

THE HOODED CLOAK

The cottage stood back a little from the side of the hard, white, dusty road that led to the city. Weary passersby looked enviously at this hot June evening into the cool, green garden, with its roses and lilacs and hollyhocks and the strips of peas and cabbages stretching down to the road.

The setting sun threw long shadows from the trees across the garden, and shone goldenly on the evenly-shatched roof, it crept in at the low kitchen window and lit up the flushed face of the girl who stood within, turning the dusky red hair about her forehead to an aureole of burnished copper.

"Thee stood at a long, low table, ironing linen taken freshly to-day from the bleaching-green. As she pressed the hot iron down on the cloth the scent of white clover rose upwards with the steam and filled the kitchen with its sweet, warm perfume.

The girl herself was tall and handsome, blue-eyed and fair, with the common fairness of red-haired people. "I wish you'd be better with him than I did with mine," she said, bitterly.

She drew her tattered shawl about her and left the house. It was a month later. The Dorans had been evicted and had left the neighborhood. Old Pat Brennan had wished to take his married daughter and her little children under the shelter of his own roof, but Maggie had fought against it.

This morning she was preparing to go into town to buy her wedding clothes. She looked very bright and handsome, dressed in a freshly-made up print gown, and she gazed long and lovingly at herself in the looking-glass as she put the finishing touches to her toilet.

"What an odious smell of mice there is—the dirty little bastards! I must get a bit of fat bacon and set a trap for them to-night," she said.

"Is it you, Mary?" she said. "I thought it was my father." "Good evening to ye, Maggie," the other replied. "No, there's no sign of your father yet. I have only come up the Ballagh road myself just now, and I didn't see him."

"Where you waitin' to see my father?" Maggie asked her, a little coldly. "Come in and sit down till I make a cup of tea for ye while ye're waiting."

"No, thank you kindly, Maggie," the other answered. "She came in and took a chair near the door, sat down and wiped her forehead with a handkerchief. Then, after a bit:

"It wasn't my father I wanted to see, either. I just wanted a few words with yerself, Maggie, and I'd be glad to have them said before he comes in."

"What is it, then?" Maggie asked, as she stopped. "Well, I suppose you've heard tell that himself is at the drink again. He broke out a fortnight ago and is hard at it ever since. It's worn out I am watching every evening for him to come home, thinkin' he'll surely be wilt off one of them carts some day or other. An' now the landlord threatens to put us out if the rent isn't paid immediately. There's three months due now," she said miserably.

"Let alone the children is so small, I'd take meself off bag and baggage and try to earn somethin' for them." Maggie looked up at her with cold, unsympathetic eyes.

"I'm sorry for your trouble, Mary Doran," she said a trifle impatiently. "But sure I can do nothin' for you, nor my father either. You made yer own bed."

"The other woman flushed and then went on again: "I know my father can't," she said. "But I thought you might have a bit to spare out o' the price o' them yics you sold—of course, I know I've no right to ask you. But if you could help me over this bit of trouble, just to keep the roof over us this time, I would make it up to you again, Maggie. I promise you, it's terrible to think of the children being hungry and homeless."

"She looked at her sister pleadingly and her lip trembled.

"Maybe where would I be gettin' money for the whole of ye?" asked Maggie with an angry frown. "Do ye think I've nothin' at all to do for meself with me bit o' savings?" "Sure of course I know you'd be wanting them, and you goin' to be married so soon," the other replied, soothingly. "You'd be wantin' a few things for yerself, agra. But sure Mike Tyrrell is a comfortable, sensible man, and will be able to give you anything you want by and by. I would not be spending too much money now, gettin' clothes or the like."

"That's all very well," said Maggie, with a scornful toss of her head. "You were never that particular about yerself that ye cared what tags ye had on."

"Well," said Mary after a while, as a last appeal, "I suppose, then, there would be no chance of ye lendin' me a pound or two. The rent comes to two pounds, but if I had the half of it it's likely I'd be best stay in my own house, Maggie, I'd pay it back to ye. I never cheated ye yet, did I?"

Maggie half relented for a moment. She thought of her sister and the four young children left homeless and desolate. Then she remembered how much she wanted that hooded cloak, and she grew hard again.

"But I wish ye good luck of yer fine clothes and yer grandeur. And I wish ye joy of your husband. I hope you'll do better with him than I did with mine," she said, bitterly.

She drew her tattered shawl about her and left the house. It was a month later. The Dorans had been evicted and had left the neighborhood. Old Pat Brennan had wished to take his married daughter and her little children under the shelter of his own roof, but Maggie had fought against it.

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WHO WERE THE FOUR MASTERS

It is to be regretted that there are a large proportion of Irishmen for whom the name of "The Four Masters" has put little interest or meaning. The very name seems to carry with it somewhat of a puzzle which does not help to create interest as to whom they were, what they did, or why they were called "The Four Masters."

Such a state of affairs shows ingratitude, unintentional or otherwise, to those immortal characters and a culpable neglect of the history of our country.

The names of the "Four Masters" are: Michael O'Clery, chief; Conary O'Clery, his brother; Conogry O'Clery, a distant relative; Fearfeasa O'Mulconry.

They compiled from scattered manuscripts and documents relating to Ireland, in her own language, what is now called the "Annals of Ireland," or the "Annals of the Four Masters." These annals are a systematic arrangement of chronology of events in Ireland, from the Deluge to A.D. 1616. The patron of this great work was Fergal O'Garra, lord of Moy O'Garra and Coolavin, in the County of Sligo, who first conceived the idea of collecting the materials, and communicated the same to Michael O'Clery, who, with the others, made the compilation for which they were liberally rewarded by O'Garra.

The work was commenced on the 22nd day of January, 1632, in the convent of the Franciscan Order, in Donegal, and it was finished in the same convent on the 10th of August, 1634.

One of the great institutions of Milesian Ireland was the office of ollamh (pron. Ollav) or historian, which was hereditary in every clan. It was the exclusive duty of these historians to keep a record of all transactions relating to the clan—its history, achievements, triumphs, etc. It was from one of the families who held this office to the royal O'Donnells for some hundreds of years that three of the four masters sprang.

The foundation of this family of the O'Clerys as ollamhs of Tyrconnell has a touch of romance about it. The O'Clerys were descendants from one of the kings of Connauht, and originally belonged to a district in that province called Hy Flachrach, which is comprised within the limits of the present diocese of Kilmacduagh.

In the thirteenth century they were displaced by the De Burgos and other Norman adventurers, and forced to migrate, some in the direction of Kilkenny, others northwards to Tyrarley, and others to Bredin O'Reilly.

About the year 1380 one of the descendants which had settled in Tyrarley, a young man of much learning and refinement named Cormac O'Clery, left home with the intention of seeking his fortune and the freedom for which he longed in the country of the O'Donnells, whose soil had not been polluted by the foot-prints of the invaders.

This abbey was at the time a great and wealthy monastery and like all such institutions in Ireland, was remarkable for its hospitality. Young O'Clery, being a cultured and scholarly man, attracted the attention of the abbot, who induced him to remain in the place as a professor of Canon and Civil Law, where he made the acquaintance of Matthew O'Sgingin, the historical ollamh of the O'Donnells, who lived in Kibarron Castle, some three miles from the monastery.

O'Sgingin, then an old man, was so much impressed with the young man's demeanor and scholarly attainments that, having no male issue living, he offered to make O'Clery his son-in-law and heir, on condition that if the marriage was blessed by a son, that son should be brought up as the intended ollamh of the O'Donnells in all the acquirements necessary for the office.

The young man willingly accepted these conditions, and fulfilled them faithfully, and from that marriage sprang a line of ollamhs which continued unbroken down to the present day.

Some of these ollamhs were men of great eminence, not only in history but in general literature. The great grandson of Cormac O'Clery was called "Diarmuid of the Three Schools," because he kept a school of literature, a school of history and a school of poetry. The reigning prince of the O'Donnells was pleased to make a further valuable grant of land to the extensive ancestral possessions of this celebrated scholar around Kibarron Castle as a mark of appreciation and to help to maintain the schools and the hospitality for which the place was noted. The school at Kibarron flourished down to the "Flight of the Earls" in the fatal year of 1607. Then, for the first time in the history of Ireland, the despoiler could exercise his will unchecked throughout the land. The lands of Kibarron became the property of the alien, and the school shared the fate of so many other sanctuaries of Celtic learning in Ireland.

The celebrated group of men who have been called "The Four Masters" included three of the illustrious stock which began with the wanderer from Tyrarley—Brother Michael O'Clery, Conary O'Clery and Peregrine O'Clery. Brother Michael in his youth was known as "Tadhg an t-Sleibhe," that is "Tim of the Mountain," a name which has a special significance when chronicles with the struggle in which Red Hugh took such a prominent part.

He had been an accomplished Irish scholar and antiquary before he joined the Franciscans at Louvain, in France, about the year 1607. He was soon afterwards sent back to Ireland by Father John Colgan, lecturer of theology in this monastery, to collect material for the great work, "The Lives of the Irish Saints," which is associated with Father Colgan's name. Brother Michael fulfilled his mission to perfection, but did also a great deal more. He collected materials for the "Annals of the Four Masters" and three other works—"The Succession of the Kings of Ireland," "The Book of Conquests," and "The Martyrology of Donegal." The three latter works were completed before the annals were begun.

Conary O'Clery was a layman with no earthly possessions save his books and learning. Beyond his connection with the Annals there is little or nothing known of him.

FARM HYGIENE

Unsanitary Closets—The Dry Earth System Department of Agriculture, Commissioner's Branch, Ottawa, Sept. 22, 1904.

Attention was recently called to the fact that out of some 100 to 200 samples of water from farm wells analyzed annually by Prof. Shutt, Chemist of the Dominion Experimental Farms, not one-fourth are found safe and wholesome. By far the greater number have to be utterly condemned, and it seems very evident that a great improvement in our water supplies is necessary.

This dangerous condition of many farm wells is undoubtedly due to pollution by unsanitary closets. There is no reason why we should have our farm-houses to-day in the semi-barbaric condition in which so many of them are, with their closets and privies a menace to public health.

We may talk about bacteriology, sanitation, and so on, but all that and a great deal more, is included in what we understand by "cleanliness." The lack of cleanliness is primarily a matter of ignorance, and secondarily a matter of laziness.

An Ontario editor, who is a member of the Board of Health in his town and familiar with sanitary conditions in his section, says in effect: "Perhaps the farmers of this district are worse than elsewhere, but of all the farms I have visited during the past few years, I have yet to learn of one closet kept with a regard to common decency, not to speak of hygienic laws. This state of affairs is utterly execrable. In the towns the closets are inspected by order of the boards of health, and the people are gradually being persuaded to adopt the dry earth system. Very few of the left and new ones are being dug. Inspection by county and township boards of health may be impracticable, but the self-respect of farmers and their families ought to mean something in this respect, if regard for health means nothing.

Ordinary shallow wells in the vicinity of the old-fashioned privy pits are almost certain to become contaminated by seepage. The soil is an excellent filtering and cleansing agent, oxidizing inorganic matter rapidly, and tending to check the development of many of the common putrefactive bacteria. But the soil is only able to dispose of a certain amount of contaminating material, and such disposal takes time, so that by heavy rains the contaminating matter may be carried far into the earth below the true purifying layer, and thus soak unchanged into the wells. An old pit which has been closed and covered with earth is almost equally dangerous, as the decaying matter in the large mass of excreta contained therein is a matter of years, unless hastened by the proximity of trees whose roots reach the pit. The contents should be removed and spread upon a field, and the pit left open long enough to permit the decomposition of any organic matter remaining.

If farmers once took time to think of these matters, there would undoubtedly be a great improvement. Windmills are now both cheap and common, and there is no reason why well-to-do farmers should not have a water system in their houses, with all the conveniences and advantages which residents in the cities enjoy from the water works systems there established.

Though not quite so convenient, the dry earth closet is so cheap and so satisfactory from the sanitary point of view that no farmer can discover a reasonable cause for refusing to adopt it. A well laid cement concrete floor will be found by far the easiest to keep in a clean and wholesome condition. A stout box of suitable size, mounted on runners and with a strong hook at one end to which a horse may be attached, makes a receptacle that can be conveniently drawn to the field or barnyard to be emptied. This box may be made wholly or in part of sheet-iron and if the bottom be semi-circular in form a kettle of hot water will be found sufficient to loosen the frozen contents in winter. Galvanized iron buckets, larger at the top than at the bottom, are also easy to empty in winter. The nature of the receptacle is largely a matter of convenience; the essential features of the system are the storing and use of a plentiful supply of dry earth and the emptying of the receptacle regularly. If the contents be spread thinly over the surface of a field, they will be decomposed in a very few days with no danger to the public health.

Ashes should not be used for a substitute for earth, and road dust is very little better. The surface soil of a field or garden that has been frequently cultivated will be found soft. It may be run through a lumpy screen. It is always advisable to keep a good supply on hand, as it becomes drier and better with age when stored in a bin.

Peregrine O'Clery, the third of the group, was the last historical ollamh of the O'Donnells. He had written a life of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, which from its merits, was largely drawn upon in compiling the Annals. At one time he owned some landed property, but like so many of the "mere gentry" of the day, he finally settled in the barony of Erris, County Mayo, where he died.

Fearfeasa O'Mulconry, the fourth of the Masters, was descended from the great stock of the O'Mulconry's of Ballymulconry in the County Roscommon. They were historical ollamhs to the O'Connors and men of the highest repute in all matters of their profession. Fearfeasa was an eminent Irish scholar and antiquarian.

Besides the four mentioned, there sat at the same table to give assistance and advice Peregrine O'Duigenan, ollamh to the McDermotts and O'Rourkes, and Maurice O'Mulconry, brother of Fearfeasa, who remained with the others only a month.

After four and a half years' unremitting labor the great work was completed on the 10th of August, 1636. The Annals of the four Masters, besides their inestimable historical value, remain as a living monument of the self-sacrifice and devotion to duty which are so common in Irish history, and which are always most conspicuous when the cause seems hopeless.

JOHN J. MADDEN The Gael.

Table with columns: TENTH MONTH 31 DAYS, DAY OF MONTH, DAY OF WEEK, COLOR OF VESTMENT, and THE ROSARY THE HOLY ANGELS. Includes dates for 1904 and various feast days like S. Gregory of Armenia, Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, etc.

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If the man who has hitherto been careless in this particular will adopt and maintain a proper sanitary system in connection with his closet, he will find himself gaining largely, not only in self-respect, but in the respect of his family and of the strangers within his gates. Furthermore, he may thereby escape the ravages of such diseases as typhoid fever, which are so frequently traced to the use of contaminated water.

The Swan Song of a Blind Religious In the Chronicle of the English Augustinian Canonesses Regular of the Lateran published in Edinburgh by Dom. Adam Hamilton, O.S.B., the story is related of a poor Irish priest who studied in Louvain and could not tell where to say his Mass, for he had been refused everywhere, and was accepted to say the first Mass in St. Monica's. Many interesting recollections of Mother Margaret Clement appear in these chapters, but none more touching than that of her death. She was blind; she carried herself with humility and subjection to all; she would not even touch an apple without asking leave of her superior. "The more I have gone before you," she said, "in my years and profession the more I must show you example by my life and manners." Sixty years had passed since, when but a child, she had entered the monastery; she had seen her niece—"two pawns to leave in my place"—professed. "And as it were, reflecting of her death, sitting at the high table by the Mother that was then, being very merry in recreation, she said unto her: "Good Mother, give me leave to do as the swan doth, that is to sing you a song now before my death, which the Prioresse answered: "Good Mother, let us hear it." And with that she sent out such a voice that the company admired. It was a Dutch ditty, but the matter was on the Spouse and the Bridegroom. That was her last, for she never came to the Refectory after, for the next day she, sitting in the chair in her place, and reading with the convent a dirge for the month, her sickness took her vehemently with a burning fit, yet would she not stir till the Office was out; and then she was last to her call, and lived but four days after."

W. A. CLEMONS, Publication Clerk.

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