

# THE COLLEGIANS.

A TALE OF GARRYOWEN.

By GERALD GRIFFIN.

## CHAPTER I.

HOW  
GARRYOWEN  
ROSE,  
AND  
HOW  
IT  
FELL.

The little ruined outlet, which gives its name to one of the most popular national songs of Erin, is situated on the acclivity of a hill near the city of Limerick, commanding a not unpleasant view of that fine old town, with the noble stream that washes its battered towers, and a richly cultivated surrounding country. Tradition has preserved the occasion of its celebrity, and the origin of its name, which appears to be compounded of two Irish words signifying "Owen's garden." A person so-called was the owner, about half a century since, of a cottage and plot of ground on this spot, which, from its contiguity to the town, became a favorite holiday resort with the young citizens of both sexes, a lounge presenting accommodations somewhat similar to those which are offered to the London mechanic by the Battersea tea-gardens. Owen's garden was the general rendezvous for those who sought for simple amusement or for dissipation. The old people drank together under the shades of trees—the young played ball, goal, or other athletic exercises on the green; while a few, lingering by the hedge-rows, with their fair acquaintances, cheated the time with sounds less boisterous, indeed, but yet possessing their fascination also.

The festivities of our fathers, however, were frequently distinguished by so fierce a character of mirth, that, for any difference in the result of their convivial meetings, they might as well have been pitched encounters. Owen's garden was soon as famous for scenes of strife, as it was for mirth and humor; and broken heads became a staple article of manufacture in the neighborhood.

This new feature in the diversions of the place was encouraged by a number of young persons of rank somewhat superior to that of the usual frequenters of the garden. They were the sons of the more respectable citizens, the merchants and wholesale traders of the city, just turned loose from school, with a greater supply of animal spirit than they had wisdom to govern. These young gentlemen, being fond of wit, amused themselves by forming parties at night, to wring the heads off all the geese, and the knockers off all the hall-doors in the neighborhood. They sometimes suffered their genius to soar as high as the breaking of lamp, and even the demolition of a watchman; but perhaps this species of joking was found a little too serious to be repeated often, for few achievements of so daring a violence are found amongst their records. They were obliged to content themselves with the less ambitious distinction of destroying the knockers and store-locks, annoying the peaceable inmates of the neighboring houses with long-continued assaults on the front doors, terrifying the quiet passengers with every species of insult and provocation and indulging their fratricidal propensities against all the geese in Garryowen.

The fame of the "Garryowen boys" soon spread far and wide. Their deeds were celebrated by some inglorious minstrel of the day, in that air which has since resounded over every quarter of the world, and even disputed the palm of national popularity with "Patrick's day." A string of jolly verses were appended to the tune, which soon enjoyed a notoriety similar to that of the famous "Lillibulero, bulam-a-la" which sung King James out of his three kingdoms. The name Garryowen was as well known as that of the Irish Nema-tian, Limerick, itself, and Owen's little garden became almost a synonym for Ireland.

But that principle of existence which assigns to the life of man its periods of youth, maturity and de-

ca, has its analogy in the fate of village, as in that of empires. Assyria fell, and so did Garryowen! Rome had its decline, and Garryowen was not immortal. Both are now an idle sound, with nothing but the recollections of old tradition to invest them with an interest. The still notorious suburb is little better than a heap of rubbish, where a number of smoked and mouldering walls, standing out from the masses of stone and mortar, indicate the position of a once populous row of dwelling houses. A few roofs yet remain unshaken, under which some impoverished families endeavor to work out a wretched subsistence, by maintaining a species of huxter trade, by cobbling old shoes, and manufacturing ropes. A small rookery wears the ears of the inhabitants at one end of the outlet, and a rope-walk, which extends along the adjacent slope of Gallows Green (so-called for certain reasons), brings to the mind of the conscious spectator, associations that are not calculated to enliven the prospect. Neither is he thrown into a more jocular frame of mind, as he picks his steps over the insulated paving-stones, that appear amid the green sough with which the street is deluged, and encounters, at the other end, an alley of coffin-makers' shops with a fever hospital on one side, and a churchyard on the other. A person who was bent on a journey to the other world, could not desire a more expeditious outfit than Garryowen could now afford him, nor a more commodious choice of conveyances on the machine on the slope above glanced at, to the pest house at the farther end.

But it is ill-talking lightly on a serious subject. The days of Garryowen are gone, like those of ancient Erin; and the feats of her once formidable heroes are nothing more than a winter's evening tale. Owen is in his grave, and his garden looks dreary as a ruined churchyard. The greater number of his merry customers have followed him to a narrow playground, which, though not less crowned, affords less room for fun and less opportunity for contention. The worm is there the reveller—the owl whoops out his defiance without answer (save the echo's)—the best whisky in Munster would not now "drive the cold out of their hearts"—and the withered old sexton is able to knock the bravest of them over the pate with impunity. A few, perhaps, may still remain to look back with a fond shame to the scene of their early follies, and to smile on the page in which those follies are recorded.

Still, however, there is something to keep the memory alive of those unruly days, and to preserve the name of Garryowen from utter extinction. The annual fair which is held on the spot presents a spectacle of gaiety and uproar which might rival its most boisterous days; and strangers still inquire for the place with a curiosity which its appearance seldom fails to disappoint. Our national lyric has immortalized the air by adopting to it one of the liveliest of his melodies—the adventures of which it was once the scene constitute a fund of standing joke and anecdote, which are not neglected by the neighboring storyteller,—and a rough voice may still occasionally be heard by the traveller who passed near its ruined dwellings at evening, to chant a stanza of the chorus which was once in the mouth of every individual in the kingdom:—

"Tis there we'll drink the nut-brown ale,  
An' pay the reck'nin' on the nail;  
No man for debt shall go to jail  
From Garryowen na gloria."

## CHAPTER II.

HOW  
EILY O'CONNOR  
PUZZLED  
ALL  
THE  
INHABITANTS  
OF  
GARRYOWEN.

But while Owen lived, and while his garden flourished, he and his neighbors were as merry together,

as if death could never reach the one, nor desolation waste the other. Among those frequenters of his little retreat, whom he distinguished with an especial favor and attention, the foremost was the handsome daughter of an old man who conducted the business of a rope-walk in his neighborhood, and who was accustomed on a fine Saturday evening to sit under the shade of a yellow osier that stood by his door, and discourse of the politics of the day—of Lord Halifax's administration—of the promising young patriot, Mr. Henry Grattan—and of the famous Catholic concession of 1773. Owen, like all Irishmen, even of the humblest rank, was an acute critic in female proportions, and although time had blown away the thatching from his head, and by far the greater portion of his blood, that remained in his frame had colonized about his nose, yet the manner in which he held forth on the praises of his old friend's daughter was such as put to shame her younger and less eloquent admirers. It is true, indeed, that the origin of the suburban beauty was one which, in a troubled country like Ireland, had little of agreeable association to recommend it; but few even of those to whom twisted hemp was an object of secret terror, could look on the exquisitely beautiful face of Eily O'Connor, and remember that she was a rope-maker's daughter; few could detect beneath the timid, hesitating, downcast gentleness of manner, which shed an interest over all her motions, the traces of a harsh and vulgar education. It was true that she sometimes purloined a fine letter from the King's adjutives, and prolonged the utterances of a vowel beyond the term of prosodial orthodoxy, but the tongue that did so seemed to move on silver wires and the lip on which the sound delayed, "Long murmuring, loth to part," imparts to its own accents an association of sweetness and grace, that made the defect an additional allurements. Her education in the outskirts of the city had not impaired the natural tenderness of her character; for her father, who, all rude as he was, knew how to value his daughter's softness of mind, endeavored to foster it by every indulgence in his power. Her uncle, too, who was now a country parish priest, was well qualified to draw forth any natural talent with which she had been originally endowed. He had completed his theological education in the famous university of Salamanca, where he was distinguished as a youth of much quietness of temper and literary application, rather than as one of those furious gesticulators, those "figures Hibernotes," amongst whom Gil Blas, in his fit of logical lunacy, could meet his only equals. At his little lodgings, while he was yet a curate at St. John's, Eily O'Connor was accustomed to spend a considerable portion of her time, and in return for her kindness in presiding at his simple tea table, Father Edward undertook to bestow a degree of attention on her education, which rendered her in a little time as superior in knowledge as she was in beauty to her female associates. She was remarked likewise at this time, as a little devotee, very regular in her attendance at chapel, constant in all the observances of her religion, and grave in her attire and discourse. On the coldest and dreariest morning in winter, she might be seen gliding along by the unopened shop windows to the nearest chapel, where she was accustomed to hear an early Mass, and return in time to set everything in order for her father's breakfast. During the day, she superintended his household affairs, while he was employed upon the adjacent rope-walk; and, in the evening, she usually slipped on her bonnet, and went across the street to Father Edward's, where she chatted away until tea was over; if he happened to be engaged in reading his daily office, she amused herself with a volume of moral entertainments such as *Rasselas*, *Prince of Abyssinia*, or *Mr. Addison's Spectator*, until he was leisure to hear her lessons. An attachment of the purest and tenderest nature was the consequence of those mutual attentions between the uncle and niece, and it might be said that if the former loved her not as well, he knew and valued her character still better than her father. Father Edward, however, was appointed to a parish, and Eily lost her instructor. It was for her a severe loss, and most

severe in reality when its effect upon her own spirits began to wear away. For some months after his departure, she continued to lead the same retired and unobtrusive life, and no eye, save that of a consummate observer, could detect the slightest alteration in her sentiments the least increase of toleration for the world and worldly amusements. That change, however, had been silently effected in her heart. She was now a woman—a lovely, intelligent, full-grown woman—and circumstances obliged her to take a part in the little social circle which moved around her. Her spirits were naturally light, and, though long repressed, became readily assimilated to the buoyant tone of the society in which she happened to be placed. Her father, who, with a father's venial vanity, was fond of showing his beautiful child among his neighbors, took her with him to Owen's garden at a time when it was unusually gay and crowded, and from that evening might be dated the commencement of a decided and visible change in the lovely Eily's character.

As gradual as the approach of a spring morning, was the change from grave to gay in the costume of this flower of the suburbs. It dawned at first in a handsome bow-knot upon her head-dress, and ended in the full noontide splendor of flowered muslins, silks and sashes. It was like the opening of the rosebud, which gathered around it, the winged woosers of the summer meadow. "Lads, as brisk as bees," came thronging in her train, with profusions of "honorable love and rites of marriage;" and even among the youths of a higher rank, whom the wild levity of Irish blood and high spirits sent to mingle in the festivities of Owen's garden, a jealousy prevailed respecting the favor of the rope-maker's handsome daughter. It was no wonder that attentions paid by individuals so much superior to her ordinary admirers, would render Eily indifferent to the sighs of those plebeian suitors. Dunat O'Leary, the hair-cutter, or Foxy Dunat, as he was named in allusion to his red hair, was cut to the heart by her utter coldness. Myles Murphy, likewise, a good-natured farmer from Killarney who travelled through the country selling Kerry ponies, and claiming a relationship with every one he met, claimed kindred in vain with Eily, for his claim was not allowed. Lowry Looby, too, the servant of Mr. Daly, a wealthy middleman who lived in the neighborhood, was suspected by many to entertain delusive hopes of Eily O'Connor's favor—but this report was improbable enough, for Lowry could not but know that he was a very ugly man; and if he were as beautiful as Narcissus, Mihil O'Connor would still have shut the door in his face for being as poor as Timon. So that, though there was no lack of admirers, the lovely Eily, like many celebrated beauties in a higher rank, ran, after all, a fair chance of becoming what Lady Mary Montague has elegantly termed "a Lay nun." Even as a book-worm, who will pore over a single volume from morning till night, if turned loose into a library wanders from shelf to shelf, bewildered amid a host of temptations, and unable to make any selection until he is surprised by twilight, and chagrined to find, that with so much happiness within his grasp, he has spent, nevertheless, as unprofitable day.

But accident saved Eily from a destiny so deeply dreaded and so often lamented as that above alluded to—a condition which people generally agree to look upon as one of utter desolation, and which, notwithstanding, is frequently a state of greater happiness than its opposite. On the eve of the seventeenth of March, a day distinguished in the rope-maker's household, not only as the festival of the national saint, but as the birth-day of the young mistress of the establishment—on this evening Eily and her father were enjoying their customary relaxation at Owen's garden. The jolly proprietor was seated as usual with his rope-twisting friend under the yellow osier, while Myles Murphy, who had brought a number of his wild ponies to be disposed of at the neighboring fair, had taken his place at the end of the table, and was endeavoring to insinuate a distant relationship between the Owens of Kilkerry, connexions of the person whom he addressed, and the Murphys of Knockodhra, connexions of his own. A party of young men were playing lives at a ball-alley, on the other side of the green; and another, more numerous, and graced with many female figures, were capering away to the tune of the Fox-Hunter's Jig on the short grass. Some poor old women, with baskets on their arms, were endeavoring to sell some Patrick's crosses for children, at the low rate of one halfpenny a piece, gilding, painting, and all. Others, fatigued with exertion, were walking under the still

leafless trees, some with their hats, some with their coats off, jesting, laughing and chatting familiarly with their female acquaintances.

Mihil O'Connor, happening to see Lowry Looby among the promenaders, glancing now and then at the dance and whistling Patrick's Day requested him to call his daughter out of the group, and tell her that he was waiting for her to go home. Lowry went, and returned to say, that Eily was dancing with a strange young gentleman in a boating dress, and that he would not let her go until she had finished the slip jig.

It continued a sufficient time to tire the old man's patience when Eily did at last make her appearance, he observed there was a flush of mingled weariness and pleasure on her cheek, which showed that the delay was not quite in opposition to her own inclinations. This circumstance might have tempted him to receive her with a little displeasure, but that honest Owen at that moment laid hold on both father and daughter, insisting that they should come in and take supper with his wife and himself.

This narrative of Eily's girlhood being merely introductory, we shall forbear to furnish any detail of the minor incidents of the evening, or the quality of Mr. Owen's entertainment. They were very merry and happy; so much so, that the Patrick's eve approached its termination before they rose to bid their host and hostess a good night. Owen advised them to walk on rapidly, in order to avoid the "Patrick's boys," who might promenade the streets after twelve, to welcome in the mighty festival with music and uproar of all kinds. Some of the lads, he said, "might be playin' their tricks upon Miss Eily."

The night was rather dark, and the dim glimmer of the oil lamps, which were suspended at long intervals over the street doors, tended only in a very feeble degree to qualify the gloom. Mihil O'Connor and his daughter had already performed more than half their journey, and were turning from a narrow lane at the head of Mungret street, when a loud and tumultuous sound broke with sudden violence upon their hearing. An ancient and honored custom summons the youthful inhabitants of the city on the night of this anniversary to celebrate the approaching holiday of the patron saint and apostle of the island, by promenading all the streets in succession, playing national airs, and filling up the pauses in the music with shouts of exultation. Such was the procession which the two companions now beheld approaching.

The appearance which it presented was not altogether destitute of interest and amusement. In the midst were a band of musicians who played alternately Patrick's Day and "Garryowen," while a rabble of men and boys pressed round them, thronging the whole breadth and a considerable portion of the length of the street. The men had got sprigs of shamrock in their hats, and several carried in their hands lighted candles, protect from the wasting night-blast by a simple lamp of whitened brown paper. The flickle and unequal light which these small torches threw over the faces of the individuals, who held them, afforded a lively contrast to the prevailing darkness.

The crowd hurried forward, singing, playing, shouting, laughing, and indulging, to its full extent, all the excitement which was occasioned by the tumult and the motion. But room windows are thrown up as they passed, and the half-dressed inmates thrust their heads into the night air to gaze upon the mob of enthusiasts. All the respectable persons who appeared in the streets as they advanced, turned short into the neighboring by-ways to avoid the importunities which they would be likely to incur by a contact with the multitude.

But it was too late for our party to adopt this precaution. Before it had entered their minds, the procession (if we may dignify it by a name so sounding) was nearer to them, then they were to any turn in the street and the appearance of fight with a rabble of men as with dogs, is a provocation of pursuit. Of this they were aware; and accordingly, instead of attempting a vain retreat, they turned into a recess formed by one of the shop-doors, and quietly awaited the passing away of this noisy torrent. For some moments they were unnoticed, the fellows who moved foremost being too busy in talking, laughing, and shouting to pay any attention to objects not directly in their way. But they were no sooner espied than the wags assailed them with that species of wit which disguises the inhabitants of the back lanes of a city, and forms the terror of all country visitors. These expressions were lavished upon the rope-maker and his daughter, until the former, who was as irritable an old fellow

as Irishmen generally are, was almost put out of patience.

At length, a young man, observing the lamp shine for a moment on Eily's handsome face, made a chirp with his lips as he passed by, as if he had a mind to kiss her. Not Patrick's himself, when vindicating his senatorial dignity against the insulting Gaul, could be more prompt in action than Mihil O'Connor. The young gentleman received, in return for his affectionate greeting, a blow over the temples which was worth five hundred kisses. An uproar immediately commenced, which was likely to end in some serious injury to the old man and his daughter. A number of ferocious faces gathered round them, uttering sounds of harsh rancour and defiance, which Mihil met with equal loudness and energy. Indeed, all that seemed to delay his fate, and hinder him from sharing in the prostration of his victim, was the conduct of Eily who, flinging herself in bare-armed beauty before her father, defended him for a time against the upraised weapons of his assailants. No one would incur the danger of harming, by an accidental blow, a creature, so young, so beautiful, and so affectionate.

They were at length rescued from this precarious condition by the interposition of two young men, in the dress of boat-men, who appeared to possess some influence with the crowd, and who used it for the advantage of the sufferers. Not satisfied with having brought them safely out of all immediate danger, the taller of the two conducted them to their door, saying little on the way, and taking his leave as soon as they were once in perfect safety. All that Mihil could learn from his appearance was, that he was a gentleman, and young—perhaps not more than nineteen years of age. The old man talked much and loudly in praise of his gallantry, but Eily was altogether silent on the subject.

A few days after, Mihil O'Connor was at work upon the rope-walk, going slowly backward in the sunshine, with a little bundle of hemp between his knees, and singing "Maureen Thierna." A hunchbacked little fellow, in a boatman's dress, came up, and saluting him in a sharp city brogue, reminded the old rope-maker that he had done him a service a few evenings ago. Mihil professed his acknowledgments, and with true Irish warmth of heart, assured the little boatman that all he had in the world was at his service. The hunchback, however, only wanted a few ropes and blocks for his boat, and even for those he was resolute in paying honorably. Neither did he seem anxious to satisfy the curiosity of old Mihil with respect to the name and quality of his companion; for he was inexorable in maintaining that he was a turfboat man from Seagh, who had come up to town with him to dispose of a cargo of fuel at Charlotte's Quay. Mihil O'Connor referred him to his daughter for the ropes, about which, he said, she could bargain as well as himself, and he was unable to leave his work until the rope he had in hand should be finished. The little deformed, no way displeased at this intelligence, went to find Eily at the shop where he spent a longer time than Mihil thought necessary for his purpose.

(To be continued.)

Family ties are not severed in Heaven; and Jesus, in raising His Blessed Mother above the saints and angels, teaches us that filial piety is a virtue of eternity.

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