LET GENTLE MERCY REIGN.

By Eleanor C. Donnelly.

I.

Let gentle Mercy reign within thy soul,
And every cruel judgement there control.
Let sweet compassion dwell upon thy lips,
And from thy tongue its purest honey drip;
Spreading a balm o'er hearts by harshness flayed,
O'er smarting wounds by others, malice made.
For, like a pearl within the deep, dark sea,
Thy neighbour's motive is concealed from thee;
And none, save God, can pierce the rugged shell,
And view the shining jewel in its cell;
Ah! none, save He, can know how fair and clear,
Is that which, to thy sight, doth vile appear!

II.

While Justice lifts her torch, and shows to you
Thine own inherent inconsistency;
While truth reveals the mass of tangled skein
That is my bosom blushing Conscience doth present
A thousand images of sin and wrong.
The fan ts and failures of a life-time long.
What must thou do, but—owing self unjust,—
Bow down thy very forehead in the dust?
What say, but moan (thine eyes with tears grown (dim),
'God is the Judge—leave judgement unto Him'!

GOD BLESS THEE TO-NIGHT.

'Tis long! oh, so long since a garland I wove—
A garland of song for the land that I love;
'Tis long since a message I sent o'er the wave
To thee, lovely Ireland, fair land of the brave;
A prayer I will twine 'mong these petals of light,
Ireland, sweet Ireland, God bless thee to-night.

'Tis long since thy valleys, bespangled with dew,
Faded slowly away o'er the ocean's deep blue,
But the love that I bore thee is ever the same,
And no music can charm like the sound of thy name.
Oh! still will I pray though you'll ne'er bless my sight,
Land of the saints! God bless thee to-night.

'Tis long, oh! so long, since thy sunset of gold,
I behold brightly gleam o'er thy shamrock-strewn mould,
But yet does its memory steal back to the heart
That loves thee, mavourneen, though distant thou art.
My prayer, 'till my spirit from earth takes its flight,
Shall be, land of my heart's love, God bless thee to-night.

—*Sister Mary Columba, in Cork Examiner.*

MOY O'BRIEN.

A TALE OF IRISH LIFE.

By Miss Skefington ("Melusine.")

CHAPTER I.

"A mere atom of suffering
Outlined against the far off, patient stars."
Bret Harte.

'Where can Moy have gone? I can't bear to lose sight of her; for after this week I shall not see her sweet face for many a weary day.'

The speaker was a handsome old Irish gentleman; the listener was a Catholic priest, a refined looking man; he was leaning against the chimney piece beside his friend's arm-chair, and he looked thoughtfully into the fire as he replied:

'I saw her go up the hill about half an hour ago, and I think I can guess where she has gone.'

'Where?' asked the occupant of the arm-chair, looking up eagerly.

'To say good-bye to Dermot's grave!' replied Father Fitzgerald. 'Remember, this journey must seem a great undertaking to your young granddaughter.'

'Of course, of course,' replied the old gentleman, hastily, 'and I can't say I altogether like her going to Sir Ralph Windsor's, but he was very kind to me after my poor boy's death, and came all the way from England to see us. Then there's Lady Arthur and her daughter, just going off to Germany, and delighted to take charge of Moy the whole way to London; so that altogether it seemed the best thing to do under the circumstances.'

'What circumstances?' asked the priest, adding immediately, 'You know I only returned this afternoon from Dublin.'

'To be sure,' said old Mr. O'Brien, twisting round in his chair, and looking up brightly in Father Fitzgerald's face. 'How stupid of me! Well, you know how this new English landlord, Mr. Frederick Hackney, has been going on—crowbar brigade at work—at least all that kind of thing—evictions the order of the day. Moy has been the witness of scenes of misery caused by this grasping man—aye, scenes that would melt the heart of a stone. Think what hers is, and then imagine her feelings when, as she re-proached him during one of his visits here, Hackney suddenly seized her hand, implored her to marry him, and do what she liked with the tenants.'

Father Fitzgerald simply raised his eyebrows with an expression of calm surprise popularly believed to belong exclusively to members of the English aristocracy.

'I was in the room,' continued the old man with enthusiasm; and to give the devil his due, I must say that I never liked the fellow so much as at that moment. Not that I want Moy to be his wife—heaven forbid!—but this intense love for the girl seemed almost to glorify his face.'

'What did she say?' asked Father Fitzgerald.

'She sprang to my side as if an adder had crossed her path, though it's not many of them we'd see in Ireland. She could not find words for a moment or two. Then she said in a low voice, 'You must not speak to me like that; I shall never love any man on earth as you ask me to love you. Do your duty to your country, and I will be your friend.' Then she was gone, and I told him what had happened just before he bought his fine property here—how her boy lover had died, and how faithful she had been ever since, child though she was, to his memory.'

'I suppose he urged that time might efface that impression,' said the priest, smiling, not cynically, but sadly.

'Oh! bless you, yes Just as confident as man could be. 'Give me time, my dear sir,' he pleaded; 'let me come here as a friend, and one day she will say "yes" to me very sweetly.'

'A dangerous flash came from the priest's eyes and he said under his breath: 'I would rather see her in her grave!'

'What!' said the old man, only half hearing the words, 'the grave!' 'Yes, she ought not to be there so late in the evening. It is cold now But, as I was saying, I thought this trip to England would be a good thing just now, and what her poor father would have liked; so, without speaking to Moy, I wrote to Sir Ralph Windsor. He was Mr. Windsor, at Ashantee, when my dear boy was shot down beside him. Now he has come into the baronetcy and left the army. He is an M. P., and his wife is an earl's daughter, and they are very grand people; but still I felt I could write to him in my difficulty, for he showed so much kind feeling about my dear boy, his old comrade, when he came to see me, and made me promise that some day Moy should pay him a visit. He said his wife would take great care of her.'

'Does Moy like the idea of going?' asked Father Fitzgerald.

'Well, when I told her what I had done,' went on the old man, 'she was a little put out, the darling, and unhappy about leaving me, and all that; now she has come to see it was a good idea, and that, perhaps, it has all been arranged for her to go and speak to the English people about Ireland, and perhaps persuade some absentee Irishmen to return to their estates. 'If they will only come back to Erin,' she said to me, smiling through her tears; 'and who knows, dear grandfather, but what I may do a little good. I don't want to be presumptuous, but you know the lion and the mouse story.'

'I never met any one with a greater sense of responsibility than Moy has,' said Father Fitzgerald.

'Aye!' said her grandfather; 'that's true. Why, I've known her sigh when she has bent a tendril of our vine the wrong way and broke it. 'I could have helped it had I been more careful,' she has said.'

'She is right,' said the priest, earnestly. 'For every thought, word and deed we are accountable. We want to put on St. Patrick's armour every day. But tell me, had you a pleasant answer from this Sir Ralph Windsor?'

'Oh, very kind. They would be delighted for her to pay them a visit, if she did not mind passing many of her evenings alone. But as they are now in London for the season they have many engagements.'

'I suppose these grand English people would be ashamed to ask if they might bring a little Irish friend with them,' said the priest.

'They'll find it a difficulty to equal her in London,' exclaimed the old man, with ill-concealed pride.

'Not only difficult, but impossible,' Father Fitzgerald said, as he took up his hat to go in search of Moy. He passed out of the house through the garden gate, and along the low stone wall, that (after he passed the O'Brien's grounds) for some distance separated the high-road from a field that rose gradually up the hill side to some poor cabins on the ridge above, though trees and shrubs quite hid them from the view of any one on the road below. Farther on the wall ceased, and the park-like grounds became wild and hilly, with heather and furze bushes, and narrow ravines, up which came the sound of torrents rushing on to the sea. Soon the priest turned off the high-road, and followed a pathway, a short cut he knew to the ancient graveyard, where he expected to find Moy O'Brien. The scene grew more and more wild and picturesque—in the distance a lofty range of mountains, behind which the sun had set so long that one or two pale stars were now visible; valleys opening here and there; a river hurrying on to the sea; and far, far away, the broad Atlantic itself. Then, a few miles off, standing out against the apple-green of the sunset sky, were the ruins of an ancient castle, one of the strong-holds of Moy's ancestors; for the mountains and valleys, far as the eye could reach, had once belonged to the O'Briens, and had gradually been wrested from them by "Confiscation," or "Plantation," or "Black Acts," about which the least said the better, if we want to have peace in these latter and happier times.

The only shred of land left to this branch of the O'Briens was the old house and garden at the end of the town of Ballyvorra, and this, in the troublous times of the Penal Laws, was preserved to them by the honor of a distant relative, a Protestant, and a neighbor who held the property for the O'Briens until such time as England permitted Catholics to hold lands in their own names. For several generations the heads of the family had managed to make a little money in Spain, where they owned part of a vineyard, but they had always returned to die in "Dear Erin." Then, Moy's father had persuaded his parents to let him enter the British army, and after a few years he married, but lost his young wife at the birth of their second child—'Moy'—and died himself, like so many of his brave countrymen, fighting under the English flag.

Since her father's death Moy had had one great sorrow in the death of her playmate, her boy-lover, Dermot Davoren; and Moy, like the Scottish king in the ballad mourning for "Douglas, the tender and true," felt that now 'all men to her were but shadows.' All were alike. Never more could she love, except her country, that dear land for which Dermont would have gladly died; and now her tender remembrance of him, to whom she had often sung, 'Who fears to speak of '98?' was so connected with her love for Ireland that the latter feeling had all the intensity of a passion; and with this love deep, deep in her heart, she devoted herself to the duties lying nearest to her. Her grandfather was her first care, for her only brother was far away in Australia, and after her home duties came the people. The good priest and the kind Protestant rector found her ever ready to help them in works of charity; and the blessings of her poorer friends followed her wherever she went.

But to return to Father Fitzgerald. He at last arrived at the old graveyard. It was in the very ruins of what had once been a beautiful Cistercian abbey. Mounds of ruins rose here and there, and the grass grew long and rankly, and into the modern wall that surrounded the sacred enclosure many curiously carved stones were built.

Father Fitzgerald mounted the steps that led over the wall, but paused when he gained the top, for he saw the object of his search kneeling beside her lover's grave, her slight figure in soft outline against the evening sky. But so absorbed in prayer was she that no sound of approaching footsteps had reached her ear.

Her kind friend looked down pitifully at the passionately swaying figure. He felt that it must be more than the personal sorrows for the past which so affected her at this moment, for the loss of her boy-lover had long ago softened into a tender memory.

The good priest hesitated to disturb this young girl, for whose earnest character he felt respect as well as affection. Suddenly Moy unclasped her hands from her bowed face, and, throwing her arms up toward Heaven, with the wild *abandon* of action which she must have unconsciously learned as she watched the "keeners" on many a hill-side, she looked away from the village lights up to those purer fires on high, and cried in an agony of supplication, 'Oh, my God, let me do good to Ireland!'

CHAPTER II.

"By the fires trod out in each hearth,
When the exiles were driven forth!"
Lady Wilde.

There were no handsome villa residences about Ballyvorra such as swarm in the outskirts of English towns, and indeed near some in Ireland. Mr. O'Brien's house was the last at one side of the old town, and the railroad station the most imposing building on the other side. But if there were no villa residences, there were some fine properties in the neighborhood, three of which almost met in the town of Ballyvorra. First of all there was 'Glenrowe,' which an Englishman, already mentioned—Mr Frederick Hackney—had bought out of a fortune made in Lancashire. He had been both hard and unjust to the tenantry, for if they remonstrated at an unfair increase of rent, he simply told them to go; and when, with breaking hearts, at the idea of leaving their old homes, they adopted the only course left to them—namely, claimed compensation under the new and much-talked-of Land Act—everything was made particularly hard for them by the legal proceedings in connection with the evictions being laid in the supreme courts in Dublin, so that the poor homeless tenants had unheard of expenses to meet. Indeed, in many cases, the wretched people found themselves not only homeless, but penniless.

Mr. Hackney's agent was a Scotchman, a hard man, but one who wished to be just, and who in several instances had sided with the tenantry against their landlord, and gained the day. The people, though they did not like him, felt grateful to him, and knew that he could not always gain his point. Indeed, Mr. Syms—for such was the agent's name—was often disposed to throw up his appointment, but his wife and daughter would not hear of this line of conduct, for they had their business in the neighborhood.

The next estate to 'Glenrowe' was owned by an Irish nobleman, Lord Arthur. He was easy-going, generous, and poor; or, as an Englishman would put it, 'reckless, extravagant, and poor!' but he was a kind landlord; his rents were pretty regularly paid, and he was beloved by his tenantry. He had an Irish bailiff, and seldom left home, though his wife and daughter went once a year to London (or some German watering place). His second son and heir was in the army, and seldom at home. His eldest son had been in the same regiment as Moy O'Brien's father, and had died soon after his return from the effects of the Ashantee fever. This community of sorrow and the remembrance of 'ancient kindness' (for it was Lord Arthur's ancestors that held the O'Briens' property in penal times) made a bond of union between the two families, so far apart in outward circumstances.

The third and the largest property, Gilmartin Castle, was owned by an absentee. When Father Fitzgerald was going in search of Moy it was the ruins of Gilmartin that stood out so boldly against the sunset sky.

The whole place had fallen to decay, and this was a real grief to Moy; for though it had long ago passed from her family, she felt as if she still had some sort of right over it. Indeed, the English officer to whose share it had fallen had married a daughter of the house, left mourning for her fathers and brothers, who had been either killed in battle or driven as exiles from their home and country.

But, oh! there can be little of the O'Brien spirit in this degenerate man,' Moy would sigh, as often she wandered through the ruins of the castle, and thought of its absentee owner. He had paid a flying visit to Ireland and Gilmartin when he came of age; but had never been near the place since, and that was now fifteen years ago. Fortunately for his tenantry, he had a good agent in Mr. Davoren, the father of Moy's 'Dermot.'

Mr. Davoren lived on a small estate of his own, and his eldest son was a lawyer and a Home Ruler.

The morning after Moy's visit to her lover's grave Mr. Frederick Hackney came riding along the road which led from 'Glenrowe' to Ballyvorra. He had not left his own gates far behind when he saw a lady on horseback coming slowly along, unattended by a groom. Mr. Hackney, with a frightful contortion of face, fixed his glass in his eye, and examining the lady attentively, discovered that she was Miss Syms, the daughter of his agent. She was small, with fair face, or, according to her friends' verdict, 'golden locks,' but her enemies called them 'sandy.' Her eyes were too small, and her lips were too thin and had a peculiar downward curve at the corners, and there was something not quite pleasant in the expression of the face even now, when she was trying to look her best. Still no one could deny that she had only just escaped being pretty.

Miss Syms had long wished to know Mr. Hackney's real feelings in regard to Moy. If he was as much in love with her as rumor said here, then, was a golden opportunity. She knew of Moy's intended journey, and felt certain that he did not.

The gentleman and lady drew rein, and their horses kept stepping backward and forward, sideways, and every way, as horses are wont to do when suddenly checked for their riders to converse. This fact is, perhaps, one of the strongest proofs of the want in a horse of mental capacity of the same kind as ours; for surely the 'dear creatures' must often hear conversations interesting enough to keep them quiet if only they could understand them!

Mr. Hackney and Miss Syms exchanged remarks about the weather, which was particularly fine, and then she said:

'I suppose you are going to say good-bye to Miss O'Brien?'

Mr. Hackney did not start perceptibly, but his face darkened, and his hand must have tightened on the rein for, his horse backed away almost into the ditch.

'Is Miss O'Brien going away for a lengthened period?' he asked, stiffly

'Oh, yes; for some months, I believe,' replied Miss Syms. She saw he felt the news so much that he seemed unconscious of her presence. She said good morning hurriedly, and, with a heightened color and an annoyed expression of countenance, rode quickly away.

Mr. Hackney, with a muttered curse, looked after her, and said, aloud, 'I wonder if the little minx was lying? It would not be the first time. She gave me no particulars of this journey, so there may not be a word of truth in it. Or was it a bit of spite her not telling me more?'

He resumed his journey to Ballyvorra, little suspecting the scene he was soon to come upon.

Moy's answer to Mr Hackney when he proposed to her had one good effect. He had already reinstated the poor tenants so lately evicted from their holdings. To one the tardy act of justice came too late. An old man named O'Leary had been suffering from fever when he was carried out of his house and laid upon the roadside; a heavy down-pour of rain came on, and though a priest from a neighboring village (who happened to be passing) saw the state the poor man was in, and bore him to a lodging (like the good Samaritan of old), still the shock and the chill had been too much for O'Leary, and he died. Who can wonder that his only child, when he looked upon his father's corpse, and saw his mother a homeless widow, vowed vengeance on the wrong doer? Even the priest, though he reproved him for his violent words, could not be very severe with the lad. Poor Tim and his dead father had done much to improve their land, and they owed not one penny of rent. Their only crime was refusing to pay an increase of rent when there was an unjust advance of from nine to fourteen pounds. In reply to their remonstrance they were served with a 'Notice to Quit.' O'Leary died before the claim for compensation could be put in; and when Mr. Hackney, to please Moy, offered to let Tim and his mother have their little farm again at the old rent (but with some tiresome conditions), Tim refused it, and went to work on Mr. O'Brien's bit of land, taking a cottage for his mother and himself on the road, close to the garden gate. It was a 'come down' for the proud spirit of Tim O'Leary, but he felt as if he would die sooner than accept a favor from the man whom he looked upon as his father's murderer. There was also something to sweeten the bitter cup. Not only by his industry and sobriety was he gaining the respect of all about him, but his heart was taken captive by the fair Kitty MacClancy (Moy O'Brien's little house-maid), and he was supremely happy in the assurance that his love was returned.

Mr. Hackney has to pass several of his small farms on his way to Ballyvorra. The houses belonging to these farms faced the high-road, and when the landlord gained the brow of a hill close to two of these, he was startled to see a large crowd collected, evidently gathered round and listening to some one in the centre. The speaker was Moy O'Brien. She had walked out to say 'Good-bye' to a poor sick girl, to whom she was in the habit of reading. The news that she was there had spread like wild fire to the adjoining farms, and when she came out into the road she was received with beaming smiles and hearty blessings.

The people had always loved her, and looked up to her as their young mistress. She and her grandfather were treated with as much deference and respect as if they still owned the broad lands over which the O'Briens had once held sway. But how this feeling increased when they found (for the fact leaked out some way or other) that it was to Moy's intercession they owed their restoration to their holdings at the old rents!

'And sure, Miss Moy,' said a tall fine-looking man, thin indeed (as if there had not been much overfeeding in his case), but muscular and healthy looking enough—'indeed, Miss Moy, we had the rights of it; a good bit of the land was bog we had reclaimed

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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Biliousness. Constipation. Stomach Pains.

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RASPBERRY and LEMON SYRUPS for sale by the gallon, suitable for Retailing or for Tea Parties.

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