

had a letter from Father Hayes, in which he states that he is about to return from America, and that he will be accompanied by a young girl whom he discovered among the Micmac Indians. She had been brought up as the adopted daughter of an old Indian queen, and was generally known as 'Neemi, the Indian princess;' but Father Hayes's enquiries elicited the facts that her parents were Europeans, who died while she was yet an infant, and that her father was an English soldier, named Henry D'Alton, who had wealthy relatives, with whom, however, he had not corresponded for a long time before his death."

"Singular!" said the Senora Fernandez. "If this girl should prove to be the grand-daughter of Count D'Alton, what a joy it will be to the old man. He has long since repented bitterly of his harshness to his only son; and I understand he is even now in England, prosecuting, through the war office, enquiries with regard to his death; though he had little hope of finding the child he was reported to have left."

"In that case," said Mr. Meldon, "Father Hayes will be a great aid to him. But we must be careful how we excite hopes that may not be realized; though I have no doubt, from what the lady says, that the mystery will be satisfactorily cleared up; and," he added after a thoughtful pause, and looking significantly at his daughter, "it may be that, in its elucidation, it will explain other matters which now appear even stranger than this does."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ABOUT the time indicated in the last chapter, at all events not very long after, two or three old friends turned into Father Aylmer's for "one of the evenings" himself and Father Power knew so well how to bestow. "One of Father Aylmer's evenings" passed into a proverb, and however spare the tabling might be—sometimes it was, as we have remarked already—the hearty welcome of the parish priest and the *bônhomme* of the curate were gifts not every day to be obtained, even when the fare was most luxurious.

On the day of which we write, the

arrival of an old friend and class-fellow in college made Father Power more radiant even than usual; and, as if to balance the years in the little parlor, old Father Morrissey, the nearest neighbor, came to make one of the happy circle.

Father Power's friend we must call Feehan, for convenience sake—and he was one of the most genial, most daring, and devoted men that ever wore alb or stole—like the "Great High Priest," always ready "to lay down his life for his friend"—or to share his last shilling with him. Father Feehan was under forty, wonderfully strongly built, and with an eye that shot out rays of reflection or sparkled with humor as the occasion arose, and really looked as if he was always going to sing "Who fears to speak of 'Ninety-eight?'"

"So those 'Young Ireland' boys are off," exclaimed Father Power.

"Safely as Giffard D'Alton's hoard," answered Father Feehan.

"How did you manage?" pursued Father Ned.

"I managed by sleeping in three different quarries three different days, and each succeeding night getting nearer to the sea."

"Singular," Father Morrissey said, "that her Majesty's faithful 'Peelers' did not make your acquaintance on the road."

"As I said, we travelled at night, and always had three carts, going 'on our lawful business;' in fact, we did carry loads of turf one night, and tents to set up at the fair of Ballybunnion another night."

"Well!" the old parish priest said, somewhat impatiently, "Father Feehan let us hear how the poor fellows got away."

"I succeeded in boarding a schooner one day last week. I found the captain was a Kerry man, and we agreed that he should receive £500 for landing the three men in Constantinople."

"Five hundred pounds!" exclaimed Father Aylmer.

"Ah, yes; your friend—or the son of your great friend—O'G—from Dublin—paid two-thirds of the money."

"Then?" asked Father Power.

"We paid one-third in hand; the remainder to be paid on arrival."