

THE COLLEGIANS.

A TALE OF GARRYOWEN.

BY Gerald Griffin.

CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

"Who is it? Mrs. Frawley?"

"The fat, good old woman that got dinner ready for me."

"Never fear her. She is hard-working, diligent woman, that always minds the business she has in hand. It was not to lie awake and make use of her ears that she got between the blankets. Hark! there is a clear proof still that she is asleep. She must be dreaming of a hunt, she imitates the horn of chase so finely. Well, Eily, be ready to start for Ballybunion at sunrise in the morning. You must contrive to slip down to the shore without being seen by Lowry, or anybody else, if possible."

The creaking of the bed which sustained the ponderous Mrs. Frawley, here startled the young and passionate though most ill-assorted pair. After a hurried good-night, Hardress returned to his room just in time to escape the observation of the good dairy woman who had been awakened out of a dream of pecks and keelers and fresh prints by the sound of voices in the stranger's room. On opening the door, however, she was a little astonished to observe her lovely guest in the attitude of devotion. Deprived by this circumstance of the opportunity of putting any awkward questions, Mrs. Frawley, after yawning once or twice and shaking her shoulders as often, tumbled into bed again, and speedily resumed the same tune upon the horn which had excited the admiration of Hardress.

Reader, I desire you not to think that this speedy fit of devotion was a manoeuvre of the gentle Eily. The sin, assuredly, was not done with reflection. But if the case appears suspicious, go down upon your knees and pray that as (alas, the while) it has not been the first, it may be the last, instance in which religion shall be made subservient to human and terrestrial purposes!

There was a slight feeling of chagrin mingled with the happier emotions of the young husband as he prepared for slumber. Gifted, as he was, with a quick perception and keen feeling of the beautiful and worthy, the passion he had conceived for the gentle Eily had been as sudden as it was violent. The humility of her origin at a period when pride of birth was more considered in matrimonial alliances, than it is at present, might, it is true, have deterred him from contravening the wishes of his friends, if the impression made on his imagination had been less powerful; but his extreme youth, and the excellent beauty of his bride, were two circumstances that operated powerfully in tempting him to overlook all other counsels than those which love suggested. He thought, nevertheless, that he acted towards Eily O'Connor with a generosity which approached a species of magnanimity in preferring her before the whole world and its opinions; and perhaps too, he entertained a little philosophical vanity in the conceit that he had thus evinced an independent reliance on his own mental resources, and shown a spirit superior to the ordinary prejudices of society. He felt, therefore, a little chagrined at Eily's apparent slowness in appreciating so noble an effort, for indeed she did him the justice to believe that it was a higher motive than the love of self-adulation which induced him to bestow upon her his hand and his affections. But the reader is yet only partially acquainted with the character of Hardress, and those early circumstances which fashioned it to its present state of irregular and imperfect virtue; we will, therefore, while that fiery heart lies quenched in slumber, employ those hours of inaction, in a brief and comprehensive view of the natural qualities and acquirements of our hero.

While Hardress Cregan was yet a child, he displayed more symptoms of precocious ability than might have shed a lustre on the boyhood of any celebrated genius. He obtained, even in his school days the sobriquet of "Counselor," from his fondness for discussion, and the childish eloquence which he displayed in maintaining a favorite position. His father liked him for a certain desperation of courage, which he was apt to discover on occasions of very inadequate provocation. His mo-

ther, too, doated on him for a mother's own best reason—that he was her child. Indulgent she was, even to a ruinous extent, and proud, she was, when her sagacious acquaintances, after hearing her relate some wonderful piece of wit in little Hardress, would compress their lips, shake their heads with much emphasis, and prophesy that "that boy would shine one day or another." His generosity, too (a quality in which Mrs. Cregan was herself pre-eminent), excited his mother's admiration, and proved indeed that Hardress was not an ordinary child.

And yet, he was not without the peculiar selfishness of genius—that selfishness which consists not in the love of getting, or the love of keeping—in cupidity or avarice, but in a luxurious indulgence of one's natural inclinations even to an effeminate degree. His very generosity was a species of self-seeking, of that vulgar quality which looks to nothing more than the gratification of a suddenly awakened impulse of compassion, or, perhaps, has a still meaner object for its stimulus,—the gratitude of the assisted, and the fame of an open hand. If this failing were in Hardress, as in Charles Surface, the result of habitual thoughtlessness and dissipation, it might challenge a general condemnation, and awaken pity rather than dislike; but young Cregan was by no means incapable of appreciating the high merit of due self-government, even to the exercise of estimable dispositions. He admired in Kyrle Daly that noble and yet unaffected firmness of principle which led him, on many occasions to impose a harsh restraint upon his own feelings, when their indulgence was not in accordance with his notions of justice. But Hardress Cregan, with an imagination which partook much more largely of the national luxuriance, and with a mind which displayed at intervals bursts of energy which far surpassed the reach of his steady friend, was yet the less estimable character of the two. They were, nevertheless, well calculated for a lasting friendship; for Kyrle Daly liked and valued the surpassing talent of Hardress, and Hardress was pleased with the even temper and easy resolution of his school-fellow.

Seldom, indeed, it was, that esteem formed any portion in the leading motive of Hardress Cregan's attachments. He liked for liking's sake, and as long only as his humor lasted. It required but a spark to set him all on fire; but the flame was often as prone to smoulder and become extinct, as it was hasty to kindle. The reader is already aware that he had formed, during his boyhood, a passion for Anne Chute, who was then a mere girl, and on a visit at Dinis Cottage. His mother, who, from his very infancy, had arranged this match within her own mind, was delighted to observe the early attachment of the children, and encouraged it by every means in her power. They studied, played, and walked together; and all his recollections of the magnificent scenery of those romantic mountain lakes were blended with the form, the voice, the look and manner of his childish love. The long separation, however, which ensued when he was sent to school, and from thence to college, produced a total alteration in his sentiments; and the mortification which his pride experienced on finding himself, as he imagined, utterly forgotten by her, completely banished even the wish to renew their old familiar life. Still, however, the feeling with which he regarded her was one rather of resentment than indifference, and it was not without a secret creeping of the heart, that he witnessed what he thought the successful progress of Kyrle Daly's attachment.

It was under these circumstances that he formed his present hasty union with Eily O'Connor. His love for her was deep, sincere, and tender. His entire and unbounded confidence, her extreme beauty, her simplicity and timid deference to his wishes, made a soothing compensation to his heart for his coldness of the haughty, though superior beauty, whose inconstancy had raised his indignation.

"Yes," said Hardress to himself, as he gathered the blankets about his shoulders, and disposed himself for sleep. "Her form and disposition are perfect. Would that education had been to her as kind as nature. Yet she does not want grace nor talent—but that brogue!—Well,

well, the materials of refinement are within and around her, and it must be my task and delight to make the brilliant shine out that is yet dark in the ore. I fear Kyrle Daly is, after all, correct in saying that I am not indifferent to those external allurements (here his eyelids drooped). The beauties of our mount in residence society will—gradually—beautiful—Anne Chute—Poll Naughten—independent!"

The ideas faded on his imagination—a cloud settled on his brain—a delicious languor crept through all his limbs—he fell into a profound repose.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW THE FRIENDS PARTED.

"Is Fighting Poll up yet, I wonder?" said Lowry Looby, as he stood cracking his whip in the farm-yard, while the morning was just beginning to break, and the dairy people were tying down the firkins on his car. "I'd like to see her before I'd go, to know would she have any commands westwards. There's no hault upon her to hinder her speaking of a Friday whatever."

"Is who up?" exclaimed a shrill voice which proceeded from the grated window of the dairy. It was that of the industrious Mrs. Frawley who, as early, if not as brick and sprightly, as the lark, was already employed in setting her milk in the keelers.

"Fighting Poll of the Reeks," replied Lowry turning toward the wire grating, through which he beheld the extensive figure of the dairy-woman, as neat as a bride, employed in the health-giving, life-prolonging avocations.

"Who is she, why?" said Mrs. Frawley.

"Don't you know the girl that came in the boat with Mr. Cregan, an' slep' in the room outside you?"

"Oyeh, I didn't know who you meant. The boatman's handsome little sister?"

"Handsome, ayeh?"

"Yes, then, handsome. She has the daintiest little nose I think I ever laid my two eyes upon."

"Why then, 'tis a new story wid' it, for a nose. Formerly, when I knew it, it was more like a button mushroom than anything else, and the color of a boiled carrot. (Good reason it had for that, as the publicans could tell you.)"

"Hold your tongue, man. Is it to drink you say she used?"

"A thrife, I'm told."

"Eh, then, I never see one that has less sign of it than what she has."

"She's altered lately, Danny Mann tells me. Nelly, eroo," he added, changing in tone—"Sonohur to you, now, an' get me a dram, for it's threatenin' to be a moist foggy mornin', an' I have a long road before me."

Nelly was occupied in liberating a whole regiment of ducks, hens, pouts, chicks, cocks, geese and turkeys who all came quacking, clucking, whistling, chirping, crowing, cackling and gobbling through the open farmhouse door into the yard, where they remained shaking their wings on tiptoe, stretching their necks over the little pool, the surface of which was green, and covered with feathers—appearing to congratulate each other on their sudden liberation, and seeming evidently disposed to keep all the conversation to themselves.

"What is it you say, Lowry? Chokeye for ducks, will ye let nobody spake but ye 'resolves? What is it, Lowry?"

Lowry repeated his request, making it more intelligible amid the clamor of the farm-yard, by using a significant gesture. He imitated the action of one who fills a glass and drinks it. He then laid his hand upon his heart and shook his head, as if to imitate the comfort that would be produced about that region by performing in reality what he only mocked at present.

Nelly understood him as well as if he had spoken volumes. Commissioned by Mrs. Frawley, she supplied him with a bottle of spirits, and a glass, with the use of which, let us do Lowry the justice to say, there was not a man in the barony better acquainted.

While he dashed from his eyes the tears which were produced by the sharpness of the stimulus, he heard footsteps behind him, and looking round, beheld Danny the Lord and the soi-disant Mrs. Naughten, still muffled in the blue cloak and hood, and occupying a retired position near the kitchen door.

"I'll tell you what it is, Nelly," said Lowry, with a knowing wink to the soubrette. "Poll Naughten lives very convenient on the Cork road, or not far from it, an' I do be often goin' that way of a lonesome night. I'll make a friend o' Poll before she leaves this, so as that she'll be glad to see me another time. I'll go over and offer her a dram. That I may be blest but I will."

So saying, and niding the bottle and glass under the skirt of his coat, he moved toward the formidable heroine of the mountains, with many respectful bows, and a smile of the most winning cordiality.

"A fine moist mornin', Miss Naughten. I hope you feel no fatigue after the night, ma'am. Your servant, Mister Mann. I hope you didn't feel us in the yard, ma'am; I strove to keep 'em quiet o' purpose. 'Tisn't goen' re are so airy, Mister Mann?"

Danny, who felt all the importance of directing Lowry Looby's attention from his fair charge, could find no means so effectual as that of acknowledging the existence of a mystery, and admitting him into a pretended confidence. Advancing, therefore a few steps to meet him, he put on a most serious countenance, and laid his finger warily along his nose.

"What's the matter?" whispered Lowry, bending down in the eagerness of curiosity.

Danny the Lord repeated the action, with the addition of a cautionary frown.

"Can't she talk of a Friday either?" said Lowry, much amazed. "I understand, Mister Mann. Trust me for the bare life. A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse."

"Or an ass eider," muttered the hunchback as he turned away.

"But Mister Mann," cried Lowry, laying his immense claw upon his lordship's shoulder, "isten hether. The mornen' will be smart enough, and maybe I'd bether offer her a dram and she goen' upon the water-her?"

He strode past the Lord and was close to the muffled fair one, when Danny pulled him back by the skirt.

"Didn't I tell you before, said he, 'dat Poll never drank'?"

"Iss, of a Thursday, you said."

"Or a Friday, or any day. O den, oh den, Lowry?"

"Well, I meant no harm. May be you'd have no vow yourself on the head of it any way, sir?" And he displayed the bottle.

"There are tree kinds of oats, Lowry," responded Danny Mann, as he twined his bony fingers fondly around the neck of the bottle; "dere are tree kinds of oats dat are forbidden to be tuk as unlawful. Dey are false oats, rash oats, and unjust oats. Now do you see me, Lowry," he continued, as he filled his glass, "if I make a vow o' dat kind, it would be an unjust oat, for it would be traitin' myself very bad, a poor boy dat's night and day at sech cold work as mine, an' it would be a rash oat, Lowry, for"—(here he tossed off the spirits) "I'm blest but it wouldn't be long before I'd make a false oat."

Lowry was greatly shocked at this unprincipled speech. "That's a nate youth," he said privately to Nelly. "That's a nice pet, judging him. If that lad doesn't see the inside of the Stone Jug for some bad business one time or another, I'll give you love to say black is the white of my eye. If the gallows isn't wrote upon his face, there's no malt in mutton. Well, good mornen' to you, Nelly, I see my load is ready. I have every thing now, I suppose, Mrs. Frawley. Whip, get up here, you old garron! Good mornen' to you, Mrs. Naughten, an' a fair wind after you. Good mornen', Mister Mann." He cracked his whip, tucked the skirt of his riding coat under his arm, as usual, threw his little head back, and followed the car out of the yard, singing, in a pleasant contented key—

"Don't you remember the time I gave you my heart, You solemnly swore from me you never would part? But your mind's like the ocean. Each notion Has now taken flight, And left me bemoaning the loss of the red-haired man's wife."

Kyrle Daly and his young friend were meanwhile exchanging a farewell upon the little gravel plot before the front door.

"Come, come, go in out of the air," said Hardress, "you shall not come down to the shore in that slight dress. Remember what I have told you and sustain your spirits. Before another month shall pass, I pledge myself to become master, for your sake of Anne Chute's secret."

"And to honor it?" said Kyrle, smiling as he gaped him his hand.

"According to its value," replied Hardress, tossing his head. "Good-bye; I see Danny Mann and his sister coming round, and we must not lose the morning's tide."

They shook hands and parted. It was one of those still and heavy mornings which are peculiar to the close of summer in this climate. The surface of the waters was perfectly still, and a light wreath of mist steamed upward from the centre of the channel, so as to veil from their sight the opposite shores of Clare. This mist, ere long, became a dense and blinding fog, that lasted until noon, and together with the breathless calm that lay upon the land and water, prevented their reaching Ballybunion until sunset. In one of those caverns which are hollowed out of the cliffs on this shore, the traveller may discern the remains of an artificial chamber. It was used at the period of which we write as a kind of ware-room for contraband goods; a species of traffic which was freely engaged in by nearly all the middle gentry and small farmers along the coast. A subterranean passage, faced with dry-stone work, opened into the interior of the country; and the chamber itself, from constant use, had become perfectly dry and habitable. In this place Hardress proposed to Eily that they should remain and take some refreshment, while Danny the Lord was dispatched to secure a better lodging for the night at some retired farmhouse in the neighborhood.

A small canvas-built canoe, summoned from the interior of the cave by a whistle from the lord, was employed to convey them from the pleasure-boat into the gloomy porch of this natural subterranean. Before the fragile skiff had glided into the darkness, Eily turned her head to catch a parting look at the descending sun. The scene which met her gaze would have appeared striking, even to an accustomed eye; and to one like hers, acquainted only with the smoky splendor of a city sunset, it was grand and imposing in the extreme. Before her lay the gigantic portals of the Shannon, through which the mighty river glides forth with a majestic calmness, to mingle with the wide and waveless ocean that spread beyond and around them. On her right arose the cliffed shores of Clare, over which the broad ball of day, although some minutes hidden from her sight, seemed yet, by refraction, to hold his golden circlet suspended amid a broken and brilliant mass of vapours. Eily kept her eyes fixed in admiration on the dilated orb, until a turn in the cave concealed the opening from her view, and she could only see the stream of light behind, as it struck on the jagged and broken walls of the office and danced upon the surface of the agitated waters.

The place to her seemed terrible. The hollow sound of the boatman's voice, the loud splash of the oars, and the rippling of the water against the vessel's prow, reverberating through the vaulted chambers, the impenetrable darkness into which they seemed to plunge headlong, and reckless of danger or impediment, all united constituted a scene so new to the simple Eily, that she grasped close to the arm of her husband, and held her breath for some moments, as if in expectation of some sudden and terrific encounter. In a little time the boatman rested on his oars, and a voice from the interior of the cave was heard exclaiming in Irish: "Is it himself?"

"It is," said the boatman in the same language. "Light up the fire at once, and put down a few of the fresh herrings. The lady is hungry."

"You will join for the first time, Eily," said Hardress, "in a fisherman's supper. Well, Larry, had you much luck last night?"

"Poor enough, masher," said the same oracular voice, which Eily now recognized as that of the man to whose escort she had been entrusted by Lowry Looby on the previous evening. "We left Mister Daly's point as soon as ever the wind fell, and come down as far as Killoordane, thinking we might come across the skull; but though we were out all night, we took only five hundred, more or less. A' why don't you light up the fire, Phaudrigh? And 'twasn't that the herrings didn't come into the river either, for when the moon sone put we saw the skull to the westward, making a curl on the waters as close an' thick as if you threw a shovel-full o' gravel in a pond."

The fire blazed upward, revealing the interior of the apartment before alluded to, and the figure of the rough old boatman and his boy. The latter was stooping forward on his hands, and kindling the fire with his breath, while Larry Kett himself was rinsing a small metal pot at the water side. The effect of the smoky and subterranean light upon the uncouth and grisly figures and on the rude excavation itself, impressed the timid Eily with a new and agitating sensation, too nearly allied to fear to leave her mind at ease.

(To be continued.)

Features of the British Budget.

The British Budget speech is a theme which has, during the past week, occupied much space in the daily press of England, and in the correspondence of American correspondents. One of the latter writing from London to the New York "Post," says:—

A clever piece of electioneering—that is the phrase which sums up the Liberal and partly the Ministerial verdict on Mr. Ritchie's first budget. Yet only the surface criticism is quite true. The fourpence off the income tax and the repeal of the cereals tax certainly please the classes whose political uneasiness had much to do with the recent Ministerial electoral reverses.

It is quite true, also, that such sanguine estimates of revenue as Mr. Ritchie makes for the coming year, namely, a sixteen-million-dollar increase over that of the present year, is one of the accepted signs that the Ministry is contemplating dissolution, but a high authority assures me that all dissolution talk is ridiculous. The Ministry is young, has a large working majority in despite of the malcontents, and has also much work to do, especially with the Irish Land and London Education bills. There is no earthly reason why they should throw up their task when only half their term has expired.

The budget is of high national importance for quite other reasons than a meditated dissolution. The budget is really a retrenchment budget. Mr. Ritchie is not content merely to repeat the warnings of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Mr. Gladstone against England's reckless increase of expenditure, though the case is stronger than ever, seeing that the country bears \$150,000,000 more of taxation yearly than before the war. He deliberately foreshadowed considerable reductions in army expenditure. The navy must increase as other navies increase. Not so the army, but against army retrenchments political and social pressure is especially great under a Tory Government. Mr. Ritchie, by spending freely now, leaves himself a small or no surplus for the next budget, and brings to his side the whole support of the Ministry and the party when a year hence he insists upon retrenchment in order to avoid unpopular increases of taxation. He distributes a gigantic surplus, \$54,000,000, now that he may be poor enough a year hence to insist upon economy.

The deliberations of Mr. Balfour's Defence Committee of the Cabinet and of the heads of the army and navy, covering the whole problem of defence, point in the same direction. Mr. Brodrick's inflated army schemes probably will make way quietly and gradually for a saner programme at a lessened cost of from fifty to sixty million dollars yearly.

The budget is remarkable also because it retraces the step which Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was induced to take last year along what Radical critics then called the slippery slope of protection. It is far fetched to suggest that Mr. Ritchie deliberately set himself to answer the Canadian Finance Minister's threat to withdraw British preference in the Canadian tariff unless Canadian products shall have preference in the British markets, but it is quite certain that if the colonies had accepted instead of rejecting Mr. Chamberlain's suggestions for free trade within the empire, with duties against foreigners, Mr. Ritchie would not have abolished the cereals tax from which the Canadians desired exemption. England now is on the way back to Mr. Gladstone's free breakfast table, and even if Canada refrains from withdrawing her 35 per cent. preference for British goods anything like tariff unity for the empire except on a free trade basis is less probable than ever. In these two respects the budget is a budget of Radicalism, not of Toryism.

Hatred of one's faults is a step towards amendment, but not amendment itself.