



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. XIV. MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1864. No. 27.

TOM SAINT-AUBYN'S FREAK, AND WHAT CAME OF IT. A TALE OF MYSTERY.

In the month of August, in this same fourth year into which this narrative has suddenly advanced, Coleraine and Burgess, after a summer tour in Switzerland, were making a brief sojourn amidst the pleasures of Paris.

One day, some time after their arrival, when a few casual meetings had made the parties acquainted, a neat little note, addressed to them in the pleasant freedom of Parisian etiquette, apprised them that the Misses Barratt would be at home in the evening to receive a few friends, and would be much pleased if Mr. Coleraine and Mr. Burgess would join them—especially as the latter were of their own country, dear old England.

They were not aware you had relatives here, said Burgess, with a laugh, their salutations and various inquiries being concluded: 'Monsieur Alexis has christened you 'Barratt,' and dubs you as either father or brother of the ladies of that name here.'

They walked out together; after spending an hour in the Bois de Boulogne, making a descent into the streets of Paris, which, however attractive as was the display of life, bustle, and gaiety there, they speedily left, at the request of Mr. Barratt, who did not wish to move about amongst the multitude, but preferred to be in the open country, where the air was fresh and free, and one felt oneself at liberty, as he said.

Coleraine was greatly shocked at the result of his innocent communicativeness, and his embarrassment was by no means diminished as the whole company, with the exception of Miss Louisa Barratt, who hastened after her sister, gathered round him, and questioned him as to the cause of the lady's agitation.

It was many minutes before Miss Louisa returned to the salon. When she did so, her face was pale, and bore an anxious, perturbed expression extremely painful to Coleraine, and by no means reassuring to the rest of the guests.

more. It is most insulting and annoying to me; and if I hear of its being further circulated by you, we shall quarrel in right earnest! Not one in a thousand would have borne the scurvy business in such good part as I did from the first; but when I come here into France, some hundred miles from home, and find the tale already abroad before me, and in the very place at which I rest, and where I am known, and people wondering and pondering over it, my patience begins to give way. Mark me;—no more of it!

The suddenness and vehemence of this outburst amazed his companions. The possible reasons of it, and Saint-Aubyn's old suspicions, broke darkly on their minds as they beheld the face of the speaker, white, even to the fiercely compressed lips, with inexplicable anger.

'Ah,' exclaimed he, without any appearance of astonishment, as he advanced and shook hands with them; 'I have heard from the ladies up stairs that a couple of Englishmen were sojourning in the house, answering to your names, and I knew at once they must be yourselves.—Hearty glad to see you!'

'We were not aware you had relatives here,' said Burgess, with a laugh, their salutations and various inquiries being concluded: 'Monsieur Alexis has christened you 'Barratt,' and dubs you as either father or brother of the ladies of that name here.'

'Ah, to be sure; I heard of it,' said Mr. Barratt. 'Sorry I was not with you. It is possible, however, I may meet Vivian and my daughter at Lausanne, so I shall not be altogether alone. How is it our crusty friend, Saint-Aubyn, is not here?—a fine place for a morrist—plenty of food—all the vanities rampant—excellent pasture for the cynical rascal. Ah, ha! he is the queerest character I have ever met with.'

They were well dressed, gentlemanly looking personages, and evidently Englishmen. On being introduced into the presence of Mr. Barratt, they requested a few moments' private conversation with him. The Misses Barratt, and Coleraine and Burgess, happened to be in the room at the time; they retired instantly, the two gentlemen observing, with surprise and indefinable expectations of calamity, that unmistakable signs of consternation were immediately betrayed by M. Barratt.

For, while they were sleeping on their beds this same night, Mr. Barratt was being conducted rapidly to England by two emissaries of the London police. From London he was immediately conveyed to D—, in Gloucestershire,

where he was brought into the presence of the county magistrates, for examination, under the following circumstances:— Some twenty-four years previously, a gentleman of property, a widower, residing at D—, had died, leaving two youthful daughters. The superintendence of the affairs of the orphans was intrusted to two guardians, who had been friends of their late father, one of whom was Thomas Duvall, Esq., a gentleman living in the neighborhood, and the other, Mr. Barratt, of London, then a solicitor.

Meanwhile a warm intimacy had sprung up between Mr. Duvall and the eldest of his wards, Miss Barratt, which appeared likely to terminate in marriage; and that gentleman found reason for anxiety and complaint in the manner in which he was treated by his co-trustee, Mr. Barratt, who seemed determined to take upon himself the whole management of the property of the young ladies. All documents relating thereto had been placed in the custody of the latter, and he had been intrusted with the collection of rents and the legal management of their affairs, in consequence of the advantages offered by his profession and position.

Suspicion arose in the mind of Duvall that all was not right, especially when he heard of Barratt's sudden prosperity. He cautiously set an inquiry on foot, and at length discovered that his co-trustee was a double dealer of the most subtle and accomplished character, and that he was trafficking with the property of his wards. He instantly wrote to him, intimating that he knew all, and demanded a scrutiny of the affairs of the estate, and threatened, in case this were refused, to proceed by law, and compel concession.

The evening was one of great enjoyment to the guests assembled. Mr. Barratt was the heartiest, blithest, and most convivial of hosts. Several times he inquired of the Misses Barratt whether they had seen Duvall, appearing surprised and vexed at his absence. In the midst of the festivity of the evening, Duvall's house-keeper came to inquire after her master, who had not been home all day, and received from

Mr. Barratt a message to deliver to her master as soon as she should see him—that he (Mr. Barratt) was very much hurt at Mr. Duvall's absence, and thought he was not treating him in a friendly way.

About twenty years after the above period, a friend of Saint-Aubyn's found some boys playing with a skull in a field at D—. He purchased it of them, and sent it, with a humorous note to the young cynic. A considerable time after, it was returned to him, with an account of the adventure at the Opera—no names, however, being mentioned. He searched out the boys, and with some difficulty ascertained where they had found the skull. A portion of Barratt's garden wall had fallen to ruin; the skull was found in the darkest corner, where it had been scratched up by a dog. The spot was delved, and an entire skeleton was brought to light, together with a watch, chain, and seals, which were recognized by many as those worn by the late Mr. Duvall. A peculiar formation in the jawbone of one of the legs also proved the identity of the skeleton.

An inquest was held upon the remains, and Barratt's arrest was commended by warrant. He had got tidings of the affair, and he sent his family to Switzerland, and proceeded himself to Paris, where, as we have seen, he was arrested. The Misses Barratt were also brought to England, and bore witness, at the inquest and before the magistrates, to the disageement which had arisen between Duvall and Barratt. It appeared they had all along strongly suspected the latter of foul play. A pistol was found in Barratt's house, hidden in the recesses of a secret closet; the maker's name was on it; he was sought, found, and was able to testify that the weapon was purchased by Mr. Barratt some four days previous to Mr. Duvall's disappearance.

The scrutiny into the affairs of the young ladies, which poor Duvall had so long ago contemplated, was now entered into with a view to discovering whether the prisoner could have had any interest in suppressing it. By this means it was found that he had, by a course of misrepresentation and chicanery, defrauded his wards of seven or eight hundred pounds annually, ever since the term of the 'advantageous investment.' Day by day, the evidence against the suspected man accumulated and gathered strength. He never, however, underwent more than two preliminary examinations. At these his demeanor was tranquil and attentive. After the second, however, his hope and nerve forsook him. He contrived to swallow the contents of a phial, which he had managed to conceal about his person—and the justice of this world was defeated!

THE DESTINY OF THE IRISH NATION. Last Sunday evening the Rev. G. Porter, S. J., of St. Mary's College, delivered a lecture in St. Walburg's Catholic Church, Preston, on "The Destiny of the Irish Nation." There was an immense congregation, and large number were unable to obtain admission.

The Rev. G. Porter in commencing his lecture said:—The destinies of nations were usually considered from our view. They were formed in the secret designs of Almighty God, and concealed in the depths of eternal wisdom, were generally veiled from the consideration of men. Sometimes, however, a great result was made known to us, and from that result we might read a portion of the Almighty scheme of Divine Providence. When an important result was attained in consequence of a long series of causes, many of which were withdrawn from the power of man's will, then we might safely assert that such results were intended, by Almighty God, and in the result we might read, if not the complete destiny of a nation, as ordained by God, at least the destiny in a great part of the people. The destiny of the Irish nation was in his opinion to convey the Catholic religion wherever the English language was spoken. The effect could not be denied. The wonderful revival of Catholicity wherever the language was spoken, was an effect too plain for even prejudice to gainsay. The British Empire one hundred years ago, afforded a sad spectacle to those who escaped the teachings of the day. The cold Protestantism of England was colder than ever. The wealthy and educated could scarcely conceal their contempt for conventional Christianity. The middle classes and the poor, destitute of real Christian-

THE END.