

Gerald O'Neill or The Prophecy.

By Louisa Gray

CHAPTER I.

The faintest breeze was whispering through the bushes and sending the water rippling through the branches and tall sedges, when Gerald O'Neill pushed off his boat from the bank of a river...

The maiden sat at the end of the boat, with a far look upon her face, as if she were thinking of some one who had just passed her...

Heavenly Gerald pulled in his oars, and listened with rapt attention to the tale of the hapless Ellen O'Moore, whom the Earl had captured and taken into a reeking dungeon...

CHAPTER II.

Having partaken of luncheon, Miss Fitzgerald and her companion wandered through the now crumbling ruin built by St. Molanahid in the sixteenth century...

tooth: the Abbey of Binnaw, hard by, and this note on, placed by the Registrar of the Bank of Ireland...

"You foolish child!" he exclaimed, "do you believe in the tales of the fairies? You are off like flies, and nothing remains to merit reward or punishment."

"To say that Miss Fitzgerald was shocked would be to imply that she was not a girl of the most refined and cultivated mind."

"The words lingered in her ear, and imparted a passing pain to her wounded spirit, but there she was, ready to receive the challenge."

"Before the lovers stood an old woman, dressed in a short blue petticoat and a white shawl, followed by a young girl attired in a dingy water-proof coat and a black hat."

"A nut-brown maid, with eyes like stars, will cross your path, Beware!" to the girl replied.

"Will the young lady have her fortune told?" she asked, peering at Mary through her rat-like eyes.

CHAPTER III.

Christmas morning Mass had been said in the private chapel; Mary Fitzgerald looked in vain for her lover's shadow. Towards the end of the service she was struck by a snowflake...

with a holy face of the Fitzgeralds, and Mary, whose eyes were dim with the color of her eyes, had been looking so long at the picture that she had almost forgotten to breathe.

"To the height of the fortresses our feet were fastened, and our hands were pinning out the map of a prophecy. What could he mean by comparing her with a snowflake that had fallen on the Blackwater and left her a bitter pang?"

"Every miss fit her moorings," she exclaimed, and each one crept to a seat.

"Ladies and gentlemen, while the Great God looks on the heavens and the golden orb of fame, which unrolls for me before you."

"She does not like to hear that she will always be a snowflake, muttered the fortune-teller, but, all the same, the mystic scroll remains unaltered."

"You must marry your first love. No, you wouldn't make a life mark?" Mary Fitzgerald trembled with indignation.

"Will the young lady have her fortune told?" she asked, peering at Mary through her rat-like eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

Gerald O'Neill upbraided Mary for her bad taste in breaking up the Christmas party, while she reminded him of the golden orb of fame, which unrolls for me before you.

and into that on the following Wednesday evening. When the curtain was about to rise, a lady of the name of Geraldine, who had been at the garden party...

"It was near Christmas, and Mary Fitzgerald had been to London a few days afterwards on route for home."

CHAPTER V.

Up and down paced a young Sister of Charity in the ward of one of Ireland's hospitals, her Rosary beads gliding slowly through her fingers.

"Somehow this evening old memories filled through her mind, and a feeling of loneliness, like the renege Gerald, welled up within her."

"You can't speak in that way of our God. You will learn to love Him before you die."

"The poor suffering creature drank in the new lessons with avidity, and endeavored for her companion to complete the work of her reconstruction."

"The patient's days were numbered. The time was short, and much was to be done, and the Sister strove, with all the love of God which comforted her heart, to prepare the dying woman, who evidently was a victim of intemperance."

"You may run away from hydrophobia, because you can see it coming in the frothing tongue and the snapping jaws of the mad dog."

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would break into lamentations over the ruby beads and glass carriages which had been stolen from her. Gradually, Divine Grace restored its empire over the darkened heart, and the waters of baptism flowed, one morning, over the outcast's head.

"The young lady was too good and sincere to show her hand to a wretch like me," she said, "and when I saw her gentle face I knew she would always be a snowflake, white as mine, and so I told her. Poor thing, she was so fond of her lover, she did not like to hear it. I often wondered what became of her."

"The gentleman peered through the tall, narrow windows, and before him lay the room where he and his intended had first met."

"The paper hung down in loose fascines and he floated through his mind the vision of a lady once created when he and she had danced beneath the peacock with gorgeous tails, which formerly adorned the walls. Time's ravages had left his traces on the some of the Fitzgeralds, and on the individual who now picked his way through the brambles and tall grass."

"Gerald O'Neill was the individual. Wounded out with the cankerous cancer of the world, for years he had pursued the mirage of ambition. When the goal was reached he found in his hands only the 'Dead Soul Fruit,' fair to look upon, but empty and decayed within. He was now a widower. The woman he had married was not only made a life martyr, and when worn out by desolation, she found death awaiting her, he was not sorry."

"Gerald, shall we ever meet again?" "Never, Carrie. Close your eyes. This is all I can do for you." "Such was Carrie O'Neill's closing scene. She was buried under the magnolia, four or five rods, and Gerald left the sunny Italian clime to ward his way homeward."

Covering his face with his hands, he drove on, his knowing whether, and caring less. Behind the Abbey of Mount Mellary the car halted. The flow applied to Killeen. Abooy were equally sure with regard to this creed of the Claretian Order in Ireland. "Such was ever the rule at Killeen; for who ever passed, he heeded not a soul, was free to call at that abbey and stay."

Nor question nor hint for his lodging pad. "Though he tarried a month with his holy choir."

"The man in the Abbey, sir," remarked the curate, "is a gentleman at the great house is waiting for you. I'll drive you both to Cappoquin."

"Gerald O'Neill's curiosity was excited, and he wandered into the church to have a look round. There was little to be seen, in the right simplicity of the unadorned walls."

"A second and third visit to Father Paul followed. Christmas Day was spent by Gerald O'Neill at the retreat house. A week passed peacefully away, and his determination was taken. He left Mount Mellary Abbey bound for the Dominican Novitiate at Tallaght, County Dublin. On his way up the river-water he stopped at Listerling House, and made off the bunch of snowberries planted by Mary Fitzgerald."

Arrived in Cork he wanted his way to the convent of the Sisters of Charity, and asked for the Rev. Mother. He told her of his intention to enter religion, and concluded his visit in those words—"I understand Miss Fitzgerald is one of your community? Ask her to pray for my perseverance. I have brought this bunch of snowberries from her old home at Listerling, to remind her of a prophecy uttered in her regard long ago. It has been verified in her case. When we meet in heaven, I trust that I, too, may then be able to greet her with a snowberry in my hand. Give her this message; she will understand."

He was gone, and that evening the gate of Tallaght closed on O'Neill's Senior Wrangler. Another leaf had been added to Father Paul's harvest of souls, and the golden future prophesied by the gipsy had dawned upon Gerald O'Neill. —Cork Herald.

Another year. And what it holds for me is shrouded in the gloom of mystery! It may of brightness reap a harvest share. Or even much of happiness may bear; And yet, again, of sorrow it may know A depth all unsurpassed in human life.

Whatever may come I shall but bravely wait, Prepared for either smile or frown of Fate; Ready alike, for pleasure or for pain; Counting each day devoid of such as vain. Their, stranger, come; in calmness I shall greet. Thy misty future, be it sad or sweet, The past is dead, forever laid away, And here to earth, instead the New Year's Day. —E. A. O'Reilly, in St. Anthony's Messenger.

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