

down before him all criticism—all thought of cavil or objection. His eye kindled, his cheek became inflamed, his form enlarged, his voice rang like the clang of a trumpet. His images started up one after the other, shining exact, and noble. The sounds of war found echoes in his numbers—the picture of the battle came before our eyes as he sang, until the knights drew the weapons bare, the standards shook in the hands of the galloglachs—the tioseachs sprang to their feet, as if to head an assault; while the war-cry of ‘Farrah!’ trembled on their lips, and the good king Aodh himself shook his sceptre as if it had been a javelin.

“It is singular his name should be unknown,” said the Ard filea, more interested than before; “I am sorry for poor Eagnea’s disappointment, but the genius of this youth has touched me. Ah! my poor dumb boy! I have seen a fire in your eye that spoke of a burning spirit within, could it but find a voice of utterance.”

The last trial—the eulogy of the age of Madaghan—was now proceeding. Again the roof trembled with the acclamations of the multitude, and again the old man’s informant was by his side.

“It is completed!” he exclaimed: “the election has fallen on the young man. You may well be proud of such an eulogist. So modest an appeal, so rational, so feeling, was never before pronounced. His hearers were moved even to tears, and yet so simple was his language, that they attributed all to your merit, and nothing to the eloquence of your panegyrist.”

At the same moment the crowd separated, and the old Prior advanced, leading the successful candidate by the hand. His head hung down upon his bosom, and his hand trembled while he did homage to the superior rank of the Ard-filea, by laying aside his girdle, and removing the green birrede from his head. Tears obscured the eyes of Madaghan while he placed the gold ring on the slender finger of the boy, and prepared to loosen the string by which the clarsech was suspended round his neck.

“My sweet-toned harp,” he said, “after long and fond attachment we must be separated; but it is some consolation to know that I do not commit you to unworthy hands. Lift up your head, young

man, and let me see the face of him who is to be my successor.”

The victorious candidate remained on his knee, with his head still lowered, while his frame was shaken with sobs, and his tears washed the old man’s feet.

“Rise!” said the latter, with dignity. “Tears become a child of song; but not when they flow like those of a maiden. Arise, and—Ha!—What?—My child! Impossible! My boy?—Give me your hands, my friends! Prior, your hand!—This is some cheat—some mockery! Was this well? My poor dumb boy, who made you a party against your aged father?”

Confusion and anger made the sensitive old man tremble exceedingly, while he clung for support to his friends, unable to conceive the meaning of what he beheld. His perplexity, though not his wonder, ceased, however, when the youth extended his arms quietly, and said, with a delighted smile:

“Father, rejoice! It is your own fond child that speaks to you. Heaven, long since, in pity to my prayer, restored my hearing, and I kept the blessing secret only for the purpose of enjoying the happiness of such a day as this. The day is come, and my joy is now complete.”

The Ard-filea threw himself with a broken cry of joy upon the neck of his son. He gave utterance to the feelings of his heart in exclamations of rapture and repeated caresses, while the spectators pressed around, with brimming eyes, to share in the gratulations of the happy relatives.

“It is enough!” the old man exclaimed looking to heaven with an eye that glistened with delight and gratitude. “I am contented for this earth. This, O Almighty Being! was more than I desired, more than I deserved. Let those who have not experienced thy benefits, if such there be, presume to be dissatisfied; we, at least, have no room within our hearts for anything but wonder, and praise, and love. Accept that love, accept that gratitude, my Maker and Benefactor! I prayed to thee, and thou hast heard me! Thou hast given peace to the old man’s heart—thou hast dried the old man’s tears—thou hast hushed his sighs—thou wilt suffer him to lay his white hairs in quiet hope within the grave. Thou hast blessed me! My soul within me thanks and adores thy goodness!”