

AILEY MOORE

A TALE OF THE TIMES SHOWING HOW EVILS, MURDER AND SUCH-LIKE FANTASIES ARE MANAGED AND JUSTICE ADMINISTERED, IN IRELAND TOGETHER WITH MANY STIRRING INCIDENTS IN OTHER LANDS

BY RICHARD BAPTIST O'BRIEN, D.D., DEAN OF LIMERICK

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The present volume is it headed to give a faithful picture of the social and religious condition of Ireland at present and during the last few years. The author is not aware that any writer of fiction has approached the subject, and he believes it to be one which ought to engage the attention of every man who wishes to fulfill the duties of a citizen, or who aspires to the character of a Christian. Suffering, on one side, is engendering feelings of hate and envy; and power upon the other is hurried on by hostility and misconception; religious fanaticism and hypocrisy seek their victims and agents among the partisans of each—so that a war, far more opposed to peace and progress than the wars of the past, is at this present moment raging in the country. To make the real state of the evil known is nearly all that persons like the author can accomplish, and to the effect so much this book has been written.

As will be seen, however, we have not confined ourselves to a narrative of mistakes and wrongs, and oppression and reaction. We have taken occasion, from the incidents which we narrate, to inculcate principles of great importance, and to correct errors of mischievous tendency, and at the same time to show the beautiful Providence that rewards patience, and the treasure of love and religion which dwells in the hearts of the poor. If the rich and great only knew the poor and humble, they would value their affections and devotedness more than the miserable gains for which they oppress them.

Regarding the facts of this tale, we beg to say that the history is substantially a true one. Almost every one of the facts of "Ailey Moore" has come under the personal observation of the writer. Some of them were among the last which dying lips narrated, and some have been the plea of misery which sought sympathy where none might gain it; the pictures of fancy—but, alas! they are only too real.

To many, no doubt, the character of "Shaun a Dherk" will appear highly colored. Let the reader, however, feel assured that "Shaun a Dherk" has been softened rather than exaggerated, and that his character has been drawn from life. Not only has the outlaw had an existence, but, unless he has died within the last eight years, he still lives; and without entering upon ground which we have forbidden to ourselves, we very much fear that the state of society in Ireland will for a time secure him success. Very likely there will also be found a class of readers to suffer disedification, by the record of one or two supernatural facts which are mentioned in the story. At all times people have been found who looked upon supernatural facts as "lies" and "imposture"—even as in the case of Christ and the Apostles, when the facts were before their eyes as well as indisputably true. The facts which we give we ourselves partly attest, and had we permission we could name the eye-witnesses to the portion which we have not seen. No more can be said, or at least no more ought to be said, at this moment for the satisfaction of those to whom our observations apply.

The author will, he hopes, be pardoned for having entered more fully into the "Roman Revolution." He had intended to write its history from the lips of its witnesses and victims, but found that his space was insufficient for many details. Enough, however, has been done to convince the candid inquirer that the partisans of Mazzini, Sterbini, and their friends, are simply the partisans of spoliation and murder. The author has spoken to many Italians, and he never met one of unsuspected character who did not look upon the revolutionists as the enemies of their country and of God. English travelers, we know, get an abundance of sedition, treason, and even infidelity in Rome, because these are the commodities that sell in their market. But where is the use of informing such people of their mistakes? They will never believe that they are laughed at!

The only thing which remains to be added is, that, as the name on the title-page imports, the author is a clergyman. His services to his country may not entitle him to adopt the sentence which forms his motto, but certainly he can lay claim to much love for Ireland, and to some labor for her advancement. He may say, in conclusion, that if the ambition and rewards of authorship were the only impulses by which he was swayed, "Ailey Moore" had never been written.

CHAPTER I

SOME OF THE ACTORS

"Well met, Gerald—Of all the men in the world you were the most needed just now—though on my conscience, the least expected."

"Why, yes, I seldom indulge myself with a walk to the 'well' during business hours. The road is pretty familiar to you, I believe?"

"Quite true; I plead guilty. No more devoted pilgrim than myself—no more zealous worshipper of the

revered Saint Senanus! The wretched hour of evens opening smile of morning always brings to my enraptured eyes such visions—angels of beauty, and—"

"Pray, my friend," replied the first young man, with a scarcely suppressed look of contempt, "pray my friend, select some other topic for your levity. It is hardly becoming, even in your mouth, to mimic wit at the expense of religion."

"Religion!" "Ay, religion!" "But in the name of all the gods at once, what is the religion of holy wells? Pshaw, Gerald, you don't believe it. Religion! to mutter beads by bundles over the brook; kill the young daisies by knee-marches; and drink unmixed cold water. Gerald, you don't—"

"Pardon a second interruption. You will be good enough not to justify your jesting humor, by insinuating a belief that any Catholic participates in your views. Our fathers worshipped around these sacred places; and the record of simple faith is read in the only offering which poverty can make. The cup from which the traveler quenches his thirst—the crutch upon which the cripple leans for support—the simpler bit of linen that hangs from the bough—are all testimonies from the past, that homes had found happiness, and hearts had found peace, under the invocation of the servant of God, whose intercession is here prayed."

"Well, Gerald, I shall not lose my temper by your severity. The Naïd-worship I shall leave to the soft-hearted. If ever I become serious, I protest I'll go and worship God himself—There now, no dark looks, as you love me."

"Ignorance, Boran—it is simple ignorance. 'Tis astonishing how enlightened some men become who find the restraints of faith inconvenient. Whoever taught you that to worship Saint Senanus, or any other saint, was not to go and worship God himself? You have learned your catechism ill, if you have not retained that the saints are honored only because God has chosen this as one mode of being honored. You will not be more wise in selecting the manner of approaching Him than He has been himself!"

"Contravert, upon my soul!" "By no means—'tis merely holding a mirror up for folly to see itself." "But the wells have been condemned in many places," said the other, in a rather subdued tone.

"Yes—the pilgrimages to them have been abused, as it appears you have abused that to the place where we are just going." "Well, a truce. Of course I know the absurdity of the sectarians. I know, for example, that the old women are perfectly well aware that God alone is to be adored, and that the saints have only, as it were, 'the ear of the court.' I know they'd no more say an 'Our Father' to even Saint Senanus, than they would to Parson Daly. In fact, I heard old Biddy Browne, the beggar-woman, exclaiming Mrs. Salmer, the other day to me, 'I declare, ma'am, God told us to pray to 'em, an' I suppose He takes care they'll hear us; an' I'm sure, about offending him, He'll be as well pleased that I ax the Holy Virgin Mary (blessed be her name, ma'am, as the angel said) to pray for me, as for you to ax Mr. Salmer to pray for you, though he's a very nice man, indeed.' But Gerald, do you believe that Providence sends His blessings this road? Have you, yourself, ever known a supernatural result from the Holy Well?"

"Have?" "Yourself?" "The lame?—the sick?—the blind?" "Pon my soul, I don't believe you're easily deceived, and I protest I'll give credit."

"The blind!" "How now? You knew the person to be blind—to have recovered his sight here?" "I was present at the time." "You are not serious?" "Always, when I speak of the works of the unseen world, by which it manifests itself in our midst—fools cry, they see not, and will not open their eyes."

"And the boy?" "Is now a man."

"He tells you the story, sir?" Gerald Moore was a young man of some four and twenty years. He had received a sound, almost a liberal education, and added to the cultivation of his intellect the self-possession, prudence, and firmness which are always so sure to sway such vitality as that of his companion. The latter, named James Boran, had once been intended for holy orders; but a brief collegiate experience proved to others and himself that neither his tastes, talents, nor dispositions were of the description to secure success. He was weak minded, impulsive, shallow, and pretentious; patronized every opinion for an hour, and abandoned it in the next; was fastidiously pious for a week, and almost an infidel for three months afterwards. Extremely decorous when a presiding mind governed, he was the creature of every excess when he himself could pretend to rule, or when he was allowed an impunity. He had been expelled from college for transgressions of all kinds, consummated by reading, during public devotion, "Don Juan," for a prayer book. We find him that kind of character which has no place in the world, and hardly a hope beyond vegetating, yet prepared for any mischief or folly that will minister excitement or kill time. The "Holy Well" was a frequent resort. He persecuted the young females who came thither for the purposes of devotion, and lied for a week after on the nature of his feats. He had been engaged in his usual mission when he met his neighbor and early school mate, between whom, however, and himself, for some years, no sympathy and little intercourse had existed.

Nevertheless, Boran had more than once had recourse to some important offices. His scapegrace practices had over and over again driven him from the shelter of the paternal roof, and truly or falsely loaded his name with suspicions of participation in deeds with which neither his honor nor his safety was compatible. The parish priest was for a time a willing intercessor with old Boran—a hard handed and, as malice said, a hard-hearted man. The frequency of the prodigal's relapses, however, exhausted the good clergyman's hope; and positive refusal on his part again to interfere had brought Gerald Moore to him as a surety and pleader. To a new exercise of his influence with the priest, young Boran alluded in the first words which he addressed to his companion. He had now lived for a week or more among the neighbors; that is, with the profligate, who made a tool of him, and the unfortunate, who dreaded some day of his return in good odor with his father to be made victims, or hoped to be rewarded.

While this matter of reconciliation was under discussion, and Boran wrapped his entreaty in promises of amendment, declarations of contrition, and accusations of his father, and older brother, whom he declared to be an "iron devil," they came to a turn in the road, which concealed a well, from which a stream of water was issuing. It was shaded by the old elder tree, that looked the protecting genius of the spot. A grey wall, of loose construction, embraced the well, and half concealed a large dark figure that bent down, as if to enjoy the luxury of a bath. The sound of footsteps attracted the stranger's attention, and he raised his head at the young man's approach. One moment—he pressed his worn forehead over his brow—a broad and daring one—his dark eyes glistened with intelligence, and his gigantic form stood in the mid-path. There, gathered up in a great coat that seemed the load of an ordinary man, and gently leaning on a staff that wore the appearance of many a long day's service, he waited their advance.

Gerald was quite convinced he had never seen the man before. He examined him with attention, and the other met his inquiring eye with the calm self-possession of one who was quite unconscious of being an object of scrutiny. His whole appearance—the suddenness of the meeting, the bold, self-reliant look, the muscle, sinew, and the very gait of the new-comer, that raised suspicion and apprehension in the mind of a beholder. In fact, the heart of Gerald Moore, as he himself said many a day subsequently, knew that man.

"Fine mornin', gintlemin," said the stranger; "great crowds at the 'well' down," and he touched his apology for a hat.

"Fine morning," echoed the two young men, with one voice.

"Great doin's going to come to pass in these parts, they say. The new landlord will take up the property in a fortnight; an' many an' ould tenant will go to find a new berrin' place."

"You seem well informed, my friend," said Gerald, fixing upon him another look of interrogation.

"Wisha, yes, sir, Travellin' a good dale, an' meetin' a great dale, one sees the two sides of every one an' every thing," replied the countryman, yet retaining his totally impassable expression of features.

"Oh, sir I'm mighty glad to make your acquaintance. I have a word to say in your ear sir. Will you speak with some hesitancy—"from my friend here."

"Sha asthore—oh, yes; but you know, saycrites is saycrites, an' mine is only for Mr. James Boran; an' he fixed upon the person addressed a look of such deep meaning that even Moore let it in his influence.

"Let me not interrupt you," said Gerald; "the man may have something of importance to communicate; and he walked on."

It was but for an instant—he caught the glance of the stranger in passing. There was a smile—a smile of conscious power,—and a light in the eye imperious and sinister, that spoke not only authority, but absolute command. As for Boran, he retired with the unexpected visitor, like a man governed by a spell. In a few minutes he returned to say that the man was right. Business of much importance called him to a little distance; he hoped on his return to find Gerald mindful of his half-made promise; and for his own part, he had resolved to lead a life for the future that should repair the follies of the past. Gerald bade him good morning, and pursued his way to his destination.

Much food for reflection had been contributed by the morning's walk. It was a glorious day in mid-summer, and the full risen sun looked down upon the glowing harvest and rich foliage with the ardent gaze of an artificer on some splendid works of his own hands. The road lay along the brow of a hill in the south-west of Ireland, overlooking a magnificent extent of well-cultivated table land, and commanding a distant view of the sea. The place we shall call Kinmacarra. The happy homesteads of humble life lay scattered over the plain, which here and there presented the dwellings of the more opulent, nestling amid trees, or surrounded by the whitened walls of comfortable farm yards, that bespoke the competency and security which accumulating wealth confers. Numerous rivulets watered the plain, and in their noisy progress, their tiny waves glancing in the sun, seemed to laugh amidst the beauties which nature had so profusely scattered around.

And the good people of Kinmacarra were reflected in their possessions. Strife had rarely found entrance to destroy their repose. The parson, to be sure, was of a new installation, and wished to signalize the youth of his pastoral zeal by irroads upon Rome; but the "old master," just now passed away, dissolved the chill of sectarian rigidity in a laugh, which the whole townland felt ringing through its happy heart; and ended every proposal of Mr. Salmer to commence aggression upon the consciences of his tenantry, by, "For the Lord's sake, sir, have sense. Let well enough alone. You'll sharpen your neighbors' scythes to cut some man's throat, and drown the country round in malice, if ever you have your way. Doesn't the old priest love his faith? Ay, does he, and the souls of men, too, as I saw in many an hour of hot episcopium. Old Father Quinlan and I have lived and loved together in Kinmacarra, men and boys, for sixty years—we shan't go down to the grave mouthing curses at one another—I'm hanged if I shall, friend. And more, he's a man whose acquaintance I'd like to renew on the other side, on my conscience."

But were these things to continue? The heir to the estate was said to be aristocratic in the least acceptable sense, and fanatical in the most repulsive form of the frenzy. How would his arriving affect the felicity which had been a hundred years in growing to maturity? Should old friends be separated, and old homes vanish? Should old families, as had been observed, seek new graveyards, and no longer hope to find quiet repose in the church where "all belonging to them," rested? How should it be with Gerald's father, himself—with Ally, his sweet sister?—and with the snug home in the valley? The young man started. He knew that living under an "abatement," his family had no security for permanent possession at the reduced rent, unless the old landlord's practice, and their own immense improvements on the soil. There was nothing between him and "rack rent" but—justice. Alas! when will justice be found, if the poor wait till Providence lead the powerful to her temple?

It was strange, too, that among these reflections ever and ever the forms of the Borans were mingling themselves up. Now the "old codger," Daddy Boran, like an elf, with his curled flax wig and hooked nose, and his little grey eyes, that had a mighty inclination to cross over and visit one another. Then came the "iron devil," Nick, so frightfully like his father that the people who saw them successfully, for the first time, really thought it was the devil, who had made himself look that man who the prodigal also; and singular—his keen eye and thrilling tone of command, brooking no compromise or delay—they all filled the mind of our traveller with conflicting surmise and feeling, until he almost reeled with excitement.

But Gerald smiled at his own pre-conceptions, and thought not without an effort, shook off the crowd of imaginings that gathered round his

soul. His had not been the education either of the mere animal man, or the mere mar of intellect; his mind and heart had both been fashioned in harmonious subvency to the eternal designs of God. From the lips of his old guide, Father Quinlan, he had often heard the lesson, and by gradual but persevering advances had acquired the virtue, of active exertion to accomplish duty and absolute submission when exertion became fruitless. When a man can no longer impute failure to himself—his fate is the wisdom of heaven, and his fortune is regulated by a principle productive only of good. Let what will come, the soul's equanimity remains undisturbed, the Christian surveys things transitory from the centre of eternity, and is no longer deluded by their various disguises. Moore was always calm—not with the calmness of stoicism or insensibility. His fine clear eyes of blue looked out like an intelligence, and never shrunk; but it was not the daring of recklessness you read in his steady lustrous beam. You saw in all his features the lines of a soul that knew its mission and performed it. And, as he moved, tall, well proportioned, and graceful, his "spirit in his own hands," and his bearing marking the man of ever-steady design, "the image and likeness of God" was in your view.

Gerald's attention was now awakened by his proximity to the "well," and by the crowd of fellow-travellers, who, less preoccupied than he, passed rapidly by. Ailey Moore—the almost too much loved and only sister—waited his arrival, and, possibly, had been in expectancy for some time. Wagons filled with straw and bearing invalids, or cars more comfortably furnished with feather beds, and carrying some ancient woman telling her beads; old men and young, decrepit from age or from accident, and moving slowly on their crutches, while the eye suddenly uplifted and the spasmodic contraction of the lip denoted weariness or pain; young girls "dressed for all day," with laughing eyes and happy smile going to "make their rounds," for some old parent at home, or some lonely and helpless friend—for the dead it may be, or for the sick; and children in their mother's arms, that wondered with their great large eyes at the gathering so novel to them;—pursued their way along the road. Occasionally some ill-mannered and unaccommodating horse would deliberately turn from the wall side and make himself a perpendicular across the narrow way, to the great discomfort of the inactive and the absordely devout, but raising an innocent laugh among the youthful whose "bad manners to you for a horse," hardly saved them from the rebuke of venerable hairs. Sometimes, too, an itinerant piper was, on a nearer approach to the sacred fountain, found in a snug nook, puffing out his claim to the religious dole of the visitors, and an iron-lunged "bocagh" made the valley ring with his wants and prayers, and his blessings when charity ministered to his need. And now we approach the entrance to the "Holy Well," "more of the actors and some deeds" will form our second chapter.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE TEST OF LOVE

Even Mrs. Thomas Thompson, mother of three daughters, admitted that Constance Russell was "pretty nearly handsome," which meant that the latter had all the gifts and graces which constitute beauty.

She had something more, as was dimly felt and either admired or resented, according to the dispositions of her companions, even while she was still a school girl at St. Margaret's. She was not unique, to be sure, in her slight, straight, supple figure, a little above medium height, nor in soft and abundant hair and perfect complexion. The wholesome living and the long hours on the heights under the fragrant pine trees at St. Margaret's brought out the grace and glow of health—and these are more than half of beauty—in all the pupils.

But Constance had what Old World folk call a high bred face and the delicate little hands and feet that go with it. She had, in a word, "style" and the fine instincts of a long line of progenitors educated and used to gentle living. She never was guilty of a fault of taste, nor lost her temper under any of the contrarieties of life in a large boarding school.

The Russells were not rich, however, and Constance was in training for the Normal College. This circumstance gave some slight satisfaction to a few envious minds, though Helen Corbett, the daughter of a Chicago multi-millionaire, who intended to supplement her school course with a three years' tour in Europe and the Orient with a chaperon who boasted her Ph. D., would have given half her prospects for that subtle refinement which made every stranger ask when Constance appeared. "Who is that exquisite girl?"

Constance had said little of her own plans and prospects, though making no secret of her intention to become a teacher. Naturally she would be the best one possible. Her admirers used her need as a defense of her intense preoccupation with her studies and her habit of always coming out ahead. The average school girl loves not "a grind," and cannot have much heart for a class competition wherein it is all but certain one will lead in such fashion that the second is not worth a thought.

Constance graduated at the head of her class, and her essay, "Out of the Catacombs," roused the attention of even the most time worn attendants at school commencements. It was an earnest and ungrilled plea for Catholic women to strive for the high places in the intellectual and business pursuits open to them, and to glorify God and serve the Church by their success. The stately Archbishop was grave and attentive. Constance took all the medals and honors for which the seniors could compete, nor gave sign, save by a slightly increased color, that she recognized the enthusiastic applause as all for her. At her seventh summons to the platform, as he laid the rarely won laurel wreath on her brown tresses, the Archbishop said softly: "My dear child, you have given us a right to expect much of you."

Even had she heard Mrs. Thompson's comment, "Certainly, Constance Russell has the plainest and cheapest gown in the class," it would not have troubled the girl. The serious compliment of one whose words of praise were so few and carefully measured would have neutralized any criticism. He should not be disappointed in her. She expected much of herself and her firm chin and confident outlook on the world suggested that she was not likely to miss her aim.

Constance left St. Margaret's with the admiration and respect of all her teachers and the warm affection of some of them. But one of these latter, who knew the girl best and loved her most of all, often murmured to her own heart:

"Oh, if my dear child were a little less determined and ambitious! She seems bent on getting the best of earth and heaven as well, and can one have both? Of course, she can't help succeeding and attracting, and if only she keeps up her high motive but the world, the world!" Then Sister Gertrude, who would have willingly given her life for a soul, began a new novena that in the pursuit of temporal success her darling might not forget the reward everlasting.

Of course, Constance was pre eminent in the Normal College, distinguishing herself there, as at the convent, in literary studies. She was named immediately at the conclusion of her course to an out-of-town training school, and after two years' apprenticeship was recalled to take a place on the faculty of the Normal College. Only twenty-two years of age, she had grown gray in the service at \$900 a year, as they noted the phenomenal beginning of this young girl who would soon be drawing her maximum of \$1,900, and they marveled what further heights, professional or social, awaited her easy conquest. With her beauty it would be her own fault if she had not made a brilliant match by twenty-five.

There was covert opposition, it must be admitted, to giving this place to a girl who had received all her training antecedent to the Normal College in a Catholic convent but the master, whose choice she was, notified his friend, Frederick Warden, and arranged a meeting with Constance for the fractious members. As usual, she came and saw and conquered.

The families of the faculty made much socially of the beautiful, gifted and unassuming girl, but this affected not her exceedingly level head. She was not aware of the condescension which some of her old friends saw in these attentions. Her profession always came first. She saw the advantage as well as the pleasure of meeting the eminent teachers and the literary lights, resident or visiting in the city of her home. She was a tireless student, but so unostentatious that only her master and a few unusually observant persons realized her advance, "unobtrusive, unassuming." Her beauty and her native social sense suffered not from intellectual development. Her toilettes were above criticism now, for she was able to exercise her taste, which was as fine here as in all things else. Many a pleasant and well-remembered bit of revision or translation came her way, and with her duty to her family generously done, she had still—for she remembered earlier poverty—steadily growing bank account.

Reserved force, wisdom, tact and distinction were more and more evident in Constance. Russell, and her righteous pride of her. She spent a week of every summer vacation with them, was faithful through the season to her sodality meetings, and was always ready with any service in her power. The rector of her parish, the Cathedral, spoke to the nuns with much satisfaction of her exemplary attendance at the sacraments. Yet Sister Gertrude's heart was not at ease.

"Ah, me," she said, "I know the day is near when Constance will have to choose. It is impossible that a soul like hers should not be tested. God keep her faithful, be my sacrifice what it may!"

"That may be only gossip," rejoined the first speaker. "Anyhow, Constance can take care of herself and her religion, too."

Sister Gertrude, with a chill at her heart, moved away from the group. An older woman, who had been silent through the brief conversation, followed her into the corridor.

"Sister," she said, "I know how you care for Constance. I fear it is worse than Mrs. Wallace says or suspects. I know three or four young men whom Mr. Warden has put on their feet in a business way, and every one of them has dropped his religion. Oh, you would never suspect anything. He is very generous and very plausible, but I fear he gets the price of his help in every case."

"Let us hope there is no truth, then, in the rumor of his interest in Constance," said the nun. Her bell summoned her for a moment. She had the delicate sense of fitness which nuns keep, as it always jarred upon her to hear of the woman as the hunter and the man as the game in the matter of marriage. In that, rumor certainly was unjust to Constance. But this man of position and wealth, this enemy of Christianity, was the seeking Constance, while she had never named him to her best friend? Well, her old teacher was not afraid to "break the ice." She sent the portress for her young friend.

"Constance, you can do something for me if you will spare me an hour or two. Sister Charlotte will bring you up your supper and I will be free at half past six."

"Surely, Sister dear. You know I am always glad when you want me." The bright eyes were as direct and confident as ever. The business was soon dispatched, and a moment of silence fell between them as they sat together in the soft spring twilight in the prime little dining-room reserved for secular guests.

"Constance looked up expectantly. 'Who is Mr. Warden, my child?' The nun's tone was incisive, peremptory, and she kept her eye on the girl's face. Was there a faint rising of color? The light was not good. Perhaps Sister Gertrude was mistaken.

"Our head master's distant relative; a very wealthy man, who gives all his time to philanthropy and education. He holds no office, but he is a sort of power behind the throne. He has travelled everywhere, has many good ideas and enjoys working them out."

"What is this man to you, Constance?" "A very kind friend, Sister," said the girl after a slight pause. "But you know he hates religion." "I know nothing of the sort. He has never discussed his opinions with me. If he hates religion, why should he serve a Catholic, and, with a quick lifting of the head, "one who has never feared to keep her flag flying?"