

SAINT PATRICK

A NATIONAL TALE

OF THE

Fifth Century.

BY AN ANTIQUARY.

What cracker is this same, that deafs our ears
With this abundance of superfluous breath ?

• • • • •
Croak not, black angel, I have no food for thee.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.)

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THE
AUTHOR'S
PERSONAL NARRATIVE.

*To be read either before or after the Tale, or not at all,
as the Reader may incline.*

Neque enim Aonium nemus Advēna lustrō.

STATIUS, *Achill.* 1. 9.

I am not unto you as a stranger and sojourner in the
land. · APOCRYPHA.

IN a tour through one of the wildest parts
of Ireland, for the purpose of examining the
ruined remains of former ages, I chanced to
lose my way among the mountains ; and, while
I was anxiously climbing one eminence after
another, to discover, if possible, some known
object to direct me, the night came on and

threw me into a state of the most distressing perplexity. About noon, I had been fortunate enough to fall in with a stone pillar, bearing an inscription in the old Irish character, and I was so intent upon taking a correct copy of it, that the sun was near to setting before I had completed my task. So rejoiced was I at the possession of this treasure, indeed, that I walked on at a great pace, as a person will do when his spirits are up, without taking much thought about any thing except what had given me joy. And the hills and glens were so much alike in appearance, that my mind was too much taken up with my inscription to suffer me to distinguish one from another.

As the night darkened, it came on to rain, which both increased the darkness, and added to the discomfort of remaining till morning in so wild and shelterless a place. Such, however, seemed to be my lot; for no wanderer on night might bring me into greater perils, without much chance of finding a shieling or a cabin

after all. I began, therefore, to look about for the most sheltered spot which the place afforded, and at length I discovered a rock jutting over a small mountain stream, and so worn away below, that there was room enough for me between its base and the water of the brook. Under this rough canopy I sat down, not in the best humour, as you may well imagine, though I was possessed of the valuable inscription which had cost me so much trouble; and I listened with gloomy dejection to the fall of the rain, and the melancholy sound of the wind as it passed through the dark and solitary glen.

Damp and cold as this rocky shelter was, it was comfortable, compared with the bare side of the hill where I had been exposed to the drenching rain; yet even this comfort I was not suffered long to enjoy without alarm. While I listened to the roar of the blast, it became louder and stronger, and the rain fell in heavier torrents; and, what was more alarming, I fancied I heard the sound of the

waters of the brook increasing in loudness as it fell over the rocks farther up the glen. It might be only fancy, but, situated as I was, in the very sweep of the torrent if it should swell, and without any means of escape, the fancy was enough to fill me with terror, and I expected every instant to be hurled along with the rushing flood. This apprehension of immediate destruction forced me out again into the storm. I clambered up the steep bank of the stream, and began to search for some other shelter, where I might be safe, at least, from its waters, should they overflow their channel. I wandered, however, a long time without success, and was beginning to despair of finding a single rock or bush to ward off the rain which drenched me.

I paused at every step, and looked cautiously at the dark outlines of the ground, lest I might stumble over some unseen precipice into the torrent, which I heard brawling over its channel far below me. ^{Even} on one of those pauses I thought I heard a human voice ming-

ling with the noise of the waters. I listened more attentively. Perhaps, said I, some benighted wanderer, like myself, who may have fallen into the torrent, for the voice had the tone of supplication as if praying to heaven for aid. It came evidently up the steep below the brow where I was standing, but it was so dark that I could not be certain whether that steep were a precipice or a continuation of the green slope of the hill.

I resolved, however, to venture down, carefully feeling every foot of my way, that I might aid, if possible, a person who seemed still more unfortunate than myself. As I descended the voice became more distinct, and was plainly the voice of prayer. But you may imagine my surprise when I saw a stream of light glancing through the rain, and spreading like a fan in the dark air. I soon traced it to a chink in the face of a low-browed rock, in front of which I now found myself. The voice came from within. On advancing, I came upon a small narrow door, through a rift, in which I saw a venerable old man, with hair

as white as snow, kneeling before a crucifix, and repeating his *Pater noster* in a tone of humble piety.

The incident was so singular and romantic, that I stood fixed to the spot in wonder. I was unwilling to break in upon the good man's devotions; but the fury of the storm was increasing rather than abating, and I dared to knock. It did not discompose him. He finished his prayer, and rising, he approached slowly to the door, and gave me a welcome admission. After I had warmed myself at his comfortable fire, and partaken of his simple cheer, I ventured to ask him how he had taken up his abode in a place so remote and wild, when the infirmities of age required the assistance of friends or relations.

“God is my friend,” he replied; “I trust in him, and he never forsakes those who worship him with a humble heart.”

I found, on conversing farther with him, that he was a Catholic Recluse, who had vowed to spend the remainder of his life in the

cave where I had discovered him. I was glad to find so true a specimen of the ancient Christian hermits, though I grieved to think that our holy religion should be twisted to countenance so wild a whim as retreat from human society certainly is. I entered eagerly into conversation with the venerable man, and, as our pursuits always tinge our thoughts, it was not long till I got him deep in the subject of Irish Antiquities, and particularly those connected with the first preaching of the gospel, and the abolition of the old religion of the Druids. On this topic the Recluse was much at home, for he had studied it keenly in his younger years, and had even made a journey to Tours in France,—where Martin, the uncle of Saint Patrick, had been bishop in the fourth century,—to examine the records of the religious there, for documents relating to the great Apostle of Ireland. His skill in the Celtic tongue also gave him a great superiority over a mere English scholar, in examining the few manuscripts which are still preserved

in cabinets. In short, he was better acquainted with the early history of the Irish church than perhaps any other person at that moment living.

I quickly forgot my valuable inscription, when I perceived that I could obtain more knowledge of my country's antiquities from the hermit, than from a thousand mutilated inscriptions. I resolved to profit as much as possible by my singular discovery, and next morning I requested permission to remain with him a few days to indulge my taste for the information he liberally gave me. My request was granted; for he was no less anxious than myself that some written record should be transmitted to after times, of facts which would otherwise perish with him, as he had never liked the exercise of writing, and had trusted chiefly to his memory, when making his researches.

In the task of writing, I laboured incessantly night and day for a considerable time, scarcely allowing myself the refreshment of

sleep, so eager was I to record all that he communicated of these early and obscure ages. I soon found that I was in possession of a large sheaf of valuable notes, which only required arrangement and connection to exhibit as faithful an account of the first Christian missions, as it is now possible at this distance of time to obtain. But his information was by no means confined to the dry facts of ecclesiastical history ; for he often launched out into interesting accounts of the manners and ceremonies of the Druids, and even enlivened his details with domestic stories of love and friendship. Like the old minstrel's romances,

Some beth of war and some of woc,
 And some of joy and mirth also,
 And some of treachery and guile
 Of old adventures that fell while,
 And of all things that men seth,
 Also of love forsooth there beth.

Transl. of *Lai le Frainc*.

He was not, indeed, like Anthony-a-Wood,
 whose antique habits made him hate woman-

kind, for he dwelt with pleasure on love adventures; and though he had conformed to the celibacy enjoined by the Catholics of more modern times, he was too well skilled in Christian antiquities to acquiesce in the unnatural doctrine, and expressed a just indignation of Origen, who carried the matter so far as to mutilate himself for conscience' sake.* Old as the recluse was, he did not belong to that class of antiquaries, who, according to Foote, cared not for a Venus "unless she had her nose broken or a gash in her cheek;" nor to those whom Milton blamed for "taking plea-

* Lingard says that celibacy was enjoined in the earliest ages of the church; and those who were married before they were converted, were taught to live continently with their wives; but he has given no sufficient authority for this. See his *Antiq. of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 69. The Irish saint, Columba, the famous Apostle of the Western Isles, was so continent in his youth, that he unmercifully whipt with nettles a virgin who had discovered a partiality towards him. JONAS *in vita*.

sure to be all their lifetime raking in the foundations of old abbeys and cathedrals." Nay, he was of opinion, that love had been one of the most powerful instruments employed by providence to further the work of the early missionaries ; a doctrine, however, which I fear will go ill down with those who reject from their creed the operation of secondary causes, and clamour against Gibbon for presuming to think that such were employed by the Almighty in spreading the gospel ; though we see every day, that it is strictly conformable to the whole economy of the universe. *

It was well that I had lost no time in recording the singular details given me by the recluse ; for he soon afterwards was seized with palsy, which rendered his speech nearly unin-

* No man, I think, would defend Gibbon's insidious infidelity ; it was base and vile. But he was surely right in the opinion, *that God acted by secondary causes in promulgating Christian^{ity}*. See Decline and Fall, Chap. xiv.

telligible. I did all that was in my power to render his situation comfortable ; but in the midst of my assiduities he was removed to a better world at the advanced age of eighty, after I had lived in his cell upwards of two months, forgetting every other pursuit in the pleasure of gaining knowledge from his exhaustless memory.

The possession of my notes so completely engrossed my mind, that I had no inclination to continue my tour, and I accordingly set out on my return to Dublin. One afternoon while I was sitting in the travellers' room of an inn, with my manuscript in one hand, and a cup of tea in the other, according to my usual custom,—the door burst open, and several persons were ushered in, whom I came to learn were engaged in view hunting, and such other laudable means of getting rid of time, which the degenerate moderns have invented for the idle. As I was in the midst of a very amusing account of the Druid doc-

trine of the transmigration of souls, * I was not a little annoyed at the interruption, and the more so, that there was not a private parlour unoccupied in the house. At any other time, I should perhaps have willingly joined this company, for there seemed to be among them more than one original; but, as I was enjoying a rich antiquarian treat, it was with great reluctance that I tied up my papers, and began to sip my tea in gloomy silence. The waiter had laid down beside me a provincial newspaper, of which I had taken little notice. This was a powerful object of attraction to one of the party,—an elderly gentleman with a snuff-brown great-coat and a grey hat,—who eagerly darted on the paper, and,

* A late author *asserts*, that the Druids illustrated this doctrine practically, by chopping down old people amongst mutton, and feasting on the mess, and refers to Strabo, xi. 513. Was it from this that Forsyth took the hint for his absurd notions of human immortality? See his Principles of Moral Science.

as if his political appetite could not be soon enough gratified by reading, he abruptly asked me whether any account had yet arrived.

“Of what, Sir?” said I.

He threw at me a look of surprise, as much as to say, what incurious mortals we have in this country; and, without making me an answer, he hurried his eye over the paper, as if his life had been hanging on the intelligence it might contain.

“Good God! it is thrown out after all!” he exclaimed, as he tossed down the paper in marked disappointment.

“I told you so,” said another of the group laughing, “the Parliament of Britain has more wisdom than to give power into the hands of a party whose leading principle is persecution.”

“I tell you, Sir, I have refuted that assertion of yours a hundred times,” replied the other, “and I will not, Sir, argue with a man who will not be convinced by reason.”

“Our friend, the doctor, over the table,

can witness that I never refuse to admit your facts when you give me proper authorities ; but you will never convince me that a Roman Catholic will cease to hate heretics, and persecute them with fire and sword whenever he can do so with safety to his own person."

"Gentlemen," said the doctor, who was thus appealed to, "I beg leave to stand neuter.—You know I always abide by the laws of the land, holding that the Parliament is more knowing in what is for the good of the country than the most learned individual in it."

"O you think so, do you?" said the first speaker, "and does not the very throwing out of that bill show you, that this same blessed Parliament takes a pleasure from year to year to sit down and coolly persecute four millions of the best subjects in the kingdom? Yes, Sir, you may see it with your eyes blindfolded, if your absurd pursuit after old ruined churches, and your raking through noisome charnel-houses, would give you time to think of any thing that is worth thinking about."

I turned a more inquisitive look at the doctor, whose antiquarian researches were thus so scoffingly glanced at by the advocate for Catholic emancipation, and I exulted in the thoughts of showing him my invaluable notes ; for what is the possession of a treasure if you are forced to keep it locked up from view ? He was by much the oldest of the company, short in stature, stooped a little forward on his chair, was thin and sallow in complexion, squinted a little with his left eye, and seemed wonderfully pleased with a gold-headed cane which he twirled about with much complacency of air. I was just on the point to accost him, and show him my precious manuscript ; but the two opponents were growing so warm and noisy, that I believe I should scarcely have been heard, and I was forced to wait till the storm of words should grow calmer.

“ I'll prove it, Sir,” said the second speaker.—“ I defy you, Sir, or any man, Sir.”—“ Nay, but be calm, my good friend.” “ No, Sir, no man can be calm when the laws are

persecuting four millions of the people.” “ You will not believe your own eyes, Sir : I tell you it is the leading principle of your Catholics to persecute with fire and sword every Protestant they can come at without danger.” “ ’Tis false, Sir, grossly false. These tenets were renounced by the six Catholic universities, Sir, when Mr Pitt applied to them for information ; and the Pope himself, Sir, in his rescript to the Irish prelates—June, 1791—confirmed the decision ; renouncing the tenets, Sir, of not keeping faith with heretics, and of encouraging his followers to assassinate Protestant kings. You should know that, Sir, before you talk to me.” “ I know it, Sir, and I pity you from my soul to suffer yourself to be duped by such a shallow device.” “ ’Sdeath, Sir, will you not believe the six Catholic universities and the Pope himself ?” “ No, Sir, I promise you I will not, so long as I am a Protestant ; for they keep no faith with heretics, and it was their interest to deceive Mr Pitt in the case you

mention." " I have done with you, Sir, it is impossible to reason with you."

" Not so fast, my good friend, and you shall have their own words for it." " I tell you, Sir, that they have long ago renounced what you allude to, and you may as well quote the laws of Draco against them, as the canons of the old councils." " What I allude to, Sir, is not old : it is sanctioned by no less a personage than the Most Reverend Dr Troy, the present Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and, I presume, by all the good Catholics at this moment in Ireland." " Well, Sir, we shall hear this mighty proof, but I believe the whole is a base fabrication."

The anti-catholic gentleman upon this pulled from his pocket a scroll, which he stated, upon his honour, to have been faithfully extracted by himself from the annotations subjoined to the Roman Catholic Bible, just published by the said Dr Troy.* I began now

* The title of this record of Catholic principles, in the 19th century, is "The New Testament, &c. with

to be somewhat interested in the discussion from its connection with the first coming of the Catholics under Saint Patrick, in the fifth century, which I had been making so many inquiries concerning at the recluse ; and, after the gentleman had read his extracts, I requested a sight of them. They were as follows :—

“ The Church service of England being in heresy and schism, is therefore not only unprofitable, but damnable.”—*Annot.* on Acts x. 9.

“ The prayer of a Protestant cannot be heard in heaven.”—*Annot.* on John xv. 7.

“ Their prayers and service are no better than the howling of wolves.”—*Annot.* on Mark iii. 12.

“ The translators of the English Bible ought to be abhorred to the depths of hell.”—*Annot.* on Hebrews v. 7.

Annotations, &c. &c. approved of by the Most Rev. Dr Troy, R. C. Archbp. of Dublin.—Dublin, 1816.

“ Even in worldly conversation and secular acts of our life, we must avoid them [that is, Protestants] as much as we may, because this familiarity is many ways contagious and noisome to good men.”—*Annot.* on 2 John, verse 10.

“ All wise men see or shall see the deceits of all heretics, though for troubling the state of such commonwealths, where unluckily they have received power, they cannot be so suddenly extirpated.”—*Annot.* on 2 Tim. iii. 9.

“ When evil men, be they heretics [that is, Protestants] or other malefactors, may be punished and suppressed without disturbance and hazard of the good, [that is, Catholics ;] they may and ought by public authority, either spiritual or temporal, to be chastised or executed.”—*Annot.* of Matth. xiii. 29.

“ A Christian [that is, a Catholic] is bound to burn and deface all heretical books, [for example the English Bible.”]—*Preface.*

“ The zeal of a Catholic man ought to be

so great toward all heretics* [Protestants] and their doctrines, that he should give them the curse—the execration—the anathema—though they were ever so dear to him—though they were his own parents.” *Idem.*

“ All Protestants are heretics.”—*Annot.* on 2 John, verse 10.

“ Now, Sir,” remarked the reader, “ what do you say to these mild and peaceful doctrines which are held by four millions of the best subjects in the kingdom as you say ?”—“ Upon my soul, Sir, I will not believe a jot of it, till I see this Bible which you mention with my own eyes. You must have been imposed on, Sir.”—“ No, Sir, I was not imposed upon ; and you may have the pleasure of seeing this book of merciful forbearance by stepping across the way to the Catholic priest’s.”

* Contrast this with the doctrine of the Church of England. “ Those are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth.”—*Thirty-nine Articles*, No. xvii.

—“ I shall go, Sir, instantly ; and I hope, Sir, you will have no objections to accompany me to see the baseness of the imposition that has been put upon you.”—“ I am ready, Sir, when you please.”—They accordingly set out to decide their dispute, and the antiquarian doctor and myself were left to decide it as we might on the parole evidence we had heard.

“ How different,” said I, “ the spirit of the Catholic church now from what it was in the days of Saint Patrick, when it was humbly struggling for existence, and spreading slowly amidst peril and difficulty through the darkness of Druidism.”

“ So you believe in these silly fables ?” returned the Doctor with a leering smile ; “ I did not suppose there was now a man in the empire above the rank of an illiterate labourer who gave any credit to the legend of Saint Patrick,* and still less to the fabulous traditions concerning the Druids.”

* “ Saint Patrick has been supposed the great apostle of the Irish, and to have effected the great work of their

“I beg your pardon, Sir,” replied I, somewhat disappointed, “but I thought from what fell from your friends who have just gone out that you were fond of antiquities.”

“You are right, Sir; I am so; but it is only rational antiquities. I never trouble myself with legendary dreams except to laugh

conversion. But the stories related of this apostle are doubtless legendary tales or theological romances, fabricated four centuries after his imaginary existence.”—Gordon's Hist. of Ireland, I. 28—9, ed. Lond. 1806, 8vo.

Sir John Carr says, “No one but an incorrigible disbeliever could doubt that the good and great Saint Patrick was a tangible being.”—Strang. in Irel.

“The sixty-six lives of Saint Patrick, which were extant in the ninth century, must have contained as many thousand lies; yet we *may* believe, that in one of the Irish inroads, the future apostle was led away captive.”—Gibbon's Decline and Fall, c. xxx. note.

It is singular that no life of the Saint (at least so far as I know) has been published in English. Some of my readers may be gratified to know that a translation of Jocelin's history of his life and miracles, with copious notes, is in preparation.

at them, or, when they are absurdly defended, to refute them."

"So you do not believe, Sir, that Saint Patrick ever had any existence? I should like to know how you disprove the testimony of the annals of Ulster,* if you do not believe the universal tradition."

"I tell you, Sir, I do not believe either in his existence or in that of his brother Senan, who seems to be no other than the river Shannon. † You are aware, Sir, I suppose, that

* "Anno Dom. 432. Patricius pervenit ad Hiberniam 9^o anno Theodosii Junioris, primo anno Xisti 42, Episcopi Romanae ecclesiae. Sic enumeravit Beda et Marcellinus in Chronicis suis."—*Annals of Ulster*.

† Dr Ledwich says, the Shaanon has been turned into St Senan, the town of Down into St Daunus, and Knock-Kevin into St Kevin.—*Antiq. of Ireland*.

Colonel Vallency was so overscen as to mistake Aicill, the ancient name of Kells in the county of Meath, first for a juriscousult of King Cairbre, and afterwards for a surgeon.—*Collectan. de Reb. Hibern.* No. 5.

Pinkerton has shown how Hector Boethius, in pure ignorance, beatified an old cloak, under the name of Saint Amphibolus. These things were common, Sir, in early times, and I have no doubt that the great Irish Apostle, upon proper inquiry, will turn out to be a mountain near Inverness, called Craig Phadraig, or Rock Patrick. Or, not improbably, he may have some close connection with the Arkite Mythology, and may perhaps be Noah himself, or even the Ark; for we know that this mythology extended to the neighbouring kingdom of Cambria, as Mr Faber has lately proved that the celebrated King Arthur was no other than Noah, or perhaps the Isle of Arran.* But waving this, Sir, I am certain you must laugh at the absurd miracles ascribed to this same fabulous Apostle, such as producing fire from ice,—“*de glacie produxit ignem,*”

* See Faber's Dissertation on the Cabiri, Vol. II. and his Origin of Pagan Idolatry, II. 393.

are the words of one of his monkish biographers."

"I beg your pardon, Sir, but I think you have been rather unlucky in your example, if you think this either absurd or impossible."

"How so, Sir? You do not pretend that the thing is possible, do you?"

"Not only possible," said I, "but certain, as Mr Hincks will show you, if you take the trouble of calling at the Cork Institution in your way. I will not, indeed, pretend to prove that all the miracles ascribed to the Apostle are genuine, but in this instance he seems to have a prior claim to Sir H. Davy for the discovery of the celebrated potassium, which takes fire when it touches ice."

"These monkish lives, however, are all fabulous, sir, notwithstanding."

"Well, Sir, I must say, that you seem to have the matter clear before you; but you must permit me to retain some of my old prejudices in favour of the books I have eagerly studied."

“ Then, Sir, I would advise you forthwith to study some of those rational inquiries which have thrown so much light on ancient times ; such as the works of Bryant, Bergier, Gebelin, Hardouin, Pinkerton, and Faber, who will clearly prove to you that all you have hitherto believed of ancient times is grossly fabulous. Hardouin, Sir, will show you, that the works which you falsely ascribe to Homer, Virgil, and Cicero, are merely forgeries of the Middle Ages in the dark ages. Gebelin, again, will demonstrate that Romulus and Remus, the supposed founders of Rome, are personages altogether imaginary.* Then, Sir, you may turn to the Abbé Bergier,† who, rejecting Hardouin’s notion that Hercules was Moses,‡

* *Monde primitif*, par M. Jour de Gebelin, Vol. IV. B. ii. ch. 5.

† *L’origine des Dieux, &c.* Paris, 1774.

‡ “ Hercules non alius quam Moses est, quem mater exposuit in carecti fluminis Nili.”

Note by P. HARDOUIN, on Cic. D. N. lib. iii.

clearly demonstrates that he was nothing else but a large causeway to prevent rivers from overflowing their banks ; which rivers have been fabled to be serpents, boars, and lions, which he destroyed. Jupiter, moreover, the Abbé shows to be rain, which impregnated Semele, a fountain, which brought forth Bacchus, a marsh ; while Prometheus was evidently a quantity of mortar, or a batch of potter's earth ; the eagle that preyed on his liver, the fire of a pottery kiln ; and Mount *Caucasus*, the hearth, or rather the kiln itself. Mightier still than these champions of truth is Mr Bryant, who has shown, beyond controversy, that the famous siege of Troy is an artant fable ; and in his *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, has proved that all the early histories of Egypt, Greece, &c. are nothing more than fanciful accounts of Noah and the ark and the deluge. Some have even gone ingeniously farther, such as Mr Alwood, who, in his *Literary Antiquities of Greece*, thinks it probable that our term for the Su-

preme Being is the Babylonish name of the Ark, or Bad ; whence the Hindoo Boodh, the Ceylonese Booden, the Gothic Oden or Woden, * the Siamese Godama, the German Got, and the English God, which, sir, you perceive, goes to prove that our pious countrymen at this moment pay idolatrous worship to Noah's Ark. In the same spirit, Sir, M. Volney, in his *Ruins of Empires*, concludes, from learned researches which he made in *the East*, that *Jesus Christ is merely the cabalistic name of Bacchus*, and in this he is sanctioned by no less a man than Buonaparte himself. † In a word, Sir, these learned men

* Mr Faber says (Robin) Hood is a fabulous personage from the same origin ; and he affirms little less of the Isle of Butc.—*Pagan Idolatry*, Vol. II. 397 and 393.

† For this, if it wanted any proof, we have the authority of the celebrated German author, Wieland, who had it from Buonaparte's own mouth at Weimar, that he did not believe that Jesus ever had existence.

GRUBER'S *C. M. Wieland Geschildert*.

have proved that all which we formerly believed of ancient times is wholly visionary and false."

I was so stunned with his long harangue, which he put an end to, seemingly, for the purpose of recovering breath to begin afresh, and I was so shocked at the impiety of the latter part of it, that I could scarcely utter a word. The subject of my precious notes, however, still kept afloat in my thoughts, and I fancied he could scarcely venture to disbelieve the mass of facts which I had treasured there, or even fly off to Noah's Ark to explain them away. I ventured to turn the tide of conversation in that direction, not without dread of being overpowered by a similar flood of scepticism to what he had just poured forth.

"You surely," said I, "cannot deny, Sir, that the Druidic superstition was the prevalent mode of worship in Ireland before the introduction of Christianity?"

"Ha, ha, ha," roared the sceptic, "what a

fool you must take me for! Has not that been long set at rest by the learned John Pinkerton.* Druids in Ireland, forsooth! You may as well say that the Irish channel is full of fresh water. There never was a single Druid in the island, and all the traditional stories to the contrary, and Toland's audacious assertions, are as void of truth as Keating's account of the charm against serpents, which Moses put on the ancestor of the Irish kings when he met with him at the Red Sea, a miracle which remains to this day, as I suppose Vallency will assert, in the absence of all venomous creatures from the island. Druids! No, Sir, there never was a Druid in Ireland!"

"And what will you make then," replied I, "of the numerous Druidical monuments to be found every where in the country, such as stone pillars, circles, altars, and rocking-stones?"

* See his Inquiry into the History of Scotland.

“ All a flam, Sir, all a flam ! No more Druidic monuments than Dublin Castle, or the Long Bridge of Belfast. The public, Sir, has been too long imposed upon by the specious learning of such works as Borlase’s Antiquities of Cornwall, Rowland’s *Mona Antiqua*, Toland’s *History of the Druids*, and such like fabulous books. Besides, Sir, Dr M’Culloch,* the learned geologist, has discovered that these same rocking-stones, so long supposed Druidical works, are formed by the natural process of the disintegration of rocks from the action of the weather.”

“ Perhaps, Sir,” I replied, “ Dr M’Culloch was not aware that we have undisputed authority for the fact, that the ancients did erect rocking stones, unless you pretend that Apollonius Rhodius, like Virgil, is a monkish forgery of the ninth age. He says of a warrior, ‘ In the sea-surrounded Tenos he slew them,

* See his Paper on the Granite Tors of Cornwall in the *Geological Transactions*, Vol. II. p. 78.

and about them he raised a mound of earth, placing two stones on the top, of which one—the wonder of men—moves to the sounding breath of the north wind.’”*

“ Well, Sir, all that may be true, but there never was, I affirm it again, a single Druid in Ireland: The monuments supposed to have been erected by them are all manifestly Gothic, and were introduced by the Ostmen or Danes; and the round towers, which have so puzzled all the learned, seem to me to have been used as speaking trumpets to increase the sound of the prayers these Goths addressed to their God Woden.” †

I perceived it was impossible to make any thing of him, and I reluctantly gave up all thoughts of showing him my antiquarian trea-

* Τηνῶ ἐν ἀμφιρυστῇ πεφνεν, καὶ ἀμησατο γοῖαν
 Ἄμφ’ αὐτοῖς; στήλας τὲ δυὼ καθυπερθεὺν ἔτευξεν,
 Ὡν ἑτερηθαμῶς, περισσιὸν ἀνδράσι λευσεῖν,
 Κινυταὶ ἤχηεντος ὑπο πνοῇ βορέαο.—APOLLON. RHOD.
 † Sir John Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*.

sure. I attempted to give the conversation another turn, and I found my sceptic as credulous of the possibility of executing some of the wildest of modern proposals as he was sceptical concerning antiquities. He believed with Darwin, for example, that we might ere long come to be able to predict the winds and the weather for several months before hand ;* and, with Dr Chalmers of Glasgow, that our telescopes might soon be so improved as to discover the planetary inhabitants. † Indeed, I have seldom seen a sceptic who was not most childishly credulous respecting particular subjects.

The Catholic disputants returned and interrupted our farther discourse on these impossibilities, while he was attempting to prove that Bishop Wilkins' project for making a journey to the moon ‡ was as practicable as

* Darwin's Botanic Garden, Vol. II. Note, *sub fin.*

† Discourses on the Modern Astron. p. 31, 1st edit.

‡ See the Works of John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester.

Sadler's balloon voyage across the straits of Dover. The advocate for emancipation appeared considerably chop-fallen, though he still persisted in his opinion. He had been convinced by his own eyes that his opponent's extracts were genuine; yet with the true liberality of spirit which so markedly characterizes those who take his side of the question, he continued to support the Catholic cause, and insisted on the Gospel precept that we ought not to persecute those who, if they had power, would, *by their own avowal and invariable practice*, show others no mercy. In order to restore good humour, I proposed that we should drown all our differences in a cheerful glass, which was immediately agreed to by the two emancipation disputants; but my friend, the Doctor, demurred, saying, he had been all day examining the interesting ruins of a church, and he did not choose to infringe the twenty-eighth canon of King Edgar, which forbade drinking and debauchery at *church wakes*, in the following terms,

which he condescended to give in Saxon, as being more intelligible than the mongrel language called English, thundering out with much vanity of air: "And we læraw that man æt Cyric wæccan swithe gedreoh ry. And georne gebidde. And ænige drenc ne ænig unnit tharne dreoge." *—But how he made out his antiquarian labour in the church ruins to be a church wake, I suppose it would have puzzled him to tell. At all events, he showed by his quotation that he was learned in the Saxon tongue, or more probably, that he had picked up the scrap from some body who was. That his learning, however, was not wholly borrowed, I began to discover before we parted.

"These Saxons must have been prodigiously learned I should imagine, Doctor," said the gentleman in brown.

"They were so, Sir," replied the Doctor, "and so skilled in the sublime of architec-

* Wheloc's Bede, Can. 28. K. Edgar.

ture, that we of these times are pigmies to them, mere pigmies, Sir."

"And civilized, I presume, in no common degree," said the other gentleman.

"As to that, Sir," said the Doctor, "the wise canon which I have just quoted is undeniable proof, if any were necessary."

"Another strong proof," remarked I, "of what you advance occurs in Milton's History of England, namely, that the wife of Earl Godwin, sister of the famous King Canute, made great gain by the trade she drove of buying up English youths and maidens to sell to Denmark as slaves; and old Giraldus Cambrensis says that this was a very common practice with the English of these times."

"I won't believe it, sir," replied the Doctor somewhat nettled, "Milton was a party-man, and Cambrensis a retailer of fables; besides, they were not so bad, even allowing this to be true, as the ancient Irish, who are proved beyond all question to have been ferocious

cannibals, as you will find both in Diodorus * and Strabo, † and so late, Sir, as the days of Queen Elizabeth, the celebrated author of the *Faerie Queene* saw with his own eyes, ‡ at the execution of Murrough O'Brien, an old woman, the criminal's foster-mother, take up his head when quartered and suck the blood, saying, the earth was not worthy to receive it. You must not tell me of the Irish, Sir."

"You are not of this country, Sir, I presume?" said I.

"No, Sir, I thank God," replied he, quaff-

* Φασί τινάς ἀνθρώπους ἐσθίειν, ὡσπερ καὶ τῶν Βρετανῶν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας τὴν ὀνομαζομένην Ἰρίν.—DIOD. SIC. Lib. v.

† Geog. iv.—Pomp. Mela says that the Irish were destitute of every virtue." "Inconditi sunt et omnium virtutem ignari magis quam aliae gentes, aliquatenus gnari, pietatis admodum expertes."—Lib. III.—"The Irish," says Humc, "from the beginning of time, had been buried in the most profound barbarism and ignorance at the coming of the English."—Hist. of England.

‡ Spenser's View of Ireland.

ing off a glass of wine with self-complacency, in defiance of the twenty-eighth canon of King Edgar.

While he was enjoying his wine, and preparing to charge a large tobacco-pipe from a well stuffed seal-skin pouch, the Anti-Catholic gentleman whispered in my ear that the Doctor was a Caledonian, who had been bred to the church; and though, while at college, he gave promise of becoming a skilful theologian, in one of his first appearances in the pulpit as a candidate for the charge of a numerous congregation, he had unfortunately, in the piety and simplicity of his heart, repeated the Lord's Prayer; and so marked a symptom of his heresy was death to his success. He lost his call for that very reason; * and seeing the at-

* This is by no means a singular occurrence in Scotland. There was an instance, I am informed, so late as 1817; and little wonder, when the reverend person who at present assumes the office of The Christian Instructor in the Scottish capital has dared to pronounce, both

tempt vain to blot out the impious offence in the eyes of these doughty disciples of Calvin, he purchased from Aberdeen a degree of LL.D., and on the income of a scanty patrimony had for many years travelled through the kingdom in quest of antiquities. I marvelled greatly, upon learning this, that he should be so very ignorant as to deny the existence of Saint Patrick ; but an incident just occurred which showed that the English are no less ignorant of modern Ireland than the Doctor was of its antiquities.

We had come to a dead pause in our various disputes, when our ears were assailed with a strange uproar from without, and immediately afterwards the door of our room was driven open with violence, disclosing a scene which I despair of being able to bring before

from the pulpit and the press, that the Lord's Prayer is "*radically defective.*"—See p. 251 of *Lectures on select Portions of Scripture*, by A. Thomson, A. M. Minister of St George's, Edinburgh.—Edin. 1816.

the reader's fancy. The first person who burst in was a tall, slender, raw-looking youth, girt about the waist like an ant, without his hat and neckcloth, his hair standing on end like the spines of a baited hedgehog, and his eyes starting out from their sockets like those of a startled hare. He was followed, or rather pursued, by a brawny black-headed fellow, literally naked, bellowing in Irish as loud as St Columba, when he sung the 44th Psalm to terrify the Pictish Druids, * and he seemed earnestly to thirst after the blood of the terrified youth, who fled from him as he would have done from an ogre, till he got behind my chair, panting

* When Columba was chanting the evening service in the castle of Brude, the Pictish king, the Magi (Druids) did all they could to prevent him; upon which he began the 44th Psalm, with a voice miraculously elevated, like unto a clap of thunder, so that the people were struck with great terror thereat.
ADAMNANUS, *in vita*,

and blowing as if his soul had been ready to escape at every heave of his breath. The naked fellow, upon seeing our company, assumed a look of the most singular cast I have ever witnessed. Humour, however, and jocularities were evidently uppermost in his mind, as he said,

“ By Saint Patrick, honey, you’ll not be having it to say over the dub, how you never seed a wild Irishman, you wont, jewel ; and had the feeling him and the axperience to the bargain, you have. Well, and to be sure, you know it’s only a joke ; your honours,” addressing the gentlemen of our company, “ and hopes, sir, it’s no offence for a bit of sport.”

We now understood, that the affrighted youth was an Oxonian who had expressed his belief in the hearing of some Hibernian wags, of the existence of a race of wild Irish men who ran naked on the mountains, and they, taking advantage of his credulity, had one of their number privately stript and chain-

ed in the stable of the inn, to a sight of whom the Oxonian was introduced as to an exhibition of wild beasts. On a signal given, however, the pretended wild man burst his chain, and darting on the terrified youth, disencumbered him of a quantity of bleached buckram, which he had wound about his throat for a neckcloth, and performed several other innocent dismantlings to put him in bodily fear. The English booby was terribly enraged, but for fear of farther danger, he was obliged not only to forgive the wags, but to allow them a bonus to drink his health, with which they contentedly disappeared, showering upon him all the blessings they had ever heard pronounced. *

On my return to Dublin, I began to re-

* The reader is assured, that this scene is neither fanciful nor exaggerated. More than one instance of a similar kind has occurred within a few years, to the great gratification of waggish Hibernians, and the exposure of John Bull.

fect on the ignorance which was abroad, concerning this country, particularly as I had heard from the Scottish Doctor, a professed adept in antiquarian lore, the most childish scepticism, relative to Saint Patrick. The notes which I had so carefully taken from the conversations of the Recluse, I thought, could not fail to expel in some measure this gross darkness, and I accordingly turned in my mind the most efficient mode of giving them circulation. I consulted with a friend to aid me with his advice, and, after revolving the matter with all the deliberation which so momentous a subject required, it was determined to throw as many of them as possible into a continued narrative, it being more to the taste of the age, than a dry chronicle of facts, or long tedious discussions.

In drawing it up I have carefully compared and collated my documents with what were previously in the hands of the learned; and I have more frequently quoted these authorities than, perhaps, my readers may thank me.

for. I have also not scrupled to use the expressions of good authors when they occurred to me, in order to give more force to my own feebler diction : if any body thinks this is patching or pedantry, he is at liberty to say so ; I shall not take offence. If it is objected, that the early inhabitants did not speak the provincial dialects which I have put in the mouths of some of the inferior characters, I answer, that I found it the best way to distinguish them, and it is no more an objection than making the superior characters speak modern English. Who ever wished to hear Shakespeare's Othello speak Venetian? or Fluellen declaiming in courtly and correct English? Besides, I can assure the reader that " I disdain," as much as Mr Godwin,* " the mimic toil of inventing a jargon" for my characters, and I have given the Irish and the Scotch † as it is at present spoken by the

* St Leon, Vol. II. p. 299.

† Dr Jamieson's Dictionary will much assist the

peasants. I am aware that this practice, however, falls under the feeble lash of the Continental critics, particularly the French, who stigmatise it as a remnant of barbarism. "C'est ce mélange," says La Harpe,* "du sérieux et du bouffon, du grave et du burlesque, qui défigure si grossièrement les pièces Anglaises et Espagnoles, et c'est un reste de barbarie." It is only necessary to reply, that it is impossible to give a picture of society by confining the delineation to heroes and princes.

As to the truth of the tale, I cannot go so far as Massuccio, and say, "Invoco l'Altissimo Dio per testimonio che tutte son-ver-simile historie;"† but I pledge myself that I have not, to my knowledge, infringed on historical facts by fanciful misstatement. I have even been sparing of giving the miracu-

English reader, though he will not find there *all* the Scotch words which occur in the Tale.

* Lycée, I. 74. edit. 8vo. Paris.

† Massuccio di Salerno, Il Novellino.

lous deeds of the Apostle, warned by the danger Comsi brought himself into by writing his Romances, entitled, “*Miracles de Notre Dame* ;” for which offence the Devil would, to a certainty, have choked him, had he not expeditiously made the sign of the cross.* I cannot, like Apuleius in his *Golden Ass*, promise you a fashionable work,—“*Ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram, auresque tuas benevolas lepido susurro pumulceam* ;” † nor a “*tres elegante, delicieuse, /melliflue, et tres plaisante histoire* ;” ‡ but by mingling the singular customs and rites of the Druids with love tales,—“*con amorosissimi documenti*,” §—I hope the reader may find in the narrative some little profitable amusement for a winter’s night ; and if it give half

* Dunlop’s *History of Fiction*.

† Apuleius, *sub initio*.

‡ Roy Perceforest, *in tit.*

§ Sabadino delli Arienti, *le Porretane, in tit.*

the pleasure in reading that it has done to me in writing it, I shall think myself sufficiently gratified.

Stephen's Green, Dublin, }
Nov. 2, 1818.

Note.—In the Cloister of St Pierre at Aix is a three-quarter length picture of Saint Patrick, with the inscription, “Sanctus Patricius, oppidi Ardmachani conditor, filius ex sorore Sancti Martini Tyronensis.” On Saint Boyne’s cross, a whole length figure of the Apostle is sculptured. In the Irish House of Lords was a fine painting by Barry of Saint Patrick preaching before Leogaire.

SAINT PATRICK.

VOL. I.



SAINT PATRICK.

CHAPTER I.

‘ Kennen sie dieses Frauzimmer ?’

WERTER.

“ Bot, O thou virgine, how sall I call thee ?
Ane goddess art thou soythly to my sight,
Whether thou be Diane, Phebus’ sister bright,
Or than sum goddess of the nymphis kynd.”

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

“ OH, my darling dear now, ye must just rest a bit among the shamrocks there, for my ould bones cannot budge, not the making of a harp-string farther,” said old Camdèroch, as he set down his harp on a green slope that margined the Ban water. “ Bad luck to

your crazy face ; look ye there now, snapt, if I am aleive, Mureghan's span new* twanger he made me pitch him a fi'penny * for at Coulraine, and swore by the great oak of Slivedonard, that it was the rael royal, and as strong aye as a curragh cable. Faith and troth, I begin to have a notion, that all the animals in ould Erin, man, woman, and chil' of them, are as good as enchanted by them magicians. There's never a bit of catgut in Antrim, but they have bewitched. Snapt! and not the making of a finger's-length in the goat-skin. Dear a dear, it would have done your heart good just to tinkle *Cyshlih ma chree* to the Ban, as he peeps out among the banks there ; but the rael royal is as dead as Dogherty, ochone !”

The good harper's eyes filled, when he thought of the sweet harmony he could have

* “ About this time there was a mint erected at Armagh and Cashel, and money coined for the service of the State.”—O'Connor's Keating, apud A. Dom. 427, page 327, edit. London, 1723.

poured along the meadows, in cadence to the murmurs of the Ban, had it not been for the snapping of this unlucky string ; and hoping, but not daring to trust, that he should find a substitute for it, he began to rummage the goat-skin wallet in which he carried all his miscellany of moveables. But had there been a dozen strings in that wallet, it is odds that he should have found one, amidst the chaos of scraps of provision, old harp pins, deer's horns, and the like, which he had carefully treasured there. As he was thus busily employed in tossing and turning his things over and over, the splashing of a horse in the river caught his ear, and raising his grey eyes, they were met by the brightest vision that ever blest the eyes of a harper since the days of Orpheus, in this or any other country. For although his fancy had not, at this moment, led him to dream of magic and enchantment, the female form that now appeared to him would not have failed to derange his calmer trains of thinking. Indeed, he might have

come to a pause whether it was not the Goddess of Music herself who had deigned to visit him, had he not instantly perceived that her habiliments were those of a Druidess,—a circumstance which tended nothing to lull his fears of magic. He overlooked her angelic form, and the beauty of her dappled palfrey, and fixed his fearful gaze on her robe of azure, the wavings of her yellow scarf, and the wreath of flowers that shielded her hair from the rough caresses of the wind. *

On reaching the bank of the river where the harper sat in gloomy conjecture, the docile-looking steed arched its neck, and reared and plunged in all the wantonness of caprice and high spirit; and, although the rider seemed to be the “gentlest of sky-born forms,” and to possess the commanding dignity of celestial natures, it required her most artful management to keep her seat. Cándèroch hesitated whether he should venture

* See Toland's History of the Druids.

to lend his feeble assistance to this female magician, as he had half-fancied the stranger to be. He decided he ought, and began to make all the haste his stiff limbs would allow to run to her aid ; but just as he got within a stone's throw, her palfrey made a spring across the field, and in an instant was out of sight in the woods. And even had it not done so, it is a question whether he would have trusted himself nearer, his fancied danger had so alarmed him, and he was so overawed by the majestic air of the stranger ; for the countenance that blushed from among the profusion of her dark tresses, though it spoke an " autumnal mildness " of nature, yet bore such traits of superior intelligence, that he could not have assumed courage to accost her ; she was, indeed, more like the eldest of the nymphs than the youngest of the graces.

Candèroch had, in his youth, been an admirer of female beauty, and had often lent his muse to its celebration ; but never had he seen his summer dreams so beautifully em-

bodied as in the apparition which had just vanished in the woods. He was lost in amazement, and his dread of magic was sunk in admiration. He stood motionless, and kept his eye fixed on the glade where he had seen the last waving of her golden scarf disappear among the trees. He thought the very air where she had passed breathed a heavenly fragrance, although he might be deceived by the odour of the dewy birches that hung in trellised luxuriance over the Ban. Nay, the palfrey itself, excepting its waywardness, looked like a denizen of paradise, its form was so elegant, its movements so airy, and the dappling of its colours so tastefully blended. He even began to expect to see flowers springing up along the track over which the vision had flitted, for so lightly had the grass been trod, that he could not perceive a foot print on the turf.

On looking around him, he found lying on the ground a square packet which had been dropped by the stranger. It was wrapped in

a piece of the same azure cloth of which her robe was made, and fastened with a golden clasp studded with gems. The capricious vaultings of the palfrey had thrown down this singular packet in the place, where the harper recognised it as a magic trap ready baited to ensnare him to destruction.

“ Man alevie !” he cried, “ I’m bewitched for certain, and here is the blue temptation dear, to ruin ould Can for good and all. Ah the jewel, to be putting her magic on a poor harper, that wudn’t harm a gnat for love or money in a long summer’s day.”

His first determination, on finding the packet, was to leave it and trudge away with his harp beyond this dangerous neighbourhood ; but his curiosity was strongly roused to discover the contents of the packet, and tempted him to run into the foreseen danger, as the fascinated bird rushes into the fangs of the serpent. * He took the precaution to bless

* The belief of the power of serpents to fascinate birds and other animals is ancient and universal. Dr

himself thrice before he touched it ; yet, withal, his hand trembled violently when he tried to undo the clasp ; but this, to his mortification, was *magically* fastened, and defied his strength or his ingenuity to open.

The whole event quite absorbed his thoughts, and he sat musing so long, that, before he was aware, the sun was rapidly hastening beyond the mountains of Tyrone. The chill of the evening, however, as it began to benumb his limbs, informed him that it was time to bestir himself. He was again put to a stand what to do with the packet. The beautiful stranger might return to claim it when she had reduced her palfrey to obedience, and should

Johnson, in his preface to Lobo's Travels, rejects it as a vulgar prejudice ; but it was proved from actual experiment by a philosophical gentleman in England. (Phil. Trans. abridg. Vol. III.) Mr Barrow found it avouched by creditable persons at the Cape from ocular observation. The peasants in Scotland believe that vipers raise themselves perpendicularly on their tails, and suck down the mounting larks.

he take it with him, it might prove a source of trouble. He felt, however, that he could not bring himself to part with it, and curiosity and superstition made him conjecture that it was spell-bound in his hand. He resolved, therefore, to carry it to his friend Bryan, who was more knowing in such matters than himself, and would, he doubted not, be able to resolve his difficulties, and put him in the way to avert mishap should any threaten.

Glendálagh, where Bryan resided, was not far distant, and he slung his harp over his shoulder and struck into the woods, expecting to reach it before dark. On his way thither, he was often betrayed by glimpses of the twilight sky into the fancy that he saw the stranger gliding through the openings of the trees; and little pools of water often appeared moulded into the form of her flowing robe as they reflected the grey light from their surface. Every rustle of the branches alarmed him with unknown danger, and the distant howling of the wolves from the less frequented tracts of

the forest was rapidly transformed by his bewildered imagination into the neighings of the palfrey in the air, into which, he had no doubt, the stranger had mounted, and "walked with angel step upon the wind."*

To add to his troubles, he was uncertain whether he was in the path, and the darkness, which now began to gather, deepened the gloom that the intermingling branches above him produced even in the sunshine of noon. He really had lost his way, by going straight forward among the underwood, instead of keeping to the right at a slight turn of the road, where stood the large white trunk of an old birch tree, that he had no relish to encounter; for that it was an inanimate tree, not a sheeted spectre, was what he could not believe. Among that underwood his wooden harp got entangled, and, as he struggled to make good his way, pulling back one branch

* Darwin

with his hand, pushing up another with his head, and pressing with all his force against the thick interweavings of birch and hazel bushes—twang went the harp strings, and two more were bewitched even to breaking. But what grieved him most was the loss of an amulet of sovereign virtue, which would have guarded him from this mischance : he utterly forgot that it had failed a few hours before to protect the continuity of “the real royal” from Druidical enchantment, or to give him confidence in his interview with the stranger. What reason they could have for thus practising their arts of necromancy upon an old harper, did not appear ; but this view of the matter never struck Camdèroch, who, although he had no tincture of what is called vanity in his disposition, thought himself of some little importance *in rerum naturâ*.

His distresses, however, only served to irritate him to drive his way among the bushes, a tuft of which he now broke through by leaning with his whole weight on the weakest

part of the barrier. As they sprung back, he felt something strike his face, and could not contain his joy when he found it to be a bunch of mountain ash berries, “the sovereignest thing on earth” * against charms.

“Oh, sure themselves it just is,” he cried exultingly, “good luck to them! Dear a dear, had they but com’d at the snapping of the twangers, and hard for the jewels it was, not being there at all as they weren’t. Ah, the Tories, they had a fancy to trick ould Cam, but the rael honies are com’d at the nick. Adad, boys chated ye are now, for certain: oh the day, that ye’d streive to harm a poor harper that never chated a boy of a ha’p’orth in the ‘wide world.”

Camdèroch’s soliloquy was interrupted by what he took for the sound of running water at no great distance on the right. He turned to that direction, and had the good fortune,—success to the mountain ash berries,—

* Henry IV.

to get through the hazels to a little brook which stole among the copsewood : the very brook, he immediately determined, that ran at the foot of Glendálagh bank ; aye, and he heard the barking of Bryan's dog, and saw a feeble stream of light flickering among the bushes that hung from the brow just above him,—the cheerful indication of sequestered comfort. The sailor, whose eye is gladdened by the light of a beacon on a dark and rugged shore, could not exult more than Camdè-roch did in this discovery. There still remained, however, between him and hospitality the thick bushes on the bank, or the no less difficult passage along the channel of the brook, that was everywhere obstructed with large shapeless stones and masses of rock, among which the imprisoned water stood in pools, and formed dangerous pitfalls, that the darkness prevented him from perceiving ; and often when he thought to step on a solid bed of sand or gravel, he plunged unawares into deep water.

After a distressing march of this kind, in which he had sometimes to clamber over the huge stones of the channel, and sometimes to push his way through the thicket on the bank, he found himself unexpectedly close by the spring which supplied Bryan with water, and Bryan's dog Flan, who had stolen out to reconnoitre, leaping around him in token of joyful recognition, not less grateful to the harper, than was the greeting of his faithful hound to the sea-worn Ulysses ;* for Camdèroch was everywhere a favourite with "the firmest friends" † of man, as he never tasted a morsel without sharing it among them.

He now found a road laid with flag stones, that led from the well to Bryan's cabin, the door of which being ajar, discovered a corner of the cheerful hearth, where Bryan himself was seated and busy in assisting little Norah,

* Οὐρῆ μὲν ἔ' ὄγ' ἔσκησε, καὶ οὐατὰ κίββιλεν ἄμφω.

Wagging his tail, and pricking up his ears.

Odyss. P' 302.

† Lord Byron.

his only daughter, to cook some venison, while she was singing to her delighted father, a song she had lately learned from our harper when he was last at Glendalagh. Camdèroch almost forgot his misfortunes, and paused with no ordinary pleasure while he listened to the sweet artless voice that was chanting his verses, and he cordially forgave some little mistakes in the air, which his ear detected.

CHAPTER II.

Young, innocent, on whose sweet forehead lay,
The parted ringlet shone in simplest garb.

TRUDE

“*Shyl*. If it will feed nothing else I will feed my revenge.—If a Christian wrong a Jew what should be his sufferance by Christian example?”

ARCH. of VENICE.

As the little girl finished the song, I heard her father saying: “Ah Norah dear, if you had ould Cam himself now, just taste a bit of your venison, and ryse you one of his purttest songs. Well, he is a right fellow, I’ll say for’t: I was just a thinking that you love the ould boy better than your own father dear. D’ye remember the day I popt upon you at the side of the brook, when you had stole away to be after him for nothing but a bit of a song?”

“ Now father dear,” replied little Norah, “ don’t be bothering me ; for I never do nothing unbeknownst to you in the wide world, only for the purty songs you know : and and then I wisel, success to him.”—

“ Success to your ownself my swate chil’,” said Camderon, who at this moment dragged his weapon over the upright flag-stone, and secured a break-weather at the cabin

“ Bless my heart, Norah love, if it isn’t your ownself there,” cried Bryan, “ com’d to truck a song for a bit of your venison.”

“ Dear, and so it is now,” said Norah, who cud have thought it ; and drowned and fatigued you are sure, my good Cam :” observing that his clothes were completely drenched and bespattered with mud, which was not wonderful, after stumbling in the dark through the pools of Glendàlagh brook, and straggling among the dripping bushes of the copse.

Little Norah was all life and activity till

she got the good harper seated dry and snug at the hearth corner, with the nicest dish of venison, and a horn of ale * beside him to make him comfortable. After the customary prefacing of circumstances, with which the old assume the privilege of teasing their hearers, Camdèroch disclosed at length the particulars of his adventure ; his interview with the stranger ; his finding the wonderful packet ; and his losing his way in the woods. The packet itself he cautiously took from his wallet, looking around him to see that no intruder had appointed himself a witness. Norah showed little less emotion at the tale than the harper had done at the reality, and she eagerly stretched her head over his shoulder to feast her sight with so great a curiosity. His talking of magic, however, intimidated her from assailing him with the questions which were mustering and jostling each other, in

* Ale was a favourite liquor in those days. Vide Jocelin in vit. St Patr. &c.

thick array, on the tip of her tongue ; and she gazed in silence. She even withdrew her hand, which was half stretched out to examine the packet ; for she felt a certain mysterious awe for every thing connected with “ the secrets of nature.”

Bryan’s countenance exhibited the most grotesque assemblage of emotions that can be imagined, and would have supplied a subject for Dumenil’s pun, that he was either a god or a painter who could make such faces.* He looked wise, and silly, and hoping, and doubtful, and glad, and surprised, all in a breath. He kept his eye rivetted on the packet, while he turned it round and round, pressing it in every direction to ascertain its contents. It evidently consisted of folded pieces of parchment, if he might judge from external examination ; and he thought, but could scarcely credit his senses, that it must be a parcel of the occult records of the Druids

which were held by them to be so sacred. How so valuable a packet came to be intrusted to a wandering solitary female, he could not guess ; her attire, indeed, as described by the harper, indicated a Druidess of superior rank ; yet why was she alone, and whither was she carrying the packet ? These were questions which he could not answer, and his mind was so hurried away with joy at having it thus in his power to annoy these hated priests, that he could not pause to think of hows and whys. It was the joy of revenge ; and but for the cause that kindled this dark passion, we should have severely stigmatised our host of Glendálagh ; that cause, though it could not sanctify so marked a sign of our fallen nature, went near to harmonize it with justice.

Bryan was, indeed, a very different sort of person from Camdèroch. He had all the genuine simplicity of the latter in his domestic circle, if himself and Norah could be called so ; but when he was out of that circle.

he showed that he had an inexhaustible fund of cunning, and a considerable knowledge of the passions of men, and of the readiest way to turn them to his own advantage, or to the execution of a favourite scheme. He had not derived any distinction from birth ; and he had spent his early years as a hunter under a veteran chieftain in Connaught, till his young fancy was irradiated by the image of the fair Evelyn, which flitted like an angelic vision before his eye wherever he turned.

Hitherto he had hunted to please his chief, and exerted himself to surpass his fellows from a spirit of emulation. Now another motive dawned on his soul, and the trophies of his prowess and agility were frequently transmitted,—not to Evelyn indeed, for to her he dared not yet hint his sentiments,—but to her father. His meaning was readily conceived ; he was encouraged by her fond parents to press his suit ; and his attachment was finally rewarded with the hand of his fair bride. His tenderness increased with the closeness of the tie

which bound him ; he renounced the precarious life of a hunter, that so frequently led him from his cheerful home ; and became a shepherd, that he might always associate with his beloved Evelyn, and live out his short span of existence in one long sunny day of bliss.

Such are the dreams of fancy's childhood, which the unwelcome light of morning dissolves, and usually leaves nothing on the trackless memory but distant glimpses of their summer greenness. Such was *not* the case with Bryan. His dream had indeed vanished, and had left his Eden blank and cheerless ; but every thing connected with Evelyn had woven its silken tissue too closely with his thoughts to be ever dissolved. Evelyn was dead ; but her image hung over his every step, like the bright planet of love when it stoops from the clouds of the morning : Evelyn was dead ; but her murderers lived in the hated form of every human being who wore

the insignia of a Druid, on which Bryan could not look without shuddering with horror.

After being united to Evelyn, he had made choice of a spot for his little cottage, near to a grove held sacred by the Druids of Connaught, to whose doctrines he was an adherent ; and several years of blissful existence rolled over him and Evelyn in this woodland retreat, where their attachment became still closer linked by the birth of the little girl, whom we have just seen to be an inmate of Glendalagh. The smooth river, that watered his field, ran not more placidly and constantly than his life of love, which was chequered only by his care for the flocks that supplied his patriarchal board ; till in an unlucky hour, his Evelyn, who shared with him his rustic toil, when following a favourite ewe that had strayed into the woods, chanced to intrude, before she was aware, within the sacred boundary of the grove, and became a witness of some of the dreadful mysteries there performed. This was an offence for which nothing

could atone, except the initiation of the unhallowed intruder ; but Evelyn had been so shocked at what she had accidentally seen of this initiation, that she revolted with horror from the proposal. The consequence was, that the dreadful sentence of her excommunication was pronounced at the following festival of the Samh'in.* This was the formidable weapon with which the Druids so rigorously maintained the terrors of their superstition. It excluded the unfortunate persons excommunicated from all human aid and intercourse. They could not even procure fire to dress their food, or defend them from the severities of the winter ; at the beginning of which the sentence was always appointed to be pronounced. Whoever also assisted the devoted criminal by the slightest service, was from that moment liable to the same penalties and privations, and was cautiously

* Pronounced *Savin*, *mh* having the power of *v* in Irish words.

avoided as a pestilence, by all the faithful followers of Druidism.

Bryan did not press Evelyn to comply with the proposal to which she was so averse, for he had never in his life thwarted her inclinations ; but he resolved to share her disgrace, and boldly demanded to be included in the sentence. His wild resolute air awed even the stern Druid who presided, who half repented that he had not paused before going so far, particularly at this juncture, when conciliatory measures were indispensable to check the rapid success of the Catholics. Evelyn did not long survive the shock of these proceedings ; for her love of retirement had so grown upon her in the happy seclusion she had spent with Bryan, that she would have shrunk even from an honourable public exposure ; but a public disgrace was too much for her susceptible feelings, and she gradually “ pined in thought,”* till death stole her from the sweet

* Twelfth Night.

cottage of which she had been the living charm.

Her death, under such painful circumstances, drove Bryan almost to distraction, and his despair only gave way to the frantic threatenings of revenge which burst from him in the intervals of his sadness. He could feel, however, his impotence to execute such threats, and he was not carried so madly onward by passion as to hurl his feeble defiance where it could not strike with effect. He did not openly proclaim, "you are my enemy, I am yours." * He curbed his spirit of revenge by the most wary prudence, and resolved to lie in wait to repay the blow, which had so unpitifully widowed him of all that was sweet in the cup of life.

He perceived, however, that it was too much for his violent feelings to remain where these hated ministers of superstition were so

* Franklin.

frequently crossing his path in his wanderings; and he was afraid lest he might in some rash moment undo his meditated plan of vengeance,—if we may so term a determined purpose which had not yet fixed upon any detail of means. It was painful to him also, though it was a pain he cherished, to linger among the fields, which, now robbed of his Evelyn, were comfortless and dreary. The sunshine looked down only upon a solitude, and the flowers appeared as melancholy as the imploring look of an orphan. This poignant grief he could not, with all his strength of mind, have supported, had not his little daughter weaned him by turns from its indulgence by her innocent playfulness, which was always bursting through the cloud her father's sadness spread over her countenance. Nothing, indeed, but his affection for his child, and his unalterable purpose of vengeance, could now have fettered him to the wretchedness of life. He fancied, that in Norah he saw the youthful portraiture of his Evelyn, when she first stole upon his

dreams, and he resolved to devote his embittered existence to her protection and support. But *she* also lay under the terrible anathema, which for life would continue to haunt her steps with inexorable pertinacity, should he remain in his native Connaught. He abandoned his home, therefore, and settled in the sequestered spot in Ulster, where we have just found him. In order to mature his plan of revenge, he resolved to join himself to the Catholics, whose cause was triumphantly prospering under the preaching of St Patrick, and the protection of king Logaire: he was not aware that the forgiving of injuries was the first thing the Apostle would have taught him to practise.

The latter part of his resolution he was more dilatory in executing than was usual with him in such cases. His melancholy, indeed, rendered him averse to mingle much with men, and he passed one day after another in caressing his lovely child, and sauntering thoughtfully about the woods around his se-

cluded dwelling, and always put off his journey to see the famed Apostle, and enrol himself among his disciples till some distant period, though his settled revenge only gathered strength by being protracted, and stung the keener, as little Norah, “from pleasing day to day,”* grew under his eye into a more perfect resemblance of her mother, unfolding all her graces and practising all her virtues. Thus glided by his days inactive, and only diversified with an occasional hunt to supply his board with venison, or by the dropping in of a chance traveller to partake of his hospitality. Of this class Camderoch happened of late to rank himself, pretty frequently, induced by the fondness of Norah for his songs, and the kind attention which she showed him in return.

The singular adventure of the harper, now, by good fortune, threw into Bryan's way one

* Gertrude of Wyoming.

means of annoying his enemies, and also of introducing him to St Patrick, who, he had learned, was anxious to obtain these sacred parchments for the purpose of destroying them, and thus preventing the continuance of the superstitions they contained. Bryan easily persuaded the harper, that it would be proper to carry the packet to the king, as it might be of more importance than they were aware of, and he offered himself to become the bearer. To this Camderoch was not averse ; for he still feared that its contents were magical, and might bring him into trouble ; a suggestion which was nothing quieted by his having lost his way in the woods. So true it is, that he who is imbued with superstition, can neither have a pleasing remembrance of the past ;—enjoy the present in peace ;—nor look forward with pleasure to the future. *

* Cicero de Finibus.

CHAPTER III.

“ Glenkindie was ance a harper guid,
He harped to the king ;
And Glenkindie was ance the best harper
That ever harped on a string.
He harped a fish out o’ the sa’t water,
And water out o’ a stanc,
And milk out o’ a maiden’s breast,
That bairn had never nane.”

JAMIESON’S BALLADS, I. 93.

It appears, from the motto of this Chapter, that the people of the north country, could boast of as wonderful miracles wrought by music, particularly in the case of fish, as those performed by Amphion and Orpheus, in the more genial regions of the east. Is it not strange, after this, that the learned should ever have dreamed themselves into doubt about the existence of fishes’ ears, and should, even at present, scarcely credit the profound

researches of Dr Monro, on this useful and important topic? * Nay, the mute nations of the North Seas appear to inherit; at this day, the mania for catgut which infected their ancestors in the days of Glenkindie, if we are to believe Mr Laing, † who avers that the Greenland whalers can always command the spectacle of a fish dance, when there is any body aboard to supply them with music. How unfortunate it is for the good citizens of his Majesty's city of London, that nobody has yet thought of importing a live cargo of said fishes from Spitzbergen, to the boards of Drury-Lane, instead of their present stock of terrier-cats and French magpies.

Candleroch could not boast of the influence of his harp over the inferior creation, except in sometimes raising a chattering of jays, and

* See an elaborate Treatise on the Anatomy of Fishes, by Alexander Monro, M. D. of Edinburgh.

† Voyage to Spitzbergen.

other similar accompaniments, when he indulged in solitary *practising* in the forests. The trees, in particular, were extremely refractory, and never showed any desire to throw somersets, or waltz out of their positions, even at his most overpowering passages: the cause of which insensibility has been lately discovered by an ingenious German craniologist, in examining some remains of the forests of the fifth century, lately dug out of Glendalagh bog, and consists in the total obliteration of a bump yeceleped by him the *organ of musicabicalness*, which he first found most distinctly marked in the Orphean oaks in the Elgin collection. It is probable the Irish woods had lost this important organ, in the times in which we write, as the English had in the time of Chaucer, who complains that,

————— it's go sithen many yeres
That feld had eyen and wode had eres.

It was no fault of Camderoch's then, it should

seem, that he was not attended by a chorus of dancing oaks; and he comforted himself with the reputation he had earned in his successful appeals to the ears of the *genus risibile*, whose attention and applauses he seldom courted in vain. To-night, however, he was peculiarly unfortunate; and though he had in some degree set himself to rest respecting his packet, by the arrangement proposed by Bryan, yet he took many a sorrowful look at his unfortunate harp, and began to screw and unscrew the remaining strings, in all the peevishness of discontent.

But what was his surprise when Norah slipped away to a small apartment her father had lately constructed for her, and returning with something concealed behind her back, glided by the harper, and dropt at his feet, as if by chance, a fine set of strings she had contrived to procure him, as a present for the song with which he amused her. He soon forgot his disasters and fatigue, and it was late before he had run over all his favourite airs,

which he thought trilled as sweetly along the black smoky rafters of Glendalagh, accompanied by the artless voice of Norah, as they would have done among the echoes and murmurs of the Ban. He thought, indeed, his harp had never sounded sweeter, and again the idea of the beautiful stranger flitted through his mind, as having produced on it some mysterious change.

Bryan, who was himself an adept on the harp, seemed more affected than he had ever seen him before with his music; for he sometimes appeared wrapt in the ecstasy of melting sounds, with his hands folded, and his eyes motionless, and often would start from his seat, and walk hurriedly about, and at once stop short and sit quietly down again. The truth was, that Bryan did not hear the music; his mind was abstracted from every subject but one—the inestimable prize he had got, and the subsequent measures he should pursue in executing on those hated priests the vengeance they had so richly me-

rited. The minutest details shot with the rapidity of lightning through his fancy ; and the whole plan of procedure was instantly spread out before him in an imaginary map, whose roads and divisions were, as usual, brilliantly illuminated by the pencil of hope.

Camderoch's harping, and Bryan's musings, were soon interrupted by a sudden trampling of horses, and a loud confusion of voices in the wood. As this was a very uncommon occurrence, in so remote a place, it appeared to the alarmed group more like the creation of witchcraft than a reality. Camderoch, indeed, had no doubt of its being caused by the magic packet ; and Norah, having some indefinite notion of the same kind, indistinctly sprung behind her father, and hung on his arm. Bryan was alarmed, though not intimidated ; he had drunk too deeply of misfortune to quail at any new danger which might threaten him ; yet he marvelled who could be marching so tumultuously through the woods at this time of night.

The trampling gradually became more distant, but soon neared again, and the shouts of the riders fell and rose in the forest like the gusts of a tempest.

In one of these brief pauses, while Bryan had his eye fixed on the door, hesitating whether to sally out to discover who had dared to disturb his privacy, it suddenly burst open, and the beautiful stranger of the Ban rushed wildly into the cabin. The fire on the hearth burned dimly, but the red glow of the embers gave light enough to show that the lady was in a wretched plight. Her long dark hair, which the morning had seen braided with flowers, now hung loose and dishevelled ; and her scarf, which had waved so gracefully to the eye of Canderoch, was now belted around her, to conceal the rents made by the brambles in her robe.

The inmates of Glendalagh were struck dumb with astonishment at this apparition, and presumed not to accost her : The harper, indeed, did not recognise the beautiful

equestrian in the wild figure before him. There was a deep pause for an instant, during which the stranger hurriedly perused, by the scanty light, the faces before her; and finding there nothing to be afraid of, she ventured to implore their protection.

“I am pursued:” she said, in a tone of dignified distress: “I am hunted: dare you shield me from my merciless enemies? If you dare not,” she added firmly, “O pierce this wretched bosom, that I may not fall into their hands;” and she held out to Bryan a small dagger, and tore away the fold of her robe, which lay loose over her breast. “But stay,” she continued, loosing a pearl bracelet from her arm, “take this to my father, as a dying memorial, and tell him I have done all a woman could, but all is lost.”

Bryan stood aghast at this strange appeal to his protection: he would not touch the dagger nor the bracelet, as he had already resolved to protect her at the hazard of his life; for the remembrance of Evelyn always

wrung his heart to pity female distress ; but when she mentioned her father, he eagerly asked,

“ Who is it that’s your father, lady, if it isn’t no offence to be axing ? ”

“ Brassail, the Arch-Druid, ” she instantly answered.—

It is out of the range of language to express the feelings which this disclosure produced in the mind of Bryan. He was implored to protect one of that hated order to whom he imputed all his misfortunes, and had resolved to devote his life to avenge upon them his wrongs. He had it now in his power to repay life for life. His Evelyn had fallen a victim to their superstitious tyranny ; he could now terribly avenge her, by the blood of their superior’s daughter.

Such were his resolutions, the moment the lady pronounced the name of Brassail ; and he furiously grasped the dagger which she held out to him, and with a fiendish joy had his hand elevated to strike the fatal blow,

when Norah sprung forward, crying in the most pitying accents,

“ Oh father dear, do not look so cruel ; O do not kill her ; do not father dear.”

The entreating look of Norah, however, was ill calculated to calm the fury of her father ; for it brought full on his recollection the dying looks of his injured Evelyn. He pushed the suppliant aside, and sternly said,

“ She murdered your mother, chil’, she shall die. I must revenge my Evelyn.”

Camderoch, meanwhile, had thrown himself between Bryan and the devoted victim of his revenge, determined to save her from his host’s inhumanity ; but although the harper had not interposed, Bryan would scarcely, with all his violence, have perpetrated the horrid deed. He had already relaxed from “ I will ” to “ I must be revenged.” His affection, indeed, for Evelyn had softened the sterner features of his character, which only burst forth when, as now, he was tempest-driven by passion ; and the unshaken and

augmented air of the stranger, in the midst of her distress, would assuredly have turned his fury to mercy, even if Canderoch had not appealed to his heart, and enforced his appeal by the law which no Irishman was ever known to violate.

“ Dear now,” said the good harper, laying his hand on the dagger, “ ye would not stain the floor of Glendalagh with the blood of a stranger; let alone a woman. Nobody ever know’d the like in ould Erin. Oh be pacified: it would do your heart good just to save the jewel.”

“ They murdered my Evelyn,” replied Bryan, with a sigh.

“ Oh then, do not, father dear, murder this swate lady,” cried Norah, “ her father will weep for her——”

Bryan dropt the dagger. He felt a father’s fondness, and he could not inflict the grief he had himself experienced, even on an enemy.

“ Norah,” he sobbed out, “ you are an

angel of mercy.—Heavens, what a crime I was after committing!—Lady, my daughter has saved you!—Oh, the wretch I shud have been!——’’

The stranger, during this struggle between passion and principle, seemed unconscious of what was passing around her. The moment that Bryan had taken the dagger, she looked upon her fate as decided, and lifting her eyes to heaven in mild resignation, she awaited the fatal stroke, as if it had been a cure for suffering. As she raised her head in silence, her long loose hair fall back from her face; but no timid shuddering at death was there. Her dark eyes were fixed and motionless, and her countenance was tranquil as that of a vestal kneeling at the altar, and wrapt in sublime devotion. The only sigh she heaved from her resigned bosom breathed the name of her beloved father; of her own fate she was wholly reckless.

As soon as Bryan passed from his inhuman purpose, they all surrounded her with looks of

kindness, and offers of assistance : even Flan, who had hung about, undecided whether to bark or growl, immediately catching the tone of feeling from the altered look of his master, came fawning to her feet. They speedily got her seated by the warm hearth, and Norah was proceeding to wring the cold dew from her hair, when the sound of pursuit again broke upon their ear, and seemed to come rapidly nearer. The lady, who, a moment before, had looked calmly on the lifted dagger, at this dreadful sound screamed out,

“ Oh kill me, in mercy kill me, rather than give me up to their brutality.”

“ What can we do, father ?” cried Norah, in great alarm, “ they are coming fast, fast.” The little girl, who had derived energy from the danger, paused an instant, as if to compose her thoughts, and then running to her father, who also was plunged in a dilemma, she whispered in his ear, “ the bower.”

The word operated on Bryan like a flash of lightning. “ Haste then, Norah, O haste,”

he said as loud as the fear of being overheard without allowed him.

Norah darted to the stranger, seized her hand, and hurried her out of the cabin, while Bryan and Camderoch stood between the door and the hearth, to prevent the glimmering of the embers from betraying them to the pursuers.

The fair fugitives had scarcely left the cabin, when it was surrounded on all sides by the horsemen, one of whom dismounted, and roughly demanded of Bryan, if he had seen a Druidess wandering near his cabin, and if she had not taken shelter there? This question threw him into a most distressing difficulty; for he must either betray the wretched female, whom the most sacred law of hospitality now bound him to protect, or do, what to him appeared no less iniquitous—deceive them by falsehood.

Camderoch perceived his perplexity, and shrewdly parried the questioner, by saying, in his simple manner,

“ Troth and it was I that did see a lady all as one as her ; that’s this morning in the Ban forest, and a purttier I never seen with my eyes since the days of Eve, only the baste she had under her ; why, it looked, heaven bless us ! like the fleckering of a harvest sky, that’s the dappling on its sides, you know. Well, if it wasn’t a right scamperer, you never seed one.”

The interrogant could hear Camderoch’s prosing no longer, and gruffly interrupted him with

“ Well, hould your jabber, will ye ? and show us where she is skulking now.”

“ Is it where she is ?” replied the harper, “ Oh, that would be hard enough, if she isn’t rid to Ballynish or Tirmorloghan ; and sure it was a baste wud carry her to the world’s end and back/again, that’s barring accidents.”

Bryan thought this a proper cue for him, and he immediately struck in with

“ Concience, sur, you shud go to them places, and make a sarch ; but you are en-

tirely wandered, which isn't remarkable, in the dark. If ye'd just houl' a bit, till ye'd get somethin' to act, I wud step out and show you the way as plain, aye, as that hearth there."

"That he wud rightly, I'll answer for him," said Camderoch, by way of enforcement of the advice.

The horseman, seeing that he could make nothing more of the respondents, was obliged to accept of Bryan as a guide to the Ballynish road, though both he and his companions affirmed that the fair fugitive had disappeared not far from this very place. They perceived, however, that their pursuit was hopeless, and gave it up with reluctance; for there was a great reward offered by the king, *—not for the capture of the unfortunate lady, but for the blue packet, which they believed she had still in her possession, and which had occasioned their pursuit.

* Historical.

CHAPTER IV.

Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,
They war twa bonny lasses,
They biggit a bow'r on yon burn brae,
An' theeket it o'er wi' rashes.

Old Song.

WHILE Camderoch and Bryan were putting every subterfuge in requisition to get rid of the horsemen, Norah had hurried the stranger through the wood to "the bower," gliding like a pheasant among the bushes, which immediately closed behind them, and secured them from being traced by any one ignorant of the tangled intricacy of the path. The bower was situated in a romantic little spot, which overhung the brook, at a short distance from the cabin, and garnished the sunshine with the dew of its birches and the fragrance

of its primroses. Midway between the brook and the highest bushes of the brow, was the face of a rock, whose summit was concealed by a thick tissue of ivy, that rooted itself in the chinks, and flaunted its green runners in the air. Below, two venerable elms, on each side of the rock, stretched their cross branches so near to meeting, that a squirrel might have leapt with ease from the one to the other. In front of the elms was a green plat, clear of bushes, whence the windings of the brook could be seen, while it either peeped out among the stones at the foot of the bank, or braided the distant meadows like a silver ribbon. On each side of this natural parterre, Norah had placed a row of bee-hives under the bushes, where also she had planted such flowers as she knew the bees to prefer, in order to beautify their home, and woo them from wandering. *

* “*Hibernia dives lactis ac mellis insula cervorum venatu insignis,*” that is, Ireland abounds in milk and ho-

To this sweet retreat she delighted to resort in the fine days of summer, to watch the ceaseless toil of industry, and imitate the tiny nation, by working busily among her flowers, or assisting her father to construct new hives for the increasing colony. Here, also, under the shelter of the elms, she had contrived a bower as a retreat from the heat of the sun ; and in this bower she would sit for hours, and listen to her father, as he ran over the often repeated tale of her mother's virtues and unmerited sufferings : and, as she caught his deep sighs on her lips, she would yield up her soul to all the wild luxury of woe. The spot, thus baptized by the tears of filial tenderness, was held sacred by Norah. It had never been profaned by the foot of intrusion, and it was so embosomed in the wood, that no stranger would find the way to it through the surrounding thickets. The only easy approach

ney, and is distinguished for the hunting of deer. Venerab. Beda, Eccles. Hist. I. 7.

was from the brook, under some tall sloe-trees, whose thickening ranks had withered the lower branches, and left a narrow winding covertway beneath the interweavings of their summits.

It was through this covert passage that Norah conducted the stranger after she had threaded her way among the thickets between the cabin and the brook ; and they soon arrived at the bee-hives, and gained a snatcht respite to breathe from their fright on the turf seats in the bower. The daughter of Brassail forgot her fatigues in the exultation of escape, and Norah's heart beat with alternate throbs of joy and fear, but she was too overawed by the stranger's dignified manner, to venture upon conversation farther than whispered monosyllables. The lady, however, charmed with the kind-hearted exertions of Norah for her safety, thought it her duty to disclose the cause of the events that had thrown her into so imminent peril, and the rather as she had not had leisure to inform Bryan himself, who

had a right to know why she had been driven under his roof.

She briefly told her sylvan guide, accordingly, that King Logaire, by the advice of St Patrick, had sent a party to seize on the sacred Druidical parchments lately deposited at Tralooney grove, * and intrusted to her care by her father, the Arch-Druid. Of the approach of this party she had only received intelligence when they were within a mile of the grove, and had consequently been compelled to seek her safety in flight, carrying with her the sacred parchments, and expecting to escape with them to her father, who was in the North. She had been accompanied from Tralooney by all her retainers, well mounted, yet, with all their expedition, Logaire's party had overtaken them beyond the Ban, and she had escaped alone, during the skirmish that ensued. In crossing the river, her palfrey had taken fright, and, in endeavouring to keep her seat,

* Historical.

she had unfortunately dropt the parchment- which had cost her so much anxiety and alarm. When she perceived her loss, she had instantly turned back, but she could ill retrace her path in the mazes of the forest, and she had wandered about, almost distracted at the unlucky event, till evening was closing around her, when she had been seen at a distance by her pursuers, after they had routed her attendants : and, although her steed was fleet, yet, from her ignorance of the tracks, she had found it impossible to save herself, except by abandoning it, and escaping into the under-wood, where the horsemen could neither discover her in the dark, nor follow her with their horses.

From her concealment among the bushes, she had seen the light of the cabin-fire peering through the trees, and, as she heard the trample of her pursuers' horses dying away in the distance, she had resolved to throw herself on the forester's mercy.

Norah was not aware of her father's inten-

ions respecting the packet, and, if she had, would at this moment have scorned to adopt them, so high did her warm heart beat with generosity; and her joy at the tidings she had to give melted her to more familiarity than she had yet used to her high-born guest, as she eagerly said,

“ Oh safe and sure it is, dear, every pin-worth, at the cabin: how lucky! Didn't oul' Camderoch stummle on it just at the edge of the forest, as he toul' us. Stop here a bit, and I'll run and bring it to you in no time at all,” and she rose hastily to go to the cabin. The idea of restoring the packet had driven from her memory all thoughts of her fair guest's pursuers. The lady reminded her of the danger, and she again seated herself thoughtfully on the turf-seat to consider what to do; for, snug as the bower was in a summer's morning, or “ when the young May moon was beaming”* through the leafy arch,

* Irish Melodies.

to-night the chill of the closing autumn hung comfortless from the boughs, and the cold dew rained from the leaves at every repeated gust of the night breeze.

The alarms that had so rudely assailed the pretty bower-maid had served rather to make her too fearless than to paralyze her activity, which her success in saving her guest had also tended to increase. On considering, therefore, the uncomfortable situation of her illustrious protegee, she resolved to return to the cabin, to see if it would yet be safe to leave their concealment; and, if not, to procure a supply of warm furs, as the only attainable substitute for a cheerful seat at the hearth corner.—Norah found the harper alone, her father having gone to direct the horsemen to Ballynish. She waited no longer than she obtained this intelligence—flew back to the bower, and had the lady snugly placed by the warm hearth “in no time at all,” as she had exultingly promised.

But the joy of the Druidess, when Norah

produced the packet, completely unbent her spirits, and she fixed on it the vacant gaze of overpowering emotion. Camderoch's mind was also unnerved, between his dread of her displeasure for carrying it off, and his gladness at being the means of restoring it in safety.

The loss of the inestimable packet had never entered into the thoughts of Bryan, when he quelled his rising revenge, and sheltered the forlorn Druidess, otherwise he would, in all likelihood, have made a second pause to bethink himself how to act. He did not, indeed, imagine, more than Camderoch, that their pursued guest was the beautiful equestrian who had dropt the packet at the Ban. This was the first news, however, which greeted him at his return, and it filled his mind with undisguisable disappointment. But there was no alternative : he had pledged her his protection,—the packet was her indisputable property,—and even his gloomy desire of vengeance could not upset his high principles of

honour ; much less could the dawning spirit of avarice, that had begun to creep into his plans for securing the future welfare of his Norah, induce him to claim the king's reward by giving up the stranger's packet. " Consideration, like an angel, came, and whipt the offending Adam out of him." * " Evelyn," he said to himself, " wudn't done such a thing, the angel, for her life ; and can I be the villain to be doing the like ?"

Bryan thus gave up to the firm principle which the example of Evelyn had rooted in his mind, all the advantages of which a villain would readily have availed himself ; but though he reined his passion in obedience to the superior claim of hospitality, it raged as fiercely as ever against the hated Druids. The daughter of Brassail was under his protection, and had a right to the kindness he forced himself to show her ; the other adherents of Druidism stood in hostile territory,

* Henry the Fourth.

and were legitimate objects of attack, and he now resolved to delay his design no longer. His bloodier purposes of vengeance, however, insensibly faded into milder measures, when he thought of the misfortunes of his fair guest, and he began to brood with most delight on plans to assist the Catholics in extirpating the infernal superstition, rather than to meditate vengeance against its ministers. He could not bring himself to believe, that the dignified female who had claimed his protection, and who seemed to move amidst her misfortunes, superior to their frown, could ever lend her acquiescence to such measures of persecution as had bitterly robbed his cottage of all its enchantment. The lady, in truth, by her forlorn look, and particularly by her calm resignation, had, in some measure, identified herself in his fancy with the image of the suffering Evelyn, and occasioned in his mind a contest of the most opposing passions. The shading of the parallel was deepened by the beauty of the Druidess, which even the scowl

of disaster could not conceal, for, though it had clouded the sweetness that dwelt on her cheek, it still gave an interesting wildness to her dark eyes.

Her troubles were not over with the retreat of her pursuers ; for soon after her return from the bower to the cabin, she discovered, with horror, that her protectors were under the curse of excommunication, and that the fire which warmed her had either been unhallowedly purloined, or unlawfully struck by the hand of impiety from the sacred flame, for otherwise such persons could not have procured it. Such she had been taught from infancy to regard with superstitious abhorrence, and the fatal discovery had nearly crushed all the fortitude she had hitherto put forth. Not the lifted dagger itself which Bryan had pointed to her breast appalled her so much as to be warmed by this unhallowed fire, and to receive offices of kindness from these unhallowed foresters. So strong were her prejudices rivetted, that the sternness of

misfortune, which often has power to break the most unyielding fetters of the mind, made no impression upon this iron cincture of suggestion, and she could not help shuddering when she thought that the kind-hearted girl, whose activity had saved her from her brutal persecutors, was under the dreadful anathema of her religion.

But, on her own account, her feelings were slight, compared with her anxiety for the sacred packet, which she dreaded was irrecoverably polluted. She could purify herself by the usual ablution; but no form was prescribed for purifying these sacred symbols of the mysteries, as their falling into the hands of the profane had never been contemplated as possible. She looked upon this, accordingly, as the most dreadful thing which had befallen her; and it rendered her anxious to set out instantly to her father, to consult what was to be done.

Bryan, glad to be released from the constraint which shackled him, and from the

contending feelings which racked his mind, did not oppose her departure ; but Norah felt more than she expressed, at thoughts of parting with the only accomplished individual of her own sex she had ever seen. She forgot her mother's wrongs, so carefully imprinted on her memory by her father, and thought only of the fascinating manners and conversation of the Druidess, secretly wishing to accompany her in her journey, though she knew it was impossible.

By good luck the lady's palfrey was found in the wood near Glendalagh, and no difficulty remained, except the want of an escort. Not but that a lady, without a single attendant, might then have travelled in safety through the wildest parts of Ireland, trusting merely to the honour of her countrymen, and so could the Druidess, had it not been for the proscribed packet, which her pursuers had learned she had secured, and was carrying to her father. She resolved, however, to go at all hazards, rather than remain under the unhal-

lowed roof of Glendalagh. But with all her superstitious horror, she was not insensible to the kindness she had experienced, and could not find words strong enough to express her gratitude for what at least had been done with good intention. She bade adieu to the hospitable inmates of the cabin, and once more mounted her steed to pursue her perilous journey.

CHAPTER V.

“ Twixt his two mighty armes him up he snatcht,
And crusht his carcas so against his brest .
That the disdainfull sowle he thence dispatcht,
And th’ ydle breath all utterly exprest:
Tho’ when he felt him dead, adowne he kest
The lumpish corse unto the senceless grownd ;
Adowne he kest it with so puissant wrest,
That backe againe it did aloft rebownd,
And gave against his mother earth a gronefull sownd.”

SPENSER’S FAERY QUEENE.

THE old harper’s mind was so filled with the occurrences which had taken place, that he was in no haste to resume his wanderings, particularly as he thought he owed Norah a double portion of his music in lieu of the strings she had so opportunely given him. One evening as he had taken his usual seat at the hearth corner, and was playing one of his sweetest airs, Flan, who, according to invari-

able custom, had laid himself down to sleep at the foot of the harp, all on a sudden raised his eyes, and pricked up his ears, setting up a cry somewhat between a bark and a howl, as if he had been struck with the full sound of the harmony. Bryan, however, understood his language more correctly than the musician, and was not to be deceived, when Flan started up, and sprung to the door. "Some other fugitive," thought he, "com'd to disturb us; if this is'nt getting as public as the palace itself, I'm not a true Irishman, and haunted we are sure by them base sorcerers. Well, I sha'n't be stopping another day here to be so bothered, that's if the morrow was com'd once't."

Flan, during this mental muttering of his master, had begun to ring out his loudest bark of alarm, and had taken his watch post at the door to be ready "in case there'd be nade." Bryan, in whom the late occurrences had awakened all his "ranckled ire," * which

* Spenser.

had been only slumbering in order to gather strength, could at this instant think of no intruder, except some other Druid or Druidess again come to disturb his retirement, and he was determined most irrevocably not to permit a second sacrilegious pollution of his floor, for such he deemed the shelter he had been compelled to afford to the daughter of Brassail. To prevent the entrance of the wanderer, therefore, whom Flan had announced, Bryan seized a pine torch, and went out to reconnoitre. The moment he opened the door, the dog darted past him with vehemence, and was beyond his cry before he could recal him. On listening he heard a confused noise, which he thought resembled most the stifled groans of a person strangling. He rushed with his pine torch toward the quarter whence the noise came, but it suddenly ceased, and he found himself at fault till the dog came panting to him, all besmeared with blood. It led him to a tree in the wood, against which he saw a person leaning his arm and his head as

if through faintness. On going nearer, he found a monstrous wolf lying dead, and mangled beside him, and the shattered pieces of a hunting spear scattered on the grass. The hunter appeared of goodly form and strength, and besides his spear, now broken, he was armed with a bow and arrows.

“Consciencé, sur,” says Bryan, “it’s a wicked struggle that ye had there, and never a boy to help ye, as there wasn’t only myself and Flan, and we weren’t in time ye sae.”

“Struissle sey ye freen’,” replied the hunter in a broad Caledonian accent, and still breathing thick, “the vile brute had ’maist war’t me, but I trou I hae gi’en him what he’ll no cast the call o’; he’ll no green tae forgether wi’ me again I’se be bail. Na, na, young as I am, I hae seen o’er mony banes breakins to be worried this gate, though the war’ mae o’ them.”

Bryan, although sometimes resolute enough, rather shrunk back when he saw the still unquenched fire flashing from the eyes of the

youth. His warm spirit of hospitality prevailed, however, when he found from his accent that the stranger was from the Christian land,* and advancing some paces nearer, he said, with a frankness peculiarly Irish,

“Why, bless my heart, if ye aren’t as brave a boy now as ever I seen alive, and welcome ye are sure to Glendalagh, and Norah dear will make ye snug and ciane, I’ll answer for’t, though herself isn’t here to spake.”

“Sweet be wi’ us,” replied the Caledonian, “are ye Bryan o’ Glendalagh?” and passing over his “struissle” as if it had been a common occurrence, he ran off to a subject about which he had come expressly to speak to Bryan—the escape of the Druidess. “Ye dinna ken aiblins,” he continued, “that ye’re the vera man I was tae speer for? An unco’ hillyballoo at the Place yonner an’ ye heard it

* Scotland was Christianized several years before Ireland, as we learn from Adomnanus in *Vit. S. Columb. Beda*, and other early writers.

mun, about thae Druids an' a wheen aul' paerchments that they work their warlock cantrips wi'.—But I'm daft to haud ye clavering out i'the cauld here ony langer; sin ye're Bryan, I'll gang in-bye wi' ye an' tell ye a' about it."

"Troth and ye-couldn't now for your life been as lucky as at this present," says Bryan. "The bit of venison I'lan chipt in the forest isn't coul' yet, and as nice a jug of ale you'll have as all Ulster couldn't show the better of, that's if it isn't mead." *

"Mony braw thanks tae ye, mun," returned the Caledonian, "for your kind offer. Eh, but you Eerish folk are warm-hearted chieks whun a's done; ane wad never ken they're frae hame amang ye."

"Is it the' ale ye mane?" returned Bryan. "By dad, I wish't it were mead; but it

* Their abundance of honey supplied them with *mead*, which was a favourite liquor in those days.

touches Norah so only about the bees the creatures, her heart cudn't stan' it, consider. 'Norah,' says I, when I reached her the swates, 'why do ye cry, chil'? Is it the bees ye're thinking on?' 'Oh, father dear,' says she, 'wudn't it be cruel hard now, wud the king take away our little cabin for good and all, and lave us to be starving and dying in the coul'? and ye have driv' them bees, that hummed so purttily among the flowers in summer, to black ruination father.' Indeed and indeed, sur, it touch'd myself abit to sae the chil' cry, and I wudn't be after vexing her in no respect."

This conversation brought them to the cabin, wherè the Caledonian was heartily welcomed and kindly entertained. He appeared, when he came into the light, to be covered with blood, but fortunately had received no dangerous wound. He broke his spear, he said, at the very beginning of the encounter, and had at last to trust to his own strength and dexterity. He had luckily caught the ani-

mal by the throat when making a spring at him, and had grasped it so firmly, that he believed he had nearly “*express the ydle breath,*” when Flan run in and assisted him to complete his victory, by tearing it fiercely with his tusks. While he was going over his encounter with the wolf, Camderoch, who always liked to be employed, began to fit a fresh shaft into the head of the spear, which the hunter had been cool enough to bring off from the field, and Norah was arranging the promised repast. At the conclusion of the narration Bryan exclaimed,

“*Ah, brave he is to the bone; every inch of him, Norah.—Don’t be sparing the venison, sur, isn’t there more in the forest good or bad, and hungry ye shud be with the fighting, consid r.*”

“*Atweel I’wat it was a gay bit warsle after a’,*” replied the Caledonian, “*and I shudna pock clean toom, it did I, at twal-nour’s time, but hunters sud ne’er compleen o’ hunger ;—sees ye [pointing to the venison]*

how Providence provides for us when we're no thinking o't."

"True for you," said Camderoch, "and didn't myself come pop on Glendalagh here all at once, never thinking on a ha'p'orth, only on the broken twangers, you know."

Norah was restrained by bashfulness from speaking directly to Angus, her Caledonian guest, but willing to draw his notice, addressed herself to the harper with a request that he would give the stranger a specimen of his native music. Bryan hinted that it should be short, as he wished "to spake to the boy consarning them things he had been after min-tioning, and it wudn't be convanient to spake, only were it unknown'st to every body."

Camderoch was busy tuning his harp, and either not hearing or not pretending to hear the injunction, struck up Ga-la-na-Mhogue, and by dints of nods and signs to Norah, got her to place herself behind the harp, and being thus screened to take up the song at the second bar, although her voice trembled sadly,

not from affectation, but from that timidity which was natural to a girl of fifteen who had lived secluded from the world. Angus was so charmed with "the rapture of sweet sound," that Bryan could not get a word from him about "the hillyballoo at the Place." The old harper, however, soon began to yield to the attacks of sleep. His fingers faltered languidly over the strings, his head nodded like a broken shamrock in a breeze, and at last he actually dropped his chin on the corner of the harp, and struck in with an accompaniment which drowned "the dying fall"* of the strings in its sonorous reverberations through all parts of the cabin. Norah rather peevishly obeyed her father, and withdrew to her little apartment, determined, however, to use her ears, having a powerful curiosity to know "consarning them secrets."

"By-dá-d," says Bryan, "gone they are

* Twelfth Night, *sub init.*

now clane : wud ye plase to mintion, if it's I that can be doing any bit of a jab about them Druids dear ? But I'm afeard it's what I can't at all at all, bad luck to me."

" Stey a wee till ye hear," replied Angus, " ye dinna ken what ye'll can' do yet. Ye see the king's no that slack ahun he tak a thing by the en', an' he's been in an unco anger at thir Druids as I tell't ye, for ye'll no hinner them frae spoonging through a' places tae tak awa folk tae their wild benfires, the deevils ; and what craws in his crappie sairest ava is, that afore this bruilzie they glawm'd at a' thing about the place like as mony corbies, an' were cy sae ready tae come in ahint'the haun, that naebody haud aff themselves could get feen't belickit o' ony guid that was gawn. But the king, fair fa' him, has sained himsel by a' that's guid, to clear the cuintrie o' the rapscallions, and whun he ance says a thing ye may as weel ding o'er Aelsa-craig as pit him frae't. Now the' hae been ye see a hantle o' wark back and for'at about

the canniest wey tae get the better o' them, and at lang an' the length our St Patrick proposed to get a haud o' their cantrips first and foremost, and the king jumpet in wi' him at ance, and sent the ither coonsellers a' away hingin their faple."

"By dad," interrupted Bryan, "he's a right boy, and more rason he has in his own head norever a mother's son of them. Ah! it's himself, sure, that can sturr when there'd be nae. But I ax pardon, I wudn't be interrupting you only for speaking a bit of my mind consarving the king, long life to him."

Angus resumed, "As ye say, Bryan, he's e'en a gay lang-headed fallow, let them say's they like: its no that done easy to bliñ his e'e wi' a blawflum.—Weel, as I was saying, they sent aff tae Tralooney tae get a claught o' the warlock paerchments, but a pauky hizzy that had the keeping o' them got a glint o' our chaps

afore the haun,—wheepet awa in a jiffy,—an' left a wheen o' her ain folk tae shuffle the brog, till she wan aff hale scart hersel' bag and baggage. Aweel, whun they saw that apen force wad do nae guid, St Patrick avised tae come about them sleeketly; gin ony ae body could be fun' it wad try, tae harry the byke his lanc. An' wi' that he tell't them a story as lang's your airm o' what he had heard o' you, an' the death o' your gudewife, an' how keen ye war tae gie the warlocks kail o' their ain groats:—safe us, a body wad think he get's wit o' ilka thing it apens an' steeks. Sae I was ca'd in tae the praesence, and sent awa aff loof tae speer ye out, an' bring ye tae speak tae the muckle fo'k: an' mirk's it was I wad' a fun' ye gin that ill-fa'r'd brute hadna come rumpaugini through the wud at me."

It is no easy matter to describe Bryan's sensations when he found that his schemes were thus anticipated, but how the illustrious Apostle could have learned his story, and his

very intentions, was a mystery he could not unravel, and he immediately referred it to his intercourse with heaven, which was universally reported and believed, and tended not a little to further his mission. He did not recollect, that the wandering harper, who so frequently shared his hospitality, was the common news-carrier from Colrairie to Donaghadee, the boundaries of his musical and gossiping peregrinations, and had been busy to circulate Bryan's history in proportion to his growing attachment for the secluded cottagers of Glendalagh. Nor did he know of the anxious inquiries that St Patrick made into every occurrence in which these Pagan priests were in any manner concerned, in order that he might discover the vulnerable points of their superstition, and ply his Christian weapons to the best advantage.

What he had heard of Bryan's history suggested him as a proper person to employ in any design against the Druids which required secrecy and determined hostility. The

obtaining the mystical parchments was such; and as their open attempt had failed, some trusty individual ought to be employed to trace and secure them, and nobody was better fitted for this, according to the Saint's intelligence, than Bryan. The choice was the wisest that could have been made; for Bryan was no less shrewd than he was enterprising and determined. The Apostle, indeed, like all great political revolutionists, had a keen penetration in selecting persons the best qualified to execute his various designs.

We need scarcely say that Bryan agreed to accompany Angus next morning, and to leave Norah under the protection of the harper till his return. Accordingly, they prepared to refresh themselves for their journey by sleep. It was the custom in those days to sleep on benches covered with skins placed round the hearth, and Bryan accommodated the Caledonian with the one which Norah had prepared for Camderoch, for the good man was still quietly reposing with his head

resting upon his harp, and was dreaming of magic and the beautiful Druidess, and the great St Patrick, whom his fancy represented as dissipating in a thin blue smoke all the spells of wicked priests and magicians. Bryan was too full of his projects to have the honour of a visitation from the Goddess of Slumber; and Norah was no less wakeful, thinking of the most graceful costume she could appear in before the stranger ere he departed in the morning. She decided to adorn her hair with a wreath of flowers, such as the harper had described that of the fair Druidess, and resolved to be abroad betimes to procure them. She recollected, that, late as it was in the season, daisies were still to be had, and she did not despair of meeting with a sprig of meadow-sweet, or of some late blowing honey-suckle.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Happy the first of men ere yet confid’d
To smoky cities ; who, in sheltering groves,
Warm caves, and deep sunk vallies, liv’d and lov’d.”

WARTON.

AT an early hour next morning, while it was still dark, Bryan stole out to examine the face of the sky, that he might take prognostications from the rising of the morning star of what was likely to be the consequences of his journey. It is hardly necessary to say, that the signs were all favourable ; for as he wished them to be so, he could easily supply deficiencies by fancy ; and explain away, by dexterous self-deception, whatever might seem unfortunate. From these conjectural calculations, his imagination carried him to the wildest castle-building. He anticipated his

success, in aiding the downfall of Druidism, and no less in securing for his beloved daughter a happy espousal ; and lost in thought, he wandered a considerable way along the side of the brook, and was not reminded of his distance from the cabin till he came to a crag, at whose foot the stream formed a deep pool, which barred his farther progress. Several patches of shrubs were scattered over the face of the crag, and among these, a beautiful mountain ash, loaded with ripe berries, caught his eye. But what was his astonishment when he saw his little Norah perched like a wood-pigeon on the furthest bough of an old filbert bush, which hung creaking over the pool. He could scarcely credit his sight, and durst not speak lest he should alarm her, which might be hazardous in such a situation. He was sure it was Norah ; and when he saw her foolishly suspending all his deep laid plans for her future welfare on the strength of an old filbert bush, he could with difficulty restrain his emotion. Her very rashness, however,

saved her ; for she fearlessly swung from one branch to another, till she got sure footing on a projecting part of the rock, whence she perceived her terrified father, and ran joyfully to meet him with a small bunch of honey-suckles, to procure which she had exposed herself to so much peril.

“ Bless my heart, chil’,” cried Byran, “ what was it in heaven driv’ you to be exposing yourself on them rocks ? Couldn’t ye keep asy at the cabin, and not be every minit after such dangerous projects ? You’ll certainly be kilt, past recovery, one day soon.”

“ Father dear, now,” replied she, hanging back sorrowfully, “ isn’t it cruel hard for you to scoul’ and scoul’ so, when ye sae I never do the valye of a pin’s worth, if it isn’t to plase you ! And there’s the making of a flower band, because you bid me look naet, but I won’t have none of it, when you are so cross ;” and she peevishly threw down the flowers, of which she had an instant before

been so proud, while the tear started into her eye.

This was what her father could not stand, "as he cudn't be after vexing her in no respect;" and matters were easily made up by a forgiving kiss. They got back to the cabin before either Angus or Camderoch were stirring.

Norah's first care was to stock two goat-skin wallets with provisions for the travellers; and she contrived, amid the bustle of these preparations, to find leisure for tastefully adorning her hair with the honey-suckles before their departure; but I shall not determine, whether it was owing to this, or to the freshness which the morning air had ripened on her cheek, that Angus stole several timid glances at her, when he thought he was unobserved. Perhaps his adventure with the wolf, and his momentous embassy, had hitherto engrossed his thoughts too much to allow him to be awake to any other impression. If this excuse be deemed invalid, he was the most

culpable of men for not running headlong into the most frantic love. Norah, as in duty bound, by the laws of romance, thought Angus the handsomest youth she had ever seen, though, to say the truth, her acquaintance with the sex was not extensive.

The shrewd Bryan soon perceived the cautious peeping that was going on; but had not yet advanced to a mutual understanding and interchange of melting looks, and was pleased to see his Norah attracting the attention of one who was accustomed to see the beauties of the court, yet he was too anxious to begin his own operations to indulge them farther. Norah, however, peeped from behind the corner of the cabin, till they were beyond the peak of the crag, and had she been sure of escaping observation, she would even have followed and climbed the peak to prolong her view, but she blushed to think that the harper might see her, and she went back into the cabin "with leaden eye that loves the ground."*

The king was at this time at one of his hunting stations in the mountains, and thither accordingly our travellers bent their steps. Bryan was charmed with the varied aspect the country assumed as they advanced, so very different from the beautiful level tracts of woodlands and meadows around Glendalagh, and strikingly like his native Connaught. Every stream, indeed, that dashed its foam over the rocks, and every hill that towered above him, recalled some youthful association which lingered sweetly in his bosom; and even the deep gullies and rugged defiles through which they had to pass, were to him more charming than the green levels of the Ban covered with flowers, fresh with the dew of spring, and glittering in the morning sun.

The figure of Bryan, indeed, as well as his mind, was more in unison with the scenery of mountains than of plains. He was tall and bony, with a countenance rendered so lank and haggard by grief, that it may not be unaptly compared to the face of a cliff scathed

with lightning. Around it a large quantity of strong black hair hung down to his shoulders like bunches of withered grass ; and his conical fur cap* set on one side, had no distant resemblance to the top of a larch half overturned by the wind. The Caledonian also was by no means an incongruous figure in the picture, though his blooming youth and goodly form made him seem (if we may continue to Ossianize) more like a mountain on the first dawn of creation, before the torrents had furrowed its green slopes, or the storms broken the regular cone of its summit, than to any of the objects which appeared in this romantic wilderness of rocks, and torrents, and mountain forests.

Their journey, which was not a short one, was solitary enough, as all the people had followed the king ; but they found, that the hunters had not completely scoured the tract

* See Walker's Irish Bards

they had gone through ; for wild goats were everywhere seen skipping among the cliffs, and deer arching their necks from the openings to examine the intruders before they retreated to remoter haunts. The hawks and falcons also wheeling in noiseless circles above the woods, indicated that they had marked out some quarry to pounce upon, and their screams betokened no friendly greeting to the intruders, who now daringly molested “ their solitary reign.” *

“ Ah, isn’t this the right country ?” said Bryan, on seeing a head of deer scamper away into the forest, “ and them mountains are as like as two peas to my own dear Connaught. Why, when I was a big lump of a boy, I kept hunting every minit over rocks all as one as that where you sae them goats skipping, and sorrow a bit of bother in life ever bothered me at all at all, and shudn’t yet, only for my dear Evelyn that’s dead, heaven rest her, and bad

* Gray.

luck to the spalpeens that were the murdering of her.”

Angus sympathized with the feelings of his companion for his bitter loss, but he had rather a different notion of a mountainous region from Bryan, though he was more pleased with the scene before them, than with extensive plains and level forests:—“but naething ava thir,” he observed, “tae Drumalbin, whar the vera cluds didna gang high enough to cuir their taps, and the hettest bensil o’ the sin in the lang days o’ simmer can har’ly thow a hue o’ the snaw that lies sae bonny and white on them, just like a lamb woo’ plaid; an’ then there’s Ben Lomond, I tell ye man, your Slemish is but a midge till’t; and the braw loch aside’t clean dings ony I hae seen here awa yet. Your Loch Neagh tae be sure’s muckle enough, and gin it had twae’ree mae isles strinkled through’t, and a rangel o’ hills roun’t tae haud in the water, and look neighbour like, it might do after a’ for an Eerish loch.” Boc-

caccio would have said, “quanto rico d’acque, tanto povero d’onor.”

Bryan did not much relish this libel on his lakes and mountains, but he was in no humour to retaliate, and merely remarked, “By dad, I have a notion there’s never a country that isn’t the best in life for the boys that keep living in it for better or worse.”

This conversation brought them to a deep cleft in a rock thickly covered with wood, and shelving up the side of a hill. Through this ravine they perseveringly scrambled, as it was the last toilsome pass they had to encounter ; for when they reached the summit, the hunting encampment of the king was seen in a beautiful valley before them, encompassed with hills, and watered by a winding brook.

This place, which was called Dalriogh, * or the King’s Valley, had been selected on account of its being completely sheltered from storms by the barrier which nature had thrown around

* Pronounced *Dalreeoh*, the *h* strongly aspirated.

dogs, and the most courageous of the hunters. Several of the dogs tried to run in upon him, but he gave them such reception, that none of them which made the attempt choosed to repeat it ; and he stood, with grim fortitude, making the most terrific growling, preparatory to an attack on the phalanx of his foes.

In this state, there was a pause for a moment, to think what was to be done, when a youth immediately darted out of the circle, and, by one manly thrust with his spear, struck the fierce inhabitant of the forest to the earth. Yet, with all the vigour of the youthful hunter, he found himself unable to vanquish the brindled savage, in whom the unchainable soul of liberty seemed to madden with the blow, but a whole circle of spears was instantly presented on every side, and he fell, pierced with a hundred wounds, while the valley resounded with cries of “ Long life to Prince Malthuine : Long life to King Logaire !”

CHAPTER VII.

“ He, that ay lass levyt fre,
 May nought knaw weill the propeyrte
 The angyr, na the wrechyt dome
 That is cowplyt to foule thyrdome,
 But gyff he had assayit it,
 Than all perquere he suld it wyt.”

*Barbour MS. in the Advocates'
 Library, Edinburgh.*

DURING this scene at the tents, Angus had manifested great impatience, and regretted much that he had not been of the party; for his recent successful encounter with the wolf at Glendalagh had wonderfully increased his courage; and he flattered himself, that he would have obtained the honour which had now fallen to the lot of Prince Malthuine. Bryan, whose keen eye permitted nothing to escape him, had perceived on an eminence on

the other side of the valley, a number of ladies in elegant hunting dresses, whose looks were anxiously directed towards the chase, and who, as soon as it was happily terminated, hastened to join the hunters in the valley. They were met by the prince, carrying on his spear the head of the boar, with the hunters following and shouting in his train. He advanced with manly modesty, and laid his trophy at the feet of one of the ladies, whom Bryan soon perceived was the most beautiful of her companions, and might almost term a comparison he thought with his own Nuala, who in his eyes had no compeer. The prince was rewarded by the sweetest smile from a countenance; where youth and beauty had assembled all that was lovely and fascinating. Joy, indeed, was more evident in the soft sparkling of her blue eyes, and in the animation which fluttered on her cheek, than in the repressed exultation that struggled in the bosom of the prince, who seemed only to rejoice in sympathy with her, and only to feel reverberated

For himself, that tide of gladness which rolled so brightly from her fair countenance.

“ My life to a pin,” cried Bryan, “ his mistress that shud be, and purtty she is, if I have my eyes.”

“ Na man,” replied Angus, “ ye’re a’ wrang there, an’ ye had been right a’ your days afore : she’s his ain titty, and a better nor a braver’s no within the bracheads o’ Dalaogh. She’s unco keen o’ daffin tae be sure, like illee young ones, but whuna’be, she ne’er forgets hersel’ far, and she’s ony thing but glauket wi’ o’ her hilliegeleeries ; an’ t’ree t’ wat, gin dawting wad spoil her, she wad’a been spoilt lang syne, for they say she has been ilka bodie’s body sin’ she was the back o’ a grozet.”

This Caledonian eulogium, however, might as well have been spared, for Bryan had taken the liberty of “ clenching the fist of his mind,” as the Greek comedy * has it, against all ex-

* Aristoph. Nubes.

ternal impressions ; and was busy in winding up his various projects, to something like a conclusion. In this mood they arrived at the tents, where all was now activity and bustle. In one quarter, groups were collected to discuss the feats of the day, and criticise the management of the whole expedition, from their exit in the morning, till the triumph of the prince. In another, some were pacing among the trees in moody solitude, vexed to the soul that it had not fallen to their lot to be signalized, and secretly cursing their own want of spirit, but forming to themselves most plausible excuses and apologies, and resolving not to let slip such another opportunity of distinction. The greater number were following the prince to his tent, and among these his fair sister *Aoine* * and the other ladies who had been spectators of the chace from the hills.

* *Aoine*, the Morning Star. Bp. Nicholson's Glossar.

Amidst so much bustle, our travellers were overlooked, and Bryan had leisure to mingle the materials of his aerial castle-buildings with the tangible images which the unusual scene everywhere presented to his notice. Angus, however, who was as much elated with the success of his embassy as the prince with his grisly trophy, pressed through the crowd, and, dragging Bryan after him, presented him with all due ceremony to the king, who was of the party, and rejoicing at his son's success. The attention of all the attendants was soon diverted from the royal hunter to the gaunt figure of Bryan, who, although not used to be stared at by so many chiefs and nobles, was too deeply engrossed with his designs to be abashed, and maintained an unaltered countenance.

The king soon perceived, from Bryan's singular appearance, that he was no ordinary person, and immediately ordered him to be conducted to his tent, where he would consult with him in private concerning the de-

sign suggested by Saint Patrick, whom also he requested to be sent for to the council, deputing the prince to conduct him thither as a mark of the high respect in which he was held by the king. * This, indeed, almost amounted to adoration, and had Patrick wished to assume the character of a prophet sent immediately by heaven to reform the Irish nation, he would have found it an easier task than the impostor Mahomet did to obtain credit. But with all the influence he acquired over Logaire and his chiefs, he remained the humble vassal of the cross, and exulted only in the extension of the truth, and in the downfall of superstition.

When the prince arrived at the Apostle's tent, which was at some distance from the rest, he found that he was not there, and it was not easy to say where his moody and solitary spirit might at any particular instant have carried him. He had not followed the

* Historical.

hunters, for he did not like hunting ; and he was nowhere to be found in the camp. Logaire's impatience, however, could not brook delay ; strict inquiry was made, and at last it was recollected that he had been seen in the morning wandering among the oaks at the mouth of the gully, and hence it was not unlikely that he was simpling on the rocks for herbs to make the medicines which rendered him so famous, and which contributed not a little to the success of his mission. *

The prince accordingly began to search along the rugged channel of the gap for the wandering solitary, and many a huge shapeless stone he clambered over, and many a steep he scaled, at the risk of his life, while, at every step, loose hanging masses threatened to bury him in their ruins. There was not a single tree nor bush to cling to, or to break the dreary wildness of the scene, and he could

* Historical.

not conjecture what induced the illustrious Apostle to wander in such a wildered place, when he was sure he might obtain herbs enough, with less trouble, elsewhere. He perceived, however, that some person had lately passed this way, for on the steeps that everywhere obstructed his progress, there were recent traces of footsteps, which had slipt and dislodged portions of the crumbling and shivery rock,—and still more evident foot-prints on the little patches of red sand bordering the pools of the stream. He at last reached a waterfall, beyond which he thought it unnecessary to search. It seemed, indeed, to be nearly impassable ; but, on going to the bottom of the rocks, he found a parcel of fresh-gathered herbs, carefully tied with tough grass, and, as this was a trace of the Apostle not to be mistaken, he immediately began to examine the most accessible point of the rocks, determined, since he had gone so far, not to return without finding him. He succeeded in scaling the steep by help of his boar-spear,

which he had brought with him ; but his difficulties did not terminate here, for he found the obstructions of the pass increased rather than diminished, beyond the cataract ; for the rocks above him were, if possible, still more loose and threatening, and they were so steep, and the opposite cliffs approached so near, that they made the channel as dark as the rainy twilight of a winter's day.

On advancing cautiously a little way along this dark ravine, he found that the brook made a sudden turn to the left, and, on doubling the angle, by crouching below a rock, undermined by the water, he saw the lofty cliffs suddenly diverge from one another, and, at some distance, contract again, enclosing a space of some extent, through the centre of which the brook flowed. In this space he perceived a large pile of rocks, which, rude as it was, looked more like a work of art than an accidental heap of stones, thrown down by storms, and driven together by the torrent. He could not conjecture, however,

for what purpose so rude a mass could have been reared, as there was no apparent entrance into it, and it did not much resemble a cairn. The stones, or rather pieces of rock, were thrown promiscuously together, without regard to size or shape, yet in such a way as to render them firm in their position, though the pile was placed in the open ground, without advantage having been taken of the support it might have derived by being placed close to the rocks.

Might it not have been reared by some rebellious chief of former times, for the purpose of concealment? If it were as capacious within as the outside betokened, it might lodge a considerable band of warriors, in times of danger; and even now, when some of the powerful chiefs were becoming disaffected at the innovations of the Catholics, it might come to be so employed. As there still were no further indications of the Apostle, he resolved to examine this pile more narrowly, to

ascertain whether it were a mere heap of rocks or an actual building.

While he was advancing to make farther examination, he was accosted in a voice which re-echoed, like rolling thunder, from the surrounding rocks. "What are you," said the voice, "that dare intrude here? Answer, wretch, or you die."

The prince was startled, though not dismayed, at the sudden threat, and looking up, he perceived on the summit of the pile a man of a grim and menacing aspect, with a bow ready bent in his hand, and an arrow drawn to the very barb, and pointed towards him. The prince returned him a look of defiance, but spoke not.

"Answer instantly," the challenger repeated, "what presumption led you hither? I cannot wait to parley."

"And who are you," the prince sternly replied, "that presume thus to question your prince?"

There is something in true courage which

overpoweringly forbids the taking advantage of circumstances to crush it unfairly by superior power, and he of the pile had begun to feel this forbidding impression before the prince answered him. But at the word "prince," he tossed the bow wildly from his hand, and clasped his hands with frantic joy, exclaiming, "We have him, we have him :—" at which several fellows, as grim and fierce-looking as himself, shot their rough heads above the level of the stone on which he was standing, to see the cause of the uproar. "Seize him, bind him ; fetters, Trassy, double fetters, we have him, we have him ;" and he finished his frenzied orders by a satanic laugh of exultation. Four savage-looking churls immediately descended the pile, with as much speed as the rugged way would permit them, and advanced furiously to Malthuine, without speaking, and were going to bind him. The vigorous youth, however, was not to be so treated with impunity. He coolly raised his spear, and laid the foremost

assailant weltering among the stones. The other three rushed upon him on all sides at once, so that he could not aim his weapon at more than one; this one he struck so violently that the spear penetrated to his heart, and stretched him lifeless beside his companion.

The chief was enraged beyond all bounds to see two of his brave followers thus vanquished, though he could not help admiring the determined bravery of the prince. Malthuine's terrible exertions in these feats had somewhat exhausted him, so that the remaining two succeeded in securing him. The chief himself descended, and assisted them to carry him to their retreat. The pile could only be entered from above, through an opening which was by this time completely choked with a serried batch of grizzly-looking heads, rising above one another like the seats in a theatre, to see the termination of the fray. These, however, sunk again into their den, as soon as their companions ascended with their

illustrious captive. From the entrance, some rude steps led down to what may be called the hall, although nothing, perhaps, ever so denominated could have any resemblance to this, except in extent.

It was even more capacious than could have been imagined from the exterior, for below the level of the apparent foundation, in the direction of the rocks on the right, a large excavation had been made, the roof of which was supported by posts formed of the trunks of trees, the projecting stumps of whose branches not having been removed by the rude architects, gave them a very singular appearance. It seemed also to be but recently constructed, for the bark was still fresh on some of the trees, and a large heap of earth and stones newly dug from it lay in the space under the entrance. To the prince, only, a few of these posts were visible by the light which was admitted from above ; beyond all was wrapt in darkness, and this was increased

by the narrow passage that led to it, which also prevented him from seeing its extent, and made it seem greater to his fancy than it really was.

As soon as the agitation into which his capture had thrown him was a little subsided, he began to conjecture who it could be that had stationed themselves in this wonderful retreat. He did not recollect to have seen the chief at court, although his language and his authoritative air bespoke him used to command. That some plan of revolt was in contemplation he had no doubt, of which the king, so far as he was aware, remained yet in ignorance. He resolved, therefore, to learn all he could of their schemes, as he trusted firmly to Providence and to his own ingenuity for means to effect an escape, if they did not put him to death. When they got him down the steps, they hurried him into what he conceived to be the farthest corner of the excavation, and bound him firm to one of the huge wooden pillars. A warder remained near

him, pacing up and down in moody silence, as if they had mistrusted the strength of their chains to bind a person who had given such proofs of strength and boldness.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Thy head stands so tickle on thy shoulders,
that a milk-maid, if she be in love, may sigh it off.”

Measure for Measure.

MALTHUINE thought proper to interrogate his sentinel concerning the daring rebel who had thus intrenched himself so near the royal encampment, in order to get some light into his wonderful adventure.

“Tell me, slave,” said the prince, in a commanding tone, “who owns this den, or rather who leads these rebels.”

The sentinel paused, raised a hideous laugh, and replied, “Oh, you may now fume out your rage at ease ; it will do your spirits good to chafe in your fetters, but recollect you do

not command here, nor ever shall, by heaven."

The prince immediately recognised in the speaker the stern voice of the chief himself, who had lingered to regale his thoughts with the sight of his royal captive, and to ruminate on the best mode of disposing of him.

"Tell me, Sir," rejoined Malthuine in the same tone of authority, "who you are who thus lie in hostile ambush on the very confines of my father's camp."

"That both you and your father shall know, ere long," replied the chief; "you have ruined Ireland by your wretched follies; you have become the credulous dupes of designing foreigners, who have cozened you out of your religion, and out of your power; and will, ere long, shackle the freedom of our brave countrymen by their outlandish measures. But you shall know that the untainted spirit of our ancestors still beats in our bosoms, and that the royal blood of O'Neil, though corrupted by your apostacy from the

religion of your fathers, still flows pure in the veins of one who would rejoice to heave his last sigh to rescue his country from the fangs of foreigners. But Heaven has heard the groans of our suffering country, and you and the accursed high priest of your delusion, shall now pay the meed of your hellish plots.’ And he resumed his pacing through the gloomy hall.

The threats of the chief, however, were lost upon Malthuine, who was unappalled at his own danger, while he bitterly grieved that the illustrious Apostle had fallen into their hands, as the chief had hinted. Perhaps he was under the same roof with himself, and in similar confinement. The chief he now understood to be Erc O’Neil,* the son of Eochad Munrevar, a branch of the royal lineage, which had

* The father of that Fergus, who is called Fergus II. in Boethius and Buchanan, but really Fergus I. See *Innes, Pinkerton, &c.*

never been reconciled to the election of Logaire to the throne, and had taken advantage of the Catholic innovations to foster a spirit of revolt. He found it, in consequence, advantageous to pretend a great zeal for Druidism, though it was all a pretence ; and he cared not what were the ceremonies or opinions of the people in religious matters, if he could obtain power.

Malthuine, who never feared danger, in whatever shape it might appear, when his hands were at liberty, began to quail at the thoughts of being slaughtered, like a bull, by some savage Druid, in sacrifice to their demons, which he now imagined was to be his fate. He saw no hope of escape, and less of appeasing the merciless horde in whose power he was ; and he grieved, also, that he was not the only victim ; for he was not so overpowered with terror but he could think of the illustrious Patrick, whom Providence alone could now rescue, by a miracle, from their fangs. He was roused from his musings by

the sound of numerous voices, in high dispute, from the opposite part of the hall. His guard left him abruptly, and he was left to the keeping of the chains which bound him. The sound of the voices increased in loudness and confusion, and he saw several figures passing between him and the light, at the entrance into the excavation. It was plain that there was some extraordinary movement going forward ; and now, thought he, an opportunity to escape may occur; could I but free myself from these accursed fetters ; and he began eagerly to examine their strength and fixture.

His attention, however, was arrested by what concerned him more nearly than the strength of his fetters. Two of the warriors were close upon him ere he wist, and he could hear one of them whisper anxiously, “ What do you mean, Trassy, that you grasp your spear so violently ? ”

“ Dispatch him, to be sure,” replied his

grim companion ; “ should he escape our plot is ruined.”

“ But you must not murder him in cold blood,” rejoined the other ; “ it is ungenerous, and our chief would never forgive you.”

“ We cannot stay to mutter mercy now,” growled out the stern Trassy ; “ he must die. The chief will rejoice at the riddance ; you do not know O’Neil ;” and twisting his arm from the hand that detained it, he furiously raised his spear, and was about to plunge it in the prisoner’s breast, when O’Neil, who had suspected the withdrawing of Trassy from the hall betokened some villainy, sprang from behind a pillar, wrenched the spear from his hand, and threw it on the floor with indignant contempt.

“ What, without my permission ?” said the wrathful and high-born chief. “ Would you stain the dawn of our enterprise with the blood of a brave captive ? Curb this impetuous haste, my noble companions, till you

meet our foes in fair and open combat ; and let not the blood of a prisoner in chains tarnish your arms.”

Trassy's countenance was changed into sullenness at this commanding interruption, but he was compelled to acquiesce, and they all withdrew from Malthuine in deep consultation ; from overhearing some words, of which he could learn that there was to be a grand feast held to-night, and a council of war assembled. He was again left to solitude and reflection. The night now approached, and dimmed the feeble light, which was rather seen at a distance by the prisoner, than showed him the secrets of his prison-house, if secrets there were. He was convinced, indeed, that St Patrick must be confined there, and his busy fancy went eagerly to work to conjecture in what quarter ; but all around was blank darkness.

As soon as the lingering twilight had melted away from the entrance of the pile, the quietness which had reigned for a little was

again broken by the noise of revelry, and the blaze of a large fire, in a remote part of the hall, fell languidly on the wooden pillars of the prison; and Malthuine could perceive the shadows of his enemies, as they darkened the light, in passing and re-passing. He could not distinguish any words, he only heard their noisy brawling and their frantic tones of exultation. At intervals there was a pause, and he distinguished the soft tones of a harp lulling with its magic their unquiet spirits, and crushing their untamed fierceness by the melody of its numbers. The tones changed, and swelled into the boldest notes of martial music; and the musician produced such loud and crashing sounds, that Malthuine could hear the warriors start,—seize their shields,—and ring out the clang of war by the clashing of their spears. Again he would “check his hand,” and weave a

pitiful requiem for those who had fallen in battle, while the heart-rending measures thrilled in soft and mournful cadence along the gloom of the walls; and again the heavenly numbers were drowned in the shouts of riot, which to-night no human art seemed capable to repress.

“Who is that who flits so cautiously, and treads so lightly among the pillars?” thought Malthuine, as he perceived a figure approach him on uptoe. “Could it be the generous person who had pleaded for his life? or could it be O’Neil?”

The fire gleamed but faintly in his remote station; yet its pale light soon showed the intruder to be of lighter form than any of the rough warriors he had previously seen among the band; it soon showed, that a shape so elegant, and an air so graceful, could only belong to the fairest of nature’s works,—to the lady who now stood before him. He was so struck with the dignity of her demeanour,

that he hesitated whether he should venture to address her. He did venture.

“Lady!”—he began, with fluttering embarrassment.

“Hush! hush, for the love of heaven,” interrupted the fair visitor, in a low whisper, pressing her soft hand on his lips. “Prince,” she cautiously continued, “I have come to save you. The attempt is hazardous, but I am resolved. If I fail, before two hours you die. But I cannot wait to explain.” And without further preface, with more ~~than~~ woman’s strength she loosed his fetters. “Remain a moment,” she added, “as if you were still shackled, till I see that our way is clear.” And she instantly glided away. He soon after heard a light step approaching; it was the lady’s. “Fear nothing,” she whispered, “all is yet safe: follow me,” and she conducted him to a concealed recess in the opposite part of the excavation, and turning back a broad thin flag-stone, pushed him into an entrance which led, he immediately

found, to a chamber of small dimensions, scooped out of the solid rock, and decorated with more splendid ornaments than even those of his father's palace, and lighted by a brilliant lamp.

“It is not every one, prince,” said his fair conductress, “that I admit into my chamber. O’Neil himself dares not enter here: and nobody, except my father and myself, knows that there is, besides this room, a concealed apartment here, for the person who constructed it is dead. Now you understand me,” showing him at the same time a secret entrance to a chamber nearly as large as her own. “Remain here till I return,” she added, “if I am suspected nothing can save us.” And away she hurried, leaving Malthuine overcome with astonishment.

During her last speech, he had had a moment to raise his eyes to mark the countenance of this guardian angel, and never countenance, since the days of Eve, expressed so much dignity and mildness united. The

fineness of her form, and gracefulness of her air, had won on his fancy, even when she first appeared in the scanty light among the pillars. The touch of her hand, as she had pressed it to his lips to prevent him from speaking, was as soft as the breath of the summer zephyr, and thrilled through every nerve to his heart. But when the light of the chamber lamps fell on her countenance, it revealed so overpowering an expression of intelligence and feeling, that all the powers of his soul were bound by the spell, and he stood entranced and motionless; and after she had left him, he kept his eye bent on the passage whence she had receded, in all the gazeless vacancy of reverie. Even if his merciless enemies had now appeared before him in their most hostile fierceness, it is likely he would have heard their threats, and perhaps felt their blows, unheeded, he was so wrapt in wonder at the singularity of the adventure.

The prince had had opportunities of seeing all the beauties at that time celebrated in Ire-

land, and he had been charmed with several of them as one would with a fine statue ; but with the exception of his sister, they appeared ~~were~~ statues compared with the superior being under whose protection he now was, whose soul spoke in all her motions, and in all her looks ; and betrayed none of that stagnation of intellect which sometimes mingles on the cheek of beauty, and deadens the witchery of its smile. But there was another charm which brightened all her qualities, and won his most guarded thoughts,—she had saved him from a cruel death. He owed his life to her enterprise, and he vowed to devote that life to her service, without reflecting who she might be. “ To whose service ? ” he said, as the thought struck him. “ She cannot be the wife of O’Neil, for she had told him that O’Neil dared not enter her chamber,” and he had treasured every word which had been graced with the music of her lips. “ A Druid priestess then perhaps ? ”

His last conjecture was right ; she was a

Druidess of a high order, as her dress would have attested to him, had he possessed presence of mind to mark it ; but his gaze was spell-bound by the living beauty that was unveiled before him, and he saw not, or marked not, the ornaments with which she was bedecked, at least, he was unconscious of the influence which female dress has over the imagination when it is selected with simplicity of taste. The lady's was so selected. She wore the azure robe sacred to her order ; yet the gracefulness of its form, and its airy flowing, arose from the taste as much as from the elegant person of the fair wearer. The elegance of her form was heightened by a scarf of golden yellow, which floated around her as floats the light gossamer on the dewy breeze of morning. Her hair was dark and luxuriant, and parted on her forehead by a fillet bestudded with native pearls, from the centre of which a large amethyst reflected its ethereal blue, while behind it a green sprig of the mistletoe rose above the rich wavings of the

ringlets, that “ ’scaped the baffled wreath which strove behind,”* and streamed on the soft contour of her shoulder like the young tendrils of a weeping birch. In short, she was the same beautiful nymph who had been sheltered at Glendalagh.

* Lord Byron.

CHAPTER IX.

“He, as falls the mighty pile,
As safe as in a cot the while,
Sits silently with musing ear,
To listen if he cannot hear --
The crash of falling battlement.”

FINLAY.

THE mind of the prince was irresistibly hurried away by a thousand wild fancies, which flitted through his thoughts in alternate and rapid corruscation. He could not bend his attention to any single part of it not for an instant: the whole darted upon him in overwhelming impetuosity, and crushed all his efforts at sober calculation. But he was not long left a victim to agitations about the past. All at once, the mirthful and boisterous revelry which had pealed its clamours through

the hall, was turned to shouts of rage and fury when his escape was discovered.

Soon after it had been agreed upon in the rebellion that it was the safest plan for their success to get rid of their prisoner, Traisy had again withdrawn from the noisy joy of the feast, in which his dark soul took no delight, to gorge his eyes with the sight of the devoted victim. But when he found the empty chains lying loose on the ground, he uttered a growl so inhuman, that even the daring female who had watched his steps shuddered at the sound, and the torch which he carried glared on such a fiendish contortion of features as seldom deforms the face of man. He grinned his teeth with raging wildness, and for want of an object on which to wreck his fury, he dashed the empty fetters on the floor. The beautiful Druidess stood speechless at such frenzied workings of passion ; and it was well, for it gave her that look of astonishment which her ingenuous

disposition could not bend to assume, and its absence might have excited suspicion.

The infuriate warrior flew back to his companions, gave the alarm, and in an instant all was tumult and clamour. They tore the blazing faggots from the fire, and run with hurrying confusion through all the recesses of their capacious den, tossing their brands into every crevice and concealment, so that, if the prince had been coiled into a rat-hole, any where but in the chamber, he must have been discovered. He shuddered when he heard the muttered curses which they breathed in passing near him, and he could see the flare of their lights through the chinky joining of the flag-stone which closed the entrance to the chamber of his protectress. The lady hovered near the recess in great perturbation, which was remarked by the cooler part of the band to arise from sympathy with the feelings of the searchers. O'Neil himself advanced to the recess after having anxiously examined every other place, and addressed the guardian

lady in a tone of mildness which he knew well how to assume.

“Éthne!” he said, “our captive cannot be discovered in the cavern, and it is impossible that he can have got out of it. He must have found his way to this chamber, I should imagine. Would you take the trouble to examine? I shall await you here.”

Éthne had foreseen that this request would be made, and obeyed with alacrity, snatching the torch from O’Neil, and putting back the flag-stone with her own hand.

“Chief!” said she as she entered, “I regret that it is unlawful for yourself to search here; but I can give you permission to observe my vigilance. Stand at the entrance, and you shall see every corner of the chamber. I shall not,”—she continued, raising her voice to put the prince on his guard,—“I shall not leave a foot of the tapestry unturned.” What she called the tapestry was made of the finest furs, with which the cham-

ber was warmly hung, and behind which the secret entrance was hid.

O'Neil eagerly darted his eye through the chamber, and watched with keenness,—as she raised the fur hangings from the wall. But when the fruitless search was completed, he shrunk back from the entrance with gloomy disappointment ; for he now anticipated that his retreat would be discovered to the king before his designs were ripe for execution. He had appeared to be unwillingly dragged into a consent to give up Malthuine, although it was precisely the thing he yearned to get accomplished ; for if the deed were perpetrated, it cut off all hope of accommodation from his followers, and as the prince was Tanist, or heir-elect to his father,* the unalterable laws

* The Tanist, or heir-elect, was not confined to the children ; it as often happened that the brothers or nephews were preferred. The children, however, were not excluded from the succession, as has been sometimes alleged. See Spenser's View.

forbade any other to possess the throne while he lived ; and the throne was O'Neil's aim of ambition. He was now non-plussed, but his daring spirit was not subdued. He was determined to succeed or die. His mind harboured no alternative, no middle state of quiet acquiescence. No deed of blood, and no scheme of atrocity or deceit, appeared criminal in this whirlwind of feeling, though, in his calmer moments, he felt his spirit fettered by the strictest principles of honour. But to what will not a ruling passion prompt ? The sobriety of thinking becomes lost in the struggle which rends the boundaries of principles and of honour ; and its victim furiously leaps into the trackless chaos of crime, to escape from feelings that only batten the fiercer around the burnings of his heart. O'Neil could not fix upon any plan of proceeding which was likely to succeed ; but he determined to make another attempt to regain the possession of the prince, who could not yet be far from the pile.

He accordingly gave orders for the whole band to disperse themselves with torches in every direction ; and in an instant all the escarpments of the cliffs were illuminated on every side, and the shadows of the projecting crags were thrown over the dark rollings of the brook. It was impossible that the prince could have scaled the rocks towards the mountains ; yet they searched even this impassable track, and their black looking figures were seen climbing among the shadowy peaks and ridges of the crags, waving their torches, and shouting with hideous clamour. The main body searched along the channel of the torrent and the roots of the cliffs, having separated into two divisions, one going up and the other down the ravine. More than once the tall fragments of rocks which shot up from the rough soil deceived the ardent fancy of the searchers into the belief that they had discovered the fugitive, and the pattering of the stream was sometimes thought to sound like retreating footsteps, and betrayed such as

burned for distinction to silyly extinguish their lights, and break away by stealth from their companions, to pursue the illusion, which vanished as they advanced, and left them to gulp down their disappointment, and skulk back to mingle in the crowd of their shouting companions.

These parties had not gone far, when a more terrific shout of alarm than had yet been heard on this night of events was yelled from the searchers on the cliffs, and on running back they were struck by the rapid movements of the lights, and the hurried descent of their companions from their wild and perilous elevation among the rocks. But they were horror-struck when they saw flames and smoke rising from the ground about the pile, and heard the earth and stones which formed the roof of the excavation falling amidst the crackling flames of the wooden pillars. This unfortunate occurrence had been caused by some one in his haste leaving his half burnt torch in contact with one of the pillars, which soon

spread the conflagration among those adjacent.

Ethne had cautiously glided into her apartment the moment the band issued out on their last search, impatient to see the youth she had so hazardously rescued, and to convince herself that he was safe; for nothing short of the evidences of the senses could banish the doubt of his safety, which was begotten by the uncertainty of the event, and hung on her conviction like a cloud on the blue transparency of the firmament. But her prudence repressed the impatience which was leaping in her bosom, and chained her in an agony of silence to the fur couch, on which she sunk as she entered; for she did not know what the lawless fury which was abroad to-night might tempt them to, and if they burst into her chamber and found the prince—She started in wildness at the thought, threw back the dark tresses from her lovely face, and, approaching the concealed door with a step as noiseless as falling snow, she whispered

to him to set himself at ease, for all was still safe.

“O I fear, my divin^e preserver,” he replied, “that you have thrown yourself into peril: leave me to my fate rather than endanger yourself; I could not live should I prove the cause of your destruction.”

As she was about to answer, the shout of alarm echoed through the hall, and she was terrified beyond measure when she perceived smoke streaming through the chinks of the entrance. She had already, however, dared too much to be thrown off her guard by any occurrence. She had calculated on the worst, and if it came to that, she was resolved to meet death itself without shrinking. The cause of the smoke she could not understand, but it was necessary that the prince should not move from his concealment till the last extremity, and she enjoined him not to be driven to expose himself by any alarm. She flew to the entrance, and, on removing the flagstone, was met by a cloud of smoke and

the sight of the flaming pillars. She heard the pieces of the roof strike on the floor in their fall, and was nearly smothered by the waves of dust, mingled with smoke, rolling through the excavation. The fire was still, however, distant from the chamber, and, as the roof fell in, the smoke gradually escaped through the breach, and left her again to breathe the colourless air. But how great was her joy when she saw the flames playing on a row of pillars which had been only recently brought from the woods. Their greenness rendered them fire-proof, and she had soon the satisfaction to see nothing of the grand conflagration but a few chips, partly smoking and partly reduced to red embers, scattered along the floor.

By this time, the whole band were again returned to mourn over the ruins of their retreat, and they looked gloomy and depressed when they saw the fruits of many a laborious hour mingled in one mass of destruction. It is hard to say whose was the most pathless

perplexity, Ethne's or O'Neil's. The lady was reduced almost to distraction, when she found all her plans defeated by this unforeseen accident, and she almost regretted having gone so far, as her own destruction, as well as his, was likely to be the consequence, without being productive of any advantage to either.

O'Neil, on the other hand, knew not how to extricate himself from his difficulties ; for, if he remained, he would, without question, be attacked by the king ; and though the place was in a manner impregnable to open force, from the height of the cliffs, and the narrowness of the defile, yet he might be effectually blockaded, and starved into a surrender, and, at all events, prevented from increasing his force and his influence. If he removed, he must go to the north, and abandon the scheme he had cherished of surprising the king's encampment in Dalriogh, and an opportunity so favourable might never again occur. as there was no other place, except the

presence, where he could station himself secretly in the vicinity of any of his hunting stations. An immediate attack was hazardous, as his followers were but few, and it would be several days before the arrival of an expected reinforcement. But, hazardous as it was, it seemed to be the only scheme which could advance his designs; for, though it placed the event of his enterprise on the chance of a single throw at this turn, it would not, even if unsuccessful, put him altogether beyond recovering his ground, when he had so powerful friends in the North,—while success in defeating the king, and taking himself and nobles prisoners, would make him the absolute dictator of whatever terms he might choose to impose. He resolved. The band were quickly summoned to a muster. Their equipment was the work of a moment. He restrained them from shouting the war-cry, lest it might be heard by some straggler from the camp; and they rushed in gloomy si-

lence through the defile above the waterfall. But, as this was an unusual order, it was not ultimately obeyed, and they pealed their shouts through the gully in spirited disobedience.

“Ethne!” said O’Neil, as he gave the signal for advancing, “you must remain here; but, lest we should return no more, I shall leave you a protector, who will conduct you to your father. Trassy! you shall protect the fair Ethne, till we return.”

“Sir?” growled the fierce Trassy, as if he had misunderstood the ungracious order.

“Sir!” cried Ethne, in the same breath, and in the most anxious tone of supplication, “let me not deprive you of so brave a warrior, when your force is so small. I shall be quite safe alone; and should you fail—which may heaven avert—I can go more safely alone than with any of your followers. Ah! I see you have forgot my successful escape from

Tralooney.” Trassy grinned his approbation : O’Neil acquiesced, and hastened to the head of the band, already proceeding along the foot of the cliffs.

CHAPTER X.

“ Fly like the moon-ey’d herald of dis may,
Chas’d on his night steed by the star of day.”

CAMPBELL.

ALTHOUGH the lady’s feelings were wound up to their extreme pitch, yet she had the prudence and firmness to repress her exultation till she had heard from the top of the pile the last sound of their footsteps, as it echoed hollow along the crags, and mingled indistinctly with the remote dashing of the cataract, and the nearer voice of the stream below her. She listened again,—and the pattering of their feet no longer met her ear.—She flew to the chamber, grasped the hand of the prince with hurried eagerness.

“ Now the time is ours,” she cried, “ come

with me ;” and, before he could speak or think, had drawn him to the top of the pile. He was utterly confounded. He knew nothing of the expedition. Ethne was alone amidst the ruins of the excavation, and all the band gone. He was about to ask her what all this meant ; but she interrupted him with “ This is no time for explanations, prince ; follow me, and all will be safe ;” and she led the way in the direction opposite to that which the band had gone.

To follow her was no easy task. She glided over the rough stones with the swiftness of a meteor, and it required all the agility of the prince to bound after her. Sometimes she got so far before him, that he could only hear the fall of the stones her foot had displaced in climbing, or see her tall figure between him and the sky, when she had reached some craggy elevation. More than once she had to return, to point out to him the windings of the rugged way, which the darkness so thickly veiled ; and at one of the precipices,

which all his efforts could not scale, from his ignorance of the proper steps, she had boldly trusted herself to throw down to him the end of her scarf, and pull him in safety to the top. This hurried flight, however, did not drive from his mind the thralldom in which he supposed the Apostle was left at the pile; and he several times began to interrogate his fair guide where they had confined him, but could obtain no satisfactory answer. She replied to all his questions, by bidding him think of his own safety, and hers, which was now involved in his deliverance.

They soon reached a part of the defile where the barrenness of the rocks began to be broken by clumps of trees and shrubbery; and, a little farther on, the tall cliffs were completely covered by a thick gloomy wood, frowning over the chasm, like the brow of night, and darkening their rugged path into one uniform blank, where the eye strained vainly to trace an image or an object. They could only grope their way in this almost tan-

gible darkness, and the prince was obliged to keep close to his guide, lest he should stumble over some ambushed precipice. In the midst of this embarrassing journey, Ethne made a pause, and said sportively to Malthuine,

“ Now, prince, if you have any daring, you may yet reach your father’s camp before the assailants. In one of my rambles, I lately discovered immediately above us a part of the rock, which an adventurous person might scale, and briefly reach the green hills adjacent to Dalriogh. Dare you venture? It is very steep, but you see there are shrubs to cling by.”

“ And leave you here, my dear preserver?” replied he, feeling his heart suddenly throb at the thought.

“ O yes,” she returned, “ I shall go back to my snug little chamber at Clogharnbree, * till the fortune of the enterprise is decided.

* Irish—*Cloigh-garbh-amhain-breac*.

I shall know before morning what to do. Will you try the precipice?"

This question reduced the prince to a troublesome dilemma. He wished not to part with his beautiful and daring companion so long as he could find an excuse for detaining her; and he did not choose to appear timid before her who had been so fearless of herself in his rescue. He had indeed known her only a few hours, but within that time he had seen more to admire than he had ever before seen in woman. She had stamped upon his heart a sentiment not to be effaced; for she was beautiful, and she had delivered him from a dreadful death. He paused,—heaved a deep sigh,—and, seizing her hand with an energy that surprised her, he passionately exclaimed,

“Ethne! I cannot leave you in these wilds alone. Any thing but that, I can do and dare. You have, at the risk of your own life, saved mine: my life is henceforth yours, and I shall live or die with you, but I cannot leave

you." And pressing her hand convulsively, he fell at her feet, overpowered by the irrepressible emotions which were grappling round his heart-strings.

The lady was also borne away by feelings which had been gradually swelling in her bosom since she had first freed the prince from his fetters, to which she had been impelled in remembrance of her own protection at Glendalagh, and not from any secret affection for the royal youth whom she had never before seen, although she had often heard of his bravery. She thought it her duty to repay the disinterested treatment she had received from her enemies, and she did not pause at the danger that hung over its performance. But no sooner had she risked her safety in his deliverance, than he became as dear to her, as the shipwrecked child to the mother who has saved it in her bosom. The chamber lamp had shown her, that the prince had a very prepossessing air, though his person could not perhaps be called handsome. There was an

openness in his countenance, which, to her eye, formed a marked contrast with the constant suspicion which lurked in the dark eye of O'Neil. And openness is so like confidence, and confidence is so flattering to human nature, that such an air always finds its way to the affections. She felt nothing of what is usually denominated love, and yet she could not hear unmoved what appeared to her the overflowings of the brightest gratitude, when he said, "I cannot leave you." She paused a moment, and answered with energy,

"This is no time for words; every moment we now lose may cause irretrievable disaster. Come, I shall go with you to the brow of the cliff, and do not let these violent bursts of gratitude unnerve you. Exert yourself, or we are both lost."

The prince started as if from a trance, and ejaculating "divine creature!" showed more than human agility and hardihood as he rushed after her up the steep, suspending himself from the hanging branches, and swinging with

fearless activity into the little projections and resting-places on the face of that precipice, which wings alone seemed capable to scale. Frequently his fair conductress had to stop and remind him, that caution was as necessary as courage, and the music of her sweet voice among these wild cliffs, was so heightened by contrast and the singularity of the situation, that it roused Malthuine to the most frenzied daring.

“Was not that her voice?” echoed a hoarse accent from a lower part of the rock,—and they heard the rustling of the bushes in the direction it came from, while the owls, that were thence scared from their prey, flapped ominously by them. The rustling came nearer and nearer, while the fugitives held on their course as rapidly as the rugged way would permit. But their pursuers, for they now heard several voices, gained upon them, and they gave themselves up for lost, as there was no way to escape. Every thing, however, depended on their exertions, and

could they reach the brow, the path was so steep and so difficult to find, that there was some chance of their pursuers being baffled.

They made another effort. The pursuers shouted to them to stop and surrender at the peril of being saluted with a flight of arrows. They answered not, but strove to surmount a jetting crag, which had barred their progress. As they were groping round its angles, the threatened salute whizzed through the darkness, and they heard the arrows ring against the crag around them. The darkness fortunately saved them from this volley, and just as the twang of the bowstrings announced a second, they discovered a runner of ivy warping among the crevices along the side of the crag. Trusting to this slender support, Ethne got first to a resting-place above; Malthuine was so hard pressed by the archers, who had reached the foot of the crag, that he felt the ivy under his feet shaken by their grasp, just as he reached the summit.

“ O save yourself,” he cried wildly, “ and

I will defend the pass with my life.—Away, haste.—Come on, you night-marauders, I am ready for you.”

The faithless ivy, however, saved the archer from his vengeance, for it gave way with the violence of his pulling, and Malthuine heard the bushes crashing and rustling under him as he fell, while he thought he felt the very crag tottering under his feet with the shock. Ethne, who had not obeyed his request, but, determined to share his fate, was still by his side, also perceived the shuddering of the crag as the root gave way.

“Would to heaven,” she anxiously whispered, “that it had fallen. Here is a safe and easy path above to a more secure station.”

“It shall fall,” says Malthuine, and springing to the edge of the upward path to which the lady had instinctively retreated, he poised himself on the strong hanging branch of an oak, and struck the crag with such force as loosened it from its position, and sent it thundering into the chasm below. The echoes which re-

bounded and multiplied along the ravine, drowned the cries of the discomfited archers, and the fugitives were too anxious for their own safety to think of ascertaining or moralizing on their fate, and they again held on their precarious way. The darkness was so far favourable, that it concealed from their view the deep chasm which they had left behind, and prevented those qualms of weakness that none can banish when hanging in doubtful support from the elevated escarpment of such a precipice.

“ Now, thank heaven, you are safe,” exclaimed Ethne with joy, as Malthuine bounded up the last steep, and sprung on the firm turf of the brow; “ You must hasten over those hills before you, and you shall come straight on Dalriogh. The band cannot yet have reached it, as their march in so narrow and rugged a pass must be tardy. I have now done my duty in repaying the favour which was done to me. I must leave you,—may heaven guard you from danger.” She

was about to add "farewell," but paused, and hung her head in silent dejection; but before the prince could recover himself from the speechless perturbation into which her words had thrown him, she made an effort to conquer her weakness, and pronounced the ominous word, but

— back recoiled, she knew not why,
Ev'n at the sound herself had made.*

"I hope, prince," she continued with mournful sweetness, "you will not forget the girl who accompanied you through this wild pass. Farewell, farewell."

"I forget you! O never. But you must not go. Where can you shelter yourself? The path is now impassable, the pile is in ruins!"—

While he was thus mustering dissuasives, she had withdrawn a few steps, and the darkness made him believe she was gone.

"I shall never see her like again," he cried.

* Collins.

“ Stay, my dearest preserver, O stay, I cannot, cannot leave you,” and he was just about to precipitate himself from a point of the cliff, being too violently hurried on by his emotions to search for the path, when his beautiful companion, almost as frantic as himself, rushed forward and drew him back from the destruction which yawned beneath him. The conflict, however, that was wrought up in her bosom between the passions which she struggled to repress, was too violent to be supported, and she sunk in helpless exhaustion on the grass.

The prince soon forgot his own distressing feelings in his alarm for his “ dearest girl,” as he now ventured to call the being whom, a few hours before, he would have looked upon as “ ensky’d and sainted,”* and approached with the awe which female dignity, when accompanied with sweetness of manner,

* Measure for Measure.

always commands ; such levelling power has mutual danger over human beings.

“ My dearest girl,” he sighed, “ what can I do for you ? I tremble lest the exertions you have made on my account may prove fatal to you.”

“ O no,” she replied languidly, “ I shall soon be well. I was alarmed to think of your falling from that frightful crag.”

The soothing attentions of the prince restored her spirits, and quieted her apprehensions, while it rivetted more deeply the fondness which was rising in her heart. The interchange of sentiments and vows of eternal fidelity, however, which would perhaps have ensued in other circumstances, it would have been perilous in the present case to have indulged. They again heard the shouts of their pursuers from below, and the morning would soon involve them in new difficulties.

Both seemed to have lost the recollection of what had happened or might happen. She spoke no more of returning, for she knew

that nothing short of her life would satisfy the vengeance of O'Neil, when he found that she had aided the escape of his prisoner ; and she even half fancied that his dark suspicions had sent those very men to track their footsteps. On the other hand, she dared not go to her father, and she could *not* go with Malthuine, although she secretly wished to do so ; but without *saying* she would accompany him, and even without thinking of it, for she dared not, she had already followed him a considerable way up the slope of the hill, whose dark outline she had before pointed out as one of the heights above Dalriogh.

CHAPTER XI.

If ybur influence be quite damm'd up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levell'd line of streaming light.

MILTON'S *Comus*.

As they turned the bend of the hill, the valley and the encampment lay below them, with its waving boundary of mountains on the starry horizon, and the irregular groups of its dark woods. When they looked toward the tents, they perceived that some extraordinary movement was going forward, for lights were seen in hurrying progress among the trees, and the din of confusion rose on the still evening air like the dashing of the sea-breakers, or the gusty roar of a storm in a

mountain-forest. There was nothing, however, which indicated a hostile conflict. It was more like the turbulence and uncertainty of alarm,—at least the prince hoped so,—than an actual engagement. The lights continued to reel from tent to tent ; and the confused bustle of the hunters melted into one uniform hum, which was only broken by the loud baying of the stag-hounds. No living thing was at rest there, and the lofty oaks which stood like sentinels around, seemed hushed into wonder, and the dim stars looked silently down with the winking of a troubled dreamer.

All at once the confused hurry was drowned in the clang of attack, and our wanderers of the hill could see the terrific spectacle of O'Neil's band rushing from among the oaks at the head of the valley, armed with brands formed of bundles of dry brushwood fixed on long poles. They even marked one of the assailants, while still in the wood, running from tree to tree with a torch to communicate its

flame to the brands of his comrades, and saw the line of flame extending at broken intervals through the wood, and glaring on the brown faces of the warriors. With these formidable weapons, they advanced on the encampment, and in an instant the first row of tents blazed up in rapid conflagration, and lighted the whole sweep of the valley and the surrounding amphitheatre of hills.

The prince was so agitated with the scene, that more than once he so far forgot his beautiful companion as to break furiously away towards the encampment, till her voice recalled him, and her need of his protection subdued the towerings of his hostile ardour, and chained him to her side, a troubled spectator of the devastation. His agitation was wound up to frenzy when he saw the assailants carrying all before them, and seemingly without opposition; but hope readily made the best even of this, and suggested the flight and safety of his father's band, though he could not well brook the thought, when

O'Neil's party were so inferior in numbers. The conflagration was soon spread over the whole encampment, and he could distinguish the crescent of flame which arose from the tents where he had slain the wild boar.

Here the progress of the assailants was stopt, and the loyal slogan of "F'erragh aboo!" resounded through the long tract of the valley. The clash of weapons followed; and they of the hill perceived, by the light of the flaming tents, the dark figures of the combatants crossing and skirmishing among the trees. One party seemed to be driven out into the open meadow beyond the tents, if they were not deceived by fancy; for they imagined they could see a dark body of warriors driving scatteredly over the field like the shadow of a broken rain-cloud, and even the passing gleam of a spear, as it caught the reflection of the flames, shot occasionally through the smoke. The main body were heard shouting from the edge of the brook, where was the hottest of the fight, in contending for the

passage, and the dark skirts of their broken lines, as the combatants closed and fell, or alternately repelled and shrunk in the struggle, imaged the midnight tide when its waves meet the red torrent of a river, and foam, and jumble, and sink, on the doubtful boundary.

The pass of the brook was won. By whom they could not know ; but the scattered shouts from the woods on the hither bank, proclaimed that the combat was changed into a rout, and the stream of the pursuit rolled towards the hill, where our agitated fugitives were standing in the horrors of suspense, and straining eye and ear to feed their anxiety. Ethne, who had more presence of mind than the prince, perceived their danger should they come to be involved among the pursuing and pursued, as seemed unavoidable, for he was unarmed, and withal rash and full of ardour. At her suggestion, therefore, they withdrew under the obscurity of a rock overhung with hazel bushes, till the pursuit should cease, or till they might make some discovery

of the fortune of the night. The shouting soon neared upon their retreat, and they could distinguish voices which they knew, uttering their brief curses and exclamations as they hurried by; and sometimes they could see the indistinct figures of the combatants as they climbed the slope beside them.

“ I’ll not a foot farther for man nor devil,” growled a voice from the rock above them. “ Coward, shall never be boomed over the cairn of Trassy by every scurvy bard that passes it.”

“ The aul’ thief be i’ their limbs,” echoed another voice from below, “ they rin like as mony maukins. Huiley, huiley, ye couart loons. Stey till ance ye get a prieving o’ the claymore.” And they heard the rustling of the hazels as the challenger forced his way after the “ couarts,” as he called them.

“ What are you ?” cried the first speaker, as the Caledonian mounted the rock; but, as he mistook the gigantic figure of Trassy, posted in such a place, for some wandering hunter,

as it was somewhat out of the line where the main body were passing, he was more disposed to ask than to answer questions.

“Ye’ll maybe no ken, freen’, whar ony o’ thae runnigates has dern’d upo’ the hill here? gin ye could airt me tae ane o’ them, we wad let you see a fine trevallie. Tae come doun the cleugh yon gate, i’ the night time, yawin like a wheen wulcats! I canna but think on the couarts yet.”

“I am one of those you seek,” said Trassy with fury, at which the Caledonian instantly rushed upon him with his broadsword, but was met by a thrust from the spear of Trassy which he caught on his target, though it made him stagger several paces back. He recovered his ground, and again closed upon his foe, and both finding their unwieldy weapons an encumbrance, dropt them and seized their *skeyns* or short daggers, and grappled together with savage fury, alternately aiming and parrying their dreadful thrusts. They were so equally matched, that neither seemed

likely to be victorious, for what the Caledonian wanted in firmness of limb, he supplied by skill and coolness, the absence of which in the Hibernian, reduced the effect of his more brawny arms and his more confirmed manhood. At last, in one of his rash thrusts, he left his breast unguarded, and his antagonist plunged his weapon in his heart.

“ Are the’ ony mae o’ ye hereawa wad like tae pree the airn ? ” said the victorious youth to the dying warrior with the utmost composure, though panting with the terrible exertions he had just put forth :—the spirit of the grim Trassy had already gone to his fathers.

The prince and the druidess had kept an anxious silence during the whole of this conflict, though they had been eloquent in the intercourse of signs ; but now, as the din of pursuit had died away beyond the hill, Malthuine did not hesitate to step from his concealment, and accosted the champion with

“ Well, Angus, my brave fellow, you have

done for one of these villanous rebels, I think."

"His praesence 'be wi' us, that I sud sain mysel," said Angus in alarm, "gif that's no the prince or his wraith, an', gude saf' us, if it didna speak ho'w."

Malthuine hearing his muttering, and judging that his thoughts were a little confused from the terrible scene he had just been acting, again addressed him, and, at last, got him to comprehend that he was not conferring with an unearthly being. But nothing could equal the astonishment of Angus when Malthuine led forth the lady from the bushes. The prince's impatient inquiries about the safety of his father and sister were satisfactorily answered; and Angus was prevailed on to escort them to the smoking ruins of the encampment, though "he wad 'a been blythe tae hae had anither bicker wi' the rin-awas."

In their way thither Angus gave them all

the particulars of the attack, so far as he had learned them, and we shall do him the justice to use his own words, having often seen the evils of a second edition of a story. Malthuine had put the question, how they got notice of O'Neil's approach?

Angus answered:—"Oo, I can tell ye that weel; for ye see, wi' your will, when ye war no liken tae come back, we thought ye war' a' gane a bellwaverin thegither. An', thinks I, I'll just dauner up the ho'w o' the cleugh here, an' see that they hinna met wi' ony mishanter, wha kens what may hae come o'er them. An' I gaed and gaed, and better gaed, but the ne'er a bit o' me could get a glint o' ane o' ye amang thae aul' warlock neuks, whar there's no the meath o' a peth atween roke an' water. Weel, I e'en had a sair heart to think that the' war' nane o' ye tae be fun', an' whun I had scraumblet up as ferr's the lin an' nae words o' ye, I didna ken weel what to do, for, by this time, it was

turn't gayan gloam't, an' the high scaurs
looket sae elrichlike, an' the howlets war'
scaughin o'er aboon me, that, I'se no lie tae
ye, I grew a wee thing eerie, though I'm no
that easy fleyed. Weel, tae mak a lang tale
short, I turn't at the lin, jealousying that ye
wad be a' hame afore me, an' saebins ye war-
na, maybe some hill stravauger wad hae seen
or heard tell o' ye.

“But tae gang back was easier said nor done,
for it grew pit-mirk, an' I fell o'er ae roke,
an' stack i' the cleavin o' anither, till I thought
I sud hae been made clean out. Ae time I
was sae demmished that I fell awae amang the
stanes, an' hou lang I lay in a dwaum I canna
tell ye. But, O gif Providence binna kin'
tae us! for, though I had got a fell crunt
ahint the haffit, I wan up wi' a warsle, an'
fan' I could doiter o'er the stenners ne'er-
betheless. Weel, as I'm telling ye, this
blype o' a fa' was the luckiest thing that
could hae come o'er me, for whun I rase an'
streeket mysel tae tak' the road, the uncoest

soun' cam' doun the cleugh ye ever heard. I was for thinking at first it was the clawmshells, or the houlets an' the wulcats tryin' wha wad mak' the loudest scraigh; yet it was na like them netherans I thought again. But I couldna believe my ain e'en whun I locket up amang the craigs an' saw a red scance o' light beekin' on the taps o' the highest o' them, an' aye the tither yellagh louder nor the ane afore't, gar't my vera lugs ring.

“ This, ye needna wonner, put me tae a swither what to think, but I jealoused the' war' some nae gude afit. Sae I thought I wad wyte on a wee blink, an' wi' that I sat me doun at the lip o' the burn tae see what it wad come to. At lang an' the length, the yellaghan gacd o'er, an' I was risin' tae come awa' whun I sees mair lights nor ane or twa

* The *clawmshells* is a wild sound supposed to be made by goblins in the air: This notion is supposed to have originated in the noise made by pilgrims striking their scallops. *Jameson in voc. Ato edit.*

joukin up amang the bare craigs at the liu, like spunkie in a moss, an' a clanjamfry o' grusome lookin' chiel's alang wi' them. I soon saw by them they war' for playin some pliskin, an' in I cowers ahint a rangel o' stanes till they cam' evenforenent me. 'Than, there was a bit founmart, pur thing, that had cruppin out o' its hole tae look for its supper, an' whun ane o' them sees it, he lute drive at the creature wi' a dart he had, an' kill't it, an' they a' gather't roun't an' dippet their unhappy weapons in the bluid,* the pagans—guid forgi'me, madam, for sayin sae o' your freens. I saw then what they war' for, but, thinks I chaps, ye're aff your eggs for ance gif ye ettle to come on us the 'te'en at on-awares.

“ Wi' that I sprahgled up amang the rokes wi' a' the birr I had, an' took a short cut through the wuds to the camp, an' ye

* See Bellenden's description of Albion in Boece's Chroniklis. *Black-letter, fol. Edinb. 1541.*

wadna said sax till I had a' our fo'krinnin heads an' thraws throu'ither, an' pittin a' things out o' the gate, out owre the burn, whar ye ken there's a bonny green know an' a beltin o' trees roun't, that we ust tae ca' the boortree know. Weel, the leddies, some o' them sair fley't puir things, war a' got safe tae the boortree know, an' the men war drawn up amang the trees tae defend them, a gay while afore the vile scums wan for'et, so that they could do nae great ill tae speak o', haud aff the burning o' the twae'ree brow tents, that we can soon big again, as lang's the're stab an' ryse in the wuds o' Dalriogh. Weel, i' the middle o' the stramash, ye'll no hinner Bryan tae gang owre the burn an' couk about through the busses like a whitret, till he sees that the enemy are no sae numerous as we had thought. He's a sleeket fallow yon, I'se be bail. Weel, back he cows an' tells; an' than there was the kemp whae tae get the first loun'er at the reivers—ye ne'er saw the like o't. The couarts didna staun' us a jiffy,

but aff tae the hills wi' themsel, like a herd o' raes an' a pack o' hun's at their heels, an' they'r a' owre the hip o' the hill there, as ye hear."

By the time Angus had finished his story of the "Reivers Race," as he called the affair, they were drawing near to the "boor-tree know," where the weaker vessels belonging to the encampment were safely stationed. The beautiful fugitive, however, who had never trusted herself to think where she was going, now hesitated to venture among the enemies of her faith, even under the protection of the prince, and had a half wish to set out immediately to her father, arduous as the journey was, and throw herself on his mercy. This was overruled by Malthuine, who proposed, that she should remain with his sister till she recovered her spirits, and till they devised some plan of escorting her in safety. To this she was compelled to give her assent, and Angus was despatched to prepare the princess for her fair guest. He soon reached

the trees, but it was not easy for him to get through the crowd who encompassed him, as pale and shadowy as the ghosts that surrounded Dante in purgatory, asking a whole tide of questions in a breath.

“ Wasn’t it the king of Munster, Angus?” said one anxiously.

“ No, that it wasn’t,” said another. “ I saw by the making of their cloaks they must be Connaught men ; weren’t they, Angus?”

“ Gae wa’, gae wa’,” said an old Caledonian nurse, “ an’ no fash the callan. I’ll wud it wasna anither levin’ nor that wild rip O’Neil, that’s tae be married tae aul’ Bras-sail’s dochter they say. Wasna’t just him nou, Angus, my man?” He could not reply to so many isochronous questions, and at last he got through the crowd to the princess, who was so agitated about the fate of her brother, who had so mysteriously disappeared, that it was some time before he could make her comprehend his message, and he began to have his apprehensions that she “ wasna just

hersel," for she looked wild enough with her long yellow hair hanging tangled about her face, and her eyes red and bewildered. The name of her brother, however, roused her from her dream, and she ran wildly out and met him with all the frenzy of tumultuous joy.

As soon as the pursuers returned, a grand council was held to determine on the best means of opposing this audacious defection of the druidical party, which had hitherto been concealed in heart-burnings, and grumbling, and whispering in corners;* and had now shown itself under a formidable leader, in the person of Erc O'Neil. The captivity of Saint Patrick was a topic of melancholy discussion, and the want of his sage counsels, at such a crisis, was deeply felt. The prince had drawn from his fair deliverer, that he was not confined at Clogharnbrec; but had been sent off

* Κατα γωίας συζητούμενοι προς ἑς ἀλλήλους κοινολογῆσιν.—LUCIAN.

under a strong escort to her father, so that it would be next to impossible to effect his liberation. The druidess could not assist them, even if she had been willing to exert her influence against her friends; for she was now implicated in the escape of the prince, which she feared would not be forgiven her. Her design had been merely to give him an opportunity of flight, but circumstances, as we have seen, had discovered her connivance, and forced her to accompany him.

Bryan, who would cheerfully have bartered his life to be revenged on the rebels, as soon as he learned the captivity of the saint, volunteered his services to procure his liberty or perish in the attempt; with the proviso, that, if he were killed, the king should "do somethin' for a little bit of a girl he had left at the cabin, who wud be crying the life out of her, the chil' loved him so." Bryan's scheme was to disguise himself as a harper, to obtain access to such places as might be necessary, and to trust to his invention for tak-

ing advantage of circumstances. Angus was equally zealous to release his illustrious compatriot, and requested to accompany the *harp-er* in quality of harp-bearer,—an appendage never dispensed with among the better order of the Irish harpers in those days.* The Caledonian also was well acquainted with the country, and had several trusty comrades in the North, who might be induced to assist them if necessary. To this proposal Bryan agreed, though, perhaps, he would have preferred a “boy with all the blood in his veins Irish to the bone.” They, accordingly, equip themselves in appropriate habiliments, and pursued their journey with all possible speed towards the northern coast of Ulster.

Walker's Irish Bards.

CHAPTER XII.

Each unhewn mass of living stone
Was clad in horrors not its own,
And at its base the trembling nations bow'd.

ROGERS.

SAINT PATRICK, to whom our narrative now turns, had begun his mission under rather unfavourable auspices; for he had been a captive during several years of his youth among the very people he now came to tell, that they were wandering in the ways of delusion having been carried off from Strathclyde in one of the numerous predatory excursions made by the famous Niall of the nine hostages. His predecessors in the good work had either been too few in number, or they had wanted energy, and the inspiration of indefatigable zeal and enthusiasm, so indispensable to captivate both the rude and the civilized. Of

these Patrick had a more than common share, with the addition of a profound knowledge of human nature, and a considerable acquaintance with the human learning of his day. Hardships in youth had given a firmness and a certain temerity to his character, which it could not have acquired had he remained quietly under the roof of the good presbyter, his father, on the banks of the Clyde; and his subsequent peregrinations in France, Italy, and the beautiful islands of the Mediterranean, had added much to his knowledge of men and books.*

He had, at an early period of life, † imbibed a strong wish to see the salutary doctrines of the cross substituted for the superstitions which then disgraced many parts of the British Isles, and none more than the unhappy country where he had spent several years of

* Jocelin in vita Sancti Patricii.

† Trans. of the Antiq. Soc. of Scotland, Vol. II. Part I.

his youth in bitter captivity. The Druids, who had been persecuted by the Romans in Wales, and their chief settlement in the island of M^ona destroyed, took refuge in Ireland, whither a few stragglers had previously found their way. They soon succeeded, by means of their knowledge in medicine and surgery, and particularly by their incantations, to make the credulous and unsuspecting Hibernians converts to their doctrines. Theirs was a system of terror; they had no mild method of soothing the minds of their infatuated devotees. As they gained influence, they ventured to denounce public calamities unless their demands were complied with; and, from their knowledge of Astronomy, they swayed the terrors of their superstition by predicting eclipses. This, to a nation still in a state of primitive simplicity, was an undeniable instance of supernatural power possessed by these designing priests; and the kings and the nobles accordingly bowed in humble submission to their counsels. They increased the

dread of their superstitions, by the horrific and infernal rite of human sacrifices, and the thunders of excommunication, which they wielded with the deepest policy. In a word, they had acquired the most unlimited direction of the affairs of the Irish princes, either by intermarriages, or by the machinations of political intrigue.

Such was the state of things when the Catholic missionaries arrived, of whom Saint Palladius was the first. They were instructed, like the Jesuits in aftertimes, to use at first the most artful insinuation, humouring and even complying with the pagan superstitions, in such particular instances as prudence should suggest, under pretence, that it was a part of their own ritual ; till they found themselves possessed of sufficient influence to throw off the mask, when they could modify the rites, so as not to offend the prejudices of the people. The effects of this mode of procedure are still prominent in every part of Europe, particularly in the countries which

remain under the spiritual dominion of Rome. The Reformation did much to eradicate the more glaring of these unchristian rites which had entwined themselves with the gospel ; but it has not wholly grubbed up the tenacious rootlings. Witness the remains of the autumnal sacrifice of fruits in the pulling of coleworts, diving for apples, and burning of nuts on Hallowmas eve, in Scotland ; the sacrifice to the Goddess of Summer, in the decorations of the May-pole in England and Ireland ; and the passing the bottle in drinking by the course of the sun, which is purely Druidical ; with numerous other vestiges which can still be traced, and otherwise cannot be satisfactorily explained.

The Catholic missionaries also found it indispensable to their success to cope with their rivals in their knowledge of nature, particularly astronomy and the use of herbs. For their knowledge in surgery, several of the early saints of our islands were very famous ; and the Scottish Highlanders, it is said, have

to this day a salve, the recipe for which is traced by tradition to the famous Saint Columba of Iona. The monks reported all their cures as miracles;—for example, Saint Patrick had influence, by means of prayer, to bring down the archangel Michael, in form of a pigeon, to pull a bone out of Logaire's son's throat, which he had unluckily swallowed : * and so of the rest.

It has already been incidentally mentioned, that Saint Patrick, after being sent to Ireland by Pope Celestine to succeed Palladius, who had laboured fruitlessly, soon acquired great influence at the court of Logaire, at that time virtual monarch of Ireland, so far as one prince could be said to be monarch of a country divided among a number of independent chiefs, who were only induced to coalesce in attacking a common enemy, or in defending themselves from invasion, and who, for the sake of unanimity, were compelled to elect a

dictator or general. The chief, upon whom such honour was conferred, was usually indebted for his elevation to his known personal courage or wisdom, or to the extent of his dominion. In Logaire all of these qualifications were in a certain degree united. He had under immediate sway a very powerful district of the island; his bravery in the field had been often proved; and few could cope with him in the wise management of difficult affairs. The latter he effected more by his careful selection of counsellors, than by original invention of his own, and he was quick-sighted in perceiving the advantages and disadvantages of a suggestion, although it might never have struck his own mind.

Logaire, after his accession, now perceived that his court was infested by a tribe of bards, who swarmed, and even ruled, wherever they found it advantageous. To this nuisance, however, he was compelled to submit; for it was dangerous, he found, to intermeddle with what bore the venerable stamp of established

usage. By intelligence from Albyn he gladly learned, that a new order of things had commenced there under the preaching of Palladius, and that, even in his own dominions, the new religion had been secretly working its way, particularly among such Caledonians as made a temporary residence there, which in these days was common, the love of wandering is so inseparable from a race of hunters. It is reported, that Logaire was strongly prompted to favour the new religion by his Queen, who had been converted by one of these zealous fathers; it being always a maxim with them to secure female support.

When it was understood by the conclave at Rome, that Ireland was in such favourable circumstances for receiving the faith, notwithstanding the failure of Palladius, no time was lost in choosing some leading person to undertake the mission; and as Patrick, who was then a Presbyter at Rome, was better qualified than any other from his zeal, his

learning, and, above all, by his knowledge of the Irish, he had no rival competitor for the appointment. He had, on his landing, been received with distinction by the king, he was abundantly successful in combating superstition, and he soon rendered himself indispensable in the counsels of the cabinet by his superiority of knowledge and genius. Indeed, he was a constant inmate of the palace, and seldom left the court, contriving to manage the conversion of the remote districts chiefly by means of presbyters, and other religious; thirty of whom he had brought with him on landing. But though he was a resident amidst the bustle and gaiety of the court, he lived with all the austerity of an anchorite, and indulged in solitary and secluded rambles, pondering thoughtfully on his great work, and only relaxing from his anxious cogitations to collect such simples as he found necessary to establish his skill in healing.

It was in one of those solitary rambles, as

we have seen, that he unluckily stumbled upon the retreat of the ambitious rebel at Clogh-arnbrec, and was exultingly secured in the pile. Many a savage counsel rolled through the mind of that stern chief, on this unforeseen good fortune. He viewed it on all sides, and in all relations ; and in his straining to make the most of his illustrious captive, he was hazarding the chance of overshooting his mark, and of accomplishing nothing. He did not even hesitate to think of renouncing his friends the Druids, who, he concluded, on his own principles, were only his friends, in so far as it favoured their interest by his affording them countenance and protection. He did not foresee, that it was contrary to the unalterable rules of the Catholic Missionaries, to take part with a rebel chief, whose power was inferior to that of the existing authorities, even could he have shown his right to be considered as the lawful prince. He decided at least to sound his prisoner, and ordered him to a private conference.

The result of the conference was unfavourable : all the sinister logic of O'Neil was lost on the apostle, who showed such dignity and indescribable superiority of demeanour, that O'Neil himself, stern as he was, looked overawed, and felt how little even his determined spirit was, when opposed to unshaken uprightness, accompanied by all the majesty of intellect and genius. He felt that the clear and forcible reasoning of the saint was beginning to awaken impertinent doubts in his mind, as to the propriety of his proceedings, which he always wished to stifle ; and he feared lest the same power of reasoning, and his dignified and authoritative manner, might operate on his followers, and detach them from his interests, or at least render them cool in executing his designs.

On these considerations, he changed his intention ; and, in order to gain time to make a final decision, he resolved instantly to send Patrick under a strong guard to his friend Brassail the arch-druid, who was the least

likely person to be influenced by his doctrines. All this passed a few hours before the capture of the prince already detailed ; the grim escort having departed from Clogharnbrec, just as Malthuine surmounted the waterfall. The rudest and most bloody of the horde had been selected by O'Neil to accompany the captive saint, and they had peremptory orders to hew him in pieces the moment he should attempt to escape. This dreaded accident, however, did not happen ; and they arrived in safety within the sacred precincts of Brassail's grove.

The northern coast of Ulster was at this period the least civilized of all Logaire's dominions, and for that reason the Druids had selected it as one of their chief stations, induced also by the sublime scenery which characterizes it,—a circumstance which they seldom overlooked, aware of the influence it has over the mind in the solemn ceremonies of a superstition such as theirs, with its midnight festivals, mysterious initiations, and

dreadful sacrifices. The Catholics had not yet penetrated to this sacred region, which was chiefly under the sway of Erc O'Neil; and all the policy which the ambitious chief and the intriguing priests could muster, was formidably arrayed to preserve their groves and cromlechs uncontaminated by the intrusion of the Catholic missionaries. They failed not to exhibit their most terrifying incantations, and human victims were often dragged to their infernal altars to overawe the people, and plunge their minds into superstitious dread, while the most horrid execrations were pronounced against the Catholic intruders, and the most inhuman tortures inflicted upon such of them as were unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of these merciless priests.

CHAPTER XIII.

Justum et tenacem propositi virum—

Si fractus illabatur orbis,

Impavidum ferient ruinae.

HORACE, III. 3.

Imitated by Young.

His hand, the good-man fixes, on the sky,

And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

THE residence of Brassail, to which the Apostle was brought by his rough attendants, was not far from the coast. A dark grove of oaks spread over the fields around it, and rendered the approach gloomy and mysterious; and many a winding path they had to thread, and many a glade to cross, in this woody labyrinth, before they reached the awful abode of this high-priest of the Druids, as if, in thus concealing the sacred place, they wished prac-

tically to inculcate with the son of Sirach, that "Wisdom first leads through crooked ways." The gloom, however, which was diffused by the thick foliage and the interweaving of the rank branches above them, though it awed his savage attendants, had no effect on the firm spirit of the captive Saint, except of strengthening his resolution to bear unshrinkingly whatever might befall him.

The idea of becoming a martyr, and dying gloriously for the cause of truth, was to him a subject of lofty exultation; and he ventured to hope, that his resisting to the death would stamp an air of truth on the doctrines he espoused, which would carry them home to every heart, and spread the irresistible spirit of zeal over every corner of the land, and thus his death, or—as he delighted to consider it—his martyrdom, would prove as effectual in accomplishing his grand work as the long and active life to which he had looked forward. He was indulging in these and similar trains of thought, unconscious almost of

the progress they were making through the dark wood, when they arrived at a place more gloomy than any they had yet passed.

Two rows of bushy oaks, whose branches met and mingled, bounded a long narrow avenue, which they now entered, but whose termination they could not see, on account of the increasing darkness of the shade. This dark avenue bore all the marks of desolation and solitude. Thin tufts of withered grass hung lank and dripping over the stones, which were scattered on all sides, overgrown with damp moss, and intermixed with the rotting leaves of the preceding autumn. No voice of living thing was to be heard; for the very birds seemed to have shunned it, and their melancholy chirping was heard remotely from the more open places of the wood. A few drowsy insects seemed rather to float passively on the thick air, than to move themselves by their languid wings, and even the grim spider had deserted this lifeless shade, to spread his snares where the air was unload-

ed of the comfortless moisture which everywhere hung in drops from the branches, and was heard at intervals to patter among the withered leaves. The glimpses of the sky, which sometimes partially intruded through the thinner branches, only added to the desolate picture, by showing the choked and scanty vegetation, black layers and masses of rotten leaves strewed on the path, and damp mouldering stones, which appeared to be prevented from crumbling to pieces, only by the patches of dark green moss that surrounded them. The humming lapse of a stream in a further part of the wood, shed a solemnity over the whole, and oppressed the ear with a heaviness almost tangible.

At the termination of this shady way was the abode of the Arch-Druid, which was, if possible, still more gloomy and mysterious; and the guides looked as much aghast, as if they had seen the portentous inscription which met the eye of Dante, when the shade of Vir-

gil led him to the Porch of Erebus.* In front, it was hid and defended by a cross row of the largest and most venerable looking oaks they had yet seen, whose thick boughs, "knit with ivy-twine," † hung over what might be a porch or a door-way, but it was so concealed in the shade of the trees, and by the crossings of the lower twigs, that its outline could not be traced. These crossings, however, were not so free and random-like as the unconstrained meeting of branches in the untrodden wilds of the forest. They bore marks of being forcibly drawn from their natural elevation by human artifice, and formed into the rude resemblance of a plashed fence.

They passed this singular entrance between the growing columns which defended it, and were introduced into a large gallery, as dark as a starless midnight, with a ceiling or canopy of the same interwoven branches of the

* Inferno, Cant. III. *sub init.*

† Spenser.

growing oaks. Nothing could be more dungeon-like than this house of gloom ; and the savage conductors of the Saint seemed to feel a religious horror as they advanced, looking cautiously at every step, and starting, appalled, when any solitary beam of wandering light fell on the damp floor, and they scanned with fearful prying the deeper black that filled the intervals between the trees.

At a little distance from the entrance of this gallery was a sort of partition of massive stones placed at regular distances ; and in the centre was a vacant space, like the gate of a camp, at which they stopt short, as if afraid to venture farther without permission. Their pause was ominous of some catastrophe ; for they dared not now look around them, and kept their heads stiff and unweverable as the huge oak trunks beside them. Their eye-lids alone seemed capable of motion,—rising with heavy slowness, and maintaining their oppressed elevation with evident pain. Their fear was not imaginary ; for they were presently saluted

by the loud rolling of thunder, which seemed to shake the solid earth,—the leaves about them rustled ominously,—and they thought they heard the crash of huge branches torn asunder by this war of the elements. Gleams of lightning flashed through the long colonnades of the trees, and showed their grey trunks, like a file of guardian ghosts, embattled to oppose intrusion. Besides the hollow roll of the thunder, they heard unearthly sounds breaking around them, and the whole air was polluted with the smell of burning sulphur.

The bloody warriors, to whom the din of battle and the horrors of carnage were familiar, stood fearfully aghast at this conflict of the elements, and wished they had been employed in any other expedition rather than the escorting of an infidel, of whose advance to this sacred place the Divinities of the air thus expressed such abhorrence. For they had no doubt that the thunder was the unequivocal expression of celestial anger, and they dread-

ed. lest they might be involved in the destruction which so terribly threatened their devoted captive. Indeed, it only seemed to require the shrieks of despair, the wailings and thickening sobs of anguish, and the fierce tones of blasphemy, to complete a picture of Tartarus itself.

As the gleams of lightning became more frequent, throwing a pale livid hue on all around,—a dim figure was seen moving as slowly as the shadow on the dial at the furthest part of the area, and pausing at intervals, seemingly to listen to the rolling of the thunder, or to start at the glare of the elemental fire, which flashed through the thick canopy of leaves above. As the figure advanced slowly along the gallery, the blue flashes of light fell upon his face, and disclosed the contour of a long flowing robe, which mantled its white folds around him, * and gave him a

* See the figure taken from an antique bas-relief in the second tome of *Mouffaucon*.

stateliness of air, so imposing, that he might have been thought the animated statue of some divinity, which had stept from its pedestal, to stalk through the gloom, or even the God of Thunder himself, who had scattered his veil of clouds, and moved along the area, in human form, to survey the wrecks of his ire. This majestic personage walked in silent solemnity towards the intruders; and, on reaching an artificial mound which fronted them, he raised himself on its summit, as if to give his high stature a more striking air, and paused thoughtfully to survey the group before him.

“What are you, and whence?” said he, in a deep musical tone of voice, such as we may suppose once charmed the Grecian besiegers of Troy, when the venerable Nestor addressed them.

“We are true men,” said the leader of the band, assuming an air of courage which he felt not, but was unwilling to discover his terrors to his subalterns. “We are true men,

and bring from the valiant Ere O'Neil this arch-infidel a prisoner, to place him at the disposal of the venerable Brassail."

"I am Brassail," said the figure; "blessed be heaven that I have lived to see this day!" and he clasped his hands, and raised them to his head, in sublime adoration of his Gods, who, he conceived, had selected him to establish in pristine splendour the tottering fabric of Druidism, by thus throwing into his hands his most deadly foe.

"Protect us, protect us, we implore thee, from the wrath of the elements," was echoed at once from several of the more superstitious warriors, whom the thunder and their mysterious dread of the grove had terrified,—as soon as they learned they were in the presence of this venerated personage.

Brassail immediately muttered some wild incantations; and, raising a small silver horn to his mouth, he blew a shrill blast, which rung drearily among the oaks, and melted into the louder peal of the thunder that still

rumbled through the air. Brassail bowed his head with solemnity,—knelt on the turf, and raised his folded hands to heaven. He then beckoned to them to advance within the partition of stones ; and they eagerly obeyed the signal, as if they would be secure in that holy sanctuary. They led forward Saint Patrick to the foot of the mound, and Brassail descended, still repeating his incantations, and walking backwards, till he had gone thrice round him in a circle opposite to the course of the sun. He encircled the warriors also at a solemn pace, but in a contrary direction. The instant he had completed the pacing of his last gyration, the thunder ceased to roll, and the lightning to flash, as if by magic ; and there was a deep and lifeless pause for a moment, in which the ear, so lately stunned by the thunder, strained idly to catch the rustle of the grass, or the fall of a leaf. All was still, as if the elements had exhausted their fury, or sunk, like the wearied wrestler, into the arms of sleep. The gloom

returned in all its blackness, and veiled the secrets of the grove from farther scrutiny, and the eye, dazzled by the lightning, felt pained and repelled by the dark air.

Light again began to stream on the trunks of the embattled oaks, but not the glaring flicker of elemental fire : it was pale and blue, and lay on the air like a thin mist, while there appeared advancing silently from behind the trees a number of men with small glimmering torches, lining the gallery on each side as far as the eye could reach ; and over their heads aërial music floated through the silence in wild and fitful cadence.

“ You are safe,” said Brassail : “ Fail not in your devotions, and my blessing shall rest with you. What tidings do you bring of my daughter ?”

“ She is with O’Neil at Clogharnbree. She would have come with us ; but our rapid journey was judged too hard for her endurance. She will be with you before the Samh’in festival.”

“ It is well : my blessing be with you and your brave chief. Go to Rath-na-Carraig, and you will be welcomed by our friends who are mustering there to join the force at Clogh-arnbree. Tell O’Neil I shall see to this infidel whom Heaven has so graciously placed at our disposal ; he shall be properly rewarded for his machinations.”

The Apostle, from his entrance into the dark avenue, had not uttered a word nor a sigh. He was not overawed by the mysterious gloom which hung round this mansion of superstition ; nor was he appalled by the awful breaking of the thunder around him, and the glare of the lightning flashing among the trees. He had heard that the Druids dared to imitate these convulsions of the elements to terrify their votaries ; but to him it was alike indifferent whether the storm was real, or only raised in mockery of Heaven. His conscience was unstained by any crime for which he did not trust for pardon ; and he was resolved to meet his martyrdom with

undaunted firmness. Perhaps his very persecutors might be converted by his unshaken courage, and to gain a single convert from such infernal superstition, life itself was not too dear a price. As his former conductors withdrew, he was seized with fiendish joy by the attendants of Brassail, and hurried away to a remoter part of the grove.

CHAPTER XIV.

There was a light within,
A yellow light, as when the autumnal sun,
Through travelling rain and mist,
Shines on the evening hills.

SOUTHEY'S THALABA.

It was "a raw and gusty"* morning in the end of October, when Bryan and Angus, after having travelled all night, entered an elevated tract of heath overlooking the ocean. The preceding evening had been clear and promising, and the bright red tinge, which "the weary sun making his golden set," † threw on the clouds, as well as the chill breeze that swept from the high grounds, betokened the first setting in of the winter frosts. As the night advanced, the sky overcast, and the

* Shakespeare.

† Ibid.

breeze became louder and more unsteady, wafting over the heath wandering flakes of half melted snow and drops of rain ; and long before day-break these preludings of discomfort had increased to a continued shower of sleet, which the wind beat rudely in the faces of the hardy travellers. To this they had been inured from infancy, and cared it not ; yet human weakness, however seasoned, cannot bear, without sinking, an indefinite portion of fatigue, at the same time that it is made the sport of the elements ; and hardy and inured as our travellers were, they began to wish themselves snugly seated at a comfortable breakfast, by the corner of a warm hearth,—and the more so, that the haze which capt the hills, and the wandering and riding of the clouds, now grey with the first breakings of the dawn, gave but little hope of a cessation of hostilities on the part of the aërial machinery.

Angus, who was well acquainted with the country, had a shrewd guess of a place of

shelter in the vicinity ; but as he had a mischievous delight in teasing his companion, he did not choose to communicate his secret, till he had enjoyed Bryan's impatience. Angus could sympathize with Bryan's grief, and he would have deemed it sacrilege to have turned it to mockery ; but he had no mercy on the pain he suffered from the storm. It was continuing to drive bitterly in their faces, and forced Bryan to exclaim,

“ Soul and conscience ! if this same isn't as bad as fighting sure, and never a bush there is to be stan'ing in the face of that coul' wind for a shelter, no nor a rock that wud be all as one in case there'd be nade.”

“ Oo man,” replied Angus, as firmly as the shivering of his under jaw would permit, “ ye're unco sune dung ; ye sud na forget, as my aul'mither mony a time has tell't me, to lippen aye tae Providence in a' your straits : Providence is a rich provider.”

“ Well,” said Bryan, “ if Providence wud make the storm quit, as you say, I wud be

entirely obliged to him, that's if there'd be a cabin any where on the common, good or bad."

"Na, na," replied the Caledonian, "we hae e'en a lang gate tae gang yet or we'll meet wi' ony thing tae ca' a house; but fac ye're sae impatientfu', what'll ye gi'e me to conquire up a bit sheelin on the muir here?" and, as he spoke, he leered sarcastically at Bryan, who hated magic, because it was dealt in by the hated Druids.

"Look ye, Sur," said the irritated Hibernian, while the wind beat the cold snow in his face, "you must quit putting your jokes upon me; if you are after knowing of the shaling you mintion, plase to go that's the direct road, or, by the powers, I'm just the boy to break all the bones in your carcass. By dad, I'm not to be put upon, Sur."

"Hout man," said Angus, as he secretly enjoyed the fuming of his testy companion, "ye needna pit yoursel' in sican a pickle for na'egear. I wad 'a ta'en ye tae the sheelin

gif the' be ane ; but I thought ye wadna like me tae cast my cantrips for fin'in't out. Ah laud, I ken mair joukery-pawkry nor ye're thinking o', for a' your wusdom."

Bryan got still more enraged at this shuffling of Angus, and the storm looked as if it were borrowing strength from his angry countenance, sweeping over the heath with all the fury of a pursuing enemy, and bristling up the windward branches of heath and juniper into the resemblance of a herd of hedgehogs or porcupines in battle array, while the distant roar of the sea sung loud in the air. Angus, whose feelings of cold were silenced in some measure by his attention being directed to his companion, persisted in his mischievous tormenting.

"Nou I'm quite sarious wi' ye," he continued, "I learnt the gate frae a skilly kintra-man o' mine ain, an' gin ye hae nae objections to count on, we'll try't for ance."

"Try what, Sur?" said Bryan, still looking moody and scowling.

“ Oo just the cantrips I was telling ye o’ for fin’in’ out the sheeling,” replied the unperturbed Angus.

Bryan was quite at his mercy, as he was as completely ignorant of the surrounding topography as of his own present locus ; and he could perceive no indications of human abode. Indeed, the copious rain which shot point blank in their faces, had become more and more mingled with snow, so that their view was much contracted, and the surrounding heath could only be obscurely scanned for a few paces a-head. Bryan was, accordingly, forced to acquiesce to whatever his companion proposed, though he continued to look sullen and gloomy to the no small amusement of the waggish youth.

Angus now gathered a small slip of heath and another of juniper, which he tied in form of a cross, muttering the while a jargon which he himself did not understand.

“ Hae man haud a grip there,” said Angus, holding out his spell, “ aye that wey, turn’t

this gate, sees ye ; odsake my fingers is dinlin aff at the nails wi' that blae win'."

The juncture was completed notwithstanding the "dinlin," and, with all due solemnity, he poised the cross over a dub of melting snow, which was collected in a depression of the muddy soil, and accompanying the ceremony with a copious seasoning of the afore-said jargon, he dropt the spell in the water. It is impossible to picture, in language, the rueful grinning of Bryan, as he submitted to this trial of his impatience—it would be a gross solecism to call it patience—for, on such occasions, he could, like Costard, "thank God he had as little patience as any other man." * He was the more irritated that, with all his skill in decyphering the expression of the human countenance, he found it impossible to say whether Angus was imposing on him, or really believed in the efficacy of his spell, so

* *Love's Lab. Lost.*

tight a rein had he kept on the laugh which was twinging every inch of skin on his face to fall into the requisite wrinkle. In this he was assisted by the storm, which had frozen and stiffened the more pliable portions, and spread a bleak hue over his cheek. It has been observed, that, when a person is exposed to cold like our wanderers, there is an accession and retrogression of the annoyance like the cold and hot stages of an ague, or the ebbing and flowing of the sea. One of these accessions had now the effrontery to assail the wag, and save the "bothered" Hibernian from circumstantial additions, which Angus meditated to complete the mock incantation. In short, he found that the cross pointed in a direction, where, if he had not miscalculated, the above mentioned sheeling had taken possession of a few feet of the waste.

With hasty strides, accordingly, such as their benumbed limbs allowed them to make, they marched in the indicated direction, till they could distinctly perceive, through the

drifting snow, the agitated surf which broke on the rocks of the beach before them. Angus carefully surveyed the bearings of the several points of the coast, pausing, by intervals, like a hound at fault, to arrange in his mind a chart to steer by. At last he turned down a green slope which descended to the beach, and was bounded on each side by a ledge of rocks. Bryan was the first to perceive the delightful pungency of smoke, and those who have been caught in a snow storm at a distance from human home, will readily sympathize with him in his joy at the discovery.

The singed appearance of a circular patch of turf, near the summit of a small declivity, which ran half way up the front of the right hand rock, pointed out the source of the fragrance which the breeze—rather a stiff one in this instance—was wafting along with the snow over the heath. Besides this, there was no other indication of “bigget laun’,” as Angus generalized the term *house*; but he

knew well how to ferret his way to a smoking hearth; and, looking at Bryan with a knowing air, and motioning to him to follow, he struck into a narrow cleft between a projecting angle of the rock and the declivity on which the patch of singed turf had been discovered. The smoke which they were so much rejoiced to see, met them in dense volumes as they advanced to the extremity of the cleft, and through it they dimly perceived on the left, a hole about three feet by four, whence this fragrant tide was issuing its blue waves, and within the hearth itself “looked through the horizontal misty air shorn of its beams.”*

The mansion looked to be totally deserted, and Bryan became half credulous of the power of the “cantrips” Angus had performed with his cross, and began to examine whether he were not surrounded by the unearthly companions who had reared the sheeling, and lighted

* Paradise Lost.

up the comfortable fire, of which he was now enjoying the convenience, having stretched his brawny limbs to each corner of it like the sides of an isosceles triangle, his nether man being propt on a large clumsy black stone, of which he had on entry taken immediate possession. Angus had made a similar appropriation at the opposite side of the hearth. Bryan's persevering scrutiny of the enchanted sheeling, at last detected something in the likeness of a little round smoky face, peeping from behind a pile of dried turf and drifted wood which was stored in a corner, for the purpose of fuel. Surely his fancy was not deceiving him, and carving in frolic a human face on the end of a smoked turf, such tricks we know are played by "strong imagination."* Angus was becoming accustomed to Bryan's peculiar expression of countenance, yet, in the present instance, he looked so like "one who sees a serpent in his way

* Midsummer Night's Dream.

and 'back recoils," that he could not help exclaiming,

"Wa guide us man, 'I think ye be gaun fey, what can ye see tae glowr at sae ~~in~~ a bing o' peats! it 'wad be mair wyselike tae harl twa'ree mac o' them inbye tae the ingle, nor tae vizzy that gate as ye war gaun tae slip an arrow at a muircock." And he, accordingly, went to the "bing" to replenish the fire, when the same little pug face confronted him which had attracted the scrutinizing eye of Bryan.

"Beteach us!" he exclaimed, "what hae we here? a wean I think," casting his eyes over the contour of a little urchin boy, whose white hair was soiled to greyness with smoke, and who had crept behind the fuel, and rolled himself up into the appearance of an apple dumplin to escape detection.

"It isn't Leprighaun * sure," whispered

* The Irish Puck.

Bryan, "ye have been after dealing with Conscience! if it wadn't be better a deal to be on the common 'yet, nor keep staying in this same cabin with the likes of such a pranky spright."

"Leprighaun! blethers!" cried Angus, "its a bit wean, pur thing. Binna fleyed my bonny man," continued he, patting his smoky head, "there naething gaun to steer you: a filsch o' a thing it's whun a's done. What do they ca' you, chuffy?"

The little fellow had been in doubts how to act, and sat rolling his head from one shoulder to another like a sea-gull on a billow, but gathering confidence from the soothing of Angus, he thrust his thumb into his mouth as if to feel for an answer, and after the question was repeatedly put, he muttered through his fingers that his name was "wee Sannock Grougar."

"Eh, Bryan, man," said Angus, "we're fa'n on our feet," looking round as if he had

just began to recognise the walls, "I'll wud my life this 'ill be lang Jock Grougar's, a kintraman o' mine."

"Troth!" answered Bryan, "I've a fancy your countrymen are to be foun' every where on God's earth, that's when there is ever a thing to ate."

This dialogue was interrupted by the sudden appearance of the *cara sposa* of "lang Jock," who now entered the dwelling, driving before her, with both hands, "a great lubberly boy,"* who seemed as unwilling to move, and performed his movements with as bad a grace as a gnarled oak when attacked by the equinoctial winds.

"I'll*gar ye," vociferated the tender mother, "ye wilyeart haingle, an' ye gi'e me sic a fright this towmont. A bonny faught fo'k has wi' ye tae bring ye up, an you tae bourd wi' neck-breakin ilka time ye can get

* Merry Wives of Windsor.

speelin a craig, out o' kennin, ye unhappy creature it ye are."

"He's shylin his mouth at ye minnie," remarked "wee Sannock," forgetting the presence of the strangers in the interest he took in his brother's punishment.

"Ye illfa'rt wonner," continued the mother, "gin ye sheyl at me"—But her eye at this moment caught the intruders, and she finished the sentence with—"These are us a' wha hae we here, think we, sitting like crows in a mist?"

"Ye'll no ken me, ga' twil, the mornin, but at apen doors dogs gae ben," said Angus, forgetting that there was nothing in the shape of a door about the sheeling.

"Wa the dear pty me, is this you Angus man?" returned Jenny Grougar, "what win' has blawn you here in sic grashlogh weather? Ain a harper too ye hae wi' ye I think. Bal-die, man, fie haste ye, cast on a weghtfu' o' peats on the hearth till I mak' ready some breakfast; for gin ye hae come owre Ross-

noek muir ye'll no be the war o' something
tae keep the heart wallopin." And away she
bustled to execute her hospitable intention,
without ever looking whether the refractory
Baldie was obeying her order.

CHAPTER XV.

“ Towers and battlements he sees
 Bosom'd high in tufted trees,”

MILTON'S L'ALLEGRO.

“ With stout couráge, ready to either of twae,
 Owthir to bring his slight to guid assay,
 Or, failing thereof, doubtless ready to die.”

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHILE the indispensable ceremonies of breakfast were going through, they learned that Grougar himself, as a retainer of O'Neil's, had been called out to join the revolters, who had arrived in great confusion the night before, and taken their station at Rath-na-Carraig, a fort at some distance to the westward. No intelligence of Saint Patrick, however, had yet been wafted to the ears of mine hostess of the sheeling; but when Angus told her how the matter stood, and hinted at their

design, trusting to the patriotic feelings of Jenny for secrecy, she stared a moment at her informer, as if doubting whether to credit him, raising her hands at the same time in token of surprise, but this suddenly changed to a mingled emotion of fear and grief, which she vented in,

“ O sirs! then I doubt its a’ owre wi’ him, the’ war’ ne’er ony body wan out o’ their clutches it e’er I heard o’. It wad be a tempin’ o’ Providence in you tae gang near them whun ye’re nane o’ their ain fo’k.”

“ Hout ’oman,” said Angus, “ a’s no tint that’s in peril: hae ye ony kin’ o’ guess whar they’ll hae him? odd an’ we could ance get an inklin o’ that, we wad try twa or three gates but we wad begunk them?”

“ I wuss weel it wadna be easy tae say, but ye may be sure they’ll hae him in some hole or bore about the Warlock-wud; they keep a’ their secrets thereawa, an’ naebody by themselves kens a’ the loops and wumples o’t; its

no chancy tae gang near't ; they're an uncanny pack tae bourd wi'."

" True for you," said Bryan, who was well aware of the danger, " in respect of your living among them ; but it makes all the differ in the world, if we manage the jab and tip them the scope of our heels when we'd be out of raech, consider."

" Eh !—" exclaimed Jenny, roused from a momentary fit of musing, " na that winna do ; they wadna be a jiffy o' gripping ye like a gled, they're no sae ae-hauit. But stay, let me see, an' ye could won hidlins down tae the shore, we might aibles jink the warlocks, an' it warnna thae fearsome craigs o'er about Pleaskin and Binguthar * that ye wad hae tae gang down, an' our bit curragh's no that rackle sin it got a stave on Monanday was aughtnights on the Partan-rock ; but O ! what wad come o' my gudeman an' the bits o' weans,

* *Binguthar*, the ancient name of the Giant's Causeway.

an' our wee cozy house here. Agin ye war tae get the boatie for sican an en'? yet its a sair pity to see Clutie's ain aagents owrgangin the hale kintra this gate too!"

"Is it the childer?" said Bryan, "oh sorrow a bit of trouble shall happen them or you, I'll engage; and the king will bestow you as snug a cabin as ye wud'nt know from the palace itself if ye were blindfolded, that's wad ye len' us the loan of the curragh."

Jenny was caught by the bait of obtaining a "haudin," as she termed it, from the king, and was also influenced by the purer motive of releasing her countryman from the Druids, to whom she was no friend, although she feared them. There was still the difficulty of gaining over Grougar himself, who was a staunch adherent of O'Neil's, for which default Jenny took frequent opportunities to employ the weapon of domestic vituperation, being rather an adept in its use; and, on this occasion, she pledged her influence in the good cause over her other half. It was ac-

cordingly agreed upon that Angus, assisted by Grougar, should bring round the boat and lie too off Pleaskin, on the eve of the Sa'n'h' festival, while Bryan engaged to effect the escape of the Apostle from the adjacent grove, in whose recesses he was immured. Bryan, also, under the shelter of his disguise, was to take the fort in his way, and apprise Grougar that his presence was wanted at home on important business; his subsequent enveiglement in the plan being safely left to the power of Jenny's eloquence, and the promise of the "cabin ye wudn't know from the palace."

Baldie was instantly dispatched across the heath to put Bryan in the direction of Rathna-Carraig; and Angus and the active hostess went to the beach to examine the capabilities of the curragh for braving the swells of the Atlantic, and to repair the "stave" it had suffered on the Partan-rock. The storm had subsided, and Bryan could now see the bleak heath of Rossnock extending for miles along the shore, diversified with rising grounds,

and watered at intervals by rivulets, that the dusk of the morning and the thick rain and snow had formerly hindered him from perceiving.

As they had climbed to the summit of an elevated ridge which ran across the heath, they came in sight of a hill that was insulated from the adjacent heights, and stood among them like a sovereign surrounded by his courtiers,—not that it was greatly loftier than the others around it, but it stood apart, and was the most conspicuous object in the view. “Ye might tak it” Angus had said, “for Ailsa craig, and the sea lav’t frae ’bout it.” The foot of the hill was encompassed with a wood which extended into the surrounding plain, and gave the whole a fine picturesque air, that was much enhanced by contrast with the bare woodless heath of Rossnock, which they had just quitted.

“Troth,” remarked Bryan to his little guide, “if that same isn’t as purtty a making

of a hill as I could wish to clap an eye on, that's if it wudn't be O'Neil that owes it."

"Yon's the vera bit," replied Baldie, "yon's Rath-na-Carraig."

"A strong position," thought Bryan, "and well chosen; it wud be cruel difficult to storm it."

Here he dismissed the boy and hastened down the slope of the ridge,—crossed the intervening valley,—entered the wood, and ascended the steep rising of Rath-na-Carraig. The rebels had chosen a station truly impregnable to the rude warfare of those days. There was no height which commanded their entrenchments, and the wood which surrounded them below, afforded the best means of destroying an enemy who should enter it, by placing archers behind the trees where they were to pass. Bryan found also that there was only a single approach to the entrenchment; for one side of the hill was a rugged precipice, and the other parts, which were apparently more accessible, were thickly

covered with brambles and other impenetrable brushwood.

The fortification itself, consisted of a double wall composed of earth and stones, and the exterior one surmounted by a parapet, intended as a defence, from behind which, they might in safety hurl their weapons upon the assailants who should dare to ascend the hill. The entrance (and there was only one) was flanked by four low towers, constructed with the same materials as the walls, and garrisoned with chosen archers. The soldiers were cantoned within in huts, built with stakes and covered with heath, which rendered them warm and snug, although their situation, on the unsheltered hill, exposed them to every storm that blew. A considerable number of the band had effected a lodgement in a part of the rock, which had been shattered in some of the grand convulsions of nature, and was hence easily scooped out into a large cavity, which, although it did not run far into the rock, was, by means of an embankment of

earth raised around it, rendered a more durable residence than the stake huts in the more exposed parts of the rath. It was here O'Neil himself had chosen his station, a space being walled off at one of the corners for his accommodation. It was in front of this that all general councils and musters were held; a large sphinx-like stone being pitched in the centre of a circle for the seat of the chief.

As Bryan approached the watch-towers, at the entrance he began to tune his harp and to chaunt a war-song known to be popular among the O'Neils. The sentinels immediately appeared with their quivers at their backs and their long bows ready bent, pacing sometimes to the cadence which floated from the harp, and sometimes looking gruffly from the embrasures of the parapet at the strange musician. The martial strains indeed seemed to find a responsive echo in every breast, and softened their hard features into something resembling pleasure. Bryan was gladly admitted within the gates,

and, after being hospitably entertained, gave ample proof of his skill in exciting the passions, by recalling the heroic deeds of Niall of the Nine Hostages and other distinguished heroes, striking at the same time the wild airs which accorded well with the martial sentiments of his verses. Bryan, however, had no ambition of becoming the Tyrtaeus of the rebels, and only exerted his powers to cover his design; and, under pretext of going to assist at the approaching festival, he departed next day towards the Druid's grove, having contrived to procure as much intelligence from his entertainers as might prevent him from committing himself. Above all, he was fortunate in being intrusted by O'Neil with a dispatch to Brassail, harpers being then employed in such services.

Bryan easily obtained admission to the Arch-Druid, delivered his dispatch, and got himself enrolled among the musicians who had assembled to be present at the Samh'in. Brassail was now become anxious about his

daughter, of whom he had got no account, except a wild story of her having been carried away through the woods of Clogharnbrec by a demon who had tumbled down whole rocks upon three hardy adventurers in attempting to rescue her. This story Brassail did not believe, and he was inconsolable for her loss, particularly on this splendid occasion, when he had intended to solemnize a long purposed union between her and the rebel chief, in order to bind their interest more firmly together. Bryan, among other things, was closely questioned if he had heard any thing of the lost Ethne, but he was too wise to disclose what he knew, and artfully eluded all their inquiries.

Bryan's singular air and expressive face soon procured him attention from his brother harpers ; but, finding they were as ignorant as himself of what he wanted to learn, he turned himself to the inferior priests of Brassail's establishment, with one of whom he contrived to become gracious, and obtained

thè secret, with the additional intelligence that this very priest was to have the guarding of Saint Patrick's prison on the night of the festival. The hopes of the daring adventurer began from this moment to wear a brighter air of probability. The greatest difficulties were now removed. There was still a formidable one to vanquish. It would be next to impossible to elude the vigilance of such determined religionists, and it would be certain and immediate death to be detected. Even if they were clear of the mysterious grove, there would be no method of passing to the boat on such a night, when every eye would be unclosed, and every heath blazing with cairn-fires. But the dauntless Bryan trampled on every thing that wore the face of difficulty ; and, borne out by the recollection of his wrongs, he laughed at danger, when its vanquishment would so annoy his enemies. More than once he was on the point of disclosing his design to his friend the priest, with a view to gain his aid by the promise of

a large reward; but he was afraid that the superstitious Druid would be less easily entrapped than mine hostess of the sheeling, and he checked the rising proposal. He was not without dread, also, lest it should be discovered that he had been excommunicated in Connaught; for, notwithstanding his careful disguise, some prying musician might detect him, and ruin the whole plot. One thing was fortunate,—that the musicians attached to the Druidical party seldom strolled into the districts which were either Christianized or adhered to the more ancient religion of the country, derived through countless generations from the Patriarchs, and which, even in the noon of Druidism, had always maintained its ground. To this primitive faith our friend Camderoch was a firm adherent.

CHAPTER XVI.

Oh, in this deep and lonely grove,
So lonely in its solitude,
Can thoughts of woe the soul o'erflow
Or aught on dreams of peace intrude?

O can the gentle stir of leaves,
The sleepy note as of a dream,
That winds below the green-wood bough,
The murmur of the lovely stream.—
Can they of grief and sorrow tell?
They can—and scenes of blood recall.

FINLAY.

THE grand festival of the Samh'in was begun at sunset, with the blowing of bugles, and the sound of music. Small bands of armed men were everywhere seen skirring through the country, headed by a Druid priest, carrying a torch, to see that all the fires were completely extinguished in the

houses, and to collect all the individuals of their district to the height where the cairn-fire was to be lighted by the priest, with his sacred torch, brought from the sanctified fire of the Arch-Druid: From the cairn-fires all who were worthy bore home a flaming brand to rekindle their extinguished hearths. Those, again, who were found guilty of crimes deserving of excommunication, were refused this symbol of purity; and not only so, but all were prohibited, under a similar penalty, from furnishing them with fire, or other necessary assistance, till they expiated their guilt by rendering the prescribed mulcts. Such, we have seen, was the case with the affectionate Evelyn, and produced the sad catastrophe, which was now goading on her grieving husband to assist in sapping the foundation of the superstition of which this formed a prominent feature.

The Samh'in was, in many of its forms, a truly primitive festival. No blood was shed in sacrifice, and the ceremonies were not per-

formed in the gloomy mystery of the groves ; but fruits were brought as an offering to the tutelary deity of the harvest, and laid on fires, kindled on the highest places in the vicinity, under the open air. It was also characterized by all the gaiety, without the profligacy, of a modern Venetian Carnival ; and the revels of dancing, gamboling, and feasting, were continued for several successive nights, with renewed ardour, around their blazing fires and smoking viandæ. Whoever, indeed, has witnessed the revelry of a Mahometan Bairam feast, can be at no loss to conceive the unfettered licence and the splendid illuminations of the Druid festival of the Samh'in, making allowance for the difference between the green isle of the west and balmy softness of eastern landscapes.

It was on this night that the adventurous Bryan had determined to release the illustrious Apostle from thralldom, or perish in the attempt, fondly anticipating the deep stab of revenge he should give to his enemies, by

accomplishing his scheme. The procession was already drawn up in the dark avenue, to proceed to the cairn on an adjacent eminence, and the red light of the numerous torches glared along the trunks of the marshalled oaks. On each side of the Arch-Druid were drawn up the priests, according to their several orders of precedence, with their proper insignia, and peculiar habits; and, from their slow and measured movements, and the gloom of the lengthened avenues through which they passed, the whole spectacle was very imposing; and the solemnity was heightened by the musicians, who were stationed at the several windings of the avenues, to salute the procession, as it passed, with their solemn airs.

Bryan had taken previous care to ply his acquaintance, the priest appointed to guard Saint Patrick, out of a leathern bottle of mead, into which he had infused such herbs as would produce an opportune deficiency in his powers of watching, till watching would be no longer

necessary. In his capacity of musician, he had stationed himself at the first winding of the passage through the grove, where it left the long avenue leading from the gallery already described. As soon as he had saluted the procession with one of his finest airs, and seen the last torch disappear in the distance, instead of following the train as he was appointed to do, he tossed his harp into an obscure thicket, and rushed along the long avenue, and through the deep gloom of the gallery, till he saw the glimmer of the watch's taper streaming feebly through the darkness. With all his courage, and his thirst for revenge, he shuddered involuntarily as he cautiously paced on tiptoe through the mysterious aisles, where no profane foot had perhaps ever trod before; and he looked anxiously round him, lest some lingering priest had remained there, besides his friend, whom he hoped was by this time "hushed in grim repose," *—or lest he should inadvertently

* GRAY.

stumble upon some part of the infernal machinery with which he knew the Druids terrified their votaries. All his fears vanished when he thought of his dying Evelyn and her merciless persecutors.

He had no time, indeed, to lose in idly indulging his hopes and fears. He must now proceed, or surrender himself to the most cruel death which could be devised. He was already within view of the watch, and had the satisfaction to see him leaning against one of the trees in irrepressible drowsiness. The adventurer slid along behind some of the adjoining bushes, till he got sufficiently near the priest to ascertain that he was thoroughly asleep. He was not an instant in springing to the entrance of the prison, which lay between two large oaks, and descended apparently under ground.* He seized the taper which glimmered beside the slumbering priest,

* See Trans. of the Ant. Soc. of Scot. Vol. II. Part I.

and hurried down a narrow flight of turf steps that led to a vault.

Every thing was still around him, and the damp air, which played around his taper in a thin blue haze, and hung heavy on his breathing, gave it more the air of a charnel-house than of a prison. The vault consisted of one large apartment, in one of whose corners he perceived the holy father kneeling on a heap of withered leaves thrown together in the form of a couch. The pious saint was so absorbed in profound devotion, that he did not perceive the approach of his daring deliverer, and Bryan could hear indistinctly some of the words he was uttering in a low deep tone, as if it had been the holy and unfeigned breathings of a departing soul.

“ O God of Spirits !” he could hear him sigh, “ descend in power, and protect this lovely land from the fangs of these harpies, who riot unsatiated in the fruits of their plunder, wrenched from the blinded people by the terrors of superstition and the machi-

nations of hypocrisy. Infuse into thy servant's mind strength to sustain, without shrinking, the trials of persecution, and to receive, with humbleness of heart, the holy crown of martyrdom, without a sigh after the world's pleasures, but with holy joy at being accounted worthy to suffer for the truth."—

Bryan was averse to interrupt the pure devotions of the saint ; but their time was precious ; all depended on dispatch. He turned the light of the taper full on his face, which expressed, in the settled composure of the eye, and the repose of every feature, the unfeigned resignation to heaven which reigned within.

“ Father !” said Bryan, “ you must follow me ;” and he began to undo the fetters which bound him. The saint did not dream, however, of deliverance, but thought the hour was come in which he should be numbered with the holy martyrs ; and Bryan, who had learned from the priest his unshaken resolution to die, was afraid to undeceive him, lest

he might not consent to escape. Patrick remained passive, and continued his devotions inaudibly, while Bryan led him across the vaulted apartment. The sentinel had by this time overcome the influence of the soporific, which had been unavoidably administered too early ; and, missing his taper, was searching about in great uneasiness, and was in the very act of descending the stairs at the moment they reached the first step at the bottom. Bryan instantly dropt the taper, extinguished it with his foot, and drew back his passive follower into a recess beside the stairs, which he had discovered as he descended.

The drowsy priest stumbled down the stairs, and groped his way to the couch to ascertain the safety of his prisoner, for whom his head was answerable should he be missing. Bryan sprung forward, and soon overpowered the astonished priest, his thoughts still confused with his troubled slumbers, and imagining the strong grasp that clenched round his arms, to be that of some dreadful demon which

Patrick had conjured up to destroy him. His fear prevented him from speaking, except in muttering the jargon of a charm, which, unfortunately for him, had no power to prevent Bryan from binding him securely in the fetters that had just been untenanted, and leaving him to the mercy of his merciless brethren when they should return from the festival.

When he had thus successfully secured his *friend* the priest, the daring Bryan hastened back to the Apostle, and, without uttering a word, led him up the steps; but, when he got under the dark canopy of the oaks, “unperceivable by anie powere of starre,”* he found it no easy task to urge his way with all the speed which necessity now required. It was fortunate that they did not need to strike from the road into the pathless entanglement of the woods, otherwise they must inevitably have failed in making good their escape. For thisthere

* Faery Queene.

was no need, as all the grove was completely vacated on account of the festival. With much groping and difficulty, they at last cleared the grove undiscovered, and came into the open country, which extended to the bluff craggy shore, best known in these days by the name of the Giant's Causeway, but then called Binguthar.

Bryan now following the instructions he had got at the sheeling, deviated from the path to avoid discovery, should they by any chance be pursued. When he had got into the open heath, he ventured to tell Patrick their design, and the success which had so far attended its execution ; for the holy man had hitherto supposed that he was dragged so hurriedly along to be murdered, or martyred by his enemies. He had, indeed, thought it singular that only one man should be appointed to conduct him, and that too in darkness ; but Bryan had answered all his brief questions with " come along, we have no time for words," and he calmly resigned

himself to his fate, and looked upon the things of time as we often look back on the days of childhood, which we know can never again beam around us, with their summer radiance and their flowery adornments.

His only thoughts of earth hung fondly over the country of his adoption. Ireland was the beginning and the end of all his musings. He was about to leave her to be the prey of intestine divisions, without any power, single or united, that could lull the uproar. Could he have been spared for a few years, he hoped that he could have conciliated the discordant factions, and established the Catholic faith on an unshaken basis ; but, since he had fallen into the power of his foes, his duty was to resign his life without a murmur ; and Heaven, he trusted, would raise up some zealous spirit, more worthy than himself, to complete the great work he had so prosperously begun.

These thoughts were floating in his mind, when Bryan made his disclosure. The effect was very different from what he had antici-

pated. St Patrick, instead of refusing to accompany him further, exulted at his deliverance, referring it to the interference of Heaven, and his active mind darted away to the theme which seemed perpetually to encircle it amidst every revolution of his thoughts,—the accomplishment of his mission. Even the glory of martyrdom, bright as the crown had shone in his fancy, was dim and selfish, compared with the splendid achievement of mustering a whole nation of brave and independent people under the banners of the cross. His zeal was the more violently kindled, that they were now within view of the unhallowed fires which blazed on every eminence, as far as the eye could wander, and the shouts of the Samh'in worshippers swelled and sank again as the breeze flitted by.

CHAPTER XVII.

Danger, whose limbs of giant mould
What mortal eye can fix'd behold ;
Who stalks his round, an hideous form,
Howling amidst the midnight storm,
Or throws him on the ridgy steep
Of some loose hanging rock to sleep.

COLLINS.

Shylock. You knew, none so well, none so well as
you, of my daughter's flight.

Merch. of Venice.

WHAT skiff is that off Bengore, which tacks
in the face of the west wind, and skims so
lightly on the sea swell? Idle and giddy
youukers, perhaps, pursuing the sun in the
bright track he has just quitted, and only left
day-light enough to show that the sail is
brown and its pendant white. There is

something very attractive in the sailing of a pretty boat. It invariably fixes the attention of the vacant shore spectator. He bends his body in cadence with its rocking, and the bulging of its sails; his heart bounds and undulates along with it over the ridge of every wave; and along with it he swims in fancy on the surface of the blue water, and seems unburdened of the sluggish and weighty body which chains him to the earth.

The skiff in question was anxiously watched by Grougar, on whom the eloquence of Jenny had prevailed to risk his little all in the enterprise of liberating their distinguished countryman. He had been obliged, however, in order to avoid suspicion, to return to Rath-na-Carraig, from which he had just contrived to steal away during the bustle of preparing for the festival, and was now stalking along the summits of the cliffs between Pleaskin and Bengore, to keep a look-out for his curragh, when the skiff appeared. He was too interested in its fate to "sit him

down on Neptune's yellow sands," and mimic its sailing "with pretty and with swimming gate;" * for he doubted not that the skiff which was beating round Bengore was the very object of his solicitude, freighted with all he held dear—his family, and his scanty store of moveables. But these, dear as they were, did not hold such selfish dominion over his mind, as to banish his lively interest in the escape of the Apostle, of which he had caught the infection at the sheeling, and he anxiously watched every movement of the boat, as it stretched out into the sea, or run in upon the shore, to catch the impulse of the adverse wind.

Having assured himself of the identity of his boat, by means of the accurate observations of hope and fear, and their constant accomplice imagination, to whose suggestions the increasing dusk of twilight gave the most ample range,—Grougar lost no time in hastening to

* Midsummer Night's Dream.

the appointed landing-place, not without apprehensions for the safety of the little vessel from the heaving of the swell, the adverse wind, and the ruggedness of the shore. For what could the frail construction of such a coracle oppose to those waves, that in this very place have rent asunder the mountains, and exposed to day the pillars of adamant on which they rest their broad foundations? Their ruin is, indeed, majestic. The pine forest, that rises so loftily on the shores of Norway, or the interminable colonnades of a Gothic cathedral, are not more regular, and want more than half the grandeur of the black columns of Pleaskin, whose projection into the sea greets the skiff at every winding of the coast. Their fragments, also, torn from their fixtures by nature's instruments of destruction, lie in scattered confusion on the beach, and pave the channel of the ocean farther and deeper than the eye can trace, bespotting every bay and sweep of the coast with splintered rocks, pointing from the bosom of the waves. You

might suppose the whole shore, for miles, to be the ruins of a vast temple, which the divinities of the sea had themselves reared, to astonish and confound the feeble race of man, and to show that the grandeur of his cathedrals and his palaces is like the insignificance of an ant-hill, when compared with the awful sublimity of nature. Or rather, you may imagine this magnificent range of columns to be an impregnable bulwark, built by Providence, to oppose the merciless ravages of the surge, which beats so furiously and so incessantly on these romantic shores. To this the boasted walls of the Romans and of the Chinese are feeble as a sheep-fence. Even the ceaseless havoc of destruction, by the foresight of nature, only adds strength to the mound, by piling up in the face of the waves the shivered rocks and the disjointed columns which the storms and frosts of winter hurl down from the precipices.

Listen to the alternate dashing of the breakers, even to-night, when the wind has

now died away, and the clear frosty twinkle of the stars hushes all besides into majestic silence, and everywhere but here the ocean stretches its extended plain, as calm and as dark as the sky that rests on its boundary. To the boatmen, this dashing of the swell in its tumultuous workings in the caverns, and its conflict around the sunken rocks, must sound hollow and ominous. You can no longer hear the bumping of the oars, which lately echoed along the high heath of Ross-nock a token of their progress, for it is drowned in the noisy turmoil of the surf.

Grougar found it no easy task to make good his way undiscovered, as he had to pass through the fields where the hum of preparation resounded in every quarter, and he could advantageously have dispensed with the superfluous altitude of stature which made him so easily recognized. No one of our daring plotters, indeed, besides himself, could have escaped detection here, and to have parried the resentment of the worshippers by ex-

cuse, would have been equally efficacious as to repress with words the fury of the east wind. His perfect knowledge of his geography, however, brought him in safety to the appointed recess of the beach, before either the Apostle had descended the cliffs, or the curragh had hove in sight at Pleaskin Point.

Bryan was, unfortunately, a less knowing geographer here than Grougar; and, although he had cunningly avoided the fires which blazed on every eminence, and the parties of revellers who repeatedly crossed their path, he found his ingenuity baffled to apply his instructions to the discovery of the path down the cliffs. These instructions had a strong likeness to a laboured poetical description, being far too multifarious to leave any marked picture in the memory, and the increasing darkness only increased the difficulty.

The Apostle was not idle in the search. He examined every portion of the edge of the precipice, where the shelving of the stone,

or the roughness of its surface, might indicate this perilous path. But their search proved vain. Patrick, indeed, began to suspect, that they had not come upon the proper point, and he climbed up the peak of a rock to examine their bearing; but, on reaching the summit, all his thoughts and his passions, and even his very existence, seemed to have fled and melted in the sublimity which surrounded him. He remained motionless, and, apparently, as unanimated as the rock he stood on. The spirits of the earth, the air, and the sea, seemed to have combined their power to strike the holy father with dumb astonishment and awe; and who could stand on that pinnacle and not forget that he was a son of earth, a little viewless point in the circle of the universe? * Eastward a group of hills and rocks rested on the moor, rising over one another, and appearing, in the darkness, like

* ——— ein tropfen

In der schöpfungen meer.

KLOPSTOCK, *Messias*,

the low rolling masses of a rain-cloud ; and, at intervals, the distant glimmering of a cairn fire, marked the elevation of summits that mingled in dimness with the horizon. To the west the coast was precipitous and wild, and everywhere scooped out into crescents, whose horns, in pillared magnificence, jutted far into the ocean. The ocean itself lay spread before him, stretching to the Pole in one extended sheet of darkness, except where the watery reflection of a star undulated its broken light among the furrows of the waves. The breakers sounded so distant ; the plain of the sea looked so far below him ; and the stars appeared to shine so near and bright, that he seemed dis severed from the earth and elevated in mid-air. The skiff he could not descry in the darkness, as it was a mere speck in the waste that surrounded it, and could only be distinguished by its motion, from the points of the rocks scattered along the surface of the water ; the wrecks of the precipices, also, which lay strewed on the beach,

looked no bigger than the small pebbles of a brook.

When Saint Patrick recovered from that vacation of thought into which his pinnacled elevation amidst such stupendous objects had thrown him, he thought he felt his very soul shrinking within him, as if the Almighty himself had unveiled his presence, and diffused his immensity through the scene. This feeling of awe gradually mingled itself with the master-passion which prompted every action of his life; the workings of his mind became almost too violent to bear, and burst forth in the wildest ejaculations. But even in such fits of frantic vehemence, which were not unusual with him, he never wholly broke loose from the bonds of reason. He was one of those daring spirits that can sport secure on the very brink of madness, and even make rapid and transitory flights into the regions of frenzy without being chained by her spells. To these dangerous flights he had been accustomed from infancy, and they had lent such energy and impressive boldness to his

speech, and such fearless dignity to his countenance, that he never failed to overawe every human being who came into his presence. The awe inspired by this scene of grandeur, and the coupling the idea of the immediate presence of God with the idolatries with which his holiness was insulted by the worshippers at the cairn fires, had an effect upon the Apostle that even his powerful mind could scarcely bear ; but doffing, with gigantic vigour, the shackles which frenzy was binding around him, he reined his rising emotions and began to continue his search.

He descended the opposite side of the peak to that he had climbed, and came directly to the brink of a crescent, which agreed to the description of that they so anxiously had looked for ; but he was now left to complete his discovery alone, as Bryan had disappeared and was nowhere to be found. This was a new and unlooked for disaster. What could have become of him ? Had he fallen into the hands of the Samh'in revellers, whose fires were blazing on the headlands around them ?

or could he have dropt, in his eagerness of search, over these awful cliffs? Perhaps he had discovered the path and descended; but, if so, why did he not apprize his companion? Every suggestion which rose in the mind of the Apostle was full of difficulty, and the design which had so far been prosperous, was, by this unfortunate event, darkly overclouded. Even if he had descended the path, it was not clear that he would thence be safe; for, in the most favourable circumstances, it was most dangerous,* but, in the present instance, descent seemed impossible. The darkness rendered it truly terrific; for the obscure light of the fires on the neighbouring headlands fell only on the projections of the rocks, and the path lay in the bending of a

* The guide who usually accompanies travellers from Bushmills says, he would not go down this path "for the county Antrim;" yet it is daily used by some poor kelp-makers to bring up their manufacture from the beach. I particularly remarked an old woman among these, squalid with age and poverty.

precipitous crescent. Patrick could see nothing but the brink of this crescent by the glimmering of the fires ; all below was a profound abyss of darkness, rendered more dreadful by the alternate dashing of the breakers, which was sullenly and distantly re-echoed from the rocks of the beach. On examination, also, he found the commencement of the path to be partially covered with ice, and it was likely this would increase with the descent. One circumstance was favourable : in many parts of the path, steps were formed by the abutments of columns which the elements had spared, and offered the most secure footing, but the ice rendered even these treacherous and unsafe.

The existence of these, however, Patrick had to take on the trust of the descriptions which Bryan had collected ; for though he cautiously crept forward on his knees to the edge of the rock, and stretched his neck over it, to endeavour to trace the narrow formless steps, the darkness prevented him from see-

ing farther than a few paces. While he thus lay hesitating what to do, anxious to discover Bryan, and equally anxious to try the dizzy path, to escape from the cairn worshippers, he heard the sound of voices immediately behind him, which he recognized to be those of some of the inferior priests he had seen at the grove, and he lay in breathless agitation lest they should discover him. He had shewn all the resigned fortitude of a martyr, while in their power ; but he now looked upon his life as precious in the eye of Heaven for the accomplishing of his mission, and would have deemed it criminal not to use every means for its preservation. He listened to the voices, but durst not raise his head, which was still leaning half over the precipice, lest the motion should betray him. He thought they were approaching ; but fear is quick of hearing, and might have deceived him. His only chance of escape was down the path ; but they were too near to make the attempt prudent, and he had to trust to the darkness for being mis-

taken for a ridge of stunted heath, or for a large stone, as he lay motionless on the turf, and felt on his face the chill of the sea breeze, as it swept up the cliffs below him. His ear greedily drunk in every sound which proceeded from his darkling enemies; and he could hear one say,

“ Well, I’ll not believe it : did it not come from Rathlin, say you ? It must be some of our people from Innisgael, * who were coming to the Samh’in. Old Conal More of Iona, perhaps, who, by the way, promised to be here to night, if the sea should mingle with the clouds.”

“ Now mark,” another voice replied, “ how conjecture gallops. Conal More is already come, and it was one of his gillies who told me. They saw the skiff come round from Rossnock point, while they were tacking off Rathlin, and could plainly see a lady at the

* Innisgael, the islands of the Celts, now called the Hebrides or the Western Islés.

stern ; but it doubled Bengore, and they lost sight of it behind the headland.”

“ And does Brassail persist that it was his daughter, on such evidence ?” said the first speaker.

Patrick could not distinguish the words of the answer which followed, as the speakers were retiring along the heath, and he was soon left again to solitude. He doubted not that the boat, of which, by fortunate accident, he had thus got intelligence, would be Grougar’s curragh, which was probably below, ready to convey him from danger, and, perhaps, his deliverer Bryan might have already reached it. He was thus ruminating on his situation, when he fancied he heard a shriek from the lower part of the cliffs, as of some person in distress ; but might he not be deceived by the clamour of sea fowls, alarmed in their roosting crags at the shouts of the revellers, and the blaze of the fires ? He was convinced that it was no illusion, when it was repeated in a louder and more distressing

tone ; but it seemed at last to grow feeble, and soon died away, and he could hear nothing but the dreary roar of the waves as they beat on the rocks below.

To hazard his life by hurrying down the dreadful path was no longer a matter of consideration. The voice was plainly a female's, and a female voice in distress pierced his very soul. He plunged down the first stretch of the path, reckless of his danger, and was instantly lost in the darkness which was embosomed in the bend of the precipice. Patrick found, that his descent was much more hazardous than even his conception had pictured ; and the slipperiness of the ice formed on the stores from the water which trickled from their crevices, was not the least of the difficulties. This he obviated by taking off his sandals ; * but the loose rocks, which gave way under his feet, and were heard so distantly, as they bounded from crag to crag in

* See *Antiq. of Kilkenny* in *Collectan. de Reb. Hib.* II. 458.

the dark chasm below, betokened almost certain destruction ; for he might be instantaneously hurled along with some one of them, and dashed to pieces at the bottom. He was therefore obliged to try with his foot, the firmness of every point of the rock before he trusted to its support.

As he was thus cautiously proceeding, another faint cry, which sunk into a low moaning tone, rose from the rocks below, and threw him so much off his guard, that he lost his footing, and was precipitated down the steep. " O God ! " he ejaculated, as he felt himself dropping through the dark air of the abyss ; but the words were scarcely pronounced when he fell on a small platform which was formed by the tops of a range of columns, and covered with grass. He was not injured by the fall, farther than the shock which terror had given to the pulse of his heart. When he recovered a little from this throb of perturbation, he began to search again for the path, but found his progress completely stopt ; for his perpendicular fall had thrown him out of

the track of the path, and this little green spot seemed every where bounded by smooth steep rocks. He most anxiously examined in every direction, but could discover no way of escape. At last, in the chinks formed between the columns beneath, he discovered some stunted heath, by clinging to which, and placing his feet in the cross rifts, he got down a little way, eagerly expecting at every movement, that his hanging foot would strike on one of the steps of the path ; but as he went further, he could not find a root of heath to hold by, and he was obliged to climb back disappointed to the little platform.

His benevolent design of aiding distress was thus most bitterly frustrated by an obstacle that baffled all his strength and ingenuity to surmount. His situation was most distressing. He was almost within call of the person who seemed to be perishing among the waves, yet was restrained from exerting his vigorous arm to assist her, which, to a man of his uncontrollable feelings, bore away all thoughts of his own danger. He

reflected not that he himself was perhaps cut off from all human aid, and might, on that solitary and inaccessible spot, perish by hunger : he thought only of the wild cries of distress which still rung in his ear, and pierced his heart ; and, when he saw that he could not control the destiny which bound him, he felt, with overpowering emotion, the utter helplessness of man when he lifts his puny form amidst the sublimities of nature, or raises his feeble arm to contend with the decrees of omnipotence.

But the buoyancy of a strong mind is seldom crushed even by the greatest misfortunes ; for Hope, who delights to track the footsteps of distress, is always near, chanting her fairy song, and painting her golden landscapes. The saint would have been unworthy of his high mission had his eye ever been blasted with the vacant look of despair, while he felt the arm of Providence supporting all his steps. He was cheered with the idea that a stronger hand than his might ward off

the perils of the sea, and save from the fury of the waters ; and he threw himself on his knees to supplicate that aid from above which he himself could not give to the distressed female, whose low moaning he still heard repeated at intervals.

The tumult of emotions, which had agitated his mind, now began to give place to the confidence he reposed in heaven ; the black and rugged crags above and around him faded from his eye, and the loud murmur of the waves beneath became faint to his ear. He dropt exhausted on the virgin grass, and fell asleep on the summit of that precipitous cliff where, before, the foot of man had never rested, and the sea-fowl, scared from the more distant crags by the glare of the light, and by the revelry above them, flapped into the platform, stupid with the darkness, and nestled quietly beside the holy man.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

