

Loss Accompanying a Shamrock.

I send you the little plant that grows On the soil of our dear old land, Yes, may be the starting tear Awakened at sight of this emblem dear, As you clasp it in your hand.

THE OLD BARON.

THE CHAMPION OF VIRTUE.

[CONTINUED.]

They contended a long time with equal skill and courage; at length Sir Philip unhorsed his antagonist. The judges ordered that either he should alight, or suffer his enemy to remount; he chose the former, and a short combat ensued. The perspiration ran off their bodies with the exercise. Sir Philip watched every motion of his enemy, and strove to weary him out, intending to wound but not to kill him, unless obliged for his own safety.

He thrust his sword through his left arm, and demanded whether he would confess the fact?

Lord Lovel engaged, answered, he would die sooner.

Sir Philip then passed the sword through his body twice, and Lord Lovel fell, crying out that he was slain.

"I hope not," said Sir Philip, "for I have a great deal of business for you to do before you die; confess your sins, and endeavor to atone for them, as the only ground to hope for pardon."

Lord Lovel replied:

"You are the victor, use your good fortune generously!"

Sir Philip took away his sword, and then waved it over his head, and beckoned for assistance.

The judges sent to beg Sir Philip to spare the life of his enemy.

"I will make it upon condition that he will make an honest confession."

Lord Lovel desired a surgeon and a confessor.

"You shall have both," said Sir Philip; "but you must first answer me a question or two. Did you kill your kinsman or not?"

"It was not my hand that killed him," answered the wounded man.

"It was done by your own order, however?"

"You shall have no assistance till you answer this point."

"It was," said he, "and heaven is just!"

"Bear witness, all present," said Sir Philip, "he confesses the fact!"

He then beckoned Edmund, who approached.

"Take off your helmet, said he; 'look on that youth, he is the son of your injured kinsman.'"

"It is himself," said the Lord Lovel, and fainted away.

Sir Philip then called for a surgeon and a priest, both of which Lord Graham had provided; the former began to bind up his wounds, and his assistants poured a cordial into his mouth.

"Preserve his life, if it is possible," said Sir Philip, "for much depends upon it."

He then took Edmund by the hand, and presented him to all the company.

"In this young man," said he, "you see the true heir of the house of Lovel! Heaven has in its own way, made him the instrument to discover the death of his parents. His father was assassinated by order of that wicked man, who now receives his punishment; his mother was, by his cruel treatment, compelled to leave her own home; she was driven into the fields, and perished here, self seeking a shelter for her infant. I have sufficient proofs of everything I say, which I am ready to communicate to every person who desires to know the particulars. Heaven, by his hand, has chastised him; he has confessed the fact I accused him of, and it remains that he make restitution of the fortune and honors he hath usurped so long."

Edmund knelt, and with uplifted hands returned thanks to Heaven, that his noble friend and champion was crowned with victory. The lords and gentlemen gathered round them; they congratulated them both; while Lord Lovel's friends and followers were employed in taking care of him.

Lord Clifford took Sir Philip's hand.

"You have acted with so much honor and prudence, that it is presumptuous to offer you advice; but what mean you to do with the wounded man?"

"I have not determined," said he, "I thank you for the hint, and beg your advice how to proceed."

"Let us consult Lord Graham," replied he. Lord Graham insisted upon their going all to his castle.

"There," said he, "you will have impartial witnesses of all that passes."

Sir Philip was unwilling to give so much trouble.

The Lord Graham protested he should be proud to do any service to so noble a gentleman.

Lord Clifford enforced his request, saying:

"It was better upon all accounts to keep your presence on this side of the borders till they saw what term his health would take, and to keep him, safely till he had settled his worldly affairs."

This resolution being taken, Lord Graham invited the wounded man and his friends to

the castle, as being the nearest place where he could be lodged, and taken proper care of, it being dangerous to carry him further.

They accepted the proposal with many acknowledgments; and having made a kind of litter of boughs, they all proceeded to Lord Graham's castle, where they put Lord Lovel to bed, and the surgeon dressed his wounds, and desired he might be kept quiet, not knowing at present whether they were dangerous or not.

About an hour after, the wounded man complained of thirst; he asked for the surgeon, and enquired if his life was in danger?

The surgeon answered him doubtfully.

He asked:

"Where is Sir Philip Harcley?"

"In the castle."

"Where is that young man whom he calls the heir of Lovel?"

"He is here, too."

"Then I am surrounded with my enemies. I want to speak to one of my own servants, without witnesses; let one be sent to me."

The surgeon withdrew, and acquainted the gentlemen below.

"He shall not speak to any man," said Sir Philip, "but in my presence."

He went with him into the sick man's room. Upon the sight of Sir Philip, he seemed in great agitation.

"Am I not allowed to speak to my own servant?" said he.

"Yes, sir, you may; but not without witnesses."

"Then I am a prisoner, it seems?"

"No, not so, sir; but some caution is necessary at present, but compose yourself. I do not wish for your death."

"Then why did you seek it? I never injured you."

"Yes, you have, in the person of my friend, and I am only the instrument of justice in the hand of Heaven; endeavor to make atonement while life is spared to you. Shall I send the priest to you? perhaps he may convince you of the necessity of restitution, in order to obtain forgiveness of your sins."

Sir Philip sent for the priest and the surgeon, and obliged the servant to retire with him.

"I leave you, sir, to the care of these gentlemen, and whenever a third person is admitted, I will be his attendant; I will visit you again within an hour."

He then retired, and consulted his friends below, they were of opinion that no time should be lost.

"You will then," said he, "accompany me into the sick man's apartment in an hour's time."

Within the hour, Sir Philip, attended by Lord Clifford and Lord Graham, entered the chamber. Lord Lovel was in great emotion; the priest stood on one side of the bed, and the surgeon on the other; the former exhorted him to confess his sins, the other desired he might be left to his repose. Lord Lovel seemed in great anguish of mind; he trembled, and was in the utmost confusion.

Sir Philip entreated him, with the piety of a confessor, to consider his soul's health before that of his body.

He then asked Sir Philip by what means he knew that he was concerned in the death of his kinsman?

"Sir," replied he, "it was not merely by human means that this fact was discovered. There is a certain apartment in the castle of Lovel, that has been shut up these one and twenty years, but has lately been opened and examined into."

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed he, "then Geoffrey must have betrayed me."

"No, sir, he has not; it was revealed in a very extraordinary manner to that youth whom it most concerns."

"How can he be the heir of Lovel?"

"By being the son of that unfortunate woman, whom you cruelly obliged to leave her own house, to avoid being compelled to see the murderer of her husband; we are not ignorant, moreover, of the fictitious funeral you made for her. All is discovered, and you will not tell us any more than we know already; but we desire to have it confirmed by your confession."

"The judgments of Heaven are falling upon me," said Lord Lovel. "I am childless, and one is arisen from the grave to claim my inheritance."

"Nothing then hinders you to do justice, and make restitution; it is for the ease of your conscience, and you have no other way of making atonement for all the mischief you have done."

"You know too much," said the criminal, "and I will relate what you do not know."

"You may remember," proceeded he, "that I saw you once at my uncle's house."

"I will remember it."

"At that time my mind was disturbed by the baneful passion of envy; it was from that root all my bad actions sprang."

"Praise be to God!" said the good priest; "he has touched your heart with true contrition, and you show the effect of his mercies; you will do justice, and you will be rewarded by the gift of repentance unto salvation."

Sir Philip desired the penitent to proceed.

"My kinsman excelled me in every kind of merit, in the graces of person and mind, in all his exercises, and in every accomplishment. I was totally eclipsed by him, and I hated to be in his company; but what finished my aversion, was his addressing the lady upon whom I had fixed my affections; I strove to rival him there, but he gave him the preference; that, indeed, was only his due; but I could not bear to see or acknowledge it. The most bitter hatred took possession of my breast, and I vowed to revenge the supposed injury as soon as opportunity should offer. I buried my resentment deep in my heart, and outwardly appeared to rejoice at his success; I made a merit of resigning my pretensions to him, but I could not bear to be present at his nuptials. I retired to my father's seat, and brooded over my revenge in secret. My father died this year, and soon after my uncle followed him; within another year my kinsman was summoned to attend the king on his Welsh expedition. As soon as I heard he was gone from home, I resolved to prevent his return, and to possess his title, fortune, and his lady. I hired assassins, who were constantly going and coming, to give me intelligence of all that passed at the castle; I went there one night, under pretence of visiting

my kinsman. My spies brought me an account of all that had happened; one informed me of the event of the battle, but could not tell whether my rival was living or dead; I hoped the latter, that I might avoid the crime I meditated. I reported his death to his lady, who took it very heavily. Soon after a messenger arrived with the tidings that he was alive and well, and had obtained leave to return home immediately. I instantly despatched my two emissaries to intercept him on the way. He made so much haste to return, that he was met within a mile of his own castle; he had out-rid his servants, and was alone. They killed him, and drew him aside out of the highway. They then came to me with all speed, and desired my orders; it was then about sun-set. I sent them back to fetch the dead body, which they brought privately into the castle. They tied it neck and heels, and put it into a trunk, which they buried under the floor of the chest you mentioned. The next morning I made my way to you, I then felt the pang of remorse, but it was too late. I took every precaution that prudence suggested to prevent the discovery; but nothing can be concealed from the eye of Heaven. From that fatal hour I have never known peace, always in fear of something impending to discover my guilt, and to bring me to shame at length. I am over-taken by justice. I am brought to a severe reckoning here, and I dread to meet one more severe hereafter."

"Enough," said the priest; "you have done a good work, my son; trust in the Lord; and now this burden is off your mind, the rest will be made easy to you."

Lord Lovel took a minute's repose, and then went on.

"I hope, by the hint you gave, Sir Philip, the poor lady is yet alive."

"No, sir, she is not; but she died not till after she brought forth a son, whom Heaven made its instrument to discover and avenge the death of her husband."

"They are well avenged!" said he. "I have no children to lament for me; all mine have been taken from me in the bloom of youth; only one daughter lived to be twelve years old; I intended her for a wife for one of my nephews, but within three months I have buried her."

He sighed, wept, and was silent.

The gentlemen present lifted up their hands and eyes to Heaven in prayer.

"The will of Heaven be obeyed," said the priest. "My penitent has confessed all what more would you require?"

"That he make atonement," said Sir Philip; "that he surrender the title and estate to the right heir, and dispose of his own proper fortune to his nearest relations, and resign himself to penitence and preparation for a future state. For this time I leave him with you, Father, and will join my prayers with yours for his repentance."

So saying, he left the room, and was followed by the barons and the surgeon; the priest alone remaining with him.

As soon as they were out of hearing, Sir Philip questioned the surgeon concerning the patient's recovery, who told him that at present he saw no signs of immediate danger, but he could not yet pronounce that there was none.

"If he were mortally wounded," said he, "he could not be so well, nor speak so without faintness; and it is my opinion, that he will soon recover, if nothing happens to retard the cure."

"Then," said Sir Philip, "keep this away from him; for I would suffer the fear of death to operate on him until he hath performed some necessary acts of justice; let it only be known to these gentlemen, upon whose honor I rely, and I trust they will approve my request to you, sir."

"I will join in it," said Lord Clifford, "from the same motives."

"I insist upon it," said Lord Graham, "and I can answer for my surgeon's discretion."

"My lords," said the surgeon, "you may depend on my fidelity, and after what I have just said, my conscience is engaged in this noble gentleman's behalf, and I will do everything in my power to second your intentions."

"I thank you, sir," said Sir Philip, "and you may depend on my gratitude in return. I presume on my fidelity, and after what I have just said, my conscience is engaged in this noble gentleman's behalf, and I will do everything in my power to second your intentions."

"I shall obey your directions, sir; my necessary attendance will give me a pretence not to leave him, and I will bear all that passes between him and all that visit him."

"You will oblige me highly," said Sir Philip, "and I shall go to rest with confidence in your care."

The surgeon returned to the sick man's chamber, Sir Philip and the barons to the company below; they stayed in the great hall, with all the gentlemen that were present at the combat. Sir Philip and Edmund retired to their repose, being heartily fatigued; and the company stayed to a late hour, commenting upon the action of the day, praising the courage and generosity of the noble knight, and wishing a good event of his undertaking.

Most of Lord Lovel's friends went away as soon as they saw his safely lodged, being ashamed of him, and of their appearance in his behalf; and the few that stayed were induced by their desire of a further information of the base action he had committed, and to justify their own characters and conduct.

The next morning Sir Philip entered into consultation with the two barons, on the method he should take to get Edmund recovered and acknowledged as heir to the house of Lovel.

They were all of opinion that the crime should be kept in secret till he had settled his worldly affairs, and they had resolved how to dispose of him.

With this determination they entered his room, and inquired of the surgeon how he had passed the night? He shook his head, and said but little.

Lord Lovel desired that he might be removed to his own house.

Lord Graham said he could not consent to that, as there was evident danger in removing him; and applied to the surgeon who confirmed his opinion.

Lord Graham desired he would make himself easy, and that he should have every kind of assistance there.

Sir Philip then proposed to send for the Lord Fitz-Owen, who would see that all possible care was taken of his brother-in-law, and would assist him in settling his affairs with them, and the surgeon who had attended him.

Lord Lovel was against it; he was peevish and uneasy, and desired to be left with only his own servants to attend him.

Sir Philip quitted the room with a significant look; and the two lords endeavored to reconcile him to his situation.

He interrupted them:

"It is easy for men in your situation to advise, but it is difficult for one in mine to practice; wounded in body and mind, it is natural that I should strive to avoid the extremes of shame and punishment; I thank you for your kind offices, and I beg I may be left with my own servants."

"With them, said the surgeon who had attended him; said Lord Graham; and they both retired. Sir Philip met them below.

"My lords," said he, "I am desirous that my Lord Fitz-Owen should be sent for, and that he may hear his brother's confession; for I suspect that he may hereafter deny, what only the fear of death has extorted from him. With your permission, I am determined to send messengers to-day."

They both expressed approbation, and Lord Clifford proposed to write to him, saying:

"A letter from an impartial person will have more weight. I will send you of my principal domestics with your own."

This measure being readily agreed upon, Lord Clifford retired to write, and Sir Philip to prepare his servant for instant departure. Edmund desired leave to write to Father Oswald, and John Wyatt was ordered to be the bearer of his letter. When the Lord Clifford had finished his letter, he read it to Sir Philip and his chosen friends, as follows:

"Right Honorable my good Lord—I have taken upon me to acquaint your lordship, that there has been a solemn combat at arms between your brother-in-law, the Lord Lovel, and Sir Philip Harcley, knight, of Yorkshire. It was fought in the jurisdiction of the Lord Graham, who, with myself, was appointed, as judge of the field, it was fairly won, and Sir Philip is the conqueror. After he had gained the victory, he declared at large the cause of the quarrel, and that he had revenged the death of Arthur Lord Lovel, his friend, whom the present Lord Lovel had assassinated, that he might enjoy his title and estate. The wounded man confessed the fact, and Sir Philip gave him his life, and only carried off his sword, as a trophy of his victory. Both the victor and the vanquished were conveyed to Lord Graham's castle, where estate to the right heir, and dispose of his own proper fortune to his nearest relations, and resign himself to penitence and preparation for a future state. For this time I leave him with you, Father, and will join my prayers with yours for his repentance."

Every one present expressed the highest approbation of this letter.

Sir Philip gave orders to John Wyatt to be very circumspect in his behavior, to give Edmund's letter privately to Father Oswald, and to make no mention of him, or his pretensions to Lovel castle.

Lord Clifford gave his servant the requisite precautions. Lord Graham added a note of invitation, and sent it by a servant of his own. As soon as all things were ready, the messengers set out with all speed for the castle of Lovel.

They stayed no longer by the way than to take some refreshment, but rode night and day till they arrived there.

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