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ELLEN DUNCAN.

BY DENIS O'DONOVUE.

There are some griefs so deep and overwhelming, that even the best exertions of friendship and sympathy are unequal to the task of soothing or dispelling them. Such was the grief of Ellen Duncan, who was silently weeping in her lone cottage, on the borders of Clare—a county at that time in a frightful state of anarchy and confusion. Owen Duncan, her husband, at the period about which our tale commences, resided in the cabin where he was born and reared, and to which, as well as a few acres of land adjoining, he had succeeded on the death of his father. They had not been long married, and never were husband and wife more attached. About this time outrages began to be perpetrated; and soon increased fearfully in number. Still Owen and Ellen lived happily, and without fear, as they were too poor for the marauders to dream of getting much booty by robbing. Owen never was particularly thrifty; and as his means were small, was generally embarrassed, or rather somewhat pinched in circumstances. Notwithstanding this, however, he was as happy as a king; and according to his unlettered neighbour's artless praise, "there wasn't a reaver hand, nor an open heart in the wide world—that's it he had it—but he hadn't, an' more was the pity." His entire possessions consisted of the ground we have mentioned, next part of which was so rocky as to be entirely useless—a cow, a couple of pigs, and the out-barn, which consisted of four mud walls covered with thatch, in which was an opening, to let in the daylight an' to let out the smoke." In the interior there was no division, or separate apartment, the one room contained their cooking materials and all other necessities, beside their bed, which was placed close to the fire, and of course, nearly under the opening in the roof. If any one spoke to Owen about the chances of rain coming down to where they slept, his universal answer was "shure we're neither shugar nor salt, any how; an' a drop or rain or a thrille of wind, was never known to do any body harm—barra't it bron't the typhus, bud God's good, an' orders all for the best." Owen had been brought up in this way, and so as he could live by his labour, he never thought of needless luxuries; and Ellen, seeing him contented, was so herself.

For some months previous to the time of which we write, Owen's affairs had been gradually getting worse and worse; and it was with no pleasing anticipations that he looked forward to his approaching rent day. His uneasiness he studiously kept a secret from his wife, and worked away seemingly, with as much cheerfulness as ever, hoping for better days, and a trust in Providence! However, when within a week of the time that he expected a call from the rent, he found that with all his industry he had been only able to muster five and twenty shillins, and his rent was above five pounds. So, aft' a good deal of painful deliberation, he thought of selling his single cow, thinking that by redoubled exertion he might aft' a while be enabled to repurchase her; and feeling that before the cow was sold was really the time to make the exertion. A circumstance that greatly dampened his ardour in this design was the idea of his wife's not acquiescing in it; and one evening, as they sat together by the light of the wood and turf fire, he thus opened his mind—

"Ellen, ashore, it's myself that's sorry I haven't a fine large cabin, an' a power of money, to make you happi' an' comfortable than you are."

"Owen," she interrupted, "don't you know I'm very happy? an' didn't I often tell you, that it was the will of Providence that we shud be poor? so it's sinfu' to be wishing for riches."

"But, Ellen a cusha, it's growin' worse-wid us every day; an' I'm afard the trouble is goin' to come on you. You know how hard the master's new agit is—how he sou'd Paddy Murphy's cow, an' tinned him out, b'kase he couldn't pay his rent; an' I'm

afard I'll have to sell 'Black Bess,' to provide for his doin' the same wid us."

"Well, Owen agra, we mustn't murmur for our distresses, so do whatever you think right—times won't be always as they are now."

"But, Ellen," said he, "you're forgettin' how you'll miss the drop of milk, an' the bit of fresh butter, for whin we part wid the poor baste, you won't have even thin to comfort you."

"Indeed, an iv I do miss thin, Owen," she answered, "shure it's no matter, considerin' the bein' turned out ov one's home into the world. Remember the ould saine' ov an' out two evils always chuse the last; ov an' so do best, jst do whatever you think is for the best."

Aft' this conversation, it was agreed on by both that Owen should set out the next day but one for the town, to try and dispose of the "cow, the crathur;" and although poverty had begun to grind them a little, still they had enough to eat, and slept tranquilly. However it so happened, that the very morning on which he had appointed to set out, Black Bess was seized for a long arrears of tax that had not been either asked or paid there for some time, and driven off, with many others belonging to his neighbours, to be sold. Now you must know, good reader, that there is a feeling interwoven, as it were, in the Irish nature, that will doggedly resist any thing that it conceives in the slightest or most remote degree oppressive or unjust; and that feeling then completely usurped all others in Owen's mind. He went amongst his friends, and they consoled with one another about their grievances; and there was many a promise exchanged, that they would stand by each other in their future resistance to what they considered an unlawful impost. When the rent day came, by disposing of his two pigs, and by borrowing a little, he was enabled to pay the full amount, and thus protect for some time the fear "ov bein' turned out on the world."

Some days aft'er, the whole county was in a tumult—Daly, "the parthor," was found murdered in the centre of the high road; and there was no clue perceptible by which the perpetrators of the crime could be discovered. The very day before, Owen had borrowed the gamekeeper's gun, to go, as he said, to a wild mountain; part of the country to shoot hares, and from this circumstance, and his not having returned the day aft'er, a strong feeling of suspicion against him was on the minds of most. In fact, on the very evening that we have represented Ellen sitting in tears, the police had come to the cabin in search of him and their report to the magistrate was that he had absconded. His wife was in a miserable state of mind, and her whole soul was tortured with conflicting emotions. Owen's long absence, as well as his borrowing the gun, seemed to bespeak his guilt; and yet, when she recollected the gentleness of his manner, and his hitherto blameless life, she could not deem him so, no matter how circumstances seemed against him. But then, the harrowing idea that it might be, came in to blast these newly form'd hopes, and her state of suspense was one of deep and acute misery.

She was sitting, as we have said, alone; the fire, that had consisted of two or three soles of turf heaped upon the floor, had almost entirely gone out; the stools and boxes were tossed negligently here and there; and the appearance of the entire apartment was quite different from its usual neat and tidy trim. Her head was bent a little, and her hands were clasped tightly round her knees, while her body was swaying to and fro, as if the agitation of her mind would not allow of its repose. Her eyes were dry, but red from former weeping; and she was occasionally muttering, "No, he can't be guilty—Owen ain't a murder!—It must be an unthruff!" and such like expressions. Gradually as she thus thought aloud, her motions became more wild, and her cheeks were no longer dry, while the light that entered the open door behind her suddenly shaded, she turned round, and raised her tearful eyes to question the in-

truder. She sprang eagerly forward, and hung on his neck, (for it was Owen himself,) while she joyfully exclaimed—

"Oh, heaven be praised, yer come back at last, to give the lie to all the reports, an' to prove yer innocence."

"Ellen my darlin'," he answered, "I know you'd be glad to get me back," and he kissed again and again her burning lips; "but do you do you mane, acusha?—V hat reports do you spake ov, an' ov what am I accus'd?" "Oh, thin, Owen, I'm glad you didn't even hear ov id; an' the polis here sarchin' the house to make you pres'nar. Shure, avick, Bill Daly, the prothor, that sazed poor Black Bess, was murdered the very mornin' you went to shoot the hares; an' on account ov yer borrowin' the gun, an' threatenin' him the day ov the sale, they said it was you that done id; but I gev them all the lie, for I knew you wor innocent. Now, Owen, a hagu, you look tired, sit down, an' I'll get you somethin' to ate. Oeb, bud 'an glad that ye returned safe!"

The overjoyed wife soon heaped fresh turf on the fire, and partly blowing, partly fanning it into a flame, hung a large iron pot over it from a hook firmly fixed in the wall. While these preparations were going forward, Owen laid aside his rough outside coat, and opening to the door, looked out, as if in irresolution.

"Ellen," at length said he, turning suddenly round, "I'm thinkin' that I'd better go to the polis barrack an' surinuhar— or rather, see what they have to say agin me; as I'm an innocent man, I've no dread; an' if I wait till they come an' take me, it'll look as if I was afard."

"Thru' fu' you, agra," she answered; "but it's time enough yit a bit—no one knows ov yer bein' here. You look slaved an' had better rest yerself, an' at a pratee or two. I have no milk ov any own to offer you now, but I'll go an' thr'y an' get a drop from a neighbour."

When Ellen returned with a little wooden boggin full, her husband was sitting warming his hands over the fire; and it was then she recollected that he had not brought back the gun with him; besides, when she cast a glance at his clothes, they were soiled with mud and clay, and torn in many places. But these circumstances did not for a moment operate in her mind against him, for she knew from the very manner of his first question, and the innocence of his exclamation, that the accusations and suspicions were all false. Even though he had not attempted to explain the cause of his protracted absence, she felt conscious that it was not guilt, and forbore to ask any questions about it. It was he first opened the subject, as they sat together over their frugal meal.

(To be continued.)

INCIDENT ON SHIP BOARD.—Incidents, novel and otherwise, are continually occurring on board ship at sea, the recital of which would prove exceedingly interesting to landsmen; from the frequency of their occurrence, however, the captains of vessels deem it scarcely worth while to record them, and therefore, many strange events take place at sea, which never find their way into the newspapers. Those, however, which happened on board the packet ship Burgundy, on her outward passage to Havre, were so manifold and of such a remarkable nature, as to induce the captain to give an account of them to the editor of the N. Y. Star, which we subjoin:

On the day of the ship's sailing, she grounded on Governor's Island in the harbor, and lost two of her anchors, which detained her 24 hours: The passage was exceedingly boisterous, and on the second days out, a young Frenchman, cabin passenger, committed suicide by leaping overboard, without any apparent cause. On the 19th at night, the sea was a dreadful squall, and two large meteors appeared in the rigging, resembling two large bright stars, one on the masthead and the other on the yard arm.—Put the most rare event that occurred in the train of unusual incidents for

the fleet but monotonous passage of a packet ship, was the sudden arrival on board, Jan. 25th, lat. 49 13, and long. 11 47, about 500 miles from Havre, of an immense flock of land birds, which completely covered the deck, and seemed in a half starved and exhausted condition.

The passengers and crew caught over 100 of these, and they consisted chiefly of the nimble little brown sparrow which is even twittering on all the eaves in Europe. Also, there were three beautiful black birds speckled with white spots and ruby colored necks; there was also a solitary snipe. No doubt these favored visitors, wandering about for some new residence in the severe winter which has passed in Europe, were caught in a violent gale and borne unconsciously to the sea, where they vainly sought refuge on the ship's deck, which proved any thing probably, but an ark of safety."

UNITED STATES.

We have New York papers to Thursday evening.—The convention for the selection of an opposition candidate for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, is to be held at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, next December twelfth-month.

Doctor Robert Nelson, late commander-in-chief of the patriots of Lower Canada, was in town last week, on his way to the U. S. Court, for the District of Vermont, to be heard at Windsor on the 21st instant. Doctor Nelson is to be tried at that Court, for alleged violations of the Neutrality Act of the United States.—We understand he has employed Wm. Upham, Esq. of this village, for his counsel in the case.—Montpelier Vt. Watchman.

THE GREAT WESTERN.—The British steam-packet Great Western was spoken by the Philadelphia packet ship Monongahela, on Tuesday last, then 170 miles from Sandy Hook. Being in Philadelphia yester day we went on board that ship and were kindly shown the logbook, from which, and from the officers, we learned that the Great Western was first seen about five o'clock on Tuesday evening. About seven o'clock she passed the Monongahela, and exchanged signals. She made a beautiful appearance and was making great head way, with steam and sails.—She had set, when she passed the Monongahela, fore-top-sail, foresail, fore and main spencer, jib and stay-sail—the wind was light from N. N. W. and Sandy Hook bore W. by N. distance 170 miles.—Com. Adm.

BRITISH QUEEN.—We are informed by Messrs. Wadsworth & Smith of this City, agent of the British and American Steam Navigation Company, that the splendid steam ship British Queen was to be launched on the 12th instant. She will be coppered and nearly ready for sea when launched; after which she will proceed to Glasgow to take in her machinery, and it is expected will leave England in August for this City. This ship is about 500 tons larger than the Great Western.—lb.

UPPER CANADA.

The Queen's Rangers were yesterday reviewed at Osageo Hall, by Sir George Arthur, accompanied by his Staff. The discipline of this fine Regiment whetted and delighted Sir Arthur who was emphatic in his well deserved praise of both officers and men. The celerity and precision of their field movements, were the delight of all beholders; in short they would have been creditable to any European Regiment. One thing in particular caught to be a source of comfort and consolation to us all, which is, that they seem to take to their old daddy's weapon, the bayonet, quite naturally; so we advise brother Jonathan to keep a sharp look out; for as sure as death, if he ever by any mishap finds himself in front of the Queen's Rangers, he will receive a modicum of cold steel, and no mistake.—Their charge with bayonets yesterday was brilliantly executed, and duly accompanied with the irresistible, fatal, death-announcing hurra. The men ought to be grateful to their pi's taking and skilful Officers, and the Officers must be proud of their steady and obedient men. Let them persevere in doing well, and keep it in mind that they may be soon wanted to settle our boundaries.—Toronto Patriot, 11th inst.