

"You see that volcanic hill lying back yonder from the shore? That is the Acropolis of Cumæ; and a regiment might find hiding-room in the mysterious caves and passages with which it is perforated in every direction."

"I think I can see them," exclaimed Saxon. "They look like rabbit-burrows."

"There are hundreds of them—all hewn in the solid tuff. They were ancient beyond all record in the time of Virgil, and no one knows whether they lead, or by what hands they were excavated."

It was now proposed that Saxon and Castle-towers should land on pretext of sketching, leaving the Albula at anchor about half a mile from shore. They put off accordingly in the small boat, taking Saxon's English sailor with them, and leaving Montecuculi on board the yacht.

The shore was flat and marshy, fringed with tall reeds, and scattered over with fragments of very ancient masonry. Among these reeds they moored their boat, and, landing, found themselves face to face with a Neapolitan sentry.

Up till this moment, no human creature had been visible along the lonely coast. Scanning it carefully from the deck of the Albula and detecting no sign of life for miles on either side they had said to each other that nothing would be easier than to bring off the fugitive in open day; yet no sooner had they set foot upon the sand than their friend's danger stood boldly before them in the shape of an armed sentinel.

The man neither challenged them nor opposed their landing; but stood by, leaning on his musket, quiet and observant. Saxon and Castle-towers, on the other hand, with an air of the utmost unconcern, lit their cigars, and began looking about for a favourable point of view.

Presently the Earl went up to the sentry, and addressed him.

"Scusate, amico," said he, "but what hill is that yonder?"

"E la rocca di Cumæ, signore," replied the soldier.

"Cumæ?" repeated the Earl.

"Sì, signore. Cumæ antico."

"Grazie molto," said Castle-towers, and immediately pulled a book from his pocket, and began reading. The book was Childe Harold; but the last edition of Murray could not have answered his purpose better. The sentry concluded it was a guide-book, set down the new comers as inoffensive tourists, and took no further notice of them.

They then wandered a little way up the shore till they came to a clump of pines, in the shade of which they sat down. Here Saxon, who was, in truth, no artist, proceeded to make a sketch.

Presently another sentry made his appearance. Like the first, he seemed to rise out of the very earth, and yet made no show of watchfulness. Having paced slowly past the pine clump twice or thrice, he withdrew to a point of rising ground about a quarter of a mile distant, and there took up his position.

"Trefalden," said the Earl, "we are watched."

"Evidently."

"What is to be done?"

"Heaven knows!"

"It is my belief that the place swarms with soldiers."

"And I feel as if the very air were full of eyes and ears."

"Poor Colonna!"

Then for a few moments, they were both silent.

"I'll tell you what I think we must do, Castle-towers," said Saxon. "Seem to sail away, and then come back again at dusk."

Despite his anxiety, the Earl could not forbear a smile.

"Decidedly, my friend," said he, "you have no genius for intrigue."

"Isn't my plan a good one?"

"It is the most artless artifice that ever oozed from an honest brain. No, no. We must do something much more cunning than that."

"Then I fear you will have to invent it."

"I think I have done so already. You must go on sketching for a few hours longer. We must then pretend to be hungry—"

"No need for pretence on my part," said Saxon. "I am frightfully hungry now."

"You will have to fast for some time, then, because it is my object to prolong our stay here till dusk; and, in order to do that, we must drive off the dinner question to the last moment. Having done this, we will go up boldly to one of the sentries, inquire our way to the nearest inn, and get something to eat. By the time we have dined it will be dusk. Colonna will then only have to steal down to the shore and hide himself in our boat; and the object for which we are here will be triumphantly accomplished."

"It seems to me," said Saxon, "that we should have done better had we followed Colonna's own instructions more closely, and not come till after sunset."

The Earl shook his head.

"Our only course," he replied, "was to land openly—to sketch, and idle, and play the orthodox British tourist. By doing this, we disarm suspicion; by steering along the coast after sunset, we should infallibly have aroused the suspicions of every royalist within half a dozen miles of the place."

"I dare say you are right," said Saxon; "but in the mean while, I am starving."

"I fear you must continue to starve for the present."

"Then, I beg you to understand that I decline to sit still under the treatment. Suppose we go over the ruins."

"Will you not finish your sketch first?"

"My sketch!" ejaculated Saxon, contemptuously. "Pshaw! my sketches are the most unsatisfactory daubs in the world. The more I finish them, the worse they get. If I had put this down half an hour ago, it would have been ever so much better than it is now."

The Earl still hesitated. Not knowing where Colonna might be hidden, he doubted whether they ought to go up to the ruins or not. At last they decided that orthodox British tourists would be certain to see all that could be seen; and so went across the broiling plains and up to the foot of the Cumæan Mount. Arrived, however, at the Arco Felice, they were met by a third sentry, who interposed his bayonet somewhat unceremoniously between them and the gate. The ruins, he said, were closed to the public, and could only be seen by order of the Royal Chamberlain.

They tried expostulation, they tried bribery; but in vain. The man was immovable. So Saxon had to make another sketch, and then another, to pass the time away.

At length the day began to decline, and the Earl judged that they might proceed to the second step in their plan. So they went back to the sentinel at the Arco Felice, and inquired if he knew where they might purchase something to eat.

The soldier shrugged his shoulders, and believed there was no albergo nearer than Patria.

"How far are we from Patria?" asked the Earl.

"About eight miles."

"Eight miles! But, amico, we have not eaten since breakfast—we are starving. Is there no farm house near at hand?"

"Oh, sicuro. There is a podere about a quarter of an hour hence."

"In which direction?"

"Following the coast-road towards Literaum."

"A thousand thanks. Good evening, amico."

"Buona sera, signore."

With this the young men turned away, and hastened in the direction indicated.

To be continued

A REMARKABLY thin man observed one evening a gentleman much inebriated approaching him in so irregular a direction, that it might have been concluded he had business on both sides of the way. After they had come near, they eyed each other for a moment, when the lean man said to the other, "My dear friend you seem to have drunk too much."—"Yes," was the reply, "and you, fellow, have eaten too little."

IRISH GAVELKIND.

GAVELKIND or equal division between all the sons was the earlier law of inheritance in many Celtic and Teutonic nations. It existed in England prior to the Norman conquest, and indeed to a much later period in Kent. But the Gavelkind which existed in Ireland had a feature peculiar to itself. In England and elsewhere when a man died, his land was assigned to his children by this custom in equal shares. But in Ireland such a death enforced a new division of all the lands held by the sept or clan to which the deceased belonged. His sons became heads of families, and entitled to equal shares with the other members of the sept. For example if in a sept numbering one hundred heads of families, a death occurred, the deceased's family, consisting of (say) six sons, became each entitled, not as they would have been under the English custom, to the one sixth of the part held by their father, but to one one hundred and fifth part of the whole lands of the clan. The chief had no larger share in the land than any other member of the sept, but he received a tribute from them and a larger share of the spoil.

The tendency, of course, of this custom was to prevent any improvement of the soil, and to make cattle the chief wealth and support of the Irish kerne.

The importance of this little bit of Irish antiquity is that it has been in some degree the cause of the agrarian character of Irish crime, and in a great degree the root of Irish discontent. To understand how the custom of Gavelkind gave an agrarian character to Irish crime, we must consider an important part of Irish history—the first plantation of Ulster.

On the 19th of May, 1607, a letter was dropped in Council room of Dublin Castle; it had no signature attached to it, but it professed to disclose a plot to seize the castle, and murder the Lord Deputy. The earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell were accused of being originators of the plot. Whether this plot had any reality, or whether the letter was forged in order to make the forfeitures, is very doubtful. The result was that the whole of Ulster was confiscated to the crown. This measure, according to all Irish notions, was atrociously unjust. The clansmen had not risen in arms; they, even if we admit that the earls were guilty, had not been involved in their guilt. The lands of the sept did not belong to the chieftain, and yet they were confiscated, the Irish kerne were driven out from their homes, and their broad lands. But with the strong yearning for the scenes of childhood, common to all Celts, they crept back again to their old haunts, as tenants to the stranger who held their lands. Thirty-four years passed, during which every Irish hut was the scene where men and women told their listening children, that the O'Neils were the rightful owners of the fertile pastures, of the heath-crowned hills, of the fuel-bearing bogs that stretched for many a mile. Each son of the sept grew up with the feeling that the land of the whole clan was his inheritance, and he stood upon it a serf. This was the feeling embittered no doubt by religious hate which caused the massacre of 1641. And at the present time the Irish peasant has the same ideas. His landlord is a thief and a usurper, and he pays rent for a miserable scrap of the lands of his ancestors, which are rightfully his own. Such are the notions which, floating through the mind of the peasant, keep him in a state of chronic discontent, ready if hardly treated, to result in crime. No doubt the sober truth is that he is as well off or even better than in the days of Irish nationality. But distance lends enchantment to the view, and the imaginative Celt after a generation or two had passed, had transferred to himself as sole heir the inheritance held in common by his sept, had transformed his savage chieftain into a bountiful monarch, and the sallow robed kerne and gallaglass into brave knights and gallant gentlemen. Education might remove this prejudice, but that the programme of national education in Ireland does not include History in any shape or form.

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