

THE GASCON O'DRISCOL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR."

The O'Driscols have long ceased to be a ruling race in West Cork, where they held sway as petty kings of Corca Laidhe, a district nearly corresponding to the diocese of Ross. Their power was broken at the battle of Tralee, where the "Gascon," with others of his house, fell before the lances of the Anglo-Norman chivalry, A. D. 1235. He was Aulay, fourth son of Donagh Mor, whose pedigree up to Ith, uncle of Milesius, may be read at large in the "Genealogies of the Corca Laidhe" (Misc. Celt. Soc. Dublin, 1849), a tract enriched with rare matter by the learned Dr. John O'Donovan and the present learned and Rev. Dr. John Quarry. Not the least curious item of the Pedigree is the note telling how young Aulay got his surname, which supplies the materials of this ballad:—

"Is airí a debróidh in Gasgúineach de; a n-gill re fin tuadh h é do lucht lúing cendaigh asa Gascaim a cind a dha bhliadhán, déa, agus do bhliú na cor eníredh do fhuair thina h é, cor dearbhadh air beith na thúil unsail, agus tuadh in jin cen úrósáidh re na lind, agus da h-índiaidh ar a ais h-é chuma thiri bodhien."

Here observe that, while no one is so verbose as the Irish Celt in certain sorts of composition, no one can tell his story in fewer words when he writes by way of chronicle or family history. The form given to the version of the legend now presented is that of the class of poems purporting to convey instruction, called *Dianseachas*, which begin by proposing the subject as a question, responded to by the phrase, "Not difficult": then follows the substance of the story, told in most cases with great directness, and ending regularly with a repetition of the initial words of the first line.

I.

In old O'Driscol's pedigree, Mong lords of ports and galleys, The Gascon, whence I and who was in First bore the surname, tell us, Not difficult the task, To answer what you ask.

II.

The merchants from the Biscay sea To ports of Munster sailing, With wines of Spain and Gascony Supplied carouse unfilling, To guests of open door Of old at Britton's.

III.

Tell when, against one fatal day, O'Driscol stocked his cellars, He found not but of gold to pay In part, the greedy censors; And, for the surplussage, Gave this good son in pledge.

IV.

They bore the boy to fair Bayonne, Where vines on hills were growing; And, when the days of grace were gone, And still the debt was owing, The careful merchant's heart Grew hard with angry smart.

V.

The wine I sold the Irish keave Is spent in waste and surfeit; The pledge for payment that he gave Remains, a sorry forfeit— Bring forth the hostage boy, And set him on employ.

VI.

Now, youth, lay by the lettered page, Leave Spanish pipe and labor To happier comrades of thy age, And put thy hands to labour, To dress and till, be thine."

VII.

From solar-chamber came the lad; In sooth, a comely creature, As e'er made eye of toothier glad, In well-shaped limb and feature, As 'mid the vines he stepped, His cheek turned, and he wept.

VIII.

The grief that wrings this pungent tear Springs not from pride or anger, Let be the hoe my hunting-spear, The pruning-knife my banner; The work ye will I'll do; But deem my kinsmen true.

IX.

"Be sure, in some unknown resort, Their messengers have tarried; Some head-and-hold their ship in port, Some tribute-ship mis-carried, Else never would they leave Their pledge without reprieve."

X.

"I've seen when, round the banquet board, From stinless-cerebell beaker To all the Name our butlers poured The ruby-radiant liquor, And every face was bright With mirth and Me's delight."

XI.

"And, as the warming wine inhaled, The shows of outward fashion, Their inmost hearts I've seen unveiled In gay and frank elation; And not a breast but grew More trusty, more seen through."

XII.

"These vineyards grew the grape that gave My soul that fond assurance; And if to-day I play the slave, I grieve not the endurance, Nor stronger mandate want To tend the truthful plant."

XIII.

The seniors of the sunny land Beheld him daily toiling,— (Old times they were of instincts bland The sordid heart assailing)— And this their frequent speech And counsel, each with each—

XIV.

"A patient boy, with gentle grace He bears his yoke of trouble; Serenely grave the ample face, The gesture large and noble, Erect, or stooping low, Along the stony row."

XV.

"Where'er he moves, the serving train Accord him their obeisance; The very vintagers refrain Their rude jests in his presence; And— what is strange indeed— His vines their vines exceed."

XVI.

"The tendrils twine, the leaves expand, The purpling bunches cluster, To purpler growth beneath his hand, As though 'twere formed to foster By act of mere caress Life, wealth, and joyousness."

XVII.

"It seems as if a darkling sense In root and stem were native; As if an answering effluence And virtue vegetative (Anointed kings own such) Went outward from his touch."

XVIII.

"Behold, his father's sagas say A righteous king's intention Is seen in fishy-teeming bay, And corn-fields' stocked abundance, In udler-weighted coaves, And nut-bent hazel boughs."

XIX.

"These Scots, apart in ocean set Since first from Shinar turning, Preserve the simple wisdom yet Of mankind's early morning, While God with Adam's race Still continued, face to face."

XX.

"Not in the written word alone He wooed and warns the creature His will is still in wonders shown Through manifesting Nature; And Nature here makes plain This youth was born to reign."

XXI.

"It were ill, for a merchant's gains, To leave, at old appointed, For honey-handed village swains, God's designate assigned; But good for man and us, The art magnanimous."

XXII.

"Blest are the friends of lawful kings To righteous rule consenting; Secure the blessing that he brings, By clemency preventing; And, returning full release, Return him home in peace."

XXIII.

"And, ere your topsails take the wind, Stow ye within his vessel, A pipe the ripest search may find In cellar of the Castle; Of perfume finer yet, Then rose and violet."

XXIV.

"That, when, at home, his kin shall pour The welcoming libation, Such rapture pierce their souls shall soar As sweet exultation, As Bacchus on his purd With moist eye might regard."

XXV.

They stowed the ship; he stepped on board In seemly wise attended; But this was still his parting word, When faces all were ended, "Be sure my father yet Will satisfy the debt."

XXVI.

And, even as from the harbour mouth They northward went careering, There passed to windward, steering south, O'Driscol's galleon bearing, From Baltimore, the gold Of ransom safe to hold, In thold."

S. F.

THE Cities and Towns of Canada ILLUSTRATED.

VIII.

SPENCERVILLE, Ont.

A PICTURESQUE SPOT—FOUNDATION AND GROWTH—NOTES RESPECTING THE VILLAGE AND THE VILLAGERS.

Spencerville is a good type of the Canadian village pure and simple. Unincorporated, boasting a population of scarcely three hundred souls, it yet presents a very creditable display of substantial buildings and numbers among its people a good few really well-to-do men. The village is pleasantly situated on the banks of the river Nation, nine miles from Prescott and forty-five from Ottawa; the St. Lawrence & Ottawa R. R. having a station about a mile to the west. As the reader will probably have surmised, the village was founded by a Mr. Spencer, David Spencer in full, who, in 1817, thought the place a good one where to erect a grist mill. He followed this up by building a saw mill—both wooden erections and not very extensive affairs. The country round about at that time was mainly dense forest with small clearings few and far between. Even now close to the village many of the fields are thickly studded with mammoth stumps giving one an idea

of what the bush must have been when the first ring of the white man's axe resounded through the groves of giant pines. Previous to the arrival of the pale faces the locality was evidently a favourite resort with the aborigines, as the ground is rich with evidences of Indian occupation. Large deposits of pottery; plasters, bottles, vases and pipes; flint chisels, gouges, tomahawks, &c., have been found, and it is quite a common occurrence for the plough to unearth such relics of a bygone age. Not far from Spencerville there is a well-defined earth-work fort and there have been found numerous traces of village encampments, with streets laid out in straight lines, as shewn by the remains of the fireplaces. The locality was apparently a famous hunting and trapping ground, as the red deer are even now fairly numerous in the woods near by, and the streams still afford the smaller varieties of fur bearing animals. The remains of beaver dams attest that not so very long ago the dark waters harboured the emblematic beaver. The hunting scene herewith is from a sketch made a few years ago in a camp located a short distance from the village. One of the hunters there represented (Mr. J. Keeler) told me that he had killed some of the finest deer that ever fell to his rifle on a runway which crossed the site now occupied by the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

In 1833 the wooden mills were replaced by stone structures, and great was the rejoicing; one who was present at the opening day told me that success to the mill and the miller was drank so often that a good many of the well wishers were unable to find their way home. These mills were destroyed by fire, and in 1863 the present fine

FLOUR AND CRIST MILL

was erected opposite the ruins by Mr. Robert Fairbairn, who owns the dam and considerable land on both sides the stream. The mill is substantially built, exceptionally commodious and fitted up in first-class style. It has four run of stones and is used for flouring, gristing and the manufacture of oatmeal. When the water-power gives out, as it generally does during the "heated term," the mill stones do not necessarily cease to revolve, as the mill contains a powerful steam engine. Mr. Fairbairn complains that the gristing business has latterly fallen off greatly owing to the little wheat grown round about Spencerville, but he thinks there will be a decided improvement this season.

The sound of the splashing water, tumbling over the dam, sounds pleasant to the weary traveller sitting under the verandah of the

VICTORIA HOTEL,

a good old-fashioned inn kept by a jovial, kindly-hearted couple named Stitt, hailing from the North of Ireland. The Stitts came to this country in 1832—when the cholera raged—and can relate many startling incidents connected with that dread visitation. Their experience from the time they left Ireland till they got settled in a little log house in the bush near Spencerville, can hardly be realized by the rising generation. After a terrible long ocean passage, the captain losing his course for some time and finally putting into the Bay of Chaleurs, they reached Montreal and secured a passage on a bateau. It took eight days to reach Prescott. The towing of these boats up the rapids was ticklish work. The teamsters had to watch closely, for if the boat swung out too far the force would be too great for the horses or oxen, and if the ropes were not quickly loosened the animals would be drawn into the surging waters. Sometimes the boat had to be let go when nearly at the head of a rapid. She would go down, whirling around, perfectly unmanageable till she reached the comparatively quiet waters at the foot, then she would be brought along shore and a fresh attempt would be made. The passengers would frequently get ashore and walk, and often find themselves at nightfall several miles ahead of the wretched craft. When the Stitts arrived at their destination they found a dense bush with bridge paths, or sad apologies for "corduroy" roads. The houses of the few settlers were so rough, and the look of everything around so strange and different to what the new-comers had been led to expect, that Mrs. Stitt says they both felt very despondent, and she cried a good deal. But they soon cheered up, and, being young and hearty, with stout Irish hearts and willing hands, they prospered, and learned to like their adopted home. But the trials and hardships of the early settlers were great indeed, and such as we in these days can scarcely form any idea of. After farming some little time, Mr. Stitt embarked in the hotel business, and has kept the Victoria for over a quarter of a century.

THE MAIN STREET.

Opposite the hotel is the tasteful residence of Mr. John Millar, a well-to-do farmer and holder of real estate. Mr. Millar is an old settler, having landed in Canada in 1833. He owns some 250 acres, besides village lots. Mr. J. W. Bennett is another old-timer. He landed in 1831, and has kept store as a general merchant for twenty-seven years. His residence is pleasantly situated a short distance out of the village, on a rise which commands pretty views all around.

Crossing from Mr. Bennett's store, the establishment of W. P. Imrie & Co., general merchants, comprising those important institutions, the Post and Telegraph offices, next claims attention. This business was established in 1846,

and having passed into the hands of enterprising young men, it has been greatly developed. Besides keeping a good stock of general wares, the Messrs. Imrie are insurance agents, printers and newsdealers.

A few steps down the road on the opposite side is still another general store, the establishment of Messrs. William Millar & Co., late Snider & Millar. They deal in pretty well everything, groceries, dry goods, clothing, farmers' implements, ploughs, &c., patent medicines, paints, oils, &c., and are agents for Bell's organs.

Further on, close by the elegant new Presbyterian church, is Mr. Andrew Carmichael's commodious store, stocked with a full assortment of almost every class of goods. Mr. Carmichael also owns a carriage shop and smithy. Some ten years ago this gentleman raised a company of militia for the 56th Batt., and now holds the rank of Major. The Spencerville Company is one of the finest in the battalion, and is invariably commended by the inspecting officer. Mr. Carmichael has been 22 years in the village, and has held the position of Deputy- Reeve for two terms.

On the road to the depot is the substantial and handsomely-appointed residence of Mr. Joseph H. Stitt. One does not look for city elegance in a rural neighbourhood, but I venture to say one would have to search a long time through Canada to find an interior to match that of Mr. Stitt's house. The frescoing, by Albrecht, is particularly handsome.

MR. JAMES MILLAR'S DAIRY FARM AND CHEESE FACTORY.

Mr. James Millar's homestead occupies a charming site on the banks of the Nation River, midway between the villages of Spencerville and Adams. The farm comprises 220 acres. Mr. Millar regards the locality as better adapted for dairy-farming than anything else, and has accordingly turned his attention to that branch. In 1873 he established a cheese factory, which has proved quite a boon to the farmers round about. The factory will turn out one thousand pounds of cheese per day, and utilizes the milk of some forty cows kept on the farm, and between three and four hundred scattered among the farms within a radius of five miles. The factory is fitted up in first-class style, and is in charge of a skilled cheese-baker. By the introduction of pure-bred Ayrshires, Mr. Millar has done much to improve the stock in the locality, and the result is a very rich quality of milk and cheese of uniform excellence which never has to wait for a market.

Mr. Millar used to go largely into bee-raising, selling as much as half a ton of box honey in a season, but lately he has given up, in a measure, this sweet industry, and sold over fifty hives swarms.

Though not one who hangers for public offices, Mr. Millar has been elected Reeve several times, and came very near receiving the nomination for South Grenville at the late Reform Convention.

MILL CREEK

is the site of Mr. James Keeler's saw-mill, which is situated a short distance back of that gentleman's picturesque residence. Mr. Keeler is of the Old U. E. stock, and a good specimen of that sterling type of humanity. He settled at Spencerville forty-five years ago, and has always taken a leading part in the management of local affairs. He was a member of the first District Council in 1812; has been in the Counties Council thirty-four years; was Warden of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville in 1863 and 1865, and is now First Deputy Reeve of the Township of Edwardsburg.

THE CHURCHES

at Spencerville are both very creditable to the bodies who have erected them.

The Presbyterian Church is a particularly handsome building within and without. The pews are of ash and walnut, and will seat 450. The basement contains a number of class-rooms, a well-appointed kitchen, &c. The church cost \$9,000, and was opened March last. The Rev. Mr. Day is pastor.

The Wesleyan Church is a commodious edifice of brick. I was not inside, so cannot speak of its interior. Close by is a very fine parsonage, occupied by the Rev. Mr. Wilson.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy, for the speedy and permanent cure for consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive, and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, with full directions for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Shearer, Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

Luck and temper rule the world. Choicest assortment of French Cambrie, Chorott and Oxford Shirtings in Canada at Treble's, 8 King Street E., Hamilton. Send for samples and price list, and have your Shirts made properly. Treble's, 8 King Street E., Hamilton.