

SHEMUS DHU, THE BLACK PEDLAR OF GALWAY.

A TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

CHAPTER XI.

The next morning arose bright and beautiful. In the fickleness of our western climate, frost had suddenly followed the rain, and a dead calm succeeded the storm of the preceding evening.

No matter what has been said and sung in praise of the beautiful mornings of other seasons, a winter's one, or one near it, has its charms and its beauty for me; especially one in November, when, if we be thoughtful and melancholy, we can contrast the life of nature in the former months, with its death in this, and yet be not depressed, but feel that God tempers the present to our enjoyment. The trees are nearly leafless, and void of the melody of their choristers. The rich green colour of the herbage is gone. The waving gold of the crops is swept from the land, and pale stubble and sickly roots remain. The music of the harvest song is not heard, and the fields and the woods have become comparatively a desert. These changes, in themselves, bring the ideas, and remind us of death—perhaps they were even intended, though not primarily, for that, and in this influence, the have their interest and their worth. But, again, the sudden opening of the spring tells us of its transitory beauty. The full verdure of summer is marked by signs of its near connexion with autumn's sombre hue; and autumn itself is the season of decay. If these changes, which remind us of our own unceasing advance towards decay, mar our happiness, must we blame the Giver of the year? No season has an advantage over another in freeing us from the thought of a happier world—in eternity!

On a fine winter day, we can go forth to our recreations, or to our duties, with a light and vigorous step—no oppressive heat palsies the action of the body and of the mind. The winter's sun gladdens, without scorching or blinding us with its mild ray. The free air quickens our blood, and gives new life and buoyancy, and health to our spirits. And at the close of the day, we are less estranged from our friends, for we seek and give back again social pleasure, and comfort surrounds the evening hearth.

The next morning was a beautiful one. The air was keen but pure, and without a motion. The sun had arisen, and illumined with its clear rosy light the coagulated drops which spangled the entire wood. The loud tongue of some hound could be heard from afar through the open sky, and the wild fowl's notes were distinct along the sedgy banks of the lake. Eveleen was the first to make her appearance in the front of her father's cabin. Her homely dress of yesterday was superseded by one of costlier material, but of the same make. Her entire costume was much improved. She wore lamb's wool stockings of her own spinning and knitting, and low uppers of Cordova leather. It would appear that she studied her dress more carefully, for what purpose we will not say; perhaps it was to do honour to a stranger in her father's house; and there might be the vanity of a girl in it, for which we will forgive her. The leaves hardened by the frost, crackled even under her light footstep, as she went to an out-house to liberate the fowl, her peculiar care.

For some time she enjoyed the rush of the larger fowl to a neighbouring pool, and it was evident that innocence and peace dwelt within that beautiful form. From what small things a conscience at peace with itself and with all mankind receives pleasure! She was not long engaged in her kind duty, when she was joined by the young stranger, to whom even unknown to her, her thoughts at the moment were recurring. O'Halloran, immediately after arising, had come forth to seek some relief in external objects, from the thoughts on his circumstances, which, in the morning's reflection rushed, clothed with sober and sad reality, to his mind. He imagined that none of Connel's household were out before him; but in this he was deceived for Fergus was some miles in the wood at the time, to procure game for his entertainment. O'Halloran came forth with a saddened air, but when he saw the young maiden to his view, for many reasons, lovelier than on the preceding night, his gloomy thoughts fled, and he accosted her with a cheerful spirit.

"Fair maiden," he said with a graceful but not an easy tone of address. "He was educated in a French school of politeness, but his Irish candour prevented the acquisition of a finished education in French manners. At first, he felt surprised at seeing Eveleen, whom he fancied a few moments before to be of noble birth and thoughts, engaged at such an early hour in the lowly occupation of tending fowl. He had mixed much with the fashionable world of Paris; his holding a commission in the French service, together with his birth and accomplishments, gave him an easy introduction to the first society, and from habit, not from judgment or feeling, he was content, if not satisfied, with the perversion of nature in their tastes, domestic as well as public. But the surprise occasioned by Eveleen's humble occupation lasted not long, for the grace of the beautiful girl gave, in his mind, a dignity to the low duty she was performing. "Fair maiden," said O'Halloran, a little embarrassed, "I wish you happiness and pleasure and all the calm joy of this beautiful morning."

"Thank you, sir; I wish you the same," was Eveleen's simple reply. The naïveté of the answer disconcerted O'Halloran. He was prepared to hear something of more elevated sentiment and corresponding in tone. At least he expected that Eveleen would be taken by surprise, and give him an opportunity of relieving her by some polite and well-timed remark. He was disappointed. Eveleen was more at ease than himself; and after her answer, she clasped her hands to the fowl, who gathered instantly from all directions around her, to receive the corn which she scattered among them.

"Are you wont, young maiden," said O'Halloran "to be out thus early, and to be engaged in these offices?" "Oh, yes," said Eveleen, unhesitatingly; the fowl are all my own; I receive the profits of them, and when the morning is fine I prefer feeding them to spinning with Judith."

"But you must oftentimes feel tired of this mode of life. Your time must be often tedious, and without employment must hang heavy upon your spirits. If I guess rightly from the specimens of your taste which I have seen, you have thoughts above those who surround you. You can have no opportunity here of finding persons who could sympathize with your fine feelings."

"The artless girl laughed outright in his face before she said— "Tired of my life; and my time hang heavily on my spirits!! We have no words like those in Portaragh. We have driven their meaning from amongst us. Oh! how my companions would laugh if I told them I had time which I did not know how to use. Indeed, we often find too little time for our amusements and our duties together."

"How, then, do you employ your time?" "Why, if the day be wet, or unfit for us to go abroad, we bring our wheels together, and spin or knit whilst we listen to some melancholy story of Judith's, or some other old woman, about former times; or, I read and relate in Irish to those who don't understand the language of the book—though I have taught most of my intimate companions to read; and if the day be fine, we fish or hunt after preparing dinner for the men; and in the evening we

dance together to Paudrick's music. He plays well on the bagpipes, or else I play the harp for the boys and maidens on that little green beyond; and then when night comes, we have Michael's Orussack's stories to listen to; he is a wonderful old man—I will show him to you to-day—and he makes us all laugh and cry by turns, and we feel sorry when the lateness of the night breaks off his tale in the middle. Don't you think now we have employment enough for our time? But I didn't tell you all our amusements? I can't now, I want to visit my rabbits before Fergus returns with his dogs. Come, I will show them to you."

O'Halloran was surprised at the lively manner of Eveleen, and that in the presence of a stranger, with whom she was not an hour acquainted. He judged her prematurely, for he was not experienced enough to distinguish nature—innocent and gay in the female heart—from its counterfeit. Had he met such a creature in the circles of fashion to which he was accustomed, he thought that he could for a time be fascinated with her, although he could not long admire her levity; for by education he was a strict moralist. But there was an evidence of playful and artless innocence about Eveleen which forbade a thought unworthy of her purity of soul.

"Hah! I fear we must put off the visit," said Eveleen, little regarding the thoughtful manner of O'Halloran; "there is Fergus' horn; do you hear it? We must to breakfast; his hunt must have given him a keen appetite."

Eveleen was preparing to lead the way, when a splendid buck-hound bounded over a wall which separated a corn-field from the farm-street in which they stood.

"Here, Buscar!" she cried, and the immense dog frisked about her with the playfulness and gentleness of a lamb, discomposing her dress with his gambols.

O'Halloran offered to prevent him, but the maiden refused and caressed the dog with both hands, as she uttered— "Poor Buscar! poor fellow! he will not hurt me—he will not indeed. That's enough sir—down!"

The animal was obedient; he ceased his leaping and only wagged his tail and fawned upon her hand.

"You see," she said, addressing O'Halloran, "the affectionate brute is overjoyed to see me. I had lost him for some days, and yesterday, by chance I found him in the wood. Here comes the company with whom I suspect he had been."

The last words alluded to the appearance of Frank O'Reilly coming from the barn. He made a more respectable entrance, with the assistance of water and towel, than that of the preceding night. His dress was adjusted with some pretensions to taste; and his first act on seeing the maiden was to doff his felt bonnet with the gallantry of the "bloods" of the time, and offer her the morning salutation. He touched his cap to O'Halloran with an air of patronage, which the other returned with stricter formality than O'Reilly expected. "A fine morning, sir, a fine morning. You have got the advantage of me in being up so early. I see I must give up my night potatoes. They do a man no good, sir."

Frank expected some reply, but O'Halloran observed the same cold distance.

"Ahem! I must have been woefully done-up, last night, else you were not here then, sir. A stranger, perhaps? A hunter from the city, more for pastime than from a taste for the noble science?" O'Halloran drew himself up with dignity, as he answered, "I am a stranger, sir, but I know of none who has a right to ask my reasons for being here."

"No offence, I hope, young man," said Frank carelessly: "I have made the remark in good fellowship—why, as it is not received, there is no more of it. It is too early to quarrel. I will first try the power of this peasant's larder to raise my spirits. Heigho! that last draught which I took was a heavy drink. Are you for breakfast here? I need not ask; I see you have made some interest, if I judge from your close conversation with that wild girl. If not I will introduce you; you will find me a better fellow by and by."

O'Halloran knew not what to make of the fellow. His freedom, he thought, was insolent, and he wished to prevent it, but he knew not how. And then his better sense suggested that he should gain neither honour nor advantage by a quarrel with him. He therefore resolved to observe a cold, though not insulting distance until he knew him better. With this feeling, he followed O'Reilly who had already entered the house; for some moments preceded by Eveleen and Buscar. Judith had anticipated the appetites of her guests. They found breakfast prepared. It was served on a larger board than usual, which was covered with a white linen cloth. The breakfast was substantial. Large earthen measures of home brewed, were placed at either end. Venison cutlets ham, wild fowl, oaten bread, fresh butter, cream and eggs, made the sum of the entertainment. The remarkable dishes on each side, and there was more than one knife, not those of hunters on the table.

The strangers had scarcely entered when Fergus joined them, attended by a strong young man of the peasantry, who carried a prime heart, the trophy of his successful chase. Greetings passed among the family and the strangers; and Connel after invoking a blessing, bid them to the meal. Its merits, if felt, were not remarked. Some of the company were occupied with thoughts only to themselves; and those who were free from care, and would have spoken, did not presume. Such alone were Nora and the boy who attended Fergus. We must except Frank O'Reilly, who now and then as he helped himself profusely to some viand, praised its savour, and then was silent in its enjoyment. He was the most accommodating companion imaginable; he was willing to please everybody; but following example, he held his peace. Yet, when after some time he found all were reserved, for his own edification, and as a stimulant to his appetite, he ventured to say, though to himself. "By Jove, delicious venison! Excellent ham!" And then, "to your health, Mrs. Judith. I don't mistake your name I hope? You must tell me how this was saved; I will want your recipe, as I intended becoming housekeeper soon," and such like words, which the breakfast suggested.

The meal was over as soon as the mere bodily wants of the company were satisfied. Frank O'Reilly was the last to lay down his knife, and to give a parting embrace to the jug, in drinking Connel's and his family's prosperity. He leaned against the back rail of his seat, and in the enjoyment of the animal ease which succeeds a good repeat, his spirits were more excited, and his conversation became more free.

"Ho! ho! Buscar. By the Law Harry, but it is he!" He never could express surprise without an oath, though it generally took the mildest form, and was void of impiety. "Well! well! it is wonderful! Here, Buscar, boy. Don't you know your master, your rogue? Here, sir." He threw the wing of a wild fowl to the dog. Buscar refused the gift. He smelled to the meat; but without touching it, he returned, fawning, to Eveleen.

"You see, sir," said Eveleen, "the dog can distinguish between us. He belongs to me, and he prefers my kindness."

ance before last night, though I forgot where. However, I must say I did good service for the possession of that dog. Shemus Dhu gave him to me a few days back. He is now in prison, the poor fellow! more is the pity; for he was a sincere, though a rude companion. But you can have the dog, Miss Eveleen; I would not deprive you of him, for twenty times his worth."

Eveleen did not thank him; for, at the mention of Shemus Dhu's name, she looked to her father, and observed his changed countenance, and his unsettled looks, divided between O'Halloran and Fergus.

"You have not deceived us?" said Connel, addressing O'Reilly, with an abruptness unexpected by every person.

"Have you been an accomplice—I mean a companion, for some time back, of Shemus Dhu?"

"An accomplice! Ha! it is well corrected—neither my friend. Unfortunately, I have been companion to D'Arcy, if you have heard of him; the deepest scoundrel that ever lived. Poor Shemus wanted assistance from me in an honourable affair connected with the safety of some of his friends. From my youth I was indebted to him for kindness, and I assisted him with heart and hand. He would force a guerdon of value on me; but, for old friendship's sake, I was unwilling to receive it. He obliged me however, to take the hound, because I praised its beauty."

"Ha! I know it!" exclaimed Connel. "The dog is yours, sir; if it were our last present, he is yours."

"There is more than your word to that bargain," said O'Reilly, with the most perfect composure. "The young maiden claims him. I have given up my right and he is hers."

"Not at my request have you given him up," said Eveleen, coolly. "But as my father wishes it you shall have him."

"Dear Eveleen—" said Fergus, approaching his sister from the farthest part of the room to which he had retired after breakfast, with the resolution of remaining a watchful, though a silent spectator. "Dear Eveleen, give him with a kind grace; my father has good reasons for the present; it may serve us all."

This was said in a whisper, and Eveleen answered in the same tone of voice, but with more melancholy.

"I give him freely, Fergus, since it pleases you all. But I would know whence is this sudden change in you?"

The young man was confused. He did not expect the question. He could not suddenly answer it, and before he made any reply, his sister had gone to her own room. Fergus followed her, and when he entered it, Eveleen was leaning pensively on the table.

"I fear," he said, "you have reason to be displeased with me Eveleen. In my conversation this morning with you, I dropped some expression which I could not then explain, but before I leave Portaragh I shall see you again."

"Leave where?" said Eveleen, starting up. "Where would you go to, Fergus?"

"I must go to Galway to-night on business of this stranger's and by Connel's command. I thought I had told you. I know not yet what the object of my journey is."

"You jest, Fergus; surely my father would have told me; but I see, he could not. I was not alone with him during the day; it may be so. When do you return, Fergus?"

"That is also concealed from me. It may be after a long time has passed, if ever. I expect some danger in the journey."

"Go not then, Fergus," clasping his neck with her hands. "I beseech you go not. Oh you terrify me. I wish this young man had not come among us. Let himself go. My father will not command your obedience where there is danger to you. I will see him, and persuade him; you will not leave us. Oh! what would we do without you Fergus?"

"But Eveleen, my place could be as well supplied by another."

"By whom? You are cruel, Fergus. Who would be as you to us all—to my father, to poor Judith my old nurse, to myself, Fergus? Who would be my only sociable companion?"

"Might not this stranger reconcile you to my absence? He has tastes fitted to yours: he can tell you what I cannot—of his travels and of his knowledge of the world; he will be a pleasanter companion than I, for he will understand your merit better and praise it more."

"He! Fergus; a stranger supply my brother's place! He a better companion! Oh, Fergus, you are ungrateful! said the agitated girl and she covered her face with her hands."

"Well, Eveleen, I will not disturb you," said Fergus, "there is no great danger to be apprehended in the journey, I hope. I shall not be long away from you; I wished only to try your affection."

"And did you doubt it, Fergus?"

"No! no! my mind has been disturbed these two days. I cannot tell you all that I wish at present; I will see you again."

He left her room abruptly and passed through the outer one to the air, without regarding the persons present.

Connel did not remark the absence of his children, whilst Fergus was engaged with Eveleen. He walked with his arms crossed and his head bent, from one part of the room to the other. He stopped suddenly opposite O'Reilly and said to him—

"Young gentleman, your name, I think, you said is O'Reilly. Do you know many of your name in the city?"

"A greater number than deserve the name," said Frank, with the greatest indifference.

"You may have known one who deserves a good name in every sense. Do you know," said Connel, "a James O'Reilly, called Shemus Bawn living in the Spanish Parade?"

"Faith, and that I do, to my sore cost," said Frank. "I have the misfortune of being his discarded son; or rather, I have the bad fortune that he is my father."

"James O'Reilly's son, the companion of D'Arcy, exclaimed Connel.

"It is not my fault, my good friend—altogether, I mean. I was a little wild, I confess, for a boy; the old man would not give me a trial. After the first fault he shipped me off without a penny ballast; what could I do. I should take chance for good luck before the wind."

"And with your family you have given up your religion, too?"

"Not entirely together," said Frank. "I have a little hankering after the old faith yet. It was that brought me within three steps of following Shemus Dhu's advice, and leaving D'Arcy on our first acquaintance."

THE SECRET HISTORY OF FENIANISM.

(CONTINUED FROM OUR LAST.)

The clock strikes one; the muffled form with revolver in hand stands at the door; the door is at the back of the corridor, near the head of the stairs; inside stands Stephens, waiting breathlessly for the undoing of the bolts. The howling of the blast prevented the creaking of the bolts from saluting the ears of the three policemen, who were standing precisely where they should not stand. The door revolves on its rusty hinges, and the creaking is absolutely tremendous. But the storm drowns it, and the form glides from within. "Stephens, how are you?" "Is that you?" are the only words that pass between the prisoner and his deliverer, and the two glide out, Stephens in his stocking feet. Stealthily down the stairs they proceed, and through the different passages leading to the boundary wall; one heavy door they lock behind them, and pursuit is cut off. It is twenty-five minutes past one, and seven forms pass through the wicket gate where only six had entered.

We shall certainly be within the mark, if we set down the revenues of the I. R. B. under Kelly, at from twelve to fifteen thousand pounds sterling weekly. Much of this money was misused. Chiefs, organisers, agents, and adventurers were, with few exceptions, men who lived to enjoy as well as to conspire, and who flung away large sums daily on their pleasures. Still there was much left to be used for the purposes of the conspiracy, and it was so employed with skill and judgment. A few hundred pikes manufactured weekly the last two or three years of his predominance; a few hundred rifles stolen from the volunteer magazines in England by men encouraged to join the English volunteer battalions with this very purpose; and a miscellaneous collection of firearms of all sorts—rusty old muskets, antiquated pistols, with here and there a better weapon—the whole number being, perhaps, less than 5,000—obtained by individuals according to their taste and means, made up the armaments of the I. R. B. when Kelly acceded to the command. Some years after Kelly had disappeared from the scene, and all danger of insurrection in Ireland was at an end, there was dug up on a farm near Cork, once occupied by a centre, a wooden cannon, carefully bound round with iron hoops, and evidently intended for service in the field. The new chiefs gave a principal portion of their attention to arming their followers efficiently. Wherever in England firearms were to be procured, there agents were established. Decidedly the ablest of these agents was "Colonel" Richard Burke—so well known in connection with the Clerkenwell explosion. A good deal of romance has been written about this man by himself and others. He has been credited with high birth, great and varied acquirements, and stirring adventures in many lands. The simple facts of his story are these. He was the son of a small farmer of Macroom, county Cork. He enlisted in the South Cork Militia, wherein he attained the rank of sergeant, and from which he deserted in May, 1863. We next find him serving in the 15th New York Volunteers during the war of Secession, and winning his way to the rank of captain. Here he was a prominent member of the Fenian Circle, known as "The Brothers Shears Circle." Whether he had joined the I. R. B. while in the South Cork Militia or not, we cannot say. But it is probable that he had, and that his desertion was the consequence. He was one of the numerous adventurers who left the United States for Ireland in 1865. Here he first rendered himself remarkable among the I. R. B. by his connection with "the Committee of Safety."

Of this committee Burke was, for a period, president. The year 1866 was marked by the Fenian trials, and the quarrels between the American leaders, events the stories of which are already fully known. The rank and file again clamoured for action; again the means were quite inadequate for such an end. Stephens, however, was in no way cast down, and in 1866 he visited New York, in order to force on some active policy, and then he met the famous cosmopolitan revolutionist Cluseret. According to the pamphleteer, Cluseret gave the following as his impression of Stephens:—"He was very clear and very explicit in his explanations. He was an organizer to the fingers' ends, and in this respect he was undoubtedly a man of superior merit; but he was vain, despotic, and overbearing beyond any man I ever saw. As regarded action, he was worth nothing. I left the house much disturbed in my mind. Stephens had explained to me at great length, and in much detail, the resources of the Fenian organization. He had given me a key to his organization, which did not leave out a single man in all Ireland; everything had been scrupulously and carefully visited and organised. As far as men were concerned, there no longer seemed need that any should be brought over. The whole of Ireland was enrolled in the organization either actually or standing well affected towards it; and as this was his strong point he was careful to furnish me with the most indubitable material proofs of the truth of facts he stated. I was present at the meeting of the various representatives of the important Irish Centres. The report was made for the whole of Ireland, as is done for a regiment, each sergeant-major reading the report of his company to the colonel. I was really astonished. 'But' remarked Cluseret, 'men were not everything; money and arms were also requisite. Of money they had some; as to arms, the Fenian confesses that we have already pointed out that they were miserably deficient therein. They tried to dazzle me with representations of their further resources, adds Cluseret, which was a characteristic proceeding on the part of Stephens and his subordinates. Cluseret, however, was not to be deceived; he was determined to search the whole thing to the bottom, which he succeeded at last in reaching. Then he found 'that the arms and ammunition existed only in imagination, or'—what was much the same—"in the arsenal"—of the enemy. As for the weapons and ammunition already procured, these had passed into the hands of Roberts and his senators; who insisted on making war in America, and who, therefore, would have nothing to do with Stephens and his schemes." In a word, Cluseret would not have an invasion of Ireland till 10,000 men, could be got together, and as this was out of the question the scheme fell through. We now pass rapidly on to the double explosion—the invasion of Canada and the rising in Ireland. In dealing with this latter subject the writer states that one Viliquan, who was in command in Connaught, did not trump up at all, and proceeds:—"We are shown how desperate were the circumstances under which this rebellion was undertaken, in a letter penned shortly afterwards by one of the Munster chiefs. He was writing in vindication of his character, for after the failure everybody distrusted his neighbor, and many were stigmatized as traitors without the smallest cause. 'I myself was expected to be in two places at the same time. While I was looked for in one quarter I was actually two miles off in another, committing a felony on a trade society that my very traducers might have means of subsistence, and therefore have no pretence for plundering during the anticipated march to Limerick Junction, I and my companions were on the road when we were met by an aide-de-camp from the chief, and ordered to fall back. He had received information of the arrest of Massey, and suspected treachery. I myself ran much greater risk from friends than foes. I was denounced as an informer. Shortly afterwards my wife overhearing a conversation respecting me, we took refuge in Liverpool Workhouse as a precautionary measure." The outbreak was arrested in like manner in many other

quarters. Like the writer of the foregoing letter, most of the local chiefs fled to England as the safest refuge. The insurgents were completely disappointed in their principal trust, the promised disaffection of the soldiery. Not a man quitted his colors. This was owing to the fact—that the majority of the disaffected had deserted already, and that the regimental centres had all been arrested. The I. R. B. were not cowards; they were simply unarmed, or nearly so, and reposed just as little confidence in their leaders as the latter deserved. Such is the story of the remarkable conspiracy. It was formidable in the number of its members, in its spirit, and in their devotion to the cause which they adopted the organization—the system of circles and centres was admirable. Its failure lay in these things—its division into two branches which could not but come into collision with one another, sooner or later and in the character and standing of its directors. It was true, as O'Mahony stated, that great numbers without the organisation sympathized with it. It is true also that the most influential personages were perfectly acquainted with its growth and extent, and ready to join, had it only been under respectable control. What the chiefs were we have shown. The third thing which went to defeat the conspiracy, was its secrecy. Now secret conspiracy, embracing or attempting to embrace a whole nation, never yet succeeded. The history of all successful conspiracies in the history of the success of a few conspirators. When, however we say that the plot was a failure, our meaning must be limited to the avowed object of the conspirators. The part it was anything but ineffectual. It was the main instrument in the hands of the Ministry which really revolutionised Ireland, by enacting those measures when the existence and extent of the conspiracy dictated as absolutely necessary."

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