

SALLY CAVANAGH,

Or, The Untenanted Graves.

A TALE OF TIPPERARY.

BY CHARLES J. KICKHAM.

CHAPTER V. Continued.

"I don't understand," said Brain, examining the ring, which he saw was of some value.

"I don't know myself what it's worth," continued Tom Burke, "but as poor Connor was always a man, I took his word for it. A watchmaker offered him nine pounds for it, he told me, and sure, I know he didn't tell me a lie. So I gave him what he axed—five pounds—on condition of giving you the ring, which he hopes you'll keep till he'll be able to release it. At the same time, you needn't hurry yourself about the five pounds, as it will do whenever you find it convenient.

The ring was examined by every one present, and many surmises were ventured to account for how it could have come into Connor Shea's possession. Brain was more puzzled than any of them. The matter was cut short by Mrs. Purcell, who declared emphatically that Connor Shea "got the ring honestly, however he got it."

"And now, Tom," said Mr. Purcell, "as you're here come and take a look at a lot of sheep I'm going to send to the fair on Wednesday."

"Who's this in the tax-cart?" Mr. Purcell asked, as he was passing round to the farm-yard.

"This is Captain Dawson about the horse," said Brian in reply. "Don't sell more than fifty of the sheep."

"Don't part with your horse," said his father.

"He offered me eighty, and I said he might have him for a hundred. Of course, I won't break my word; and besides, you know 'tis unlucky to refuse a good offer." And Brian hurried to the door, and shook hands cordially with a dashing looking young man equipped for the hunting field.

"The governor must be a particular friend of yours," said Captain Dawson, laughing.

"Who, Mr. Grindem?"

"Yes. He wouldn't listen to reason; refused point-blank to let me give a hundred for a hunter till I told him 'twas your horse I was buying."

"He knew he was worth the money, and more," said Brian.

But the truth was, Brain Purcell mounted upon this same horse, was a sight that often disgusted Mr. Grindem, and to this fact his nephew owed the cheque which he now placed on the table. Connor Shea's ring happened to be on the same table, and Captain Dawson took it up carelessly to look at it. He laid it down hastily, with a look of extreme bewilderment, and his face flushed scarlet as his coat when he saw Brain put the ring in his waistcoat pocket. As Captain Dawson was usually rather taciturn no one noticed that he never opened his lips while the hunter was being saddled, and that he mounted him and rode away like a man in a dream.

As Arain held Mr. Oliver Grindem's cheque for £100 between his fingers, while Tom Burke was pushing a sheaf of notes towards his father, saying, as he did so, "Your health, Mr. Purcell (for Tom had a tumbler of grog in his left hand); 'tis too much I'm giving you"—he could not help thinking of the handsome sum which was to his father's credit in the National Bank five years ago. But, as this was a gloomy subject to dwell upon, Brian called his greyhounds and set out for his farm at Coolbawn.

CHAPTER VI.

His mother and sister, as was their wont, followed him with their eyes till he reached the larch grove about the "high field" beyond which the view from the house did not extend in the direction of Coolbawn. Whether on foot or on horseback, Brian was thus lovingly watched every time he left home. In fact, Mrs. Purcell was oftenseen to hurry from her dairy, or wherever else she might be—impatiently breaking from any one that might chance to interrupt her—for no earthly purpose but to gaze after the manly form of her son. On these occasions she usually stood drawn up to her full height, with her arms akimbo, and, altogether, we must admit,

with an air of consequence, as if she rather looked down on the world in general.

The larch grove remorselessly swallowed Brian up, and his mother sat down by her daughter's work-table. It was evident there was something on the good woman's mind that troubled her, for she pressed her hands on her cap several times, rubbed the smooth lid of Kate's writing desk, twisted the thick gold ring on her finger, and at length spoke.

"There's something on his mind this week past," said Mrs. Purcell. Kate looked up. Mrs. Purcell must have construed the look into an inquiry as to whom she was speaking of, for she went on, emphatically, as usual:

"Brian, Brian, Brian—now do you know? I say there's something on his mind. Could it be that—that?"—Mrs. Purcell paused, or rather stopped, for she found herself on the point of uttering something uncharitable.

"That what, mamma?"

"That Miss Evans—now do you know?" Kate now did know very well. Perhaps she had been turning the same subject over in her own mind during the past few days.

"I always thought Brian Purcell was too high-spirited to go sneaking after people who gave themselves such airs. The upstarts?"

Kate reddened to the temples at the bare notion of Brian's not being "high-spirited." But she felt bound to remonstrate.

"Now, mamma, they are not upstarts, at all events."

"'Tis all the same," said Mrs. Purcell, "they were poor, and they got rich, and the people they were glad to set their traps for (meaning Mr. Brian Purcell, of course) while they were poor, they forget that they ever know, now that they are rich."

"Well, I don't see that it is so," said Kate. "All we can say is that Brian and Miss Evans have avoided each other. For my part I'm glad of it for Brian's own sake, for I don't think he would be happy with her. Perhaps he felt this himself, and was not sorry to break off her intimacy."

This softened Mrs. Purcell considerably, and she went on to tell what a very nice man, a perfect gentleman, indeed, Miss Evans' father was. Mrs. Evans was well enough, but not to be compared to her husband. Sure, she (Mrs. Purcell) ought to know them well, for they lived in the cottage "joining our own bounds" at Coolbawn. Sally Cavanagh lived with her father at the other side of the road—a snug little place but there's no sign of it now. Many an evening Andrew Evans spent at Coolbawn, and pleasant company he was. He was rather old when he married, and left a young widow and one child to mourn a good, kind husband and father. When Brian left college and decided on becoming a farmer (Mrs. Purcell was fond of alluding to the fact that her son had been "at college") he used to spend more of his time at the cottage than was consistent with a close application to business. Then Andrew Evans' brother, who never spoke to him after his marriage with an "inferior," being childless himself, took it into his head to leave the greater part of his property to his younger brother's child and widow. Then the shy "lily of the valley," as Brian was pleased to call her, was sent to a fashionable boarding-school, whence she returned after two years and a half to dazzle by her beauty and talents all who came in her way. Then the cottage was given up for an imposing mansion, called Moorview House; and it was remarked that the cottage beauty was quite at home in boudoir and drawing-room, and her uncle's old coachman was heard to declare that horses "came as natural to her as if she was bred, born, and reared among 'em." And this Mrs. Purcell said in her own way, and broke off suddenly by asking whether Brian would stop for the night at Coolbawn. Kate replied that she was not sure, but probably he would. Whereupon Mrs. Purcell started up and set about packing a hamper, with a supply of viands, and Heaven knows what besides, enough to satisfy the wants of an ordinary mortal during a week's residence upon a desert island. The churn boy was sent round to Coolbawn with the hamper, and divers instructions concerning sheets that were to be "well-aired," and stockings and slippers, and a fire in the bedroom.

"You're sure you won't forget, now," says Mrs. Purcell, thrusting a huge piece of "shell" bread into the churn boy's

hand. "And bring me word did that fox do any more harm."

All this put Mrs. Purcell into such a flurry, that she gave double the usual allowance of meal to six "poor women" who sat, three at each side of the kitchen door, having first told them to "be off out of that," in a most peremptory manner.

CHAPTER VII.

BRIAN went over his farm, and saw that everything was as it should be. He spoke to the steward about draining a bottom field, and desired him to send round to the laborers of the district, and employ a sufficient number to complete the work before the first of March. This order was given after he had carefully examined a three-year-old colt, and satisfying himself that he was worth at least sixty guineas. Having told the housekeeper not to kill a chicken for his dinner, as he had a prejudice in favor of allowing a bird to get cold before the process of cooking commenced, he strolled listlessly about the fields. He felt his cheek flush on finding himself near a certain stile not fifty yards from a thatched cottage, almost hid in evergreens. As it was the shortest way to Connor Shea's, he would take a run over the hill and call to see Sally Cavanagh and her children. We must admit, however, that this was an afterthought; and that Brian Purcell somehow found himself at that stile before an idea of the little white house at the foot of the mountain occurred to him.

As he passed the clipped private hedge which separated the cottage garden from his own land, he stopped as if spellbound.

"I felt such a strange longing to see this place, Mrs. Hazlitt, I persuaded mamma to drive round this way to-day." These were the words that arrested the steps of Mr. Brian Purcell on the other side of the hedge.

"Won't you come in and sit down, miss?"

"Oh, no!"

Talk of bells and flutes, organs and cookoos! Mr. Brian Purcell would at that moment make oath that there was music in that "Oh, no!" the like of which mortal or immortal ear had never heard since the stars first sang together.

"The happiest days I have ever known were spent under that thatched roof, Mrs. Hazlitt."

"I don't think you'd like to come back to it again, Miss Evans?"

"Well, perhaps you are right; but—" Here there was a break off. Mr. Brian Purcell filling up the blank with the resting of a fair cheek upon a gloved hand, and the falling down of a shower of rich brown ringlets; which ringlets, he, Mr. Brian Purcell, had a dim recollection of having seen, perhaps felt, falling down very close to his own cheek, when the said ringlets were just a shade lighter than they are now.

"Does your neighbor, Mr. Purcell, spend much time here now?"

"He's off and on, miss, nearly every week. And a good neighbor he is. 'Twas only last week he gave us two horses to go to the colliery."

"Does he ever come to see you?"

"Well, no, miss; but Matt is over with him often, particularly since he began improving the garden; for I suppose you know Matt has a great turn for gardening, and he says Mr. Purcell will have one of the handsomest gardens in the county next year."

"Well, I must bid you good morning now, Mrs. Hazlitt. Or perhaps you would come with me as far as the bridge where the carriage is. I could not prevail on mamma to come any nearer to the old cottage."

"With great pleasure, miss," said Mrs. Hazlitt.

Brian was about proceeding on his way, when his dogs bounded over the little rustic gate in the garden, and he gan to frolic and leap round Matt Hazlitt, who, with his coat off, just came round from the back of the house. He opened the rustic gate—the work of his own hands, like almost everything about the cottage—and invited Brian to come in and look at some monstrous parsnips which he had just dug up. Matt Hazlitt, we may remark, was a staunch Protestant, who use to quote Scripture against Father O'Gorman, and send him presents of vegetables. After interchanging a few words with Brian, he went out to the middle of the road, and looked in the direction his wife had gone. He then hurried back and spread a "check" apron upon the floor, and with a plate transferred as much meal from a great oaken chest to the apron, as could be conven-

iently tied up in it. He had just tied his bundle securely, when his wife was heard trying to open the garden gate, which Matt had bolted on the inside.

"Well, now," says Matt Hazlitt, continuing the conversing in an unconcerned tone, "take a friend's advice, and raise that north wall four feet higher, not an inch less." Here he opened the back window and let the bundle drop through the laurels outside.

"Matt, are you within?" Mrs. Hazlitt rattled at the latch of the little gate making ineffectual efforts to reach the bolt.

To be Continued.

We do not lose sight of God in ourselves when we acknowledge His gifts in creatures. There is no pride in the adoration the creature pays to the Divine Majesty within him.—St. Francis of Assisi.



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