THE SHERIFF'S SALE.

'Percy,' exclaimed Mrs. Ellison to her husband, who was dozing near the fire—'Percy, as I live, here comes old Neville. Look, is not that he?'

Mr. Ellison, who was just in that state when the senses are so much awake as to enable us to feel the soft pleasures of sleep, took the square of Indian silk from his eyes, and rubbing them went to the window.

'Neville, sure enough, Emily—coming, no doubt, to bore me for money, after having tried every body else.

'Having indulged you so long, I hope he will now receive indulgence from you,' observed his daughter Emily who sat at her work beside him.

'Nonsense, child,' said the mother.

'Would that the lines of my favourite may not be applicable him,' said Emily:

> 'Deserted in his utmost need
> By those his former bounty fed.'

'You are very intermeddling, Emily,' observed Mrs. Ellison. 'How will you act, Percy?'

'Gratefully and honourably, I trust,' replied Emily.

'Quit the room, if you cannot hold your tongue!—Run, Percy, close too the door on yourself, and you shall see how I'll reply to his eloquent entreaties.'

'I fear, mamma, you will have no opportunity to show off. He will simply tell you he wants money—and what can you say to that?'

'Job's patience had never become a proverb had he met you, Emily.—Haste, Percy, he's at the door.'

'Nay, mamma, don't deny him a share in the victory,' said Emily.

'After all, then, Percy,' said Mrs. Ellison, 'I think you had better stay, and let us both so manage as to remove all future expectations.'

When Mr. Neville entered, he was received very cordially. His hand was pressed with that friendly squeeze which often deceives into hope and confidence. They looked all kindness and candour; condoled with him on the loss of his wife; consoled his misfortunes with simulated sympathy; encouraged him to trust in heaven, and to exert his fortitude beneath momentary calamities, and expressed their assurance that he would wait a family dinner. He was not prepared for so warm a reception.

They were at wine, and he was about stating his need of fifty pounds, but was prevented by his host, between whom and his wife it had been settled, that, if possible, he should not have the advantage of announcing the extent of his wants before they had declared the extent of their benevolence. And accordingly Ellison, in a very earnest manner, requested his lady to let him have ten pounds; at that uttering of which words his daughter could not check an ejaculation.

'You know, Percy,' she replied, 'after paying the bills which fell due to-day, only a trifle remained. I shall go and see what can be made out; for I would not disoblige our friend for the world.'

'And our best benefactor,' added Miss Emily.

'We know all that as well as you, Miss,' subjoined the mother, scowling scornfully on her daughter as she retired.

In a short time she returned, saying, 'I have been able to procure but five pounds, one of which I had to borrow from the house-keeper. I am perspiring all over yet.'

'Do not stand in the draught, my pigeon,' said her husband, with truly facetious tenderness.

'Draft, good papa! Yes, a draft will just suit Mr. Neville,' observed Emily, with a roguish smile.

'Right, my dear,' added Mr. Neville, coolly; 'if your father has not ready cash, and that he is willing to assist an old friend, let him be reached pen and paper.'

'I declare, poor Percy has not been able to handle a pen this fortnight. O dear, he is so nervous!' cried his spouse, while Emily brought forward the writing apparatus.

'I regret,' added Ellison, who affected not to have noticed Neville's observations, 'that it is not in our power to muster more at present.'

'Indeed you are always too generous, my love,' whimpered his lady.

'Gratitude precedes generosity, as the day breaks before the sun appears,' observed Mr. Neville.

With these words he was about to withdraw, but his worthy hostess intercepted him.

'Nay, nay,' cried she, 'be not too hasty. I am as ready as any one alive to do a good office, and equally slow to give offence. Do stop: I want to have a bit of chat with you.'

'Chat, madam! Every word you have uttered rankles in my heart. It is full six years since I was last within these walls, and my occasion of coming then was to rescue you from ruin. A short time after, fortune began to deal hardly with myself; the punishment of guilty indulgence to a prodigal son was falling fast on me; and I forbore visits which might prove painful from the inevitable discussion of mischances and disappointments. Ingratitude ——'

'I do not think that you deserve all this from Mr. Neville, my darling,' interrupted Ellison.

'Go to bed, my treasure,' cried his gentle consort; 'it is late, and the doctor ——'

'A mere farce!' shouted Neville, pushing towards the door.

'The doctor will be quite angry, my love—take this candle.'

On which Mr. Ellison composedly folded up the five notes, put them in his pocket, and made his exit with this valediction—'Good night, my children—I really cannot have any further intercourse with this gentleman.'

Astounded by the baseness of their ingratitude, and the wantonness of the insult offered to him, Mr. Neville returned home, deeply depressed in spirit. On the following day he received this note:

'Dear Mr. Neville—Please to accept these twelve pounds. Three are the gift of my kind governess. Poor Fanny, who feels for you more than can be expressed, supplied five. As to the remainder, my inability must answer for my gratitude. Heaven help suffering worth!

Emily Ellison.'

'And may heaven reward these generous girls,' was his fervent prayer as he concluded the paper.

The young lady mentioned in this brief epistle by the name of Fanny, was Mr. Ellison's niece. Her father formerly held a subordinate official situation in Ireland, where he married; but this having become irksome, he purchased an ensignacy, and his valor and conduct during the war in India, were soon after rewarded with the rank of colonel. His wife, whose health was indifferent, and her only child, remained among their Irish friends.—Fanny enjoyed her uncle's warmest partiality; but between her father and him there had long subsisted a total estrangement, which pride and disingeniousness on one side, and the remembrance of unrepented wrongs on the other, seemed likely to perpetuate. The former strictly forbid any intercouse between the families during his absence; but in this inhibition vindictiveness had no part; the only motive was a tender regard for what models of noble nature and just principle might be set before his child in her youth. The injunction, however, was not long observed: the accent and the polish of London soon tempted its violation. Fanny and her mamma invited Emily to the lakes of Killarney; and Emily, in return, induced her willing cousin to accompany [illegible] seeing the city of London. It was during this visit that she 'was the spectator of her uncle's display of cruel ingratitude to poor Neville.

A few days after this unpleasant occurrence, Mr. Neville's landlord levied a distress for non-payment of rent. During the sale, he remained with his two daughters, interesting little girls of eleven and thirteen, in an upper room. His youngest child, William, whose ninth birth-day was ushered in with this disaster, watched the progress of the sale from room to room, whether actuated by curiosity, or some more serious, but childish, motive.

As an antiquated virgin was grasping a beautiful piece which she had just purchased, an involuntary exclamation burst from the boy—

'That's mine: mamma gave it to me when dying.'

'And was it she worked it?' she coolly asked.

'Yes, ma'am,' answered Billy; 'and papa says 'twas all done during the honey-moon, and told me to keep it for ever.'

'And what do you think it represents?' continued she.

'Sterne's Maria; but the face is mamma's,' he returned.

'You are a very good boy,' concluded the ugly, neglected, self tortured, all-torturing creature, lifting up her lifeless eye to take a covetous peep at whatever article was going the rounds, and see whether it was likely to turn out 'a sacrifice.'

A locket was shortly after submittted to inspection, when a military gentleman entered. It was Colonel Ellison, whose regiment had just returned home. He had written to Ireland to announce his arrival, and was preparing to start for Dublin. A few rare coins and medals, which had been advertised for sale attracted him hither. Mr. Neville he had never known, and even his name had passed away from his memory.

At sight of the trinket little William lost all self-control, and shrieked out, 'Mamma's hair! Dear mamma's hair.'

The old maid, who alone seemed unmoved by this juvenile, but affecting, manifestation of filial piety, chided him sharply for interrupting the business; but he of the hammer avenged such sacred sorrow violated so grossly.

'Surely, madam,' said he, addressing her emphatically, 'this lover's toy ill suits a lady of your venerable years.'

'And I am sorry to find, Miss,' subjoined an old gentleman, who appeared to be an acquaintance, 'that while compassion melts all others, cupidity seizes on you, overcomes your discretion, and gives to your heart a coldness which would preserve a snow-ball undissolved in the bowels of Vesuvius.'

'Three guineas for the locket,' resumed the auctioneer

'Give it to poor papa,' cried William.

'I am obliged to sell it, my boy,' was the reply.

'Then I shall buy it for him,' answered the youth, thursting his hands into his pockets. They were empty. He stood motionles, his eyes fixed on the floor.—The consciousness of poverty confounded him: he looked bewildered, and he wept.

Murmurs of pity and of admiration spread round the room. Hearts filled, and not a few testified their feelings by their tears. To purchase the trinket and restore it became the desire of many, and the lad was consoled by this announcement. Accordingly a brief contest commenced, which soon brought the bidding to fifteen pounds. 'Fifteen pounds, the last time,' repeated the auctioneer, and the fatal hammer was descending, when arrested mid way by the sob of a young lady, who imperfectly articulated, 'Twenty.' No further opposition was expected; but Colonel Ellison, who had been an attentive and compassionating [illegible] magnanimity of the young lady, and to their utter astonishment cried out, 'Thirty pounds; and would I had such children!' The lady turned round to gratify herself with a view of her generous victor.—Fanny beheld her father. How tender the endearments of such a meeting! What a moment of rapture! He never thought of asking her how she came to be in London.

The surprise which prevailed was equalled by the admiration of the delicate and generous sentiments evinced so remarkably. The disposing knock was rapidly given, and the official declared the sheriffs were satisfied. Miss Ellen presented the prize to William, and asked him for his papa. He showed them up stairs.

Fanny introduced the colonel, and after offering a few brief words of condolence, detailed the circumstances which preserved to him the precious relic. She expressed her regret that the difficulty of obtaining money hindered her from coming earlir, and saving some other fond memorials. After restoring a little order and comfort to the house, they departed.

THE DEAD HAND.

AN INTERESTING STORY.

'On a fine frosty, star-lit evening in November, two men in frieze coats, on their way homeward from the fair of N——, were quietly trudging along, and talking as they went.

'Why, then, Brian,' said one to the other, 'that little boy of mine does be talking to me a great deal about your Rose; and, by coorse, I tould him there's not a colleen in the seven parishes I'd like so much to see him take up with as Rose Gaynor. And, sure enough, last night he came round me, somehow, and made one promise to tell you about it.—So, now Brian, what have you to say to the proposal?'

'Deed now, Rody Moylan, it's not that the boy's father's to the fore, that I say there isn't a better or a likelier gorsoon far or near; but, you see, the thing is this—I reared up Rose and Mike Mahon together, and all as one as gave the crathurs to understand they were reared for one another—and how can I go back?'

'Arrah dont't be talking, now, Brian,' resumed Moylan: 'the whole parish calls you the wise man, but I'm blest if they heard what you're after saying, it's a different account they'd give o' you. To go throw away the likes of Rose Gaynor, wid her purty face, and all the money that, by coorse, you have to give her, on a by-blow that has nothing but his two arms, an' the wide world for his kitchen garden. Augh, then, if myself heard that story from another, may I never sin if I'd believe it.'

'Whisht, now, whisht, Rody,' answered Brian, 'don't go thry to put between me and the poor gorsoon, that I reared, and that has no frind in the world but myself. Night, noon, and morning, I'm hearing the same song from Biddy, as if there wasn't enough to do the crathurs without ever pinching ourselves. By-low, by-low, is all the word, until at last I almost mistake the poor, innocent gorsoon to come across me at all.'

'Musha, then, I'm glad to see there's one wise head in your house,' continued Moylan. 'Come in here now, and let us have a dhrop at Casey's, and talk the mather over easly. Sure, if you have a regard for the boy, you can show it many a way besides giving him your decint daughther, and no one can doubt but you have done well for him. Come in, now—come in, I say—the night is cowld,' and the two disappeared into the interior of the public house, to discuss their doubtful speculation, leaving us an interim, which we shall use by letting the reader a little into the histories of their respective families.

When Brian Gaynor was a young boy, he was one those tormenting, good-natured individuals, whom every body loves, and of whom every body in their turn complains; but there is a season when the wildest becomes tame, and this revolution occurred in the heart of Brian, as well as his betters. He fell in love—the object of his wayward affections was a young girl, a servant in a neighbouring gentleman's family, who, by dressing in a more dashing style than her equals, and being a little more versed in the arts of life, succeeded in what many failed, and made an impression on the fickle breast of the village inconstant. Gaynor, in fact, loved her with an affection which she could never have deserved, nor even intended to return—her whole object being to allure her master's heir into a marriage with her, by playing off Brian as a rival. Wise as she was, however, in her own conceit, young Mahon was wiser; she was not the first whom he had deceived, by holding out such absurd hopes; and her bungling efforts to excite his jealousy afforded him nothing but the utmost amusement, so much so, that he forgot his schemes for the moment, while he occupied himself in playing off the lovers against each other, until the girl was on the very verge of acceding in despair to the vigorous suit of her rustic admirer. This was the moment for him. By holding out some fresh hope, he called her back to her more serious designs again; and Brian, in consequence, was rather unceremoniously sent about his business. There is no necessity, surely, in this age of the world, to say how much the sanguine, fiery Brian felt on this occasion. Many a heart is won in the recoil; and among those which have fulfilled this maxim, was that of Brian. One of those girls whom in his palmy days he had despised, now came forward in his sorrows to comfort him. It is a pity generosity should ever go unrewarded; and in this instance, the compassionate damsel in process of time became possessed of her share of whatever honours Mr. Brian Gaynor could bestow, in return for her disinterested attentions. Whatever inclination the new-married man might have had to regret his disappointment in love, it was repressed by a circumstance, which, occurring soon after, gave him reason to be thankful. This was the fall of his former sweetheart, who, caught in her own snares, became the victim of her own will and consent, having fallen beneath the artifices of young Mahon. The feeling of content on the part of Gaynor was heightened in time, by the birth of a daughter—his pretty Rose.

About a month or two after this pleasing event, as he was sitting with his thrifty and obliging, though not handsome wife, before his comfortable hearth, one evening after his work, he heard a low moan in the *bohereen* leading to his door, and being just at the moment in too good humour with himself and the rest of the world, to sit quiet while such a call was being made on his humanity, he merely waited to hear if it would be repeated; and on hearing it again, he rushed forth, guided by the faint cries, which now became more distinct and more piteous, while something in the accents told him it was no ordinary sufferer he was to relieve.

'For the love of Heaven, good Christian, don't let me die here,' exclaimed a female in the last state of exhaustion, while the struggling moan of an almost dying infant awakened his sympathy still further; so, without uttering a word, he raised the woman from the ditch, under which she had lain for shelter, and supported her into his cabin.

'Gracious me!' ejaculated Biddy, on Kelly that you're bringing into the one floor with me.'

'Nonsense!' answered Brian, endeavouring to catch a glimpse of her features, which, in spite of her efforts to conceal them, he at last effected, and saw that the poor, ragged, emaciated wretch was indeed no other than the once handsome, showy girl, on whom, but a short time before much of his happiness appeared to depend. A groan declared that he recognised her, and placing her on the small settle beside the fire, he turned away to hide the emotion which he could not repress.

'Oh, you dirty crathur, to go and disgrace your decint people,' was the beginning of the salute with which Biddy greeted the entrance of the stranger; but she was quickly cut short by Brian.

'Biddy, achora,' said he, in the calm suppressed tones of resolve, 'let us have no more of this. Stir yourself, and thry and recover the poor crathur, for she's low enough without you making her lower with your talk. Put down the pot, I say, and make the stirabout, or gruel, or something for the crathur, and have a human heart in you.'

'Brian—Brian,' said the sufferer, 'it's no use—I'm dying—but my child—my sweeny darlint—oh, Brain—will you take care of him—they turned me out—sy—he's got a fine Dublin wife, and I had to make room for her. Oh, wirra, wirra—that I ever saw his face,' and she burst into a passion of tears, the vehemence of which overpowered her so much, that she sank lifeless on the floor.

Brian released the crying infant from her arms, and handing him into his wife's, proceeded to reanimate her, and at length succeeded: the poor girl opened her eyes and gazed long and fondly at her baby, glutting himself on the natural nourishment which Biddy, now thoroughly melted, was affording him, and which she herself, through her weakness had been utterly unable to supply. She made an effort to speak, but failed—then stretched out her skinny arms for her baby—but ere she could receive him, fell back on the breast of Brian, and with one long sigh, expired on the hearth of him whom she had in her other days so deceived and wounded.

From that night forward, the motherless boy was looked on by Brian and Biddy as their own, nor had they cause to regret their adoption of him when he became old enough to do those little offices generally required from the children of an agricultural population. Ever looking on Brain as his father, with a natural docility, he learned to read his wishes in his look, and execute them the moment they were understood: and when, in his riper years, he became acquainted with the full extent of the obligation under which he lay, such an additional stimulus was given to his exertions, that it is much to be doubted if his own son would have been near such a treasure to his reputed father as was the poor by-low, Mick Mahon.

The thrifty qualities of the woman of the house, to which Brian was, with some difficulty at last broken in, added to the vigilant care of their interest displayed by Mahon, gradually placed them, at a point of wealth and comfort, at the head of the whole rustic portion of the parish, and enabled Biddy, after some few years of struggling, to reach the highest point of her ambition, by making her the mistress of a dairy. But as age came upon her, her thrift began to degenerate into covetousness. The large produce afforded by her cows was not enough, and in accordance with a superstition, now fast falling away, she applied to a farmer's wife to know by what spell she could procure a transfer into her churns of the cream-tuba of the milky treasures which Providence had [illegible] bestow on her neighbours to supply. [illegible]