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THE RIVALS.

By Gerald Griffin.

CHAPTER VI.

(Continued.)

The most striking characteristic of the Wicklow scenery is that of intense, though not oppressive loneliness.

A cloud had stolen across the moon, when he descended that rugged part of the road which leads downward upon the lake of Luggela.

He saw, beneath him, embosomed among the brown hills, a little valley full of beauty, full of varied loveliness, full of character, and of romantic interest.

In a few minutes a small boat emerged from that part of the lake which was darkened by the shadow of the mountain, and gliding rapidly over the star-spangled abyss that lay between, buried its light keel in the sandy beach above described.

This was the spell-word which, like the first speech addressed to a spirit, put an end to Davy's silence, and left him free to become as inquisitive and communicative as he pleased.

The poor pedestrian remained, gazing long upon this scene, for he remembered the time when his young master, Francis Riordan, and himself were accustomed to spend the whole summer days upon the lake, paddling luxuriously along the mountain sides, or standing out in the centre and looking for trout.

The air of Luggela, to which Moore has adapted that perfection of lyric melody, commencing "No, not more welcome the fairy numbers," &c.

which is so exquisitely adapted to the scene from which it takes its name.

On a sudden, the ears of Davy were greeted by a strain of music so singular, so novel in its character, and yet so sweet, that bound him to the spot, in an ecstasy of surprize and admiration.

"A sound so fine that nothing lived 'Tween it and silence."

And then a rich masculine voice, improved into an almost magical sweetness by the loneliness of the place, took up the following melody, which was executed with a skill that told of continental accomplishment:

Hark! hark! the soft bugle sounds over the wood, And thrills in the silence of even; Till faint and more faint, in the far solitude, It dies on the portals of heaven!

Oh, thus let my love, like a sound of delight, Be around thee while shines the glad day; And leave thee, unpaired, in the silence of night, And die like sweet music away.

The song ceased, and the listener could hear the words, "Again, and again!" floating off and fainting in the bosom of the distant valleys.

In this he was successful. The stranger, in answer to Davy's courteous greeting, touched his hat lightly with his finger, and, folding his cloak around him, continued his journey in silence.

"Do you go to Roundwood, friend?" asked the stranger, in what Davy called an "Englified" accent.

"A little beyant it please your honor," he said, touching his hat; "as far as Glendalough."

"That will depend altogether, my good friend, upon the nature of the question itself."

"Surely, sir, surely. Well, it's what I was going to say was, that I know a family from Dublin that come here last year, and of all the world, I never heard anything more like the tone o'

their voice than what your honor's is, The Nortons, sir, a fine likely family indeed, and 'tis what I thought when I heard your honors', was that may be, says I, 'tis one o' the young Misthur Nortons I have there, and sure enough, says I, 'tis Misthur George, that went out with the patriots, for I see the green feather flurin' up in his hat, an' he comin' up the road?"

"My voice, then," said the stranger, "is not unfamiliar to you?"

"I declare, then, no," said Davy, "I have a feelin' greatly in myself when I hear you talkin', as I may say."

"And the best conjecture you can make is that I am young Mr. Norton of Dublin?"

"I hope I may not find all my old friends in Ireland so forgetful, and yet there are many there by whom I do not feel anxious to be recollected. Your name is David Lenigan?"

"It is, abo' ever?"

At this question, David drew back with a secret misgiving at the heart, and a cold creeping of the skin, such as is occasioned by the extremest horror of which human nature is capable.

After a long pause, Davy had recovered sufficient presence of mind to stretch out his hands towards the stranger, and exclaim, in a hoarse and broken whisper, while his teeth chattered, and his limbs shook with fear.

"My poor fellow," said the stranger, still in the same loud and excited tone: "I am indeed your master, Francis Riordan."

"There was a time when I would have rejoiced to give occasion to such a rumor," said Riordan: "but what a brilliant fortune I would then have lost! To see the cause succeed to which I had devoted my life and labor, to come back once more in health and honor to my native land, and even, before my youth had fled, to return with all my youthful hopes accomplished."

"Afraid! of what?"

"Francis smiled! "Nay, nay," said he, "Lacy I hear is alive and well, and for anything else I'll find proof of his falsehood; at all events, I can't think there is great danger of my finding people's memories so very acute. My enemies must not have sharper recollections than my friends."

"Aye, then, I declare I wouldn't trust Richard Lacy for gettin'."

"Oh, then, Oh, then, Master, 'tis it that is his interest, an' nothin' else. O dear! O dear! Oh, Miss Esther Wilderming! the heavens look down on you this blessed night."

The moment he had said these words, the stranger seemed on a sudden to have lost a foot of his customary stature. His proud and soldier-like bearing was altered in an instant.

"Come hither!" he said to his attendant, after a pause of painful silence, "what do you say of her?"

"Oh, then, Master Francis, I declare I don't like to say any thing about it to you.— You're sick and weary now, sir, afther your journey."

"Speak on, speak on," repeated Riordan in the same tone.

"Speak, sir," cried Francis, in a voice of sudden anger, springing to his feet, "you sling me on a rack, and bid me sleep! What of Miss Wilderming?"

"She is——" Davy began——

"Not dead, sir, no——"

"Wisha, faix, that's not it, sir, neither."

"What then? What is it that you fear to tell me, Lenigan?" continued his master, "why do you hesitate, and moan, and look downwards? Out with it, man, whatever be the event. One thing at any rate, I cannot fear, and that is Esther Wilderming's unkindness. I never will look upon her face with a sad heart, unless I should live to see her in her coffin."

"Why, then, since you say 'coffin,' Master," said Davy, "I declare I'd rather see her in her coffin, than where she is to be, in Misther Lacy's house."

"Than where?" said Riordan, stepping back, and speaking in a whisper.

"Oh, then, in Lacy's house!"

"What have you said?" cried Riordan, leaning with both hands on David's shoulder and speaking in a low voice.

"Over at Glendearg."

"And well?"

"Iss, purty well."

"Married," he paused a moment, "married, or not?"

"Not married, yet."

"What then? She is contracted?"

"Yes."

"To whom?"

"To Richard Lacy."

"'Tis true, then!" the young man cried aloud, turning from Lenigan.

He stood for some minutes in an attitude of rigid agony, with both hands pressed upon his forehead, and the fingers twined in his hair, as if with the intention of tearing it up by the roots.

"To him, then, and to no other."

"Oh, you have said enough!"

"I told her, at our parting, that I could not change, and I spoke the truth. I have been tempted, too. Wealthy, and beautiful, and high-born was the being that put my true affections to the trial. I was poor then, and friendless, and I went up all alone to the house top, in the calm and burning noontide, to look to the east and think of her whom I had left in our own distant island. The sky was clear and still, the woods were silent, a stream splashed at a little distance, and I thought of former times. I lifted my hands to heaven, and I said, No!—let my fate be gloomy as it may, let me die young, and in a foreign land, but never will I meditate falsehood to my country, or to my love. I kept my truth, and this is my reward!"

"Oh, then, sir," said Davy, "I have that notion o' the women, that if they wished to prove thue, itself, they couldn't keep from rovin' an' to do their besut."

"But she has found her punishment even in her crime. Married to Richard Lacy! I am a fool to trouble myself about it—Davy!"

"Well, master?"

"When is the marriage to take place?"

"This week, sir, as I hear."

"Ah, shame! And at Glendearg?"

"Providen' she is better before then."

"What, is she ill, then? What's the matter? Well, well, though she is worthless, I am sorry to hear this."

"Ah, master, you're too hard upon her."

"Do you think so, David? You are a faithful fellow."

"'Tis unknown, sir, what coaxin' an' arguefyin' they had at her, over at Glendearg, to make her say the word that she'd marry Lacy."

"Ha! do you know this?"

"To be sure, I do. Didn't she remain shut up in her house for as good as four years a'most, without seein' a crather, hardly, until we heard of your death?"

"Aye, I forget; you spoke of some such rumor. And Esther heard of this?"

"The world wide heard of it; sure it was printed in the papers all over Ireland. 'Tis after that, sure, Lacy come coortin' of her again, an' she wouldn't have any thing to say to him for a long while, only the death of her mother, an' Mr. Damer's arguefyin', an' every thing, forced her to it at last, an' she got the sickness on the head of it."

"Forced her?" cried Riordan, in a tone of extreme surprise.

"Iss—Misther Damer."

"And does he think," the young man exclaimed, with sudden vehemence, "does he imagine that he can complete this sacrifice while she has got a friend on earth to save her? Hold, Davy, stop one moment. You must return to Glendearg, and take from me a note to Miss Wilderming. To-night I sleep in Roundwood; to-mor-

row, some business takes me to Enniskerry, but I will be with you at Glendalough, to hear your answer, in the evening, and that must guide us in our future conduct."

He wrote with a pencil a short note, which he folded and placed in the hands of his attendant, bidding him to use the needful secrecy in its delivery.

"I'll give it to Mrs. Keleher," said Davy, "for, dear knows, I'm in no hurry at all to have any talk with Misther Aaron!"

"What, is poor Aaron Shepherd living still?"

"Oh, then 'tis he that is, an' 'tis I that has reason to know it."

"Poor Aaron!"

"Dear knows, I think that man would bother the world, convertin' 'em. I declare to my heart what I ait an' drink at that house doesn't do me good, I'm so smothered from bibles, an' thraacts of all kinds. Arguefyin', arguefyin', for ever. Erra, sure if a man had a head as long as my arm, 'twould set him to have answers ready for every question they'd ax him that way. But I'm promised a copy o' the Fifty Reasons next week, an' indeed when I get it I'll give Aaron his due. Well, master Frank, good night, sir, an' the heavens bless an' direct you. I'll go no farther now, as I'm to return to Glendearg."

"Good night, good fellow. I will remember your honesty and your attachment, David, when I am once more at peace."

"Oh, then, don't speak of it, master Frank. 'Tis enough for me to see you well, an' hearty, an' more than I expected to see, sure. Well, well, only to think o' this! Alive and here in Ireland afther all! That I may never die in sin, but it bates out all the fables that ever was wrote."

He turned away, and, as he descended through the rocks, Francis could hear him, at a long distance, in the calm moonlight, singing the following lines of a controversial ballad:

When woeful bereave And infidelity Combined for to raise disconsolation, You forsook that holy church That would not have you in the lurch, And publicly denied your ordination. Your name it will appear Through Ireland fair and near In Limerick, in Cork, and Dungannoon, In Belfast and Dublin town Your conduct will be shown An' they'll talk o' the revolted Father Hannan.

Young Riordan remained for several minutes gazing on the moonlit desert, by which he was surrounded, and delivering up his mind to the romantic nature of the scene, and of the circumstances under which he now beheld it, after years of suffering and of exile.

"Alive, and here in Ireland!" so ran the current of his thoughts, "I left these hills in sorrow and in fear, and now I come again, in joy and safety, to challenge the fulfilment of my youthful dreams. Ye hills, that seemed to my infant fancy the boundaries of earth itself; ye barren wilds, that my untutored eye could find as blooming as the gardens of Arunida; ye lakes and streams into which I have so often gazed, and longed to dive into the mirrored heaven beneath; ye fresh, familiar winds, that even now waken in my mind a thousand sudden sweet remembrances; ye rocks, trees, waters, all ye shapes and hues that constitute my home, I hail you from my heart! There's not a bell blooms on the brown heath of these, my native mountains, but my heart loves with a particular fondness. There's not a rock frowns downward from those dreary summits but leaves the luxuries of all the tropics behind-hand in my estimation. Oh, and shall ye still greet me with the same young and constant smile; shall ye still offer to my sense the same unaltered sights and sounds; shall the winds blow, the waters run, the mountains and the rocks rebuke the morning with the same sad frown as in my infancy, and all remain unchanged, except my love? I will not think it. Now, from this time forward, I never will anticipate an evil.— My life has been a life of fear and toils, and now I never more will cease to hope. The cloud may gather dense, as night itself, above my head, but, 'till it bursts, I never will believe that it bears thunder in its womb. I must succeed: I must be gay and happy."

After this enthusiastic fit of musing, the young soldier threw his cloak around his glowing frame, and hurried off in the direction of his native village. Young nerves, young blood, young feelings and young hopes, combined to keep his spirits in that buoyant state to which his fancy had excited them, and he trod along the mountain path as if it were entirely by his own free election that he preferred the earth to air.

(To be continued.)

A Quaker once hearing a person tell how much he felt for another, who was suffering and needed pecuniary assistance, drily asked him, "Friend, has thou felt in thy pocket for him?"

The proprietor of a forge, not remarkable for correctness of language, but who, by honest industry, had realized a comfortable independence, being called upon at a social meeting for a toast, gave:—"Success to forgery."