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LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD

An Historical Romance.

BY M. M'D. BOKIN, Q. C.

CHAPTER III.—CONTINUED.

"Ask Tony there," returned the other; "he is as good a judge as another. He, too, the gentlest creature on God's earth, has been a rebel in his day. The first time I ever laid eyes on him he was engaged in an act of desperate rebellion. He had got his legal lord and master by the throat, and was squeezing the life out of him with his bare hands. Two Loyalist bloodhounds were tearing at the naked limbs of the 'rebel.' A third Loyalist (human this one) whom he had flung into a swamp was fumbling for his pistol. If I had not come up at the moment and taken part with the rebel you would have lacked the kindest of nurses when you needed was most."

Lord Edward was silenced for the moment; then he broke out again abruptly—"I cannot think why you should denounce war so. You are a soldier yourself, as brave and as fierce as any of us."

"When the bloody work is doing, the wild beast instinct that is at the bottom of all our hearts gets the better of me, I suppose," said Blake. "But I have no pleasure, be sure, in the thought of slaughter beforehand; no pride when it is done and over."

"Then why fight?" asked Lord Edward. "You blame me for fighting for liberty. What do you fight for?"

"For freedom—the one thing worth fighting for," he responded, with such earnestness that it startled the other. His eyes flashed and his color heightened as he spoke. "I fight for the freedom of my adopted land. Nor will I deny that the love of the land of my fathers inspires me, too."

"But you will pardon my Irish hastiness," he said more gently, noticing his friend's rising color and misinterpreting its meaning. "I have no right to speak in such a strain to my English guest."

"I am no Englishman," cried Lord Edward Fitzgerald, proudly. "I am of the Geraldines—Irish to my finger-tips. In name, and race, and heart, Fitzgerald is Irish of the Irish."

Blake turned quickly, with something like veneration in his face and voice. His dark sunburnt cheeks glowed to a ruddier brown; his blue eyes beamed with a warmer light. "Of the Geraldines," he said, wonderingly. "More Irish than the Irish themselves. The grand old race, who were ever true to the old land when her own sons failed her."

But the enthusiasm died out of his face in a moment, like light from the sky when the sun sets. "It cannot be," he muttered, "a Geraldine in the army of England; a Geraldine in the ranks of Ireland's enslavers, battling against liberty in the Old World as in the New. The descendant of Sir John Thomas has never surely sunk to this."

He thought aloud, unconscious of the insult his words conveyed. Lord Edward listened with flushed cheeks. His hand dropped unconsciously on his sword's hilt, but, remembering his life saved, gratitude mastered his anger.

"This is cruel," he broke out, with a passionate sob, "when you have tied my hands with kindness."

Blake looked at him with surprise. Then he felt how harsh his own words were. "Forgive me," he said, "I never meant it; I stretched out my hand as he spoke, 'I promise you, my lord,' he added, 'I will never again touch on a topic that so pains you.'"

But Lord Edward would not let the subject be so put aside. "Believe me," he said, "I love the old land as dearly as any of my race, and would as willingly have died for her liberty. There is no longer need. Surely even here in the wilderness the glorious news must have reached you. Ireland is free at last. Grattan and the volunteers have done the glorious work. I would have dearly loved to have had a hand in it, but I was a boy when it was done."

As he spoke he looked like a knight of the old days, eager for glorious adventure. Blake gazed at him with an admiration in which there was pity too. "Can a nation be calmed free," he asked, bitterly, "of which three-fourths of the people are as abject slaves as the black skins who pick cotton in the Southern States? I am an Irish Catholic, my lord; I went on with increased bitterness. 'I am any man's equal here. What would I be in my native land—my 'free' native land, as you call it? What, but the bond-slave of every man who could boast of a newer and more fashionable faith. Do not wonder at me,' he continued, for he saw that Lord Edward was surprised and even startled at the heat with which he spoke. "The old faith and the old land are all I have left to love or live for. All I know of my own story is told in a few words, mostly hearsay; the rest guess work. Of my father I know nothing, except that he, too, was an Irish Catholic gentleman who came

out here before I was born. My mother died at the hour of my birth. My father suddenly disappeared. Whether he is dead or living I cannot tell. No one can tell but Christy, and he keeps his secret stoutly, as he swore to keep it. He was my father's foster brother, and was alone trusted. He is at once my guardian, my comrade, and my servant—the last at his own command. I am quite alone in the world—an orphan and an exile. I have no friends, no relatives, no country. I long to go back to the dear old land, but slavery would not suit me. I should rebel, and get hanged. Can you wonder that I plunged eagerly into this war for freedom and against England? Can you wonder that I rejoiced to find a countryman in you, to whom my heart leaped out from the first, even when I stood in arms against you? Can you wonder that I grieved to find an Irishman in the ranks of his country's oppressors?"

"Not wittingly," cried Lord Edward, eagerly. "The allegiance of my heart is Ireland. If ever she needs it, my sword will be hers, too, against the world. Believe me, I believed her free. I joined in the general huzzas at Grattan's triumph, without asking why. But how comes it that you know more about Ireland than I do?"

"Christy is largely responsible," replied the other. "He was a rebel himself, and he has made me one. He has filled my childhood with stories of my country's wrongs, and sufferings, and glory. Since I have grown to be a man I have read and thought of little else. From all I have heard and read I am convinced that Grattan's Parliament cannot last. I hardly wish it to last. I speak now as an Irishman, even more than as an abolitionist. This spurious freedom, wrested from England's fears, is worse than worthless. Freedom and slavery cannot live together in the same land. To be really free all must be free. You cannot keep liberty long balanced on a point so narrow as Grattan's Parliament. It will topple over one side or another. England will recover by division and corruption the mastery she sacrificed for fear, unless united Irishmen strike together one brave blow for real liberty. Will the great lesson of unity be ever learned? Must the fairest and the bravest land on earth be a slave always? Why cannot we follow America's example? I should like happy if I might but make one in her army when Ireland meets her enslavers as she has never yet met them—on a fair field—to settle the question of her freedom or slavery for ever. I make no bargain with Providence for the issue of that fight. It is not needed. What Irishman dare doubt of victory in such a cause?"

The hot blood of the Geraldines coursed like fire through the veins of Lord Edward as he uttered these words. "When united Irishmen meet to strike a blow for freedom," he cried, with like ardour, "I will not be the last in the charge."

"You will be first," said Blake, solemnly. "Your race calls you to the front."

His strong right hand fervently grasped Geraldine's as he spoke.

The two stood, hand clasped in hand, under the silent stars that now spangled the black sky. In their hearts they felt a sacred oath had been sworn, and the night wind that came stealing up from the far wood—the only moving thing abroad—seemed to whisper a sad amen.

Lord Edward, when he left, carried away Tony for good and all—never to part on this side of the grave. Maurice Blake rode with him to the British camp.

At parting, the young Geraldine stretched a cordial hand to his first enemy, the grim silent Christy, who wrung it with awkward earnestness. "Master Maurice has told me, my lord," he said, "if I had known you were of the old stock in the old land I would have cut my hand off sooner than it should shake a sword against you. May be yet—"

Before he could complete the sentence the chestnut thoroughbred, delirious with long idleness, tore them apart, and in two bounds was beside the great black charger "Phooka" that carried Blake so sedately.

Christy watched the two as they rode down the slope toward the distant plain, shining with Tony a little in the rear. The same thoughts came to his mind that filled their night before. "Pray God," he said, "The day will come when those two will lead us in our own land. There is a rusty pike in the ditch of a little cabin by the Shannon river at home, that will not be far behind in the first rush. It was in my grandfather's hands when they murdered him on his own threshold long ago, and I will carry no other weapon when the great day comes."

He watched the two young men, with his hand slanted over his eyes, until they disappeared around the edge of the forest. Then, with a curious mixture of tenderness and heroism, he turned and followed them into the hut, and the landscape lay silent and solitary in the all-pervading sunlight.

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CHAPTER IV.
"AND MAIDENS CALL IT LOVE IN IDLENESS."

—Midsummer Night's Dream.
"Poor, honest lord, brought low by his own heart."
—Timon of Athens.

A month later found Lord Edward Fitzgerald tumbling across the Atlantic in the good ship *The Alcory*.

Crossing the Atlantic was not then a six days' pleasure trip. Six weeks from shore to shore was counted a fast voyage. Before a fortnight of the time was over he was deadly tired of the journey. In compliment to his wound, or rather in remembrance of it—for it was completely healed—he sailed in a passenger, not a troopship. He was the duller on the board, and was shy of making new acquaintances. The ship was peopled chiefly by dismissed British officials and disappointed place-hunters.

Lord Edward's notions of the merits of the war were further enlarged by the lamentations of this greedy crowd, who, without them, and eagerly looked forward to a speedy renewal of the conflict, and "extermination of the rebels."

There was but one man on board whose acquaintance Lord Edward cared to make. The ship's books told the name—Dr. Denver, and the name was familiar to Lord Edward. He knew the doctor to be one of the shining lights of the profession in Dublin. He knew him to be a special friend and favourite of his mother's.

He had a vague recollection of having seen that handsome old face when he had come in, a little boy, to desert in the great dining-room at Carlton. But beyond that the acquaintance did not reach.

It was in the doctor's daughter, Norah, however, not in the doctor, that Lord Edward was most keenly interested.

Norah Denver was, indeed, beyond expression, beautiful—fascinating alike in face and manner. Her father's old-fashioned, dignified courtesy was softened down in her to sweet womanly graciousness, that had an indefinable charm in it.

A great coil of soft brown, wavy hair crowned her shapely head, framing a broad forehead of pure white. There was a suggestion of resolute will in the shapely mouth and clear-cut chin, but her smile was of a winning sweetness, and her clear, shining eyes had all the frank candour of a child's.

Withal there was about her a gentle dignity which charmed even while it restrained.

Lord Edward, despite his shyness, had availed himself of the informality of ship life to get on speaking terms with the father first, then with the daughter. His attentions, sanctioned by the narrowness of their little world and mutual dependence of its inhabitants, were graciously received by Norah Denver and acquaintance imperceptibly ripened into friendship.

There was no touch of restraint in their intercourse. They walked and chatted on deck in the freshness of the morning and in the gorgeous sunset. Norah, with her bright and pencil-captured glimpses of the changing beauty of sky and water, while Lord Edward praised and wondered. Despite of this, perhaps because of this, Lord Edward was not quite satisfied. He had a vague half-latent feeling of discontent. Their intimacy was too brotherly and sisterly for his taste. These brave eyes looked too frankly into his own. There was no flatterer of self-consciousness in her greeting. The color never heightened on the soft cheek. The long lashes never drooped over the bright eyes when they met.

He felt it a kind of duty to himself to be in love with this beautiful and charming girl, whose life he had the good luck to save. But there was no hint of response.

Norah had lived in the gay Irish capital. She had lived, too, in the wildest part of the county of Kildare, where her father was known far and wide as "the poor man's doctor." To the peasants' mud-cabins, as "the doctor's daughter, God bless her," she was always welcome. She loved her poor best.

She always stoutly maintained that the Irish peasant and his wife were the finest gentleman and lady in the world since Adam and Eve. She had a thousand stories to tell of their quaint humor, their tact, and courtesy, and unobtrusive tenderness. She had stories, too, of the savagery with which they were treated, and the misery they endured. Lord Edward, as he looked in her tear-dimmed eyes, felt his own cheeks burn with shame to know such things were in his own land, which, in his blank ignorance, he had boasted to be free.

He felt, too, while he listened, that he must and did love this girl, in every way so lovable—and yet—he never felt with her the foolish, wild palpitations which the mere sight of that stately, self-possessed young beauty—Lady Gertrude Glenneire—could provoke in those days when he first donned his uniform for the wars.

Even now that calm, fair face would sometimes look in upon his heart, and set it fluttering restlessly at his own foolishness.

While Norah was present her frank, unaffected kindness put love-making out of the question. He was content to be serenely happy. He found himself talking to her as freely as he had talked to Maurice Blake, under the high roof of the primeval forest.

But when she left him, he was angry with himself for the chance he had missed. One evening late they sat together on deck, with a pleasant rustling and rippling motion the good ship drew swiftly forward before a favorable wind. A full moon shone in the cloudless sky, glorifying the waters. It was no mere white disk, but a great globe of pure light—God's own lamp hung high in the heavens. The moonlight seemed to mingle with the young man's blood, filling him with soft and delicate desires. There was a tender embarrassment in his eyes and voice, which Norah was quick to notice, but quietly ignored. She listened with a smile of quiet amusement to the high flown compliments with which he now and again broke the even tenor of their talk. At last she could no longer pretend to mistake his meaning, and frankly faced the situation.

"Lord Edward," she said, abruptly breaking in on a compliment, "will you grant me a favor—a very easy one to grant?"

"Can you doubt it," he replied, with tender passion in his voice that for the instant was fully felt. "I would die to please you."

"It is something much simpler than that," she answered, smiling. "And I ask it for your own sake as much as mine—and yet I hardly know how to ask it."

She paused for a moment in evident confusion—then went on bravely. "I want you to give up the foolish notion that you are bound to love me, because we have been so much alone together. You like me, I trust, a little. I like you and admire you; I cannot say how much. But of what is called love there is not the least bit in the world between us two, and there never can be."

He tried to utter a fervent protestation, but could find no words at the moment. She held up her finger in playful warning, and went on quickly before he could speak.

"It is the proper thing of course, that we should fall in love," she said, smiling, "or would be in a romance. But we cannot set our hearts to what time pleases the story-tellers. Best not try. It gives a touch of insincerity to our true friendship. Those pretty things you have been saying for the last half-hour must be very troublesome to you to devise. Forgive me, my lord, they are tiresome for me to listen to. I suppose"—she was blushing now a rosy red, but determined to have her say out—"when folk are really in love such soft nonsense is very pleasant. But this I know—it is not for us. Be my friend always, my lord, my true friend, as I am yours, but never

make believe to yourself, or to me, to be my lover. This is the favor I have to ask."

Lord Edward heard her with something like relief, yet there was a little tinge of wounded self-love mixed with it, that she could talk so calmly.

He leaped up, and paced the deck two or three times before he could reply. "I will trouble you with my love no more," he said, a little stiffly. Then her kind smile disarmed his reticence. "You are right and I was wrong," he added with all his own cheery frankness. "Friends, then, let it be, true friends, and allies while life lasts."

With a kindly pressure of his hand, she silently closed the contract. From that hour the last shade of restraint passed from their friendship, and a few days later he found himself talking quite naturally to Norah of Gertrude Glenneire, while she listened and smiled.

Dr. Denver was a man whose friendship was hard either to win or lose. But he could not resist the brave, true spirit that looked out of Lord Edward's frank eyes, and spoke in every tone of his pleasant voice.

The doctor was deeply interested in America. He was specially curious about the war. Lord Edward had many stories of his own experience, stories told without a touch of boastfulness, or of that mock modesty which jabs still more unpleasantly on a listener's ear.

On his latest adventures he was, however, strangely silent. It was not till he and Dr. Denver had grown very intimate that Maurice Blake's name was incidentally mentioned, as they sat tranquilly smoking their after-dinner cigar, on deck in the cool of the evening.

The doctor half-started from his seat with sudden surprise and interest at the name. "Maurice Blake," he repeated. "Did you meet a Maurice Blake in America, my lord? Pray tell me how and when. Believe me, I have special reason for wishing to know."

He listened with gradually growing interest as Lord Edward complied. When he came to Blake's brief story of himself, Dr. Denver broke in once or twice with eager questions.

"How strange," said the doctor musingly, when the story was finished, "if your new friend should prove the son of my old friend—Sir Valentine Blake, of Cloonlara—of whose sad story you may have heard something. Your father and he were friends, I know. It were still stranger if by mere accident on my return I should chance on something of the news for which my journey was made in vain. I will tell you what brought me to America, if you care to hear it. I begin to think you can help me."

"Some years before you were born," the doctor went on, "I one night received a hurried summons to my hospital. A woman was dying, they told me, and begged to see me. I went, and found one whom I thought long dead, the disheveled and discolored wife of my old friend, Sir Valentine Blake. No need to trouble your young ears with the sad story. She had died with a false friend from the best and truest of husbands. She shamelessly flaunted her shame in the face of the city. There was a duel, and the wronged husband was wounded almost to death. The whisper ran of foul play, and of a pistol fired before the handkerchief fell. I think I must have been so for Sir Valentine was famous for his skill, and the other escaped without a scratch."

"His son—if Maurice Blake be his son—inherits that quality at least," said Lord Edward. "His aim is miraculous."

"The rest of the story is short as sad," the doctor continued. "Before Sir Valentine was again on his feet his guilty wife and her paramour both disappeared. The man was heard of now and again on a career of reckless vice through Europe. Of the woman nothing afterwards was seen or heard. Into what vile haunts she sank I cannot tell, but the rumor of her death was spread. It grew to be an accepted fact. My broken-hearted friend, Sir Valentine, believed himself a free man. But his freedom availed him nothing. He was filled with a fierce, unreasoning shame that almost touched his reason. He was a Catholic, and the penal laws had long galled his proud soul. His wife's dishonor made him desperate. It is said that he strove to organize a revolt among the broken-spirited peasants of Connought, and failed. More than a year before that night on which I stood by his deathbed, in the bleak hospital ward, he had fled to America, leaving his vast estate in Connought in the hands of his twin brother, who, as time went on with no word from the wanderer, assumed the baronetcy without dispute."

"The wretched woman, who had dishonored his name and broken his heart, sent for me, not as a doctor but as his nearest friend, who had been by his side at that most unhappy day on which he had made her his wife. She was dying now beyond all doubt, and she knew it. It was pitiful to witness the agony of her remorse. She begged me to beg forgiveness from her injured husband. She felt, she said, that she could not rest in her grave without it. From her own lips I wrote her agonizing entreaty for pardon. She signed, and dated it with trembling hands, and tying it in a packet with her marriage certificate and marriage ring, implored me to deliver all safely to her husband, to whom it meant freedom and it might be happiness. I promised, and she thanked me fervently."

"Our conference lasted late into the night. When I called at noon next day she was in her death agony; she died almost as I arrived. I wrote at once to Sir Valentine, whose address I was the one man in Ireland that knew. I received a reply, that set my heart at ease. The very day after his wife's death—seven weeks before my letter was received—he had married a young American girl, to whom he was devoted with all the passionate tenderness of his noble heart. He freely forgave his dead wife. In his great joy there was no room for a bitter thought. He talked, in his letter, about returning to Ireland soon, and begged me to keep safe for him the packet of which I spoke."

"I heard no more. Though I wrote again and again, my letters were returned unopened. A score of years have not chilled my interest in my lost friend. It was in the wild hope of finding him I made this voyage to America, and failed. I heard nothing but vague rumors of his second wife's death and his frenzy and flight. Something was said of immense wealth acquired by a lucky purchase of land close to New York the first year he came out."

"There was talk too of a son; and the name Maurice was mentioned. This son lived, I was told, with his father's foster-brother in the backwoods the life of a trapper until the war broke out, when he joined the insurgents and greatly distinguished himself."

"It is the same; it is the same!" broke in Lord Edward, excitedly—"beyond all doubt the same. The foster-brother's name was Christy Calkin, was it not—a tall, gaunt man?"

"Yes, yes," said the doctor, smiling at the young fellow's eagerness, even while he shared it. "Honest, uncomplaining Christy. Hard and tough as a spring of shilleagh which has been seasoned for three winters in the kitchen chimney, but with the living sap in his heart still. As surely it is the same."

The discovery was a new bond between them all. Norah was, if possible, more excited than the doctor. She loved to listen to Lord Edward's generous praise of the son of her father's dearest friend. His strength, his skill, his courage, softened by his strange tenderness—above all, his passionate love for the old land—delighted her. To Lord Edward's surprise, she was far more interested in Maurice Blake than in Gertrude Glenneire.

So the last half of the voyage flew swiftly as the wind that sped the good ship to the Irish shore. The three friends, taking coach from Cork to Dublin, slipped safely through the highwaymen that infested the roads, and after a short four days' journey arrived in the Irish metropolis, then the brightest and gayest in Europe.

CHAPTER V.
"A PLACER ON ALL COWARDS SAY I, AND A VENGEANCE TOO."
—Henry IV. Part I.
"But now he was returned and that war thoughts."
—Much Ado About Nothing.

"Thurio, give back, or else embrace thy death. Come not within the arms of my wrath: Do not name Silvia thine."

The gallant and noble young soldier, fresh from the wars, speedily became a lion in Dublin society. He was a gay young lion, and the bright Dianias of the Irish capital hunted him gaily. Sweet maidens, till night, shot timid glances from under silken lashes, and the bright eyes of bolder beauties looked straight into his own with an audacious challenge. The life he lived was delightful—it was delicious. Youth and wit and beauty filled the gay Irish capital at the time. In the brilliant debates of the House of Commons he heard from the inspired lips of Henry Grattan the thrilling eloquence of freedom which has reverberated through the hundred years, and which even then stirred the crowd of brilliant, selfish place-hunters who thronged the benches, with something like generous emotion.

Lord Edward entered frankly into the social life of the brilliant capital, where wit and wine flowed with equal freedom; where Curran, night after night, spread the intellectual feast with the careless, lavish generosity of wealth that was not out limit. The colored light of sparkling fancy played on all things in that bright society, changing them from what they were, and showing them by turns, fantastic, splendid, or grotesque, as the whim of the magician changed. At the theatre there were actors whose skill reached to the height of genius:

"There Shakespeare's men and women lived in truth. There gaily laughed the wit of Sheridan. And gentle Goldsmith's gentle humor smiled."

Life was, for the high-spirited young soldier, one round of enjoyment from morning till night, and that night and morning too offered merriment to minister to his enjoyment. Any other man than Lord Edward would have been spoiled by the flattery that followed him everywhere. Above all, the soft, delicious feminine adulation, so delicately administered, was most dangerous. But the simple modesty of his nature was an antidote against the subtle poison, and saved him harmless.

He took his pleasure gaily, and for a while unthinkingly. It is not to be denied that sadder and nobler thoughts, with which Blake, and after Blake, Norah Denver, inspired him, hid away in some inner recess of his heart, were not lost, indeed, but half forgotten. As he floated with the current on the bright, warm surface of the stream, he had little thought of the chill and darkness that lay below. Freedom was the fashion in Dublin; the slavery of the people was placidly ignored. Where wealth and luxury flaunted themselves for ever before his eyes, scant blame was his that he could not see the abject want and misery on which the brilliant edifice was built.

Above all, his senses were dazzled and his heart made drunk by the bright light and beauty of his old flame—Lady Gertrude Glenneire. The passion which had smouldered in his heart through all changing scenes, was kindled to clear flame by the first glance of those bright eyes. He had neither the art nor the desire to hide his adoration. She received him very graciously, with a gentle tolerance of the old error or misapprehension that was like acceptance. She sedately paraded her conquest with a woman's pride. No one could doubt his passion that watched the rapture of his happy face as they sat whispering together, or swung around in voluptuous motion to the languishing swell of the music in the smooth whirl of the waltz, then a newly-arrived and welcome stranger in Dublin ball-rooms. Gaily commencing warless domesticity, but she was gracious almost tender, especially when they were alone. Her calm voice took a softer tone, her proud eyes shone with gentler light, when he was by.

TO BE CONTINUED.
All Run Down.
This is the condition of thousands. Squanderers have been of sleep, rest and finally of health. The mad pursuit of place, power, and self leaves them broken in spirit, weak in body, shattered in nerve. In the long run, the longer it is, their days are spent in desire, impotent and powerless, for they have bankrupted health. Thousands are on the road. They heed not the warning that nature gives. Sleeplessness, moria, despondency, and fatigue add their mournful notes to the still sad music of humanity. Tired! Tired! Tired! You need aid. Your system requires a staff upon which to lean, and your brain rest for increasing vigor! Health and strength are the alternatives for decay and death. Coca, combined with Maline, affords that staff. It will give tone to the nervous system, strength to the shattered nerves, sleep to the weary eyes and rest to the tired brain. Maline with Coca Wine will build up the body and give strength, vigor, and health to the weak and debilitated. Maline with Coca Wine is sold by all druggists.

HOW THE MONSOON WAS SAVED.

CHAPTER I.