

The True Witness

AND

CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XXI.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1871.

NO. 47.

THE EMIGRANTS.

A TALE OF CANINE FIDELITY.

"Don't father; do let faithful Neptune go with us. He will be so much company on board the ship, and so little trouble. I'll give you every sixpence that I have been gathering to help to pay any expense he may be for his passage, and never grudge the outlay. It will grieve me for many a day to come, if you destroy your old and trusty servant."

It was this way that Fanny Welsh, a little girl, the youngest daughter of a countryman of the principality, pleaded in behalf of their household dog—a most sagacious Newfoundland—on her learning it was decided the animal should be put to death immediately preceding the embarkation of the rustic family for a foreign shore.

William Welsh, and his father before him, had farmed a considerable tract of land in North Wales, and like most of the natives in that part of Great Britain, was deeply attached to the place of his birth. The lease by which the worthy man held the farm had, however, at length expired, when not only did the proprietor ask an exorbitant rent for it, vastly greater by comparison than had previously been paid, but an offer of the amount stated was made by an adventurer from a distant part of the Kingdom; the sum thus offered, in the judgment of all who were acquainted with the capabilities of the soil, appearing to be out of all reason. Much to the regret of William Welsh and every one of his family, which was numerous, he could not compete with the rash stranger, and had to submit to the removal from the endeared spot. He had in the course of his lease saved a little money; just so much indeed, after taking him and his children out to Canada, as gave him the prospect of settling as a small farmer in that colony—supposing that he husbanded his means in the most economical manner. According to this economical view, it was determined not to take with him across the seas his dog, a sagacious animal and a great favorite, but now well advanced in years, every one of the number acquiescing in the resolution as a matter of propriety, if not obvious necessity, with the exception of little Fanny, a girl of some ten years of age, whose affection towards the faithful brute went beyond all pecuniary considerations.

"I think it will break my heart, father, if you put poor Neptune to death," said the weeping girl, as she saw her parent preparing to carry the dog's sentence into execution, by having him expeditiously drowned. "Oh, spare him, spare him—and when I grow big and able to earn wages, I'll serve you without asking any until you say that I have made up for all that the noble creature has cost you in taking him to our new home."

"Fanny, my dear, it must not be as you would have it with poor Neptune," answered the father, "although it pleases me to hear you talk and plead as you have done. The faithful creature, you know, is getting old; it cannot be very long before it will be an act of kindness to him to put an end to his days, unless he should happen to die suddenly of some natural death. In fact, I think it would be cruel rather than otherwise to take him to America with us, even although the expense of his passage were left out of view; a thing, however, which I cannot overlook when considering our straitened circumstances and my duty to my children, you yourself amongst the rest, Fanny. Neptune is not like one of us, for whom there is another world and an after life. He has not an account to give of deeds done on earth. He dies and perishes forever; and if that death be dealt him from proper motives, as a matter of prudence, and with sparing him all needless alarm and pain, no wrong is done the poor brute. They say drowning is the easiest of deaths; and I'll just take him out to the lake, and having fastened a cloth around his neck with a stone in it, fling him from the top of one of the rocks at the side of the water, and he'll be dead in a few seconds."

Fanny was obliged to yield, and to silence her objections; and this the more readily on her father's quoting some lines from his favorite poet, Cowper, a copy of whose works he possessed; where that instructive and charming writer speaks of a needless act, incurring no blame, but that he would not enter amongst his list of friends the man that wantonly sets his foot upon the meanest worm.

William Welsh proceeded to the fulfilment of his purpose with his dog, this being immediately before his departure from his old farm with such of his goods and family as were to accompany him to the new world. It was as a work of painful necessity that he set about the matter, forcing himself to it by an effort of the will rather than delegating the business, from a wish to save his own feelings, to any other person, who might, after all bungle it, and cause the poor brute needless suffering. With a heavy heart the worthy man set forth towards the lake; Neptune, according to his wont, being fain to go along with him, and showing his feelings on the occasion by scampering away in advance of his master with a pioneer zeal.

"Poor brute!" said William Welsh to him-

self, on seeing the confiding animal conduct himself in his accustomed way, "thou hast no notion of what is awaiting thee at my hands, which have never misused thee; and as little canst thou ever know how it vexes me to put an end to thee. But it is only one of many griefs which I have at this crisis to bear. Indeed, were it not but one of my trials, and after all not by any means the chief of them, I should not be able to keep the stout heart for the painful performance that I actually have."

The grave soliloquist had now reached the side of the small lake that lay amid the uplands of his late farm, and Neptune had stretched himself at his master's feet, as that master for a few seconds ruminates upon the thing that is to be done; considering, too, of the precise spot into which to fling the animal. And now he has stooped to tie the piece of stuff around the dog's neck, having placed within the sort of bag formed by the pendant part of the cloth a fitting weight of stone; Neptune all the while kindly licking the worthy man's hand, as if in return for some understood piece of extraordinary tenderness of treatment. But what remains must he hurriedly accomplished, forbidding any waste of flattery or fawning. Strength is put to the needful work; Neptune and the appendages to his neck are speedily lifted up, and as quickly tossed into the watery element at the foot of the little eminence upon which the farmer has taken his stand, and who has wheeled round the instant he was delivered of his charge, even before the dog has well reached the surface of the lake. He has wheeled round, and hurries away from the brink, that he may not be near the scene of the painful operation to which he has forced himself, yet consoled with the idea that the animal's work was done forever, and that very brief would be its sufferings. He hurries away, and is pleased to see that little Fanny has had an eye after him, for she is running to meet her father, and to learn how it has fared with him and the dog.

"It is all over with the poor creature by this time, my dear!" says the worthy man. "I heard the plunge well enough; although I refused my eyes the light of his sinking in the water. His life must have left him in a few seconds; and now let us neither think nor speak of the occurrence any more, especially as we have so many other things to concern us that are of far greater importance."

"His life must have left him in a few seconds, father!" cried Fanny; "and we are neither to think nor to speak of the poor creature any more! Why, yonder comes Neptune, crouching towards us, with the cloth you took with you in his mouth!"

The father stood still in amazement, until the faithful brute came up to him, throwing itself down at his feet in an imploring attitude, and as much as saying, "What had I done to cause you to treat me so? See, I have brought back the cloth that you tied round me, and have taken care that it should not be lost!"

"Poor brute!" ejaculated the farmer, on seeing all this. "Thou shalt not perish by my hands; but shall go where I go, and live where I live!"

These were gladdening words to the affectionate Fanny. Away, with Neptune led by her, she hastened to announce the reprieve that had been issued, and to tell of the wonderful escape of the faithful animal, in consequence, it was seen, of the stone's weight having caused the cloth into which it was put to burst, and thus to liberate the condemned dog, splendid swimmer that he was; the pleasant recurrence being accepted by every member of the family as an encouraging token, and serving to lighten the sorrow with which they looked for the last time on the place of their birth and up-bringing.

Next day the emigrants were upon the face of the mighty deep, plunging their way to a land of promise, the sagacious Neptune being the object of not a few other caressings than those which little Fanny bestowed upon him. It was observed that the head of the family paid more attention to the mute creature than he ever before had done, and also that his kindness was joined to special favors to his youngest daughter. He was thankful that the dog had been spared and survived; nor in the Transatlantic home was he found to be unserviceable.

But time sped; age gained upon this faithful house-keeper, as it did upon William Welsh, and death was at length to overtake both.—Two years had elapsed since the good man set foot upon the soil of Canada. He and his offspring were now comfortably settled in their American habitation; and the prospect of independence, though not of idleness or opulence, was theirs; the father, already a widower, looking humbly yet trustfully forward to another and better world, beyond the grave. He sickened and for weeks was bed-ridden; his cherished dog, as if endowed with some measure of human sympathy as well as foresight, every morning and evening seeking to pay the good man a visit; but never prolonging his stay so as to be troublesome. To meet the welcoming and extended hand; to respond as such creatures do to kindly words, and then to take its leave with a short lingering look thrown

behind, was the uniform procedure of the old domestic on each visit.

William Welsh died; nor from that time did Neptune ever evince a wish to go to the chamber where lay the remains of his late master. It looked as if his grief was too great to allow him to approach the body from which the spirit had fled that had dealt so tenderly to the creature. From the hour of the farmer's decease, to that in which the corpse was carried to its last resting-place, the sagacious brute refused all food, hiding itself, it seemed, in a corner where it might mourn unnoticed and untroubling, yet not uncared for by the affectionate Fanny.

The worthy farmer had pitched upon a spot in the adjoining forest in which he wished to be buried, and had been at pains to enclose and lay it out in a manner fitting for receiving the ashes of his descendants and his people. Many a time had he repaired thither to do the needed or appointed work of fitting the locality for its intended design, and always with Neptune for a companion. The day of the funeral arrived, and now the dog left his lair for silent mourning, in order to follow the corpse to the burying-ground; nor ever did a day pass, while the creature lived, that he was not to be found wending his way to and from the sacred spot; the grave on each and all of these occasions being lain upon by the animal, so that the grass never failed to afford evidence of the temporary bed.

Three months had elapsed since the death, when one morning it was ascertained that Neptune had been missing ever since the forenoon of the preceding day, that being the time of his accustomed journeyings to the burial spot. What was more natural than to seek the creature there? Nor can the reader have failed to have anticipated the statement, when it is told, that upon the grave of its late master the dog was found to have died. And let it not be deemed to have been irreverent in Fanny Welsh, neither to be so in the writer of these simple recordings, when it is added that, at the affectionate girl's suggestion, the lifeless creature also had its grave within the enclosure, the preparation of which had been conducted, as it were, under the sagacious brute's inspection.

THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE;

OR,

SAVED FROM THE SEA.

Not far from that part of the coast of Cornwall which is washed by the British Channel stands Restormel Court, at the time of our story—a few years ago—the seat of Sir Launcelet Tredegrath Tresilian, Bart., a proud old gentleman, whose chief, if not only failing was an inordinate pride of family; and hence whose principal regret was, that though he had heirs to succeed him in his estate, there was none to follow him in his title, which had been bestowed upon him by the late King William IV. for certain political services. His two sons had been killed in the service of their country. One had fallen in Central India the other in the Crimea, and as the baronetcy was limited by diploma "to the heirs male of his own body," he had to rest himself content with the knowledge that he was the first and last baronet of Restormel Court.

Occupying the site of a castle demolished by the French when they landed in Cornwall during the reign of Henry IV., the latter is an edifice much older than it looks.

The whole house was an epitome of the past; trophies of war and chase—coats of mail and stags' horns—decorated the hall, and some of the rooms had remained untouched since the days of the "Virgin Queen," hung with tapestry, which was lifted to give entrance; hearths, intended for wood alone, and andirons—heraldic griffins—to support the logs; and there were curious cabinets, Cromwellian chairs, and carved *pro-druca* of all kinds.

On one evening in autumn, the present lord of Restormel Court was lingering over his wine—some choice old Madeira, which had been carefully iced for him by the butler—in company with his two nephews, the eldest of whom was understood to be, and acknowledged by himself as his future heir.

Sir Launcelet, verging then on his eightieth year, was a pale, thin, and wasted-looking man. He was toying with his wineglass, and from time to time contemplating his wasted white hands, on each of which a diamond glittered; and then he looked at his nephews, who were intently conversing near the fire.

They were both men about thirty-eight and forty years of age respectively. Arthur Tresilian, eldest, and ever the prime favourite, was remarkably handsome, with fine, regular features.

His brother, Basset Tresilian, who followed the legal profession with success in London, was less athletic, but quite as striking in figure.

Somehow people, especially in Cornwall, did not like Mr. Basset Tresilian; and his periodical visits to the Court added no brightness to the circle usually to be met there.

"Well boys" (for though men, the old bar-

onet, by force of habit, called them boys still), "fill your glasses, and don't leave me to drink alone. Egad! in my time fellows didn't shirk their wine as you do; but it is all cigars and odious pipes now. Well, Basset, what does he say? Is he inclined to follow the example you so boldly set him some sixteen years ago, and take unto himself a wife?"

"I cannot say, sir. It is of a horse we were talking."

"A horse—pshaw! You were wise to marry young Basset. I did so!" said Sir Launcelet.

"I have had no reason to repent me thereof," replied Basset, complacently. "My family are charming; Mona is a fine girl in face and figure."

"Quite a Tresilian—eh?" said the old man, proudly.

"And your nephew, Lance, is as handsome a boy as any in London. I have, indeed prospered every day since I placed the marriage hoop on Marion's finger."

"Egad! you sing your own praises well, nephew Basset," said the baronet, after a pause.

"But you, Arthur, why have you not imitated this fine example? I cannot last for ever, and I don't want my estates to go begging for owners."

Arthur colored with too evident vexation.

"They cannot beg, far, dear uncle," he replied, "while I have the good fortune to be your heir; and, then, Basset—"

"His sons," you would say?"

"Yes," replied the other, with a faint voice; for Basset was regarding him so keenly that he felt his color deepen.

"What is the booby blushing for?" asked Sir Launcelet, laughing. "Blushing at forty!"

By Jove! I was cured of it at fourteen! Will you ride with me to Carn Morval to-morrow? My friend Trelawny has three fine daughters, and I should like you to make their acquaintance. Tresilian and Treawny would quarrel well on a shield; or would it be *impudic*? Will you go Arthur?"

"I regret to say it is impossible, sir."

"When—why?"

"I have been a whole month at the Court, and am now due at a friend's house near—near London."

"London again? The last time you started for London, Treawny gave me some hints that you never went in that direction so far as the borders of Devonshire, I can't understand your total indifference to the society of ladies, and this resolute celibacy at your time of life. Hang it, sir, it don't look well! and I only hope you haven't conceived some unworthy attachment—I mean unworthy the name of Tresilian."

"I have not," replied the other, almost angrily; for he still felt the keen legal eye of Basset upon him. "I shall never, I hope, do anything unworthy of the name we bear in common."

"Thank you, Arthur, boy. Give me your hand."

"And now, uncle—leaving you and Basset to the Madeira—I'll smoke a cigar in the stable, and look at that horse I mean to take away with me to-morrow."

And anxious to close a conversation, the subject of which pained him deeply, Arthur Tresilian left the stately dining-room, and strolled over the beautiful lawn towards the stable court.

"Can Basset suspect me? Does he know anything? No! no!—he cannot! My poor Diana!" he muttered; "still this humiliating concealment, and no hope save through the death of that poor old man. Accursed be this silly pride of birth!"

"How long papa has been away from us—a whole month!"

"When will papa be home, mamma dear? The cottage seems so dull without him!"

Such were the questions two handsome boys—one was now quite a lad of eighteen—asked of a lady on each side of whom they stood caressingly, while she hastily read a letter which had just come by post.

"In four days, dearest boys, he returns to leave us *no more*!" she exclaimed, with joy, as she fondly kissed them both, and once more turned to her letter.

"Restormel Court, Sept. 8th.

"MY DARLING DIANA—My uncle, Sir Launcelet, is gone, poor man! He was found dead abed by his valet this morning. No cause is assigned but old age, yet he was hearty as a brick last night on his Madeira, rallying Basset and me. Well, he has gone, with all his overstrained and old-fashioned ideas of birth, and all that sort of thing. And now for our marriage, dearest—now all justice can be done to you, my much enduring one! I am the sole heir to Restormel, and your Arthur after me. I have written to the curate of H—, Jersey, for the attested copy of our marriage left with him, and expect it by return of post. Kiss our boys for me, and believe me dearest Diana, your affectionate husband,

"ARTHUR."

Yet she remarked that it was addressed as

usual, "Mrs. Lydiard, Carn Sperr Cottage," forgetting that she was unknown by any other name.

"It is well named Carn Sperr—the Carn of thorns—for in some respects, with all our happiness, such has it been to me; but now—now all that is at end! and blessed be God therefore! Yet it is through death—the death of an old man, however—a very old man! My boys!—my innocent boys!—they are so young—they must never know our secret! Yet!—how to explain to them the change of name from Lydiard to Tresilian? I must be silent as yet, and consult my dear Arthur about this."

And now to go back a little way in the private life of Arthur Tresilian. The favourite nephew and acknowledged heir of his paternal uncle, he had ever been supplied by the latter with a handsome allowance. When travelling or sojourning for a time in Jersey, he had there made the acquaintance of Diana Lydiard, then a girl barely done with her schooling. Her rare beauty fascinated him; but, unfortunately, she was the daughter of one who at Restormel Court, would have been deemed as a mere tradesman. Arthur knew that he should mortify, offend and disoblige irrevocably the proud old Sir Launcelet if he made such a *mesalliance* as to marry Diana Lydiard openly; for he knew that his uncle's immense fortune was entirely at his own disposal, and that he was quite capable of cutting him off with the proverbial "shilling;" and leaving the whole to Basset—the careful, plodding and thrifty Basset. So they were married; but wherever they went they passed as Mr. and Mrs. Lydiard, the maiden name of Diana. The marriage was duly registered in his name in the book of the little Jersey church, and an attested copy of it was lodged with the incumbent who performed the ceremony.

Arthur Tresilian took his girl-wife to the Continent, as he could then with a safe conscience write home for remittances.

Amid these wanderings two boys were born to them—Arthur and Ralf, whom she so named after her father, and each boy seemed a reproduction of either parent; for the eldest had all the personal attributes of the father—was bluff, bold and manly; while the latter had all the dark beauty and gentleness of his mother.—On the education of these boys Arthur Tresilian spared nothing, and both were already highly accomplished. Everywhere they had the best masters money could procure; but no profession was decided on for Arthur, the eldest, as the *falsus name* and the expected wealth raised doubts and objections as to what should be done.

Diana Lydiard was the daughter of a tradesman—true; but amid the love she bore her husband, and the luxuries by which his wealth enabled him to surround her, she had never felt her position to be anomalous, and with it the pride that struggled against shame—a shame that at times became blended with a vague fear and sorrow for the future.

And now for the last three years the secret family of Arthur Tresilian had been settled in a little sequestered spot named Carn Sperr, near Trevoest Head, a rocky cape that juts into the sea westward of Padstow, and some thirty miles or so distant from Restormel Court.—There he was known simply as Mr. Lydiard, and by the frequency of his absence was supposed to be a commercial traveller; but as the little family lived quietly, made few acquaintances, incurred no debts, their lives glided by unnoticed and uncared for by all save the poor, to whom the charity of Mrs. Lydiard was a proverb, and something more solid too.

Through some unseen agency a whisper of an alleged improper connection formed by Arthur did reach the ears of Basset Tresilian, and through him, those of old Sir Launcelet, and in the fury and indignation of the latter, his lofty and aristocratic scorn, he had a foretaste of what awaited him, and the three beings he loved most on earth, if the reality became known.

And now the proud old man was dead, and all necessity for concealment was at an end.—Arthur Tresilian succeeded to Restormel Court, with thirty thousand pounds a year; Basset to eight thousand pounds, the baronet's gold repeater, and all the legal works in his library.

"It is well the boys have gone to fish, I have so much to say to you, Diana, darling," said Arthur, as he flung his hat away, and clasped his little wife to his breast. "And about the resumption of our name, Diana, they must simply be told that I have succeeded to an estate which requires a change in our designation."

"Excellent, Arthur."

"To-morrow I must for St.—"

"For Jersey."

"Yes, Diana, I am anxious personally to get the attested copy of our marriage certificate by the curate who married us, or a new one from the records. I shall fill up the time of absence by writing my will in your favor and the boys, to make all sure, for one never knows what may happen. When you see me again, Diana, both documents shall be smug in this old pocket-book my father gave me."

And laughingly he tapped the heirloom, a handsome, scented and gilt morocco book, on the boards of which were the Tresilian arms, surmounted by a griffin, stamped in gold.