

SHEMUS DHU,

THE BLACK PEDLAR OF GALWAY.

A TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

CHAPTER V.—(CONTINUED)

But, at the time, Connel did not think deeper on the causes of this melancholy manner, than to attribute it to the situation of the stranger, alone among those whom he did not know, fatigued, and perhaps wanting food. It was evident that his accent was not that of the country. Connel had some experience of the world, and was from habit a keen observer. He soon perceived that there was an uneasy expression on the face of the questioner. Connel had a full view of the stranger without being himself clearly seen. The stranger sat in front of the fire, and its light fell full upon his face. There was, now and then, a quick gathering of his brows, a sudden motion of his lips, and once or twice, after he asked a question, a starting of his entire person. That all this arose from a passing interest which the stranger might feel in the answer to his simple enquiry, O'Keane was too experienced to believe. He set him down, therefore, as one whose peace of mind was bruised, if not destroyed, by some heavy weight of memory. How often do we see among the crowd those who, to the careless and light-hearted, appear at ease, while the experienced will see in their calmness, not nature's ease, but its counterfeits; and he who himself has suffered, will recognise in the sigh and the start, and the stern word, half uttered, the kindred of a wounded spirit, though calmness suddenly again settle on the countenance, and give it the show of peace. Just so the dangers of the dark were seen when a cloud passes over the moon, and the waters are again suddenly silvered, and the deep loses its horrors under the brightness of the sweet light.

From the moment Connel had a full view of his guest, he believed him to be a sufferer; and, as suffering, no matter whether merited or otherwise, has a strong hold upon the sympathies of the generous; the good fellow's heart opened to him, and he was determined at any risk to be his friend. Then a new pleasure arose from his determination to assist him; perhaps he was persecuted by those whom Connel believed to be the oppressors of his country. The pleasure of that thought was exquisite to him; the first impulse to the act of kindness towards the stranger, was given by his human feelings; but now it became a sacred duty, when connected with his boasted virtues—love of country and of religion. With such opinions of his guest's position, Connel assured him again and again of his security in Portlaoigh.

"For the last eighteen years," he added, "since I became a dweller in this part of the country, I have been happy in not seeing the oppressor which marked the visits to other parts of the country of the blood-thirsty soldiers. But I should not blame them so much. It is their masters—the hunters after our blood—who set them loose upon us. Young man, I can tell you many a true tale, which would harrow your heart. My blood boils even to think of the scenes of cruelty which I have witnessed, without the power of assisting the wretched sufferers; but I will not tell them. Times, I hear, are changing. Well, if they only allow peace to our religion, we will let our just hatred sleep in the cold grave with the innocent victims of their villainy. "My good friend," said the young man, who showed by the excited expression of his countenance that he entered into his host's feelings, "you feel deeply, but rightly, on your country's wrongs. I have heard of many instances of your sufferings, and they are great. However, I fear that the treachery of your own was more the cause of them than the open hatred of strangers."

"Both, young man—both," said Connel, "have united to oppress this wretched land. I know it," he continued in a wilder voice and manner, starting from his seat, with his hand raised above his head—"I know it. There is a curse upon us. Is not our land blessed above others, and yet we are starving? Are we not faithful to our religion, and yet we have not its consolation? Don't we prove even with our blood our loyalty to our king, and yet under his sanction we are gibbeted as traitors? Ah! it there must be a curse of some sort upon us. It cannot be God's for he has blessed our land. It is man's wickedness that works our misery." Connel's manner, more than his words, powerfully affected the young man. He felt the power of Connel's vehemence, and when the latter, after his burst of passion, resumed his seat, the dark eyes of the stranger appeared wilder than before. Connel, without pretending to notice the effect, continued with more calmness:

"You speak well, sir, in saying that our false friends have done us more injury than our open enemies. There could be no excuse for the oppression of those who know not Ireland as the land of their birth, or who, born among us, have no common-feeling of faith or interest with us. But for those who have called us brothers, and who have professed our faith and broken bread with us—ah! their villainy is past endurance. I have known such; and if there be justice anywhere, vengeance will overtake them."

"Vengeance must and will overtake them," said the young man in a loud voice, almost of fury. "I have known one villain of the kind, and I would give—"

He stopped, and his brows were knitted and his features drawn together by the conflict apparently of opposite feelings. He continued, not addressing O'Keane; but the words—they were only half audible—were distinct from the pauses between them: "What proof have I of his guilt? None that amounts to certainty. He promised to bring me safe. He swore there was no danger, and the moment we landed we were attacked. He could be deceived—I will believe that he was. Would to heaven I had believed the hints which I heard of his treachery, and then the old man's blood would not be heavy upon my heart."

At this moment he perceived that he was speaking louder than was prudent. He raised his eyes, and they met Connel's, which were riveted upon him. What was there in the stranger's look which could disturb Connel? He winced under it; his features changed. Doubt, and inquiry, and wonder were mixed strongly in their expression. His eyes were turned to the ground. He raised them again. Yet there was the same look of the stranger.

"Mercy of heaven!" thought Connel, "can it be he? No; the idea is too wild. Yet, there again, is his father's look in bloom." He arose suddenly; he stretched out his hands towards the young man—who had also arisen, startled at the wildness of Connel's manner—and asked, with a tone of deep supplication: "In heaven's name, say who are you, young man?"

CHAPTER VI.

The words and energy of Connel were calculated to excite misgivings in the mind of a person in more secure circumstances than the stranger. He looked in doubt around him. He observed the quick approach of Fergus and the women towards Connel. A fear of hidden treachery arose suddenly in his mind, and his hand grasped a pistol which was concealed beneath the covering of his outer dress. He relaxed his grasp when he perceived that

the family of Connel stood in the centre of the room, looking with wonder from the old man to himself, but without any evidence of evil intention. The picture which presented itself in the little room, was well worthy of being transferred to a stage better suited to display the grandeur and the beauty of its characters. The bright glare of the blazing wood fell upon the marked profile of the old man, giving a tinge of gold to his silvered hair; now disturbed from its usual settled state by his excitement. A change had entirely come over him. The wildness and determination of his eyes had sunk to a milder, though still ardent expression of entreaty. The energy of his manner was lost in the suppliant expression of his stooped posture, and his hands, a moment before raised by the passion of his defiance against his supposed enemies, dropped before his breast. If you could forget the personal dignity the effect of which was only weakened by his pre-ent posture—you might well fancy him an aged and holy seer deterring the wildness of youth from some dark deed.

The attitude and countenance of the other persons were in keeping with his. The stranger stood erect before the light. There was suddenly wonder in his eyes and on his parted lips,—but only for a moment did his countenance give this expression. He looked from father to son, and then the whole power of his keen eyes was concentrated upon the former. He looked to find the motive of Connel's question.

The stranger's age could not be more than twenty-five, although he appeared more advanced in life, owing to the dark hue, which travel and exposure to all sorts of weather had given to his complexion. This appeared,—that is, that he had felt the influence of a more severe climate than that in which he was reared,—from the contrast of the remarkable fairness of his forehead with the bronza colour of his lower features. His height was something above the common; and he seemed much taller still from his slight though well-formed figure. When first introduced to the reader he wore, perhaps to avoid notice, a cap of frizes without peak or other ornament than the common head-covering of the peasant; but now his hair of glossy black fell unconfined about his forehead and neck. His other dressing had nothing to attract notice; it was of coarse gray cloth, and its make was well adapted to the ease of the pedestrian as its strong material was to his defence against soil and rain; still there was in its cut and fitting, that which, escaping the vulgar, could tell to a person conversant with the fashions of the time, that its wearer had some claims to a higher rank of life than at first sight appeared.

We must leave the stranger and Connel in their wonder to describe the spectators of the scene. Whilst the stranger had been engaged with his father in their first conversation, Fergus was seated on a low stool in a distant part of the room, at one moment anxiously watching the feelings of the speaker, and again answering in a low voice the eager enquiries of a beautiful girl, who leaned with the confidence of a sister upon his shoulder. This was his sister Eveleen, or "Eveleen of the dark hair," on whom he doated with more than fraternal love.

"You have told me," she said, in a tone of sweet persuasion, running her delicate fingers through the long curls that fell around her brother's neck, "that you met him by chance, and yet you pray that he may be the person you suspect him to be. Ah! Fergus, I see you don't wish me to know your thoughts. You and my father are changed towards me since that dark pedlar has been last here."

"Hush, dear Eveleen, don't let my father hear you say this. I have no secret, at least none about which you could care, and as for the pedlar, though I have never spoken to him, I suspect him."

"Ah, but you have secrets," she replied, not with the purpose of exercising the influence which she knew she possessed over her brother, but feelingly, though her manner was jocose. "You have, indeed; I know it, Fergus. Come, now, don't look so gloomy. Tell me why you and my father like the pedlar so much, whom all other people hate. Well, well, you don't hear me. I also, I see, must be serious; I, too, have secrets."

And here she whispered something into her brother's ear, which made him start from his seat and say, "You jest, Eveleen; you could not have seen D'Arcy, and if you have, he could not say this to you." Eveleen answered, but with an altered tone. The laughing expression of her deep blue eye was changed; she unlocked the hand that was playing with her brother's hair, and looking him full in the face, she said, "So you, too, would make me believe it by your manner, yet I cannot blame you. Strange thoughts have lately arisen in my own mind." Eveleen communed with herself. She withdrew her eyes from her brother's face to look upon the stranger's, at the moment Connel had arisen, and she and her brother, with one impulse, rushed forward.

Fergus O'Keane was distinguished among the young villagers, not only for beauty of face, and symmetry of figure, but for that which young men prize more—for his strength and agility in all their manly exercises. This of itself would give him an influence among the young of his acquaintance; but he had more to recommend him—he had the good opinion of the old inhabitants, who often pointed him out to their sons and daughters, as a model of prudence and wisdom, of docility and obedience. Connel's great influence among his neighbors certainly reflected upon his son; yet, it was not from it alone that Fergus derived his character as the chief and most promising young man for miles around; he earned it by his kindness of heart and constant good humour—by his ready and sincere attentions to the wants of others. There were none of his companions who would not have endangered their lives for his advantage, and the old loved him as their child.

As proficiency in book learning was supposed then, as it is still, among the unlearned, to give a sort of wonderful character to its possessor, it was no surprise that Fergus and his sister (who after learning all that her father could teach—which was not little for those times—were entrusted to the spiritual and literary guidance of the priest, a learned man, who devoted his leisure moments to the instruction of pupils so docile and so apt) should each, among their respective companions, have an influence which none others enjoyed. Fergus' own natural disposition confirmed this adventitious power. He was the peace-maker among the young, as his father was among the old. He was always ready to relieve the necessities of his companions with hand and purse; none knew from whence he had the money, and none thought much about it.

Fergus was above the middle height, and finely formed. There was in the colour and texture of his face and hands a delicacy which would not be expected in those of a peasant. Perhaps he was indebted for this to his exemption from manual labour; for, though his father laboured, he had a boy and girl who did the work of his household, allowing his son and daughter, in this a liberty, which made them an exception to the children of the farmers of the country. If we say his age was about twenty, his hair dark, and worn in long curls his forehead high; his eyes of a deep black; his nose and the rest of his features well formed, we can end his description for the present.

Eveleen O'Keane was equally esteemed among her companions. She was now entering her eighteenth year. Her perfect form was fully developed; and no maiden ever trod the green sward in the evening dance, with more elegance of form and lightness of step. Her stature was rather tall, and was above the common height of women; yet there

was such proportion in her form, and such ease in her gesture that none who looked on her would wish her less. Her hair was of the darkest black, so worn as to display the evenness of her fair forehead. Her deep blue eyes had a character of firmness; yet there were times when they would express archness and even wild passion; but this latter expression was not settled, for it was only observed by her companions, when she listened to the wild stories of some old poet, or felt her country's woes in the plaintive notes of some itinerant harper. Her nose and lips and chin added their own beauties to a face, which neither young or old could look upon without a deep interest.

Eveleen was the famed beauty of Lar-Connaught. Many of the young Franches, Lynchs, and O'Flahertys, whom, with her father's consent, she often met at her visits to Moyeuellen and Drimcong, paid more than usual attention to the beautiful peasant girl, whose company otherwise they would scarcely tolerate, though patronized by the ladies who gave the laws of fashion to that part of the country. She had been early introduced by the priest to Mrs. French of Moyeuellen, and that lady had given her all the advantages of the education which her daughter enjoyed from a resident governess; so that now she stood on the footing of companion with Mary French. Eveleen but seldom accepted the invitations which she received from the gentry to spend the merry time of some festival with them. She began lately to think that her beauty and natural accomplishments were the cause of these invitations, and she was determined, as far as her father would allow, not to subject herself to the mortifying reflection that she wanted birth and fortune to make her the equal of some of the proud beauties whom she met. It is true she came forth from the society of the great as innocent as when she first entered it; but it often required days, after her departure from Moyeuellen, to make her feel the same pleasure which she formerly had in her amusements with her companions on the lake and through the woods, and her domestic labours.

At the time she is introduced to the reader, she wore a dress well suited to show off the proportions of her fine shape. Her hair was gathered in a black ribbon behind, and fell over a red woollen jacket, tightened to the form, and which was met at the waist by a blue dimity bed-gown. Beneath this latter garment, towards the ankle, appeared many inches of full flannel petticoat, home-spun, and of home-dyed red. If you except an untanned slipper or sole fastened on the instep, she had no covering on her feet, in conformity with the custom of the country, within doors.

Such were Fergus and Eveleen O'Keane, the son and daughter of Colmel More O'Keane.

CHAPTER VII.

While we attempted to describe Fergus and Eveleen, we left the stranger and Connel gazing in wonder at each other. The young man understood from the looks of both his host and family that no danger threatened him. His astonishment quietly subsided to surprise, and with this feeling he answered Connel's question.

"I would know, before I answer your question," he said in a calm but resolute tone, looking from Connel to his son, "why you, to whom I am a perfect stranger, feel an interest in me. If your question be put with a good purpose, as it suits me I may reply; if not, I will thank you for your kindness thus far, and take my leave of you for the night."

"Young man," said Connel in a tremulous voice, "you are, indeed, at liberty to be silent or to speak. Far be it from me to force the stranger under my roof to a confession. But we have long expected you; we have long waited for you. Confess it; you must confess that you are Godfrey O'Halloran's son."

The stranger's countenance became suddenly frank, whether it was the kindness and good-will which he perceived in Connel's look and manner, or the mention of the name that changed his feelings. He exclaimed: "I am he, though unfortunate. What interest can you have in me?"

O'Keane raised his hands above head for a moment, and then rushed towards the stranger whom he hugged to his breast with the feelings of a parent over a lost child. Some moments passed before the stranger could extricate himself from the fond embraces of the old man. Fergus, and Eveleen, and Judith looked on in wonder. The stranger himself was the first to speak:

"My good man, I was not prepared to expect this show of friendship but from one—that one I cannot find here. You are not Dermot O'Grady?"

"Who else but Dermot O'Grady? I see there were reasons for deceiving you. But, in faith, why should there be? Come Master Harry," said Connel with quick words to distract the attention of his family, which he saw his first expression had excited. "You may be sure that you are under your best friend's roof. Oh I and my son have often wished to see my dear master's son before the light parted from these eyes. And who would think that Dermot-Connel O'Keane would have this happiness? Was not I without sense or feeling not to know you when you entered? Sure I ought not to forget the likeness of your father. You must be old Master Harry, and hungry? Norah, Judy, Eveleen—no—yes, Eveleen, prepare supper. Oh! this is a happy night for Dermot-Connel More."

And Connel threw fresh logs upon the fire, and forced the stranger into his own seat, and tumbled about the kitchen utensils, much to the annoyance of the poor maid, Norah, in his eagerness to prove his affection. Norah was left to her own wits to prepare the supper. Fergus and Eveleen stood still in the same place, looking from the stranger to each other. And the old nurse, after a little thought but without saying a word, rushed forward, and taking one of his hands in hers with the other she turned his head to the light, and burst aloud into sobs.

"Oh! *uirra struie!* but it is he himself! and it is his father's beauty, and it is his father's love to come from a far, foreign land to see his old friends! The light of heaven fall upon you, you avourneen, and direct you for your kindness."

The stranger was obliged to bear in silence the devouring caresses of the old nurse. Supper was soon ready; it consisted of slices of fried ham—which might be blamed by some for not telling it—and cold fowl, from Connel's well-replenished larder, accompanied with home-brewed malt drink, and a platter heaped with farls of white oat bread. It was served on a long low table, of such whiteness, that the most fastidious would prefer it without a cover. Henry O'Halloran (we shall now call the stranger by the name Connel gave him), commenced with an eager appetite. He had not eaten for the last twelve hours, save a morsel of hard bread, which he received from a peasant girl in the mountains. During the repast, he had not time to remark, with particular attention, any person, not even O'Keane's daughter, though she was introduced to him by her father. Since after slice of the sweet ham disappeared from his wooden plate, and he answered, in monosyllables, the few enquiries of his host, but only in the interval between his draught and the renewal of his attack upon the viands. It was, after his finishing draught, when he had wiped his knife and replaced it in its sheath by his side, that his eyes met, for the first time, in full gaze those of the maiden. Eveleen blushed, and looked in another direction, but Henry O'Halloran continued to gaze with more interest, feeling that he had never before seen so interesting a countenance.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.)

CATHOLICITY IN SCOTLAND.

Writing of the condition of the Church in Northern District of Scotland, a contemporary says: "It is in this district of Scotland that we find the remains of that once flourishing church of the Highlands, which, for so long after the faith had almost entirely abandoned the Lowlands, maintained itself, along with a kindred loyalty to king and country, in the hearts of large numbers of the people. At the date, however, with which we are just now dealing, the vicariate counted only nineteen regular mission stations, and including the venerable bishop, twenty priests, one of whom was already counted in the staff of the College of Blair (Eastern District)."

Preshome was the seat of the vicar-apostolic, who had one assistant clergyman. This mission, which is situated in the Euzie, five miles east of Fochabers, possessed a chapel capable of containing eight hundred persons, which was erected about 1788 by the Rev. John Reid, and a congregation of about one thousand four hundred souls. The two stations of Auchinalrig and Fochabers, which are also in the Euzie district, and which were about three miles apart, were served by a single priest, and each possessed a chapel. The chapel of Auchinalrig has been built by Bishop Geddes, and that of Fochabers by the Rev. George Mathison and Bishop Patterson, in 1826, and was still largely burdened with debt in 1831.

The district of Euzie in which, then, three chapels were situated, and which forms that part of the Banffshire coast extending from the River Spey to the town of Cullen, is of particular interest, from the circumstance that a considerable number of Catholics had remained in it from the time of the Reformation, and the exercise of the Catholic religion was never interrupted even in the darkest times of persecution. In this year (1831) the district contained about two thousand four hundred Catholics. The chapel at Preshome, too, was remarkable for being the first Catholic place of worship in Scotland since the Reformation, in the erection of which it was ventured to make any attempt at elegance or ornament. It furnished, too, no small proof of the liberality of feeling which then prevailed in that part of Scotland. For though it was built when the penal code was in full vigor, though it stood in a very conspicuous situation, and though it at that time far surpassed in size and appearance all the neighbouring parochial churches of the Establishment, yet not only no hindrance or molestation was given to the clergyman who undertook its erection, nor any feeling of jealousy exhibited, but Protestants of every rank in the vicinity protected, countenanced, and encouraged him in the undertaking. The Earl of Finghall presented an altar piece after Annibal Carracci, and two very handsome holy water fonts made of Portsoy marble. The church possessed, besides, an organ and circulating library.

In the course of 1832 or 1833, the four hundred Catholics who resided in the fishing village of Buckie added to the stations in the district by fitting up as a chapel a hall which had been leased for the purpose, the people being too poor to do more.

Besides serving the principal station of Portsoy, its priest, in 1831, went every alternate Sunday to Banff and Fogglyon, and in all three places was a chapel. That of Portsoy was erected in 1829, and at that time a Sunday school was being set on foot there. These congregations together numbered from five to six hundred souls; and in consequence of the great deficiency of priests in the district, the clergyman, at Portsoy, was obliged to attend occasionally at Strichen, Blyth and Turiff, which stations previously formed a separate charge. Aquorthies, by Keith Hall, was in reality an appendage of the College of Blair, and its chapel and farm served by the procurator of the college. At Toumintoul, by Ballindaloch, a chapel had been built in 1789, and, in 1820, the increase of the congregation to about six hundred souls brought about the addition of a gallery.

The increasing vitality of the Scottish mission is further shown by the fact that the Directory of 1832 contains, besides the additional stations already given, the name of that of Driftown. It was not a new mission, but the church and station, as well as the village in which both were placed, were new. The mission, though in 1832 it was nearly circumscribed within the limits of the parish of Mortlach, had recently formed a very extensive charge, being scarcely bounded by the banks of the Spey and Don, and comprehending parts of seven or eight parishes. In 1794 a chapel and house had been erected at Keithloch, in the central parish of Mortlach, but that situation was inconvenient to pastor and people.

At Tombae, in the same neighborhood, there had long existed an old and crumbling chapel for the service of the Catholics of Glenlivet, which, in 1829, gave place to a new and needed building, for the erection of which its incumbent had to appeal to the Catholics of the three kingdoms. This mission was, and is yet, specially interesting from the circumstance that in troublesome times, and for more than a century, the Catholic clergy found an asylum in that remote and sequestered vale; that there, in the seminary of Seilan, candidates were educated for the priesthood, and thence sent to preach the Gospel through the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland. Its chapel, too, was one of the first to which a Catholic burial-ground was attached. Glenlivet is of considerable extent, being about fourteen miles long, and the Rev. Paul MacPherson, a native of the Glen, who had been for many years agent of the mission and Superior of the Scotch College at Rome, on his return thence in 1827 built at Chapelstown, on ground granted by the Duke of Gordon, a neat chapel house, for the benefit of the population of the higher and more remote part of the Glen, which was almost exclusively Catholic. To the chapel he attached a small burial-ground, and, in addition to his other services, he supplied funds for the building of a school in the Glen. At Elgin there existed a very small and inconspicuous chapel. In Inverness and its environs there was a considerable number of Catholics, and for a chapel they had then, owing to their poverty, to be contented with a ruined house. To the westward of Inverness is Strathglass; almost wholly peopled with Catholics, and from its history, specially interesting to the student of Catholic story. It had, in 1831, a congregation of over eight hundred souls, and a chapel, which was built by Bishop Eneas Chisholm. The Aird and the eastern part of Strathglass formed but one mission—that of Eskadale, which was founded about 1791 by Bishop John Chisholm. There was a chapel at Aigies, which was abandoned in 1827 for the new and beautiful Saxon structure at Eskadale, erected at the charge of T. A. Fraser, Esq., of Lovat, and containing comfortably, and without the aid of galleries, about eight hundred people. In the western extremity of the Northern District, near the Isle of Skye, lies Kintail, which was in 1831 undoubtedly the poorest mission in the North. It did not possess a chapel, and Divine service was celebrated in an old thatched house at Dornie. Two priests attended to the religious needs of the Catholics of Abojeen, where, besides a chapel, was a school; which, having been found inadequate for the instruction of the children and the congregation, gave place in 1832 to a new and more commodious building. Ballogie, by Kincairdine of Niall, built by two priests, and the other three places by one priest each: a chapel and congregation at O'Connell were attended from Abojeen and Kincairdine, and a new and handsome chapel erected at house for the priest. In Keith a handsome chapel

was built in 1830, and was supposed to be the only specimen of the Roman Doric architecture in Scotland. His Majesty Charles X. in 1829, presented to the chapel an altar-piece representing the incredulity of St. Thomas, and the site of the chapel was granted by the Hon. Colonel Grant, of Grant.

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