



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XXIV.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, NOV. 14, 1873.

NO. 13

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THE IRISH LEGEND OF M'DONNELL, AND THE NORMAN DE BORGOS.

A BIOGRAPHICAL TALE.

BY ARCHIBALD M'FARRAN.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

But to return to our strangers—they returned safely across the Foyle, and through that region, until they arrived at the banks of the Swilly, and at that very place where they disembarked. They were fortunate in meeting, or rather hearing the voice of O'Fallon, who had just cast his night lines, and was halloping upon Drake and his son, as they had had gone down the strand on some excursion of their own.

O'Fallon was sitting on the side of his boat humming a kind of song to himself; but hearing the sound of footsteps, he started, and wheeling round, knew them in the twinkling of an eye. "Arrah, musha, kead miel a faultie, my brave fellows, are yes returned? By the hokies, it was but this instant that Phelim and Drake went down the shore after a hare that came hirling past a few minutes bygone there." Before he was done speaking the boy returned, bringing with him the hare, and the dog following at a little distance. It is a custom with the peasantry, in the time of snow, to go out a hunting, carrying only a large bludgeon, and coming on the track of the hare, they follow onward to the place where she has lain down to sleep, and with a blow of this weapon, either maim or kill her.*

When they were embarked, and some short distance at sea, they could perceive a red-colored light like a large star in the western horizon; but frequently it dipped from their sight and immediately after appeared again.

On asking the captain what the light was, he said to them it was nothing else than the light of the Atlantic. "And what is the reason," said they, "that it disappears so often?"

"Why," said he, "when a great sni comes between us and it, or rather, when we sink between two sais, the light is hid from us, agra! And so I see you are not well acquainted with coasting, jantlemen; but no matter, you're acquainted with much better things." The size of the light always increased as they drew near the shore, until they could perceive the children sitting around the fire.

O'Fallon gave a shout that echoed along the beach, at which his wife came out and hung a small lamp against the wall, and filling it with oil, it cast a flame along the water extending to the boat. He rowed down a small distance and bound her to a large stone, then returned, and brought all with him into the cottage.

O'Fallon's hospitable place retained and cherished them that night, after which, they

sought the castle of O'Donnell, and there informed him of Daniel M'Quillan's determination. They also delivered the message that they had undertaken to his daughter, who, when she was informed how matters stood between her father and that of her friend, was cast into the deepest trouble; and immediately repairing to him, with tears in her eyes, she used her most strenuous exertions to dissuade him from this undertaking.

"What," said she, "has the family of M'Quillan done to merit your enmity, or that you should make these severe denunciations? His fault is nothing but what the bravest and most disinterested man would do—adhere to an old and faithful ally. And, my dear father," said she, "let us consider that the family of Clanbuoy have rather been protectors to him, being one of the most powerful septs in our nation. Besides, will you think of his daughter and her affection to me, while we were at the convent together? Indeed, I can never forget my dear friend, and how could I bear the idea that my father would unshath the sword of his ancestors against that family from whom I have received the most distinguished marks of esteem and affection. And again," said she, "there is another consideration that ought to weigh well with you; he is a brave man, and his clans are numerous, and strongly attached to their leader, nor is there a doubt that, though you should be victorious, it may cost you the sum of many precious lives."

M'Quillan's fair advocate was possessed of much humanity and the finest feelings, not alone to those she knew, but also to persons she never saw, and even was convinced were inimical to her family and connections. Besides all these reasons which she gave in, as mitigating against the measures about to be adopted by her parent, there was still another more powerful one that she could not properly introduce here, and therefore, it remained at the bottom of her heart, sending forth sighs morning and evening.

Fion or Finn M'Quillan had gone to the convent to see his sister; he also had orders from the father to bring her, and any other of her companions whom she might wish, and for whom she could obtain leave from the abbess. Her companion alone was the fair daughter of Baldearg, who was her equal in all the tender feelings that can possess the female breast.—When young ladies meet at convents, boarding-schools, or such places, and form their first attachment, it is usual for each to be mentioning the individuals of her family to the other, and even describing their persons and manners, among whom we need not expect that the brothers will be left unnoticed; their characters, features, and dispositions, form the topic of general conversation, and not infrequently make an impression before there has been an interview; and such was the case with Laura O'Donnell, in favor of Finn M'Quillan. Her companion knew that one of her brothers would come to convey her home from the convent, but which of them she could not tell; and, indeed, her fair friend was as anxious to know, and more so than she. The happy day at length arrived, and, to their inexpressible joy, it was the favored person; any of her brothers was the same to her, but on her friend's account, she preferred the present.

'Twas during the happy recess at the castle of Dunluce, that Laura O'Donnell formed an attachment which ever after wrapped her in a veil of melancholy. The commencement of hostilities, therefore, between her father and Daniel M'Quillan could not but have a most dangerous effect on a mind so tender, so young, and so deeply engaged, and, indeed, which happened almost unknown to herself, as she had talked herself into this attachment with his sister.

Her father, the following morning, sounded the war shell, which echoed round the adjacent hills, dying away among the woods and oaken forests of Tyrconnell. The M'Laughlins caught the sound, and blew another blast that roused the O'Dougherties, dwelling from the Atlantic to the Foyle. The Magenisies toward the south renewed the dying sound, and sent it rolling through the mountains of O'Flanagan, M'Mahon, and O'Rourke, who, all under arms, of whatever sort they could find, repaired to the castle of O'Donnell.

A short speech was delivered to them, as they stood around their chieftain, commencing on the insolence, pride, and growing power of the Norman de Borgos. This was answered by the war cry of the O'Donnells, Aboo, aboo, from every mouth, that rung like a peal of thunder through all the apartments of the antiquated mansion. To add to the distress of his daughter, she was carried with them to be a spectator of scenes unbefitting the presence of any female, much less the feeling heart of young Laura.

The next evening saw them across both Swilly and Foyle, marching with hostile minds

against the peaceable inhabitants of Dalriadagh.*

"Unhappy Erin!" said Laura, "ah, unhappy Erin! torn by intestine broils and discussions since time immemorial! And how can I behold those scenes that are about to take place? Had my father left me at home to mourn in dreadful expectation, it would be affliction enough, and rather more than I could bear. Perhaps I may see the face of some of those whom, above all the world, I do not wish to see. If Providence had fated me another father, or my father another daughter." At the conclusion of these words she wept aloud, and fell upon the breast of one of her maids who accompanied her.

The father was witness to this sensation of his child, whose feeling heart, it seemed, was not capable of conceiving the sad sequel of this undertaking. She and her two maids were mounted on white horses of that species, called Hobellarii,† something larger than the common ponies, but of a gentle disposition and elegant figure.

The two bards, Malbruthan and Tuadhar, who had so lately travelled this way, surrounded with happiness, and entertained by the innocent conversation of the peasantry, were now forced to accompany their patron on this disagreeable business, which was about to water the pleasant plains of Hibernia with the tears of wife, maid, orphan and widow.

When they entered the barony of Kennaught, or O'Kane's country, O'Donnell said to one of his sons who commanded the M'Laughlins, "Order the troops to file to the right, keeping the river Roe on the same side until you come to the castle of O'Gahan, for there I intend to quarter my forces to-night, and the following morning we shall clear the pass of the mountains, and direct our march for the deep and sullen Bann; and thence to the Dalriadagh, or lands of M'Quillan." He then ordered the shells and war trumpets to be sounded, the echo of which travelled up the streams of the Roe, until it reached the castle at Limavady. O'Gahan immediately despatched a couple of horsemen to reconnoitre and bring back tidings what the warlike sound meant, who, on mounting a little hill to the one side, could perceive three large red flags waving aloft, and shortly after, the front ranks of the forces. Returning, they informed O'Gahan of what they had seen, and added, they were sure it was the approach of M'Quillan, his enemy.

He coolly mounted, and calling for his sword, rode forward to see; but when he came to that place called Mulloghbaan, or the little white hill, he immediately called to his gallow-glasses. "No," said he, "these are no ene-

* A name by which the northern parts of Antrim were formerly called, and now corrupted into Route.

† Ireland in early times has been known by many names—Erin, Jerne, Jerna, Juverna, Iris, Borinia, Hibernia, Hiberione; also, Scita, Scotus, Scoticus, and Scotia, from Scythia, whence the Gaed emigrated. Others think from Scota, wife of Gaethelus, and daughter to one of the Pharaohs, Claudius, Paulus, Orsius, Gildus, Cogitossus, Isadore and Bedetestes. Iris Alga, the noble island; Inis Bannud, the blessed island; Inisfalla, the fatal island, from the fatal stone, which was taken to Scotland and used for the coronation of their kings,—being placed in a wooden chair, it was afterwards taken away by Edward first to London, and left in Westminster Abbey, shortly after the unhappy end of immortal Wallace; the green island, the island of strangers.

‡ The Hobellarii were first imported from Spain, and used in war by the kings of the Continent.—Palus Jovias affirms that he saw twelve of the Irish Hobellarii, of a beautiful whiteness, led in the Pope's train.

§ The castle of O'Gahan, one of the chiefs of that name, stood on a lofty rock, overhanging the stream of the Roe. There are at present the traces of his fishpond, with one solitary apple-tree growing where his orchard was, but not a stone is to be seen where this ancient edifice once stood. I imagine they have been carried away for the purpose of building, as a bleach-green has in late years been erected in its immediate vicinity. There are many stories prevalent regarding great O'Gahan, who last inhabited this beautifully romantic place, surrounded even to this day by oaks and all other kinds of forest trees which our country formerly abounded. I have heard some people affirm that he would have sharpened his sword in the morning, and come in at night having it altogether blunted from the slaughter he made among the Protestants; to this I am not inclined to give much belief. Another story is, that he had arbitrary demands regarding every new married bride, in consequence of which, he was almost killed by the O'Mullins, near the village of Garvagh, although this place was convenient to another powerful branch of the same family. Be this as it may, on the first market day of Newtonlimavady, he collected indiscriminately a number of the O'Mullins, and brought them to a place since called the Gallow Hill, and there hung them in revenge for what had been done to him. It was but the other year that some laborers, in digging gravel for the public road, turned up their jaw bones and skulls, where they had been buried at the foot of the gallow, which was erected in sight of the castle windows. I am happy to learn that it was with much reluctance the present possessor pulled down the castle, saying, as I am informed, "he would rather have sunk one thousand pounds in its repairs;" but being obliged in a clause of his lease, he was forced to demolish this beautiful Gothic structure, the history of which will cast an eternal obloquy over the Vandal's memory who was the prime instigator.

mies; it is the colors of Owen Baldearg, or O'Donnell the red, Owen Roe O'Donnell. I can easily distinguish the Tyrconnell arms as the wind expands the flag, and sweeps it like a red flame over the trees. Make the best of your way to the castle," said he, "and give orders that dinner be prepared for the army of Owen Roe O'Donnell; and what cannot be accommodated at Limavady, let them be quartered through my tenantry, while I go to receive them." After a friendly salutation on both sides, they rode forward, O'Donnell having given the charge of the troops to his two sons Odo and Roderick.

As they came along the side of the hill, lying parallel with the river, and were turning down a large avenue skirted on each side with spreading oaks, the old family mansion of O'Gahan, or Coony Na Gall, opened upon their view, standing on the peak of a rock after the manner of a sentry-box, with the lucid current of the Roe dashing in whitened foam far below. At some distance were his office-houses, with barracks, and other accommodations for his gallow-glasses; and on the rising grounds, a high stone wall fenced in a spacious track of land, which was well stocked with deer. The great entrance facing the avenue was raised a considerable height above the common surface, with some rough hewn blocks of basalt or whinstone, and a large massive door of glenwood oak, solid as iron, and black as ebony, secured this passage. Above this door was a broad slab of quartz, and on it was carved in legible characters the family coat of arms—"The crown and three stars, two flags of defence on each side of the crown, two rampant lions to support the standards, with bloody heart and hand, sword, stag and deer, cat and monkey, river, otter, salmon, and bunch of shamrock."

As they entered the hall, it was hung on each side with suits of rusty armour, and at the opposite end were seen a huge pair of antlers, probably the growth of some hundred years, together with the shaggy skin of a wolf, having the teeth and claws still attached to it. O'Donnell surveyed them as he passed along, and reaching up his hand brought down a weighty instrument having a blade almost as broad as a scythe. "He must have been a stout fellow," said he, "who could wield this weapon with any kind of ease."

"That is the Baillie na Shuadh," said O'Gahan; "it was with that weapon that my ancestor, Dermot O'Gahan, overthrew the Saxons at the old cemetery of Dungiwen, when they were attempting to pillage that monastery; and I am prouder to be heir to the Baillie na Shuadh than the estate of Limavady; nor is there any instrument you see, that was not either the property of my ancestors, or taken by them from their enemies on the field of battle. But our family is fast going to decay, as well as our inheritance."

Owen Roe O'Donnell informed him, after dinner, of his intentions regarding M'Quillan, and his alliance with the O'Neills of Clanbuoy. "I do not wish," said he, "to punish him farther than drive off a number of cattle from

* This is one of the most extraordinary mines in the county Derry, or perhaps in Ireland. In 1100 Dermot O'Gahan founded a priory for canons regular of the Augustian order; but it having been polluted by the effusion of blood, was afterwards restored by the Archbishop of Armagh. In 1297, the town of Dungiwen was founded by the same family, and this cemetery was the chief burying-place of that sept. In the south-east corner of the church, lying in a horizontal posture, is the effigy of Coony Na Gall, the last inhabitant of the castle of the rock. Above him, on the eastern gable, in former times, was his coat of arms, but this has long disappeared. He has on the Celtic dress, which was the national costume at that period, with a broadsword in his right hand. Around him stood twelve images (two at each end, and four at each side), of a smaller size, seemingly as if they supported the greater image. It was unknown what the meaning of these was, or whom they represented, as O'Gahan's children did not amount to that number. Some years past, however, not exceeding half a century, one of the lineal descendants of the O'Gahans had buried her husband within the church, and as near as possible to the great Coony Na Gall, which grave seemed to have infringed a little on the ground taken up by a certain gentleman of the neighborhood of Dungiwen, whose ancestors had come as strangers to that place. He rode to this poor woman's door, and, with some warmth, demanded by what authority she dared to inter her husband so near his ground? This reprimand tore asunder the wound in her mind which was beginning to heal, and opening upon him in the strong invective and opprobrium of her vernacular tongue, she raked him fore and aft with various epithets, asking him how dare he bury in the church erected by her great forefathers any of his spurious breed, as she called them in Irish, terming him at the same time turn-coat and interloper. "I say," said she, "how dare you approach the sacred ground on which great Coony Na Gall lies, with his twelve men of the Cooneys, at present Quiggs, supporting him." These were twelve families of the O'Gahans, who supported Coony Na Gall, and after him were called Cooneys, or Quigs. After this, taking the street, and clapping her hands violently together, she raised the old coigne, following him up the street, clapping and howling in the most terrific manner, until the O'Gahans, roused by her cries, rushed forth upon him, and it was the swiftness of his horse alone that saved him.

the Route and northern parts of Antrim. But should he attempt anything like opposition, I fear I may be likely to lay a heavy hand on him."

"He and I," said the other, "have been at war these seven years, and I have always found him a generous enemy, nor can I censure him for his adherence to our common friend O'Neill; for, let matters stand as they will between us and the latter, he is our kinsman, and, indeed, I must say, he is a warm friend, but on the other hand a dangerous enemy; and if the sound of M'Quillan's shell can reach the Clanbuoy boys, I think the same number of you never will descend the heights of Knockanbaan, for he has the swiftness of the eagle, and the impetuosity of the lion."

"I am perfectly aware," said O'Donnell, "of his prowess in war, and know well that what you say is characteristic of him, but the temper of Baldearg's sword was known to O'Neill long before the present day; and I question, notwithstanding all his velocity of wing, but he might fly back again as fast as he flow forward; however, it does not sit well on a Tyrconnell to boast. A short space of time will put all our sayings to the test, so let us leave off commenting now, and introduce another subject."

"Pray, where have you got the wolf-skin? It seems to have been a large animal, and scarcely so dark in the colour as many wolves that I have seen."

"This wolf," said the other, "was caught near to the deer park, and there lies the boy," pointing to a large, stout wolf-dog that was lying in the hall, "there lies the boy that attacked him. You see he is a pensioner, having lost nearly all his right ear in the contest. He is greatly lacerated in the breast by the claws of his enemy, who was no common plunderer; but he is recovering, and I shall take good care that he be well nursed until he be better."

"It was one night as I had walked out after dinner to inhale the fresh air, and enjoy the beauty of the surrounding scenery. I am always attended by Tartar—this was the dog's name,—and rising the height along the park wall, Tartar dashed into a thicket and laid hold on the robber, who answered him with a most tremendous yell, and, wheeling upon him with tooth and nail, I thought had despatched him, as Tartar remained quite silent. I, however, with a blow of that Andrew Ferara, half severed the wolf's head from his body, and there I found Tartar clinging to his throat with a death hold, regardless of all his efforts. I have suspended the trophy in the hall, and there is no place in the mansion pleases Tartar so well to lie as immediately under it, basking like many a renowned hero, in the sunshine of his hardly earned spoils."

The night from hence was spent in wassail and revelry. The deeds of the O'Gahans against the Danes, the Saxons and their achievements in the land of Palestine as Crusaders, were all sung. The great Baldearg was not, however, left in the shade, but shone equally splendid in all the records of music and poetry. The Irish cornu, which used to kindle the flame of war from shore to shore, was here filled to brim with strong wine of Oporto, and manfully quaffed to the bottom by every guest.

Teag O'Gahan, who was now family bard at Limavady, mingled the strains of his harp with the others; and, along with many good pieces, performed "Through the green valleys of Erin," with true taste and judgment, at which all rose to their feet in honor of the deceased minstrel—the O'Gahans all hanging down their heads, and turning their eyes toward the likeness of the sage, suspended on the wall, as he

* In Ireland, the appellations which are used for hills and mountains, serve better to distinguish the size of the one from the other than in any other country. Knock signifies the smallest hill, but one tolerably abrupt or steep as they call it. Mullough is a hill that may be tititudinous in its base, but of an easy ascent. Cruck is sometimes applied to a smaller, and sometimes to a larger eminence, even approaching a mountain. Sliah or Slieve, the largest mountain, such as the Andes, the Alps, or Pyrenees. Benn, or Binn, to an abrupt rock, as Benn Eeveny, in county Derry, Tillanhead in Donegal, and St. Kilda in the Hebrides. Doon also signifies a rock overhanging the sea.

† A family who were natives of the village of Dungiwen, and by trade timber-workers, practised going to the glenwoods in night time to cut and carry off the oak. They would have kindled a large fire in the old graveyard, and turning their horses into the castle meadow, no person dared look out while the fire was there. Then mounting, they rode to the woods, and cut down their loads, trusting it to the pins of the saddle on each side of the beast. It was in one of these excursions, that a horse strayed away in the wood, and his owner running down the glen in search of him, bearing in his hand an instrument, in form of a sword, to defend himself from the wolves, when, seeing him as he thought, sitting on his haunches in a bog, he seized him by the tail, and striking him along the hip with the instrument in his hand, called, Get up, Brown, as loud as he could roar. The animal, which was a wolf, with a howl that made both his ears tingle, passed across the glen like a shadow, and disappeared in the darkness.

* How cruel the act!