

AILEY MOORE

SALES OF THE TIMES SHOWING HOW VIOLENCE, MURDER AND SOCIAL LIFE PARTISAN ARE MANAGED AND JUSTICE ADMINISTERED IN IRELAND TOGETHER WITH MANY STRIKING INCIDENTS IN OTHER LANDS

BY RICHARD B. SMITH, D. D. DEAN OF NEWCASTLE WEST  
CHAPTER XVIII  
OLD NICK BORAN AGAIN

Old Mr. Moore became sensibly better after his arrival in Limerick. The air of Limerick is balmy, and there is a cheery, cleanly look about the streets, houses, and quays, that operates favorably upon all hearts and heads. The city is not so large that one feels himself lost as soon as he passes the barriers, and it is not so small as to contract the feelings of the inhabitants into those of mere villagers; in fact, Limerick is altogether a pretty place, and many tasteful folk prefer it—men, women, lace, glories, bacon, tobacco, and all—to any city in the sister kingdom.

Here Mr. Moore, senior's only sister lived. Many beautiful villas crown the sweet slopes by the Shannon's banks, on the clear side of the river. They are, that is, the villas—are of every possible shape and size, and they are in every direction. The Doric stands in sober gravity on one spot, and the Corinthian shines in its gracefulness upon another; the Gothic, or "Elizabethan," like an old lady in ruffles and spectacles, vindicates the claims of the sixteenth century; and the plain convenient dwelling of modern times shows that the utilitarian spirit of the age can find a place even among abodes of relaxation and indulgence. In a word, everything as it should be, and looking along the circling and serpentine ways—and walking amid "sweet-briary fences" and flower-gardens, and looking down upon the lordly river, rolling onward to the sunset, and viewing the homes and seekers of pleasure all around—a dreamer might imagine that the ages by the Shannon side shared its immortality, and still retained even their fashions.

Mrs. Benn had one of the cottages on the banks of the Shannon, and Mr. Moore, senior, had a charming look-out therefrom. And then Mrs. Benn had so many old recollections to indulge, and therefore so many to awaken in her brother, and they being every one of them, of the spring-tide of existence, fresher and fonder as years wither up all things besides and as Mr. Moore had a kind human heart, and all things soft and homely were treasured, it came to happen that the old gentleman lived in his boyhood and young manhood again, and enjoyed the scenes which memory happily preserved. And thus Mr. Moore, although of the present, he could be made to comprehend little, and would enjoy nothing, was vivid and accurate of the time of the "Volunteers."

Mrs. Benn's cottage is a Gothic one, and Mr. Moore has an easy chair in the "oriel window," and Ailey is already sitting at a round table in the middle of the apartment, Mrs. Benn being vis a vis. The aunt and niece really like one another, and in truth, there is no merit in the affection of either, for Mrs. Benn is an admirable woman, and the reader need not be informed of the claims of the gentle Ailey.

Eddy has finished whatever small work has been allotted to him, and he is looking out from the skylight, and viewing the ships borne onwards to the sea. Poor Eddy is thinking of "Gran,"—the bronzed old begonia woman—and thinking that she once lived near the sea also; and he remembers how she used to look at him when she sat knitting by the old hearth; and often, when she said her prayers upon her old beads; and he thinks of how many a time she kissed him in his little bed of straw, when she thought he was asleep, and the tears flow down the poor boy's cheeks, and he thinks he should not have left her. But then "Gran" begged him to go, and she laid her two hands on his head, and she blessed him, and she said she would go "live among the neighbors that never refused a bit to any one," and she would "pray for Eddy and for Miss Ailey, and not forgetting hand-some Master Gerald," and she, poor Biddy Browne, would "see them all again, she knew."

What a noble character the one that lives in love! Love the old heart! Love the old parents! Love the young little brood of brothers and sisters! Let the heart glow with delicious ardor when you see those around you smile in homes, dear, dear joy! Every look of light and word of kindness will enrich you with flowers of home's holy affection, and around you will flourish a garden of love! Riches there you have what riches can never buy, and what money is gathered to purchase. Power!—you have in home love what power can never command, and what ambition vainly laments, after slaying it.

Love is power and riches and dignity altogether; and we may have it at the expense of only opening our hearts, for it knocks at the door, and it is the child of innocence:

"—que t'importe,  
Le riche et le puissant!  
Un soufle les emporte,  
La force la plus forte,  
C'est un cœur innocent!"

"What are riches to thee?  
Why care you for power?  
A breath may destroy them,  
They are things of an hour!  
A might like to God's  
But to one thing is given,

A heart that is pure  
Is the right hand of heaven."

What a wrong road many a wise man travels in his search for happiness! "The kingdom of heaven is within you!"

"A servant coming up the walk," said Mrs. Benn, "and bearing a letter to me." "Very well," said Eddy Browne, in reply to some remark of the messenger.

The people in the parlor heard no more; but in a few minutes Gerald Moore came down stairs. Gerald was in his room when the messenger came with the letter. He looked (we mean Gerald) a little puzzled, though not excited, and he held the letter in his hand. Ailey Moore raised her eyes from her work, and Aunt Benn raised her spectacles up among her nose, looking out from very mild blue eyes.

"News, Gerald?" said Mrs. Benn. "Why, yes, replied the young man, smiling. "I think Ailey has another suitor."

Aunt Benn looked knowingly at Ailey, and Ailey slightly blushed—very slightly, however, for Ailey knew her brother too well to believe that anything serious would be so lightly introduced.

"And my dear?" Ailey asked, with a smile.

"Old Mr. Boran has come to town to see me—and only to see me; I don't think he cares to see me unless for Ailey's sake," answered Gerald, laughing.

"Ailey can't go!" cried Mr. Moore, who, very unusually with him, caught some notion of the import of Gerald's words.

"Where papa!" Ailey asked, rising rapidly, and approaching him with hands outstretched; the poor child was delighted to see an appearance of improvement in her father. The tears came down old Mr. Moore's cheeks, and the gentle daughter throwing his arms round his neck kissed him. Again she asked, "Where, papa, shall I go?"

"Yes, Ailey," replied the old gentleman. "You?" he said, laughing through the tears. "Oh, no fear of your going—no fear of that—no fear," he repeated, "no fear you'll go."

Gerald held his hat in his hand, and stood.

"Let us sit down, Mr. Gerald; I'm old. There!"

After a considerable pause, old Boran said: "You had some fine pictures at Moorfield, Mr. Gerald."

"Yes."

"I bought them," said the old man, looking furtively at young Moore. "Well, sir, I hope they'll prove worth your money."

"I paid £150 for a small picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

"Why I heard an Englishman bought it for £50!"

"So he did; just so; and he had £100 profit off old Nick Boran—what very few men ever had before."

"You must have liked it very much."

"So I did. I liked it very much. I bought it for one I liked, because he liked it."

Gerald looked at Mr. Nick Boran, senior, rather doubtfully, we suppose. "Oh, yes, by course—by course, that's it. I'm Nick Boran, the miser!"

Here was something very wonderful! Old Nick Boran had sent him £500!

The old man had made it absolutely his. What could it mean? Again he read the letter, and again—but there was the fact still in black and white. On the back of the letter was written, he saw,

"Providence will mind them," and he remembered that he had made use of these words when speaking to old Boran about the prospects of his father and Ailey; but no examination could discover more.

Full of thought, and a little anxious, Gerald took his hat and left the hotel. He made direct for the beautiful bridge (absurdly called Wellesley bridge) which he crossed, and gained the docks, where he was obliged to remain, to wait the passing up of a large vessel. His eyes passed to the opposite side, where a crowd was delayed by the same obstacle which stayed himself; and near a lamp-post—leaning, in fact, against the lamp-post—was a man whose shape and face were not to be forgotten.

Shaun a Dherk was waiting for Gerald on the bridge.

Gerald was not easily moved by any one or by any circumstance, but here he felt a strong resolution necessary to keep him tranquil. Decidedly the most wonderful man of his class, or perhaps of his time, stood near him, waited for him evidently; and this man seemed mysteriously to influence his destiny.

Shaun a Dherk was in his holiday gear; but Gerald would have known Shaun a Dherk on a throne had he only seen him on one.

As soon as the bridge was closed, Gerald walked rapidly across it, and as rapidly approached the lamp-post. He was just about to stretch out his hand ardently, when Shaun turned round and walked on—towards the Crofloe Road. Gerald understood him.

Shaun a Dherk soon arrived at a sequestered spot, and waited. He looked pale, much thinner, and more thoughtful than usual.

"My ever dear friend," cried Gerald, "how can I thank you! How happy I feel at last to see you! You must come over and see my sister and aunt."

"I have seen them," answered Shaun, in an accent which made Gerald's blood tingle. It was Irish beyond all doubt, but not the accent of a peasant.

THROUGH MARY

A TRUE STORY  
By Rev. Richard W. Alexander

In a charming home, small yet refined, lived a young girl with her two brothers, all non-Catholics. Both men were matured, each with a business of his own, and were in the city all day. They returned to their suburban home for dinner, after which they would smoke a cigar, and chat with their sister, whom both loved devotedly; sometimes returning to the city for an hour at the theatre, or a concert; sometimes reading in their cozy library or den at home. They were very happy in their pleasant surroundings, not caring very much about religion, but leading good, moral lives. Church-going did not trouble them. The girl was devoted to her brothers, and strove in every way to make the home pleasant.

They had lived thus for a long time, none of them being inclined towards a married life, when suddenly a cloud broke over the little circle. The brothers quarrelled. Hot words resulted, mutual recriminations followed, and at last, estrangement.

Finally there was a sort of truce patched up. They returned to the home for the sake of their heart-broken sister, but refused to speak to each other. Every night they met at dinner studiously civil, but acting as if they were strangers; never exchanging a word. One always left when dinner was over, either going to his room, or leaving the house. The other brother chatted with his sister as if no one else lived there. They sternly refused to hear each other's name mentioned, and while in all else most affectionate to their sister, in this they were unbending. She loved them both tenderly, and their estrangement was a sorrow that began to eat deeply into the happiness of her hitherto unclouded life.

Months passed by. All efforts to reconcile the brothers resulted in a more deeply rooted animosity, and a threat to leave the house forever if the matter was mentioned again.

Three years had passed, and no change took place. Katherine—this was the girl's name—had exhausted every invention of love she could bring forward, but all in vain. William and James had not spoken. A wall of ice had formed between them, and they passed each other like strangers. No one dared to comment upon the matter to them, and Katherine grew coldly silent when any mutual friend ventured to remark that, where both brothers used formerly to accompany her from time to time, only one was seen with her now.

The two men saw that Katherine, their beloved sister who had given her life for their comfort, was growing pale and sad, although she made every effort to be cheerful. The hour they dined together she tried to make as pleasant as possible. But the icy silence, the unnatural restraint, could not be ignored; and the single meal of the day, at which they met, and which used to be so pleasant, was now shadowed by a cloud, heavy and sorrowful. They could not conquer their pride—and, moreover they would not.

Hiding her sorrow in her own heart, Katherine often would walk or ride to the city. One day, in the month of May, she passed a Catholic Church, the doors of which stood invitingly open. Hesitating she entered; and then stood at the end of the church. She saw dimly a shrine decorated with flowers and lights and, rising above them, a tall statue of white marble, representing the slender figure of a woman with arms extended. The face was pure and gentle, and even at that distance Katherine imagined something was attracting her, drawing her, impelling her forward. A lady passed her, and noticing that she was a stranger, smiled. Katherine said in a whisper,

"Will you tell me what that statue means—the one with the flowers and lights about it?"

The lady instinctively knew she was not a Catholic, and whispered: "It is a statue of our Lady, the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God. It is May-time, the month in which our dear Mother is especially honored. She never fails to grant the petitions of those in sorrow or trouble, who promised to honor her Son."

Katherine stood looking at the distant shrine—at the white figure with its outstretched arms—and a great faith sprang up in her soul.

"If you will reconcile my brothers, dear Mother of God," she murmured, "I will publicly visit your shrine, and will try to learn all I can about honoring you!"

Was it a freak of imagination? Or was it a stray sunbeam that flitted across the marble face, and gave it the glow of a smile? Katherine's heart beat almost aloud. She turned and left the Church, but with a strangely peaceful and hopeful feeling. She went towards home, her soul full of the beautiful vision that silent Church; she went about her duties, prepared a bountiful dinner, and dressed carefully to meet her brothers. She felt that something was in the air, something supernatural, with the statue of the White Mother in the center.

James came home first. He kissed his sister as usual, noticing her bright eyes and high color. In a few moments William entered. Without a moment's pause James advanced to William, both hands extended. William stared, uttered not a word; then came forward and laid his hands in his brother's. They looked into each other's eyes for a long minute. Then James spoke.

"William, it is three years since we have spoken; are we the happier for this estrangement?"

"No, James," was the choked answer that strong men give in deep emotion. "We will end it!"

And with a warm, long hearty handclasp, the brothers were reconciled.

Katherine burst into tears. "Oh! thanks be to the Mother of God!" she cried. "She has granted my prayer, and I will keep my word!"

And she did. The happy trio sat down to the happiest meal they ever tasted. And after it was over the brothers, arm in arm, went out together.

Katherine immediately visited the shrine of our Lady. She soon obtained the gift of Faith, and she is now a fervent Catholic. Her daily prayer to our sweet Lady is for the conversion of her two beloved brothers. Can we doubt that her petition will be granted?

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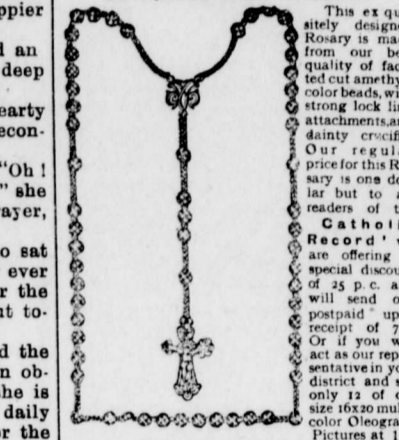
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