



KENNY KILFOY; OR, MURDER WILL OUT.

A THRILLING TALE OF PEASANT LIFE.

It is a custom in several parts of Ireland for the young men of one village to join and perform certain descriptions of work for each other in conjunction. For instance, from a dozen to fifteen young men will assemble, with their spades and facks, and completely sow all the potatoes for one family before they stop. They will then proceed to another farm and perform the same task, and so on until all the potatoes belonging to the confederacy are planted. Turf-cutting and reaping are usually performed in this manner. This is generally considered a very good method of performing labor, as it ensures expedition and promotes good feeling in the neighborhood among the young, besides rendering them better workmen, as there usually exists an emulative pride among them for the best and cleanest work, and the leadership of the field. These meetings are always scenes of feasting and merriment, besides, as the farmer, considering his work done without an outlay in money, is anxious to give his friends and neighbors the best entertainment. The rude jest, ever bring the ready and boisterous laugh, and the loud song are heard over the field the live-long day.

In the beginning of the summer of 1796, a parcel of young men assembled early in the morning on a portion of the bog of Allen, adjoining the King's County, to cut the turf of a young farmer named Buckley. They amounted in number to about fifteen, all fine, well-limbed and healthy young men, with their slanes and wheelbarrows, ready to cut with sinewy arms the black soft soil. The morning was extremely fine, and the young men worked with spirit and activity until about one o'clock in the afternoon, when Buckley's sister and a servant girl were seen approaching the bog, loaded with "the dinner" for the men, and followed by a *gosssoon*, carrying two large vessels of milk. The young men ceased working as they approached, and arranged themselves on the heath-covered bank.

Among the young men working for her brother the handsome Essy Buckley had two admirers, who eagerly contended with each other for the honor of her hand at the dance, at fair, or patron, and who wooed her smiles with the most constant assiduity. She, of course, felt her heart inclined to one, much to the mortification and jealousy of the other. They were both youth men, and lived in the same village; their farms were nearly equal in profit, and subject to the same rent; and both, with regard to worldly substance, were nearly equal; that is, both were comfortable in the sense in which an Irish peasant understands the word. Each had a cow giving milk, a few sheep, poultry and pigs; their corn and potatoes were regularly sowed, and their rent punctually called for by the agent, and generally forthcoming. But still they were not equal in the eye of Essy Buckley. Her favorite, Tom Molloy, in her mind was infinitely superior to his rival, Kenny Kilfoy, for the equality which existed between them in other things, did not go with Essy as a criterion of their merits otherwise. She loved Tom Molloy. He was a dark-eyed, ruddy-faced, black-haired, pleasant young fellow; ever with a smile on his lips, and pleasant in his look; always the lightest foot in the dance and the merriest at labor. His rival had the advantage of him in stature, but was not so compactly made or handsomely formed, with light hair and a sallow, colorless face; his disposition, too, was sombre; and he was generally taciturn and reserved. For his own sake he always joined the co-operative laborers; and though, as his neighbors expressed it, there was ever "the *coatha corra*" about his mouth, and the complaint of one thing or another on his tongue; and though he was always penurious and *graw-though* (niggardly) in doing a decent thing, yet he never thrived better than another." Such were the lovers of Essy Buckley; and we cannot blame her in her choice of a sweetheart; for what young girl would prefer a silent, melancholy lover, without spirit or sprightliness, like Kenny Kilfoy, to a good-humored, good-hearted, and pleasant, handsome young fellow, like Tom Molloy.

The bacon and cabbage was served round on the white wooden platters, then so commonly in use, by Jack Buckley, the elder brother of Essy; and the thick milk poured out into the equally white wooden noggins—still the vessel generally used among the Irish peasantry—and the scene was one of happiness and peace: "Rustic labor, toil embrowned;"—a group of smiling faces, seated on a high bank richly covered with yellow moss, purple heather, and the long green branches of the bog-sallow.

"Come, move over there, Kenny," said Tom, who was sitting next his rival, "an' make room for Essy to sit beside me."

"Do you want to shove me into the hole?" grumbled the stiletless Kenny.

"Don't stir, Kenny," interrupted the lively Essy. "I'll just sit down here furinst you 'till I see which o' youz can eat the purtiest."

"Och, thin, iv that's the case," said Tom, "I must turn my back to you."

"Why so, Tom?" asked Essy; "I thought you'd give up in nothin' to him."

Kenny smiled grimly, whether through satisfaction or otherwise none could interpret.

"And do you give it up, Tom?" said Jack Buckley, placing another slice of the bacon upon his platter.

"Oh, faix," said Tom, "he has the best tools; see what a fine sharp set o' teeth he has, and a beautiful big mouth; the sorra purtier eather or cleaverer thrinner-man on the bog ov Allen this day than you are, Kenny Kilfoy," he added, addressing himself to his rival, with good-humored comicality.

"Well, sorra take you, Tom," said another, "but the dickens can't bate you at jibing."

"Och, I don't mind what *cracked people* sez," grinned Kenny bitterly.

"An' you're right, Kenny," said Essy, mischievously; "an' the never a better he is with his romashes—never lets a sober body alone."

"Och, thin, never heed him you, Essy," smilingly answered Tom, for he saw the cholera of his rival rising, and he wished to provoke him to draw him out; "never heed him—he's vexed enough 'thout you goin' to vex him more with your sly jokes."

"It's not the likes o' you that could vex me at any rate," muttered Kenny, getting more vexed at having his testy humor taken notice of before all his competers, and her before whom he wished to appear particularly amiable; "it's not you that could vex me," he added, "barin' you were saucy or impident, and forced me to make you know which was the better man."

This hint was too much for even Tom's good humor, especially when given before Essy; and the boys, who felt it in its proper sense, looked to see how such an intimation would be taken.—Tom's eyes kindled with a brighter light as he replied, still in his good-humored way.

"Bar there, Kenny," said he, "I acknowledge you are an oulder man than me, and that you were a man when I was a *gosssoon*; but I will never say, that now we are both men, that you were ever a taste a better man, or as good. With regard to what you said afore, about *cracked people*, all I have to say is, that thank God I'm not a moping *omedhaun*, like somebody that I could put my hand upon."

"You may thank that I wouldn't like to spoil the day's work on Jack Buckley," said Kenny; "and that the decent girl that I have a regard for is to the fore, or I'd soon let you know the differ."

"It's easy settlin' that," said Tom; "I'll wrestle you this evening, when the decent girl that you have a regard for (mimicking Kenny's drawing tone), an' that cares little about you, I'm thinking, won't be present, and let the best two out of three show who's the man that has a right to brag."

"Aye, that's the fair way," interposed some of the men, who saw a quarrel likely to ensue, and wished to prevent it, by what they considered a harmless trial of strength and dexterity.

The men resumed their work with increased good humor and renovated glee, all except Kenny Kilfoy, who nursed his angry feelings and passions in silence within his own bosom. Their work was soon done, and many a dry or elevated patch in that quarter showed black that evening, being thickly covered with the square sods cut from the deep hole which they left behind them. The sun was not set; it was yet early as they left the bog.

"Well, boys," began Tom Molloy, "many hands make the work light; we're done brave and early, and it's as purty a day's work as you need look on."

"We'll have full time," said one, "to thry the three falls here above in the meadow, and be home after afore the supper time."

"Auch!" said another, "sure it's only jokin' Kenny was."

"How's that?" said another; "sure it's not maning that it's afraid he is you'd be."

"I never joke 'thout laughin', boys," said Kilfoy, "an' I'm not in the grinnin' humor much at this present minute."

As soon as they reached the meadow, Tom, who was jogging on before Kenny with another group, tossed off his coat, and addressing Kilfoy, who was crossing the stile, said:

"Now, Kenny, let there never be a boast about the best man after this bout, an' we needn't be the worse friends after. Come, Pether, lend us your jacket, and throw my *thrissy* here over your showlders."

He was soon arrayed in the frieze jacket, and kicking off his weighty brogues, he stood in his stocking vamps inside the little circle formed by his companions. He was joined by his rival,

whose dark and lowering brow still plainly told of ire unquenched, and passion fierce and burning; and as they stood before each other, Tom stretched forth his hand in frank and manly manner.

"Come, Kenny," said he, "give us the fist before we begin, to show there's neither spite or anger in regard o' the few words."

"Let every madman and fool shake his own hand," said Kilfoy bitterly, withholding his hand, and looking on the extended one of his rival with a sneer.

"Well, the sorra may care for your good or bad humor," replied Tom, moving towards his opponent, "come on, an' every man do his best."

They grappled, and after a few preliminary movements, the contest became interesting to all parties.

Perhaps there is no exercise so animating and healthy as wrestling, as it is practised in most parts of Ireland, and at the same time so beneficial and conducive to health when conducted fairly. All the agility and strength of the frame are put into requisition; every muscle in the body is strung, and the steadiness of foot—the quickness of eye and limb, and the pliancy necessary to excel, give vigor and elasticity in a surprising degree.

Kilfoy was the stronger man, but he evidently did not possess the action or dexterity of Molloy, who exhibited at every turn that wavy motion of the body, so observable in the tiger and leopard kind, and which gives the plainest indication of strength and agility combined, and which shows the body more like a moving mass of muscle than a composition of flesh and bone.—Often did Kenny attempt to toss his opponent, and as often was he foiled by the superior tact and quickness of his adversary, and the spectators, by their looks, gestures, and exclamations, gave vent to their feelings or their admiration.

"By my conscience that was a mighty purty offer of Tom's to draw him off."

"Faix he was near getting the *sleeshoge* on him that time."

"Look at the hump Kenny has on his shoulders, watching like a badger in a barrel."

"Faix Tom has as purty a stan' as ever I saw with a boy; as straight an' as light as Sharp-foot the dancin' masher."

"Wow!—he was near bringing Tom with that strong *cross-thrip*," said one amateur, starting from a recumbent posture to one knee, as his favorite stumbled from a sudden forcible manœuvre of his opponent.

"A haugnashun ugly thrip that *cross-thrip* is," remarked another.

"Ha! he's at it agin—not to so well as before though," said another.

"Look at Tom how he smiles; watch his eye; he's throwing himself in the way ov that ugly curl agin," said a young one.

"Never!" said another, in a lower voice; "if he thries that *cross-thrip* agin, he's done as sure as his name's Kenny Kilfoy."

Kenny did try the *cross-thrip* again, and as quick as thought his rival drew back; his foot missed the object, and, in endeavoring to recover his position, his foot was caught, and Kenny Kilfoy measured his length on the green grass.

A loud hurroo declared the triumph of the victor. Kenny rose from the ground more furious than before. He was more enraged than ever, for shame added to his anger. He had been certain of victory, and disappointment lent three-fold stings to his former ranking. His friends came round him:

"I was thinking," said one, "that *cross-thrip* id disappoint you."

"You should have got in on him," said another.

"Close him, Kenny," said a third, "when you go in agin; he's too active for you, and you'll have a better chance, for you're the strongest."

"Standers by are always good wrastlers," said Kenny churlishly, shaking off his Job-like advisers, and walking forth again to meet his antagonist. They grappled again; Kenny went more incautiously to work than before. He "tripped" furiously, and swung his lighter antagonist about in rather an awkward way. Molloy went from side to side with him as he pulled, and escaped his efforts to throw him, until his violent exertions had pretty well fatigued him; he then commenced annoying, and with a well managed feint he drew his comrade off his guard, and tossed up his heels in a most dexterous manner.

"You're the best man be odds," said Jack Buckley, "an' Kenny must acknowledge that himself for a good thruth; but he won't refuse to shake hands I know now, as I won't be easy 'till I see you friends agin."

"Never!" muttered Kenny, with furious emphasis from between his set teeth, and he turned from the group.

"When I offered him my hand," said Tom, "before we began, I did it like a man; now I wouldn't give him my hand for all he's worth in the world."

Kenny stalked away completely crest-fallen,

yet with a refreshed and a new burning hate in his bosom. He felt that Tom was beloved by Essy; and he thought that harmless jest which Tom uttered in the bog was with a design to render him ridiculous before his mistress. He retorted in a way in which he imagined himself sure of drawing his rival into disgrace, and in this, too, he was foiled. Thus jealousy and shame were heaped upon him, and worked within his moody soul. Yet another trial awaited him, in which he suffered more, but which brought on the most tragic results.

Not far from the village there was a wake on this very night. An old woman, the mother of a neighboring farmer, and a distant relation of Kilfoy's, had "departed" that morning. He would have avoided going, for he knew that the Buckley and Molloy, and all the witnesses of his defeat would be assembled there, and that the story would be told to many, and that he would be the subject of all tongues, and the marked of every eye. Yet she was his own blood relation that was waking, and could he stay away when strangers would be there? besides, his absence would be marked, and attributed to a fear of his rival; and this thought at least he could not bear. His supper was taken in silence, and in a short time after he set out for the wake. He went by the most unfrequented bye-paths, and reached the house just as the darkness was closing around.

To many an Irish wake is a familiar sight; to many more a short description of it, such as it is, in its full costume, as seen in almost every part of Ireland, may not be unacceptable, and we will take this one as for all. Nearly opposite the door the corpse of the old woman was extended on a large table, which being too short another smaller was placed at the end, and supported by sods of turf to bring both on a level. Under the head was placed a "phangle," or sheaf of straw, but smoothly covered over with a white sheet. The corpse was also covered with white sheets, and on the breast was laid a platter with snuff, which was taken off and handed round the house occasionally. Below the snuff plate was a bundle of new pipes, filled with cut tobacco. Then a large canopy was formed over the body, with white sheets also, from which others depended, covering the wall, and protecting the corpse from view at head and foot, but leaving it entirely visible in front. Two painted prints were hung over the head: one representing "the Nativity," and the other "the Crucifixion," while opposite, against the wall, was fastened a large cross, made of two stripes of black velvet placed crosswise. Then here and there within the alcove were pinned up large bunches of flowers. Such is the usual method of "laying out a corpse" in the country places nearly through Ireland. All the stools, forms, &c., in the neighborhood were borrowed, and the house was thronged with the young and old of both sexes, laughing, chatting, and smoking quite at their ease; but the women invariably decked out in their best muslins and calicoes.

As Kilfoy entered he took off his hat, and kneeling down within the threshold, he crossed himself, and repeated a few prayers within his breath, and then rose up, without looking at any person, and threw himself carelessly into a seat, and pulled his hat down low upon his brow.

"Ah, then, Kenny Kilfoy, but it's gettin' mighty polite and genteel you are," said the light tones of a loved and familiar voice at his side, which made his heart-strings thrill, "an' you sit down without sayin' be your leave, or lookin' at who's beside you."

It was Essy Buckley. She saw him sunk and cast down—she knew all that passed—and felt that quick perception, so marked in woman, felt that he was suffering, and that she was the occasion of it; and she thought she had a right to speak cheerfully to him.

(To be concluded in our next.)

REV. DR. CAHILL

ON THE POLITICAL ASPECT OF EUROPE.
(From the Dublin Catholic Telegraph.)

The student in politics can never form a just opinion of the progress, the civilization, or the feelings of his own country without taking a view of the parallel condition of the neighboring states. It is by the comparison we make between ourselves and others that we can learn the proper estimate which (in the age we live in) ought to be attached to our own civil, political, and religious institutions. And, perhaps, the most powerful sentiment which can combine the united action of a nation is, the universal belief that their laws are the wisest, their religious institutions the most liberal, and their people the most learned, the bravest of all the surrounding kingdoms. It was the practical development of this sentiment that gave to the ancient Persians their former predominance; that raised old Greece to unrivalled sway; and had made the very name of "Roman" be heard with terror in these his-

toric times, when the throne of the Casars governed the world. The scholar who reads these ancient records of hoary centuries, long, long past and gone, owns the justice and the power of the sentiment referred to: and on a close examination of the premises he cannot, therefore, be surprised at the moral force which, through the ages under consideration, raised weak peoples and moderate beginnings to conquest, empire, and greatness. Whatever progress these nations made, the historian recorded in glowing panegyric; the talent of the citizen, the eloquence of the senator, the skill of the general, the courage of the soldier, were all painted in the brilliant coloring of unrivalled perfection; and the result was that the national character practically fulfilled the measure of the universal expectation: and men lived, and spoke, and fought, and died realizing the picture which the national painters had drawn of the national superiority.

All this discipline was great national teaching: producing high national sentiment; and really and *bono fide* raising the national mind to the lofty standard held up to the public imitation.—But what will the scholar in modern history think of the modern people and of the modern writers who attempt to give moral power to their country by belying all other states; by ridiculing foreign institutions, while their own are topping on their foundations; by decrying virtue abroad, while vice has tainted the heart of the nation at home; by publishing a false statement of their internal as well as of their foreign policy, at once insulting to other peoples' and deceitful to their own; and by propagating a gospel of indifference where Faith is a mere gratuitous popular opinion; and where their Decalogue teaches social hatred, sectarian rancor, and, I had almost said, national persecution. By this system of falsehood England so mis-teaches her rising generations that the masses neither understand foreign legislation for domestic justice; nor have they a correct idea of other people's religion or their own varying creed. Their newspapers, in reference to the subjects here stated, are records of convicted misrepresentations; editors, otherwise honorable men, do not hesitate to fill the public mind with a studied, a learned forgery; and frequently they write articles, dissertations, and essays, with scarcely one element of fact; without even a pretext for their astounding falsehood. Their historians, their novelists, their missionaries, all struggle for the mastery to see who can most belie Rome, most ridicule Naples: to try who can most expose Madrid to contempt, Austria to hatred: to rival each other in the malignant effort, who can most revolutionize all Italy, or most misrepresent, persecute, and crush Catholicism all over the world.

The incredible practice of lying in history, in literature, and in journalism, has pervaded all classes, and all the dependencies of England: it is in Toronto and Calcutta: in Belfast and at the Cape: in Dundee and the Port of Spain. It is in the army and the navy, where scarcely one word is ever heard of the valor of a Catholic soldier or sailor. Although Catholic Ireland supplies more than one-third of the British army while living; and, of course, the one-third of the slain when dead: yet these fallen husbands and fathers have no asylum in England for their bereaved widows and orphan children—except in a perjured conscience, and dishonored apostasy. This system has its throne, its centralization, its very source in the English pulpit, from which its unholily ordinances are issued every Sabbath day.—Listen to the sermon which sets forth before attentive hearers, that France, Spain, Portugal, the Sicilies, all Italy, Austria, Bavaria, Belgium, Ireland, together with their Kings, their queens, their bishops, their senators, their judges, historians, painters, sculptors, dead in the past centuries; together with their present living populations, to the number of upwards of two hundred and fifty millions of souls are and have been all idolaters, all Pope-ridden, Priest-troudden fools; and that, consequently, according to Lord John Russel, they cannot have either an independent mind, or an extended intellect. From whence it also may be deduced that Angelo could not be equal in talent to an English house painter: that the contemporaries of Canova were far inferior in mind to British stone-masons; that Pascal was unfit to teach a National school in Kent; and that General Simpson lying (as he himself asserts) with his head covered in the trenches at the Redan, has evinced a higher military genius, than the Popish assassins who triumphantly scaled the embattled towers of the Malakoff, against a forest of crimsoned steel, and in the midst of a storm of fire! This English lying is as universal as the British flag: it has de-ranked the popular mind, has tainted the national heart, and has weakened the whole frame of the empire. I am prepared, indeed, to admit—I am anxious to say, that the natural character of the English people is generous, honest, honorable, just; but where *race and religion are concern-*

* Words expressive of that draw which a miserable and poor spirit is supposed to give to the expression of the mouth.