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ELLEN AHERN; OR, THE POOR COUSIN.

CHAPTER II.—Continued. While she was making these observations, the stranger was scanning the almost defaced portrait of the Lord of Fermanagh who, more than a century before, had raised the standard of revolt against England, aided by the O'Donnell and the O'Neil, two of the princes of Ulster, and waged so successful a warfare, as to have nearly driven the Gael (stranger) from the Isle of Saints. The brilliant victories they won under the green banners, on which the cross and crown were emblazoned in gold, adorn the page of their country's history! Here is the Maguire who fell at Clothbreec, said Father McMahon, acting as cicerone.— And this is the hero of Benburb. This one, whose face the mildew and worm have spared, is the Lord of Fermanagh who, in a dangerous crisis, shouted the slogan of the Maguires in such peals from the dark hills of Donegal, that the septs of Ulster started from their eyries, and following the chief who led them, swept down like a mountain torrent on the Saxon army, and scattered them like chaff at Drum Luck? And who is this with broad forehead, flowing hair bound with a fillet of gold, large eyes of blue, and white flowing robes; whose appearance almost persuades me he is the genius of Peace? inquired the stranger, pausing before another portrait. That is Eadhna—a famous bard of this ancient house, who was celebrated in his day, for his learning and eloquence. He was one of the bards who was converted at Tara the day that St. Patrick preached before Laogaire. But perhaps I weary you. I forget that every one is not so fond of archaeology as I am. It is a science of which I am extremely fond, and I shall take it as a favor if you will proceed, Reverend sir, replied the stranger, earnestly. Here, then, continued Father McMahon, is one of the heroes of the Pass of the Plumes; all is effaced of his lineaments except one wild, flashing eye, as keen as a falcon's, and as gray as a smoke wreath. On this worn eaten canvas, said Father McMahon, passing on, we can discern a Bishop's mitre and a crozier. Beside it, dim, defaced and tattered, hang the portraits—rudely executed, it is true—of three Knights of the Red Branch, famous in their day for their gallant exploits. And here we pause before the faithful likeness of their lineal descendant, the late Lord of Fermanagh—who was the friend of Charlemont and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and their cause. He spent his gold and his blood in the dark days of '95, and barely escaped attainer, on condition that he would retire to Fermanagh and spend the rest of his days there. Exasperated and chagrined, there was no help for it but to accept the hard conditions proposed by the Government; and with his newly wedded second wife he came hither. The Union, so disastrous to Ireland, completed the work that defeat had commenced; he never held up his head again, and died, I verily believe, of an outraged and broken heart. His motto was 'Patria cara, carior libertas.'—('My country is dear, but liberty is dearer.') That was a martyrdom as glorious as a triumph, responded the stranger. I feel a singular interest in the noble man. Did he leave as heir? That is another sad section of his history. His first wife, who was a Desmond, bore him a son, who was only four years old when his young and noble mother died. He afterwards married the daughter of an impoverished English Baronet, who also became the mother of a son. He lived only two years after this child was born.—His widow spent the first months of her mourning here, after which the family—herself, the two boys and a nurse—left the country and settled on the continent. It is to be hoped that Lord Desmond is no recreant to his princely race, observed the stranger. Lord Desmond died abroad, it is said. The title and estates devolved on his step-brother, Hugh, who is now the chief of his sept, replied Father McMahon; but he is a stranger to his native land, more's the pity, he never having been here since he was two years old. It is to be hoped, though, my Father, that the young lord is retinus vestigia famæ.—('Keeping in the footsteps of an honorable ancestry.') It would be a thousand pities for the escutcheon of the Maguires to have a single foul blot on it, replied the stranger, turning towards Ellen Ahern. I do not apprehend that it ever will. That which a stranger hopes for them, the Maguires are bound, life and estate, to avert. Lough Foyle's deep waters are neither deep nor dark enough for the dastard, who would sully it. Our little Ellen is a Maguire by descent,

said Father McMahon, laughing at her enthusiasm; and she is apt to get into the heroics whenever the honor of her family is in question. I'd like you to see how like a Knight Templar this Reverend gentleman can look whenever the glories of the McMabons is the subject, retorted Ellen Ahern. Sir Godfrey de Bouillon himself could not exhibit more of the spirit of chivalry! Fousense, Ahern, my child! What should a poor old priest have to do with pride, said Father McMahon, handing his snuff-box around, and inviting the stranger, with an incipient mirthfulness lurking about the corners of his eyes, to try his Irish blackguard. At this moment Thela, the wolf-dog, ran into the gallery in search of his mistress, but on seeing a stranger he uttered a fierce growl, threw himself back for an instant on his haunches, and sprang towards him, ere Ellen or Father McMahon could call him off; but to their astonishment, the growl subsided into a whine; and after gazing intently into his eyes, which were fixed stercorally on him, and seeming to survey his every lineament, he hung his head, until the tip of his black nose rested between his fore feet, then crouched himself down close beside him. There had been a mute language spoken between the man and the dog, inexplicable and mysterious to the lookers on, who knew that cowardice had no part in the strange conduct of the latter. Thela's instincts have discovered a friendly and humane nature in you, sir, said Ellen Ahern, well pleased that her savage favorite had not merited death by tearing the stranger's throat. There is a strange power in the human eye over the savage instincts of a brute. But I am glad to conquer the ill will of so noble an animal, even though the conquest is won by fear.—Wolf dogs are rare now in Ireland, I believe, Miss Ahern? Yes; they are dying out. Poor Thela has as friend of his own kind in the barony. Perhaps his instincts informed him that I am in the same predicament, and he had a fellow feeling for me, replied the stranger with a smile, which imparted to his swarthy countenance a bright and singular fascination. Thela is truly a friend in need. He is not governed by worldliness certainly, or he would not be so faithful to one as friendless as I am, she replied, calling the dog to her side and caressing him. Miss Ahern's loneliness will be dispelled by the arrival of her relatives. I have no such hope, or even so humble a friend as Thela to make my present loneliness tolerable. Miss Ahern—since you seem to know my name so well—may be more thrown on herself than that now; for, sir, I am now mistress of Fermanagh; then I shall be only—a poor cousin, she answered, with a smile half hopeful, half said. I believe that all individuals of that class are unconditionally snubbed by their rich kinsfolk. I should like to see you snubbed, Aileen, dear, said Father McMahon, with another merry twinkle of the eye. Do you think it would not matter, or that it would not hurt me? About as much as a rain drop would hurt a falcon's wing. But be of good cheer, my child. The very noblest natures are those which are developed by trial; and to the followers of Christ, there is no safer way to Heaven than the way of sorrows. But I must go. God bless you! said Father McMahon, laying his broad palm on the fair head of Ellen Ahern. I should prefer a less stern ordeal, Father, she said, throwing back the curls from her bright face. Fie, fie, my child. Do not forget that the cross is inevitable. If we avoid it, it will be laid on our shoulders; if we lay it down a heavier one will take its place; and if the heart is undisciplined to meet them, how will it be possible to bear them? Like a Catholic Maguire, said the girl proudly. That means slecti non frangi, (to be bent, not broken) said Father McMahon, shrugging his shoulders. When in danger of defeat, Father McMahon invariably takes refuge in Latin, she said, with a light-hearted laugh; then I am at his mercy, for I don't know any more than Thela, what compliments he may be paying me. What did he say, sir? His meaning was that yours is a spirit to be bent, not broken. A good motto, Miss Ahern, and not incompatible with the spirit of a Catholic Maguire! said the stranger, wrapping his short Spanish cloak about him. I shall remain in this region perhaps a month or two; may I hope to be recognised, should we meet hereafter? As a friend of Father McMahon's? asked Ellen. You anticipate what I wish, but I think I

may answer yes, because I have a letter for him, through which I hope to be placed upon his list of friends. It would require no letter, I imagine, to effect that object, said Father McMahon, who was very much prepossessed in the stranger's favor. But I, who know so few people beyond Fermanagh, look on a letter as an event. The one I refer to is from Seville, replied the stranger; and it introduces your humble servant as Enrique Giron. A letter from Seville! from my nephew the canon? exclaimed Father McMahon. My dear Don Enrique Giron, why did you not name it earlier? Come with me, I believe we shall find a broiled pullet and a fitch of bacon at my house. You must dine with me. And the good old man pulled his guest along, talking all the way about the canon, his nephew. Don Enrique bestowed a caress on Thela, who followed him to the gallery door, and bowed with a kind and courteous air to Ellen Ahern, who stood watching their exit. She resumed her seat in the oriel window, and had made some progress with her work when Alice Riordan came into the gallery, looking about her with a timid air, as if in search of some one. There was a tradition among the people of the hamlet, that the Banchee's cry had been heard from time to time in the old gallery, in such shrill, eerie tones, that the soundest sleep was broken by it; and they declared that it was always followed by some dire misfortune to the Maguires or their fortunes. Hence Mrs. Riordan's timid step and frightened countenance. Is it me you are looking for, Eihave avourneen, (mother darling) said Ellen. God be good to us forever, amen, said the woman, starting, but you're given me a frecht, Miss Aileen a sulish. It's about them hangings in her ladyship's bedroom, that I know so more about fixing than a bacchan (soft, innocent person). Katy's broke her heart—the craythur—trying to get 'em up, and Bridget, scolded the two hands off of her; and I thought maybe you'd come, asthore, and set us right! To be sure I will, Alice, said Ellen, with a smile. And I thought, a sulish, as long I was coming, to have a word in your ear, continued the woman, whose voice sunk to a whisper, while she came closer to Ellen, I'd get you to spake to her ladyship when she comes, to see if she wouldn't revoke (revoke) what Tim Fahey, the black-mouth's been after doing about our rint. Is your rent in arrears, Alice? And how could it be otherways, asthore, when the nagur's been raising on us from time to time, 'till it would be asier to pay him with the blood from our veins than with gold. And then because Kate turned her back on him, when he was saying that to her that no dacint girl ought to hear, he threatened to cant and rackrint us—the villian—if we don't pay up, and we with an honest lease from the coud lord, Christ save his soul. I will do what I can, Alice. I am in hopes that Lord Hugh will make straight many of Fahey's crooked ways. Will you please to tell me, Miss Ellen dear, if there's any truth about the Scotch weavers coming? And then I hope the MAN ABOVE will send down lightning to burn their spinning jennies, and their factories, till there's not a skeed left, if they daro to put 'em up on holy ground, as I hear they are, Lord save us, said the woman, in a passionate tone. I have heard such a report, but can't and won't believe it, replied Ellen Ahern, looking over towards the old abbey, where the dust of her ancestors reposed. Why, Miss Ellen dear, there's so many monks and saints buried there, along with the Maguires, that the devil himself would be afraid to set his hoof in it, and I don't think Scotch spinners is much better, by my troth, said Alice. Let us hope for the best, Alice, answered Ellen sadly. Even if it never comes, a lanna voght, said the woman. God be good to us, and give us His Grace to bear the coming ill; for its enough we've got already, without living to see a factory put up beyond there. Come now, Miss Ellen—and I wonder at you for staying here, so lone like, in this dismal old picture gallery—and show me about the hangings. CHAPTER III.—THE LORD OF FERMANAGH. Exactly one week had slipped away since the announcement of the advent of Lord Hugh Maguire and his noble mother, but to the consternation of Mr. Fahey, and the disappointment of the tenants, who were on the tip toe of expectancy and hope, their arrival, from some cause or other, was still deferred. Fahey, to increase his own consequence, by showing off to Lord Hugh how worthily he ex-

ercised the signorial functions so long delegated to him, by an exhibition of the subjection that he held those in over whom he reigned, had determined from the first to give him a grand reception, and such a welcome to his ancient domain, as he could not fail to be grateful for, inasmuch as it would necessarily flatter his pride and afford a guarantee of his own fidelity to his interests. For this purpose he had been drilling the yeomanry of Fermanagh day and night; while they—poor souls—anxious to propitiate their landlord, and willing to get into Fahey's good graces on such easy terms, aided him with a right good will; enjoying, with impunity the exasperation which their own blunders excited in him, almost as much as they did the nozzin of poteen that he doled out to them during their exercises, by way of coaxing them into his measures. A sentinel was stationed day and night on one of the old watch towers of Fermanagh, ready to run the ancient pennon of green and gold up the flag-staff, the moment that the buzza from the vale below announced the arrival of the Lord of the Barony. Each man and boy of Fahey's brigade was provided with a green ribbon bow and streamers, with which to adorn their hats; and fresh fern bushes were cut every day, to be in readiness for them to strew in the road along which the carriage wheels of their chief was expected to pass. Another party were to take the horses from his equipage, and draw it up to the narrow pass of Fermanagh, where donkeys, well accustomed to the steepness and roughness of the way, were stationed to carry the travellers up to the castle. St. Finbar's bell—the only one in the barony—was to ring out a peal of welcome, and Father McMahon's choristers were to sing one of the old songs, with which in times past, the sept of the Maguire used to greet the coming of their chieftains. At the castle everything was in perfect order. Ellen Ahern, assisted by the strong hands of Alice Riordan, and guided by an innate taste for the refined and beautiful, arranged Lady Fermanagh's sleeping apartment and the ancient drawing-room; and when the finishing touches were bestowed on them, in the shape of clusters of fragrant flowers, which she placed here and there, they wore an aspect at once genial and cheerful, if not elegant. In the broad fireplace of black marble, huge logs of fir blazed and gleamed, brightening up the dark, polished panels and the grim, mail-clad portraits which adorned the walls, until all gloom seemed to have vanished. Ellen removed her harp thither, and by the aid of a correct ear and a good knowledge of music, put the piano in tune; then opened the music-books, wheeled fauteuils and antique sofas round until they formed a sociable and inviting circle; brought some handsomely bound books from her own room, along with a quantity of exquisite engravings, which her father had sent to her mother years ago from France and Spain, which she spread out on a centre table; nor rested until she had opened the curtains of the eastern windows sufficiently to let through a glimpse of sunshine or moonlight. She was pleased with her arrangements, and in her simplicity, thought that Lady Fermanagh could not fail to be; and felt disappointed as each succeeding day closed in without bringing her. One night after having played whist with Mr. Ahern, and mixed for him a tumbler of speed punch, which his age and infirmities required, Ellen was about bidding him good night, when he said— This is our last quiet evening, a sulish. How do you know, cousin? I feel it, dear: it is like a cold wind in my heart, as if a wrath from the unseen world had passed through its silent and deserted cells. Do you believe in such things, cousin Eadhna—you who are so wise and learned?—Remember that you are the lineal descendant of a Bardic race, and no doubt inherit some of their highly strung sensitiveness, said Ellen Ahern, taking up her candle. Assuredly I believe in such things, as far as I have tested them by my own experience, otherwise I am skeptical. The veil is more transparent between souls and the unseen, than it is in others. Some natures are more spiritual, some more gross; it is that which constitutes the difference. But good night, avourneen, said the old man, kissing her broad, fair brow, after which she fitted up to her room, but not to sleep. This room was in the north east angle of the castle; and of its two windows, one overlooked the steep ravine, and the other commanded a view of Cathagaura abbey and the beautiful scenery around; amidst which sparkled and foamed a silvery cascade, that leaped down with a sound of rejoicing into the valley, where, having found a channel, it wound around the abbey lands, then brawled into the ravine, from whence, gathering a fresh impetus from one or two springs that emptied themselves there, it wandered off to the great ocean beyond. It was

this stream that suggested the idea of a factory to Lord Hugh Maguire; in fact its deep, rapid flow was admirably calculated for any utilitarian purposes to which water power could be applied. Ellen Ahern donned a loose white wrapper, and throwing a shawl about her, went to the eastern window to look out at the night. Not a ripple of cloud disturbed the calm heavens, where the glorious planets shone in undimmed splendor! Solemn and holy at all times did the upper deep appear to her, with its myriad lights and glowing fires, that preached most eloquently to her of the Almighty Power that fashioned and upheld them, and by the mystery of their magnificence, led her soul in strong and rapid flight to His very footstool, in adoration as hushed and holy as their own. But to-night—she could not tell wherefore—they seemed to look pitifully and lovingly on her, and to be, more than ever, a link between the departed and herself, as they shone as lustriously down on the graves in the old abbey burial place, as they did into her living eyes. What words of tenderness did their busy twinkling inscribe? What was it so full and unutterable, that they suggested? She felt the mystery, but she could not define; and turned with a sigh from her upward gaze, towards the gray ruins of Cathagaura, where her mother and kindred reposed. She could not see their graves at this distance, but she knew the spot—it was where, like a garland of lilies, the hawthorn hedge, white with blossoms, gleamed in the moonlight. As she stood looking out on the quiet and lovely scene, it is not strange that with the thought of the departed, and the fruitless yearning of the soul to follow them to their unseen and pathless world, there should have arisen a desire to open, touch and caress the treasured relics which had been consecrated by their touch or perchance by their tears; so Ellen turned away, and opening a small drawer of an antique black cabinet, she took out a miniature and a few old letters, which she gazed on through fast falling tears. Oh, my mother, my beautiful young mother! how well do I remember the day this letter came, she murmured. How blithe some thou wert, and how bright was the bloom of thy cheek! Child as I was, I recollect how, in admiration of thy loveliness, I stood toying with the long curling tresses of thy hair, listening to thee sing, while thou didst pause now and then to kiss or caress me. Then some one brought thee the letter from Spain, which announced my father's death, and how he fell covered with wounds, defending his post to the last. From that hour, in speechless woe thou didst wither and fade, my darling, until within a few short months, they laid thee down among the holy dead of Cathagaura. While Ellen Ahern was thus communing with the past, Lord Hugh Maguire and his cortege suddenly appeared, driving at great speed into the hamlet of Fermanagh. A gossoon—stationed there for the purpose—ran shouting up the crooked and rugged street to announce the news. Mr. Fahey, who kept his brigade at his own house, roused the men, and in a few moments led them out to the outskirts of the miserable place, just as his lordship's carriage turned a point in the road to enter it. He had given them a thousand injunctions to obey his directions implicitly, and flattered himself that they would; but the moment they came in view of the carriage which contained their landlord—forgetting all about the speech which Fahey was to make—and thinking of nothing at the instant but their own loyal and affectionate devotion to the chief of their sept, they waved their decorated hats and the fern bushes over their heads, with such a wild, piercing buzza and shouts of cead mille fallia, that the horses, terrified at the sudden noise, became unmanageable, and required all the strength of the coachman's arms to hold them in. Fahey, almost beside himself with rage at the derangement of his plans, commanded them in his most thundering tones to be quiet, gesticulating all the time like a madman. Quiet being somewhat restored, he strode up to the carriage door, and was in the act of laying his hand on the window, to begin his speech, when Lord Hugh, totally unprepared for such a wild rout and uproar, imagined that he was surrounded by banditti or some illegal association, whose intentions were hostile and murderous; and that Fahey was the chief of the band, who had come to demand his effects or his life; fired his pistol, the balls of which grazed the agent's ear and shoulder, and sent him, howling with pain, under the horses feet, who, now absolutely unmanageable, sprang forward, scattering the yeomanry of Fermanagh to the right and left, while some, still more unfortunate, were knocked down and trampled on by the half frantic animals. Fahey, wounded and bruised, was helpless; and under exciting circumstances, was compelled to admit to himself, that any attempt a formal reception of his lordship would be more honored in the breach than in the observance, after all that had