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THE IRISH LEGEND OF M'DONNELL, AND THE NORMAN DE BORGOS. A BIOGRAPHICAL TALE.

BY ARCHIBALD M'PARRAN. CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

With Sir Coll M'Donnell came some officers of rank, who were all present, and whom he introduced to their common host with the same ceremony as himself. "I," said he, "ought rather to receive my orders from some of these gentlemen, who have measured swords with the enemy in many a well-tried field, but for me, as the saying is, I am only a greenhorn, never having been farther engaged than in a few skirmishes."

"As you say you are but a beginner in the art of war," said Sir Henry O'Neill, "I dare say you are not so in the exercise of the ball-room; the ladies have almost danced us down to-night, and I shall consider it a favor if you assist me in supporting our cause."

"What I can do," said he, "shall be gladly contributed, and I should be unwilling to assist in any cause wherein the sex are to be opposed, only that on such opposition much of our happiness depends. And now, when I do purpose to enlist under your banner, can you assure me that one of your refined young ladies will venture to take as a partner a wild Highland laddie from among the heather, who has been after a partner to gaur cocks and moor hens, than to six fine ladies; and I can tell you that I can leap burns and climb braes meikle better than dance, but what I can is at your service."

M'Donnell spoke what we call broken Scotch, and such a dialect to any person accustomed to it is by no means unpleasing. "Will you have the goodness," said he to O'Neill, "to choose me a partner?"

"I would be extremely sorry," said the latter, "to take that privilege out of your hand. Recollect you are in Ireland, the country of hospitality and freedom, if I don't say too much, and we, as Irishmen, give you leave to choose for yourself, and at the same time, pledge ourselves that whatsoever your choice is, no one present shall be offended. I must also inform you that we, on going to the Scottish shore, shall claim the same prerogative."

"You are very kind," said M'Donnell, "and I find no more courtesy when present in your country than what I have often been informed of." "But," said O'Neill, "I am hardly doing you justice—there are two other young ladies whom you have not seen yet, and in order that you may have them all before your eyes, previous to your making a choice, I shall ask them in."

It was not long after this, when Sir Henry John O'Neill entered, leading in his left hand his sister Rose, and in his right Aveline M'Quillan. "Behold," said he, presenting Aveline, "the heiress of Dunluce"—then bringing forward his sister, "and also the heiress of Shane's castle."

Sir Coll saluted them in the manner in which a young knight ought, and, one too, who was going abroad in search of adventure; but although he received them with politeness, yet he almost forgot himself in their presence, and bowing with some confusion, asked one of them to dance, scarcely knowing which; but from

whatever he articulated, and his bow inclining toward Rose O'Neill, she accepted the invitation by returning him the same act of complaisance in a courtesy.

At the time Sir Coll M'Donnell and his men were brought into the castle, the two young ladies, of whom I have been speaking, had a full view of him from the door of the apartment which they occupied, although he might not have noticed them. They pitied him from his years, being exposed to such a tempest, and also lightning and thunder, which was sufficient to shock the stoutest mariner. "Little I knew," said Rose O'Neill, "when I was talking of a foreign prince or knight of the lance, that the curly head of this poor youth was abiding the pitiless pelting of the storm, and this, perhaps, too, his first voyage to a strange country. It was a happy circumstance that so many gentlemen were present to assist them in landing, otherwise, had they remained there until morning, I should think they would have been dead even with cold; but the all-ruling arm of Providence assuaged the billows, and directed them into a harbor, which, although we thought otherwise, was to them a place of safety."

"I wonder are his parents living, or has he no elder brothers who might have been sent on this hazardous expedition?" said Aveline, leaving a sigh, and putting on her serious face as she looked straight into the fire, not seeming to notice that her friend was present.

"Since he is now, with his men, saved from the danger of the seas," said Rose, in answer to what she had almost involuntarily asked, "since he is perfectly secure, will you candidly tell me whether you could wish any of his brothers in his place. But rouse yourself, and shake your plumes, leave aside that grave face that you have put on, more fitting an old woman, for I expect we shall be sent for to the ball-room immediately, and you know there is to be a contest between you and me to-night. I am not at all disposed to contend with you," said she; "in this cause, therefore, you have the matter to yourself." When Aveline was in a way to pity any individual, she became as grave as an abbess, and it was evident from the cast of her countenance that, in this propensity of mind, she felt much inward happiness.

As they were thus engaged in conversation, Sir Henry O'Neill entered, and requested their company in the ball-room; and it was on their first appearance to Sir Coll M'Donnell that he took the liberty of asking, as a partner, pretty Rose of Clanbuoy, who, with all spirit and vivacity, executed the dance with natural grace and elegance, smiling to her friend as she was handed round the corners, and seeming to say, I know I would engage him.

M'Donnell, fired by one of those merry lilt peculiar to his country, and assisted by a pair of good bagpipes, performed the Highland reel in its national character, and always appeared more elevated as the pipes screwed it a peg higher, until, in respect for his fair partner, he bowed a conclusion.

During the dance, Aveline sat with her eyes fixed on both, and whilst she saw her friend more animated, she became more serious, though sometimes she was forced to smile through all her gravity of face, and when she did so, showed such a countenance as never failed to captivate.

After the dance Sir Coll handed his fair partner to a seat beside her friend, and then joined the gentlemen; but frequently turning his eyes, appeared as if stealing a look of the heiress of Dunluce. Then rising up from his present place, as if no situation in the house could make him easy, he crossed to them again, and asking if they would allow him the honor of their company, on being accepted, took a seat with them.

"As I am a stranger, ladies," said he, "and, perhaps, in this cheerful assembly, thinking of friends that I have left behind, I have presumed to ask the privilege which I am now in possession of, and of which, no doubt, I am envied by many gentlemen present; but for the liberties which I have taken as a wandering Highland laddie, I hope to receive your indulgence, together with the pardon of those who deserve this seat better than I."

"I don't imagine," said his partner in the dance, "that you need be in the least degree uneasy in regard of your dangerous situation, and if it were only in respect of us, you will be as secure as in the city of Edinburgh."

"I beg to be excused," said he, "I have intimated that my situation was happy, but not dangerous, unless so far as to encounter the glances of four bright eyes, as unaiming to me as the most formidable enemy."

"It appears from that," said Aveline, "you are in little dread of your enemies."

"I see," said he, "you will either make me a hero or a being insensible; and, as my assertions on either of these points can by no means prove my argument, I shall resign the field."

"May I ask, have you ever been in Scotland?"

"I have been in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and in the castle of Dumbarton," said Aveline.

"You have then," said he, rejoicing that he had drawn her into conversation, "seen the sword of the immortal Sir William Wallace?"

"I had the honor," said she, "to raise it in my hand, but had I not known of his existence beyond a doubt, could not have believed it possible for any man to wield it."

"Have you," said he, "been in Holyrood house?"

"I have," said she, "and also, on our return, my father took me to some of the islands, in one of which, called Staffa, we spent a few days, and were hospitably received and entertained by a party of London gentry, who came there, it being the summer season, to see the beauties and natural curiosities of the islands. And here were basaltic pillars resembling those of the Giant's Causeway, and which some think a continuation of the same mole. In this island is the celebrated cave of Fingal, one hundred and seventeen feet high at the mouth, and into which the tide flows to the depth of nine feet."

"I could scarcely," said he, "have imagined that one of our most learned philosophers could have gone about the description more accurately."

"We also," said she, "during our stay in Edinburgh, heard a number of musicians, with whom I was highly pleased. I think the Scotch airs remarkably sweet, and, when well executed, nothing is more fascinating. There was one in particular that was performed with much justness, and, indeed, for a fortnight afterwards, I, betimes would have thought I heard the soft strains of it vibrating in my ear. Now, according to my share of taste and judgment, I considered it executed with correctness and euphony."

"Pray," said he, "may I ask the name of it?"

"I think," said she, "they call it 'Through the wood, laddie.'"

"I know it, ma'am," said he, "perfectly, could give it to you on the violin, or, as our countrymen call it, the fiddle. Have you got such an instrument in the castle?"

"We have, sir," said she; "my brothers perform a little on it; but the instrument which is most practised in our family is the Irish harp, and one, perhaps, you would esteem but lightly."

"Upon my honor, ma'am," said he, "it is quite otherwise. I am extremely fond of the harp, and have not the least doubt but you can touch it with a masterly hand, if you'll allow me to apply that epithet to a lady's hand."

They had now commenced what might be called a musical conversation, the most delightful to both of any other; but I am much inclined to suppose that any ordinary subject on which Sir Coll could have succeeded to engage her was interesting to him in an important degree. She asked many questions of him regarding the natural beauties of Scotland, its mountains, lakes, woods, and rivers, besides others respecting its historical and political character; but not a word was there from either even tending toward that subject so much hackneyed by every pretender, although, I might venture to say, one of their hearts was probably as sincere as those who, at every interview of such a kind, make manifold more professions.

While they were thus employed, and the time seeming to pass imperceptibly with them, a messenger came from the other end of the room and requested his company with the gentlemen, that they were all getting favorite pieces of music performed, and that he was called upon to make a choice as well as others.

"I have," said Sir Coll M'Donnell, "found my present company so pleasing, and also so improving, that it is with sincere regret I part with them, notwithstanding that music is so dear to me. However, ladies, keeping in mind your first indulgence, shall I expect the honor of your company as heretofore on my return, after discharging those duties required of me by the gentlemen in the other side of the room?"

On being answered in the affirmative, he politely took his leave of them, and went to the other party. "We," said they, "are each of us about to get his favorite piece of music played by the minstrels, and we thought it would be an act of injustice not to give you lawful notice, so you are at liberty to call upon whatsoever air you wish, whether national, fanciful, or otherwise." "Indeed," said he, "there are many airs, both Scottish and Irish, which I could call upon, but, perhaps, they might discover more want of taste than were I to sit silent; but when I hear your choice melodies severally performed, gentlemen, I shall do myself the honor you are kind enough to propose, whether my selection be tasteful or not."

The minstrels now stood ready for com-

mencing, and, beginning at the host, each in turn made a request, until it went round them all, save M'Donnell, who, speaking as he had done before, said the tune he wished played was only simple, but as it was the one performed on leaving sight of the mountains in Scotland, there were possibly gentlemen present who wished to hear it as well as he, therefore, he said, he would call upon that one called 'Through the hazel glens of Spey,' where," said he, "I fondly hope to return at one time or other, however delusive my fond expectations might be," finishing the last part of the sentence with a long sigh.

Aveline and her friend sat listening to the conversation, chiefly that part of it where he said, with a sigh, he hoped to return to the hazel glens of Spey.

"He seems, poor young lad," said Rose O'Neill, "to have a sincere wish to return to his country, but what the ties are which engender those weighty sighs that he heaves, I cannot take upon me to say; but assuredly the air that he called for is one of the sweetest ever composed in that musical country. Have you the words?" said she.

"Yes, I have," said Aveline, smiling, "and am beginning to fear there is love under the hazel glens of Spey. That word sounds so heavily on his heart-strings, that, even unknown to him, as I imagine, it has brought forth a sigh; and whether it may be love of kindred, love of country, or love of another kind, I cannot tell."

"Upon my word," said pretty Rose, "your definition of love, and the sensations to be understood under the word 'hazel glen,' are perfect originals in their kind; and, indeed, Miss Aveline, with your solemn face and serious looks, who would have thought that you knew what the meaning of that dangerous term was? not thinking that you could give such a finished explanation of it, but you are so much given to meditation and thought, and who can tell what those thoughts are?"

As the minstrels performed the tune, they went over the words of the song to themselves, repeating—

The' feaming Spey should quit the' glen, I'll meet my Jessy there again.

Undoubtedly there is some watchery in his mind, concerning the rural glens and bonny lassies of Scotland:

"And at the maids frae Clyde to Dee, Young Jessy Camron pleases me."

"Yes," said Rose O'Neill, "that's the origin of those long-fetched sighs, and likewise that ardent and anxious hope of returning to his country."

"And, poor lad," said Aveline, "in such a tempest surely these silly ideas did not occur to him to-night; but certainly, in a tempestuous hour like to that in which he landed, even that he had been possessed of some of our imaginary sensations, he could not be occupied so foolishly."

"In what a fantastical silly light," said the other, "you represent those matters which you would wish to be so, I am certain; but the last sigh he gave, and the air he called for, tell me no less than he is in love, and also longs to return. It is very possible that your resemblance to the friend he left behind has been the principal reason for his insisting, or rather soliciting, to be admitted as our companion here."

Aveline said nothing in answer to this desertation, but sighed, and unknowingly relapsed into her pretty grave face and philosophical physiognomy so becoming her.

"Take care," said Rose, taking her a flap on the cheek, "take care," said she, "or you'll sigh yourself into love; and I wish it is not half begun with you. If you would quit thinking, and leave aside your deep reveries, you might do better; but I almost see that you are gone and bewildered in thought."

"I hope," said Aveline, "you are not imputing a weakness to me, of which I am altogether innocent; if ever you had known me immersed in vain ideas or fanciful notions, you might well accuse me, but, as it is, I think you have no reason. I, indeed, must confess," said she, "that I pitied him, but any farther, I cannot by no means submit to an unjust accusation, and, therefore, my dear friend, I beg you will not tease me any further on this matter."

"I do not wish," said the other, "you should understand me as teasing you; I am only representing as a friend to the manner in which I see you are affected, and which I think you are not aware of. You say you only pity him, but I beseech you, guard against that term, it has unthinkingly led thousands, like an Iguis Fatuus, into the most inextricable, and I may say, even fatal associations. For what is pity? It is, undoubtedly, love unfeigned. And though callow at present, and lying, as it were, in embryo, it will positively assume strength at one time or other, and mounting on wing, you knew not where its flight may terminate."

"Your wholesome counsel," said Aveline,

"is both salutary and pleasing to me, and if I may be allowed anything to say in justice of my own inclinations, must always suppose that the pity which I felt towards him was nothing more than what the ties of humanity obligate one rational being to feel for another; and in compliment to you, pretty Rose, for your moral lecture and refined desertation on the foregoing subject, I am called upon to say you have even excelled the gravest of the fathers, whom, when in the habit of receiving monastic admonitions, I was accustomed to hear. But I hope with me you will conclude that the air is sweet, and also that the young Islander feels its most affecting pathos, which, I presume, is nothing more than any young man would, when in a strange country he should hear one of his national airs well executed."

"Well," said her friend, "let us conclude so, for he is coming to join us I see."

"Ladies," said he, "on returning, I feel much happiness in rejoicing you again, so many of our sweetest national airs performed—a pleasure in which I am certain, you both participate as deeply as the poor stranger, but certainly Lady Aveline, if she will allow me to call her by that name, for I think I will not be mistaken in saying that she is a musical enthusiast."

"But pray," said Aveline, "which of those pieces did you consider the sweetest?—for that old Irish melody called 'Hoologandagh, oh!' in my opinion, is beyond comparison, and like many others of our country, is well adapted to the harp; it was on that instrument it was composed."

"Assuredly," said he, "it is fascinating to an extreme, and is one of those melodies, I presume, which, to all the world, has celebrated your country for the soft cadence and melancholy of her music; but may I ask how you liked the Glens of Spey?"

"Extremely well," said they; "have you been accustomed to hear it sung?"

"O yes," said he, "often."

"Was it by gentlemen or ladies?"

"I have heard it sung by both," said he, "but think that a soft voice suits it best; and, Lady Aveline, I would venture to assert, that if you have the words and please to essay, you can do it equal justice."

"I am, indeed," said she, "fond of the air, and have the stanzas or words, I should say, but cannot please myself in singing, and perhaps might please others less."

"You have heard it done so well," said Rose O'Neill, "that she is intimidated, notwithstanding her being possessed of a sweet voice and science in proportion."

"But," said Sir Coll, "will you inform me, is Sir Phelim Roe O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, related to the family of Shane's castle, I mean, Sir Henry, to your family?"

"He is," said O'Neill, "our kinsman and our firm ally, long and often tried. Our common ancestor reigned in Tara, besides many others of the royal Hy-Nial race."

"I feel," said Sir Coll M'Donnell, "sincerely unhappy in your last relation, so much so that I could almost wish I never had touched on the shores of your hospitable island.—Had I met you in the field of battle as an open enemy, or had I never known either the goodness or the engaging manners of an O'Neill or a M'Quillan, I might not now regret my coming; but as it is, I am almost unfortunate in being rescued from the fury of the wind and waves."

"And pray, sir," said Daniel M'Quillan, "may I ask what is the cause of this strange emotion in your mind?"

"The cause," said M'Donnell, "is this—Owen Roe O'Donnell of Tyrconnell sent to my father supplicating assistance against the Earl of Tyrone, in consequence of which embassy, I am sent with these troops to succour your late enemy."

"It is more than probable," said O'Neill, "that you may meet us there, under the banners of our friend; but if you should, my dear sir, I beg of you not to let it disturb our present happiness, for you know that acts of generosity and hospitality may be performed in the field of battle as well as in the drawing-room or cabinet."

"Owen Roe Baldearg, whom you are about to succour, is a brave man, and I am certain you will be as much attached to him after a little intercourse, as you have been, or are to your present host and his friends."

"These things are possible, are truly possible," said M'Donnell, "but still they cannot set my mind at rest. However, as I find it is inevitable, I shall take it in as good part as I can, hoping that you will all think as favorably of me as my mission will allow."

While they were handling this disagreeable subject from right to left, Aveline and her friend were listening attentively, and, no doubt, bore a part in the depression of mind into which the stranger was lately cast. He turned his eyes frequently toward her, and seemed, from