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SHAWN NA SOGGARTH; OR, THE PRIEST-HUNTER. AN IRISH TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

BY M. ARCHDEACON, ESQ., Author of the Legends of Connaught, &c. CHAPTER V.

The cabin, in which the proscribed instructor of youth resided, was situated on the edge of an extensive heath, stretching away to the Partree mountains, and hard-by a deep, dark stream.

Ned was intently engaged over his manuscript, occasionally rubbing his cap with a puzzled air; and Frank paused to observe his fantastic and curiously mingled garb.

"Hubaboo, murder in airnest?" shouted the old man, as he jumped about with the agility of boyhood, now perfectly assured of the reality of his visitor.

"Oh, bad, bad, bad entirely for us. Nothin' but finin', an' imprisonment, an' transportation, if we don't become vagabond turncoats, like masher Robert—I beg your pardon, masher Frank."

twice as many dinners as myself, an' three times as much meal an' potatoes. A spalpeen that hardly knows a case from a tense, couldn't tell whether Cæsar was a Roman or a Milesian general, and scarcely knows a square from a circle.

"Hard is the task to wash an Ethiop white, To polish dunces—make a blockhead bright."

Laughing at this outburst of jealousy, Frank observed, "I need not ask respecting Pergus, as I met him yesterday."

"He is driving fast to his eternal harbor, and it's as much owing to his illness, as to my wish to see yourself, that I came here to-day, as I thought I might hear something of Father Kilger, who landed with me two days ago—you haven't heard of, or from him?"

"That's the first time I heard his name mentioned this many a long day; an' did the darling venture back to his own old parish in spite of the two Shawns? Faith thin, maybe he won't be as welcome as the flowers o' May, or—"

"Don't be alarmed, Mr. Frank," observed the latter;—"I'm coming, my jewel;—it's only my little rosebud, Elizabeth Andrews, that sometimes gets an odd lesson from me, to improve her language and knowledge of accounts. You remember Miss Elizabeth;—I'm with you in a jiffy, a haggard;—though she doesn't remember you, with your foreign look, and unvernacular accent. But I can introduce you in a minnit."

"Not a word of my name on any account, Ned, or I will instantly hoist sail. The young lady must remember—I remember—that is, we shall be very well acquainted."

"Very well, Masher Frank—here is the charming flower herself!"

"You must have been deeply engaged, Ned—perhaps writing love verses," said the lively girl, springing lightly from the hedge, "as I have called two or three times without your minding me"—then perceiving Frank, she drew back a pace, blushing deeply.

"This is an ould pu—an ould friend I mean, just returned from foreign parts, an' talkin' to me o' ould times, Miss Bessy," said Ned, "an' that's my apology for delayin' my purty rosebud."

"Oh, 'tis as much as I can ever do, to re-

member my friends while they are before my eyes, and sometimes, I fear, even more than I do," she said, without appearing in the least surprised at the knowledge of her name, displayed by a stranger, as she affected to consider Frank.

"No brother, cousin, or other valued friend, in whom she feels any particular interest?"

"Arra, tunder an nouters, never mind him, Miss Bessy," said Ned; "who is he at all—"

"Oh, there is nothing like openness," responded Frank. "Complete the admission now, by stating that, at present, you have no thought or memory for any one not decorated with sword or helmet."

"A rather curious proposal certainly, to one who admits no father confessor, and only to be tolerated from a person introduced as the friend of my old acquaintance, Ned."

"Another frown cut Ned short again; Bessy, affecting not to perceive this bye-play, continued "well, as I have listened to the question, I will answer it openly. I do like the society of the military, as I think them the gayest; and I believe, most of my countrywomen have the same feeling towards them. You are not military, I should imagine."

"Oh, the daughter of a founder," she said laughingly, "would, in your country, be too much beneath one of those epauletted gentry, to have a thought bestowed on her; and, fortunately, I am much humbler in my notions—"

"Oh, Miss Bessy, don't talk that way of yourself" eagerly interrupted Ned, who liked neither the manner nor matter of the conversation.—The rosebud of Ballintubber is good enough for a colonel, if she fancied him—I didn't give you a copy yit of the lines I made for you the last time I mounted my ould Pegasus. I wish Dan Heraghty was here to listen to them.

"Another time will answer better for the recital, Ned," said Frank.

"Let us have the verses by all means, Ned, however unworthy the subject of such a muse as yours."

"After humming twice or thrice to clear his throat, drawing up a stocking, and adjusting a dingy cravat, Ned commenced,

"When the sun he is brightly shining, This our rosebud the fairest is smilin'; For it is yit full and clear conviction, Beyond all fear of contradiction, That the goddess Venus was scarce so fair, And did Helen of Greece, but once compare, With our rosebud, in her blooming charms, Ould Throy would have been spared from its alarms. The Greeks would stay at home and be quiet, Instead of kicking up so vagabond a riot; For the Throjan boy'd scorn to rob her From her spouse, but turn to Ballintubber—"

"Well, Ned," she said, interrupting him with a hearty laugh, "now that you've brought him to Ballintubber, I must take my leave of him, till another opportunity, as I have already overstayed my time, listening to your flattering verses, which had almost made me forget, that my errand was to tell you, that, when you find time to come to the cottage, my father will have some employment for you, in making out accounts, that have foiled me. Farewell then for the present."

"Wait, Miss Bessy, for the next four lines.—They're the flower o' the flock, an' 'ud make Dan Heraghty bang himself if he heard them, bairn!" that the spalpeen knows no more about poetry, than a Spanish cow does of talkin' Eng-

lish. They won't delay you more than a few minutes."

"I can't delay a second more at present, Ned—there's the workmen's dinner bell, and my father would be alarmed at my absence; when you come to the cottage, I shall have an opportunity of hearing the remainder of your flattery."

"With another curtsey to Frank, as cool and distant as the first, though the same arch smile was still on her countenance, she recrossed the hedge, and moved along the heath, with a step almost as light as that of the hare she occasionally startled in her path.

"Well, then, Miss Bessy, if you must go, I must go with yourself, asking pardon of masher—this gentleman." So saying, Ned rushed into the cabin—seized his ancient and well worn cocked hat, and, repassing, Frank, whispered, as he shook his hand, "I will do more for you, than you were doin' for yourself. Pho, did you think me such a gomeril, as not to see all the time, that you didn't lave in foreign parts, an atom o' the sneakin' regard you used to have for my little rosebud? An' throth, it went agin my stomach, not to tell her at wast, who she was talkin' to; though I'm sure I saw by her eye, she half suspected it all the time, though she said nothing—bonnagh lath, (blessings with you) I'll have more to tell you in a day or two." He pushed on after Miss Andrews, at a pace utterly at variance with his years, and which, with his motley dress, formed a striking contrast to her appearance and motions.

"I think with him," soliloquized Frank, "that she suspected at least who I was, if she didn't recognize me all through. And how completely she exhibited her old jilting propensities! Pshaw! what are her propensities—or what is she herself to me at present? And yet, the ease with which she talked to my face, of her preference for the military—the pertness of her manner, and the provoking smile she wore throughout.—More than once I had enough to do to shorten sail, and refrain from flinging back on her some of her former sentiments and opinions. But I will think no more of her now, when heavier matters are pressing on me. How gracefully she moves, like a vessel before the breeze, with all her gear on. I am almost zealous of that odd, old simpleton, for moving so near her.—Ah! she is gone; but I shall see her soon again, and her favorite perhaps, too."

An eminence had shut her out from his straining gaze, and he turned him towards the abbey; his mind, despite his recently expressed resolution, actively and effectually engaged in tracing out the striking improvement three years had made in Bessy's personal attractions, and recalling the late as well as former interviews with her.

He was nearing the precincts of the abbey, so entirely wrapt up in this subject, that the approach of a person, from behind an ivied fragment, was unperceived, till a hand was laid on his shoulder, and the voice of Father Bernard said, "Frank, my boy, your thoughts must have been of a deep, if not of a pleasant nature, as I have been moving parallel, and close to you, for the last few minutes, without your having perceived me."

"And yet you, my dear sir, were the person of all the world, I was in search of," said Frank, with a warm pressure of his hand; "though but with but slight hopes of meeting you, as it is a day earlier than you calculated on arriving here."

"Yes, I found the inmates of a cabin, in which I intended resting for a day, were from home."

"Not altogether, Frank; but let us take the field path towards Owen Durkan's, where I purpose resting for the night, and I will detail to you my escape, as it may serve to impress on you the value of the presence of mind, in an emergency. The night after I parted from you," he continued, as they struck into the field-path, "I sheltered in a lone cabin; and whether I was betrayed, whether he had tracked my steps, or whether it was mere casualty, Shawn, in a state of complete intoxication, came to rest in that cabin about midnight. Unfortunately, too, he must have witnessed my departure at grey dawn, as I had scarcely advanced a quarter of a mile, when I distinguished the clatter of a horse's hoofs pressing hard behind me; and, in a few minutes more, I heard the voice of the ruffian calling on me by name, with a tremendous oath, to stop, or that he would shoot me. Instead, however, of complying with this request, I redoubled my pace. But, in vain. He came up with me rapidly, and, in dismounting, attempted to seize me; but intemperance rendered him powerless, and, shoving him to the earth—a task which a child could then have easily accomplished—I made at my utmost speed for Castle-

ard, once beyond which, my chances of escaping observation, and consequently of safety, would, I knew, be greatly increased. Unfortunately, however—fortunately I should rather express it—the first person I saw on entering the town, early as was the hour, was the person I most feared, and had most reason to fear, the dreaded Sir John Ingram himself. To attempt to retrace my steps would be madness; and to diverge from the street was out of the question, as the houses were all closed, and, even if practicable, such a movement would have but prolonged the period of my danger, as Sir John, having perceived me, was advancing fast. So I took the resolution of throwing myself on his protection—a resolution certainly conceived on the spur of the occasion, but to which I was induced by more than one motive. The worst have sometimes redeeming qualities. I had heard that there was a species of wild generosity in Sir John's character that, when the chord was awakened, had induced him to shelter temporarily some that had confidently appealed to him. I had heard also, that he greatly relished the discomfiture of his villainous satellite. Accordingly, I met him boldly, as he advanced towards me;—and when he asked my name, and where I was going to, I answered unhesitatingly, that I was a priest, flying from Shawn na Soggarth, whom I was after having knocked down; that there was one man I was particularly afraid of, namely Sir John, and that I trusted that he, as the first I had met with, and evidently a friendly gentleman, would help to save me from those I feared.

"And you gave the rascal a sound licking—eh! did you?" he said.

"I left him stretched on the road certainly."

"A grim smile passed across his face, as he said, 'and you wished to escape Sir John and him?'"

"That is my most earnest wish under heaven, this moment."

"Then you couldn't have fallen into better hands—follow me." The same grim smile lighted his features, as he wheeled round to be my guide.

"I followed him through some streets, silently, though not without suspicion, an occasional early riser eyeing me as we passed with commiseration, though without venturing to speak, till we reached a bridge about a furlong east of the town, when he stopped, and, turning full round to me, said, 'You are now safe for the present. I am Sir John Ingram; but beware how you cross my path again. Mullowny will not be always drunk.'"

"I was not long, you may be sure, in taking myself out of his sight; and striking into the fields at once, I reached Ballintubber without further obstacle or delay."

They had now closely approached Durkan's cabin, and, at the priest's request, Frank and he separated for a few hours, the former returning to his uncle and cousin, with the glad intelligence of Father Bernard's arrival, and his intended visit to them that night.

CHAPTER VI.

It was the market-day of Castleard. The usual groups of loungers and vendors—the industrious and the idle—were assembled; but by far the most remarkable man in the market was Johnny McCann, the widely-known peddler, usually designated "Cheap Johnny."

Johnny had, as usual, a considerable assemblage about him, to whom he was auctioning gowus, caps, kerchiefs, &c., with his accustomed strength of lungs and profusion of words. "That's right," he roared, "faug a ballagh (clear the way). There, that's the way. Gather round me, boys and girls; there's no one else in the market worth goin' to. For every one else 'll look for profit; but I give the primest articles that's made for less than it could be manufactured for:

"Tanners, weavers, Sawyers, paviors, Tinkers, tailors, Soldiers, sailors, Brewers, bakers, Sweepers, shoemakers, and their wives. There, Molly, that is the pattern of a gown, I believe. Examine it, try it, And if you like it buy it. Turn it—draw it—twist it—pull it. It can bear inspection as well as yourself. Look at the texture, as smooth as an eel's waistcoat, and the colors as clear as— Mud," put in an arch girl among the surrounding group. "No, you rogue," said the ready salesman, "but as bright as your own roguish eyes. I wish I was a week courtin' you." "Troth thin we'd rather have you for a week than for a fortnight, I'm thinkin'." "I'll have no more to say to you, you little divle, you. Molly, be sure to have the coat.—I brought it myself all the way from the manufactory, and can sell it cheaper than it was made for. It's one of our lucky patterns, too. The last colleen that bought a gown o' that pattern, was married and churched in it—buried