

now he knew indeed his last hour was come. No priest was at hand to hear his confession, but the cry of his soul went up to the great High Priest, and joy filled his heart. When the fetters were struck from his hands he easily contrived to take from his breast the small linen bag and receive his Viaticum. A smile of triumph was on his lips, a light shone in his eyes: he had eaten the "Bread of the strong," and what cared he for death. But worthier words than ours shall describe the closing scene. A poet of whom Ireland is justly proud,\* has embodied in immortal verse this most touching episode of Ireland's wonderful history.

"They led him to the peopled wall;  
'Thy sons, they said, 'are those within;  
If, at thy word, their standards fall,  
Thy life and freedom thou shalt win."

"Then spake that warrior Bishop old:  
'Remove these chains, that I may bear  
My crosier, staff, and stole of gold;  
My judgment, then, will I declare."

"They robbed him in his robes of state;  
They set the mitre on his head;  
On tower and gate was silence great;  
The hearts that loved him froze with dread."

"He spake: 'Right holy is your strife;  
Fight for your country, king, and faith.  
I taught you to be true in life;  
I teach you to be true in death."

"A priest apart by God is set  
To offer prayer and sacrifice;  
And he is sacrificial yet,  
The pontiff for his flock who dies."

"Ere yet he fell, his hand on high  
He raised, and benediction gave,  
Then sank in death, content to die;  
Thy great heart, Erin, was his grave."

It only remains for us to tell the manner of the Bishop's death. He was given up by the enraged Lord Broghill to the soldier's fury. They severed his arms from his body, then dragging him along the ground to a neighbouring tree, hung him to its branches, in the sight of the garrison. It was close on All Saints Day, and in all Catholic lands the *Requiem aeternam* was rising up for the souls of the faithful departed, but the Bishop needed it not: for him was reserved the palm branch and the quick entrance as "a good and faithful servant into the joy of his Lord."

\*Aubrey De Vere.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

A bell was softly tolling from the Convent of S. Clare, in Madrid, and groups of people were wending their way to assist at a sermon that was to be preached in the convent chapel. It was understood the preacher would ask for the alms of the faithful for the many poor Irish exiles who had sought refuge on the hospitable shores of Spain. A group of ladies who had nearly reached the convent door had paused, and were deeply engaged in conversation.

"Is it possible, Donna Beatrice?" exclaimed one, her dark eyes flashing with eagerness. "Do you say you have seen it?"

"Even so," returned the lady addressed, "and though Monseigneur will not permit any public veneration to be paid to the body, the nuns always believed her to be a saint, and occasionally, as a great favour, the vault is opened and persons allowed to gaze on the corpse, and the last time this was done I was one of the party."

"And what did you see?" demanded her three auditors in a breath.

"There lay in her coffin," said Donna Beatrice, "a young nun. She was arrayed in the full habit of her order. A parchment, on which her vows were written, lay between her clasped hands. She was like one asleep, a glow in her cheeks and lips, a smile lighting up her whole face. The eyes were closed, but every moment I expected to see her open them, it was so life-like."

"Did you touch the body?" inquired Donna Caterina.

"Yes; and the icy coldness told me this indeed was *death*; but the death of a saint. But that is not all, dear ladies; a heavenly perfume filled the vault, 'twas more like a fragrant garden than a charnel house, and by my side knelt a little blind girl to whom the nuns have been very kind. She is niece also to Sister Agnes. Have you not seen her sometimes?"

"Yes," replied the ladies; "well, what of her?"

"The child knelt and prayed with a wonderful faith. We could see it by her attitude. Then the stranger man who is always praying by the tomb raised her up and laid her face upon the face