

Poetry.

BORN IN APRIL.

The girl that is born on an April day Has a right to be merry, lightsome gay...

Literature.

FATHER AND SON.

One evening in the month of March, 1788,—that dark time in Ireland's annals...

The child paused—"I'd like to give her a pen'orth of scuff and a piece of tobacco every week...

Mr. Hewson laughed, and Billy prattled on, still seated on his knee...

"I can see nothing," he said,—"stay—there are figures moving off among the trees...

Seizing the bell-roppe, he rang it loudly, and said to the servant who answered his summons...

"Fasten the shutters and put up the bars, Connell; and then tell Gahan I want to see him."

"What took you round the house just now?" asked his master, in a careless manner.

Why, then, nothing in life, Sir, but that "What took me round the house, is it?"

"Then," said Mr. Hewson, smiling, to his wife, "the minute of time must have been reversed, and swine turned into men..."

Mr. Hewson went a frightened glance towards the windows which opened nearly to the ground, and gave a view of a wide tree-bespoken lawn...

"Listen, James!" she said, after a pause; "what noise is that?"

"Nothing but the sighing of the wind among the trees. Come, wife, you must not give way to imaginary fears."

"But really I heard something like footsteps on the gravel, round the gable end—I wish!"

A knock at the parlor door interrupted her. "Come in."

The door opened, and Tim Gahan, Mr. Hewson's confidential steward and right-hand man, entered, followed by a fat-haired, delicate-looking boy of six years' old, dressed in deep mourning.

"Well, Gahan, what do you want?"

"I ask your honor's pardon for disturbing you and the mistress; but I thought it right to come and tell you the bad news I heard."

"Something about the rebels, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; I got a whisper just now that there's going to be a great rising to-morrow; thousands are to gather before daybreak at Kiltrean bog, where I'm told they're a power of pike hiding; and then they're to march on and sack every house in the country. I'll engage, when I heard it, I didn't let grass grow under my feet, but came off straight to your honor, thinking maybe you'd like to walk over this fine evening to Mr. Warren's, and settle with him what's best to be done."

"Oh, James, I beseech you, don't think of going."

"Make your mind easy, Charlotte; I don't intend it; not that I suppose there would be much risk; but, all things considered, I think I'm just as comfortable at home."

The steward's brow darkened, as he glanced nervously towards the end window, which jutted out in the gable, formed a deep angle in the outer wall.

"Of course it is just as your honor pleases, but I'll warrant you there would be no harm in going. Come, Billy," he added, addressing the child, who by this time was standing close to Mrs. Hewson.

"Make your bow, and bid good night to master and mistress."

The boy did not stir, and Mrs. Hewson taking his little hand in hers, said—"You need not go home for half-an-hour, Gahan; stay and have a chat with the servants in the kitchen, and leave little Billy with me—and with the apples and nuts!"—she added, smiling as she filled the child's hands with fruit.

"Thank you, Ma'am," said the steward hastily. "I can't stop—I'm in a hurry home, where I wanted to leave this brat to-night; but he would follow me. Come, Billy; come along this minute, you young rogue!"

"Don't go yet, Gahan; I want to speak to you by and by; and you know the mistress always like to pet little Billy."

Without replying, the steward left the room; and the next morning his hasty footsteps resounded through the long flagged passage that led to the offices.

"There's something strange about Gahan, since his wife died," remarked Mrs. Hewson. "I suppose 'tis grief for her that makes him look so darkly, and seem almost jealous when any one speaks to his child. Poor little Billy! your mother was a sore loss to you."

The child's blue eyes filled with tears, and pressing closer to the lady's side, he said—"Old Peggy doesn't wash and dress me as nicely as mammy used to."

"But your father is good to you?"

"Oh, yes, Ma'am, but he's out all day busy, and I've no one to talk to me as mammy used to; for Peggy is quite deaf, and besides she's always busy with the pigs and chickens."

"I wish I had you, to take care of and to teach, for your poor mother's sake."

"And so you may, Charlotte," said her husband. "I'm sure Gahan, with all his odd ways, is too sensible a fellow not to know how much it would be for his child's benefit to be brought up and educated by us, and the boy would be an amusement to us in this lonely house. I'll speak to him about it before he goes home. Billy, my fine fellow, come here," he continued, "jump up on my knee, and tell me if you'd like to live here all your life and learn to read and write."

"I would, Sir, if I could be with father too."

"So you shall,—and what about old Peggy?"

and put by in his desk; for he suspected this some time past that gold was missing. This morning 'twas gone; a search was made, and the marked guineas were found with your son William."

The old man covered his face with his hands, and rocked himself to and fro. "Where is he now?" at length he asked in a hoarse voice.

"Looked up safe in the inner store-room; the master intends sending me to go early to-morrow morning."

"He will not," said Gahan slowly. "Kill the boy that saved his life!—no, no."

"Poor fellow! the grief is setting his mind astray—and sure no wonder!" said the cook compassionately.

"I'm not astray!" cried the old man, fiercely. "Where's the master?—take me to him."

"Come with me," said the butler, "and I'll ask him will he see you?"

With faltering steps the father complied; and when they reached the parlor, he trembled exceedingly, and least against the wall for support, while the butler opened the door, and said—"Gahan is here, Sir, and wants to know will you let him speak to you for a minute?"

"Tell him to come in," said Mr. Hewson, in a solemn tone of sorrow, very different from his ordinary cheerful voice.

"He will not," said the steward, advancing. "they tell me you are going to send my boy to prison—is it true?"

"Do you, indeed, Gahan. The lad who was reared in my house, whom my wife watched over in health, and nursed in sickness—whom we loved almost as if he were our own—has he been sent to prison, and not once or twice, but many times. He is silent and sullen, too, and refuses to tell why he stole the money, which was never withheld from him when he wanted it. I can make nothing of him, and must only give him up to justice in the morning."

"No, Sir, no. The boy saved your life; you can't take his."

"You're raving, Gahan."

"Listen to me, Sir, and you won't say so. You remember this night twenty years? I came here with my mother's child, and young Gahan, and the mistress put up, and spoke loving words to him. Well for us all you did so! That night—little you thought it—I was banded with them that were sworn to take your life. They were watching you outside the window, and I was sent to inveigle you out, that they might shoot you dead. A faint light had for the bloody business, for you were ever and always a good master to me; but I was under an oath to them that I'd break, and I was ordered to shoot my own mother. Well! the hand of God was over me, and you would not come with me. I ran out to them, and I said—'Boys, if you want to shoot him, you must do it through the window, thinking they'd be afraid of that; but they weren't—they were daring fellows, and one of them, sheltered by the angle of the window, took deadly aim at you. That very moment you took Billy on your knee, and I saw your hair begin to rise, and the musket, I don't know exactly then what I said or did, but I remember I caught the man's hand, threw it up, and pointed to the child. Knowing I was a determined man, I believe they didn't wish to provoke me; so they watched you for a while, and when you had put him down they got daunted, hearing the sound of soldiers riding by the road, and they stole away through the grove. Most of that gang swung on the gallows, but the last of them died this morning quietly in his bed. Up to yesterday he used to make me give him money—sums of five and ten shillings—and it was for that I made my boy a thief. It was wearing out his very life. Often he went down on his knees to me, and said: 'Father, I'd die myself sooner than rob my master but I can't see you disgraced. Oh, let me go to the country? Now, Sir, I have told you all—do you wish your boy to be sent to goal, I deserve it, but don't spare my poor deluded innocent boy!'"

It would be difficult to describe Mr. Hewson's feelings, but his wife's first impulse was to hasten to liberate the prisoner. With a few incoherent words of explanation she hastened to the presence of his master, who, looking at him sorrowfully but kindly said:

"William, you have erred deeply, but not so deeply as I supposed. Your father has told me everything. I forgive him freely and you also."

The young man covered his face with his hands, and wept tears more bitter and abundant than he had ever shed since the day when he followed his mother to the grave. He could say little, but he knelt on the ground, and clasping the kind hand of her who had supplied to him that mother's place, he murmured:

"Will you tell him I would rather die than sin again."

Old Gahan died two years afterwards, truly penitent, invoking blessings on his son and on his benefactors; and the young man's conduct, now no longer unbecomingly influenced, was so steady and so upright, that his adopted parents felt that their pious work was rewarded, and that, in William Gahan, they had indeed a son.



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Etna of Hartford, Conn., Established 1816. Capital, \$5,000,000.

Hartford of Hartford, Conn., Established 1800. Capital, \$5,000,000.

Northern of London, England, Established 1833. Capital, \$5,000,000.

British America of Toronto, Established 1833. Capital, \$5,000,000.

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