

St. Patrick's Well.

THE WISDOM OF THE FAIRY BLACKBIRD.

BY GERALD BRENNAN.

THERE was a dew upon the hedge-row cobwebs, and in the air a faint hint of early violets. Since daybreak a garrulous blackbird had been linting from the old thorn-tree above Toberpatrick; and now Ballycarney Chapel bell sent its summons across the valleys.

Two persons were coming towards the cross-roads, in answer to the clamorous bell—the one a man, old and of feeble bearing; the other a girl, the prettiest in all the barony.

By the crossroads stile they met and gave each other "good morning."

"Arrah, Maureen," said the ancient leaning heavily upon his staff, "you're the picture of good looks! But, where's your shamrock? Sure you didn't come out without your shamrock on Patrick's Day, did you?"

Maureen blushed under her veiling shawl. "I—I gave it to some one," she stammered.

"Aha," the old man chuckled. "An' that is how the land lies! Sure, I was thinkin' Peter O'Hara wouldn't be keeping his daughter long. An' who's the lucky boy, I don't know?"

"Then you won't know, either, Mehaul Reagan," the girl said with spirit. "This none of your business at all."

Mehaul chuckled and made haste to help the affronted beauty over the stile.

"Sure, I wouldn't offend you for all the gold between here and Dublin town," he said, deprecatingly. "All I asked you was because 'tis a serious matter to give shamrocks away on Patrick's Day—a mighty serious matter."

"How is that, Mehaul?" asked the girl, interested and somewhat mollified, as they set forth along the road together.

Mehaul Reagan winked furtively, as he produced his short clay pipe and filled it with tobacco. He was the recognized chronicler general of Ballycarney affairs; and as such it behooved him to discover the identity of Maureen O'Hara's favorite swain.

Mehaul had all the traditions and superstitions of the country at the ends of his gnarled fingers; and he now proposed to use this knowledge as a means of worming the desired scrap of information out of his fair companion.

"How about giving the Shamrock away, Mehaul?" repeated Maureen eagerly.

The sly old Sheanachie lit his dhudeen, fitted on the tin lid with care and began to smoke contentedly.

"Well, alannah," he said after a pause, "tis an old superstition his Rivrence, Father Tom, would be calling it. They say that when a girl gives a boy a shamrock on Patrick's Day, she does it to test his true love."

"To test his love, Mehaul?"

"Aye, that's what my old grandmother said. 'Twas like this, Maureen. I heard the old grandmother tell it to no less a fine lady than Dame Carney herself. I was only a slip of a boy when Dame Carney—she was Miss Fitzgerald then—came to consult the wise woman."

"Tell me, Mrs. Reagan," says she, "if Sir Geoffrey Carney loves me?"

"The old grandmother took a bunch of shamrock that myself had plucked (for it was Patrick's Day), and gave it to Miss Fitzgerald."

"Miss Honor," she says, "if you want to find out the truth, give that shamrock to Sir Geoffrey. Then, unbeknown to him or anyone else, go by the hillpath to the well of St. Patrick, this very night, when the moon is high. There will be a blackbird sitting on the thorn tree, over the well. 'Tis a fairy blackbird, Miss Honor; but it won't hurt you, if you repeat St. Patrick's name three times, an' dip your little finger in the water."

"Then the blackbird will fly away to fetch the man that loves you best. Wait till the full of the moon, an' when twelve o'clock strikes from Castle Carney clock tower, you will see your lover's face in the water of St. Patrick's well."

"Oh!" exclaimed Maureen, who had not lost a syllable of this reminiscence. "And did she see him, Mehaul?"

"See him, is it? Sure, of course, she did. Next day she comes to my old grandmother an' gives her five golden guineas."

"Mrs. Reagan," she says, "the spell came true. I saw Geoffrey's face in the well last night, an' this morning I promised to marry him."

"Marry him she did, too, an' mighty happy they were. Now, Maureen, if you go to this well to-night, an' the boy that you gave the shamrock to really loves you, you'll see his face in the water."

Mehaul's dhudeen had gone out, and he stopped to light it. When he turned around, the operation performed, he was surprised to hear what sounded like a sob from Maureen.

"Ayah, Maureen, it is crying you are?" ejaculated the Sheanachie, peering under the coquettishly draped shawl.

"It's ruined it all!" she wailed.

"Oh! Mehaul, I've ruined the spell. Sure, I had two bunches of shamrock, an' I gave both away—to different boys. Now I must wait till next Patrick's Day to find out which loves me best."

But Mehaul came promptly to the rescue.

"An' is that what you're crying for?" he shouted. "'Tis laughing you ought to be. Sure, the two bunches won't hurt the spell, Maureen, for only one of them can be the fairy bunch. Never you fear, but go to the well at midnight, an' you'll see the face o' the boy that you're goin' to

marry. By the way, alannah, who were the two boys you mentioned? The names have clean shipped my memory."

In Maureen's delight at hearing that the shamrock spell still held good, she revealed her heart's secret to the wily Sheanachie. The two favored "boys" were Bryan Kavanagh and Dennis Nowlan—both strapping youths and promising whippersnappers.

They had plagued her with their attentions for a twelvemonth, until she was utterly at a loss to choose between them.

"An' you've no choice at all?" queried Mehaul.

Maureen pursed her pretty lips. "No-o—I've no choice. I did think I liked Bryan better; but then Denny came back from New York, an'—an'—"

"An' he looked so fine in his broadcloth suit that you couldn't resist him?" said Mehaul.

"No such thing!" cried Maureen. "He knows more in a day than Bryan does in a year. Besides, he'll take me out to America. But where's the use o' talkin'? If the spell is as good as you say, the well will show me the man to take."

"Aye, that it will," Mehaul answered.

Mehaul went chuckling across the churchyard after parting from Maureen.

The old man had a pretty little scheme in view. He, Mehaul Reagan, would himself be the "deus ex machina" in this interesting love episode.

Accordingly, after Mass, the Sheanachie seated himself in a cosy corner of the churchyard, where the young men on Sundays and holidays were wont to foregather. This Sunday, being the festival of the patron saint, there was a considerable assembly, and the conversation was animated.

Mehaul smilingly noticed the twin bunches of shamrocks borne by Bryan Kavanagh and Dennis Nowlan.

Young Kavanagh, being a farmer's son, and country-bred wholly, carried his bunch in the traditional manner, in his hat. His rival, however, had picked up some notions among the Americans, and he sported the verdant keepsake as a buttonhole bouquet. The stay-at-home seemed honest but heavy; the returned American was a happy type of native Irish humor, graced on trans-Atlantic experience. Oddly enough they were old friends, and swore by each other.

Which should be picked out for Maureen? Which sent at midnight to peep over the girl's shoulder into the mirror of St. Patrick's well? Such was the Sheanachie's crafty scheme for making his spell work—such the manner in which he hoped to render Maureen happy for life.

Finally, the girl's own words rose to his mind. She had said—"I did think I liked Bryan better; but then Denny came back from New York—"

Moreover, she had added that Denny "knew more in a day than Bryan did in a year," and dwelt upon Denny's promise to take her to rich America. Clearly, the girl secretly favored Denny Nowlan. Therefore it was right that Denny she should have.

"Denny, avic," the Sheanachie said, "you're after Maureen O'Hara?"

"You can bet I am," answered Denny.

"Very well, ma bouchal. I'll give you a spell to win her. Hold your ear close."

Then the Sheanachie unfolded to young Nowlan a wonderful "pishogue," by which he was to look into the waters of St. Patrick's well, by midnight, and there behold the face of his true love.

Now Denny was sceptical as regards "pishogues"; but he shared the local respect for Mehaul, and took care not to let that worthy see him laughing in his sleeve at this utterly ridiculous way of winning Maureen.

Thus it came to pass, that old Mehaul went home, sure of the success of his plan, and determined to be a third party to St. Patrick's Well that night; while Denny Nowlan, laughing gaily, told the story of the proposed spell to the churchyard loungers.

"You go in my place, Bryan," said Denny to his rival. "For my part I prefer to court Maureen by her father's turf fire."

Bryan Kavanagh was the only one present who did not join in the laughter. He was thinking over the Sheanachie's spell.

Old Mehaul crouched in the copse behind the well, that St. Patrick's right, as Maureen O'Hara came faltering up the path. He heard her repeat the name of St. Patrick thrice, kneeling to dip her fingers in the water, and noticed with a grin that the "fairy" blackbird, frightened from its nest in the over-hanging bush, flapped through the branches even as he had promised.

Then he saw Maureen fix her eyes steadily upon the moonlit surface of the well.

"Clang."

Out chimed the clock from Castle Carney, ringing clearly through the stillness of midnight, waking the watch-dogs with its brazen voice. At the last stroke of twelve there was a rustling in the bracken, and some one stole past Mehaul's hiding place.

Next moment he uttered an exclamation of astonishment, for the tall figure that leaned over the well-side in the moonlight did not belong to Denny Nowlan, but to Bryan Kavanagh.

There was a startled cry, and Maureen turned from the pale reflection of Bryan's face in the water to find herself clasped in the strong arms of a real, palpable Bryan.

"Ah, then, Bryan darling," so Mehaul heard her say, "his myself is glad you've come. Sure I was afraid it would be Denny Nowlan."

As the astonished Sheanachie crept out of his lair and down the hillside, all he could say to himself was—"St. Patrick is a better matchmaker than me, after all!"—*Catholic Columbian.*

St. Patrick's Day Celebration

AT MOUNT ST. LOUIS COLLEGE.

Whenever Mount St. Louis College undertakes to do anything, we can always rest assured that it will be well done. This fact has ever been evidenced from the many grand entertainments given in the past by the pupils of the College on the Mount.

However, their former efforts were surpassed on last Tuesday afternoon, when they celebrated the feast of Ireland's National Saint.

A scriptural drama in four acts, entitled "The Prodigal Son," which was recently translated from the French by one of the Christian Brothers, had been carefully prepared and was produced for the first time in English. The excellent manner in which all the characters were portrayed reflects much credit upon their instructor, Mr. Edwin Varney, upon the Revd. Brothers who had charge of the entertainment, and upon the pupils also.

Master William Kearney as the Prodigal Son deserves special mention for his able interpretation of the part. The struggle between passion and evil advice on the one hand and paternal love on the other, was especially well portrayed. E. Cummings as the Prodigal's father, was a veritable grey-beard both in voice and manner. The work of Walter Warren as Phogor—Manahan's evil genius—was admirable. His acting was worthy of a professional—in fact, few of our local professional actors could equal his self-possession and grace of gesture. C. Conrad as Melchias, a rich man, appeared a real spend. Messrs. A. Cardell, H. McKenna, P. Magrane and J. O'Brien, Phogor's companions in evil, were also very good.

The production, after the first and third acts, of several historical tableaux, was an appropriate addition to the excellence of the entertainment, and was much appreciated by the audience.

After the second act Master J. Sheahy rendered a selection of Moore's Melodies upon the violin, and proved himself to be a perfect master of his instrument. Mount St. Louis band also sustained their former reputation in their rendition of several selections.

The success of the entertainment is, in a great measure, due to the indefatigable efforts of Rev. Bro. Jerome, the genial Sub-Director of the College, and he has every reason to be proud of his pupils.

CHARACTERS.

Manahan, (The Prodigal Son).....	W. Kearney.
Jeremiah, (Father of the Prodigal).....	E. Cummings.
Amri, (Brother of the Prodigal).....	J. Connolly.
Ezriel, (Sons of Amri).....	W. Cummings.
Jemini.....	F. Foster.
Semei.....	H. Bedard.
Somer.....	R. Quisley.
Phogor.....	W. Warren.
Rau.....	Manahan's evil companions: A. Cardell.
Herson.....	H. McKenna.
Nabul.....	P. Magrane.
Melchias, (A rich man).....	C. Conrad.
Enos.....	O'Brien.
Zebeel.....	O. Coe.
Mershal.....	J. Breen.
A Slave.....	H. Bedard.
Elmathan.....	D. Duffy.
Jobus.....	J. Austin.

TABLEAUX.

1.—Bryan's vision before the battle of Clontarf.
2.—Offer of his services to his country.
3.—Musters his Chieftains.
4.—Choice of the crucifix as his standard.
5.—Words when dying.
6.—Death.

Spoken..... J. Stevens.

PATRICK BARSFIELD.
1.—Barsfield Champions his country's cause.
2.—Erin blesses him.
3.—His speech to his officers.
4.—Barsfield and officers swear fidelity to their cause.
5.—The Battle.
6.—The Drummer Boy of Limerick is wounded.
7.—Dies.
8.—Signing the treaty of Limerick.
9.—The Treaty is broken.

Spoken..... R. Quisley.

DANIEL O'CONNELL'S SPEECH ON THE DISTURBANCE BILL.
Daniel O'Connell..... F. Shallow.
Spoken..... A. Cardell.

A FAMOUS WITTY PRIEST.

Repartees by the Late Father Healy, of Little Bray.

Who that hails from Dublin has not heard of the witty sayings of the famous Father Healy, of Little Bray? But who has read more than one or two of his sayings, or knows anything of his personal history? A biographical sketch of him has just been published, from which we give the following extracts:

"I have never met any one so quick at repartee, yet never saying an unkind word," wrote Lord Londonderry. "Father Healy's wit was unwritable—so indescribable," says Lady Leslie. "His bright grace of heart and speech just sparkled like a diamond that had no hard facets—nothing heavy or labored, so kind and benevolent. His wit did not shine ever at the expense of another." Professor Mahaffy said to meet him in the street was like passing suddenly into sunshine. Father Healy was a Dublin man, the son of a provision dealer in Francis street, where he was born on December 15, 1824, his mother, whose maiden name was Meyler, being a member of a respectable Wexford family. A fine lady at one time volunteered the information that she was of the "Dalys of Castle Daly," and asked him what family he belonged to. His answer was, "I belong to the Francis street branch of the Halys of Castle Halys."

"Mrs. V—, a lady of good social status, whose first husband was a military officer, married secondly a retired postman. It was said that she sometimes made him put on the uniform of her deceased lord, which led Healy to quote, as applicable, Moore's lines: "The heart that has truly lov'd never forgets, But as truly loves on to the close (clothes)."

Canon Pope replied that it was only natural that she should regard the vested interests of her late husband, which so amused Healy that he declared it was better than the joke it capped. He was most tolerant of Pope's jokes, which encouraged the good Canon to prepare more whenever he expected to meet Healy. * * * Healy, on entering an ante-room where several priests had assembled, was grasped by both hands by Pope, who asked, "Why is my hand like the land act?"

"Because it embraces Healy's clause" (claws).

It is an old saying that extremes meet, and it is strange that one of Father Healy's "intimates" at Little Bray was the late Judge Keogh, of whom some very good things are told in this book. Keogh declared to all his friends that "the most charming man in Ireland was a curate in Bray." Priest and Judge met one day on the road. Keogh said:

"I have a crow to pluck with you."

"Let it be a turkey," said Healy, "and I'll be with you at half-past 6."

"All right," said Keogh, "but we must have the crow, too."

"Then I hope," replied Healy, "it will be a crow without caws."

A bad attack of pneumonia—during which for many days the priest's life was in the balance—prostrated him; no one was allowed up-stairs, and it is well known in Bray that the Judge,

waiting for the turn of the crisis, spent one night weeping under the pastor's window. There was a remnant of the angel left in that soul made of fire, who, a professing Catholic, scandalized all Ireland by his famous Galway judgment, in which he inveighed against the bishops and priests. It was at this juncture that the Judge was burnt in effigy near Father Healy's door.

"Only fancy what they say of me now!" said Keogh one day, quite flushed, as he hurriedly called on the priest of Little Bray.

"What?"

"Nothing less than that I am about to change my religion."

"Then I hope you'll become a Catholic first."

Keogh was once told by Healy that, although deaf, it was in contemplation to make Napier Judge of Appeal.

"What!" replied Keogh, "a man who cannot hear the sound of his own bell, to make him Judge of Appeal!"

Everyone knows of Keogh's sad ending of his life at Bingen. While still in possession of his mental faculties he had Father Healy telegraphed for, and on September 30, 1878, he received with much devotion the last rites of the Church from his old and tried friend, who never cast him off even when clouded with obliquity and menaced with assassination.

Men who had long viewed a priest with repugnance gradually warmed towards Father Healy, and finally all but folded him in their embrace. One evening at Lord Justice Fitzgibbon's, Lord Randolph Churchill said, "It is well for us Protestants that all the priests are not like you."

"How so?" said Father Healy.

"Because in that case we'd all become Catholics," replied Lord Randolph.

"A man of pure mind and pure life," writes Lord Wolseley, "he was an ornament to the ancient priesthood he belonged to, and did much to raise the opinion entertained for his race by those who are ignorant of Ireland and its people."

Father Healy was persona grata at the viceregal court as he was in Dublin society. He was sought after everywhere. He was a lord among wits and a wit among the lords.

"Father James," writes Lord Ashbourne, was one of the most charming of men—racy of the soil, a true Irishman, a true friend, kind, witty, genial sociable. We shall not soon look upon his like again. I knew him for over a quarter of a century; I have dined with him on several occasions in his house at Little Bray, and I can never forget those wonderful and hospitable entertainments. The numbers varied—sometimes eight, ten, twelve, even fourteen. The most varied guests met at his table. I have sat there at the same time with Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Lord Powerscourt, Mgr. Persico, Archbishop Walsh, Lord Morris, Chief Baron Palles and others. His guests were always delighted to be there, and he was delighted to have them. * * * He was brilliant, quick like lightning in conversation, and never hesitated for a second to come out with a sparkling, genial 'mot.' Sir Redvers Buller dined with him on one occasion, when the other guests were Archbishop Walsh and eleven priests. Sir Redvers made a slight start when he saw he was the only layman.

"Never mind," said Father Healy, "the soutane is not worse than the Soudan." * * * His friends comprised all classes, rich and poor, old and young, Protestant and Catholic. He was a priest devoted to his Church and to his flock, but his heart was big enough to include kind and loving feeling for all, and it will be long before Father James passes from the memory of those who had the delight of knowing him." Father Healy died on October 28th, 1894.

Distress

IN THE WEST OF IRELAND.

We have received from Sister Catherine Norris Superioress of the Sisters of Charity, Ballaghaderin, Co. Mayo, Ireland, two wreaths of shamrock, one of them artistically entwined round a green silken harp, and the other having a silk ribbon attached to it, bearing the words: "98—Erin-go-Bragh." Accompanying these very acceptable presents are a poem, "The Shamrock of Ninety-Eight," which will be found in another part of this issue, and the following pathetic appeal in behalf of the distressed poor in the West of Ireland:

At the present moment there are thousands of human beings on the verge of starvation in the West of Ireland through the failure of the potato crop.

There are thousands who cannot get a bit of bread or a drink of milk, or even a handful of Indian meal, without the alms of the charitable.

That food which God gave them in other years—growing at their feet—the potato—has failed.

They have no money to buy their food—no credit at the shops.

They must wait till the men go to England and earn a little money, and until the new crops come in before they can support themselves. The men have no money to buy seed for the new crops, or to pay their way to England.

When you were a little child were you ever hungry, and had nothing to eat?

Did you ever see your mother cry because she had nothing to give you?

Did you ever see your father seek for want of food?

Were you ever faint and weak from hunger?

Did people ever tell you to go and earn money, when there was no work to be got, and when you felt you could hardly drag yourself along?

All this, and more than this, your fellow-creatures in the West of Ireland are suffering to-day.

Fathers and mothers, with your happy children round you, well fed and well fed—give a trifle from the comfort of your homes to those who have no comfort.

Young men, do with one cigarette or one drink less in the day—and send the price to the starving poor in Ireland. You will be all the better for it, and so will they.

Young girls, make your old gloves and ribbons last a week or two longer—send the cost of the new ones over to Ireland.

Little children, do without sweets and cakes even for one day, and spare the money for the hungry little children in Ireland.

GIVE in the first place, to your own relatives, if you have any in the West of Ireland, they have the first claim on your charity, and perhaps they are suffering very much.

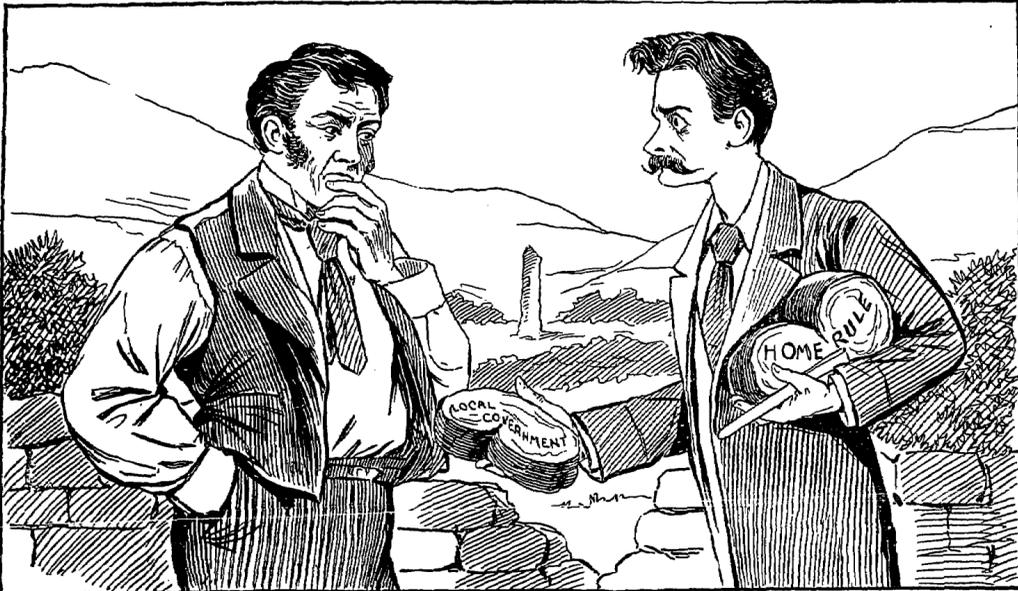
GIVE—no matter who you may be, give all you can. God will give it back to you a hundred fold.

GIVE quickly, the want is urgent. He who gives at once doubles the gift.

The smallest donations will be most gratefully received—send them to SISTER CATHERINE NORRIS, Superioress, the Sisters of Charity, Ballaghaderin, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

For reference apply to the Bishop of the Diocese, Most Rev. Dr. Lyster, Lord Bishop of Achonry, Ballaghaderin.

P. S.—Send us the address of any one you think likely to help.



HALF A LOAF, OR SOMETHING ON ACCOUNT.

Yes, we'll take it for the present as a payment on account; But don't think, John Bull, we look on it as all. Our claim is somewhat larger; 'tis a pretty big amount, And soon or late for payment we will call. Home Rule is what we want, nothing less will satisfy, And though this you offer now is pretty fair, It is just as well to understand that we will by and by Require our rights adjusted and made square.

We are thankful for your effort to be juster and more wise, But a history of wrong is not undone By a measure such as this. No; the blood of Ireland cries, Cries aloud to never falter till we've won Independence, freedom, mankind. These and nothing less than these, Are our rights, and these we'll have. So let it be Plainly understood between us, though your present efforts please, In the end we'll want and have our liberty. —Dublin Freeman.