru, at the battle of Clontarf.

Not long before this period, the Irish had adopted the use of surnames. Each clan naturally called itself by the name of its greatest man. To his name was added Mac or O, according as he was father, or more remote ancestor; *Mac*, implying "son of," *O*, grandson or descendant.

The Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland dates from the twelfth century, when the Provincial King of Leinster, Dermid MacMurrough, who had been deservedly expelled

from his dominions, sought the aid of Richard de Clare, Earl of Strongbow, to whom he promised the hand of his daughter Eva in marriage, and with her the succession to Leinster. Strongbow and his companions in arms, FitzStephen, FitzGerald, sons of the beautiful Nesta, her grandson, Meyler FitzHenry, and others, landed on the south coast of Ireland, and established themselves in Wexford and Waterford. In 1171, King Henry Fitz-Empress, the second of the name, first of the House of Plantagenet, visited Ireland, received the homage of the chieftains, and curbed the power of the Anglo-Norman Barons. The only daughter of Strongbow and Eva had married William Earl of Pembroke.

Isabel and the Earl Marshal had five daughters, through whom the territory of Dermid MacMurrough passed into the families of their respective husbands. Most of these were absentees. The feudal law of inheritance was repudiated by the clans of Leinster, who elected Kavanagh, illegitimate son of Dermid, as their chief. His representative in the fourteenth century was the celebrated Art Kavanagh, who played a conspicuous part in Irish history during the reign of King Richard the Second. His namesake in the nineteenth century, Arthur MacMurrough Kavanagh, Esq., of Borris, worthily represents this ancient family at the present day, and is the possessor of a portion at least of the ancestral acres.

Among the Anglo-Norman nobles who took root in Irish soil, we may allude to the descendants of William Fitz Adelm de Burgh, who accompanied King Henry the Second to Ireland. He is the common ancestor of the Earls of Mayo and Clanrickard. We are introduced in the second tale of our series,

THE RETURN OF CLANEBOY,

to his representative in the senior line, William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, son of Richard, the Red Earl, who, during his long life was the most powerful subject in Ireland. This branch became extinct in the male line, in the person of Earl William de Burgh, whose only child, Elizabeth, married Lionel Duke of Clarence, in 1352. The assassination of Earl William at the fords of the Lagan, near Belfast, in 1333, gave opportunity for the return of the

tribes of Ulster into the North-eastern portion of their native territory.

Lionel of Clarence and Elizabeth de Burgh had a daughter, Philippa, who married Edmund Mortimer Earl of March. Their granddaughter, Anne Mortimer, by her union with the Earl of Cambridge, son of Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, fifth son of King Edward III., carried into this branch the prior right to the succession to the English throne. The contests between the Houses of York and Lancaster—the white and red rose—resulted in the ultimate triumph of the white rose in the person of King Edward the IV. and Richard III., grandsons of Anne Mortimer and Richard Earl of Cambridge. Before these bloody conflicts arose in England, the Earls of March had played an important part in Ireland. Roger Mortimer was Viceroy—ruling from Trim—for his cousin King Richard II. Their conflicts with the native Irish are illustrated by the third story of our series,

THE CAPTIVE OF KILLESBIN,

which is concerned with the struggle in the central counties, while the scene of

CORBY MAC GILLMORE

and of

AN ADVENTURE OF SHANE O'NEILL'S

in the second series of *Hibernian Nights' Entertainments*, is in Antrim and Down. The local feuds and guerilla warfare between the contending races, with their inevitable consequences, are exemplified in these tales.

We pass by the brief episode of Edward Bruce's campaign in Ireland in the fourteenth century. Had it not been that the brother of the heroic Bruce of Bannockburn perished on the field at Faughard, the subsequent history of Ireland might have been different. We have seen the condition of the country under the Plantagenets and the House of York, and have now to consider it under the Tudor dynasty. Henry VII. and Henry VIII. and his children, uniting the claims of both the white and red rose, found themselves free to interfere actively in Irish affairs. The great Anglo-Norman family of FitzGerald, who came in with Strongbow, were then high in power and influence. This period is illustrated in the story which will

appear in the third series of the *Hibernian Nights' Entertainments*,

THE REBELLION OF SILKEN THOMAS

son to Gerald Earl of Kildare, who died a prisoner in the Tower of London, 1534.

It remains only to acquaint our readers with the details of the escape of the prisoners, which we shall give in the graphic words of the "Four Masters" whose "Annals" are especially full and reliable for the history of Ulster at this period. They were contemporary authors, compiling their great work in the convent of Donegal, among the clansmen of Tyreconnell, whose chieftain, Hugh, was the father of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, who, in 1592, made his second and successful escape from the Castle of Dublin.

This young Prince had been captured by treachery. A vessel laden with choice wine had anchored in Lough Swilly. Its cargo was readily disposed of among the neighbouring chiefs. One of them who had as his guest the young Tanist, then in his nineteenth year, applied to the skipper for a further purchase of wine, but was told that all was disposed of, except such as was required for the captain's table, which Hugh and his friends were invited to partake of on board. While enjoying the captain's hospitality in the cabin, the hatches were closed, the sails unfurled, and the young men carried off in sight of their helpless and despairing friends on shore.

The rigour of the Princes' captivity in Bermingham Tower was increased after the first abortive escape of Hugh Roe. The second attempt, in which O'Donnell and his companions in captivity, sons of Shane O'Neill, were aided by Turlogh O'Hagan, shall be told in the graphic words of the contemporary chronicler.

"Hugh Roe, the son of Hugh, son of Manus O'Donnell, remained in Dublin in prison and in chains . . . to the winter of this year. One evening he and his companions, Henry and Art, the sons of O'Neill . . . took an advantage of the keepers, and knocked off their fetters. They afterwards . . . with a very long rope . . . let themselves down . . . until they reached the deep trench that was around the Castle. They climbed the outer side until they were on the margin of the trench. . . . They then

proceeded through the streets of the city, mixing with the people; and no one took more notice of them than of any one else, for they did not delay at that time to become acquainted with the people of the town; and the gates of the city were wide open. They afterwards proceeded by every intricate and difficult place, until they arrived upon the surface of the Red Mountain. . . . The darkness of the night, and the hurry of their flight separated the eldest of them from the rest, namely, Henry O'Neill. Hugh was the greenest of them with respect to years, but not with respect to prowess. They were grieved with respect to the separation of Henry from them; but, however, they proceeded onwards, their servant guiding them along. That night was snowing, so that it was not easy for them to walk, for they were without clothes or covering, having left their outer garments behind them. . . . Art was more exhausted by this rapid journey than Hugh, for he had been a long time in captivity. . . . It was not so with Hugh; he had not yet passed the age of boyhood, . . . and his pace and motion were quick and rapid. When he perceived Art had become feeble, and that his step was becoming inactive and slow, he requested him to place one arm upon his own shoulder, and the other upon that of the servant. In this manner they proceeded on their way, until they had crossed the Red Mountain, after which they were weary and fatigued, and unable to help Art on any further, and as they were not able to take him with them, they stopped to rest under the shelter of a high rocky precipice, which lay before them. On halting here they sent the servant to bring the news to Glenmalur where dwelt Feagh, the son of Hugh (O'Byrne), who was then at war with the English. This is a secure and impregnable valley. . . . When the servant came into the presence of Feagh he delivered his message, and how he had left the youths who had escaped from the city. . . . Feagh immediately ordered some of his servants of trust to go to them, taking with them a man to carry food, and another to carry ale and beer. This was accordingly done, and they arrived at the place where the men were. Alas! unhappy and miserable was their condition on their arrival. Their bodies were covered over with white-bordered shrouds of hail-stones freezing around them on

every side, and their light clothes and fine-threaded shirts too adhered to their skin; and their large shoes and leather thongs to their shins and feet; so that, covered as they were with the snow, it did not appear to the men who had arrived that they were human beings at all, for they found no life in their members, but just as if they were dead. They were raised by them from their bed, and they requested of them to take some of the meat and drink; but this they were not able to avail themselves of, . . . so that Art at length died, and was buried in that place. As to Hugh, after some time . . . his energies were restored except the use of his two feet, for they were dead members, without feeling, swollen and blistered by the frost and snow. The men carried him to the valley . . . he was placed in a sequestered house, in a solitary part of a dense wood, where he remained under care until a messenger came privately from his brother-in-law, the Earl O'Neill, to inquire after him. When the messenger arrived he prepared to depart. It was difficult for him to undertake that journey, for his feet, . . . so that another person had to raise him on his horse, and to lift him from his horse whenever he wished to alight. . . . They proceeded forwards on their noble, swift steeds . . . until they arrived before morning on the brink of the Boyne, a short distance to the west of Drogheda, and they were afraid of going to that town, so what they did was this, to proceed along the brink of the river to a place where a poor little fisherman used to wait with a little boat, for ferrying. Hugh went into this little boat, and the ferryman conveyed him to the other bank, having received a full remuneration; and his servant returned with his horses through the town, and brought them to Hugh on the other side of the river. . . . They proceeded to Dungannon where the Earl, Hugh O'Neill, was. . . . Here Hugh remained for the space of four nights, to shake off the fatigue of his journey and anxiety. He then prepared to depart, and took his leave of the Earl, who sent a troop of horse with him till he arrived at Lough Erne."

This Earl of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill, was cousin to Henry and Art O'Neill, sons of Shane *an Diomas*, but was far from friendly in his feelings towards the survivor, Henry, whom he looked on as a possible rival, and kept at Dun-

gannon in close confinement. Art, as we have seen, had died on that bitter winter night from fatigue and exposure, on the walk towards Glenmalur. Their common grandfather, Con Bacagh, had been created Earl of Tyrone in 1542, when he consented to renounce his Irish title and accept the re-investment of his territories at the hands of the English Sovereign. This legal proceeding converted what was merely a life interest into an hereditary title descending to his direct heirs, and afforded a plea of legality to the English Government, in confiscating the lands of the tribe whenever the chieftain might rebel. Con O'Neill, on this occasion named as his heir his reputed son, Matthew, who was created Baron of Dungannon. He died in the lifetime of his father, and any claims his children might be supposed to possess were ignored by the tribe, who, on the death of Con Bacagh, inaugurated his son Shane as The O'Neill. After a stormy career Shane was assassinated in 1567, and was succeeded as O'Neill by his cousin Turlogh Lynach. Meantime Hugh, son of the Baron of Dungannon, who had been educated in England, had grown to man's estate, and was created Earl of Tyrone in 1587, and soon proved himself the ablest man of his race, Turlogh Lynach eventually yielding to him the chieftaincy.

In diplomacy and duplicity, as in war, Hugh O'Neill proved himself a match for the generals of Queen Elizabeth, whom he defeated at the Battle of the Yellow Ford and many other engagements. At last the favourite of the Queen, the Earl of Essex, was sent to Ireland with a well appointed and formidable force in 1599. After some months he encountered O'Neill on the borders of the Pale in Louth, and consented to a parley. They met in the centre of the stream, had a private conference, and Essex agreed to a truce. He hastened to London, but failed to propitiate the angry Queen, and in 1601 perished on the scaffold in the thirty-third year of his age. He was succeeded in his Irish command by Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, who had married Penelope, sister of Essex, immortalized in her youth by Sir Philip Sidney, who wooed as the fair "Stella" (then the wife of Lord Rich) the Lady Penelope Devereux, to whose charms so much of his poetry was dedicated.

In 1601, the King of Spain sent an expedition into Ireland, under the command of Don Juan de Aguilá. He landed at Kinsale, and summoned the Northern clans to take up arms for the Catholic cause. Hugh O'Neill and Hugh Roe O'Donnell promptly responded. Their troops sustained a terrible defeat before Kinsale at the hands of Mountjoy. O'Donnell went to Spain to solicit further aid, while his brother Rory led back the defeated contingent from Tyrconnell, in company with the Earl of Tyrone.

When Hugh Roe announced his resolve to appeal for succour from Philip III. of Spain, the chroniclers declare that "it was pitiful and mournful to hear the loud clapping of hands, the intense tearful moaning, and the loud-wailing lamentation, that prevailed throughout O'Donnell's camp at that time. They had reason for this, if they knew at the time, for never afterwards did they behold, as ruler over them, him who was their leader and earthly prince, in the island of Erin."

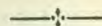
He died at Simancas, not without suspicion of poison, and was interred at Valladolid, in the Franciscan monastery. "He was a mighty and bounteous lord, with the authority of a prince to enforce the law," writes a contemporary chronicler, "with determination and force of character in deed and word . . . endowed with the gift of eloquence and address, of sense and counsel, and with the look of amiability in his countenance, which captivated every one who beheld him."

Sad as was the fate of Hugh Roe, it was less tragical than that of his brother, Rory O'Donnell, Hugh O'Neill, and their families. Some years after the defeat at Kinsale, they were suspected of complicity in a plot, but its existence is denied. Whether they were guilty or not, they felt that their ruin was impending, and with their families took shipping at Rathmullan, and sailed from Lough Swilly for the Continent. The flight of the Earls in 1607 paved the way for the Plantation of Ulster. The Irish exiles died in Rome, whither the mortal remains of Hugh O'Donnell were transferred from Spain. To his sister, Nuála, the "woman of the piercing wail," the mournful lament of the bard—Owen Ward—was addressed, which has been so finely rendered from the Irish

by Clarence Mangan. It is too long to quote, but may be found, with other material bearing on this period, in the interesting work on the "Flight of the Earls" by the Rev. C. P. Meehan. We close in the words of the chronicler, the sad narrative of ruin and defeat—"Woe to the heart that meditated, woe to the mind that conceived, woe to the council that decided on the project of their setting out on this voyage, without knowing whether they should ever return to their native principalities or patrimonies to the end of the world."

M. C. F.

HIBERNIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.



THE FIRST NIGHT.

It was the close of a bleak and stormy day, in the winter of 1592. The mists rising from the marshy banks and bare bed of the Liffey, met the descending gloom of twilight, and thickened into palpable darkness the obscurity that hung around the old castle of Dublin. Bermingham Tower alone stood out, dim and huge, against the dusky sky, like a great rock from amid the sea of vapours that filled the wet ditches, and lay in dense volumes on the Castle-yard.

The sentinel, pacing his narrow stripe of platform, cast a glance at the dim outline frowning above him; and, as he strode to and fro more rapidly, to drive the increasing chillness from his limbs, solaced the dreariness of his watch with the reflection that, cheerless as was his walk upon the battlements, still more miserable was the plight of those he guarded. "Poor gentlemen!" he muttered, "'tis cruel usage for youths of their noble blood; it is reported that they are princes by birth among their own people. Well! what has Miles Dymock to do with either chief or tanist? Harry Moulton will shortly come hither to relieve my post; and then after a flagon of ale and a sleep on the guard-house bench, I can give thanks to Heaven that I am neither Prince of Tyrconnell, nor Tanist of Tyrone; but a plain English yeoman of Kent, and a poor halbardier in the service of our good Queen Elizabeth. Ho! who goes there?"

The sentry's soliloquy was broken by the sound of

advancing footsteps. "'Tis I, Raymond Fitz Walter, warden of the tower." The countersign was given, and the warden, with his men, passed on to the postern of the keep.

"So, friend, Nicholas," said the sentry, detaining one of the keeper's attendants as they passed, "bear you a good supper to the Irish nobles? By the rood, they had need of hearty entertainment to qualify their lodging! What new face is that I see among the warden's men?"

"A new comrade sent hither in the place of Pierre Waldron, who lies sick—an old serving man of the Earl of Ormonde—an Irishman, but of English blood, and a loyal subject of the Pale."

"How like you the new comer?"

"Not over much. He is a grave man, and takes little part in our merriment over the can, but, as I hear, a shrewd scholar, knowing in both tongues, and a man of discreet counsel. He has been chosen, they say, by the Deputy to be private guard over the princes, that he may, perchance, discover from their conversation something to the advantage of the Queen's government. Certain it is, that the North is again unquiet, where the great Earl of Tyrone still hatches mischief with Maguire; Kavanagh, too, is daily plundering Kildare, and here upon the southern border of the Pale, 'tis but a month since Feagh Mac Hugh, the great O'Byrne, burned and pillaged the country, from Rathfarnham to the city wall; five of mine own bullocks, which his kerns drove from the pastures of Rathgar, are even now grazing in the fastnesses of Luggelaw, or Glenmalur, if they be not already eaten by his hungry galloglasses."

"But what have O'Donnell and O'Neill to do with thy five bullocks?" said the soldier.

"They may have helped to eat them, for aught I

know," replied the attendant, "while abroad with O'Toole; but that is not to the point: the reason of this strictness is to gather from them whatever they may have heard of their friends' intentions, while lurking among the Irish of the mountains during the six days of their last escape. Knowest thou not that they are but newly recaptured, after breaking out of the Castle as never man broke before?"

"Something I have heard since my return," replied the soldier, "of their needing a stricter watch; but little of the reason."

"Why, sir," said Nicholas, "they broke out while it was still day; and after getting over the wall, and passing the ditch, had the hardihood to come back upon the drawbridge, and thrust a log of wood through the links of the great staple chain, so that when the alarm was given, and we ran to throw open the gates, we could not draw the bolts, nor get out in pursuit, until we had procured the help of those without to remove the bar, and let the chain be drawn."

"By St. Anthony, a shrewd device!" exclaimed the soldier; "a shrewd device, and boldly practised: and how caged ye the flown birds again?"

"O'Toole, to whom they fled, after harbouring them for the space of a week, returned them to us; but whether through treachery, or because he could no longer protect them, I cannot aver."

"But how came they at first into our hands?" questioned the soldier.

"That is a longer story," replied Nicholas, "but as the warden has no need of me till after settling his accounts with the keeper of the stores, I shall take a turn along the battlement, for the sake of old friendship, cold as it is, and tell thee. The O'Neills have been kept close

prisoners here, since Tyrone made his first peace with the deputy. They are the sons of Shane an Diomas, that is, Shane the Proud, of whose wild exploits you have so often heard; and it is feared that if they got abroad among their northern kindred, we should have all Shane's old retainers in arms again. As for O'Donnell, his capture was both strange and wonderful; and as I was present at the exploit, I shall tell you how it was brought about. It is now almost four years since; but I well remember the morning, when being ordered with my comrades to embark ourselves in a ship then lying in the bay, we went on board, not knowing what expedition might be destined for us, or whither we might be about to sail. Neither knew the crew, nor any on board, save the captain of the bark, and one or two of his chief friends. Having laid in good store of French and Spanish wine, we set sail, and steering southward, held along by the coast of Wicklow and Wexford, so that many thought we might, perhaps, be bound for Bristol haven, or the narrow seas; but after passing the point of Toskar, our captain altering his course, turned our vessel's head towards the west, and for three days bore onward toward the ocean; so that many surmised that we might be on our voyage to the new countries, whence they bring the gold and silver of the Indians; but, anon, altering our course once more, we began to sail northward, having many mountains and islands on our right hand, by which we judged that we had gone the circuit of the whole southern parts of this realm of Ireland, and were destined to land upon its western side, as we at length did, after passing innumerable rivers, rocks, and headlands. So, steering landward, we sailed up the mouth of a great river, with fair green meadows, and high hills on either hand, until we came in sight of a

strong castle, built on a green mound by the shore. Here having cast out our anchor, and furled our sails, we awaited in some amaze what we might be ordered to do; for it seemed to us that we were about to lay siege to the castle, and much we marvelled that such an enterprise should be undertaken with so small a number; but instead of arms or armour, our captain now commanded us to take forth five casks of Spanish wine, and place them in our boat. We did so; and rowing on shore, where the wild Irishmen now stood in great crowds, wondering at the strange sight of a ship, such as ours, upon their river, we set the casks upon the land, and by an interpreter invited all who wished to come and purchase. The wine was so excellent, and cheap withal, for he asked but ten cows' skins for a cask, that in a short space all our store was purchased up, and from the castle to the shore was nothing to be seen but dancing and jollity thenceforth till evening. We meanwhile returning to our ship, remained awaiting the issue of this strange adventure, uncertain what might be our captain's design, but marvelling much that such a voyage should be undertaken for the sake of so poor a return. Next morning came a kern, in a shallop from the castle, who bore a message from the great MacSweeny, desiring that more wine should be sent on shore, for that he wished to purchase provision for a feast to be given to the young tanist of Tyreconnell, O'Donnell, surnamed Hugh the Red, who was then sojourning at his castle, with others of the young Irish nobility. Then our captain commanded one to go with his messenger to the castle of MacSweeny and to say that all his merchantable stock had been already sold; but that, if the young princes of Donegal would come on board our ship, they should be freely entertained from his own store, with whatever of the

choicest wines of Spain and France, he kept for his private pleasure. When our messenger reached the castle—they call that pile, if I remember right, Donaldald—there were about the young princes only their servants and galloglasses; and, having none to restrain them, they, with one accord, leaped into their skiff, and came laughing and jesting towards us. Our captain, doffing his cap, received them cordially on his vessel's side; and, dismissing all but O'Donnell, MacSweeny Oge and another, placed before them the most savoury meats and the most delicious wines. Then the young princes continued feasting, till being warmed with wine and strong aqua vitæ of France, they forgot their desire to return to the shore, and sat singing and jesting till sleep overpowered their senses. Whereupon our captain taking their swords from their sides, and their daggers from their belts, called upon us to carry them into the small cabin. We there shut them down under hatchés, and set sail. An eastern breeze carried us safely out of the river, for the mere Irish had no vessels in which to pursue us, although many thousands hearing of their princes' capture, thronged the shore on either side eager for our destruction. And thus we bore away the young heir of Tyrconnell, who now lies with a chain round each ankle in yonder tower, where, save the week of his escape, he has lain for three twelve months, and where the Deputy has, I think, decreed that he shall lie till the day of his death."

"By the mass, it was an unworthy and a churlish snare to lay for any noble gentleman!" cried the soldier, "and if we can conquer the island by no manlier means than treachery and ambuscading, I care not how soon I give up my chance of the five hundred acres promised me in the forfeited lands of Sir Brian MacWalter of the Rore."

"Nay," cried Nicholas, "thou art over nice in judging of the devices of our governors. I'll warrant thee it was not without authority from them we dare not blame, that our captain did the exploit I have told thee of,—but there, I see the warden's light in the loophole of the tower stair—farewell, honest soldier—keep thine own counsel and a strict watch—adieu."

"Farewell, comrade," said the soldier, resuming his walk, while the other joining his companions and master, ascended the winding stone stair that led through*the thickness of the wall from the postern of the tower to the upper chambers.

The warden turning his huge key in an iron-bolted door, led the way into a stone-floored and vaulted apartment of confined dimensions, for the thickness of the walls was so great that their bulk left little room within. In this chamber were the captives. They sat on an caken bench before the embers of a decayed fire; and the clank of iron, as they moved on their keeper's entrance, told that they were fettered. Two were young men fully grown and large sized, but sickly from long imprisonment: these were the sons of Shane, or John the Proud, Art and Henry. The third was, by his auburn head, taller than either of the others, although a youth of little more than nineteen. His ruddy cheek showed no symptom of ill health, and his eye was bright and quick as that of a free mountaineer. Large boned and sinewy, although well proportioned, the noble young man seemed formed by nature for equal excellence in action and endurance. He was dressed in the British costume, but the long hair curling to his shoulders, and the unshaven upper lip, proclaimed his nation—this was Hugh Roe O'Donnell. He seemed scarcely conscious of his keeper's entrance; but kept his eye fixed on the dark

wall before him, as if on its dingy plain he were, in imagination, marshalling those warriors whom he afterwards led to victory, though the broken battalions of Elizabeth's bravest armies.

"Sirs," said the warden, as his attendants placed upon a rude table their evening repast, "be pleased to conclude your supper with what dispatch you may, as my orders are to remove the instruments by which you might do mischief to your attendants, or to one another, with the greatest convenient speed." So saying, he took his seat near the door, while the two O'Neills turning with indignant glances, addressed themselves to the viands before them; but perceiving that O'Donnell took no notice of their preparation, one of them addressed him.

"Cousin, wilt thou not eat? The keeper fears to leave his knives among us, lest we cut a breach in the castle wall, and stab the guards, or make our way to the chamber of the Deputy himself, and avenge our wrongs with a thrust of a carving knife."

"Ha!" cried Hugh, awakening from his reverie, "does the Saxon dog impose his presence at our meals!" and starting up, forgetful of his chains, strode towards the door to expel the overseer; but the fetter checked him; he returned to his bench and sitting down without a word, relapsed into his abstraction.

"Sirs," said the keeper, "it grieves me to intrude upon your privacy, or to limit the enjoyment of your repasts; but my orders are too strict to be infringed, and I must needs remain with you for a little longer. When I shall retire, I also leave, by the lord chamberlain's commands, an attendant to continue with you during the night. He is well armed, and instructed to oppose any violence that may be shown him. Sir Hugh O'Donnell, time presses; if thou wouldst, I pray thee fall to."

A deep imprecation in Gaelic burst from the lips of the young chief; but he remained where he sat, with his back to the table, gazing as before at the blackened wall over the low and ashy hearthstone. Equally unavailing were the solicitations of his companions—he answered them in their native tongue, briefly, and with kindness, but emphatically, and they pressed him no further. Presently, having washed down their slender fare with a draught of water, the young men withdrew from the table, to their original seats upon the bench beside their fellow captive. The warden, then, having seen the table cleared, retired with his men, and closing the door, left their new attendant, who had hitherto remained unnoticed in the background, seated in the further corner of the chill and gloomy apartment.

The three youths spoke not for some time, for Hugh's superior energy of character had gained him an ascendancy over the others, which forbade their interrupting his meditations whenever they took the fierce earnestness that marked his present manner. They sat in silence, without bestowing a look on their attendant, and he had not moved from his seat since the warden's departure. He was a man of advanced age, yet still of unimpaired vigour. Locks of pale yellow fell from his partly bald head down upon his shoulders, and a close beard of grizzled red curled round a wellformed and expressive mouth: his dress was that of a yeoman of the guard, but the sharp features and light-limbed figure marked the Irishman. O'Donnell at last, drawing a hard breath through the distended nostril, and casting himself back on his seat, exclaimed to his companions:

"So cousins! we are not to be permitted even the privilege of unnoticed conversation. This spying villain, I'll warrant, is to report all our words to the bastard

Deputy—a knife in the hound's throat! I would to God and St. Columb Kill, I had him and his ten best men-at-arms before myself and my three foster brothers for one short hour in the gap of Barransmore. Ha! Henry, if we ever get back to the Black Valley, we will make a bright bonfire of Ardmullen castle for this!"

"I would rather see Glenwhirry," answered Henry, "and the blue mountains of Dalaradia—ah, Art! if we were once in merry Antrim, we would soon drive the black strangers from the country of Hugh Buidh*!"

"I'd give the best year of my life," cried Art, "to hear the war-cry of our House once more upon the hills of Kilultagh—Mother of God! for one note of the gathering of Claneboy!"

"*Lamb dearg aboo!*"

Cried a voice, low but tremulously earnest, at their backs. The three young men started to their feet, and, standing before them, beheld in their attendant the well-known features of their fosterer and clansman Turlogh Buidh O'Hagan, the Bard of Tulloghoge.

For a moment the old man stood gazing on the three youths so long denied to the eyes of their people; then cast himself on his knees before them, and clasping their hands successively, pressed them to his lips and to his heart. "My son, my prince, my king!" he at last articulated, using the profuse phraseology of their native tongue; "my joy, my glory, my hope and promise!—branches of the old tree of nobleness! lights of valour and generosity! do I again behold your fair faces, and the lustre of your heads like gold? Long, long, have I planned and pondered, long have I done and suffered what no price but the hope of seeing you again before I

* Pronounced Bwe. *Buidh*, yellow.

die, could have bribed me to endure. I have been the servant of the Saxon, and the slave of the Saxon's servant for your sakes, and if need were, I had been the menial of the slave's slave, that I might at last put my old eyes to rest upon the faces of your royal fathers' sons! News for you, my princely masters, I have brave news from the north! Maguire and O'Rourke are stirring like stout gentlemen in Roscommon and the Brenny, and the Earl is drawing his country to a noble head at the Blackwater: Donell Spaniagh holds Idrome by strong hand; and the bold O'Byrnes overhang the very city walls from the Three Rocks to the gap of Glencree. MacCarthy Mor and Desmond are ready to take up the game in Munster, and it wants but O'Donnell in Ballyshannon and O'Neill in Castlereagh to raise such a storm about the head of this cruel Queen, as shall ere long beat the rifled crown from her withered brows, and blow across the sea those robbers of our lands and snarers of our chieftains' children, never to trample on our blessed soil again!"

"Ah, Turlogh!" cried O'Donnell, "thou tellest us a tale we have already heard in the castle of O'Toole ten days back—alas, we were then at liberty, and thy hopes had ere long been verified, but that mischance befel us as thou hast heard, and here we stand to-day with fetters on our feet in Dublin Castle, while others play the noble game over green woods and broad mountains; but our friends and people, languishing for their lost leaders, stay idly in their duns and castles, and strike no stroke for liberty or honor! I vow a fair stone chapel and two bells of silver to St. Columb Kill, if he will but release me out of this bondage before New Year's Day!"

"Noble prince," cried the bard, "thou shalt be feasting again in the castle of Dundonald before that day, if there be truth in man! I have not come hither only to

gaze on thy face and tell thee to despair—no—we fly together on next Christmas night: till then, dear sons of my heart, be patient and discreet, nor let your jailors suspect you have aught of new hope since my appointment to your charge. Blessed Mother! it wrings my heart to see the sons of your kingly fathers perishing for cold in the dark dungeon of their enemies. Here, let me pile these fagots on the embers and trim our wretched lamp. Dear Saviour! that my eyes should ever see Saxon fetters on the limbs of my heart's children! Alas, alas, I cannot now undo them, but while you sit I can relieve you somewhat of their weight." While he spoke he renewed the sinking fire, and supported the chains upon the footrail of the bench. Then placing himself on a low seat at one side, forgot for a time the danger and discomforts of his and their situation in mutual inquiries and fond recollections.

At length O'Donnell, recurring to the subject nearest his heart, broke in on the conversation by demanding:

"How many days till Christmas?"

"One-and-twenty," replied Turlogh.

"And before Christmas we may not make the attempt?" continued O'Donnell.

"Not till then, prince; for, until Christmas, that company of halbardiers in whom I have my trust, take not the guard of the wall next the city, over which I would, with God's and Columb Kill's permission, purpose our escape."

"Enough," replied O'Donnell; "until then, as well as we may, let us forget our hopes and fears; and as thou art to be with us every night, let us sleep during the day, if watched by any other, and while away our hours till morning in thy company, with some pleasant occupation of making rhymes or story-telling, as is the

wont, when not employed in any enterprise of moment, at the castles of our chieftains and knights. Alas, 'tis now four years since Owen Ward last sang his verses in my father's honor, to the music of the harp, in Bally-shannon hall. Ah! when shall I hear again the sweet sound of strings, and melody of ladies' voices? When shall I sit again by the great hall fire, wandering in fancy with Finn and his old warriors, through enchanted castles and over magic seas?"

"Noble prince," said Turlogh, "it hath long been my use and occupation to be a bard, as well to the clan O'Neill as to those of my own name. I will tell any tale that may be most pleasing to your noblenesses, without desire of fee or hope of reward, beyond doing what may please your fathers' sons in their captivity."

"Thanks, true and faithful clansman!" said O'Donnell: "let my noble kinsmen name the tale; and do thou, while these fagots throw unaccustomed warmth through our chill chamber, try whether thy skill can make us, for one night, forget that we are captives."

"Let it be the 'Sons of Usnach,'" said Art; "I ever loved to hear of the three waves roaring round the blue border of Conor's shield."

"I would I had my harp here," said Turlogh, "that I might sing the songs of Deirdre as they ought to sound from the string: but, alas! I had forgotten; the notes of a harp were dangerous to be heard from a prisoner's dungeon; so I shall chant the strains as best I may, and abstain from singing, lest we should be overheard." So saying, Turlogh drew his seat nearer the cheerful blaze now flickering on the red hearth-stone, and with half-closed eyes began the tale of

THE DEATH OF THE CHILDREN OF USNACH.

THE nobles of Ulster were feasting in the house of Felimy, the son of Dall, the rhymor of King Conor. Then was the wife of Felimy busied in attendance on her guests, though shortly to become a mother. Cups and jests go round, and the house resounds with the revel. Suddenly the infant screamed in the womb of its mother, and the bitter pains of childbirth fell upon her. Then arose Cathbad the Druid, and prophesied, as she was borne away—"Under thy girdle, O woman, screamed a woman child, fair-haired, bright-eyed, beautiful—a virgin who will bring sorrow on Ulster—a birth fatal for princes—a child of disaster: let her name be Deirdre." Then sat they all in amaze till the infant was brought in; and it was a female child; and Cathbad looked upon it, and again prophesied:

"Child of sorrow, sin, and shame,
Deirdre be thy dreaded name!
Child of doom! thy fatal charms
Soon shall work us deadly harms.

"Long shall Ulster mourn the night
Gave thine eyes their blasting light—
Long shall Usnach rue the day
Showed his sons their fatal ray.

"Woe, Emania, to thy wall—
Woe to Ulster's palace hall—
Woe to Fergus—woe to Yeon—
Fourfold woe to Usna's son!

"Bitter woe and black dishonor,
Fall upon the foul clan Conor!
Good has lost, and evil won her,
Deirdre be the name upon her."

When Cathbad ceased, the nobles present with one voice cried out that the child should not live; but Conor would not permit them to slay the child, for he believed not the words of Cathbad, and he already longed to have the infant to himself. So, taking the child from Felimy, the king commanded that she should be cared for by his own people; and when the baby was nursed, he sent her to be brought up in a lonely fort, where she should never see man till he might make her his own wife. Here Deirdre dwelt till she had grown to be the most beautiful maiden in all Ireland; and never yet had seen a man, save one aged and morose tutor. But on a certain day in winter, when her tutor was slaying a calf before the gate of the fort, to prepare food for her, she saw a raven drinking the blood upon the snow. Then said she to her nurse, "Lovely, in truth, were the man marked with these colors—body like the snow, cheeks like the ruddy blood, and hair black as the wing of the raven—ah! Lewara, are there such men in the world without?" "Many such," said Lewara, "but the fairest of all is in the king's house—Naisi, the son of Usnach." "Alas!" cried Deirdre, "if I get not sight of that man I shall die!" Then her nurse plotted how she should bring Naisi and Deirdre together.

Now on a certain day, Naisi was sitting in the midst of the plain of Eman, playing on a harp. Sweet, in truth, was the music of the sons of Usnach. The cattle listening to it, milked ever two-thirds more than was their wont; and all pain and sorrow failed not to depart from whatsoever man or woman heard the strains of that melody. Great also was their prowess. When each set his back to the other, all Conor's province had been unable to overcome them. They were fleet as hounds in the chase: they slew deer with their speed.

Now, then, as Naisi sat singing on the plain of Eman, he perceived a maiden approaching him. She held down her head as she came near him, but passed without speaking. "Gentle is the damsel who passeth by," said Naisi. Then the maiden looking up, replied, "Damsels may well be gentle where there are no youths." Then Naisi knew that it was Deirdre, and great dread fell upon him. "The king of the province is betrothed to thee, oh damsel," he said. "I love him not," she replied, "he is an aged man: I would rather love a youth like thee." "Say not so, oh, damsel," said Naisi; "the king is a better spouse than the king's servant." "Thou sayest so," replied Deirdre, "that thou mayest avoid me." Then plucking a rose from a briar, she flung the flower at him, and said, "Now art thou ever disgraced if thou rejectest me." "Depart from me, I pray thee, damsel," said Naisi. "Nay," replied Deirdre, "if thou dost not take me to be thy wife, thou art dishonored before all the men of thy country: and this I know from my nurse Lewara." Then Naisi said no more; and Deirdre took his harp, and sat beside him, playing sweetly. When the men of Ulster heard the delightful sound, they were enchanted. But the sons of Usnach rushed forth, and came running to where their brother sat, and Deirdre with him. "Alas," they cried, "what hast thou done, O brother? Is not this the damsel fated to ruin Ulster?" "Ah, me?" said Naisi, "I am disgraced before the men of Erin for ever, if I take her not after that which she hath done." Then he told them the tale of what had happened. "Evil will come of it," said the brothers. "I care not," said Naisi, "I had rather be in misfortune than in dishonor. We will fly with her to another country. There is no country of Erin in which we will not have welcome and protection."

They then took counsel together, and for the love they bore to Naisi, resolved to accompany him wheresoever he might go. So that night they departed, taking with them three times fifty men of might, and three times fifty women, and three times fifty greyhounds, and three times fifty attendants; and Naisi took Deirdre to be his wife. Then being pursued by Conor, who was greatly enraged at the loss of his betrothed spouse, they wandered hither and thither over Erin, in constant danger from their enemies, from Esro to Ben Edar, and from Dundelgan to Almain. At length, weary of wandering through Erin, they sailed by Ulster into the realm of Alba, and made their home in the midst of a wild therein.

Here, when the chase of the mountain failed them, they fell upon the herds and cattle of the men of Alba; and the fame of their exploits reaching the ears of the king of that country, they were received into friendship and allegiance by him. But upon a certain day, when the king's steward made a circuit of the palace, early in the morning, he saw Naisi and Deirdre asleep in their tent. Then said he to the king, "O king, we have at length found a meet wife for you. There is in the bed of Naisi, son of Usnach, a woman worthy of the sovereign of the west of the world: let Naisi be slain, O king, and marry thou the maiden thyself." "Nay," said the king, "do thou first solicit her in private." It is done so. Deirdre informs Naisi of all this; and, moreover, how the son of Usnach would be put forward into danger till he should be slain, that the king might wed her being left without her husband. "Away, therefore," she said, "for if you depart not to-night, you will be slain to-morrow." Then the sons of Usnach departed from the palace of the king of Alba, and went into a distant island of the ocean.

Upon a certain day, King Conor was feasting with his nobles in the mansion of Emania, and there was sweet music and delight among all present. And after the bards had sung, in delightful measures, their branches of kindred and boughs of genealogy, King Conor raised his royal voice and said: "I would know of you, princes and nobles, whether you have ever seen a feast better than this, or a mansion better than the mansion of Emania?" "We have seen none," they replied. "And again," said Conor, "I would fain know of you, if there be anything whatsoever here wanting." "Nothing," they replied. "Say not so," said Conor, "I well know what is here wanting; the presence of the three renowned youths, the martial lights of the Gael, the three noble sons of Usnach, Naisi, Ainli, and Arden. Alas, that they should be absent from us for the sake of any woman in the world! Hard bested they are, and outlawed in an island of the ocean, fighting with the men of the king of Alba. Sons of a king indeed they are, and well could they defend the sovereignty of Ulster—I would that they were with us." Then the nobles replied and said: "Had we dared to speak our thoughts, this is what we would ourselves have said; and moreover that had we but the three sons of Usnach in the country, Ulster alone would not be inferior to all the rest of Erin: for, men of might they are, and lions for valor and prowess." "Let us then," said Conor, "dispatch messengers to Alba, to the island of Loch Etive, to the fastness of the clan Usnach, to solicit their return." "Who can give sufficient surety of safety to induce the sons of Usnach to come into thy kingdom?" asked they. "There are three only of all my nobles," said Conor, "on whose guaranty against my anger, the sons of Usnach will trust themselves; and they are, Fergus, Cuchallan,

and Conall Carnach: one of these will I send upon this message."

Then taking Conall Carnach into a place apart, Conor asked him what he would do if he should send him for the sons of Usnach, and that they should come to harm while under his pledge of safe conduct. "Whomsoever I might find injuring them," said Conall Carnach, "on him would I straightway inflict the bitter pain of death." "Then can I perceive," said Conor, "that dear to you I myself am not." A like question asked Conor of Cuchallan, and of him received a like answer. Then called he apart Fergus the son of Roy, and in a like manner questioned him; this said Fergus in answer: "Thine own blood I shed not; but whomsoever else I should find doing injury to those in my safe conduct him would I not permit to live."

"Then," said Conor, "I perceive thou lovest me. Go thou to the clan Usnach, and bring them to me on thy guaranty; and return thou by the way of Dun Barach, but let not the sons of Usnach tarry to eat meat with any till they come to the feast I shall have prepared for their welcome to Emania. Give me thy pledge to do this." Then Fergus bound himself by solemn vow to do the king's commands, and so returning together, they joined the other nobles and bore away that night in feasting and delight. The king, however, called Barach, the son of Cainti, into a place apart, and asked him had he a feast prepared at his mansion? "I have a feast prepared in Dun Barach," said Barach, "to which thou and thy nobles are ever welcome." "Let not Fergus then depart from thy mansion," said Conor, "without partaking of that feast on his return from Alba." "He shall feast with me for three days," replied Barach, "for we are brothers of the Red Branch, and he is under vow not to refuse my hospitality."

Next morning Fergus, with his two sons, Buini Borb, and Illan Finn, and Callon the shield-bearer, bearing his shield, departed from Emania for pleasant Alba. They sailed across the sea until they came to Loch Etive, to the island of the sons of Usnach. Here dwelt the clan Usnach in green hunting booths along the shore. And Deirdre and Naisi sat together in their tent, and Conor's polished chess-board between them, and they played at chess. Now when Fergus came into the harbour, he sent forth the loud cry of a mighty man of chase. And Naisi hearing the cry, said, "I hear the call of a man of Erin." "That was not the call of a man of Erin," replied Deirdre, "but the call of a man of Alba." Then again Fergus shouted a second time: "That was surely the cry of a man of Erin," said Naisi. "Nay, 'twas not, indeed," replied Deirdre; "let us play on." Then, again, Fergus shouted a third time, and Naisi knew that it was the cry of Fergus, and he said, "If the son of Roy be in existence, I hear his hunting shout from the loch: go forth, Ardan, my brother, and give our kinsman welcome." "Alas!" said Deirdre, "I knew the call of Fergus from the first." "Why didst thou then conceal it, my queen?" said Naisi. Then Deirdre answered, "Last night I had a dream. Three birds came to us from the plains of Emania, having each a drop of honey in its beak; and they departed from us having each a drop of our blood in place of the drop of honey." "And how dost thou read that dream, O princess?" said Naisi. "That Fergus cometh with false messages of peace from Conor," she replied, "for sweeter is not honey than the message of peace of the false man." "Nay, think not so," said Naisi; "Fergus is long in the port: go, Ardan, meet him quickly, and guide him to our tent."

Then Ardan went and welcomed Fergus, and embraced him, and his sons, and kissed them and demanded of

them the news from Erin. Then they told him, and thereafter came to the tent of Naisi, where he and Ainli, and Deirdre were together. Then with many kisses to Fergus and his sons, they asked what news from Erin. "Good news," said Fergus, "Conor hath sent us to be your warranty of safe-conduct, if you will return to Emania." "There is no need for them to go thither," said Deirdre, "greater is their own sway in Alba than the sway of Conor in Erin." "To be in one's native land is better than all else," said Fergus, "for of little worth are power or prosperity to a man if he seeth not each day the land that gave him birth." "True, it is," said Naisi, "dearer to me is Erin than Alba, though in Alba I should enjoy more fortunate estate than in Erin." "Put your trust in me," said Fergus, "I pledge myself for your safe-conduct." "Let us go then," said Naisi, "we will go under Fergus's safe conduct to our native land."

They whiled away that night until the dawning of next day; then went they down to their ships and set sail across the sea. And Deirdre looked back upon the land of Alba, and as it sunk over the waters, raised the mournful song of her farewell.

Farewell to fair Alba, high house of the sun,
Farewell to the mountain, the cliff, and the dun:
Dun Sweeney adieu! for my love cannot stay,
And tarry I may not when love cries away.

Glen Vashan; Glen Vashan! where roebucks run free,
Where my love used to feast on the red deer with me,
Where rocked on thy waters while stormy winds blew,
My love used to slumber, Glen Vashan! adieu!

Glendaro! Glendaro! where bircher boughs weep
Honey dew at high noon o'er the nightingale's sleep,

Where my love used to lead me to hear the cuckoo
'Mong the high hazel bushes, Glendaro! adieu!

Glen Urchy! Glen Urchy! where loudly and long
My love used to wake up the woods with his song,
While the son of the rock, from the depths of the dell,
Laughed sweetly in answer, Glen Urchy! farewell!

Glen Etive! Glen Etive! where dappled does roam,
Where I leave the green sheeling I first called a home;
Where with me and my true love delighted to dwell
The sun made his mansion—Glen Etive! farewell!

Farewell to Inch Draynach, adieu to the roar
Of blue billows bursting in light on the shore;
Dun Fiagh! farewell, for my love cannot stay,
And tarry I may not when love cries away.

By this they had reached the port of Dun Barach; and Barach himself meeting them upon the shore, welcomed Fergus and his sons, and the sons of Usnach, and Deirdre also, with kisses eager and affectionate. Then Barach said to Fergus: "Tarry, and partake of my feast; for I will not let thee part from me for three days without breaking thy vow of brotherhood and hospitality." When Fergus heard this, he became crimson red, for anger, from head to foot, and thus he said: "Thou hast done ill, O Barach, to ask me to thy feast, knowing, as thou dost, that I am bounden to Conor not to let the sons of Usnach, who are under my safe-conduct, tarry night or day for entertainment from another, till they reach Emania, where he hath his banquet prepared to welcome them." "I care not," said Barach, "I lay thee under the ban of our order if thou rejectest my hospitality." Then Fergus asked of Naisi what he should do? and Deirdre answered: "Thou must either forsake Barach or the sons of Usnach: it were truly more meet

to forsake thy feast than thy friends who are under thy protection." "Neither Barach nor the sons of Usnach will I forsake," said Fergus; "for I will remain with Barach, and my two sons, Illan Finn and red Buini Borb, shall be your escort and pledge of safe-conduct, in my stead, to Emania." "We care not for thy safe-conduct," said Naisi; "our own hands have ever been our pledge of protection;" and he departed from Fergus in great wrath; and Ardan, and Ainli, and Deirdre, and the two sons of Fergus followed him, and they left Fergus sad and gloomy behind them.

Then said Deirdre: "I would counsel that we go to the isle of Rathlin, and abide there till Fergus shall be free to accompany us; for I fear this safe-conduct will not long protect us." Then did Naisi and the sons of Fergus reproach her, and they said they would not take that counsel, but go forward to Emania even as they were. "Alas!" said Deirdre; "would that I had never left the long-grassed Alba!" But when they had come to Fincairn watch-tower, on the mountain of Fuadh, Naisi perceived that Deirdre did not accompany them, for sleep had fallen upon her; and on returning he found her in a deep slumber in the valley; and when she was awakened, she arose in grief and fear. "Alas!" she said, "I dread treachery: I had a dream, and in my vision I beheld Illan Finn fighting for us, and Buini Borb idle, and his head on Buini Borb, and Illan Finn's trunk headless." "Thy lips are lovely, but thy prophecy, nought save evil," said Naisi. "Let the vengeance of thy lips fall on the stranger. I fear not treachery. Let us on." And so they went on till they came to Ardsalagh; and then Deirdre said to Naisi—"I see a cloud over Emania, and it is a cloud of blood. I counsel you, O sons of Usnach, go not to Emania without Fergus;

but let us go to Dundalgan, to our cousin Cuchullan, till Fergus shall have fulfilled his obligation to Barach." "I fear not," said Naisi; "let us proceed." Then again Deirdre cried: "O! Naisi, look at the cloud over Emania: it is a cloud of blood; gore drops fall from its red edges. Ah me! go not to Emania to-night; let us go to Dundalgan—let us take shelter with Cuchullan." "I fear not," said Naisi; "I will not hear thy counsel; let us proceed." "Grandson of Roy," said Deirdre, "seldom have we not been of one accord before—I and thou, Naisi! This had not been so that day when Lewara led me to your seat upon the plain of Emania." "I fear not," said Naisi; "let us on!" "Sons of Usnach," again said Deirdre, "I have a signal by which to know if Conor designs treachery against us. If we be admitted into the mansions of Emania, Conor designs not harm toward us; if we be lodged apart, in the mansion of the Red Branch, then doth Conor surely meditate us evil." By this they were arrived before the gates of Emania. Then Naisi knocked at the gate, and the door-keeper demanded who was without? "Clan Usnach and Deirdre," replied Naisi. Then were they conducted towards the house of the Red Branch, by Conor's orders. "'Twere better to take my counsel even yet," said Deirdre, "for evil is surely now designed for us." "We will not do so," said Illan Finn, the son of Fergus; "cowardliness hath never been known of the sons of my father. I and Buini Borb shall go with you to the Red Branch." Then moved they on to the house and entered it; and attendants brought them rich viands and sweet wines, until all were satisfied and cheerful, save only Deirdre and the sons of Usnach; for they partook not of much food or drink, being weary from their journey, and in dread of their lives. Then said Naisi, "Bring hither the

chessboard, that we may play:" and he and Deirdre played upon the polished chessboard.

And now when Conor knew that Deirdre was in the Red Branch, he could not rest at the feast, but said: "Whom shall I find that will do my errand to the Red Branch, to tell me whether her beauty lives upon Deirdre; for, if her own face and figure lives upon her, there is not in the world a woman more beautiful than she." Then said Lewara, the nurse, "I will do thine errand." For she dearly loved both Naisi and Deirdre, whom she, at first, had brought together. Then Lewara, coming to the Red Branch, found Naisi and Deirdre with a polished board between them, playing chess; and she gave them kisses eager and affectionate, and said, "Alas! my children, you do not well to spend your time in games and pleasure, while Conor cannot rest for the thoughts of the treachery he designs you. Woe is me, this night will be a black night for the clan Usnach, if ye bar not fast your doors and windows, and fight not courageously O sons of Fergus, and manfully defend your charge till Fergus himself cometh." Then shed she bitter tears, and returned to the mansion of Emania; and Conor asked what tidings. "Tidings of good and of evil," replied Lewara; "and my good tidings are, that the sons of Usnach are three of the most valiant and noble; of the most excellent form and aspect of all the men in the world; and that, with their help, thou mayest henceforth sway all Erin, if thou wilt; and my evil tidings are, that she, who at her departure from Erin was the fairest of women, is now bereft of her own form and aspect and is lovely and desirable no longer."

Then Conor's wrath and jealousy abated, and he went on feasting until a second time he thought of Deirdre, and he said, "whom shall I find to bring me true tidings

from the Red Branch? Is there any here will do my errand truly?" Then none of the nobles answered; for they feared to abet the king in violating the pledge of Fergus, as they dreaded he now meditated to do. Then said Conor to one of his people, "Knowest thou who slew thy father, O Trendorn?" "Naisi MacUsnach slew my father, and my three brothers," replied Trendorn. "Go thy way, then," said Conor, "and bring me true tidings of Deirdre, whether her beauty still live upon her; for, if it doth, there is not on the ridge of earth a woman lovelier than she."

Then Trendorn went to the Red Branch, and found one window unfastened, and looked through it, and saw Naisi and Deirdre within, and the polished board between them, and they playing. And Deirdre said to Naisi, "I see one looking at us through the window." Then Naisi flung the chessman he held in his hand, at the spy, and dashed his eye out of the head of Trendorn. And Trendorn went to Conor, and told him, and Conor cried aloud, "This man who hath maimed my servant would himself be king!" Then asked he, what tidings of Deirdre? "Such beauty liveth upon her," said Trendorn, "that there is not on the ridge of earth a woman so beautiful." As Conor heard this his jealousy and hatred were renewed, and he rose from the table in great wrath, and cried that the sons of Usnach had sought to slay his servant, and called upon his people to go and assault the Red Branch, and bring them forth, that they might be punished.

Then came the troops of Ulster to the Red Branch, and sent forth three dreadful shouts about it, and set fire and flames to the doors and windows. And the sons of Usnach, when they heard the shouts, demanded who were without. "Conor and Ulster," cried the troops, and

shouted fearfully. "Villains," cried Illan Finn, "would ye break my father's pledge?" "Ravishers and villains," cried Conor, "would ye abet the seducer of my wife?" "Ah me," said Deirdre, "we are betrayed, and Fergus is a traitor." "If Fergus hath betrayed you," said Red Buini Borb, "yet will not I betray you;" and he threw open the gates, and went forth with his men, and slew thrice fifty men of might abroad, and made dreadful confusion among the troops. Then Conor demanded who made that havoc of his people, and Buini answered, "I, Red Buini Borb, the son of Fergus." "Hold thy hand," said Conor, "and I will bestow upon thee the territory of Slieve Fuadh." Then Buini Borb held back his hand from the carnage, and demanded, "Wilt thou aught else?" "I will make thee mine own prime counsellor," replied Conor; and Buini Borb desisted from the slaughter, and went his way. But his territory was made that night a desert; and it is called Dalwhinny to this day, a wild moor on the mountains of Fuadh.

When Deirdre saw that Buini Borb had deserted them, she said, "Traitor father, traitor son! Well knew I that Fergus was a traitor!" "If Fergus was a traitor," said Illan Finn, "yet will not I be a traitor: while liveth this small straight sword in my hand, I will not forsake the sons of Usnach!" Then Illan Finn went forth with his men and they made three swift onslaughts round about the mansion, and slew thrice an hundred men of might abroad, and came in again where Naisi sat playing at chess with his brother Ainli, for the sons of Usnach would not let their calm hearts be troubled by that alarm. Then taking torches, Illan Finn and his men went forth a second time, and slew their men of might abroad, and drove the hearers of the flame and fire from around the mansion. Then it was that Conor cried, "Where is my

own son Fiara Finn?" "I am here, my king," cried Fiara. "As I live," said Conor, "it was on the same night that thou and Illan Finn were born; go then and do battle with him manfully. And as he is clad in his father's arms, clothe thou thyself in mine. Take Ocean, Flight, and Victory—my shield, my spear, and my claymore, and do good battle for your father with this son of Fergus." Fiara then arrayed himself in his father's noble and bright armour, and went to the Red Branch, and did good battle with Illan Finn. They fought a fair fight, stout and manly, bitter and bloody, savage and hot, and vehement, and terrible, till Illan Finn beat down Fiara, so that he forced him to crouch beneath the shelter of his shield. Then the waves round the blue rim of Ocean roared, for it was the nature of Conor's shield that it ever resounded as with the noise of stormy waves when he who bore it was in danger. And the three chief seas of Erin roared with all their waves responsive to the shout of Ocean. The wave of Tuath, and the wave of Cliona, and the fishy-streaming wave of Inver-Rory roared around Erin for the danger of Fiara. Conall Carnach sitting on the rock of Dunseverick heard the tumult from Loch Rory and the sea, and taking his arms and calling his men of might, came towards Emania, where he knew that Conor, his sovereign, was in peril. There, on the open field before the mansion of Red Branch, he found Fiara Finn sore pressed by his adversary, and, coming behind him, he thrust his sword through the heart of Illan Finn, whom he knew not, for he had not yet beheld his face. "Who hath pierced me at my back?" asked Illan Finn, "when he might have had fair battle, face to face, had he sought it?" "Nay, rather, who art thou?" said Conall. "Illan, the son of Fergus," replied Illan Finn; "and art thou Conall Carnach?—Alas, it is even so. Evil is the deed

thou hast done, Conall, to slay me while defending the clan Usnach, who are in the Red Branch under my father's pledge of safe-conduct from Alba." "By my hand of valour," cried Conall, "this shall not be unavenged," and he struck Fiara Finn a sharp stroke, where he stood, and lopped away his head from his beard and went thence in great wrath and sorrow. The weakness of death then fell darkly upon Illan, and he threw his arms into the mansion, and called to Naisi to fight manfully, and expired.

And now the men of Ulster came again to assault the Red Branch, and to set fire and fagots to the doors. Then forth came Ardan and his men and put out the fires and slew three hundred men of might abroad, and scattered the troops. And Ainli, with his men, went forth the other third of the night, and slew six hundred abroad, and made sore havock of Conor's people. Naisi himself came forth with his men the last third of the night, and ere day dawn had slain two hundred and driven all the troops from around the mansion. And at dawn, Conor brought all the men of Ulster, and he and the clan Usnach, with their men, joined battle on the plain and fought a fierce fight till broad day. And the battle went against the men of Ulster; and till the sands of the sea, the leaves of the forest, the dew-drops of the meadow, or the stars of heaven be counted, it is not possible to tell the number of heads, and hands, and lopped limbs of heroes, that then lay bare and red from the hands of Naisi and his brothers and their people on that plain. Then Naisi came again into the Red Branch to Deirdre, and she encouraged him and said: "We will yet escape: fight manfully and fear not." Then the sons of Usnach made a phalanx of their shields, and spread the links of their joined bucklers around Deirdre, and bounding forth like three eagles,

Stag, exult on glen and mountain,
 Salmon, leap from loch to fountain,
 Heron, in the free air warm ye—
 Usnach's sons no more will harm ye.

Erin's stay no more you are,
 Rulers of the ridge of war!
 Never more 'twill be your fate
 To keep the beam of battle straight.

Woe is me! by fraud and wrong,
 Traitors false, and tyrants strong,
 Fell clan Usnach, bought and sold,
 For Barach's feast and Conor's gold!

Woe to Eman roof and wall!
 Woe to Red Branch, hearth and hall!
 'Tenfold woe and black dishonor
 To the foul and false clan Conor!

Dig the grave both wide and deep—
 Sick I am, and fain would sleep!
 Dig the grave, and make it ready—
 Lay me on my true-love's body!

Whereupon Deirdre fell down and expired beside the grave. And they laid her in the grave with the sons of Usnach, and piled their cairn, and their names were written on the stone above them. Then fell the curse upon clan Conor; for Fergus, the son of Roy, slew Conor, and burned Emania and the Red Branch to the ground, and no man hath inhabited them from that day to this. So ends the history of the three sons of Usnach.

"Had I been Fergus," said Henry O'Neill, when Turlogh concluded, "I would never have deserted my charge for Barach's banquet."

"Ah," said Turlogh, "thou takest no thought of the strange usages of different times and nations. I might readily have made Barach detain Fergus, by claiming his aid in some expedition against an enemy, undertaken for

that purpose, and impossible to be avoided by a friend and brother in arms; or I might have detained Fergus on an assembly at Dun Barach, of his order, whereof he was a high dignitary, and being so, could not refuse attendance; or I might have invented any more likely excuse that I had thought fit: but what I have told you is according to the ancient account, which hath never been varied during many hundred years of constant tradition, and which hath delighted more princes, and nobles, and honorable audiences, than any other story of Milesian times; and this obligation of hospitality, although it be not now practised, yet hath its old existence never been doubted by any bard or story-teller of ancient or modern day. Truly it was a strange and ungracious observance to detain a man against his will, and already angry with his host, at a banquet which neither could enjoy while that anger of the guest continued; and, doubtless, Fergus was in high wrath all the time of his reluctant stay at Dun Barach: yet such is the tale our ancestors have told us, and it becomes not us to alter or corrupt it."

"Neither can I understand," said Henry, "how it was that the nobles of Ulster, who had such love to the sons of Usnach, could permit Conor, on a pretence so trifling as the maiming of his servant, to violate both his own pledge and that of Fergus, by slaying their friends and fellow-nobles before their faces, without either remonstrance or resistance."

"Such is the history as we have heard it," said Turlogh, "the power of the king was supreme; the nobles were at a distance from their own provinces and troops; and all the violence committed was done by the army of the enraged monarch."

"Again," said Henry; but he was interrupted by Art—"What matter, brother, how the thing was brought

about, so that the generosity, and valour, and fortitude, and true love which make the true delight of the tale be not hindered in their operation and display? With the clang of the magic shield ringing in my ears, and the picture of the brothers' heroic composure before my eyes, I can think of nothing but noble deeds and generous affections: my eyes are dazzled with the glorious flashing of swords and battle-axes; my ears drink in the exulting din of battered armour, while my heart melts within me for pity and compassion, and sweet thoughts of those who love me, and who would do and suffer as much for my sake in a like extremity."

"Far different thoughts have been mine," said O'Donnell, withdrawing his eyes from an intense contemplation of some scene in the vacancy before him, "not that my breast hath not been stirred with many and strong emotions of indignation, sympathy, or tender remembrance; but truth to tell, I have thought far less of private wrong, or personal affections, than of my country's miserable condition which hath ever been caused and continued by even such feuds and tyrannies among ourselves, as those related to us by Turlogh. And I think, with my cousin Art in this, that it matters little for the nature of those small hinges whereon the mechanical operation of the story turns, so that we be not prevented from seeing clearly the chief truth that the tale at large teacheth. Here, behold what strife and weakness arose for Ulster, from making private wrongs and jealousies the causes of public commotion: behold the nobles disgusted with the king, the king sacrificing the best and bravest of his own subjects; and, in the end, inviting, by the weakness he had himself occasioned, the invasion of another potentate, and the final subjection of his own people to the rule of strangers. Alas, it hath

been ever thus; Conors, and Dermots, and Teige Caoluisces have never been wanting to perpetuate the curse of division and weakness. In God's name, my cousins, let not the old quarrels of our houses hinder our hearty union! If injury be done by either to the other, let the Brehon settle who is the offender, and who the sufferer, while we employ our common arms in upholding the means and power of reparation in both. What though Hugh Calvagh, my own near kinsman, was robbed of wife and lands, by your father, Shane? think you I have better chance of recovering my right from Elizabeth, than from you? No; let us first join in keeping the country, and let us settle its division after. Before God, and Columb Kill, it is my firm belief that we are strong enough, if united, to hold the three provinces against the world! Where could the Claneboys, and men of O'Neilan, and the Fewes, most readily muster on the other side of Blackwater?"

"We would join you," replied Art, "with Claneboy, anywhere, either in Turlogh Lynach's country, or O'Cahan's; the fort newly built on the Blackwater, would check our march south of Loch Neagh."

"At Tulloghoge, then, be it;" said Hugh, "we will draw down our forces by the Earl's country, and assault the fort together; then raise the Mac Kennas and Mac Mahons, drive the Bagnals into Newry, and narrow the northern Pale to Eash Oriall; by my father's bones, a fair exploit! The Earl would, beyond doubt, join us, for he hateth Bagnal, as well on his sister's account, whom he hath married against the marshal's will, as from his close and dangerous neighbourhood to Dunganon. Ha! we will have another blow for land and liberty, before we see the strangers stable their steeds in our castle halls, and send their ploughs through our

raths and hunting grounds! Bagnal and Clifford, Bingham and Fitzwilliam, ye shall yet rue the day you first saw Irish land!—Ho! Art and Henry, let us go and fix the levies." He rose, unconscious of his captivity, as if to take his seat at a council table; but the fetter soon checked him, and he again sat down with a bitter sigh. "I had forgotten," he cried, "while meditating English overthrow, that I am still a captive in the chains of England. Yet, why repine? Let me rather thank Heaven that hath sent thee, Turlogh, to lighten my captivity and give me these dreams of glory which are so sweet while they last, that I would freely suffer ten such awakings for the forgetfulness of one such hour as this thou hast afforded me."

"Praise be to Him who hath given me the power," replied Turlogh: "with His permission you shall yet enjoy many such hours. Meanwhile, 'tis time for you, my noble masters, to retire for the night, lest our voices heard longer, excite the apprehensions of the guard."

SECOND NIGHT.

ON the next evening, Hugh Roe required no solicitation to do full justice to such fare as the liberality of the warden had afforded; and when left alone with his fellow captives and their friendly guard, he was the first to demand of Turlogh another tale for their amusement.

"My chains have all day hung lighter," said he, "in expectation of another hour's forgetfulness of their restraint. Let me again walk with the steps of a free dreamer beside brave men and fair ladies. Come, Turlogh, beat me down those black and hideous walls, and show me again the free prospect of waving wild woods and flowing rivers, blue mountains of mist, and the dun

deserts where red deer are running free upon the backs of Corry Vanacht or Gougan More."

"I also long," said Art, "to hear of generous actions and brave exploits, of loves, friendships, loyalty, and kindness; for my heart is sick of the sounds of violence, and malice, and treachery that here cease not day by day to remind us of man's cruelty and baseness. I pray thee then, good Turlogh, let thy tale be one of honest men and chaste women; giving the right its due reward, and rendering full retribution to the wrong."

"I will, if it so please you, my noble masters," said Turlogh, "proceed with the second woe of Irish story—the Death of the Children of Lir: that of Clan Usnach having been the first. And although the tale be tragical, yet, in the end, true piety obtains for the persecuted princess and her brothers, the best reward of patience under misfortune—a happy death and the certain hope of a crown of glory in a better world."

"These woes of Irish story," said Henry, "are to my mind too ancient and uncouth. Tell me your tale as you would tell me of a present adventure; and I will keep pace with you far better than when you march upon these stilts, as it were, of antique phrases. I had rather hear a song of Agnew than a lay of Oisín: I had rather hear a tale of our own or our grandsire's times, than fables of Tuatha De Danaan enchantments, or of Finian prodigies."

"Ah, Henry," cried Art, "thou wert surely destined by nature for a Brehon or an Ollamh; or rather, in truth, for a doctor among these strange unbelievers, the Saxon lawyers! If the Lord Deputy did but hear thy grave judgments on our old romances, thou wouldst, without doubt, be summoned to the council, where, as I hear they are now busied in enacting new statutes against wolves, priests, and unshaven story-tellers, such as Turlogh Buidh."

"Nay, nay," said Hugh, "taunt not kind Henry, with the possession of that in which we are both deficient. I care not, I confess, for my own part, whether the tale be ancient or modern, Finian or Elizabethan; let it only do its work of entertainment, and I am content: and as we have had our Clan Usnach last night, let Henry name his story now."

"Be it so," said Art, "and Henry, my heart's brother! forgive me if I have said aught to offend thy better judgment."

"Nothing, nothing, dear Art," cried his brother, "I only fear least my colder manner of speech may have damped thy ardent expectation of enjoyment: let the tale be as Turlogh pleases—he best knows what will answer best our different dispositions."

"What say you, noble prince," replied Turlogh, "if I tell you a tale in which your own ancestors are the chief actors. You all know that the broad lands of Ulster belonged, some thousand years ago, to your common progenitor, Niall of the Nine Hostages."

"Shame it were for us," interrupted O'Donnell, "were we ignorant of his fame. The Nine Hostager must have been the most martial man of our race; he was the protector of his clansmen, the scourge of his enemies, the devastator of the coasts of Gaul and Britain."

"And to whom—Pagan though he was—we owe, indirectly, our Christianity," replied Henry.

"It is true," rejoined Turlogh, "Niall carried from Gaul in one of his plundering expeditions, the young Succat, then about sixteen years of age, son of the deacon Calphurn, whom he sold as slave to Milchu, a petty chieftain in Antrim. The churl put the youth to herd his swine on Slemish Mountain. There, in hardship, in solitude, in communion with Nature, his own soul, and his

God, was spiritually nurtured that holy saint, afterwards known as Patricius—Patrick—the Apostle of Ireland."

"Tell us more about him, Turlogh," said Henry O'Neill; "did he not escape, and rejoin his kindred?"

"He did," replied Turlogh, "after some six years or more of captivity. But God put it into his heart to return to Ireland; to win for Christ the people he had learned to love. He has left on record all his feelings, his motives, his spiritual experiences. You know, my prince," continued Turlogh, addressing O'Donnell, "that it was from the wood of Focluth, in your country of Tyrconnell, that St. Patrick heard in vision, the voices of the children calling to him, 'Holy man, come over and instruct us.'"

"I have read that in his *Confession*," said Art, "a book in which I always greatly delighted, because it seemed to me the revelation of a yearning and loving soul. Much of the *Confession* remains in my memory. St. Patrick says, does he not? that God, ere he knew Him, had him in his charge: and further, that when he had attained the touch and apprehension of his God, he ardently desired to preach the same to others. These are his words:

"Wherefore I, chief and first of the unlearned,
God's runaway, untaught, who nothing know
How to provide the morrow, surely know
This, that, before my happy humbling came,
I was as is a stone that, in deep mire,
Lies on the highway: and He came, who can,
And, in His pity, thence did lift me up
And set me on the wall-top. Therefore I
Will now be bold and eager, prompt to pay
The tribute of my praises to the Lord
Who has bestowed His everlasting boons
So great on me as pass the mind of man."

"Art, my brother," said Henry O'Neill, "how every thing

that is sweet and pure and good, clings to your memory. When I compare myself to you, I seem to be of the earth, earthy. Can you remember what the Holy Saint speaks of the call to come to Ireland?"

"Yes," said Art, "he speaks thus:

" 'Methought I heard the cry
Of them that by the wood of Focluth dwell,
Beside the Western Ocean, saying thus,
"Come, holy youth, and walk amongst us. Come!"
All with one voice. It touched me to the heart.'

"And again he says:

" 'Therefore unwearied thanks I render Him
Who kept me faithful in temptation's hour,
That I to-day should live to offer up
Myself a living sacrifice to Him,
My Saviour, my Preserver. Well may I
Say, Lord, what am I, or my calling what
That with such favor, with such aid divine
Thou hast environed and uplifted me.'

"And afterwards the blessed Patrick expresses his yearning love for his Irish converts:

" 'But never, never let me lose the flock,
He pastures by me in earth's outland here!
God grant me that! And that I persevere
In faithful witness to my journey's end.' "

"How well I remember that wood of Focluth," said Hugh Roe, "and the well at the wayside, where the roads met. Often when I have hunted there, have I, refreshed with its waters, reposed myself on its green margin. And yet I never thought of the blessed Patrick. In my imagination the woods re-echoed to the horn of Finn, and Oisín, and Oscar. Their powerful staghounds brought the giant elk to bay. The poetry that rose to my lips, told of their exploits. I could repeat much of it,

for I, as well as you, Art, love and retain in memory, the poetry of Erin.

"When St. Patrick preached and baptized, was our ancestor King Niall still living!" asked Henry.

"No," replied Turlogh, "Niall, Nine Hostager, died in A.D. 428. His territory was divided among his sons. You, my princes, are descended from his twin-sons, Owen and Conall Gulban. The great Sept of O'Donnell," he added, turning to Hugh Roe, "to whom belong the north-western district, are the descendants of Conall, who has given its name—Tyrconnell—to the territory between Lough Swilly and the Erne."

"Kilmacrenan to Ballyshannon," said Red Hugh proudly.

"The name of your ancestor, Owen," Turlogh continued, addressing Henry and Art O'Neill, "is preserved in Tirowen (Tyrone); but its broad lands, in those days, were only bounded by the sea on the north and east, Lough Foyle on the west, and included Armagh to the south; but after the Normans came in with Strongbow, they speedily encroached on the territories which owned the sway of O'Neill. The north-eastern districts were invaded, and the boundary pushed back to the river Bann. The great Barons de Courcy, de Lacy, de Burgh, were successively created by the English Sovereign, Earls of Ulster, but held sway east of the Bann only. Here they built strong castles, which effectually secured them from hostile attack on the part of our people."

"And we had neither skill to build, nor could we master the arts of war wherewith to destroy," said O'Donnell, sadly.

"True," said Henry, "the genius of our nation is not suited for patient and disciplined work in the field, nor for the investment of places of strength. The clans will only

follow their chiefs so far, and for so long as seems good in their own eyes. In rapid movement, in guerilla warfare, in pluck, bravery, and daring, they are not to be surpassed, but they lack organization. They have no cohesion, no commissariat. They must, perforce, live on the country, and disband when provisions and forage fail them. When successful, they cannot be restrained from plunder, but insist on returning home to secure their spoils, quite indifferent to the ultimate fate of the campaign."

"It is too true," said Hugh Roe gloomily; "nor can I see, with our present organization, how we can hope for any permanent success, even in holding our own against the English, unless we were reinforced by trained and disciplined soldiers. If Spain could be induced to lend her aid, and bring to our cause an army, organised and armed, as are our foes; and if the clans could be got to combine, lay aside mutual jealousies, and co-operate with perseverance as well as energy, we might hope for ultimate victory, for we could, at least, make war very costly and irksome to the Saxon; and Queen Elizabeth in not over liberal of her money or men."

"If you enter on these calculations, my princes," interrupted Turlogh, "you will hardly have time for my story this evening. I was about to tell you how Aedh Buidh*, or Yellow Hugh O'Neill regained his territory of Claneboy† on the death of William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, in 1333."

"The story, the story!" cried Art.

"But how comes it, Turlogh, that the title of Earl of Ulster is attached to the eldest son of the English Sovereign, if our ancestor Aedh Buidh swept these people from his territory of Claneboy?" asked Henry O'Neill.

* Pronounced Aed Bwee, † Clan-Aed-Bwee.

"William de Burgh," rejoined Turlogh, "who was quite a young man when he was stabbed in the folds of the Lagan at Bealfarsad,* left an infant daughter, Elizabeth. When she grew to woman's estate she was wedded to Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of King Edward III., and her descendants who ultimately ascended the throne of England, the Sovereigns of the House of York, inherited through her the title of Earls of Ulster. Elizabeth of York, daughter of King Edward IV., intermarried with Henry Tudor, and was grandmother to the reigning Queen, the third Elizabeth bearing the name of the heiress and only child of Earl William de Burgh."

"No more disquisition, I implore of you, good Turlogh," pleaded Art, "I long to hear the story of my people. Do let us begin without further delay."

"Then let your imaginations carry you back some 260 years," said Turlogh, "while I tell you the story of

THE RETURN OF CLANEBOY.

ON an afternoon in midsummer, 1333, a party of native Irish, issuing from the northern forests of Tyrone, crossed the river Bann into Antrim. They were of the clan Aodh-Buidh,† or followers of Yellow Hugh O'Neill, a prince expelled some years before from his kingdom of Dalaradia, on the western confines of which they were now arrived.

The appearance of the cavalcade, however, bespoke no intention of a hostile inroad for its recovery, and at that time there was little prospect of success attending on such an attempt; for by the vigorous government of William De Burgh, third Earl of Ulster, then stationed with a

* Belfast. † Which afterwards lapsed into the present Claneboy.

strong force at Carrickfergus, the county Antrim had been placed in a state of security such as it had not before enjoyed since the days of the great De Courcy.

The Bann, a broad and beautiful stream, and at that time the limit of the English Pale, flowed between ancient forests on either side halfway from Toome to Coleraine; and so intricate were the paths, and close the underwood, that save when fording the placid expanse of the river, little could be distinctly seen of their unwonted traversers. A youth on horseback, the splendour of whose dress proclaimed one of the family of O'Neill himself, had led the way, dashing down the bank, and plunging with a burst of white spray into the water, while warnings and directions, shouted after him by his outstripped companions as they beheld him from the wood behind, bearing up and struggling against the current, told that this was his first passage of an unknown and perilous ford. He was followed by a hurrying troop of horsemen, at the head of whom a grave and middle-aged person, in a dress half clerical, half lay, spurring through the shallows of a true track with little difficulty, ascended the nearer bank, where, reining in his impatient charger, O'Neill was eagerly gazing at everything around him, and in a tone of affectionate care, rebuked him for his recklessness.

"Prince," said he, "the life of an O'Neill was not given to be cast away upon the running waters. Here are pools and currents that have swept down man and horse, and one step to either side might have carried thee amongst them."

"Pardon me, pardon me, for giving thee alarm, good Loughlin," said young O'Neill; "but trust me there are rivers as deep, and fords as dangerous in Tyrconnell, yet has White Fingall borne me from Ballyshannon to the

Black Valley, and never put hoof to bridge. And this is Dalaradia," he cried, striking the butt of his hunting spear against the green sward, and gazing at bank and tree, and at the river at his feet, and the sky overhead—"Dalaradia! my father's right, my brothers' and my own inheritance, and I am here at last!—I would I had a fairer view of the country: ho, Loughlin, let us on to the open hills," and they gave their horses head, and ere the dull beat of the hoofs upon the grass had died away, were hidden behind the thick green veil of the foliage.

Presently appeared a smaller party on foot, shaggy and nimble kerns, with mats of their own plaited hair for head-pieces, and long mantles, fantastically fringed and braided, flung over their yellow linen doublets and close trousers of deerskin. These led grey-hounds and wolf-dogs in leashes, and carried tent-poles and hatchets, which, with the panniers borne by three sumpter-horses, showed that the strangers purposed pitching their camp for some time wherever they might stop. They followed in the track of the horsemen at a pace that took them almost as quickly out of sight, and the river had hardly smoothed itself behind them, till the salmon shot past again, and the wild swan came down from his island, the ruffling of his feathers the only sound between the forests, save when a sudden plunge told that the otter had slid out again from his hiding-place, or when the wood-pigeon, that had wheeled aloof from the strange aspect of men, cooed murmuring from her reclaimed nest upon the overhanging ash once more.

When the strangers next emerged from the forest, it was upon the hills to the north of Connor. As they rose into view of the open country beneath, O'Neill's eye glanced with restless admiration over the scene.

"And is it," he exclaimed, pointing down the rich

valley of the Mayne,—“is it from such an inheritance as this that we have been driven to the bleak ravines of Slieve-Gallen, and the thickets of Killeightra? Oh, Loughlin, had I known what a fair country was ours by right, I had never staid so long contented in Tyrconnell, I thought it a desolate tract of moorland and morasses, fit only to be dwelt in by those hungry strangers who are glad of any spot of ground, however miserable.”

“Alas, Prince,” said his companion, “thou hast never seen an English army, nor an English stone castle. One of the wattled shielings of Tyrconnell could be fired and consumed over the heads of its inmates in shorter time than thou couldst pick a single corner-stone from the keep of Cragfergus; and for an armed knight of their nation, thou mightest as well shower thy blows upon the armourer’s anvil.”

“Bones of Saint Murus!” cried the youth; “and if he were as impenetrable as a pillar of flint, strength of men and horses could overturn him! and for their redoubted castles, when did they ever build such a cromlech as I see on yonder knoll, where the altar top is as broad as the shield of Finn MacCoull, and every standard stone would sink a ship.”

“Think not that I magnify our enemies to excuse ourselves,” replied his companion; “but their tower battlements have even such stones heaved higher than the rath of Ughlogael, upright from the ground; and one of their ships would hold an hundred such leathern baskets as thou hast seen on Lough Erne and the Blackwater—floating castles they are, with tall trees for masts, and armies of men and horses in their holds.”

“I have seen ships,” said O’Neill, “I have seen ships on Lough Swilly, and Tanists of the great Clan Donnell sailing in them over the waves of the open sea; but

though these strangers had ships like our castles of oak, and castles like our mountains of rock, I have learned, Loughlin, among the shielings of Tyrconnell, to trust to myself, my kinsmen, and my noble allies, for the maintenance of our ancient state and freedom against both.”

“Think not, I again pray thee,” replied the other, “that I would make our enemies terrible in thine eyes, either to excuse ourselves, or to daunt thee; but trust me, thou art over-confident in the strength of unaided arms. The English are as wise and powerful as they are covetous, and while united to oppose invasion of their robberies, will ever be triumphant as they have been; and this thy royal father well knoweth, when he holds council all year round in his mountain castle, leaving the war within their Pale to shrewd clerks, Brehons, and Erenachs like myself, who have wrought their government more mischief in one day than centuries of unequal war could have accomplished. Have we not already in times past stirred up both the De Lacys to rebellion; won over the MacMurrough and O’More to our alliance of late in Leinster, Fitz-Thomas in Desmond, and, in Ormonde and Kilkenny, the stout Lord Tipperary? And have not I here within a year drawn Bermingham and Mandevill, nay, the very cousins of William de Burgh himself, to abandon their allegiance, and turn Irish as ourselves?”

“For which,” replied O’Neill, “if I have heard aright, Walter hath already perished miserably in his imprisonment at Cragfergus, while Richard and Hubert still lie in the deepest dungeon of Norburgh, awaiting the Earl’s mandate for life or death. Their sister, Lady Gyle, the widow of Sir Richard Mandevill, is stirring all Ireland in their behalf; and all, as I have heard, in vain.”

“All this I know,” rejoined the Erenach, or lay abbot, for such his words and habit had shown him to be; “I

know that in Dublin and London, the defection of these nobles has struck such a terror into the councils of the English, that letters commanding the cruelties exercised upon these unhappy gentlemen, have been sent to all the Lords of the Pale; and that whether he will it or no, William de Burgh must execute the law, without regard to blood or kindred; but it is from this same cruelty, and from this ungrateful compulsion, to its exercise, that we hope the best. Thinkest thou Earl William will sign the death-warrant of any gentleman for living as a noble spirit prompts him, and not reflect that when he perchance may increase his own retinue by a butler more, or raise his own walls by a foot of battlement higher than may seem good to some timorous tyrant of the Council, he also may be proclaimed a rebellious traitor, and a *Merus Hibernicus*? But that I fear thine open fierceness, I could disclose such a plan as would make thee well contented with our peaceful policy."

"Let me be no party," said O'Neill, "in any concealed designs. I will defy the traitor to his face, if you list to trust your quarrel in my hands; if not, I am privy to nothing save the accommodation of the cosheries."

"Be it so," said the Erenach gravely; "thou shalt have store of pleasures at the English Court, without tilting at the Earl."

"Ho, Loughlin," cried the impatient youth, while he struck his spurs into his horse's flank, and making him spring high into the air, threw out his right hand expanded, as if to grasp the long line of highlands that lay before them,—“Ho, Loughlin, these are brave mountains! they look not like other hills; they are broad-swelling, and rolled together like a wave of the sea, or an army of good warriors! How name you that great one that rises over all like the ship among

the waves, or the king's presence on the ridge of battle?"

"That," answered the Erenach, "is the great Mount Slemish. We shall be on its summit ere sunset, and I shall then show thee the whole land of Dalaradia from Mourne to Rathlin."

They pursued their way along the vale of Broughshane, through thick woods that for a time hid every thing else from their view, and were almost under the western precipices of Slemish before they beheld its huge wedge-like bulk piercing the blue sky overhead.

Slemish is one great joint of that spine of mountain that runs between the vale of Glenwhirry on one side, and that of Broughshane on the other, heaved over its fellows so high, and so abruptly, that to the eye of one standing on its highest point, the platform of its summit is alone visible, like a green island underfoot, floating a thousand feet above the middle of the County Antrim, for from that point neither base nor side can be seen, but all around, from Louth upon the south, to the hills of the Causeway upon the north, and from the mountains of Argyleshire and Galloway upon the east to the western highlands of Derry and Tyrone, every thing lies under view as on a map. The rock, of which it mainly consists, rests upon a green sloping and smooth base, rising suddenly out of the hollow of the hills on either side, and in itself a mountain.

Rounding the southern shoulder of Slemish, our travellers came upon a fountain, springing out of the green sward, beside a great stone which seemed to have come down at one bound from the brow of the precipice above, for it was sunk half way in the earth, and overhanging, as if arrested by the depth of the first dint it had made in the soil. Under this they halted; the horsemen dis-

mounted, and till the arrival of the kerns, who although on foot were not far behind, occupied themselves in cleaning their horses and accoutrements. Presently the kerns came up, bearing willow withes and rushes, which they had cut in the holms by their way, and all were soon busily engaged in pitching their camp.

Two circles were marked out, one on either side of the great stone, round each of which they sunk certain of the tent-poles alluded to, at equal distances, and having brought the ends of these together under caps prepared to receive them, speedily wattled the spaces between, and thatched them all over with rushes, so that to one coming suddenly in sight of their dark green pyramids, it might have seemed as if two trimmed yew-trees had all at once sprung up beside the fountain. So soon as these works had been put in progress, O'Neill and his preceptor ascended the mountain. The Erenach often stopped and breathed himself upon the steep and dizzy ascent, but O'Neill betrayed no further symptom of fatigue than a deeper glow upon his cheek, and a fuller expansion of the plaited tissue on his breast. He had thrown off his mantle and high cap, and now stood on the middle and highest peak of the summit, the rays of the declining sun deepening the yellow of his garments into flaming orange, and graining the auburn bands of his hair with a waving radiance like gold, as the wind blew it out round his deep-flushed and animated features. The Erenach ascended to the foot of the little pinnacle on which he stood, and gazing blessed the glorious boy in his heart. "The very sun crowns him with a brighter light," he murmured, "there is a glory on him from heaven!" O'Neill stood rapt also in a trance of admiration, but it was of the noble prospect spread everywhere at his feet.

"Stand by my side, good Loughlin, I pray thee," he said at length, "and tell me how all these lakes and mountains around us are named; for I here see loughs and countries I never dreamed of till now."

"Let us look northward first," said the Erenach, "before the cloud falls between us and the top of Knock-Laide, for a storm is rising from that old country of the giants,"—and pointing out successively the various objects on the northern horizon—the Causeway mountains, the watch-hill of Fairhead and Lurgedin, and the Isle of Isla; and eastwardly, the Mull of Cantire, the Isle of Arran, the Crag of Ailsa, and the Carrick mountains, he told him the names of their possessors, and the wars and wonders for which each was celebrated: then turning towards the south, directed his eyes to the lough of Carrickfergus, distinguishable at intervals, past the steep shoulders of the intervening mountains. "The strangers have their castles," said he, "all along its nearer shore, close under this broken line of hills. First stands the great stone keep of Cragfergus, with the lesser castles of Machnecoole and Kilroute; next, under yonder precipice—they are scooped into caverns, in which I have seen the kings of three nations assembled—have they their town of Coole and Castle by the fords at Belfast; beyond, the forests of the Lagan stretch far into the territory of Kilultagh; then come the low countries of the Macgennis and O'Hanlon, but these we cannot see for the intervening heights of Devis, although their southern boundary of Mourne rises over all, mountain on mountain, cutting the horizon as with the teeth of a saw. To the west Lough Neagh flames like a sheet of gold, and the hills of Tyrone and Coleraine are hardly visible through the bright veil of the sunlight. But come, now, and let us look down upon the spot we have left."

He led O'Neill to the southern verge of the precipice, whence all that side of the mountain was visible. "Is not this a strange and solemn scene, Prince?" said he, "this lonely hollow at our feet, this black rock on which we stand, these wooded wildernesses all around, and that solitary well-spring in the midst, rising unwearied and silent, and sliding down the same smooth path from century to century? Knowest thou who wandered amid these woods and mountains, climbed those rocks, and drank of these blessed waters eight centuries ago?"

"I know not," said O'Neill, "unless perhaps a herd of wild boars or a troop of wolves."

"Oh, holy and blessed Patrick!" exclaimed the Erenach, "was it for this that the visions came to thee by night and the voice of the unborn infants of Erin crying out of the forest for redemption? that the scene of thy prayer and fasting should be deserted and forgotten, that the people of thy choice should be made vagabond like Cain!"

"Nay," said O'Neill, "I knew not that the good saint had been a mountaineer of Dalaradia."

"Knowest thou the song of Fiech of Sliebtha?"* said the Erenach.

"From beginning to end," answered O'Neill; "I learned it of Callough Moyle, my grandfather's bard."

"What says he in his 16th and 17th stanzas?" said his preceptor.

O'Neill repeated the Irish of the following:

"By the fountain that never knows drought or decrease,
He nightly sang an hundred psalms,
In service of the King of Angels,
Then went he to sleep on the bare rock,
His covering round about, a damp mantle,
His pillow of rest, the bark of the forest tree."

*Pronounced Sletty.

"And what sayeth his own epistle, when he tells how the love of God increased within him day by day in his captivity?" questioned the Erenach.

O'Neill paused for an instant to recollect, then repeated the passage—"etiam in sylvis et monte manebam, et ante lucem excitabar ad orationem, per nivem, per gelu, per pluviam; et nihil mali sentiebam, neque ulla pigritia erat in me."

"You look now upon those woods," cried the Erenach, "this is that mountain, and yonder well-spring is that fount!—Hear me, Prince,—we stand on the most blessed ground in Europe—in the cradle of the Church—in the nursery of kingdoms, in the very womb and navel of western Christendom! for here it was, even in this wild and lonely rock of Slemish, that God raised up the reclamer of the Pagan; and here I make a vow—and I call these hills and waters and these eternal rocks to be a perpetual witness against me—that through good and evil, through honor and dishonor, through life and death, I will devote myself to the sacred cause of this thy thrice blessed land's recovery!"

O'Neill stood apart, astonished and in silence, while the other knelt and prayed; and neither spoke, till at length the Erenach having arisen, the Prince turned himself again to the wonders at his feet. But he had not long looked till he cried suddenly, "Cast thine eyes over this hill beneath, good Loughlin:—what takest thou that glittering and glancing among the hazel copse to be?—Ha! there goes a stranger horseman; and by the Lamp of Kildare, two gallant-mounted ladies by his side!—and see, their train draw out from the wood, and take to the open country—Bones of Murus, 'tis a rare sight on these deserted hills!" So speaking, he flung himself down the nearest pathway, hurrying to join his men below, while

the graver Erenach followed by a more circuitous but safer road.

When O'Neill came again in sight of his retainers, they were clustering round the tents like bees before the hive; for a bugle note from the party just descried from above, had reached them before the strangers were yet risen into view. Many were the enthusiastic exclamations that the appearance of their Prince swinging from rock to rock down the face of the precipice, called forth.

"Behold the young eagle of Claneboy," cried his bard Turlogh Gorme—"he stoops from his eyrie of Slemish like the young golden eagle."

"Like a sun-beam from the cloud!" exclaimed Brian Roe his standard-bearer.

"Like the bright sword from its sheath," responded Rorie Duff his armourer.

"Ring round him, sons of Hy-Nial!" shouted another kern, with hair like flame and eyes like coals of fire, as he put a long twisted horn to his mouth, and made the rocks re-echo in reply to a second blast sounded over the hill, as the Prince stood before them. "Sheathe your skenes, my loving friends," he said, "I have seen the strangers from above, and they rather crave our shelter from the storm that already is fast rising out of the north, than violence or discourtesy."

At that moment the party alluded to appeared over the hill—two ladies and one knight, with an attendant train of half a dozen troopers. They came on at a hand gallop, till the group of dark figures round the green tents caught the elder lady's eye.

"Draw up, brother," she exclaimed, "these are no friends of ours; I know the red cloak of their leader—they are the Irishry from Coleraine. Draw up, Sir Robert;

and do thou, Ayimer Warda, ride out and ask the knaves if they be for peace or war."

"Stay," cried the knight, "their leaders are advancing—let me meet them half-way. Noble kinswoman and Lady Honora, your palfreys are fleet, and if we should come to blows with these rascal kerns, I pray you hold back out of arrow-range, and keep us ever between you and their battle." So saying, he spurred forward, attended by the man-at-arms, and met O'Neill with his preceptor in the intervening hollow.

"What greeting have you, sirs, for the noble Lady Gyle de Burgh on her kinsman's hills of Antrim?" he inquired in a loud voice.

"Health and peace to that noble lady, and all good greetings to her valiant brother-in-law Sir Robert Fitz-Martin Mandevill," answered the Erenach in good English, as he advanced, and held out his hand, which the Knight shook warmly, exclaiming, with a face of glad recognition—"What! our sometime chaplain of Coleraine! right welcome thou art to our Pale, thou and all thy good company. Which of the Princes of the West have we here?" he inquired, looking at O'Neill, who could only perceive by the tone in which he spoke that terms of goodwill had been established, for, save Latin, he knew no other but his mother tongue. The Erenach, in the different languages, made each acquainted with the name and rank of the other, and the Knight acknowledged the courteous salute of the Prince with an obeisance almost as deep as he would have bestowed on an Englishman of the blood royal; then ordered the soldier to bring the ladies and their troop forward without fear. As they approached, he rode up to them, and addressed the Lady Gyle.

"Dear kinswoman, we have fallen among our best

friends. This is the pious and trusty churchman Father Loughlin Phelimy, thy poor Walter's tried advocate in all his perils; and the young noble, his companion, is the youngest of the Princes of Claneboy."

Before Sir Robert had ended, the lady had dismounted. She gave both her hands to the Erenach, while tears filled her eyes, and so great was her emotion that she was hardly able to articulate her thanks and greeting.

"Forgive my weakness, good my father," she said, "I have to-day ridden from Muckmore to Connor, and from Connor to Gilgorm, soliciting Abbot and Bishop in my hapless brother's behalf, and I have not looked on the face of one true friend till now. Pardon me, that when I hold your hand I have yielded to my emotions, and cannot but weep to think of the sorrow which presses on my heart."

"Take comfort, noble lady," said the Erenach; "while there is life there is hope. Earl William cannot have so lost the nature of humanity as to put an unjust law in execution on his own blood-relation; but, alas! why do I measure Red Richard de Burgh's successor by the simple and kindly rule of our own nature? When did the cold tyrant ever show any touch of generous spirit, any spark of frank nobility? I pray you, let me ask does your fair daughter still show her love for the Irish, by gracing our tongue with the sweet voice I so well remember when she was a child in Omagh. By my troth, her form and face astonish me with a beauty never imagined before."

"Honora still loves the Irish," said the lady; "but, alas she must forget the language of her grandmother within our cousin's Pale; else would thy rebellious tongue be clipt out, child," she added as she drew her daughter forward,—“and thy dumb services bestowed upon some lackey of the Earl, as I am assured happened to a gentle-

woman of good birth in Connaught. Nevertheless, let us venture for once—tell the good father in his own tongue how much thou art bounden to his friendship."

Honora, in Irish, reiterated the thanks that her mother had already given. O'Neill, who, all the while, had been gazing at the fair stranger, no sooner heard her pronounce the well-known accents, than he accosted her, delighted to find one with whom he could converse without an interpreter. Just as he was expressing his hope that they would rest within his rude camp before proceeding on their journey, heavy drops of rain began to fall, and the whole party made a simultaneous movement towards shelter; but before they could reach the little encampment, at a distance of about a quarter of a mile from which the conference had taken place, darkness had shut in on every side, for the sun had set. As they drew up before the green-arched doorway, the mountain above seemed already blended with the dim cloud, where the precipice caught the lurid light that was still struggling through the upper tract of air. A flash of lightning illumined the scene:—the rocks started out from the dark background, a white and sudden apparition, and the crash of thunder broke over and around them at the same moment, accompanied by the harsh splintering of crags, and the reverberation of a thousand echoes. Half blinded by the blast, O'Neill could only see a figure by his side rise high into the air, as a shriek pierced his ears, even through the deafening battery of the thunder. He stretched out his arms instinctively; they received the falling Honora, as her horse flung her with a plunge from the height to which he had reared in his terror. She was unhurt, but he had borne her in his arms into the tent before she recovered from her fright.

The confusion outside was bewildering; horses unman-

ageable and dispersed, riders unseated, kerns and troopers mingling execrations and aves, thronging together into the choked passage of the further tent; while the Knight and the Erenach by turns commanded, and exhorted their respective servants. The Lady Gyle alone sat unmoved; she had seen her daughter borne in, in safety, and waited patiently till a trooper, having secured his own horse, assisted her to dismount. At the next moment she beheld O'Neill with Honora at the door of the tent. She embraced and kissed her child, and they all entered the temporary dwelling of the tent. The interior presented an unexpectedly comfortable aspect. A drapery of cloaks lined the sides of the tent to the height of a man's head, and a boss of rushes rose all around under a carpeting of the same material; while on a natural hearthstone, round which the tent had been so contrived that it should occupy the exact centre, there was already blazing a cheerful fire of wood, the smoke from which found exit by unseen apertures in the roof. There was no table, but on the ground were ranged wicker baskets, with bread and sodden venison, kept from oozing through by green leaves interposed; and horns rimmed and tipped with silver lay beside. As Lady Gyle, clasping her daughter, sat down upon the rustic couch, another flash of lightning made itself visible even through the close thatch of the tent, and the prolonged thunder broke again in reverberations overhead; and as the stunning roar rolled momentarily away, the rain followed like a waterspout upon the roof, and the gurgling of incipient torrents became already audible in the mountain gulleys above and around their temporary home.

The Knight and Erenach, although hardy and brave men, were compelled to seek shelter in the tent, routed by the fury of the storm; for the thunder and rain seemed

shaken out of a falling firmament, and forked flashes of fire were streaming off the precipices of the mountain, and sending fragments of rock tumbling and rumbling down the stony hollows of its sides, and tearing their way far into the woods below where the turmoil of their descent mingled with the groan of shattering trunks of trees, and the crashing of snapt and broken branches. All stood silent for a time expecting that their tent would be torn from its foundations by a rolling crag, or scattered and consumed by a thunderbolt; but after a crashing round the sky overhead for a time, the storm gradually rolled southward, and sank at length into a heavy and intermittent growl over the hills beyond Glenwhirry. But the rain still poured from the clouds over Slemish, and the gurgling of the rills was now exchanged for the hoarse roar of torrents leaping down every channel, and mingling their waterfalls in the seething cauldrons of the Misty Burn, for so the little river was named, whose dashing and foaming torrent was heard in the distance, like the heavy continuous breaking of the sea waves on the shore.

The party in the tent, meanwhile, had recovered from their first dismay, and finding the rush thatch impervious to the rain, as the strong framework had resisted the concussions of the thunder, were beginning to feel the enjoyment of comfort within doors, and to reconcile themselves to the bad weather heard without; but as they sat and listened, and distinguished the several torrents raging on either side, and hemming them against the impassable cliffs of the mountain, they perceived the impossibility of proceeding further on their journey, until the waters should abate, not only immediately around them, but also over the numerous fords that still lay between them and Carrickfergus. This necessity

alone must have reconciled the Lady Gyle and her party to remaining that night in the camp on Slemish, but there seemed to be other considerations which made the necessity be rather embraced than submitted to. It afforded the Lady Gyle de Burgh the opportunity of talking long and earnestly with the Erenach and Sir Robert Mandevill of her brothers and their wrongs. She still had plans to suggest, and injuries to complain of, and counsel to seek from these prudent advisers. Meantime to Honora had been assigned, by O'Neill's ignorance of English, the not unpleasing task of sustaining a conversation with him in his native tongue; and the men in the further tent, pleased with their good cheer and lodging, were well satisfied to remain with the kerns all night, even crowded as they were, rather than face the dark and flooded country.

The storm had died away, the evening meal was over, a bright fire blazed in the middle of the reclining party, and the deep counsels of the Erenach and the lady were at an end. O'Neill and his fair guest bent over a chess-board, which glittered with gold and silver inlaying upon the purple carpet between them; for the young Tanist had brought with him not only the materials of field-sports, but also those of whatever refinement of domestic accomplishment the Court of his guardian of Tyreonnell could produce; his visit to the English settlement having been designed as much for experience of worldly intercourse as for any special object of diplomacy. As they reclined opposite to one another, almost mingling their bright curls, the observant mother could not but perceive that the eyes of the Prince were oftener fixed on the face of her daughter than on the movements of the game, and that a furtive glance at her companion had more than once escaped from the downcast lids of Honora herself. The

Erenach also sat with his looks fixed on the youthful pair, but his earnestness soon sank into abstraction; although his eyes were still full upon them, he seemed to contemplate other scenes and other actors in the vacancy between.

At length, after a decisive move, O'Neill raised his head—"Lady," said he, "thou hast planted thy castles, and advanced thy knights and bishops round my last retreat. I am doomed to play the conquered king in game as in earnest. Wouldst thou again drive me beyond the Pale, or rather hear my bard touch some mountain notes upon the harp? I have here a harp strung by the hands of the last minstrel of Tara."

Honora preferred the music, and the harper was summoned from the farther tent. He entered, bearing the instrument, a rich and beautiful piece of workmanship, and took his seat between the folds of the drawn curtain, which hung across the rude doorway.

"Turlogh," said the Prince, "singest thou any of the lays of these hills of Dalaradia?"

"I can sing the Tears of Glenevy," replied the harper, "the Groans of Gilgorm, and the Parting from Slemish, or the Con's Flight to Tyrone."

"'Tis a mournful catalogue," said Lady Gyle suddenly, "but the Parting from Slemish I would fain hear. I trust we shall sing a merry enough parting to-morrow, to make amends for its dolefulness."

The harper addressed himself to his task, struck a few notes, and in a rich and mellow voice began:

THE PARTING FROM SLEMISH, OR THE CON'S FLIGHT TO TYRONE.

I.

My Owen Bawn's hair is of thread of gold spun;
Of gold in the shadow, of light in the sun;
All curled in a coolun the bright tresses are—
They make his head radiant with beams like a star!

II.

My Owen Bawn's mantle is long and is wide
 To wrap me up safe from the storm by his side :
 And I'd rather face snow-drift and winter wind there,
 Than lie among daisies and sunshine elsewhere.

III.

My Owen Bawn Con is a hunter of deer,
 He tracks the dun quarry with arrow and spear—
 Where wild woods are waving, and deep waters flow,
 Ah, there goes my love with the dun-dappled roe.

IV.

My Owen Bawn Con is a bold fisherman,
 He spears the strong salmon in midst of the Bann ;
 And rock'd in the tempest on stormy Lough Neagh,
 Draws up the red trout through the bursting of spray.

V.

My Owen Bawn Con is a bard of the best,
 He wakes me with singing, he sings me to rest ;
 And the cruit 'neath his fingers rings up with a sound
 As though angels harp'd o'er us and fays underground.

VI.

They tell me the stranger has given command
 That crommeal and coolun shall cease in the land,
 That all our youth's tresses of yellow be shorn,
 And bonnets, instead, of a new fashion worn ;

VII.

That mantles like Owen Bawn's shield us no more,
 That hunting and fishing henceforth we give o'er,
 That the net and the arrow aside must be laid
 For hammer and trowel, and mattock and spade ;

VIII.

That the echoes of music must sleep in their caves,
 That the slave must forget his own tongue for a slave's,
 That the sounds of our lips must be strange in our ears,
 And our bleeding hands toil in the dew of our tears.

IX.

Oh sweetheart and comfort ! with thee by my side,
 I could love and live happy whatever betide ;
 But *thou* in such bondage wouldst die ere a day—
 Away to Tir-oën then, Owen, away !

X.

There are wild woods and mountains, and streams deep
 and clear,
 There are loughs in Tir-oën as lovely as here,
 There are silver harps ringing in Yellow Hugh's hall,
 And a bower by the forest side, sweetest of all !

XI.

We will dwell by the sunshiny skirts of the brake,
 Where the sycamore shadows glow deep in the lake ;
 And the snowy swan stirring the green shadows there,
 Afloat on the water, seems floating in air.

XII.

Farewell, then, black Slemish, green Collon adieu,
 My heart is a breaking at thinking of you ;
 But tarry we dare not when freedom hath gone—
 Away to Tir-oën then, Owen Bawn Con !

XIII.

Away to Tir-oën then, Owen, away !
 We will leave them the dust from our feet for a prey,
 And our dwelling in ashes and flames for a spoil,—
 'Twill be long ere they quench them with streams of the
 Foyle !

"Alas, alas !" cried Lady Gyle, as the harper raised
 his hands from the still vibrating chords, "it was by
 listening to the lays of such tempters that all the unfortu-
 nates of my house have been beguiled ; and yet I cannot
 hear the complaint of oppression, or the longing for
 liberty, without dreaming myself of the free hill-side and
 of the merry-men at call ; of royal state and authority, of
 gallant huntings and festivals, of embassies and high

councils, and sylvan courts and camps, and all the pomp of arms and royalty." Her looks kindled as she spoke, and while her eyes sparkled with the fire of ambition, and her brow expanded, a smile of conscious dignity spread triumphantly over her features.

Although the mother of Honora, whose age might have been eighteen, Lady Gyle was still a fair and noble-looking woman, and as she sat between the dim-seen figures of the Knight and Erenach, there was something startlingly bright in the sudden flashing of her eyes, and revelation of her neck and arm from the falling cloak, for she had stretched out her hand as if to grasp an imaginary sceptre. "But woe is me!" she exclaimed, relapsing into a deeper dejection from her temporary excitement, "why do I talk of freedom or honor while chains are on the limbs of Richard and Hubert, and the clay of the churchyard lies upon Walter's breast?"

She burst into tears, and Honora went over to her, and taking her hand sat down by her side, heartily sympathizing in her sorrow, yet glad to escape the embarrassment of again meeting the eyes of O'Neill; for while the harper had been singing, she could not help twice owning their appeals at those passages of the song which applied so closely to their own situation, that neither could restrain a glance at the other. O'Neill, a fisher and hunter like the fugitive Owen, wore his long and bright hair plaited in a band, or coolan, while on his upper lip the crommeal, or moustache, had already gathered its browner defiance of the statute, although he seemed but little older than the fair being by his side; the cloak which he had thrown off was the prohibited mantle, and the language he used was every syllable proscribed. In short, there wanted nothing to make the song perfectly appropriate to him and to Honora, but that they should be lovers; and how

long its application might be marred by that deficiency, it would have been difficult for either to have told.

"Thou wilt learn to-night to sleep upon a bed of rushes, lady," said he, rising to retire with natural politeness, when he saw the grief of her mother, "and to pillow thy head upon a soldier's cloak."

She looked down blushing, for O'Neill's eyes seemed to say, "Come, and live always with me in such a home."

Mandevill and the Erenach were already withdrawing, so without venturing to meet her eyes again, the young Prince also retired to the farther tent. There, wrapping themselves in their mantles, they reposed side by side with their men.

With the return of day, comparatively few traces of the storm were visible around the encampment on Slemish. The torrents had shrunk to the rivulets from which they had arisen, and the rivulets were trickling down the sides of the mountain, scarce seen in the bottoms of their deep channels. Even the little river was clearing its diminished waters between its banks; and save for the pools that still remained in the hollows adjacent, and here and there a red scar where the land had been stripped by a more impetuous sweep of the stream, the face of the open slope between the mountain and the woods looked as bright and cheerful in the sunrise as if it had been visited by nothing heavier than the dews of summer. But across the lower country, that was partially revealed through the end of the valley, there was a glittering of the sunbeams on a sheet of water like a lake, where the spent floods of all the surrounding hills had exhausted themselves. The young leaves of the woods again rustled crisply in the wind, and even where a tree had been torn up or a branch broken down, the waving boughs that had escaped wove a green and shin-

ing veil over the half-seen calamity; so that when the inmates of the nearer tent came to their door, and looked down the mountain hollow, they could hardly believe it the same scene they had beheld under the descending storm the night before. And in the eyes of each other, as great an increase of fresh beauty seemed to have been imparted to the Lady Honora and her young host, although the evening image that each had left upon the other's memory had seemed fair beyond addition of beauty in numberless dreams overnight.

O'Neill and the Erenach stood ready to give the morning salutations to their guests, along with Mandevill, who had already prepared the horses for proceeding on their journey. With the gallantry of the times, the Prince advanced and kissed the cheek of each, but as he withdrew his lips from the scarcely impressed down of Honora's, a burning blush suffused her brow and neck, and was answered by as deep a crimson on his own. Again the Lady Gyle and the Erenach fixed their eyes upon the pair, and exchanged looks of intelligence; but the churchman did not seem to contemplate the chances of their mutual admiration being matured into a serious attachment with the same complacency as the fond mother, who already in imagination beheld her daughter's brow encircled with the asion of an Irish princess; for, whatever power of negotiation might have been deputed to the legate of the exiled government, the disposal of the Prince's hand in marriage, or the sanction of his own disposal of it, had *not* been intrusted. He had ripened the disaffection of the lady and her kinsman, so that they were only withheld from casting off their allegiance by the almost hopeless chance of still obtaining a pardon for their relatives, and in their defection he had secured that of the numerous and powerful families of which they

were, next to Earl William, the heads; but he foresaw that the accession of even such strength would be ungrateful if coupled with a connexion disapproved of by the haughty house of O'Neill. Nevertheless, he could not refuse the invitation pressed on him and the Prince, to accompany the stranger party to their common place of destination; and accordingly, unwilling as he was, he found himself, after the morning meal, by the side of the elder lady, while the Prince and Honora rode behind deeply engaged in conversation. They had twice sunk out of sight of Slemish, while crossing the broad valleys that lay upon their route, and had risen again into view of it when the blue mountains of Down became visible over the last ridge of hills between them and the coast.

The sun was still far from the mid arch of the sky, as they at length beheld the broad arm of the sea that lay beneath. A fresh breeze had curled the offing into a dark rough blue, while the shoal water on either side of the lough lay in stripes of pale green and purple, shifting and mingling as the shadows of the clouds swept rapidly across; the summer sun and the dewy air showed every thing in the fresh clearness of the morning; and sails at sea, and castles and houses on shore, with their magnificent amphitheatre of hills and woods, cornfields and pastures, burst all at once upon the astonished O'Neill. The first object that fixed his eyes was the great square Keep of Carrickfergus, where it stood out from the beach, dusk in its own huge shadow against the glittering belt of sunlight on the water.

"Bawn of Tara, what a tower!" he exclaimed, "fair gossip, is it all of stone?"

"Stone to the foot of the flag-staff, Sir Tanist," replied Honora; "and all these lesser towers before the gate, with their red-tiled roofs and fantastic parapets, are castles

of stone also. Alas! I have not been within these walls since I was a child, but I well remember their solid strength, and the giddy terror which oppressed me, when I tried to look down from their battlements."

"And these ships, truly they *are* floating castles—sailed they across all that wilderness of waters?" he said, half unconsciously; and then smiling at his own simplicity, prevented a reply by again questioning—"And tell me, lady, whose are those courts and turrets between us and the great castle, where I see some of the roofs bright red, like the others, and some as blue as the sea water?"

"That," said Honora, "is the Priory of Holy Cross, where we will lodge thee to-night in a chamber roofed with slate, and floored with polished oak. The Prior is my mother's kinsman, and we use his house as our own."

They continued to converse, Honora explaining all the novelties of the scene, until they arrived at the Priory. Here they found a spacious range of apartments prepared for their reception, for the building was at that time the most extensive religious house in the north. Lady Gyle had scarce allowed time for the common greetings to the Prior, ere she laid before him the long catalogue of her grievances, and unrolled the numerous petitions and memorials for their redress, that she had procured on her journey. "And now, worthy Richard," she said, "take thy staff and let us to the Castle, for I have made a vow that I will neither eat nor sleep till I have told Earl William as much as I have now told thee. Come, for I see his grooms parading their horses at the gate, as if he intended a journey. Come thou also, good father," she added to the Erenach.

"Alas!" said he, "my advocacy would but increase their guilt in his eyes: yet I will wrap one of the brother-

hood's cloaks around me, and go down in your train, that I may see and hear this youthful governor, of whose wisdom fame has been so loud; for I also shall soon have difficult matter to deal in with him."

He drew on a friar's gown above his dress, and having pulled the cowl over his face so as to complete his disguise, followed the lady and her companion to the Castle. They passed the portcullis and barbican, and in the middle of the square met Earl William, armed at all points and equipped for a journey, descending from the keep. Lady Gyle advanced—he started in amazement, but held out his hand to welcome her. "No William—no," she said; "I will not touch the hand that cast chains upon a dear brother."

"Noble kinswoman," replied the Earl, "thou art wearied from thy journey; let me lead thee to my Countess, who will see to thy refreshment and lodging here in our castle."

"Oh, William, William!" she exclaimed, "I can hardly look at the walls you ask me to enter. Was it not in the dungeon of that keep that Walter lay in your fetters, winter winds piercing him through the open grates above, and the chill damps rising from beneath, till Death came at last and set him free? And do you ask me to share your hospitality within these gates? No! Under your roof I cannot go, but here, in the open light of day, I tell you—and I call heaven and earth, before whose face you have done this injustice, to witness—that my brothers have been belied by traitors, betrayed and foully wronged by you, and others your accomplices. Look at these names," she cried, unrolling a voluminous parchment, "pious churchmen or noble gentlemen all; look at this enrolled flower of your Pale, and read their declaration." She put the writing into

his hands, and stood pointing to every clause as he gave it a careful and calm perusal.

"Noble Gyle," he said, when he had read it, "there is both truth and reason here. My cousins have done good service in trying times; but, alas! so did the de Lacys, before they fell away from their allegiance; and so do many now, who, if not deterred by constant example, would also turn their arms from honourable services to traitorous rebellion. For, day and night, the subtle Irishman ceases not to instigate us all to the kingdom's ruin and our own disgrace; and nothing save the stern exercise of the laws by men rigorous to inflict and patient to endure, can longer withhold us from total disaffection. Our nobles have so long been left to their own wild wills, using the authority of kings and judges, each in his castle; and our gentry and yeomanry have, by their feuds, been so accustomed to turbulence and bloodshed, that they have long since begun to hold our English laws to be intolerable, and would rather take the mantle of the kern, and, like the savages, compound with the Brehon for the blood they may have shed, than retain the decent habits and responsibility of civil subjects. It is known to all how the kingdom has, by these means, been reduced to the extremity of misery—how no man's life, these ten years back, has been safe outside the walls of his castle—how burning and pillage have frightened the husbandman from his fields, and the artisan from his factory, while many of those who were sometime honest men, seeing nothing for their portion but to be driven up and down before the outlaws, have either fled beyond sea, or desperately joined their persecutors. And now when at length, by the enforcement of the laws, and the exertions of the Council, peace is again beginning to let the earth yield its increase, and just government is once more extending

its protection to all within the Pale, behold these my unhappy kinsmen, forgetful of their birth, their duty, their bond of past services, ungrateful for bounties numberless, and mad in impotent ambition, have given another triumph to the barbarian, and, I fear me much, must soon give another example to ourselves. Nevertheless, I will make no delay in laying these applications before the Council; for I am but a servant—a servant of others, older and more powerful; and as they command, so must I, at peril of my life, if need be, execute. Dear lady," he continued, for Gyle was now in tears, and it was a strange sight to see her spirit so subdued before the youthful severity of her kinsman, for Earl William, though high in trust and reputation, was but one-and-twenty—"Dear lady, feel for me also. Tarry to-day with my Countess; or, if thou canst not enter our doors, let me commend thee to the care of the good Prior till my return; for I am summoned thus hastily, as thou seest, to quell another deadly dispute and insurrection of White and Savage, in the Ardes. And, Prior, there has come an embassy from the Irishry to Holy-cross. Entertain them honourably and freely at my charge till this tumult is settled. I would I could wait to treat with them, for I have heard of some designs whereof I would fain show them the vanity; but thou knowest that a rising of the Savage brooks no delay."

So saying William de Burgh mounted his horse, and with the long attendant troop, wheeled out of the arched gateway, whence he struck along the beach towards the distant fords at the mouth of the Lagan. Lady Gyle stood for a minute, with her eyes fixed on the ground, and her hand pressed upon her forehead, then took the arm of the Prior, and slowly and sorrowfully returned to the Priory.

Of all the standers-by during the Earl's speech, none, however, had departed with more confused and disappointed feelings than Loughlin Phelimy. The Erenach's designs on Earl William, whatever they might have been, were apparently rendered quite abortive, for he thenceforth seemed rather to dread than to desire a conference; nor did he evince any further wish to check the attachment of O'Neill and Honora. Thoughtful as he had been before, he now became doubly so—spent much of his time in prayer, and seemed like a man who either had staked, or was about to stake, every thing on the issue of some desperate chance.

That day, and the next, and the next, passed in constant expectation of William de Burgh's return; but messenger after messenger brought news of unexpected difficulties and delays; and day after day the Erenach regretted not having sent for instructions from Tyrone, till at length, by sunrise on Saturday, a messenger arrived with the positive assurance that the Earl would be at Carrickfergus in time for next morning's matins. Loughlin no sooner received this intelligence, than he departed in haste to the encampment on Slemish, and by noon the green tents had disappeared; and Saint Patrick's well flowed in a solitude as unbroken as on the eve of their erection. But on the hill-top, and on all the eminences of a western aspect from thence to Devis, there had arisen piles of turf and fagots before sunset; and close beside, scarcely distinguishable from whatever cover the long grass or heather might afford, a kern, with a slow fire of peat by his side, lay crouched.

Meanwhile, at the Priory, although Lady Gyle still kept her chamber in excessive grief, Sir Robert Mandevill had provided all kinds of amusements for the entertainment of O'Neill. There had been huntings and hawkings

in the mornings, games and dances at night; and the Prince, delighted with every thing, would have been completely happy, had not her duty kept Honora almost constantly with her mother.

But on the Saturday morning there issued from the Priory gate a cavalcade, at the head of which appeared the Lady Gyle herself, accompanied by the Knight, her kinsman, while amid the waving of plumes and glittering of gay habits and housings, might be seen the young Irishman, beside his eminently graceful and lovely friend. They crossed the hills that lie behind the town, and pursued their game till the middle of the afternoon; but long ere then they had broken into different parties, drawn asunder by the diverse course taken by their hawks and hounds. The chase was now over, and the hunters were straggling home in groups of twos and threes. Some had descended the southern side of the Knockagh, or Hill of White Thorn, and were winding their way along the strand at its base, where the sea breeze came fresh and cool from the ebbing tide; others, having climbed the shoulder at Slievatrua, were hurrying to screen themselves among the steep and hazelly banks of the Woodburn; while a third party, having taken the northern route, were descending from the commons by Lough Mourao.

There is scarcely a more dreary and ominous pool on all the face of Ireland than this:—dark, deep, level with its bare margin; its monotonous aspect unbroken by the shadow of any thing save the clouds, at a great height above the neighbouring sea, and the subject of traditions obscure and fearful, it now lay, even under the sun of June, and in the midst of the country's summer pride, a dismal and melancholy blot upon the landscape. The party who had chosen this forbidden route accorded

well with its aspect; they were the Lady Gyle, and her kinsman, Sir Robert, with the Erenach, who had joined them as if by appointment; for they had early separated from the rest of their party, and without partaking in any of the pleasures of the chase, had been riding up and down in the way towards Slemish, till met by him a little time before. They now moved slowly along the banks of the lake, engaged in earnest consultation; the Erenach apparently urging some course repugnant to the lady; for they frequently stopped, while her gestures betrayed excessive emotion, and her colour went and came like the shadows sweeping over the water before them.

They had already traversed the whole circuit of the little lough, and the Erenach, with a face of angry disappointment, seemed preparing to withdraw from the conference, when a horseman was seen coming at full gallop over the bare table-ground between them and the town. Mandevill rode back to meet him, and having received his message, returned to where his relative, with her face averted from the Erenach, sat trembling from excitement, flushed and indignant; the irritated legate, for his part bit his lips and breathed hard, played with his reins and dagger (for he was now armed), and scowled askance at the unoffending water.

"Ill news—ill news, sister," cried Sir Robert. "A messenger has arrived at the Castle with writs for the execution, directed to William as Constable of Norburgh. He came by Armagh and Kilultagh, and so missed the Earl, else our brothers were now no better than dead men."

"May Heaven pity me!" exclaimed the miserable lady, and became deadly pale.

"So sure as Earl William comes home to-night, he will sign and seal their death-warrant," said Loughlin Phelimy. "What say you *now* to my offers, lady?"

"Are you *sure*," said Lady Gyle, in a voice so low as hardly to be heard even in the calm of the sultry air—"Are you *sure* that you can make good what you have offered?"

"I pledge my life to you," replied the Erenach, "that I will fulfil all I have promised."

"Then," said Gyle, slowly, while she raised her pale and agitated face, "*I agree*. Sir Robert, thou wilt stand by us?"

"To the last drop of my blood," replied the Knight; "and now let us hasten to find Honora and the Prince, and conclude the first part of our compact."

They put their horses in motion towards the town at a rapid pace, as if they dreaded to pause in what they had undertaken. On the road near Woodburn, they met a groom leading the horses which those they were in search of had ridden at the hunt, and on inquiring of him, were told that Honora and her companion were together in the glen. All three immediately dismounted, and proceeded up the ravine in search of them.

Let us now return to the party mentioned as taking their way over Slieveatruie.

Among them had been Honora and O'Neill, and ere they reached the waterfall, they were accompanied by but one attendant. As they rode on, the banks became so precipitous, that, fearful of trusting their horses on the insecure footing, they were obliged to hold their course for the greater part along the exposed sunny head of the hill. The languid form of Honora, as she bent to each step of her palfrey on the rude and uneven road, betrayed her exhaustion. O'Neill cast his eyes wistfully upon the river, where it appeared glancing between the tree tops, clear and cool below.

"Lady," said he, "if thou wouldst but trust thyself to my guidance down this bank of furze and hazel, I would

place thee safe on yonder broad stone beneath the rowan-tree, where the coolness of the shadows and the breath of the running water will soon refresh thee. Meantime this groom shall lead our horses on before us to the Priory."

"In truth," replied Honora, moving her ungloved hand through the almost impalpable air as she spoke, "I would give my merlin's best crimson jesses and varvels of silver to dip but my fingers' ends in that dimpling pool."

O'Neill leaped from his horse, and gave the reins to his attendant. "See," said he, "here is a path by which I can lead thee to its very brink; the bank is here less steep, and the trees grow more closely. Sweet lady, let me help you to alight, for I also am sighing to change this fiery sky for the coolness of the shadows;" and he did sigh deeply as he assisted her to dismount, and led her, supported on his arm, down the steep pathway from stem to stem and rock to rock, till they gained at length the deep and stony channel of the river. Against the broad crag he had pointed out, the stream took a sweep, rising in an unbroken swell almost to its surface at one side, and sliding off at the other in a gurgling gush that melted and dimpled far into a gravelly pool below. Honora sank, panting, on the seat of stone, and dipped her hands over its edge till the water bubbled up round her white and polished wrists. She looked at her small fingers as they twinkled through the glancing eddy, for she felt an even deeper glow upon her cheeks and forehead since she had descended from the sunshine into these silent and unseen depths of the glen. O'Neill stretched himself along the bank at her feet, and, laying aside his cap, laved the flashing water over his neck and brows, and they also glowed under its fluent crystal. When he raised his

head, he met the dark eyes of Honora. They were suddenly averted, but not before they had expressed an interest she could not wholly conceal. They were mutually embarrassed till O'Neill broke the silence now become painful.

"How pleasant," said he, "how cool and grateful this water is to my brows! The cold steel of a helmet rim were not more refreshing to my wearied temples."

"Alas! Prince," replied Honora, "canst thou here, in this peaceful and lovely glen, think of arms and battle?"

"Ah, sweet lady," said he, "the lovelier the land the more we mourn its loss, and long for its recovery. The lovelier the daughters of the stranger," he added, "the more we long to win them also, each with her hills and castles, and her presence like a burst of sunshine in the valley."

"Nay, nay," hastily said Honora, "thou hast been arming for some trial of poetic prowess under the discipline of thine old bard of Slemish. If thou dost assail me with weapons so fearful, I shall fly the encounter."

"Trust me, fair Honora," said O'Neill; "I lie here thinking less of either fair speech or merry conceit of compliment, than of losses and wrongs, and the hopeless sorrow of seeing that these are well nigh as irretrievable as those are beyond my power to redress. I would to Heaven," he said, passionately, "that I had either never been born my father's son, or that when I did come to visit our ancient kingdoms, it had been with the weapons of war in my hands, and its sternness in my heart, that I might not have been thus unmanned by living with the stranger, till I love his daughter better than our own—better, Honora, than all my hopes of sovereignty or honor."

A deeper blush than ever covered Honora's face and neck, while she replied, as though she had understood

him generally, "Shame on thee, Prince, to deprecate the love of any—We have been commanded to love even our enemies."

"And couldst thou, Honora, love an enemy of the English?" said O'Neill, fixing his blue eyes ardently upon her beautiful countenance.

"With all Christian kindness and good-will," she replied; and there was a tone of conscious expectancy in her voice, and the lawn trembled over her fluttering bosom;—"with such love that I would have them forget their wrongs, and come and live among us like brothers and sisters," she added; but ere she said so much, O'Neill had taken her hand, and told all she had anticipated, yet shrank from hearing.

"Honora," he said, after the first confusion of her mingling pleasure and timidity had subsided, "I have confessed my love for thee before I have told what, alas! thou shouldst have known before I had claimed any place in thy thoughts. I am son of the O'Neill; but as he and his kindred may sanction my marriage, so and so only will I enjoy the rights of my birth. I shall not conceal from thee that Loughlin Phelimy did, on the day after our first meeting, warn me that they would hesitate to sanction this; but I have other kinsmen in the west. I should be well content, for mine own part, to forego my claim to any share of sovereignty, and live an unknown chieftain under O'Donnell, so that thy presence might atone for the absence of all other splendour, while thy love would supply a hundredfold the loss of any kinsman's affections."

"I care not for power or splendour," said Honora; "but thou wert made for honor and dominion, and mine shall not be the hand that shall take the crown from thy head."

"I will back to Tyrone to-night," cried O'Neill; "and if my father yields not to my entreaties, we will fly together, Honora, to Tyrconnell, or to my cousins in Inis Owen."

"Alas," she said, "thou knowest not whither to fly!—come to *us*—come within *our* Pale, and be a fellow subject of our King! But woe is me, I know not how long I may myself be an English subject! My mother is incensed against their laws; my uncles are suffering imprisonment, and threatened death at their hands; I know not what to say. Alas, I only know that I have now a dearer solicitude than ever!"

O'Neill clasped her to his breast as she made the avowal, and had pressed her cheek and lips with kisses that were not avoided, when her mother and the Erenach, with Sir Robert Mandevill, appeared at a little distance, making their way along the rocks by the side of the little river's channel. The lovers rose in confusion; but Honora did not shrink from O'Neill's side as her mother approached.

"Here will be little preparation necessary," said the Erenach, as he advanced to where she stood, with down-cast face. Her lover fixed on the intruders an angry glance.

"Dear children," said the Erenach, offering a hand to each, "we have come to make you as happy as loving hearts can desire. We have seen you plighting your troth, and have come to lead you to your bridal—if ye will, within the hour."

"'Tis all good sooth he tells thee, love," said Gyle, who now stood by her astonished and incredulous daughter as she parted the curls from her brow, and kissed her forehead; but tears were falling on Honora's face as her mother spoke.

"Oh, not so soon, dear mother, not so soon," cried the amazed girl; but O'Neill had taken her hand, and reluctance and denial were melting in its pressure.

"Dearest Honora," he whispered, "Loughlin has full power from my father; he consents, and there is no fear. Let us be happy to-day, we know not what to-morrow may bring. Let us on to the Priory, at least," and he led her forward, while she, blushing and smiling through her tears, and still clinging to her mother, yielded herself into their hands, and ere she had ceased to weep, was placed upon her palfrey, with her bridegroom by her side, upon their way to Holy-cross. They alighted at the door of the chapel, and entered: Honora threw herself upon her mother's neck, as Gyle undid her plumed head-dress, and smoothed down her hair; Mandevill paced the aisle impatiently, and O'Neill, grasping the Erenach by the arm, drew him aside. "Loughlin," said he, "how is this? hast heard from Aodh Buidh?"

"Claneboy will bless the marriage," replied the other, emphatically; and O'Neill, rejoiced to be assured of his father's consent, returned to lead his bride to the altar.

Early next morning fresh horses were at the gate of the Priory, and the bridal party were again mounted. "We give thee a weary beginning to thy honey-moon, Princess," said the Erenach, as they turned their horses' heads towards the road; "but thou shall have rest in Muckamore, where none will be in danger—it were unsafe to tarry longer here."

"But this is not the nearer way to Muckamore," said Honora, for her mother and Sir Robert, who led the party, had now passed the castle, and were riding by the same path that Earl William had taken to the fords.

"Thy lady-mother hath chosen this way," was the reply, and the Erenach spurred forward to join her.

After an hour's ride along the western shore of the lough, passing White Abbey and Bencoolle, they took their way between the woods and the broad beach, for the tide had now ebbed far off the muddy banks that lie along the mouth of the Lagan. As they advanced the ground became low and marshy, overrun with osiers and coarse sedge, and skirted towards the water with flats of still blacker mud, among which the river lay in the reaches of a gloomy furrow, discoloured, silent, and monotonous.

"The fords should be passable now," said Mandevill; "I see the top of the low-water mark."

"They will wait for the turn of the tide," said the Erenach; "the current of the river is too strong till checked by the counter flood." By this time their path had led them to the river's edge, where the water seemed shallower, and a rude road was laid upon the soft banks at either side. O'Neill and his bride both uttered exclamations of astonishment as they drew up. Each had been so wholly engaged with the other, that till now they had paid little attention to aught else, although Honora had once expressed surprise at their going so far southward; but when they found themselves at the boundary of Down, both rode up to their conductors, and questioned whither they were going.

"We do not cross," said the Erenach, in reply to O'Neill, "we wait the arrival of friends;" while Gyle turned at her daughter's expressions of amazement, with a face so expressive of anguish, that Honora could not restrain a cry of alarm.

"Dear mother," she exclaimed, "thou art distressed—thou art ill and suffering; let us dismount, and we will spread a cloak for thee to lie down upon."

"No, no, child, we must not dismount," replied her mother, and there was a tone of agony in her voice that

betrayed even greater suffering than her looks; "but," she added faintly, looking towards the Erenach, "were it not well that we should ride on till they come?"

"No, lady," said he, "we must keep together. Sir Robert, I heard the sound of horses' hoofs beyond the bank. Cross over now, and fail not. Prince, look to thy bride; and thou, dear lady, keep a good heart," he added to Gyle, whose agitation was becoming momentarily greater.—"Ha!" he continued, "they come!—now then for the Cause of the Red Hand!"* and spurred forward to the water's edge. As he spoke a party of horsemen appeared upon the opposite bank, and drew down to the ford. Lady Gyle averted her eyes, and sunk her face upon Honora's breast.

"Oh, I am sick, sick at heart!" she said.

"Dear mother," cried Honora, "here is a sight will make thee well again; yonder is my brother Robert behind the Earl. Look, look how tall he has grown since Christmas!" But Gyle did not raise her head. "And there is good Sir John Logan. How Robert Fitz-Martin whispers them, and wrings their hands! See, they are coming now. Oh, Phelim, my mother is fainting!" she exclaimed, as the head of the miserable lady sunk lower and lower on her bosom; but O'Neill shouted aloud, and drew his sword, for a cry of "*Lamh dearg aboo!*" suddenly rose on all sides, and from the sedge and thickets there started up a dozen kerns, and rushed towards the river. "Merciful God, they are murdering the Earl!" screamed Honora, as she saw him drop from his saddle, Robert Fitz-Martin drawing his sword all bloody from his side, Robert Fitz-Richard and Sir John Logan striking at him as he fell, and the

* "The cause of the red hand!"—O'Neill's war-cry.

Erenach and kerns engaged in deadly combat with his servants. As the cries of "Treason," and "Murder," and the shouts of the assailants, mingled with the plunging of men and horses in the water, and the clashing of weapons above, rose into the undistinguishable din of battle, Lady Gyle raised her head, and sat erect with a firm brow and compressed lips, gazing at the scene, while Honora, clinging to O'Neill, with prayers, tears, and locked embraces, held him back. His first impulse had been to strike in with his own people; then to arrest the hands of the murderers, and call off his men; but all had been the work of an instant, and he now sat indignant, but irresolute, while the attendants of the Earl, disheartened by the death of their leader, and the desertion of their captains, yielded before the aggressors, and fled in all directions. The two Sir Roberts, spattered with blood and the black soil thrown up by their horses' feet, galloped from the scene of their dishonourable victory to where Lady Gyle still continued gazing at the spot where William de Burgh had fallen. Fitz-Richard embraced his mother with affectionate ardour, and turned to kiss his sister, but Honora shrunk from him and exclaimed, "Off, traitor! I touch not the hand of a murderer."

"Thou doest me wrong, Honora," cried he, "thou doest me foul wrong—I was his prisoner, not his squire; and I tell thee I had been a headless corpse ere morning had I not struck that blow for life and liberty."

"Oh, Robert, thou hast done that which will bring down tenfold ills upon us all," she said, yielding him her hand mournfully; "but if it was for liberty you struck, brother, who that has known bondage can blame thee. And for what hast thou stained thy hands in this young and noble gentleman's blood?" she said to Fitz-Martin.

"To save thine uncles' lives, niece; had he lived till

night, they had been dead men ere eight-and-forty hours," answered Fitz-Martin.

"And for other reasons, which thou shalt learn anon, daughter," added Gyle, smiling faintly through all her bitter suffering. As she spoke the Erenach was seen recrossing the river above, from the pursuit. "And here comes one who, I doubt not, will satisfy even thee," she said, pointing to him; but although his horse made towards them, it was soon evident that it was not by direction of the rider, for the reins trailed with a little track of foam through the water, and a cry arose that the Erenach was wounded.

"He holds both his hands upon his side," cried the lady; "Ah! I see the broken shaft of an arrow between his fingers! Ride down, Sir Robert, and thou, son, ride down and aid him hither." But O'Neill had already started out to his assistance, and a kern had reached him, and was supporting him on the saddle before even he arrived.

"Prince," said the wounded man as he slid heavily into their arms, "I am hurt to death; grant me thy pardon that I may die in peace."

"I forgive thee, Loughlin," said O'Neill, "I forgive thee freely, although it was unworthy our house to set upon a brave gentleman, at odds and unawares." Loughlin made no reply, but groaned and turned his face to the ground. By this time all the party had approached, and were gathering round the spot where he lay bleeding and ghastly among the discoloured rushes; he heard the rustling of their footsteps, but could not raise his head to look around.

"Is the Lady Gyle amongst you?" he inquired, in a low voice.

"I am here," she answered; "let me essay my skill to draw the arrow."

"Touch it not," he said, "else the life that is fast going will have left me ere I can ask thy forgiveness for what I have this day done."

"Thou hast not played us false, Priest?" said Fitz-Martin, sternly.

"Sir Robert, I am a dying man," replied the Erenach; "vex me not now with upbraidings. If I had lived," he said, with a moment's returning energy, "all had been well. I came hither to draw Earl William into revolt. I saw and heard him, and despaired of success. Let no man blame me for then seeking his death. I have done that good service, and therein I am satisfied. But, lady, to engage thee and thy kindred in this adventure—and without that aid it could not have succeeded—thou well knowest what I have promised to perform."

"And if thou hast deceived us in any tittle," cried Mandevill, "I will burn thee on a slow fire!"

"Knight," said the dying man, "I have done thee wrong, but I have done greater wrong to others who are now silent."

"What hast thou done, unhappy man?" asked Gyle: he made no answer, and seemed suffering great bodily pain; the question was repeated.

"I have deceived you," he said, with a groan of anguish, "*Claneboy knows not of our agreement.*" All stood in the consternation of sudden despair. "Had I lived," he repeated, "all would have been well; but, as it is, without one to play out the part in which I am thus stricken down, you will be but the fools of my policy, the deluded tools of my ambition." Fitz-Martin struck his brow with his gauntleted hand, and would have done violence to the apparently dead body—for the Erenach had drawn out these words with almost the last gasps of

parting breath—had he not been restrained by Fitz-Richard and O'Neill.

The eyes of Honora and her bridegroom had met, as they looked up in their first hopelessness, and they had mutually derived from that silent conference a power to bear whatever might happen; but Lady Gyle and her kinsman seemed utterly despairing. In the midst of the confusion, while some cried that the English were coming down upon them, and others urged to flight, they still sat upon their horses, or stood around the dying man. His lips moved again, and he tried to sign with his hand. Gyle, who was nearest to him, stooped, with strong abhorrence marked on her countenance, to hear his hardly distinguishable accents; but she had not listened to more than the first imperfect sentence, till her face assumed an expression of interest, and she bent her head lower and lower, till at length, holding up her hand to warn those around to silence, she knelt down by his head, and, till the limbs stiffened before her, and the death-rattle choked the last syllable, continued to catch every word he uttered with the most intense eagerness.

"Poor wretch," she said, as she rose and remounted, "he meant not to have deceived us in the end; even now, he would in some sort atone for what is done, by teaching us what to do. Dear children, forgive me also, for I have helped, alas! ye know how unwittingly, to bring you into this trouble; but, trust me, I shall not desert you now, since that is done which cannot be undone, and we must use our remaining chances for the best."

"What chances now remain?" cried Fitz-Martin. "What chances have we now of land or liberty, or even of life, in Claneboy, drawn, as they are by us, into a war and an alliance against their knowledge, and, I doubt not, against their will?"

"Ride by me, Sir Robert," replied Gyle; "and thou Sir John Logan, hear also what I have to propose."

She rode forward with the two Knights; and Honora and O'Neill, uncertain what might be their fate, but contented in enduring it together, drew the scattered kern around them, and, followed by a lamenting band, bearing the dead Erenach on a bier of branches, took their way after the elder leaders, along with the liberated and exulting Fitz-Richard. They directed their course over the heights of Devis and Donegore, and, as they came in sight of the distant Bann beyond, the noon-day sun shone upon their counsels still mournful and uncertain, but far removed from the despair of their first consternation on the confession of the Erenach.

On that evening the headquarters of the Clan Hugh Boy swarmed with retainers of the numerous chieftains of Inis Owen, Tir Connell, Oriel, and Oirther. The O'Dougherty, O'Donnell, O'Hanlon, MacMahon, and others of less note, had been invited to a solemn conference in the Castle of Aodh, the exiled king of Dalaradia. O'Neill's fortalice, although built for a temporary refuge and admitting no stone into its structure, save those on which the numerous fires burned, was nevertheless, an extensive and imposing pile. Huge trees had been felled from the surrounding forests, and sunk so deep, for the main timbers of the walls, as to defy the most violent storm that ever swept from Slieve Gallen above, down to the expanse of Lough Neagh that lay beneath. The interstices had been closely wattled and covered over with plaster of grey loam, wrought into rude mouldings round the doorways and narrow windows. The roofs on the meaner parts of the building were of straw, or rush thatch; but over the great hall all was of massive planked oak, that glistened in the sun with a thick varnish drawn

from the pines around. The whole was surmounted by a watch-tower, rising full fifty feet from one end, and supporting a flag-staff, whence the *Red Hand* waved out on its ground of white far above the green tops of the highest trees. In the open space that sloped away on every side to the verge of the forest, temporary huts had been erected, and some hundred kerns and galloglasses might be seen lying about their sunny sides, or busily engaged in games and feats of strength upon the field. Here and there a horn still went its round among a circle of a dozen together, showing that the evening meal was just finished. In the court immediately before the Castle, there was a better sort of galloglasses, with some idlemen or esquires, still busied in directing the quartering of men, and stabling of horses; while, among piles of arms and armour, two war chariots stood opposite the gates, with the gilded harness not yet removed from their poles.

Crowds of butlers were hurrying to and fro among the lower buildings, where the banquet was still going on, and bearing ale and honey-wine from the cellars to the great hall, where the chiefs themselves were assembled, each seated upon a boss of rushes covered with a cloak, before a separate table, with his butler behind him, and his sword-bearer by his side. The walls were here hung with tapestry of crimson frieze, festooned between the timbers, each of which rose like a trophy, sustaining its load of sylvan and military decorations. At the upper end of the hall, upon a raised platform, stood three huge candles, formed of rushlights, bound together to the full thickness of a man's body, and nothing less than ten feet in height. Every one was supported by two butlers, whose office was to feed the pith with oil as fast as the flame consumed that in which it had been originally

steeped, and to guard against danger to the wood around from a body of flame so great and high as rose from each, and filled the hall from end to end with intense amber light. Of all the assembled chieftains, Aodh O'Neill himself was, by his yellow head, the tallest. He stood up at his table, a horn of mead in his hand, and, as he rose into the light of the torches, which the height of the platform had hitherto shaded from him, the brazen flash of his head in the sudden glare caught every eye.

"He rises like a comet in the night," whispered Callough Moyle to the MacMahon's harper at the foot of the hall.

"Like bright iron from the furnace when the sword is to be hammered that shall consume the stranger," responded the bard of the Bear's children.

"Royal and noble Princes," began the yellow King, in a voice that filled hall and passage even to the outer doors, "famous Chieftains and worthy Knights, who have this day done honor to our poor retreat here among hills which we can hardly call our own, I pledge you, one and all, and pray you, of your loving kindness, that you would now assist our council with your wisdom and advice. You have seen how the false Englishman, with spiteful and malicious perseverance, ceases not to make daily some further encroachment on the little that has been left to us. But why need I speak of wrongs that all have felt from year to year? What say you, Princes of Leath Con—shall we endure this longer, or fall upon their settlements with united arms?"

Chieftain after chieftain gave his voice for peace or war, as each was more or less acquainted with the real power of the English. Various plans were proposed, and had been debated, when question arose of the extent to which English defection might be reckoned on in case of a

general rising. Many families were named, and among the most considerable, the de Burghs of Galway and Mayo, who had already assumed the Irish patronymic of MacWilliam, or sons of the renowned Sir William de Burgh, a warrior of the preceding generation.

"Of these we have assurance," said O'Neill, "and of their kindred of the north I should ere now have had intelligence, but that my messengers delay, I know not why, in Dalaradia."

"For the northern de Burgh I am here to answer," said a figure separating from the crowd at the foot of the hall.

The stranger was enveloped in a cloak, but the voice was that of a woman, and the face, when in advancing she removed the hood that had concealed her features, was that of Lady Gyle. All were mute in astonishment. Aodh advanced, took her hand with natural courtesy, led her to the upper end of the hall, and drank to her health; but it was plain that all this was half involuntary.

Gyle dropped the cloak from her shoulders, passed her hand over her brow, and for a moment looked up as if seeking strength to bear the scene she had ventured into; then took the silver goblet that was handed to her by the chief butler, looked round the gazing assembly, and said—"King Aodh, and ye, Princes and Gentlemen—I pledge the health of all with unfeigned good-will. I am here an unbidden guest; but the grand-daughter of an O'Brien need not fear, methinks, to come among the Princes of Ireland in their council. I have come, noble Aodh, to answer for our House; that as we were weary of the pride of Richard the Red, so are we now ready to rebel against the tyranny of William the Cruel, who has already slain and imprisoned his own kinsman, confiscated the estates and scorned the application of his own Peers, and of

Holy Church herself, on their behalf. Princes, and I will say kinsmen, for our house has mixed blood with the nobility of Ulster, as often in happy wedlock as in honorable battle, we have, by this severance of the English tie, through the keen cruelty of our leader, become the natural friends and allies of our nearest protectors; and to whom, save to the Chiefs beyond the Pale, shall the revolted English look for protection? I am here, a weak woman, to plead the cause of many, and you may well wonder that the cause of such a family should rest in hands so feeble. Alas! my Lord is long dead, my son is a tender youth, my brothers are slain or captive, my noble kinsmen of Mandevill are themselves at feud with Claneboy. I alone am left to dare peril and hardship in our children's behalf, and I have travelled hither, Princes, to urge you to take back your own, and to admit us partners of your dangers and alliance."

She paused; a hum of approbation rose on all sides, and she continued—

"What service do you crave of us, Princes? We are fewer than we have been, but never were we yet so well disposed."

"Seize upon Cragfergus Castle," said a south-country chieftain, "while we overrun Lecaile, and so cut off their communication with Leinster."

"The castle is strongly garrisoned," she replied, "we are too few to essay it."

"Yet," said a voice in the crowd, "although the boar's lair be unspoiled, we slew the wild boar to-day in the wood."

"Ha!" cried Aodh, "the closed eyes of Earl William de Burgh were truly a gladder sight than even the open gates of his castle. I had not sought his alliance had I known, Princes, of your rising, or of thy friendship,

lady—thy kinsmen are ever by him—he is our worst enemy.”

“Let me not disguise it,” said Gyle, but she faltered as she spoke; “we do offer you freedom from that pest and scourge of your nation. But much as we long to prove ourselves trusty and prompt allies, we would not shed blood in the quarrel without full assurance of protection in defeat—and blame me not, Prince, that I stipulate where life and fortune are at stake—neither will we without also equal and just recompense in success.”

“Ask what thou wilt,” cried Aodh, “that service gains it;” but his sons Neale Mor, and Brian, and all the younger chieftains, murmured, and there were expressions of disgust heard among many of the elder Tanists.

“We will buy no man’s blood,” said Brian Ballagh.

“Let the assassin look for accomplices among the Scot,” cried Neale; “we have neither Bruce nor Kirkpatrick in Tyrone.”

“Be silent,” cried Aodh sternly, “I would that we had even such brave men in the place of vain and irresolute boys. I tell thee, lady, thou hast named the price at what thou listest to ask. This Earl William is worse than Comyn; and the man that makes him sure, shall be a better Baron than ever was Kirkpatrick. Say what thou demandest, lady.” But the colour came and went upon Gyle’s cheek; she covered her face with her hands, and burst into passionate weeping.

“Rash and unmannered boys,” cried Aodh to his sons, “your insolent taunts shall not pass unpunished.” And he took the lady’s hand, and strove to soothe her with kind words and apologies; but Gyle’s tears flowed faster and faster, and she sobbed aloud. Those who had reproached her, already blamed their own harshness, and the

sons of O’Neill joined in their father’s entreaties that she would forgive them.

“Oh my Lords, my Lords,” she cried, forgetting, in her agony, alike forms of address and pre-arrangement of action, “I do not deserve these reproaches! I cannot longer bear your unworthy thoughts of me. My Lords, the Earl is already slain!”

She had no sooner made the avowal than the shame of her former apparent hypocrisy again assailed her; and amid the confusion that her intelligence had created, she hastened impatiently to justify herself—“Oh, hear my story,” she implored with uplifted hands; “judge me not till I have told what brings me to this degradation. King Aodh, I have been wrought upon in thy name; it was thy legate who deceived me. Let me but speak and I will tell all.” She dried her tears and continued—“Thy legate sought to tamper with Earl William; he saw that his designs were hopeless, and strove to bribe us to the attempt that has been accomplished. He offered us in thy name, for a reward, all the lands of Dufferin, with oblivion of all ill-will to my son and kinsmen of Mandevill; all the lands of northern Dalaradia, from Clough to the sea, to my imprisoned brothers, and engaged to set them free from Norburght within six days; and to confirm the compact, Aodh, he offered us, in thy name, the hand of thy youngest son in honorable marriage with my only daughter.”

“Villain!” cried Aodh, “I never authorized him—and thou hast been duped, lady?”

“I call Heaven to witness,” she replied, “that I spurned his bribe with scorn:—but, my Lords, a messenger from the council arrived with orders for my brothers’ death without delay, and William had to ride from Ardes next morning to sign their death warrant.”

Aodh's brow that had cleared up at first on her reply, fell again, and he sternly questioned, "What then, lady? Is the son of a hundred kings married to *thy* daughter?"

"My daughter," replied Gyle, kindling at the imputation of inferior birth, and now unchecked by the consciousness of dissimulation—"my daughter shrinks not from comparison of ancestry with even thee. Her great forefather, Charlemagne, was Emperor of nations and countries, out of which as many kingdoms of Claneboy as the King of Claneboy can boast lineal ancestors, might have been taken, without stinting a horse, in his hundred stables, of one pile of barley. Her ancestors by the side of her noble father, were barons of Normandy, whose vassals led each as many men to their standard as half the muster-roll of thy people;—and her great-grandfather was The O'Brien, at whose footstool kings of such nations as thine have knelt and done their homage."

"Thou bravest it well, lady," said Aodh, "well and boldly—but we of the Tanistry wed not our Princes thus rashly to the daughters of Saxon Knights."

"Oh, had I but a little longer concealed the truth," cried Gyle bitterly; "had I tempted thee with offers of a service to be performed, as our miserable deceiver counselled me to do with his dying breath, and as he would have done himself had he lived to finish what he began; had I bid thee to kindle thy warning fire on Slieve Gallen, and shown thee an answering light on every hill in Antrim, as I was prepared by him to do, and as I should have done; had I but shown our strength, and stipulated for its exercise, I could have gained whatever I desired. But I am a weak woman, Aodh, and I could not stand before an assembly of men, and bargain for the price of infamy. My daughter *is* the bride of thy

son, but she brings thy nation a richer dower than ever did the wife of an O'Neill before. Alas, alas, Honora, thou hadst little thought of what would be thy marriage portion!"

"And Phelim, lady," said Aodh, "did my son know of thy compact?"

"He knew not," she replied, "he knows not even now the peril I encounter for his sake:—he and his bride await thy determination in security; if they receive not thy pardon ere morning, they will have fled out of reach of thy displeasure. I only am here, a weak, widowed, outlawed woman—I and one trusty kinsman, who has shared my fortunes in peace and honour, and is willing now to share them in danger, and, if need be, in death. Stand forth, Sir Robert Fitz-Martin Mandevill, and show this ungrateful Prince the testimony on thy sword."

Ere she had finished, Mandevill advanced into the hall, holding in his hand the sword with which he had slain the Earl—"Behold the blood of the tyrant!" he exclaimed, and struck the point of the weapon into the ground; it quivered from the stroke, and shook the red crust that had still adhered to it in flakes upon the floor. The boldness of the action, and the sight of an enemy's heart's blood scattered at their feet, joined to the spirit with which Gyle had already won the respect and pity of all, raised such a triumph of stern admiration, that the whole hall rung with acclamations, and Aodh, whether it was that he could not resist the universal voice, or that he really sympathised with it, advanced and extended a hand to each.

"Noble lady and valiant sir," said he, when the tumult had abated, "Claneboy knows how to honor constancy and courage; and if I were forgetful of the worth of this service, I would well deserve the reproaches which

thou, lady, hast not made altogether unprovoked; but forgive the anxiety of a father for his son, of a king for one of the princes of his people. Sir Robert, this good sword has healed the quarrel it caused last summer; thou shalt have all my legate promised thee—I will make good the pledges of my name in all things."

"Oh noble Aodh," cried Gyle, "it was neither for land nor for lordship that we consented—rescue my brothers, and we care not for the woods of Dufferin."

"By the staff of Murus," cried O'Neill—and all of his name, at the great household oath, bowed—"I will have them in possession of their lands within three days, else will I raze the walls of Norburgh stone from stone. And, lady, for thy daughter, she must be worthy any Prince in Ireland, else were she not thine; I would fain see her as Phelim's bride: where hide they?"

"We left them in Clan Conkein," said Gyle—and her voice now faltered as much from joy, as it had done so shortly before from shame and sorrow—"they think that we are at the abbey of Colersaine, to procure them shipping for Scotland; for pardon from thee they do not hope, and had they known the peril of this adventure, they had not easily parted with me. Sir Robert will lead thy messengers to *their* concealment, but, Aodh, after I have seen thee bless our children, the abbey of Muckamore shall be *mine*."

"We will rouse them ere sunrise," cried Aodh, "and that with a joyful summons; and now, Princes of the North, who rides with me to-morrow to the rath of Donegore?"

On every side the assembled chieftains offered themselves; some drew their swords, some shouted their war cries; the bards answered from the hall, and the kerns, with their bagpipes, from the court-yard; the neighing

of horses, and the rushing and trampling of troops, filled the whole space from forest to forest, and all was the tumult of preparation thenceforth till midnight.

The watchfires on the Antrim hills, in answer to the flame upon Slieve Gallen, were still burning red in the obscure dawn, when there arose a sound of rattling arms and trampled thickets among the deepest of the western forests of the Bann, and presently from among the displaced boughs of the underwood, there thronged a dark multitude of horse and footmen, and poured down like another river on the fords. The sun had risen, and the fires were undistinguishable in the broad light of day, but the living stream still swept from bank to bank of the choked and swollen river, for its waters rose against the dense array of kerns and galloglasses as against a builded mound, and split by their limbs into a thousand currents, gushed through them with the noise and tumult of a rapid. In a chariot surrounded by spears, and almost overcanopied by waving banners, habited in the robes of an Irish Princess, crowned and unveiled between her mother and husband, sat Honora, while Aodh Buidh and his other sons riding by the chariot side, gazed with unconcealed admiration on their lovely kinswoman—lovely through all the sufferings of watching and fatigue. Along with them rode Fitz-Martin, Fitz-Richard, and Sir John Logan, for all the English concerned in William de Burgh's death had fled together to Clan Conkein, and all had been received into the favour and protection of O'Neill.

It was long till the Bann resumed its quiet flow after that passage; when the nation of O'Neill had crossed, the wilder outlaws of the west followed; tribe after tribe swept back upon the astonished and defenceless English; and although a speedy retribution overtook the mur-

derers of the Earl, Antrim did not, for full four hundred years, recover from the *Return of Claneboy*.

"Noble Princes," said Turlogh, on the third evening, "I shall tell you a tale that seems to me to be suitable to all your tastes, which I learned of a friar in the church of Killeshin, when last in O'More's country with the Earl, my late master. I have seen confirmation of its truth in a certain pleasant chronicle much studied among the English nobles, written by a French gentleman of note, named Froissart; but that which I have heard is, doubtless, the truer, as it is the fuller and more explicit history." So saying Turlogh addressed himself to his tale.

THE CAPTIVE OF KILLESWIN.

On a pleasant autumn evening, towards the end of the reign of King Richard the Second, the horseboys and galloglass quartered about the courtyard of Killeswin Castle—a strong pile hard by the ancient church of that name, in O'More's country—were started from the various games and recreations in which they whiled away the afternoon, by the appearance of a horseman who urged his steed up the green slope, to the gates at a desperate but tottering pace. He bore all the marks of recent conflict and rough-riding; his torn mantle streamed loose from his shoulders; his head was bare, and he reeled in the saddle, as if exhausted by loss of blood.

"Ababoo!" cried a young battle-axe-man, starting from the dice-board, and clapping his hands, "What mischief has happened to Black Donogh, the chief's gilly?"

The horseman cast himself from his charger, and stood panting for breath.

"Where is the chief?" he cried. "Lead me to him

at once. Let him stab me where I stand! Let it be my blame and mine only—I care for nothing that can happen after this."

"Bones of Saint Bride! after what?" cried the battle-axe-man; "has Fitzgerald driven a prey into Kildare, or is Dunamase fired by the Butlers?"

"I would rather, Rory Buy, see the rock of Dunamase level with the meadows of Moy Liffey," replied Donogh Dhu; "I would rather see the whole clan Gerald sunk in the deepest pools of the Barrow, and my own wretched body lowest of them all, than have to say before these gates of Killeswin, what I have to say this day. It is a black day for the house of O'Nolan—Sir Ever Oge is slain."

"Slain!" echoed a hundred voices; "the Tierna Oge slain! and you live to bear the tidings?"

"I will not long survive them," said Donogh faintly, leaning against the shoulder of his horse for support. "Ay, Fleetfoot, let me take from thee the service that my own kind deny me," he said bitterly; "I shall never mount thee again, I think, my dun garran! Will no one help me to the hall? I would fain see the chief himself before I —"

He could say no more; his limbs sank under him, and he slid forward on the ground at his horse's feet.

"Stand back," cried an authoritative voice, as the now commiserating crowd closed around the body tendering their late assistance; "stand back, my children. What ails my true man, dark Donagh?"

The speaker was a tall and noble looking personage, advanced in years, but nothing impaired by old age; his dress costly, his aspect mild and benevolent.

"Ha!" cried he, as a dull puddle of blood welling with slow increase from under the prostrate body, caught

his eye, "here is murder done at my door—villains, by whom has Donagh Dhu been stabbed?"

The men around looked with conscious confusion on one another; but before any had found words to preface the dreadful intelligence, the speaker proceeded—"Lift the body, ye villains, and bear it to the hall where the wound may be looked to—but how? what? you stare and stammer, and gaze like guilty men on one another. Come hither, Rory Buy MacRanall—I was wont to love thee for thy honesty. Look me in the face, sirrah, and say what means all this?"

"O'Nolan," replied Rory Buy, saluting the chief by his title, "I know no more of this tragedy than that 'tis scarce a minute since Donogh Dhu rode hither sore wounded, and fell into this swoon; having first given us such doleful tidings that I would cut the right hand off my body to be able to believe them untrue."

"What tidings, sirrah—ought touching my son? speak villain, do you dare to dally with your chief?"

"O'Nolan," said the clansman, "we have heard no more, than that Sir Ever Oge has come by harm in Donogh Dhu's company: but here comes one who will satisfy your nobleness, alas, I fear too surely, both when and how."

As he spoke, loud lamentations were heard in the valley, and a crowd appeared toiling up the steep ascent with slow steps and mournful cries and gestures. In front, on a rude bier of branches, was something wrapped in a cloak. As they neared, a human arm and hand covered with a hawking glove, became visible hanging over one side. Blood dropped from between the supports upon the mantles of the bearers, and left a mottled track upon the grass behind.

"My son, my son!" cried the distracted father, and

covered his eyes with his hands, as if with the sight of his misfortune he could have shut out its reality. But soon recovering his fortitude, he advanced, with seeming calmness, and said, "Set down your burden, friends and kinsmen, and let me look upon the face of my boy." They set down the bier, and removing the cloak, discovered the dead body of a fair youth of eighteen, pierced with many wounds. "Has this been done in private broil, or by malice of another?" said the father in a low voice. "Answer me, noble Cormac O'Connor."

"O'Nolan," replied he whom he had accosted, "the foul deed was done through the malice of your old enemies the MacGillpatricks. What I know of it I shall relate. An half hour since, in the glen, I was overtaken by Donogh Dhu, thy clansman, spent and bleeding, and bearing the corpse of Sir Ever Oge upon his steed before him. They had been surprised in the woods beyond Shrule, by the kern of Upper Ossory, headed by Rickard Roe MacGillpatrick, the arch traitor himself, who set upon them unawares, and slew all their company upon the spot, saving himself; and he made his escape, after taking many wounds in his young chief's defence. He lurked in the woods till the departure of the murderers; then, returning, had discovered and brought away the body of Sir Ever, which he besought of me to bear hither for him, as his strength was fast failing; and he earnestly desired to supplicate thy forgiveness for leading the Tierna Oge into that fatal adventure, ere he should give up the ghost."

The father, who, during the narrative, had stood with clasped hands, gazing on the still features which wore a haughty expression of calm scorn in the midst of all their disfigurement, now turned to question Donogh Dhu, whom he had thought, at first, merely in a swoon from

loss of blood. The loyal servant was gone to his account before another tribunal.

"Bear the bodies in together," said O'Nolan, "place them in the hall, out of our sight, for a little space; for I cannot look on my son's face till the harness is on my body, in which I purpose to avenge his death. Friends and kinsmen, arm yourselves and mount. We must ride for the passes of Bawn Regan before day."

The crowd, who till now had stood silent in awe and astonishment, responded by a fierce shout of vengeance. In a moment the courtyard was ringing to the tramp of horses, and clattering of swords and axes, and the tumultuous execrations of the enraged clansmen, as they buckled on their arms and harness, or reined their chargers into line. O'Nolan himself, clad in a shirt of mail, his brows encircled by a helmet, his shield slung round his neck, equipped with spear, claymore and skene, strode into the hall of the castle; and, taking the cold hand of his son in his steel gauntlet, swore never to give over his feud against Ossory till either Richard Roe MacGillpatrick or himself should perish in its prosecution. The transition from the mild father of his people, to the implacable avenger of a savage feud, was complete; and, as O'Nolan rushed from the house, and threw himself on his horse, the voice in which he issued his command was as unlike that in which he had bespoke the bearer of his son's bier, as was his martial bearing unlike the peaceful aspect he had then worn.

As he mounted, the monks from the neighbouring abbey appeared in the court-yard. "Holy father," cried O'Nolan to their leader, "I leave the burial of my dead boy, in your hands; spare nothing for his soul's health; and if I be not back on the fourth day, inter him as becomes the last of an ancient house. I commend my

daughter to the lady abbess of Saint Canice's, whom you will summon to the charge of my household till my return. She is now motherless and brotherless—should I also be taken from her, I commit her to the guardianship of O'More, whose behests ye will obey in her regard. Now, kinsmen, forward, or Ossory will gain the pass before us."

So saying he plunged the rowels into his steed, and dashed out of the gates, followed by two hundred mounted and mailed galloglass.

Scarce had they crossed the drawbridge, when they were met by a hurrying company of horse.

"O'Nolan," said the leader of the new comers, riding up and presenting the chief with a signet ring, "thou art mounted in good time; Kavanagh claims thy service against the English."

"What say you, Sir Donell Kinshella?" cried O'Nolan, "see you not that I am bound on my own feud against another?—Donell, Donell; my son, my Ever, my only stay and promise, is scarce yet cold from the murderous hands of MacGillpatrick!—King of the elements! how can Kavanagh crave service of a father in such extremity? I cannot do it: my heart is on fire, and I care neither for life nor for allegiance, if I get not my revenge! I conjure you, as you love the memory of your mother's father, stay me not; urge me not; for by the blessed bells of Ullard, I will ride against no man save Rickard Roe the bastard of Ossory, and his abettors, who this day slew my son in Shrulc forest, until that feud is ended by the death of one of us!—I have said it and sworn it."

"Then ride against the English, noble Brian," said Kinshella, his countenance clearing up from the deep shade of disappointment and distress that had overcast it on O'Nolan's first refusal; "ride on with a safe con-

science against the general enemy; for Rickard Mac-Gillpatrick is even now fighting against his natural allies, under the banners of Edmund Earl of March, in Kildare. It was on his way to the traitor's rendezvous at Castle Dermot, that the red dog of Durrow came through the pass of Shrute: my own scouts saw his party crossing the fords above Coole-banagher."

"Then God be praised that has saved me from the sin of rebellion against the best prince that ever reigned in Leinster!" cried O'Nolan; "Come on, kinsmen; name the mustering ground, Sir Donell."

"The Moy of Tully Phelim," replied Kinshellah; "the word, *Eri go bragh*; and the route thither by the passes north of Cahirlogh." So saying Donell Dunn resumed his signet, and turning his horse's head towards Dunamase, proceeded with his men to raise O'More and O'Dempsey.

At sunrise next morning, the woods of Castle Dermot resounded to the unaccustomed din of English drums and trumpets, as the army of the Earl of March wound their glittering way through passes that had been rarely trodden by Saxon foot since the time when the third Edward had withdrawn the barrier from Carlow Castle to the Naas. Their vanguard, cased in plate armour, and bearing gay streamers on the ends of their long lances, had entered on a narrow stripe of open ground that lay along the verge of a rivulet, and were deploying into a different order suitable to their less contracted line of march, when, on a sudden, the skirts of the wood swarmed with a host of assailants, and a shower of javelins fell among their astonished ranks, while two hundred Irish horsemen followed with their long lances to the charge. These were the Slieumargie galloglass upon their route to Tully Phelim. The English, wheel-

ing into line, with their backs to the river, received the shock like gallant men, and the ground was soon covered with many dead on both sides. When the lances had been either cast or broken on either part, the fight was maintained at the point of the sword, and now, man singling man, it raged over the plain in a tumultuous series of single combats. Quarter was neither asked nor given; there was nothing to be seen but flickering blades and prostrate men and horses; nothing to be heard but shouts and war cries and the clang of iron. Brian Mor O'Nolan had already struck down three antagonists; his blood was up, his frame dilated, and his whole aspect breathing furious purpose, when he suddenly checked the impetuous course of his charger, and in a voice distinctly heard over all the clamour and tumult of the field, called off his men, before whom the remnant of the enemy's vanguard was momentarily giving ground; for the main body of the Earl's army was now in sight, and more than one shaft from the English longbow had already fallen among the combatants.

It was with ill-suppressed reluctance that the Irish leader prepared to withdraw from a field, where a few minutes more would have given him a victory so complete as he seemed about to achieve, and the more so, that one cavalier among the English who had twice endeavoured to single him out, still continued to press through the thickest of the fray with a daring which, while it challenged his admiration, provoked his pride. The Englishman was sheathed in complete armour; his closed visor concealed his face, but his figure was slight, and, although he fought with distinguished valour, it seemed as if he had been indebted for his success hitherto, as much to the weight and mettle of the magnificent horse he rode as to his own personal

prowess. The fortune of the day was now turned; the Irish horsemen again made for the woods out of which they had issued; for, in the face of such a force as was approaching, further contest, on the plain, would have been madness. The pursued were the pursuers, and foremost of those who hung on the broken rear of the Irish was the English cavalier, whose sword had not been idle for a moment during the skirmish.

Brian Mor O'Nolan, seeing him again doing such gallant service against him, rode back with the design of encountering him hand to hand; but ere he had reached the spot where this determined champion was hotly engaged with two galloglass, a blow of a battle-axe beat the helmet from his head, and exposed the fair hair and flushed features of a youth hardly past the earliest prime of manhood. The emulous hostility of the chief gave way to astonishment and admiration; but, as the warlike boy sprang from among the intercepting blows of his antagonists, and came charging down upon himself, a sudden flood of tenderness and compassion rushed upon his heart, for the calm disdain of the fine features, the waving fair hair, and the graceful figure of his own Ever, as he had faced his death among MacGillpatrick's men the morning before, seemed magically summoned up before his eyes. He gazed on the defenceless youth—for his sword-arm was disabled, and hung, at length, idly by his side—as on an apparition; the young Englishman, with equal wonder, beheld the red weapon, by which he had already expected his death-blow, returned to the sheath, as his now unmanageable charger bore him within arm's length of the Irish captain. Brian Mor seized his bridle as he dashed past, and gazed again on his ingenuous countenance, now animated with all that haughty defiance mingled with eager expectation,

which he so well remembered in his own lost boy. The illusion was complete; the father triumphed over the warrior; his eyes filled with tears, and he cried, unconscious of his hearer's ignorance of his language, "Brother of my boy! I would save thee for that look, if there were not a man of my clan but had suffered mischief at thy hands!"

The bewildered youth could only reply by an appeal of piteous amazement; but, at that instant, an arrow from the pursuing archery struck O'Nolan's horse through the flank, and the tortured animal plunged forward in the agonies of death. The chief sprang from the ground, still grasping the reins of the young Englishman's charger, and perceived that, short as the time occupied by this strange conference had been, the enemy had advanced close upon him and his prisoner, while his people, ignorant of his return to the rear, were already dispersed in the wood, and hurrying, by different routes, to their next place of rendezvous. There was no horse at hand, and to guide that of his captive, while mounted on another, would have been both difficult and retarding; so, laying hold of the high peak of the Englishman's saddle, he vaulted on, behind the astonished but unresisting rider; and, giving the spur to his powerful charger, was soon out of arrow range, among the depths of the forest.

He had not borne his captive far when he perceived that he was severely wounded, and felt him getting weaker in his arms. The flush of defiance had now left his face, and the young man leaned, with the sick repose of conscious helplessness, upon the bosom of his captor. Brian Mor felt his breast penetrated with a strange affection for the helpless being resting on it. The likeness to his own son seemed stronger at every look; and every moment revived his sorrow and softened his heart. When he

found that they were safe from pursuit, he turned aside from the rude overshadowed track he had till then pursued, and bore his charge through briars and thickets into a glade of the forest, in the midst of which a clear spring reflected the open sky. Here he dismounted; and lifting his faint captive from the saddle, like a sick child, in his arms, he laid him upon the margin of the fountain, unbraced his armour, and with his scarf stanching the battle-axe wound in his arm. The youth's faint eyes now expressed the utmost gratitude, and he murmured low thanks, but in a language unknown to Brian Mor. The chief sat down beside him, laid off his helmet, and bathed his own brows and hands in the tranquil waters. The clear fountain was reddened as he washed away the marks of conflict. The sight of such a pure and peaceful spot, stained for the first time, perhaps, since the waters had burst out of the earth's green bosom, with the blood of slaughtered men, stung the soul of the chief with a pang as bitter as unwonted. He leaned his head upon his hand, and tears at length stole through his fingers and dropped upon the water like a purifying sacrifice.

A low groan from the wounded youth roused his attention. O'Nolan turned and beheld him stretched motionless in the swoon which stanching blood usually brings on a wounded man. His heart, already melted, now overflowed—"Ever, my son," he cried, "you also are lying low! but Ever, child of my soul, yours is the swoon from which the wounded man awakens not in this life. Blame me not, my boy, that other hands are about you, or that the faces you loved to see are not watching over you. You have met your mother now, my heart's treasure, your mother and the three bright boys and girls that went before you. Tell her, and tell them, Ever, that I would fain be with them; but that my heart sinks in my

breast when I think of my lonely Una, the last—and oh, dear angels, forgive you father if he do you wrong—the best and fairest of you all!—Oh, Heaven have compassion on my lonely orphan!—look down upon her, sweet Saint Bride! Mother of Heaven, guide her, and guard her for ever!—And, Ever, tell our dark Hugh that he need not blush to meet you, for that Tubberbawn has not run red with the only blood that shall yet be shed in your quarrel. No, my brave boy, if you perished foully you shall be fearfully and fully avenged!—Ah, would to God, it had been my fortune before I die, to have seen you by my side fighting for your land and people, as I saw this gallant young gentleman fight in the English van this day!—Alas, I cannot bear to look on his pale fair face, so like my own child's, when they brought him home fresh from the blade of MacGillpatrick—so changed from the noble and ardent beauty that an hour ago reminded me of Ever, as he rode out on that black morning to Shrule wood. Gallant boy," he continued, addressing the faint Englishman, now slowly reviving, "does a father expect your return? does mother or sister keep a place at the evening board for you?" Ah, my fair youth, you may well look at me with thankful eyes—for I make a vow to St. Bride, that when I shall have healed your wounds, and shown you our Irish sports and hospitality, I will return you free of ransom to your people, as an alms to heaven, that God may deal as mercifully with me and mine! You understand me not, but I shall soon bring one who will tell you in your own tongue what a reward your valour this day has earned you." Brian Mor rose, and leaving his gauntlets and helmet on the margin of the fount, to indicate the short absence he contemplated, left his captive on the ground while he took a path that led into the woods, and was soon hidden behind the close screen of thick foliage

In a short time he returned, bringing with him an aged man, whose long beard and coarse garment of black serge proclaimed a recluse. The hermit, kneeling by the sick youth's side, spoke to him in broken English, telling him not to be cast down, for that his generous captor would detain him only till his wounds might heal, and then in consideration of his youth and valour, restore him, free of ransom, to his friends.

"I have no friends," replied the captive with a deep sigh; "had I had friends to live for, I should not have courted death as I have done this day."

"Who art thou?" said the hermit.

"Had I returned to the English camp to-day, I should be Sir Robert Fitz Thomas," replied the youth, "but the spurs that I have won I shall never wear: I am, I fear, dying."

"Not so, my son—with God's help, not so," cried the old man, hastening to produce a phial of medicated waters, from which he administered to his patient with the air of one skilled in the treatment of the sick.

By this time, a score of the Slieumargie galloglass had joined their captain, and by his orders were busied in constructing a soft litter of wattled saplings. When this was finished, strewed with rushes and covered with a mantle, they placed upon it the young Geraldine—for his name associated him with the great house of Desmond—and elevating the whole to the shoulders of four men, awaited the further orders of the chief.

"Rory Buy," said O'Nolan, "to thee I entrust the care of this wounded gentleman and the command of these twelve galloglass. Bear him to the priory of Killeshin, with my instructions to the chief almoner that he want for no attendance or fit medicine. Lysagh Moyle, this holy hermit, will accompany you; he desires a safe conduct to Killeshin, and will aid the sick gentleman in

interpreting his wants. On your life see that he comes by no harm in your hands, and charge the same strictly upon the fathers. Good Lysagh, take thou this scarf for the Lady Una; tell her I plucked it from the shoulder of a Saxon warrior in the fight this morning, and send it to her for a token that I have not forgotten her in her sorrow. But we have already wasted too much time. Farewell, Sir Robert, look to your charge, Rory MacRanall. Now, my children, mount, and ride for Ardnehue." So saying, O'Nolan departed with one body of his men, while the remainder proceeded with their charge, through the woods, in an opposite direction.

Sick and faint, Fitz Thomas could mark nothing but the shifting clouds or receding foliage overhead as he lay supine upon his litter; but the potion he had taken soon weighed down his eyes in total unconsciousness, and all seemed a blank till he awakened alone in a strange apartment, with a lamp burning by the head of the couch on which he lay, and an illuminated breviary open on a seat beside his bed.

He attempted to raise his head, to convince himself that it was not a dream; but the stiffness and pain of his arm reminded him of the strange events of the last day, and the throbbing of his temples, and parching heat of his body, told too plainly that fever was about to be added to the pain of his wounds. Sounds, too, were ringing in his ears which he at first thought voices of persons overhead. They then seemed to be but the chiming in his own brain. Again they rose audibly from without: Fitz Thomas had never heard sounds so sweetly plaintive before. They became clearer, and more wildly mournful at every note; now rising in almost painful sweetness, now sinking and floating away in murmured music, hardly to be distinguished from the sighing of a night breeze; then, again, drawing the very soul of the listener out in the ringing

harmony of voices, mingling as they rose to a swell of lamentation inexpressibly touching. Fitz Thomas listened in doubt, nay, almost in terror; for his situation was such as might have admitted alarm in the most courageous —. Wounded, fevered, alone, he knew not where, at the dead of the night, approached by sounds of almost unearthly solemnity and mournfulness, his heart beat fearfully fast, and his eyes began to wander as he looked with momentary expectation of some equally strange appearance down the narrow vaulted passage through which a half-drawn curtain gave the view of a heavy door at the farther end. Beyond, there seemed to be a large apartment: for the sounds were now reverberated as from an arched roof, as the chanters, he thought, entered from the distance. Shafts of light now streamed through the crevices of the door, and soon after a gentle push from some one in passing, opened it far enough partially to disclose the scene without.

Fitz Thomas beheld a portion of the interior of a church, the richness and splendour of which struck him with no less admiration than surprise. He could not see the altar; but a silver censer swinging across the foreground of that part of the edifice which came within the scope of his eye, showed that it was the scene of some solemn religious ceremony. Presently a bier was borne past on the shoulders of wildly attired men. Monks followed with a multitude of tapers. Then came female mourners with dishevelled hair, singing the dirge. It died away at length, and in its place single voices were heard alternately chanting what seemed to Fitz Thomas, from the few words that he occasionally caught, to be the Latin service of the dead. This was succeeded by a voice more animated, as of one pronouncing a funeral oration; but the language was unknown to the listener.

The emotions of the speaker were, however, so strongly expressed, that the character of the mingled lament and panegyric, with all its passionate appeals and tender eulogiums, could not be mistaken. When this had ceased, there was a stir among those without, and a path seemed to be opened down the nave of the church for the approach of some one of superior rank.

At the same moment, the door, through which the scene had been till now but partially visible, swung back as the throng pressed to the wall, and gave to the view of Fitz Thomas the whole eastern end of the choir, with its high altar glittering over the heads of the people in the light of innumerable tapers. On a raised platform, immediately in front lay the corpse of a young man, the rigid white features painfully distinct against the shadow of the cornice above. Ecclesiastics stood round in tissued vestments that flashed dazzlingly in the light at every motion of the wearers: the crowd beneath kept an awful silence, broken only by occasional sobs from the females. The path now closed behind the advancing procession. The persons composing it were concealed by the intervening crowd; but when they ascended the steps leading from the base of the platform, Fitz Thomas beheld a young and lovely girl supported by two sisters of a religious order, kneel down by the side of the corpse, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, while her lips moved in silent prayer; and a hush, like that of the grave, fell on the spectators. At length she rose, kissed the cold lips of the dead man, and in a voice sweeter by far than any he had yet heard, uttered a few words so tenderly sorrowful, that none present could refrain from tears and lamentation. Fitz Thomas felt his breast thrilled with the contagion, and would also have wept, but no tears would moisten his burning eyes. In vain he tried to

dispel the choking sensation that was rising about his heart. His eyes grew hotter, his heart fuller; the scene rose and fell, flickered and whirled before him. The corpse seemed moving over the heads of the people; the lady's face came near him; bent over him; frowned upon him; her words fell on his ears in altered and terrible tones—he groaned in the anguish of despair and pain, and thenceforth beheld nothing but shifting scenes and monstrous phantoms through three long days and nights of delirious fever.

The recovery of Fitz Thomas was slow and doubtful; he wanted not, however, for assiduous and affectionate attendance. The hermit of Tubberbawn visited him daily, ascertained his wants, instructed him in the Irish language, or read for his entertainment from the voluminous lives of saints and martyrs with which the Priory abounded. From him Fitz Thomas learned that he was in the hospital of Killeshin, in O'More's country, and that the sight he had witnessed in the commencement of his fever was the funeral of Sir Ever Oge, the son of his captor, who was interred in the chancel of the adjoining chapel. He learned also that O'Nolan was still absent in the wars against the English of Kildare, but that he himself, so soon as he was able to travel, was, by the pious generosity of that Chief, at liberty to return to his own people, free of ransom, if he preferred that course to remaining among his present friends. Who the lady was whose face and voice were still so fresh in his remembrance he did not ask; for from what he had incidentally heard from Lysagh Moyle, he was satisfied she could be no other than the sister of Ever Oge, and he already cherished the imagination that he might yet be as deeply indebted to her as he already was to her father. In pondering such fancies, he had a motive which will hereafter appear.

Time at length restored his health so far that he was permitted to leave his sick chamber. On coming out he found himself, to his increased astonishment, among such marks of civilization and security as he had not supposed any part of the country, save that inhabited by the English, to contain. The arched doorway, by which he sought the open air, was a work of elegance and art, such as he had never seen surpassed. Delicate, intricate, grotesque and elaborate, its clustered columns, rich friezes, and antique inscriptions, proclaimed a long cultivated knowledge of the arts. A slender round tower rising to twice the elevation of the loftiest buildings, shot up into the blue sky before him, like the only remaining column of some gigantic portal. On his left, among the trees, a castle stood on the green eminence, and down upon his right, between him and a hidden rivulet, the noise of which rose from a neighbouring copse of dwarf oak and hazel, stretched a wilderness of grey tombs and sculptured crosses, some of them full four times the height of a man, and covered with carvings richer than he had ever seen on similar monuments before.

His first walk was to the well of the patron saint, a fair fountain flowing from the green slope of the stream's further bank. Close by, there was a romantic hollow, overhung by pendant rocks and luxuriant wild rose bushes. Here, the brook falling in a tiny cascade from its blue channel of slate, gushed with a pleasing murmur through trailing festoons of briars and ground ivy, and dimpled into a shallow pool that discharged its waters by a narrow outlet, overarched with the laden branches of the mountain ash, and the thick cover of the sloe thorn. Into this sweet recess Fitz Thomas penetrated on the first day of his enlargement, and hither he returned day after day, as he recovered, to enjoy the coolness of the shadows and

the melody of the falling water. It was the fourth day of his convalescence, and he wandered forth alone to his accustomed seat, under the secluded ledge of rock and waving bramble. To gain the fairy spot it was necessary to cross the stream above, and thence, following the course of the water, to return upon its sylvan den by the channel from beneath.

As Fitz Thomas hastened to his favourite haunt, he was startled to hear a voice singing in low cadence a dirge of his own country! The tears gushed to his eyes, and his heart beat tumultuously, as he hurried down the briary bank and along the stony channel, to see what messenger from that other world was awaiting him. He gained the spot: there by the water side sat the lady of the chapel, weeping as she sang, alone, and beautiful as a spirit.

"Oh, Heaven!" cried he, as he beheld her rise pale and agitated at his approach, "do I hear the voice of an English lady, or have my ears deceived me, and do I now intrude upon the presence of one to whom I cannot justify my rudeness?"

The lady stood for a moment trembling as she gazed upon the intruder, but as he spoke she recovered from her alarm, and said in English, "I am not a Saxon although I can speak the language of my nation's enemies."

"Lady," said Fitz Thomas, "blame me not that I did the duty of a subject by my own Sovereign: I fought not to injure you, but to serve him."

"Noble Sir," she replied, "I blame thee not; and if I guess aright in supposing thee to be the young knight whose life my father hath spared, I can well believe thou wilt not abuse that generosity by drawing thy sword again against our race."

"Alas," replied Fitz Thomas, "when I last drew my sword, I never hoped to have bared it again."

"Yet I have heard," said the lady, "that thou didst do battle against our people, valiantly it is true, but more unrelentingly than duty could demand of any soldier not spirited on by other motive—hatred, or revenge, or the thirst of blood."

"Lady," said Fitz Thomas, "hear me and I will justify myself. I thirst not for the blood of God's meanest creature; I would to heaven that all mankind did love one another but half so dearly as I love the humblest flower they trample on. I fought, neither from cruelty nor from hard-heartedness—I fought from despair! I courted death because I abhorred the life I was destined to live. I smiled upon your father's steel when I thought it raised to release me from a tyranny that would make me miserable for life, and break the heart of one whom, if I cannot love, I would rather die than injure. Lady, I entreat you to hear me, for you have stung me to the soul with your reproaches. I am the nephew and ward of the Earl of March; he would force me to wed one that I cannot love. Vast possessions in England depend upon this union: if it take not place, they go to others; if he can force me into it the greater portion falls to himself. I'm but nineteen, and for the next two years his power over me is absolute. I have already endured such tyranny as I blush to tell of; do you wonder that I was weary of my life?"

"Was there no law to appeal to? hadst thou no means of escape?" inquired the lady.

"None," replied Fitz Thomas; "the eastern sultan practices not more unmitigated tyranny on the lowest of his slaves, than does the feudal baron over his ward. I have neither father nor mother nor protector to apply to. I have been watched and guarded like a felon, lest I

should throw myself at the feet of the King when in England; but here I have no redress, unless I should go as a supplicant to my proud kinsmen of Desmond, who disclaimed and dishonoured my father for marrying as he did, the daughter of O'Maley, and I would rather die than insult the memory of my mother!"

"And was thy mother, then, a Scot?" said the fair Irishwoman, her eyes beaming with an interest hitherto unexpressed.

"A true Scot, lady, of the best blood of Connaught," cried Fitz Thomas; "and but that I was born upon the seas, and educated in England, I should myself be half an Irishman."

"I also was educated among the English of Dublin," said the lady, "yet I am not the less an Irishwoman on that account: their language I use for my pleasure; it is not my pleasure to use their government or laws." Her countenance kindled as she spoke, and Fitz Thomas thought he had never before seen any being so nobly beautiful.

"Would to heaven," he exclaimed, "that these dissensions which keep us from knowing one another were at an end! Ah, lady, if instead of waging a vain war against the king of England, you would abide by the surrender of the realm made by your ancestors and confirmed by the church, what a happy people might the Irish be! We should hear no more of intestine feuds, of barbarous manners, of princes murdered by their usurping successors, or of any of these disgraces to a nation, which the people of England now allege against this country, as an excuse for whatever rapacity or oppression they may choose to practise upon its ill-fated inhabitants."

The lady's eyes flashed an insufferable light of indigna-

tion on the reddening and downcast countenance of Fitz Thomas; he felt under her glance ere he had finished his sentence, the injustice of much that he had said; yet he could scarcely believe that the sentiments, which he had been habituated to hear from the wisest of his youth's companions or advisers, were erroneous.

"Thou a son of O'Maley!" continued the lady with warmth—"thou half an Irishman! Oh, they have done foul wrong to my lost Ever, to say that thou wert like him! In form, in feature, I behold the semblance of my noble brother; but never did his countenance glow as thine, save with virtuous anger against wrong or dishonesty. I am but a simple maiden, unread in the annals of other nations, and I cannot appeal, as the learned do, to your own histories. I would I were an ollamh or a bard, to make thee blush for thy country's disfigurements, before thou didst arraign these blemishes in mine. I can only bear witness with my tears to the indignation with which my heart is burning when I hear these specious sophistries of sordid, rapacious men, blindly repeated by one, who himself groans under the oppression of a Saxon tyranny, so hateful, that death itself would, he confesses, be a happy alternative! Oh, Sir, these unjust reproaches have made me forget myself; have made me a truant to my grief, and I fear, alas, to my modesty. I have been here too long—I came to mourn in secret, and I have spent my time in idle, if not unbecoming converse with a stranger—but the spirit of my brother will forgive me; in the cause for which he would have laid down his life, he can pardon his sister if she has laid aside for a moment the restraints of her education."

So speaking the Lady Una rose from her seat, and with a courteous gesture of farewell, left him, and ere he could find language to entreat her stay, had disappeared

round the angle of the rock. Fitz Thomas stood like a man dazzled by lightning. "She is a noble being!" was his first exclamation; "she is a noble and lovely being! Surely I cannot have offended her! I fear—I fear—I have: nay, she cannot but be offended—she certainly left me in displeasure. Yet why should she expect other sentiments than those I uttered, from me, whom she knows to be an Englishman? Ah! but she has heard from me that my mother was of her own country, and that my uncle's tyranny has estranged me from his nation and its laws. What could she have meant; for surely she would not have spoken as she did without some motive? I would I could believe that her warmth implies—I am a fool—she could have had no interest in me—I must be raving from my fever! Still, would she, could she—knowing as she does, my captivity, my obligation to her father's charity—utterly dependent as I am on the mercy of her people—knowing too, that I am an orphan and without friend or kinsman, could she, with such animation, upbraid me merely for the purpose of increasing my wretchedness? She must be generous. She could not have done so. She *has* an interest in the poor captive! My heart burns to do something worthy in her eyes—but against whom? What, could I draw my sword against my own countrymen? Why should I hesitate? They are no countrymen of mine! I have no country! Would to heaven that I could but forget my oppressors and make my mother's land my country? Can it be possible that this was in her thoughts when her eye kindled so beautifully at my mother's name. Alas! what would she care for me if I did become an apostate? No; there were no apostacy in that: I am Irish by blood on both sides; and, by Heaven, since I have seen that enchanting maiden, I feel that my tongue alone is

English, and that my whole heart is already devoted to her and to her nation! I care not for land or honour: let them attain and confiscate! I shall, at least, hear no more threats, no more tyrannical commands in that accursed household—but what would I say? She scorns me, and I desperately dream of happiness that I can never hope for." He returned with double bewilderment to the Priory, and spent the remainder of the day in his chamber.

Meanwhile the lady Una could not but think of her strange interview with the young Englishman. Her indignation had soon given way to self-reproach for her severity, and fear lest she might seem to have exceeded the bounds of propriety, in conversing so long with a total stranger in a place so secluded; but her great cause of uneasiness was the apprehension that Fitz Thomas might interpret her singing the English ditty as an invitation to that unexpected interview. At every recurrence of this fancy her face was covered with blushes, and she could have wept for vexation. Yet on the whole, the thoughts that predominated were pleasing. However she had condemned the unprovoked bravery of Fitz Thomas, she could not think of so young a warrior, and yet so valiant, without admiration: but when she remembered the cause he had assigned for that desperate exhibition of courage, her admiration was mingled with pity and respect for a heart so ingenuous. Then, he had exhibited a gentleness of disposition that claimed her sympathy, as much as his valour challenged her respect; and the conscious condemnation of his fine features as she had left him, confused and subdued before her eloquence, gratified an innocent pride of influence, which she had not hitherto been conscious of possessing.

All these considerations arose involuntarily, nay, some-

times obstinately against her will, in the midst of other thoughts to which she strenuously tried to turn her mind. A month had hardly elapsed since her beloved brother had been consigned to the grave; her father was still abroad in the wars of Kildare; grief and anxiety seemed to be her duties; but in spite of her best endeavours, imagination could not be prevented from recurring to the amiable regrets and pleasing speculations connected with the gallant young Englishman. Finding that her whole thoughts were running contrary to the course which she conceived she ought to pursue, she was meditating a disclosure of her interview to her aunt, the abbess, when news arrived from the army that for a time banished all thoughts, save anxiety for her father's safety.

The Irish forces had been defeated in Kildare, and driven into the heart of Catherlogh. O'Nolan had made a stand in the castle commanding Leighlin Bridge, where he every day expected to be besieged by the Earl of March, at the head of his victorious army; while Mac Murrough, falling back on the Leinster mountains, was only protected by the swamps and forests between Raduff and Clonegall. In the midst of her distress the lady Una was sought by a brother from the priory.

"Trouble never comes single, Bantierna," said he; "Lysagh Moyle, the hermit of Tubberbawn, hath been found on his knees, in the oratory, stone dead; and here is none to interpret the letter which O'Nolan hath sent to this stranger youth. We know not what to do, as the commands of the chief are, to communicate his message without delay, unless thou, lady, wilt act as thy noble father's interpreter. We have tried the Saxon both with Latin and Hebrew, but he understands these no more than our own Gaelic. Shall I bring him before thee, Bantierna?"

Una's colour came and went as she consented; but as her agitation might have arisen from her father's danger, or from the death of an aged adherent, no one attributed it to the expected interview with Fitz Thomas. He was introduced. The abbess and the brother of the order were present. The embarrassment of Fitz Thomas and O'Nolan's daughter was quite evident during the interview.

"Noble Sir," said Una, when he was seated, but without raising her eyes from the ground, "in the absence of any other understanding thy language—for thy aged friend, alas! is no more—I must be the interpreter of a letter addressed to thee by my father. It has pleased God to prosper the arms of thy friends. They are now about to lay siege to the only stronghold remaining to us on the other bank of the Barrow. O'Nolan thus writes to you from that castle." She then translated as follows from the Irish of her father's letter:—

"O'Nolan, chief of Slieumargie, to the Saxon gentleman captured in the skirmish near Tubberbawn, health. Be it known to thee, valiant Sir, that success has attended the arms of thy countrymen and their allies. Thou wilt rejoice at this; but it is to me a cause of grief. My house of Killeskin is threatened with an early attack by their conquering forces. I am pent up here, so that I cannot stir out to defend my own hearth or the graves of my people. If thou wouldst do me a service, remain, I pray thee, and moderate the violence of thy great kinsman's soldiers, so that my children's tombs may remain undisturbed. I rejoice to know of thy returning health, which if thou wouldst rather enjoy among thine own people, I require not thy stay. Do as thy will prompts thee in this regard; I shall not the less abide by my first purpose towards thee: therefore, if thou wouldst depart at any

time, let these presents be thy warrant. Given from the castle at Leighlin Bridge, this ——— 1398, by me,

“O’NOLAN.”

Nothing but the reflection, that when she had last addressed Fitz Thomas, it was in words and accents that would make any appeal to his compassion incompatible with the dignity she ought to sustain, could have prevented Una Ni Nolan from giving way to tears as she read this letter. As it was, her voice was tremulous with emotion, and her beautiful face alternately crimson red and the colour of the lily. Fitz Thomas sat at first uncertain and abashed before the grave severity of the ecclesiastics, and the offended feelings, as he doubtfully imagined, of the fair interpreter: but when at length he perceived the object of O’Nolan’s letter, his diffidence vanished before the conscious sincerity of his good-will. He leaped to his feet and ardently exclaimed that he would shed the last drop of his blood in the defence of her father’s house against all adversaries.

“Nay, noble Sir,” Una replied, recovering her self-possession as she found herself in the less difficult position of one deprecating instead of beseeching aid, “we would not have thee peril either thy life or thy allegiance in our quarrel. If our own people cannot hold this tower against the Saxon, we but ask thy humane interest with the victor that the conquest shall be as bloodless as the generosity of thy people can permit.”

“Lady,” cried Fitz Thomas, “do not afflict me by a scorn which I no longer deserve. I have no friends—I have no country; suffer me only to be thy friend, and thy country shall be mine! My heart has reproached me ever since I uttered that unworthy, but inconsiderate calumny of thy nation. Thy words have wrung my soul with shame and remorse. I stand here to offer thee the service

of my arm, if thou wilt but receive me as thy servant. Use me—command me: fighting in the cause of justice, in the defence of innocence and beauty, I fear no difficulty, I shrink from no danger! I am no longer but half an Irishman: one look from thee, and I cast away, for ever, this badge of thine and my oppressors!”

So saying, he tore away the red cross embroidered on his surcoat, and kneeling with the enthusiasm of a worshipper, laid the symbol of his sacrificed allegiance at her feet.

“Ever, my brother, thou art not dead!” cried Una, looking up, whilst her eyes streamed with tears no longer suppressed: but the abbess advancing, prevented further acknowledgment of her approbation, by demanding why she saw a man kneeling at the feet of her niece with all the fervour of a lover before his mistress?

“Rise, rise, noble Fitz Thomas,” said Una; “my kinswoman considers this indecorous. Dear mother,” she continued, turning and addressing the scandalized abbess in her native tongue; “dear lady, the noble gentleman is but swearing his allegiance to his mother’s country; he loves the liberty of Ireland too well to suffer any other object to share his devotion.”

“If the liberties of Ireland reside in forward maidens’ eyes, he will, doubtless, prove an ardent patriot,” replied the abbess with considerable severity of tone. “Meantime, inform him that he may retire.”

“Noble Sir,” said Una, blushing deeply, “we have offended the lady abbess: leave us now; but go not without the thanks and approbation of—all who love the cause thou hast so generously espoused.”

“Have I, then, thy forgiveness, lady Una?” said Fitz Thomas,

“Yes, yes,” she replied; “I ought never to have blamed

thee; I ought rather to ask forgiveness from thee for my unjust reproaches."

"Dear lady," cried the delighted youth, "for such a moment as this I would barter the best year of my life, and deem myself happy in the exchange!"

"What says he now?" demanded the abbess.

"That he would rather serve us than the English," replied Una, somewhat confused.

"He uses many words for so simple a phrase," observed the abbess.

"The Saxon language is less expressive than ours," replied Una.

"True, true," assented the propitiated lady; "the Irish is, indeed, the most perfect, as well as the most ancient language in the world. The dialect of these strangers seems truly a most harsh and incondite jargon. I pray thee, soil not thy lips with further use of it, but let the youth depart."

Fitz Thomas accordingly retired, but with a step so exulting, that one who had seen him enter, could hardly have believed him to be the same man. The Irish he had acquired was put in immediate requisition, and the monk who had so anxiously sought an interpreter for O'Nolan's letter was amazed to find the unsuspected progress of the ignorant Saxon.

The clansmen were summoned—the defences inspected—and Fitz Thomas's assumption of the mantle and barrad won the hearts of all whose admiration had already been captivated by the fame of his valour. "*Tha me Gael*," was his passport to the confidence of young and old. "He says he is an Irishman! we will fight for him to the last gasp! *Gerralt aboo!* he is a kinsman of Desmond; he is the image of Sir Ever. *Farrah, farrah!* gather down to the bawn, one and all, till we repair the barricade and clear the foss and barbican."

Such were the cries with which Fitz Thomas's tumultuous allies thronged about Rory Buy's little band of galloglasses, the only disciplined body left in Killeskin, and at whose head he had, by general consent, placed himself. Young as he was, he had already served a campaign in the French wars, and knew enough of military affairs to direct the operations of those employed in fortifying the place, by example at least, if not always by intelligible precept.

The enthusiasm of the people was boundless; the ecclesiastics themselves prepared to barricade their sacred buildings. The valuables of the priory were transferred to the round-tower, which, being fire-proof, made the safest treasury. Every day brought fresh auxiliaries from the country, and at the end of the first week from the time of his declaring himself an Irishman, Fitz Thomas found himself with Rory Buy, at the head of a sufficient force, to hold the castle against any ordinary assault. The effects of his fever were gone; its traces were hardly to be observed. Every day brought an accession of bodily vigour, of influence over the people with whose language he had become hourly more familiar, and of enthusiastic devotion to the fair maiden whose smiles animated all his projects and rewarded all his toils. In the hurry of warlike preparation, among the tramp of marching men, the clang of the armourer's hammers, the strokes of the barricaders' axes, and the ceaseless clamour of kerns and horseboys, there was little time or opportunity to talk of love. Approving glances and kind words of encouragement were not, however, wanting. Even the lady abbess was won to occasional smiles.

Time flew by, and the daily intelligence that reached them was, that the Leighlin Bridge was closer and closer invested. Fitz Thomas now meditated throwing succour

into the besieged town, and a chosen band was selected for the contemplated service. On the evening before their intended march, on his return from collecting supplies for the relief of the besieged garrison, our hero found the court-yard of Killeshin a scene of such confusion and lamentation as it had not exhibited since the day of Sir Ever Oge's death. News had arrived of the fall of Leighlin Castle—the garrison had been put to the sword: O'Nolan was reported to be slain. The army of the Earl of March was in Kilkenny, ravaging the west bank of the river, and in full march upon Kavanagh's country by the fords of Graig-na-managh. No one had yet ventured to communicate the dreadful tidings to their chieftain's child. Far from being infected with the general consternation, Fitz Thomas's spirit rose with his danger. He ordered the clamouring soldiers to their posts, sent out the scouts, placed the guards, and committing the charge of the watch to Rory Buy, entered the great hall of the keep with the air of a man conscious of his own resources, and determined to use them to the utmost. He met Una hastening from her chamber to inquire the cause of the unusual tumult.

"Lady," said he, taking her by the hand, "canst thou confide in me?"

"I were ungrateful and senseless not to do so," she replied; "but tell me, I beseech thee, what means this alarm?"

"If I have merited thy confidence or regard, come with me," said Fitz Thomas. He opened a side door and led her out on a secluded spot of the platform. "Una," he began, "success still attends the arms of my uncle."

"Leighlin is fallen, and my father slain!—this is what thou wouldst tell me," she said; "I know this: my heart told it to me when I heard thy voice." She clasped her

hands, and pressed them to her bosom, while a cold shudder ran through her frame, but no tears came to her relief.

"Una," again said Fitz Thomas, "when I tore the English ensign from my breast, it was for love of thee I did it."

"Oh, if thou dost love me, return to thy allegiance!" she cried; "enough has been lost already:—father, brother, all gone! oh! add not thou also thy life to the sacrifice!—for me, there is nothing left for me but to die! Mother, dearest mother, I shall soon again rest on thy bosom where sorrow shall reach me never more! Open your arms, Grace Bawn, and little Nora, your sister will not be long away from you! Oh, my friend, how bitterly I now reproach myself for enlisting thee in this disastrous cause! Yet it is not too late: fly, save thyself, shun us—there is death in our alliance! Oh save thyself, and leave me to my fate, for now that all are gone before me, I would rather die than live!"

"And canst thou believe that I ever loved thee, Una, when thou wouldst have me desert thee in this extremity?" cried Fitz Thomas.

"Love me not, love me not!" she exclaimed, "all who ever loved me are departed! father, mother, brother—not one left—and I—alas, I would not survive thee also!"

"Then tell me not to leave thee Una," cried Fitz Thomas, "for without thee I care not how soon I quit a world that would then be to me a desert. Thou hast neither father nor brother; but I will cherish and protect thee while life lasts! I take the heaven above me to witness that I will be constant to thee and to thy father's people, come what may. Nay, dearest, thou didst but try my constancy! Oh, then, reward the truth thou hast

proved:—let father Raymond join our hands to-night, and then, bring the morrow what it may, we shall live or die together!”

Una shrank with natural repugnance from such a proposal on the first day of her mourning for a parent; but ere Fitz Thomas left her side she had plighted to him her troth, and the triumphant lover returned to his warlike labours with a light heart and cheerful countenance. Una was now his own. They might be forced to fly from Killeshin, but the life of a hunter in the woods of Ofaly seemed sweeter with her for a companion, than that of a baron of England in his castle with another. Una's situation could not be made worse by marrying him: it might be bettered. Thoughts of his approaching happiness deprived him of sleep; or, if a light slumber did weigh down his eyelids for a moment, it was but to exhibit visions of delight and beauty.

He started from such a dream of bliss, and seized his sword, aroused by the sound of a knocking at the gates. Except the sentinels, he was the first upon the spot. A messenger spent and breathless presented to him a letter — “for the Saxon gentleman.” By the light of a torch Fitz Thomas tore open the paper, and recognised the writing of the Earl of March, his hated guardian, and now his enemy. The letter ran thus:—

“DEAR KINSMAN,—By a strange chance it hath been made known to me that thou art still alive; whereat I rejoice heartily. Among the rebels captured by the King's Majesty's troops, at the pass of Leighlin Bridge, is the arch traitor O'Nolan. It was observed of him that he rode that grey charger I had bestowed on thee the morning of the passage of arms, wherein thou wert lost sight of. Being questioned touching the same, he maketh answer that thou art at Killeshin. Moved with

an earnest desire to release thee out of the hands of these savage people, I have consented to delay the execution of the aforesaid traitor until Friday at noon, when, if his rebellious adherents shall not have delivered thee up to my lieutenant, Sir John De Ryddel, at the church of Ullard (where the said traitor lies ready to be exchanged on thy behalf), he shall hang from their belfry as a warning to all presumptuous scornors of the Royal Majesty. Herein I send thee a letter of safe-conduct for those who may accompany thee; but I will not permit a greater number than ten to pass my out-posts under that warrant. God speed thee, shortly, dear kinsman, to thy loving friends. I commend me heartily to thee, and so bid thee for a short while (I trust) adieu. MARCH and ULSTER.

“Given from our camp, at the abbey of Graig-na-managh, this evening of Wednesday, — 1398. *Postscriptum.* I have singed the beards of the pestilent Cistercian friars, who sheltered the traitor Mac Murrough last spring.”

Those who stood near Fitz Thomas as he read this missive, might have observed, in his flitting colour and flashing eye, the signs of those contending emotions, which may well be supposed to have agitated his breast; but they were busied in hearing from the messenger, who was one of the prisoners taken at Graig, and spared in order to convey the letter, such vague rumours as he had collected on his way, of the defeat of their friends at Leighlin; among which, however, he had heard nothing of the escape or capture of O'Nolan.

It was already the grey dawn of Friday. Not a moment was to be lost. Fitz Thomas took his resolution with the same promptitude he had exhibited throughout. There was nothing in the Earl's letter to lead him to sup-

pose that his voluntary desertion was as yet known in the English camp. In that case a thousand opportunities of escape would offer themselves; he might be back in Killeshin almost as soon as his released benefactor! To summon Rory Buy, to announce to the astonished and delighted clansman that his chieftain lived, and how he purposed to redeem him, to inscribe his uncle's letter with the words, "I go—but to return," and leave it to be delivered to the Lady Una, after sunrise, was the work of but a few minutes; and, long before the indistinct dawn had changed its grey haze for the streaks of the true day-break, Fitz Thomas and Rory Buy were riding at the head of eight chosen galloglass, through the steep defiles and close passes of Cloghrenan. The delight of the clansmen knew no bounds. They already beheld their chief returning to lead them to his old accustomed victories. They swore eternal gratitude to Fitz Thomas, and made the woods ring with songs and shouts of exultation.

The road they took to avoid the English outposts was circuitous, and it was not until the day was fast verging on the meridian, that they, at length, beheld the grey gables of Ullard between them and the forests of Idrone. The sky had changed, and a continued storm of wind and rain had added to the toil of their journey. The sun could no longer be distinguished, but many an anxious glance was turned towards the dull light that still marked his position among the driving rack, as they spurred up to the English outposts. Rory Buy, with his letter of safe-conduct, rode forward—the token was acknowledged—the bearer retired, and the captive chieftain was brought forth. Sir John de Ryddel himself, armed cap-a-pie, led him forward, and demanded the body of the king's liege, Sir Robert Fitz Thomas. Fitz

Thomas wrung the hand of Rory, as he separated from his little band, and met the knight half-way. De Ryddel extending one hand to grasp that of his recovered companion in arms, severed with the other the cords that bound the wrists of O'Nolan, and the liberated chief sprang forward to his men with a wild cry of joy that was lost in such a shout of congratulation as made the echoes ring from the church walls to the wooded banks of the Barrow. Fitz Thomas would have embraced his preserver—soon, he hoped, to be doubly dear to him in a still more tender relationship—but the welcomes of his clansmen so covered the chief with caresses, that he could not even see the adieu which his young friend wafted to him, as he went. When the first burst of their joy was over, the Irish drew up, for a moment, on the skirt of the wood. O'Nolan seized a dart from one of his attendants, shook it aloft, with a gesture of defiance, and then the whole party broke asunder, and, plunging into the thickets, disappeared.

"Thou takest thy liberation in but sorry part, Sir Robert," said De Ryddel; "methinks, unless thy looks belie thee, thou wouldst rather be riding with yonder kern than with me. Sir Robert, thou art my prisoner!"

Fitz Thomas struck his horse with the spurs, and laid his hand upon his sword; but his reins were seized on either side, and De Ryddel himself, grasping his arm at the wrist, prevented him from drawing his weapon.

"Yield thee, Sir Robert!" he cried sternly; "I arrest thee by command of the Earl, thy uncle. He has heard of thy degeneracy—thy very dress proves all that his informant reported; and, unless thou wouldst be tried for rebellion against the king, I counsel thee to submit to whatever he may think most meet for thee."

"Never! never!" cried Fitz Thomas; the whole

misery of his situation rushing on his heart with unsupportable anguish, and he madly strove to shake himself free of the guards, who now, in spite of his most frantic exertions, disarmed and bound him.

"Sir Robert," said De Ryddel, "I have not done this without sorrow. I pray thee to have patience, and urge not my men to reluctant severity. Marmaduke Cuthbert take thou this knight, thy prisoner, to the abbey at Graig. Confine him in the upper apartment of the great tower, and place two guards upon his person. If the knight consent to forego violence or resistance, give him the freedom of his limbs and honourable attendance, till the return of the Earl out of Kavanagh's country. Immediately on his arrival bring the prisoner before him. Sir Robert, I bid you adieu." So saying the knight left the unhappy youth in the hands of his keepers, who proceeded without delay to execute what they had been commanded.

Fitz Thomas again found himself riding through the woods, but, alas, with prospects and feelings how woe-fully different! The treachery of the Earl stung him to the soul: the thought of Una was distraction—he could have dashed out his brains against the stones! He no longer marked the scenes around him with an eager or observant eye. He was conscious, but no more, of a broad river flowing in the valley—he knew not whence, and cared not whither, and of ruins smoking over his head, as he was borne through the courts of a great building, and lodged at the top of a tower that seemed to have escaped a fire. His guards undid his bands, but he sat motionless gazing on vacancy. He would not eat. The day passed on, and the wretched gentleman, with his head reclining upon his arms, leaned over the solitary oaken table as motionless as a stone.

To any but one overcome with such excessive grief, the scene, visible from the window near to which he sat, would have been well worth his journey to have looked on. The storm had abated. The clouds were clearing off before a western breeze. The sun now hanging on the steep verge of the horizon, shed a red flood of light upon mountain, wood, and river. Under the eye, the Barrow, fordable at that spot, still flowed undiscoloured, save where its more rapidly swollen tributaries were already streaking its clear expanse with their muddy and turbulent waters; but these angry inroads gave fearful presage of what might be expected, when the great river itself should have gathered its slower but more certain increase from the plains of Carlow and Kildare. On the opposite bank, a brown wilderness of oak forests stretched away to the bases of the hills, that rise about the grey step of Stack Dhu, the Stair of Leinster. That gaunt wall of stone closed up the eastern prospect, under a curtain of half-drawn thunder clouds, heavy and imminent. Far as the eye could reach, every object had caught an ominous tinge, reflected from the deep canopy that still overhung the landscape, broken only in that rent through which the sunset so fearfully illumined its lurid concave. Suddenly Fitz Thomas raised his head and listened; then dashed away the moisture from his eyes, and starting up, took his stand at the open window. His ear had caught the familiar sound of war shouts and battle-tumult, faint, it is true, and indistinct, but not to be mistaken. The noise came from the opposite forests. He bent his eye eagerly on the open space fronting the fords, for here, he knew, whatever was approaching would first be visible. Presently half-a-dozen English horsemen dashed out of the skirts of the wood and plunged into the river. They crossed

in haste, formed hurriedly on the bank below the abbey, and then spurred on to meet Sir John de Ryddel, whose company had just arrived from Ullard, and was wheeling into the gateway of the courtyard.

"Do not dismount, Sir John," cried the leader of the new comers; "the Earl will need thy services presently. Draw down thy battle to the ford, and prepare to cover the landing of such a prey as was never driven over the Barrow before."

"Fore God," replied the knight, "I wish that prey may not be the Earl's army; for if some mishap have not befallen, he surely would not take the fords with three thousand footmen such a night as this."

"Tut, Sir John!" said the other, "the fords are passable by a troop of children. Let us but get the prey across before this storm bursts again, and we shall drink a carouse to our friends in Essex, in the abbey hall, ere night."

"What prey has the Earl captured," asked the knight, "that he is so eager to get out of Kavanagh's country in this haste?"

"By Saint George," cried the other, "I had not thought all Ireland contained such booty as we bear out of the fastnesses of Bahana and Tighmolin: gold and silver, Sir John, horses and harness, sheep and beeves—as I live by bread, beeves enough to victual Dublin against a six months' siege."

"But what of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles?" cried Sir John, "what of the Kavanaghs and their galloglass? Have you met nothing but sheep and black cattle in Hi Kinshella?"

"Not till an hour ago," replied the other in a more serious tone; "but, by my faith, if we get not shortly into the open country, I would not answer for the safety

of our post in yonder woods. The Irish kern were already skirmishing with our rere before I left the Earl's vanguard—hark! you may hear their savage war-cries even now." As he spoke the sounds which had already reached the quick ears of Fitz Thomas, became clearly audible from the woods at the foot of Coulyehoune.

"What!" cried Sir John, "the enemy in force upon our rere—a rising river in front—and we stand idly gossiping here! That brawling torrent protects our right flank; the abbey walls cover our rere, and them I leave well guarded. Advance thou thy troop, Master Cosby, into the wood, an arrow flight to the left: see that you let none pass either by the water's edge or the crest of the hill; if pushed by a superior force fall back between the abbey and the river, but on your life leave clear room for the head of the Earl's main battle to form on the bank above the ford." Then giving the word, he led his own division to the river side, while his officers, with the remainder of the troops, proceeded to secure an open esplanade for the operations of the advancing army.

Fitz Thomas now turned his eyes to the forest from whence the cries and tumult were momentarily redoubling. The level sunbeams were flashing on glimpses of arms and armour through the trees; the regular march of a considerable body of cavalry was now heard, and from the dark forest-passes issued the vanguard of the English army, a battalion of men at arms cased in steel and glittering in the yellow light. The sight of their well-trained ranks, as they came down with waving plumes and pennons, flashing breastplates, and a forest of lances quivering and glancing overhead, made Fitz Thomas's heart bound with a martial ardour that for a moment dispelled all recollection of his griefs. "Blessed Saint George!" he exclaimed, "there go a company of spears that a man

might well come ten days' journey to look upon. In what fair order they bear their staves! what gallant array they keep! how easily each sits his heavy war-horse; By Heaven, the sight of their knightly harness is so sweet to my eyes, that I can hardly keep down my tears! Sound a point of war, Sir John De Ryddel, hear you not their silver trumpets and kettle-drums? Ah! long might I live in the woods of Ofaly ere I could see such goodly show among the Irish galloglass! Alas!" he continued, after a pause during which his eyes were suffused with tears he could no longer suppress, "I am false and ungrateful to forget the true hearts that I leave behind me in the wild woods of Slieumargie! what have I to do with their knightly harness or martial music? I am a disgraced man—betrayed and dishonoured—I shall never wear gilt spurs more!"

While he indulged in these bitter reflections, the tumult in the woods was growing louder and nearer at every shout, and at length, with a sound as if a storm were tearing its way through the forest, came rushing, trampling, bellowing, the maddened animals. They burst from every outlet of the wood in dark and impetuous torrents, that seemed to flow from a perpetual source, so innumerable was the multitude of bees and other animals. The leaders, refusing the ford, ran wildly up and down, pawing the ground, and roaring with rage and terror. They were driven back at either side by the men at arms; still they refused to take the water. The rest gathered against these as a stream against its barriers, until the whole open space between the wood and the river was filled with the heaving and reeking mass. The vapour from their fretted sides hung over them like steam above a seething cauldron; while the lowing of the heifers, the piteous bleating of the sheep, the horrible cries of the

swine and bellowing of the bulls, raised such a tumult as drowned both the clamour of the drivers and the din of arms. But the force of man at length prevailed, the sullen leaders gave way before the point of the spear, and the accumulated throng poured down upon the river. The water rose in a broad sheet of foam before their breasts and swelled against the solid mass of their wedged bodies; but long ere the foremost had reached the nearer bank, their order was broken, and the river rushed free through their thinned and scattered numbers; for many had been borne by the violence of the current over the shallows of the ford, and were vainly struggling with the rush of the mountain stream that fell into the deep water below; while others, heading up the river, were swimming wide of the landing place, or could not make good their footing on the higher bank. When the captors perceived their loss, they sent forward a body of cavalry who formed in line across the river, on the lower shallows, and with their spears confined the cattle as they passed to the centre of the ford.

For a full hour the prey continued to pour across the Barrow, and the opposite ground was not yet cleared of the herd. Ten thousand head of cattle had been driven out of Hi Kinshella! But with the prey were now crossing numerous bodies of foot and horse, hardly distinguished from the dark masses beside them in the deepening twilight. The cattle were driven together under the abbey walls, and the troops, as they arrived, were drawn up on the water's edge, at either side of the advancing column. It was now plain that the main army were hotly engaged in defending their position on Tinnehinch; for as the field on that side was abandoned by the departing herds, it was rapidly occupied by horse and foot pressing on to the fords, as if anxious to place the Barrow between them and

their assailants, with as little delay as might be. The river, too, was evidently rising, and each successive party crossed with greater difficulty. It was at this crisis that Fitz Thomas first perceived that the position of Cosby's horse, upon the left of the abbey, was attacked by a force from the hill and woods next Ullard. The first shout of the onset was hardly drowned in the noise of battle, when the river above was suddenly illuminated by floating fires launched from either bank on rafts of rushes and bramble. By their light, he could see in the distance, boats full of galloglass crossing over, and the heads, above the now embrowned waters, of hundreds of kern swimming from the opposite bank. The attack on Cosby's post was redoubled; his men at arms were forced back before an overwhelming multitude of horse and foot. They debated every inch of ground, but in vain; and after a furious resistance were driven in, pell-mell upon the mass of cattle. They threw themselves for safety among the astonished herd, while their assailants, keeping their front unbroken, pushed both men and beasts, with shouts and blows, back upon the river. It was in vain that De Ryddel tried to stem the rush of such a multitude, for the slope of the ground was with the Irish, and the mere weight of their charge was sufficient to bear down any opposition he could offer. Like a gallant soldier, however, he made good his stand upon the spot of level ground below the ford, upon the bank of the stream that had covered that flank of his broken position. Here he was in direct communication with the main army, from which numerous masses of infantry were now detached to his aid. The river seemed bridged by a broad causeway, so fully was the ford occupied by the advancing succours; but the head of the column of cattle was now turned, for the routed throng from before the abbey were pouring back

with irresistible impetuosity on those advancing; and they, checked or repulsed in front, and terrified by the fires now blazing among them, pressed also by the accumulating weight of water, and scrambling for the shallows, bore down against the paralled march of the infantry, whose shouts and imprecations rose fearfully above the loudest of the fray; for they were up to the middle in the river, upon the lowest verge of the shallows, and if thrust from their march, must perish in the deep water and meeting torrent below. This was the purpose of the Irish, and their design took fearful effect. Fitz Thomas beheld the dusk mass that stretched across the river, convulsed for a moment, and writhing like a single being in agony; the centre then bulged, the line wavered, and there rose a cry of despair, from bank to bank, that drowned every other sound, as the whole multitude fetched away like the ruins of a broken bridge, tumbling and flashing in the irresistible waters. For a moment, the river was alive with the rolling bodies of men and cattle, swept over and under one another, or swimming through the driving tumult, shrieking or bellowing as they were again thrust down by other strugglers; but the wreck of violence and plunder was soon swallowed up or hurried out of sight down the darkness, and into the next reach of the river. The cries came fainter and fainter from the distance, and in the silence that succeeded among the awestruck spectators—for no shout of triumph rose from the Irish, as they gazed in breathless wonder on the success of their desperate stratagem—might be heard the bleat of a solitary lamb, as it stood alone upon the bank, up which it had clambered from the side of its drowning mother.

The first man to rouse himself to action, from the astonishment and dread of the moment, was De Ryddel.

He was now cut off from the remnant of the Earl's army, as well as from the abbey; a raging torrent behind, a savage enemy before him. He did not consume his time in unavailing efforts to save the few that still clung round the bank beside him, but shouting "Saint George for England!" charged at the head of his company right through the centre of the Irish, and gained the abbey gate with little loss. Fitz Thomas observed among his troopers, as he entered, a number of the native auxiliaries who had escaped from the fords. Their leader, a man of ferocious aspect, rode next De Ryddel: he was drenched with water, and bore the marks of a desperate struggle for his escape. Scarce had they gained the entrance, when the Irish, flushed with their success, rushed to the assault, and ere the gates could be closed, were at blows hand to hand with the hindmost. A determined fight ensued, close under Fitz Thomas, but, in the dusk twilight he could see nothing distinctly. The Irish auxiliaries fought with the bravery of their nation, but with the perverted hatred of their countrymen for which they have so long been infamous. They were slain almost to a man, for they rode the last of the retreating party, and had to bear the first onset of the pursuers. Fitz Thomas could no longer have observed the course of the contest, had not some indignant brothers of the plundered order, who accompanied the Irish, held lighted torches to give their friends the better chance of avenging them. One of these enraged ecclesiastics mounted a portion of the ruin, still smoking from the fire which had consumed its roof and floors, and, waving a link over his head with furious gestures, encouraged the assailants and denounced the defenders. By this light Fitz Thomas saw that the two foremost warriors among the Irish were O'Nolan himself, and Rory, his

lieutenant of the galloglass. In a moment his determination was taken—to snatch the battle-axe from one of his guards, strike down the other, and make his way to the side of his friends. He turned to carry his purpose into execution; but his guards were gone. They had stolen out while he was absorbed in the interest of the battle, and had fastened the heavy door outside. He struggled to drag it open, but in vain. He ran back to the window: De Ryddel was fighting valiantly in front of his men; but his shield was cut open, and the crest of his helmet shorn away by blows of battle-axes. He was beaten from his saddle the next instant, and slain upon the ground by the knives of the kern. The captain of the Irish auxiliaries took his place and filled it courageously, but in vain. The English were borne down by numbers, forced back, and at last driven to take refuge in the tower. The Irish entered with them, and the fight was renewed in the hall. Fitz Thomas heard the noise of the battle ascend from story to story, as the defenders were successively driven from each post, until at length the blows, shouts, groans and yells of the combatants sounded at his own door. The bolts flew open as from the shock of an engine, and the captain of the auxiliaries was driven in before O'Nolan. The apostate fought with the fury of despair, but he was staggering under the blows of his enemy as he entered.

"Stand back!" cried O'Nolan, fiercely, as his men pressed after him, bearing torches and naked weapons, "Stand back, on your lives! I will strike him dead who interferes!"

"Come on, one and all!" cried his adversary; "this is not the first time I have fought the three best men of your clan."

"Dog of Ossory!" shouted O'Nolan, "remember how

you slew my son in Shrule;" and, at the word, he cleft MacGillpatrick through his headpiece to the eyes, at one blow. Red Rickard fell with clenched teeth, and a grim smile of defiance; and O'Nolan stooping over him, thrust his sword twice through his body.

"Ever, my boy, thou art avenged!" he exclaimed, as he sheathed his weapon. "I have now shed blood enough in thy quarrel; and, if God permit me to return, in safety, to Killeshin, I will end my days in a holier life than I have led since I left it. But, who? what? my generous friend and rescuer!" he exclaimed, as Fitz Thomas stood before him. "Ah, my fair youth, when I made thy life an alms-gift to Saint Bride, I little thought that heaven would repay me so largely by thy hands."

"Noble O'Nolan," cried Fitz Thomas, returning the affectionate embrace of the chief, "I am again released from despair by thee:—my life is still thine as much as when I lay by the margin of Tubberbawn:—I would spend it in the service of my mother's nation:—command me in the cause of Ireland, and I am thy true man till death!"

"Come to my arms," cried O'Nolan "thou shalt be my son in place of him who is gone! Rory Buy, what didst thou say of the clansmen's proceedings, on the rath yester even?"

"May it please your nobleness," replied Rory, "the heads of the clan remaining at Killeshin, resolved on electing Sir Robert the Tierna Oge."

"Ha, Sir Robert, since thou art my Tanist," cried O'Nolan, "thou must want for nothing to make thee a worthy chief of my people when I shall be gone. I grant thee the bonaghts of Shrule and Cool-banagher, and the coyne and livery of one half of Cloghrenan. Is there aught else that a willing mind can urge me to grant, that

thou wouldst have? For, by the bones of Saint Bride, but for thy good service in rescuing me this day, I should have had neither victory nor revenge!" As he spoke he looked with fierce satisfaction on the body of Rickard Roe, still lying before him; but Fitz Thomas, taking his hand, led him aside, and addressed him with low and urgent words, which those around could not hear. After a short conference they advanced to the clansmen, O'Nolan still grasping the hand of the young tanist.

"Mount and ride, my children," said he; "we will await the falling of the floods at Killeshin, and should we have a bridal to cheer us during that delay, we shall but return all the merrier to our friends in Hi Kinshella."

"The bridals and the proclamation of the tanist, I leave for another day," said Turlogh; "nor shall I now relate how Rory Buy kissed the abbess of St. Canice's, by mistake, for a daughter of Cormac O'Connor's nor all the penance he had to perform for that impiety; for it is now time to leave off, and go to rest."

"I would but ask," said Henry, "how Froissart, the French gentleman, relates that tale."

"He tells a somewhat different story I confess," said Turlogh, "but, as he was never in the Sacred Island, and speaks marvellously ill of the Irish, I think the Killeshin monk's must be the truer, as it is, beyond question, the pleasanter, relation of the two."

"I care not for calumnies!" cried Art, "'tis well known they must either be such, or cannot have been intended to apply to us."

"Turlogh," said Hugh Roe, "knowest thou how Mortimer got out of Hi Kinshella, after that gallant check at Graig-na-managh?"

"I have not heard," said the bard, "nor do I know

that the Earl of March was ever there. We, story-tellers, stop not at such niceties where the plot needs thickening."

"And dost thou tell me," cried Hugh, "that the English were never swept off the fords by their own plundered bullocks?"

"A hard fight was fought at the ford of Kells in Kildare, during that expedition of the Earl of March," replied Turlogh; "but I know not of any truth in the story of the battle of the ford at Graig."

"The more the pity, by Saint Columb Kill," cried Hugh.

"It reminds me of the battle between our houses," said Henry, "when my father, Shane, lost his army by the return of the tide, at Farsad Swilly."

"Ay," cried Art, "and when the sea and the O'Donnells had left scarce a hundred men of my nation, the English of Derry attacked us on our return. They stood but to have ten men slain, yet now their histories maintain that it was by the valour of one captain—Merryman, I think, was his name—who commanded the sally, that the flower of Tyrone were cut to pieces."

"The English historians are an ignorant race," replied Hugh; "but we need not revive our family feuds to prove what hath never been doubted."

"But is it possible, Turlogh," questioned Henry, "that he who made the tale could have invented that treachery in the Earl of March?"

"I would be slow to defame the memory of the Earl upon such authority," replied Turlogh.

"Then, if I were a king," said Henry, "I would make a law that no bard should be allowed to tell anything but the truth."

"Alas, my prince," replied Turlogh, "if that were the case, we should now have had a melancholy night's entertainment."