



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XIV.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1863.

No. 5.

THE RETURN OF CLANEBOY.

(From Blackwood's Magazine.)
'Alas, alas!' cried Lady Gyle, as the harper raised his hands from the still vibrating chords, 'it was by listening to the lays of such tempters that all the unfortunates of my house have been beguiled; and yet I cannot bear the complaint of oppression, or the longing for liberty, without dreaming myself of the free hill side and of the merry-men at call; of royal and state authority, of gallant hunting and festivals, of embassies and high councils, and sylvan courts and camps, and all the pomp of arms and royalty.'

Mandeville, who had already prepared the horses for proceeding on their journey. With the gallantry of the times, the Prince advanced and kissed the cheek of each, but as he withdrew his lips from the scarcely impressed down of Honora's, a burning blush suffused her brow and neck, and was answered by as deep a crimson as his own. Again the Lady Gyle and the Erenach fixed their eyes upon the pair, and exchanged looks of intelligence; but the churchman did not seem to contemplate the chances of their mutual admiration being matured into a serious attachment with the same complacency as the fond mother, who already in imagination beheld her daughter's brow encircled with the aision of an Irish princess; for, whatever power of negotiation might have been deputed to the legate of the exiled government, the disposal of the Prince's hand in marriage, or the sanction of his own disposal of it, had not been instructed. He had ripened the disaffection of the lady and her kinsman, so that they were only withheld from the casting of their allegiance by the almost hopeless chance of obtaining a pardon for their relatives, and in their defection he had secured that of the numerous and powerful families of which they were, next to Earl William, the heads; but he foresaw that the accession of even such strength would be ungrateful, if coupled with a connection disapproved of by the haughty house of O'Neill. Nevertheless he could not refuse the invitation pressed on him and the Prince, to accompany the stranger party to the common place of destination; and accordingly unwilling as he was, he found himself, after the morning meal by the side of the elder lady, while the Prince and Honora rode behind, deeply engaged in constant conversation. They had twice sunk out of sight of Slemish, while crossing the broad valleys that lay upon their route, and had risen again into view of it when the blue hills of down became visible over the last ridge of hill between them and the coast. The sun was still far from the mid arch of the sky, as they at length beheld the broad arm of the sea that lay beneath. A fresh breeze had curled the oiling into a dark rough blue, while the shoal water on either side of the lough lay in stripes of pale green and purple, shifting as the shadow of the clouds swept rapidly across; the summer sun and the dewy air showed everything in the fresh clearness of the morning; and sails at sea, and castles and houses on shore, while their magnificent amphitheatre of hills and woods, cornfields and pastures, burst all at once upon the astonished O'Neill. The first object that fixed his eyes was the great square keep of Carrickfergus, where it stood out from the glittering belt of the sunlight on the water.

complete his disguise, followed the lady and her companion to the Castle. They passed the portcullis and barbican, and in the middle of the square met Earl William, armed at all points, and equipped for a journey, descending from the keep, Lady Gyle advanced—he started in amazement, but heid out his hand to welcome her; 'No, William—no,' she said; 'I will not touch the hand that cast chains upon a dear brother!' 'Noble kinswoman,' said William, 'thou art wearied from thy journey; let me lead thee to my Countess, who will see to thy refreshment and lodging here in our castle.'

to the Priory. Of all the standers-by during the Earl's speech, none, however, had departed with more confused and disappointed feelings than Loughlin Phelim. His designs on William, whatever they might have been, were apparently rendered quite abortive, for he thenceforth seemed to dread a conference; and so far did their disarrangement operate on his future conduct in other respects, that he did not afterwards evince any wish to check the attachment of O'Neill and Honora. Thoughtful as he had been before, he now became doubly so—spent much of his time in prayer, and seemed like a man that had staked, or was about to stake, everything on the issue of some desperate chance. That day, and the next, and the next, passed in constant expectation of William's return; but messenger after messenger brought daily news of unexpected difficulties and farther delays; and day after day the Erenach regretted not having sent on yesterday for instructions from Tyrone, till at length, by Sunday, a messenger arrived with the positive assurance that the Earl would be at Carrickfergus in time for next morning's matins. The Erenach no sooner received this intelligence, than he departed in haste to the encampment on the Slemish, and by noon the green tents had disappeared; and St. Patrick's well flowed in a solitude as unbroken as on the eve of their erection. But on the hill-top, and on all the eminences of western aspect from thence to Devis, there had arisen piles of turf and fagots before sunset; and close beside, scarcely distinguishable from whatever cover the long grass or heather might afford, had couched down a kern, with a slow fire of peat by his side. Meanwhile, at the Priory, although Lady Gyle still kept her chamber in excessive grief, Sir Robert Mandeville had provided all gaieties for the entertainment of O'Neill. There had been huntings and hawkings in the morning, games and dances at night; and the Prince, delighted with everything, would have been completely happy, had not her duty kept Honora almost constantly with her mother. But on the Saturday morning there issued from the Priory gates a caracade, at the head of which appeared the Lady Gyle herself, accompanied by the Knight, her kinsman, while amid the waving of plumes and glittering of gay habits and housings, might be seen the young Irishman, beside his eminently graceful and lovely friend. They crossed the hills that lie behind the town, and pursued their game till the middle of the afternoon; but long ere then they had broken into different parties, drawn asunder by the diverse course taken by their hawks and hounds. The chase was now over, and the hunters were straggling home in groups of twos and threes. Some had descended the southern side of the Knocknagh, or Hill of the White Thorn, and were wending their way along the strand at its base, where the sea-breeze came fresh and cool from the ebbing tide; others having climbed the shoulder of Shevatrua, were hurrying to screen themselves among the steep and hazely banks of the Woodburn; while a third party, having taken the northern route, were descending from the commons by Lough Mouene.

Norburgh. He came by Armagh and Kilutah, and so missed the Earl, else they were now no better than dead men.' 'May Heaven pity me!' exclaimed the miserable lady, and became deadly pale. 'So sure as William comes home to-night he will sign and seal their death warrant,' said Loughlin Phelim. 'What say you now to my offers, lady?' 'Are you sure,' said Lady Gyle, in a voice so low as hardly to be heard even in the calm of the sultry air—'Are you sure that you can make good what you have offered?' 'I pledge my life to you,' replied the Erenach, 'that I will fulfill all that I have promised.' 'Then,' said Gyle, slowly, while she raised her face that was as white as ashes, 'I agree—Sir Robert thou wilt stand by us?' 'To the last drop of my blood,' replied the Knight; 'and now let us hasten to find the Prince, and conclude the first part of our compact.' They put their horses in motion towards the town at a rapid pace, as if they dreaded to pause in what they had undertaken. On the road near Woodburne, they met a groom leading two horses which those they were in search of had ridden at the hunt, and inquiring of him were told that Honora and her companion were together in the glen. All three immediately dismounted and proceeded up the ravine in search of them. Let us now return to the party mentioned as taking their way over Shevatrua. Among them had been Honora and O'Neill, and ere they had reached the waterfall, they were accompanied by but one attendant. As they rode on, the banks became so precipitous, that, fearful of trusting their horses on the insecure footing, they were obliged to hold their course for the greater part along the exposed sunny head of the hill. The languid form of Honora as she bent to each step of her palfrey on the rude and uneven road, betrayed her exhaustion. O'Neill cast his eyes wistfully upon the river, where it appeared glancing between the tree tops, clear and cool below. 'Lady,' said he, 'if thou wouldst but trust thyself to my guidance down this bank of furze and hazel, I would place thee safe on yonder broad stone beneath the rowan tree, where the coolness of the shadows and the breath of the running water will soon refresh thee. Meantime this green shall lead or horses on before us the Priory.' 'In truth,' replied Honora, moving her unglowed hand through the almost impalpable air as she spoke, 'I would give my merlin's best crimson jesses and varrals of silver to dip but my fingers' ends in that dampling pool.'