

is full of old castles, he travels by day, and digs by night; but he has not yet found his crock of gold."

How well I remembered the evening when, sitting on my friend's knee in the great bow-window of the drawing-room at Barristown, she told me that story! The Castles of Clonmines had flung their shadows on the water, and the evening was as calm and silent as the grave. I remember asking her to send me word when next the old treasure-seeker came to the neighbourhood, that I might see him, only at a little distance; and I also remember her saying, that "he might never come again, for that exposure to all weathers had brought on premature old age, and he seemed ill and worn the last time he was there."

Alas! dear Sally had departed long, long ago to a better world; and I, after residing many years in another land, had, by one of those curiously turned romances of real life that laugh at fiction, encountered the treasure-seeker upon the very spot where, years ago, I knew he loved to linger and explore—the very old man whom my poor friend had supposed too worn and ill to return again! Indeed, I had been so certain of his death, that I had never thought of inquiring about him. I know not how long I might have remained among the ruins, musing over the story I have recorded, and recalling the looks and voice of her who told me many such tales, had not my little busy companion, Daniel Muckleroy, begged "my honour's" pardon, but "would I be pleased to tell him which I liked best—travelling by night or by day, or in rain or sunshine?" This recalled me to a sense of the rapidity with which time had passed, and I became aware that the evening approached. I had hoped the sun would have set over the castles with the red, red glory I had so often witnessed, bestowing his radiant benediction with all his brightness; but no, the clouds were grey and heavy, the whistle of the plover was more frequent than usual, and a moaning came from the not far off ocean—a sound perfectly distinct from the roaring that accompanies the progress of the storm-king, or the loud ripple that beats music to the breeze; it was a *moaning*—those who know the sea understand what I mean—a heaving, as if the mighty waters groaned inwardly at the approach of a tempest.

"The clouds have gathered above our heads, ma'am, and ye haven't noticed them; and there was a *broch* about the moon last night; and early as it is, sorra a crow, the craythur, that hasn't come home; and since ye seemed so *struck*, my lady, with Daddy Whelan, if ye'll just be pleased to step here, you'll see him in his *iliment* intirely."

I walked on to where the boy stood, and I was pleased, when, looking earnestly in my face, he added, "Daddy's of *dacent* people, ma'am; and *sure* you wouldn't laugh at him! He's as innocent as a baby, only touched in the head with the throuble he had onst, and the fancy of a crock o' goold." There was warm feeling round the heart of that wild Irish boy, though he was standing in the skin of his feet.

Roger Whelan was preparing for a stormy night, and the prospect seemed to have imbued the old man with new life; he had fastened his cowl more closely round his head, and was seated on the grey stone my guide had pointed out; his curious staff placed upon his knees, his elbows resting upon it, and his attention divided between the arrangement of a piece of candle in an old lantern, which I had not before perceived, and the

course of the clouds, that were, without any appar wind, careering above our heads. I advanced near but he did not heed me.

"My lady," whispered little Daniel, "he's dug round and round that stone a thousand times, but the neighbours fill up the marks; his brother, Misther Mick has come to live in this county, and likes to keep Daddy, as we call him, near at hand. He would stay in the place if he found his own marks, but go break fresh ground; granny says he's more easily saved than he used to be."

Suddenly a shivering flash of lightning ran amid clouds, and a few drops of rain warned me to shelter under a ruined arch close to the grey stone upon which the treasure-seeker was seated.

"Daddy, sir," said Dan, "come in the shelter; bad for ould bones to get could."

The old man turned his face suddenly towards the smiling child, and holding forth a long arm-bone, which was fastened beneath the shreds to his singular head, and was polished as ivory, he exclaimed, "This do feel the could! it has been stript these hundred years and more. I had dug the whole night, and the thunder howling, and the lightning, not laughing like the weather flash that passed us now, but dancing mad with delight through the heavens and over the earth. It is in Adair I was rooting—rooting—for the crock of gold inside the proud lord's walls, and he thinking none of me could get at his hid treasure. And I saw the handle of the crock, *forenint* me, in the hole, and made a plunge and seized it. I knew it *was* the handle, and I was so wild wid joy, that I forgot myself, shouted, and heard the shout repeated as loud again, some of the *achoes*, and muttered over by others according to their fancy. And I knew I had done wrong spake, but I held fast; and, ah! ah! I pulled, and pulled; but I held fast, and tore this up—this! Do understand it?—the spirit that had owned the goold had power afther I shouted. So he kept his crock goold, but I got his arm-bone! That was my chance; I never can have such a chance except *they*," and he pointed downwards, and spoke in a low tone, "when *they* get *tarryfied* with the thunder; that's my best chance, and I shall have it to-night; if I but a *drame*. Are you sure you had not a drame, lad?" he added, peering at me as he had done before.

I asked him if he remembered his friends at Barristown, for I was anxious to ascertain if his mind wandered on all subjects.

"Ay, well!" he replied, and his voice changed again. "God be good to them!—the warm welcome, the house, the ould Lady Queen of the Castle! she damed for me: and her son—the flower of the garden—and the fair young lady, I brought a white rose from Woodstock, and set it on her grave, though would never try to drame for me! Poor thing, she not believe in drames; but she knows the truth of *now*! It's a quare world, and every thing in it. It is from first to last but a drame, leading by vision to eternity! Sure, in our own short time, the people are gone from Barristown like a drame! and yet *war* in it onst, and so with the money in my crock goold! Sure, afther that, what can ye say agin' drames? Isn't all life a drame? There's another o' lightning! I love to read my drame-book by fire o' lightning! and I love it at sea, the fire and water sporting wild sport together! Ah, thin, it