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SHAWN NA SOGGARTH; OR, THE PRIEST-HUNTER. AN IRISH TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

BY M. ARCHDEACON, ESQ., Author of the Legends of Connaught, &c. CHAPTER XIII.

Arthur and Ellen had not met before since her father's death; and, though their words at meeting now were but few, there was a cordial greeting of hearts. Indeed the tears started to Arthur's eyes and streamed freely from those of the gentle and sensitive girl by whom he was accompanied, to perceive the blighting traces a few days of sorrow and suffering had imprinted on the appearance of the bereaved daughter.

Mr. Gordon's family consisted of his wife, a kind-hearted woman, and an admirable house-keeper, with four children, of whom the senior by some years was Maria, the rest being indeed little more than infants.

Maria had been of a weakly and delicate constitution from childhood, and that delicacy had increased as she verged towards womanhood. She was now entering into her sixteenth year, and was indeed a tender and fragile flower, but a beautiful one withal. Her figure was small and slight, and, though not angular, it yet wanted that mellow roundness which perfects the outline of female symmetry.

The day was, as we before said, sunny; and cloudless it might be called too, as the odd fleecy cloudlets that occasionally flitted across the sun, served rather to beautifully chequer, by their shadows, the blue bosom of the elsewhere sparkling waters than to produce gloom; and there was in the air that tender warmth we prize and enjoy the more, that it reminds us of the brightness and the beauty that are gone from us.

"Ellen," said Maria, as she raised her head from gazing into the transparent waters, "have

you faith in the existence of fairies or water spirits?"

Ellen smiled faintly, while Mr. Gordon, with a simple earnestness that made Arthur laugh, observed, "Surely, my love, you don't give any credence to such nonsense."

"I'm not too certain of that, papa," she said, shaking her head archly; "but I can't help wishing that I had been living in the times the popular belief was stronger and more general, when, I am confident, I should have been a most sincere believer and, doubtless, rewarded with those visions and communications, which, I fear, our grossness and want of belief have, latterly, almost entirely shut out from us."

"And are you, then, so anxious to behold those tenants of rath and ware, Maria?" said her father, now jocularly.

"O, beyond all things, papa! How often have I strained my eyes, while the delicious summer twilight was melting into night, longing and half-expecting to see a troop of tiny elves, emerging in their gambols from our own sweet rath. How often, too, at a later hour, have I lingered on the margin of this lake, endeavoring to conjecture up a vision of gentle spirits gliding along the surface of the moonlit waters."

"Then why, my love, did you not take into your counsel old Sibby, the fairy woman, who would, doubtless, have obtained for you at once the gratification of your desire?"

"Perhaps, sir," observed Arthur, "Maria wishes to save Sibby's fees, as she, I understand, like the exhibitors of other wonderful creatures, will not give a glimpse of the fairy folks without being well fed."

"Arthur, Arthur, you must learn to talk with more reverence of the gentry. Recollect that the scene we are moving in at this moment is one of enchantment, and that, though our dull eyes, may not be favored with a glimpse—and one of us certainly deserves it not—the lonely fisherman on those waters often forget both profit and pleasure to spend hours gazing on the spires and turrets of the enchanted city, that start on his awed and wondering view in the clear depths beneath, and to listen to the unearthly strains that ascend from it."

"Then I suppose, Maria," said her father, "it was for those same spirits and towers you were seeking so intently in the lake just now;—perhaps they may even give inspiration to some supernatural, if not immortal, stanzas."

"Alas for my inspiration, papa! I had little chance of having them gratified while in the company of such utter infidels to fairy lore. But I shall have my revenge, for, as you have openly accused me of versifying, in the presence of my friends, I shall be sure, at a convenient time, to inflict the reading of my fairy ballad on them—that is, if dear Ellen will sanction my retaliation."

Another faint smile was the acquiescent response from Ellen, while tears rushed to her eyes, as the thought arose that, the last time she had been on those waters, her beloved father and herself had held a long discussion on the same fanciful subject.

"And now, my love, if you take as warm an interest in human as in fairy traditions, I suppose you can give us one connected with those dark walls frowning over the lake?" said the rector, with a smile, as, after having doubled a point, Castle Bourke appeared in view, flinging its dark shadows on the waters of the opposite shore.

"Indeed, papa, the traditions of our country are so darkly stained with treachery and blood, that memory loves not to dwell on them, as on the glowing visions of fairy land; and one of the baronial seats of the potent Bourkes, and, above all, the residence of the despotic and relentless son of a bold mother, *Thubboth na h-ang*, must be fertile in dark and fearful traditions."

"They were an extraordinary twain, indeed, to follow in succession," observed her father, "that daring chieftainness of our shores, and her cruel and remorseless son; and their singular career must have furnished one as fond as you, Marie, of records of the olden time, with an extensive stock."

"But, my dear papa, you must recollect that we are all 'native and indued' to those shores and that, of course, every anecdote regarding that widely-famed lady must be known and remembered by all as well as by me. There is, however, a dark tradition of the Bourkes and Bingham in connection with those walls, which may not be known at all, as it was during the past week I heard it myself for the first time."

"It is new to me, my love," observed the rector.

"And to me," said Arthur.

"Tell it, dear Maria, if it does not fatigue you," said Ellen, in reply to a look of her friends.

"If my rattle has not already wearied you, Ellen; I am like one of those untiring birds that seem to think there can never be enough of their own notes. So now for the legend, which you

must allow me to tell in my own way, without daring to laugh at my style or sentiments."

LEGENDS OF CASTLE BOURKE.

"It would appear that there was deadly jealousy and animosity between the families of the Bourkes and Bingham, though it must have been also, to some extent concealed, about half a century ago, the date tradition assigns to my legend. The Bourkes, who were of those that had become more Irish than the Irish themselves, very probably looked all along with an evil eye on the others, whose settlement here did not date for centuries after theirs, as intruders—and still worse, as successful intruders; while the Bingham, as probably, regarded the high and haughty Bourkes as obstacles to the extension of their authority and domains."

"Well, at all events, according to the legend, there must have been fierce hatred, unbridled power and implacable tempers on both sides, though it would appear there was still visiting intercourse between them."

"One day two brothers of the Bingham visited the castle; and the hellish thought sprung up in the mind of the fierce owner to make brief work with the visitors, and cut short further annoyance by hanging them in the front of the castle—a plan which he debated in secret with a murderous agent, while the unconscious brothers were partaking of his hospitality. Brief and secret, however, as the debate was, it was partly overheard by Sally Davoren, one of the maids; and Sally, though she might not care much for the brothers, was desperately frightened for their attendant, Hugh Chambers. So flying at her fastest speed to the scullery, where Hugh was, she beckoned him to her, unseen by her comrades, and whispered to him the terrible intentions of the lord of the castle, and warned him there was not an instant to be lost, as whatever her lord determined on doing he generally did promptly. Accordingly, after having managed to extract the three horses from the stable unremarked by Bourke or his terrible agent, he went forward boldly to where his master was seated with his brother and their courteous host, stating aloud that one of the horses had become dead lame, contriving, too, to convey to his master at the same time in a whisper the warning he had received and the information that the horses were in readiness. A second extended a warning to his brother; and, apologising to the lord of the castle for a momentary absence, they left the apartment—rushed through the door without waiting to snatch their hats—reached their horses—sprung to the saddle and rode for life, followed by Hugh at equal speed, till they reached their own residence."

Abrupt, however, as was their departure from the castle, and evidently betraying terror and suspicion as it did, it would appear that the Bingham must have convinced their enemies that the real terrible cause was still not known to them, as the tradition concludes that, in a few months after, three brothers of the Bourkes went, by invitation, to the residence of the Bingham, when all three, having no friendly warning to give them intimation of their danger, met the same treacherous and terrible doom they had themselves devised for their opponents. And, now, papa, I shall close my dark legend by observing that woful—woful, indeed, must have been the state of our humbler countrymen, when such fearful deeds were enacted by their chiefs, in the face of day."

The boat had, by the time the tradition closed, reached the little wharf contiguous to the rectory, and the party was preparing to land when two horsemen, dashing over an adjacent hedge, rode to the beach. One was Sir Robert, and evidently half intoxicated, early in the day as it still was; the other was Bryan Gaven, his confidential groom and occasional companion.

"So my little bird," said Sir Robert, addressing Ellen, "I see you can spread your wings for a flight abroad, heavy as your grief was, when you like your company. But I'll take measures to clip them, and to make your upstart companion, in spite of his epaulettes, stay from Ballin-tubber; for Mr. Gordon, too, I may find means to teach him whether it's the duty of a parson to bring together those that are forbidden to meet by their friends."

While he spoke he gave his horse the spur, to urge him towards the boat; while his sister, with a suppressed scream, clung to the rector for protection, and Arthur sprang forward in the boat, as if to grapple with the rude insult. But at this moment a cry was heard, and the terrified animal, starting suddenly, pitched its rider heavily on his shoulder; and while the groom was assisting him to rise, the party from the boat passed on to the rectory, Ellen shuddering and clinging closer to Mr. Gordon's arm as she passed her stunned brother, and Maria exclaiming "the unnatural monster."

CHAPTER XIV.

After Harry Gorman had received the dollar from Mr. Gordon, he was proceeding at a fast

pace to his cabin, when he was overtaken by a Sheriff's officer with a party of dragoons, under the command of Sergeant-Major Heavisides, on their way thither also.

"Well, you're ready for moving now, you are, I should think, muster 'Arry," said the sergeant.

"He was noticed yesterday—wasn't he?" observed the bailiff.

"Well, I think he was to a certainty,"

"Thin, without more palaver, out he goes at wanst, *vi at armis*, as 'torney Baker sees, which manes, or coarse, by law and arms."

"O boys, jewel," exclaimed Harry, with an imploring look and a pathetic earnestness of tone, "for the love of heaven give us till evening, and we'll lave the cabin, with our blessing and the blessing of God on ye."

"Well, I think we may give the poor hainial a few hours 'owsomdever," said the sergeant-major, who was really a good hearted fellow, "as we have to visit the MacHandrews, or Mac'ughs, or some other d—d birish name—blast such dirty say I. 'Ere's a pull from the canteen, meantime."

"Well, sergeant, that's rale stingo; and if you have any wish we can take the misfortunate ragabon' on our road back, as his cabin will be in the way. So let him be off now and be ready to thramp, bag and baggage, in a couple of hours."

"God bless both yer honors; an' may ye die an aisy death!" said Harry, as he sped more rapidly than before to his doomed cabin.

"O Sally, my jewel," he cried, as he flung himself panting on the little banmock beside the fire, "we must quit the poor ould cabin afore two hours."

"I didn't think, though we got the warning, that the black hour ud come so soon," said Sally, who was quieting a restless infant in her arms; "but if it must be, it must be, a *chorra maahree*. God's will be done."

"Well, I'm afeard, Sally ashore, I could hardly say that from my heart this munit, like a thrue Christian; for it's a poor thing to be thrown to beg on the wide world, without house or home, from where we were all born and thought to die."

"But, Harry, agraw, we should always bear in mind that God and the Virgin, that ever and always minded us and ours here, can provide for us *there* too, though it's more nor we deserve, God forgive us; and surely we won't be obliged to beg, while we're both strong and healthy, praise be to God and the saints for it; and there's the little children, God help them, small as they are, can do something too."

"Yis, daddy," cried the eldest, a little flaxen-haired thing, with a soiled but lively countenance, running up to him and catching his knees, "I can pick ribbes."

"And I can gather brooms, ye know daddy," said her sister, who was about a year younger.

"God bless ye, ashore, and mark ye with grace," said the half broken-hearted father, kissing them; "and God bless you, too, Sally, for giving us such courage. But, after all, it's a cruel thing to be larvin' for ever the ould roof that one was born inunther, and his father afore him, and the poor goralghs. Och hone, it's little my poor ould father thought, (may his sowl rest in glory this day) when he got his death by helpin' to carry the timber for that loft, the month poor little Peggy was born, that his misfortunate son wouldn't be left a stick o' them; and it's little it inthered his mind, the day he ficed the back plot abroad, that afore five years ud past an' gone, none of those that kem after him ud ever get a male from it agin. Thank God, he didn't live to see this black 'ay, any way; may a meltation hot an' heavy come soon an' sudden on the villain, that's the cause o' laving oursel's and our wake children without house or home this day—*awmen a Hyerna*."

"Don't curse at all, Harry ashore; remember what Father Bernard sed last week, that cursin' was only doing harm to oursel's, and that God himsel' ud be sure to punish, when he pleased, them that's hard-hearted to the poor and distressed." The courageous and confiding, though equally afflicted wife, laid the now slumbering infant on its little hammock, as she continued, "So as there's no good in fretting an' grumblin', instead of that, let us tighten up the little things we can't do without, while poor little Tommy's asleep."

"Where'll he have to be sleeping to-morrow, Sally?"

The big tears gushed freely from the mother's eyes, at the idea of the destitution before her infant, but she wiped them away instantly, saying, "God will provide a place for him and for us all. So let us have no more grumbling, but ready the things afore the throopers is back on us. Polly Hannan (God bless her) 'll pay us for the table an' the big box that we can do very well without; and Jack 'll lend us the ass to help to carry the rest. We can go for a week to my uncle Tom's; and who knows but we'd coax him to

take the cow an' calf into the kitchen, and let oursel's have the outhouse till God ud turn up something in our favor, for poor Tom had always a good heart though he's so close intirely. So, in the name o' God and the Virgin, do you, a *journean*, go for the ass, an I'll tighten the things."

Harry accordingly moved out, and speedily after, returned with the ass and creels from his kind-hearted neighbor, who had the good fortune not to be united in the same calamity. The scanty and slight household articles (with a few exceptions) which the cabin contained were then arranged amid occasional bursts of grief and repining from their owner. The arrangements was, however, not entirely completed when the dragoons and the sheriff's officer made their appearance.

"Not ready yet, ye lazy rascal, though we cleared out a dozen since we saw you afore," said the bailiff.

"If you're plaisin' to take a blast o' the pipe we'll be ready, with our blessing, afore you're done," said the bustling wife, reaching over to him, at the same time, Harry's black *thudeen* (short pipe), well filled.

The hardened official took the pipe, lighted it, and seated himself while the few remaining articles were speedily packed and arranged.

"'Ere 'Arry, I say, blast it, 'ere's a 'alf dollar to help the children and wife," said the good-hearted Heavisides in a whisper, slipping the coin into Harry's hand; "the man 'ant no 'art as wouldn't help a woman and a child."

The arrangement of the ass-creels was now speedily completed. The two older children were nestled in one, balanced by some rude domestic articles in the other, while the unfortunate mother, bearing in her arms the awakened infant, and on her back a large parcel containing some coarse raiment, yarn and other sort articles, was followed by Harry laden with the "feeding"—their humble bed could be procured wherever they found an asylum for the night—together with some provisions, and driving before him a pig. And thus departed the ejected family for ever from the roof which, lowly as it was, had hitherto afforded them shelter; their charitable neighbor, Polly Hannan, having kindly purchased the table, box, wheel, and other articles not portable and not indispensable.

When the little procession reached the Abbey, the ill-fated parents entered it, leaving the children and the animals outside, and remained some time kneeling in prayer on the grave of Harry's father, as he stated with tears and groans his conviction that that was the last time, in all probability, they should ever have the same opportunity.

It was their wild shout of lamentation, after having been joined by some other families in the same predicament, and when they had reached a point that shut out the view of their cabins altogether, that had started Sir Robert's horse.

"Now," said Mr. Gordon, speaking to his curate, who had returned to the glebe to receive directions respecting matters forgotten in the heat of the preceding argument, as the unfortunate cavalcade was passing close to the glebe, invoking blessings on the worthy rector, "Now, my dear sir, can you wonder, after having witnessed so sad a spectacle as that, that the laws are not respected and that our creed is not loved?"

"I own, as I said before, Mr. Gordon, that I can have no sympathy for any of their idolatrous creed."

"What has their creed to do with the heartless villainy which has been the means of throwing industrious toilers—aye even helpless infancy and tottering age on the world, homeless and destitute?"

"Could they not have abandoned their idolatry and been thus independent of him?"

"And they might, had there been no compulsion. But I cannot too often repeat that I greatly fear our rulers are placing a lasting barrier between the English and the Irish, and what I deem still worse—that they will make the faith we are so anxious to teach and extend an object of hatred, while the creed of Rome will be consecrated in the hearts of my countrymen by persecution. May my fears prove not prophetic."

"You will never see them realized."

"Aye, but may God grant that our descend ants shall not have to reap in sorrow the bitter cup we are sowing. Often does a dim, far-off vision rise before me, in which I have glimpses of our church fiercely assailed and maligned, while that we persecute spreads its roots deeper and wider through the land, for that very persecution."

The conversation closed, and with it we close this brief chapter.

(To be continued.)

Spectacles were invented about the year 1285. The honour of their discovery is claimed for two individuals, Spina and Salvino, both Italians. Spina's claim appears to be the more rightful.