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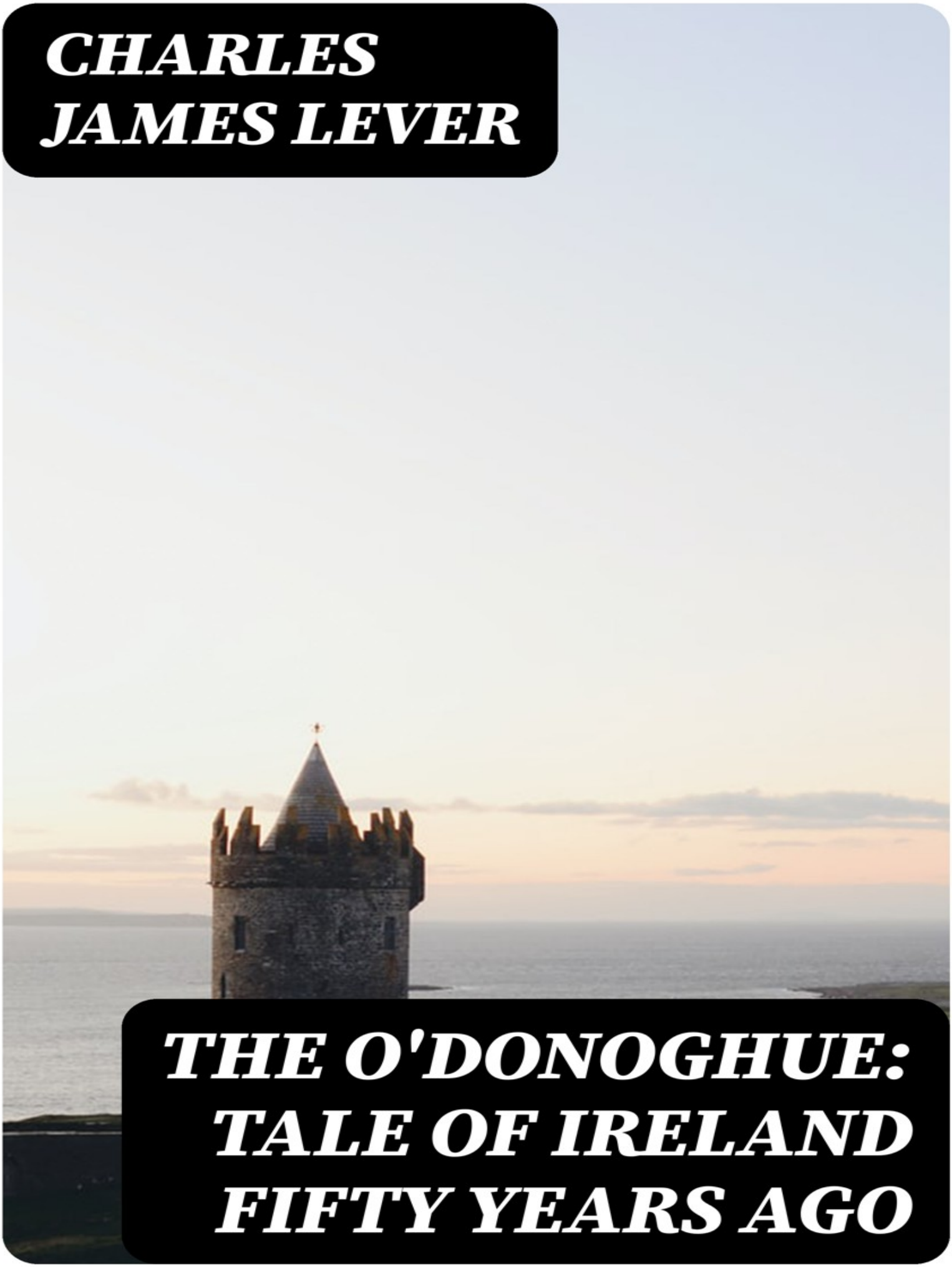

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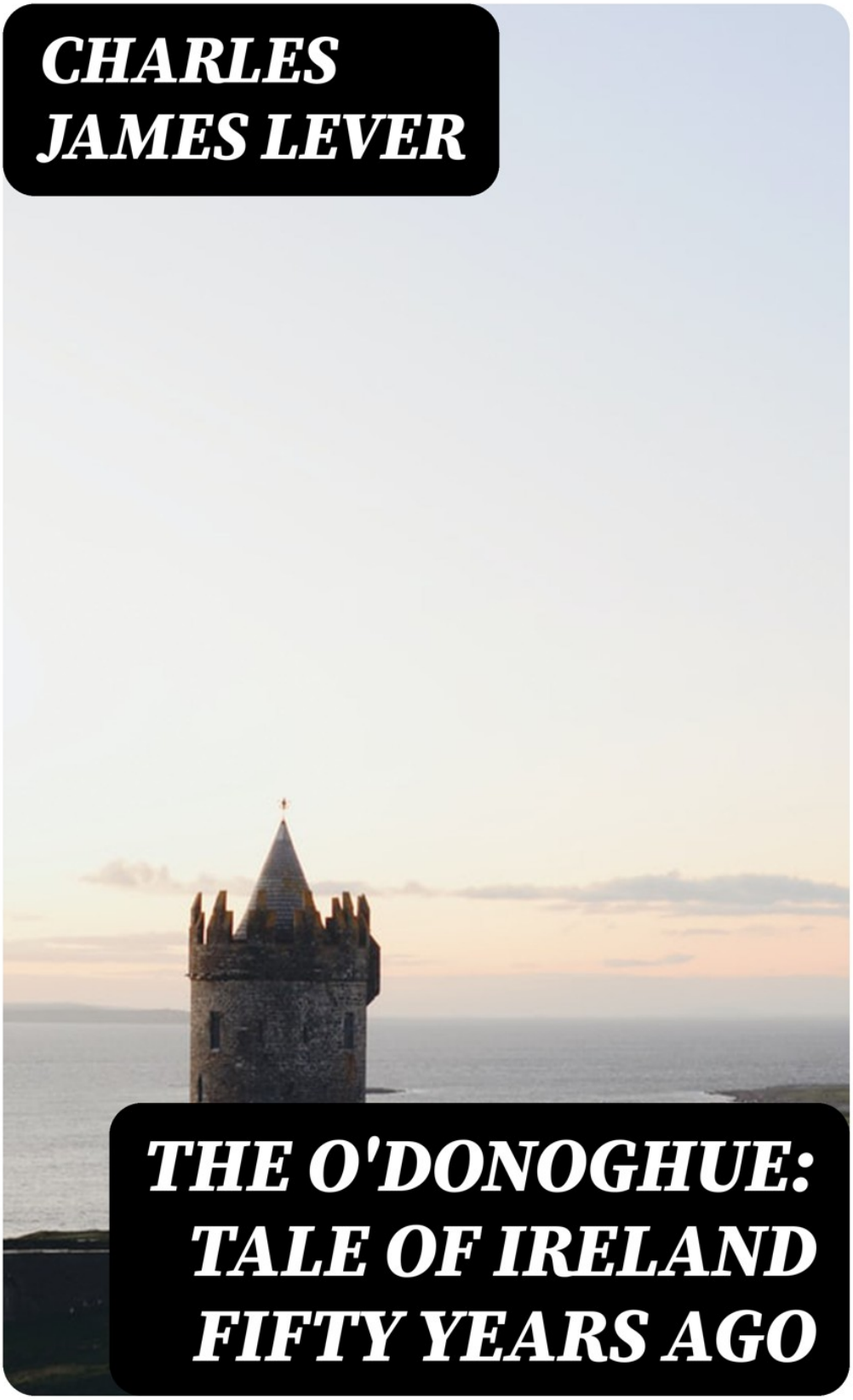

THE O'DONOGHUE: TALE OF IRELAND FIFTY YEARS AGO

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The O'Donoghue: Tale of Ireland Fifty Years Ago

EAN 8596547140115

DigiCat, 2022
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CHAPTER I. GLENFLESK.

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In that wild and picturesque valley which winds its way between the town of Macroom and Bantry Bay, and goes by the name of Glenflesk, the character of Irish scenery is perhaps more perfectly displayed than in any other tract of the same extent in the island. The mountains, rugged and broken, are singularly fanciful in their outline; their sides a mingled mass of granite and straggling herbage, where the deepest green and the red purple of the heath-bell are blended harmoniously together. The valley beneath, alternately widening and narrowing, presents one rich meadow tract, watered by a deep and rapid stream, fed by a thousand rills that come tumbling, and foaming down the mountain sides, and to the traveller are seen like white streaks marking the dark surface of the precipice. Scarcely a hut is to be seen for miles of this lonely glen, and save for the herds of cattle and the flocks of sheep here and there to be descried, it would seem as if the spot had been forgotten by man, and left to sleep in its own gloomy desolation. The river itself has a character of wildness all its own-now, brawling over rugged rocks-now foaming between high and narrow sides, abrupt as walls, sometimes, flowing over a ledge of granite, without a ripple on the surface-then plunging madly into some dark abyss, to emerge again, lower down the valley, in one troubled sea of foam and spray: its dull roar the only voice that echoes in the mountain gorge. Even where the humble roof of a solitary cabin can be seen, the aspect of habitation rather heightens

than diminishes the feeling of loneliness and desolation around. The thought of poverty enduring its privations unseen and unknown, without an eye to mark its struggles, or a heart to console its griefs, comes mournfully on the mind, and one wonders what manner of man he can be, who has fixed his dwelling in such solitude.

In vain the eye ranges to catch sight of one human being, save that dark speck be such which crowns the cliff, and stands out from the clear sky behind. Yes, it is a child watching the goats that are browsing along the mountain, and as you look, the swooping mist has hidden him from your view. Life of dreariness and gloom! What sad and melancholy thoughts must be his companions, who spends the live-long day on these wild heaths, his eye resting on the trackless waste where no fellow-creature moves! how many a mournful dream will pass over his mind! what fearful superstitions will creep in upon his imagination, giving form and shape to the flitting clouds, and making the dark shadows, as they pass, seem things of life and substance.

Poor child of sorrow! How destiny has marked you for misery! For you no childish gambols in the sun—no gay playfellow—no paddling in the running stream, that steals along bright and glittering, like happy infancy—no budding sense of a fair world, opening in gladness; but all, a dreary waste—the weariness of age bound up with the terrors of childhood.

The sun was just setting on a mellow evening, late in the autumn of a year towards the close of the last century, as a solitary traveller sat down to rest himself on one of the large

rocks by the road-side; divesting himself of his gun and shot-pouch, he lay carelessly at his length, and seemed to be enjoying the light breeze which came up the valley.

He was a young and powerfully-built man, whose well-knit frame and muscular limbs showed how much habitual exercise had contributed to make the steepest paths of the mountain a task of ease to him. He was scarcely above the middle height, but with remarkable breadth of chest, and that squareness of proportion which indicates considerable physical strength; his countenance, except for a look of utter listlesness and vacuity, had been pleasing; the eyes were large and full, and of the deep grey which simulates blue; the nose large and well-formed; the mouth alone was unprepossessing-the expression it wore was of ill-humour and discontent, and this character seemed so habitual that even as he sat thus alone and in solitude, the curl of the upper lip betrayed his nature.

His dress was a shooting-jacket of some coarse stuff, stained and washed by many a mountain streamlet; loose trowsers of grey cloth, and heavy shoes-such as are worn by the peasantry, wherever such luxuries are attainable. It would have been difficult, at a mere glance, to have decided what class or condition of life he pertained to; for, although certain traits bespoke the person of a respectable rank, there was a general air of neglect about him, that half contradicted the supposition. He lay for some time perfectly motionless, when the tramp of horses at a distance down the glen suddenly roused him from his seeming apathy, and resting on his elbow he listened attentively. The sounds came nearer and nearer, and now, the dull roll of a carriage

could be heard approaching. Strange noises these in that solitary valley, where even the hoofs of a single horse but rarely routed the echoes. A sudden dip of the road at a little distance from where he lay, concealed the view, and he remained in anxious expectancy, wondering what these sounds should portend, when suddenly the carriage seemed to have halted, and all was still.

For some minutes the youth appeared to doubt whether he had not been deceived by some swooping of the wind through the passes in the mountains, when the sound of voices fell on his ear, and at the same moment, two figures appeared over the crest of the hill, slowly advancing up the road. The one was a man advanced in years, but still hale and vigorous, in look-his features even yet eminently handsome, wore an air of mingled frankness and haughtiness; there was in their expression the habitual character of one accustomed to exert a degree of command and influence over others-a look, which of all the characteristics of temper, is least easily mistaken.

At his side walked one who, even at a passing glance, might be pronounced his daughter, so striking the resemblance between them, She did not seem above sixteen years of age, but through the youthful traits of her features you could mark the same character of expression her father's wore, modified by the tender beauty, which at that age, blends the loveliness of the girl with the graces of womanhood. Bather above than below the middle height, her figure had that distinguishing mark of elegance high birth impresses, and in her very walk a quick observer might detect an air of class.

They both stopped short as they gained the summit of the hill, and appeared wonder-struck at the scene before them. The grey gloom of twilight threw its sombre shadows over the valley, but the mountain peaks were tipped with the setting sun, and shone in those rich violet and purple hues the autumn heath displays so beautifully. The dark-leaved holly and the bright arbutus blossom lent their colour to every jutting cliff and promontory, which, to eyes unacquainted with the scenery, gave an air of culture strangely at variance with the desolation around.

“Is this wild enough for your fancy, Sybella,” said the father, with a playful smile, as he watched the varying expression of the young girl's features, “or would you desire something still more dreary?” But she made no answer. Her gaze was fixed on a thin wreath of smoke that curled its way upwards from what appeared a low mound of earth, in the valley below the road; some branches of trees, covered with sods of earth, grass-grown and still green, were heaped up together, and through these the vapour found a passage and floated into the air.

“I am wondering what that fire can mean,” said she, pointing downwards with her finger.

“Here is some one will explain it,” said the old man, as for the first time he perceived the youth, who still maintained his former attitude on the bank, and with a studied indifference, paid no attention to those whose presence had before so much surprised him.

“I say, my good fellow, what does that smoke mean we see yonder?”

The youth sprung to his feet with a bound that almost startled his questioner, so sudden and abrupt the motion; his features, inactive and colourless the moment before, seemed almost convulsed now, while they became dark with blood.

“Was it to me you spoke?” said he, in a low guttural tone, which his passion made actually tremulous.

“Yes—”

But before the old man could reply, his daughter, with the quick tact of womanhood, perceiving the mistake her father had fallen into, hastily interrupted him by saying,—

“Yes, sir, we were asking you the cause of the fire at the foot of that cliff.”

The tone and the manner in which the words were uttered seemed at once to have disarmed his anger; and although for a second or two he made no answer, his features recovered their former half-listless look, as he said —

“It is a cabin—There is another yonder, beside the river.”

“A cabin! Surely you cannot mean that people are living there?” said the girl, as a sickly pallor spread itself across her cheeks.

“Yes, to be sure,” replied the youth; “they have no better hereabouts.”

“What poverty—what dreadful misery is this!” said she, as the great tears gushed forth, and stole heavily down her face.

“They are not so poor,” answered the young man, in a voice of almost reproof. “The cattle along that mountain all

belong to these people—the goats you see in that glen are theirs also.”

“And whose estate may this be?” said the old man.

Either the questioner or his question seemed to have called up again the youth's former resentment, for he fixed his eyes steadily on him for some time without a word, and then slowly added—

“This belongs to an Englishman—a certain Sir Marmaduke Travers—It is the estate of O'Donoghue.”

“Was, you mean, once,” answered the old man quickly.

“I mean what I say,” replied the other rudely. “Confiscation cannot take away a right, it can at most—”

This speech was fortunately not destined to be finished, for while he was speaking, his quick glance detected a dark object soaring above his head. In a second he had seized his gun, and taking a steady aim, he fired. The loud report was heard repeated in many a far-off glen, and ere its last echo died away, a heavy object fell upon the road not many yards from where they stood.

“This fellow,” said the youth, as he lifted the body of a large black eagle from the ground—“This fellow was a confiscator too, and see what he has come to. You'd not tell me that our lambs were his, would you?”

The roll of wheels happily drowned these words, for by this time the postillions had reached the place, the four post-horses labouring under the heavy-laden travelling carriage, with its innumerable boxes and imperials.

The post boys saluted the young man with marked deference, to which he scarcely deigned an

acknowledgment, as he replaced his shot-pouch, and seemed to prepare for the road once more.

Meanwhile the old gentleman had assisted his daughter to the carriage, and was about to follow, when he turned around suddenly and said—

“If your road lies this way, may I offer you a seat with us?”

The youth stared as if he did not well comprehend the offer, and his cheek flushed, as he answered coldly—

“I thank you; but my path is across the mountain.”

Both parties saluted distantly, the door of the carriage closed, and the word to move on was given, when the young man, taking two dark feathers from the eagle's wing, approached the window.

“I was forgetting,” said he, in a voice of hesitation and diffidence, “perhaps you would accept these feathers.”

The young girl smiled, and half blushing, muttered some words in reply, as she took the offered present. The horses sprung forward the next instant, and a few minutes after, the road was as silent and deserted as before; and save the retiring sound of the wheels, nothing broke the stillness.

CHAPTER II. THE WAYSIDE INN

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As the glen continues to wind between the mountains, it gradually becomes narrower, and at last contracts to a mere cleft, flanked on either side by two precipitous walls of rock, which rise to the height of several hundred feet above the road; this is the pass of Keim-an-eigh, one of the wildest and most romantic ravines of the scenery of the south.

At the entrance to this pass there stood, at the time we speak of, a small wayside inn, or shebeen-house, whose greatest recommendation was in the feet, that it was the only place where shelter and refreshment could be obtained for miles on either side. An humble thatched cabin abutting against the granite rock of the glen, and decorated with an almost effaced sign of St. Finbar converting a very unprepossessing heathen, over the door, showed where Mary M'Kelly dispensed “enthertainment for man and baste.”

A chance traveller, bestowing a passing glance upon this modest edifice, might deem that an inn in such a dreary and unfrequented valley, must prove a very profitless speculation—few, very few travelled the road—fewer still would halt to bait within ten miles of Bantry. Report, however, said differently; the impression in the country was, that “Mary's”—as it was briefly styled—had a readier share of business than many a more promising and pretentious hotel; in fact, it was generally believed to be the resort of all the smugglers of the coast; and the market, where the shopkeepers of the interior repaired in secret to purchase

the contraband wares and “run goods,” which poured into the country from the shores of France and Holland.

Vast storehouses and caves were said to exist in the rock behind the house, to store away the valuable goods, which from time to time arrived; and it was currently believed that the cargo of an Indiaman might have been concealed within these secret recesses, and never a cask left in view to attract suspicion.

It is not into these gloomy receptacles of contraband that we would now conduct our reader, but into a far more cheerful and more comfortable locality—the spacious kitchen of the cabin, or, in fact, the apartment which served for the double purpose of cooking and eating—the common room of the inn, where around a blazing fire of black turf was seated a party of three persons.

At one side sat the fat and somewhat comely figure of Mary herself, a woman of some five-and-forty years, with that expression of rough and ready temperament, the habits of a wayside inn will teach. She had a clear, full eye—a wide, but not unpleasant mouth—and a voice that suited well the mellifluous intonation of a Kerry accent. Opposite to her were two thin, attenuated old men, who, for dress, look, age, voice, and manner, it would have been almost impossible to distinguish from each other; for while the same weather-beaten, shrivelled expression was common to both, their jackets of blue cloth, leather breeches, and top boots, were so precisely alike, that they seemed the very Dromios brought back to life, to perform as postillions. Such they were—such they had been for above fifty years. They had travelled the country from the time they were boys—

they entered the career together, and together they were jogging onward to the last stage of all, the only one where they hoped to be at rest! Joe and Jim Daly were two names no one ever heard disunited; they were regarded as but one corporeally, and although they affected at times to make distinctions themselves, the world never gave them credit for any consciousness of separate identity. These were the postillions of the travelling carriage, which having left at its destination, about two miles distant, they were now regaling themselves at Mary's, where the horses were to rest for the night.

“Faix, ma'am, and it's driving ye may call it,” said one of the pair, as he sipped a very smoking compound the hostess had just mixed, “a hard gallop every step of the way, barrin' the bit of a hill at Carrignacurra.”

“Well, I hope ye had the decent hansel for it, any how, Jim?”

“I'm Joe, ma'am, av its plazing to ye; Jim is the pole-end boy; he rides the layders. And it's true for ye—they behaved dacent.”

“A goold guinea, divil a less”—said the other, “there's no use in denying it. Begorra, it was all natural, them's as rich as Crasis; sure didn't I see the young lady herself throwing out the tenpenny bits to the gossoons, as we went by, as if it was dirt; bad luck to me, but I was going to throw down the Bishop of Cloyne.”

“Throw down who?” said the hostess.

“The near wheeler, ma'am; he's a broken-kneed ould divil, we bought from the bishop, and called him after him; and as I was saying, I was going to cross them on the pole,

and get a fall, just to have a scramble for the money, with the gaffers.”

“'They look so poor,' says she. God help her—it's little poverty she saw—there isn't one of them crayters hasn't a sack of potatoes.”

“Ay—more of them a pig.”

“And hens,” chimed in the first speaker, with a horror at the imposition of people so comfortably endowed, affecting to feel any pressure or poverty.

“And what's bringing them here at all?” said Mrs. M'Kelly, with a voice of some asperity; for she foresaw no pleasant future in the fact of a resident great man, who would not be likely to give any encouragement to the branch of traffic her principal customers followed.

“Sorrow one of me knows,” was the safe reply of the individual addressed, who not being prepared with any view of the matter, save that founded on the great benefit to the country, preferred this answer to a more decisive one.

“'Tis to improve the property, they say,” interposed the other, who was not equally endowed with caution. “To look after the estate himself he has come.”

“Improve, indeed!” echoed the hostess. “Much we want their improving! Why didn't they leave us the ould families of the country? It's little we used to hear of improving, when I was a child. God be good to us.—There was ould Miles O'Donoghue, the present man's father, I'd like to see what he'd say, if they talked to him about improvement. Ayeh! sure I mind the time a hogshead of claret didn't do the fortnight. My father, rest his soul, used to go up to the house every Monday morning for orders; and ye'd see a

string of cars following him at the same time, with tay, and sugar, and wine, and brandy, and oranges, and lemons. Them was the raal improvements!”

“'Tis true for ye, ma'am. It was a fine house, I always heerd tell.”

“Forty-six in the kitchen, besides about fourteen colleens and gossoons about the place; the best of enthertainment up stairs and down.”

“Musha! that was grand.”

“A keg of sperits, with a spigot, in the servants' hall, and no saying by your leave, but drink while ye could stand over it.”

“The Lord be good to us!” piously ejaculated the twain.

“The hams was boiled in sherry wine.”

“Begorra, I wish I was a pig them times.”

“And a pike daren't come up to table without an elegant pudding in his belly that cost five pounds!”

“'Tis the fish has their own luck always,” was the profound meditation at this piece of good fortune.

“Ayeh! ayeh!” continued the hostess in a strain of lamentation, “When the ould stock was in it, we never heerd tell of improvements. He'll be making me take out a license, I suppose,” said she, in a voice of half contemptuous incredulity.

“Faix, there's no knowing,” said Joe, as he shook the ashes out of his pipe, and nodded his head sententiously, as though to say, that in the miserable times they'd fallen upon, any thing was possible.

“Licensed for sperits and groceries,” said Mrs. M'Kelly, with a sort of hysterical giggle, as if the thought were too

much for her nerves.

“I wouldn't wonder if he put up a pike,” stammered out Jim, thereby implying that human atrocity would have reached its climax.

The silence which followed this terrible suggestion, was now loudly interrupted by a smart knocking at the door of the cabin, which was already barred and locked for the night.

“Who's there?” said Mary, as she held a cloak across the blaze of the fire, so as to prevent the light being seen through the apertures of the door—“'tis in bed we are, and late enough, too.”

“Open the door, Mary, it's me,” said a somewhat confident voice. “I saw the fire burning brightly—and there's no use hiding it.”

“Oh, troth, Mr. Mark, I'll not keep ye out in the cowld,” said the hostess, as, unbarring the door, she admitted the guest whom we had seen some time since in the glen. “Sure enough, 'tisn't an O'Donoghue we'd shut the door agin, any how.”

“Thank ye, Mary,” said the young man; “I have been all day in the mountains, and had no sport; and as that pleasant old Scotch uncle of mine gives me no peace, when I come home empty-handed, I have resolved to stay here for the night, and try my luck to-morrow. Don't stir, Jim—there's room enough, Joe: Mary's fire is never so grudging, but there's a warm place for every one. What's in this big pot here, Mary?”

“It's a stew, sir; more by token, of your honour's providin'.” “Mine—how is that?”

“The hare ye shot afore the door, yesterday morning; sure it's raal luck we have it for you now;” and while Mary employed herself in the pleasant hustle of preparing the supper, the young man drew near to the fire, and engaged the others in conversation.

“That travelling carriage was going on to Bantry, Joe, I suppose?” said the youth, in a tone of easy indifference.

“No sir; they stopped at the lodge above.”

“At the lodge!—surely you can't mean that they were the English family—Sir Marmaduke.”

“'Tis just himself, and his daughter. I heerd them say the names, as we were leaving Macroom. They were not expected here these three weeks; and Captain Hemsworth, the agent, isn't at home; and they say there's no servants at the lodge, nor nothin' ready for the quality at all; and sure when a great lord like that—”

“He is not a lord you fool; he has not a drop of noble blood in his body: he's a London banker—rich enough to buy birth, if gold could do it.” The youth paused in his vehemence; then added, in a muttering voice—“Rich enough to buy up the inheritance of those who have blood in their veins.”

The tone of voice in which the young man spoke, and the angry look which accompanied these words, threw a gloom over the party, and for some time nothing was said on either side. At last he broke silence abruptly by saying—

“And that was his daughter, then?”

“Yes, sir; and a purty crayture she is, and a kind-hearted. The moment she heerd she was on her father's estate, she began asking the names of all the people, and if they were

well off, and what they had to ate, and where was the schools.”

“The schools!” broke in Mary, in an accent of great derision—“musha, it's great schooling we want up the glen, to teach us to bear poverty and cowld, without complaining: learning is a fine thing for the hunger—”

Her irony was too delicate for the thick apprehension of poor Jim, who felt himself addressed by the remark, and piously responded—

“It is so, glory be to God!”

“Well,” said the young man, who now seemed all eagerness to resume the subject—“well, and what then?”

“Then, she was wondering where was the roads up to the cabins on the mountains, as if the likes of them people had roads!”

“They've ways of their own—the English,” interrupted Jim, who felt jealous of his companion being always referred to—“for whenever we passed a little potatoe garden, or a lock of oak, it was always, 'God be good to us, but they're mighty poor hereabouts;' but when we got into the raal wild part of the glen, with divil a house nor a human being near us, sorrow word out of their mouths but 'fine, beautiful, elegant!' till we came to Keim-an-eigh, and then, ye'd think that it was fifty acres of wheat they were looking at, wid all the praises they had for the big rocks, and black cliffs oyer our heads.”

“I showed them your honour's father's place on the mountains,” said Joe.

“Yes, faith,” broke in Jim; “and the young lady laughed and said, 'you see, father, we have a neighbour after all.'”

The blood mounted to the youth's cheek, till it became almost purple, but he did not utter a word.

“'Tis the O'Donoghue, my lady,' said I,” continued Joe, who saw the difficulty of the moment, and hastened to relieve it—“that's his castle up there, with the high tower. 'Twas there the family lived these nine hundred years, whin the whole country was their own; and they wor kings here.”

“And did you hear what the ould gentleman said then?” asked Jim.

“No, I didn't—I wasn't mindin' him,” rejoined Joe; endeavouring with all his might to repress the indiscreet loquacity of the other.

“What was it, Jim?” said the young man, with a forced smile.

“Faix, he begun a laughing, yer honour, and says he, 'We must pay our respects at Coort,' says he; 'and I'm sure we'll be well received, for we know his Royal Highness already—that's what he called yer honour.”

The youth sprang to his feet, with a gesture so violent and sudden, as to startle the whole party.

“What,” he exclaimed, “and are we sunk so low, as to be a scoff and a jibe to a London money-changer? If I but heard him speak the words—”

“Arrah, he never said it at all,” said Joe, with a look that made his counterpart tremble all over. “That bosthoon there, would make you believe he was in the coach, convarsing the whole way with him. Sure wasn't I riding the wheeler, and never heerd a word of it. Whisht, I tell ye, and don't provoke me.”

“Ay, stop your mouth with some of this,” interposed Mary, as she helped the smoking and savoury mess around the table.

Jim looked down abashed and ashamed; his testimony was discredited; and without knowing why or wherefore, he yet had an indistinct glimmering that any effort to vindicate his character would be ill-received; he therefore said nothing more: his silence was contagious, and the meal which a few moments before promised so pleasantly, passed off with gloom and restraint.

All Mary M'Kelly's blandishments, assisted by a smoking cup of mulled claret—a beverage which not a Chateau on the Rhone could rival in racy flavour—failed to recall the young man's good-humour: he sat in gloomy silence, only broken at intervals by sounds of some low muttering to himself. Mary at length having arranged the little room for his reception, bade him good night, and retired to rest. The postillions sought their dens over the stable, and the youth, apparently lost in his own thoughts, sat alone by the embers of the turf fire, and at last sunk to sleep where he was, by the chimney-corner.

CHAPTER III. THE “COTTAGE AND THE CASTLE.”

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Of Sir Marmaduke Travers, there is little to tell the reader beyond what the few hints thrown out already may have conveyed to him. He was a London banker, whose wealth was reputed to be enormous. Originally a younger son, he succeeded somewhat late in life to the baronetcy and large estates of his family. The habits, however, of an active city life—the pursuits which a long career had made a second nature to him—rendered him both unfit to eater upon the less exciting duties of a country gentleman's existence, and made him regard such as devoid of interest or amusement. He continued therefore to reside in London for many years after he became the baronet; and it was only at the death of his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, that these habits became distasteful; he found that he could no longer continue a course which companionship and mutual feeling had rendered agreeable, and he resolved at once to remove to some one of his estates, where a new sphere of occupation might alleviate the sorrows of his loss. To this no obstacle of any kind existed. His only son was already launched into life as an officer in the guards; and, except his daughter, so lately before the reader, he had no other children. The effort to attain forgetfulness was not more successful here, than it is usually found to be. The old man sought, but found not in a country life the solace he expected; neither his tastes nor his habits suited those of his neighbours; he was little of a sportsman, still less of a

farmer. The intercourse of country social life was a poor recompense for the unceasing flow of London society. He grew wearied very soon of his experiment, and longed once more to return to his old haunts and habits. One more chance, however, remained for him, and he was unwilling to reject without trying it. This was, to visit Ireland, where he possessed a large estate, which he had never seen. The property, originally mortgaged to his father, was represented as singularly picturesque and romantic, possessing great mineral wealth, and other resources, never examined into, nor made available. His agent, Captain Hemsworth, a gentleman who resided on the estate, at his annual visit to the proprietor, used to dilate upon the manifold advantages and capabilities of the property, and never ceased to implore him to pay a visit, if even for a week or two, sincerely trusting the while that such an intention might never occur to him. These entreaties, made from year to year, were the regular accompaniment of every settlement of account, and as readily replied to by a half promise, which the maker was certainly not more sincere in pledging.

Three years of country life had now, however, disposed Sir Marmaduke to reflect on this long unperformed journey; and, regardless of the fact that his agent was then grouse-shooting in Scotland, he set out at a moment's notice, and without a word to apprise the household at the lodge of his intended arrival, reached the house in the evening of an autumn day, by the road we have already been describing.

It is but justice to Sir Marmaduke to add, that he was prompted to this step by other than mere selfish

considerations. The state of Ireland had latterly become a topic of the press in both countries. The poverty of the people—interpreted in various ways, and ascribed to very opposite causes—was a constant theme of discussion and conversation. The strange phenomenon of a land teeming with abundance, yet overrun by a starving population, had just then begun to attract notice; and theories were rife in accounting for that singular and anomalous social condition, which unhappily the experience of an additional half century has not succeeded in solving.

Sir Marmaduke was well versed in these popular writings; he had the “Whole State of Ireland” by heart; and so firmly was he persuaded that his knowledge of the subject was perfect, that he became actually impatient until he had reached the country, and commenced the great scheme of regeneration and civilization, by which Ireland and her people were to be placed among the most favoured nations. He had heard much of Irish indolence and superstition—Irish bigotry and intolerance—the indifference to comfort—the indisposition to exertion—the recklessness of the present—the improvidence of the future; he had been told that saint-days and holydays mulcted labour of more than half its due—that ignorance made the other half almost valueless; he had read, that, the easy contentment with poverty, had made all industry distasteful, and all exertion, save what was actually indispensable, a thing to be avoided.

“Why should these things be, when they were not so in Norfolk, nor in Yorkshire?” was the question he ever asked, and to which his knowledge furnished no reply. There, superstitions, if they existed—and he knew not if they did—

came not in the way of daily labour. Saints never unharnessed the team, nor laid the plough inactive—comfort was a stimulant to industry that none disregarded; habits of order and decorum made the possessor respected—poverty almost argued misconduct, and certainly was deemed a reproach. Why then not propagate the system of these happy districts in Ireland? To do this was the great end and object of his visit.

Philanthropy would often seem unhappily to have a dislike to the practical—the generous emotions appear shorn of their freedom, when trammelled with the fruit of experience or reflection. So, certainly it was, in the case before us. Sir Marmaduke had the very best intentions—the weakest notions of their realization; the most unbounded desire for good—the very narrowest conceptions of how to effect it. Like most theorists, no speculative difficulty was great enough to deter—no practical obstacle was so small as not to affright him. It never apparently occurred to him that men are not every where alike, and this trifling omission was the source of difficulties, which he persisted in ascribing to causes outside of himself. Generous, kind-hearted, and benevolent, he easily forgave an injury, never willingly inflicted one; he was also, however, hot-tempered and passionate; he could not brook opposition to his will, where its object seemed laudable to himself, and was utterly unable to make allowance for prejudices and leanings in others, simply because he had never experienced them in his own breast.

Such was, in a few words, the present occupant of “the Lodge”—as the residence of the agent was styled. Originally

a hunting box, it had been enlarged and ornamented by Captain Hemsworth, and converted into a cottage of singular beauty, without, and no mean pretension to comfort, within doors. It occupied an indenture of the glen of Keim-an-eigh, and stood on the borders of a small mountain-lake, the surface of which was dotted with wooded islands. Behind the cottage, and favoured by the shelter of the ravine, the native oaks grew to a great size, and contrasted by the rich foliage waving in the breeze, with the dark sides of the cliff opposite, rugged, barren and immutable.

In all the luxuriance of this mild climate, shrubs attained the height of trees; and flowers, rare enough elsewhere to demand the most watchful care, grew here, unattended and unregarded. The very grass had a depth of green, softer and more pleasing to the eye than in other places. It seemed as if nature had, in compensation for the solitude around, shed her fairest gifts over this lonely spot, one bright gem in the dreary sky of winter.

About a mile further down the glen, and seated on a lofty pinnacle of rock, immediately above the road, stood the once proud castle of the O'Donoghue. Two square and massive towers still remained to mark its ancient strength, and the ruins of various outworks and bastions could be traced, extending for a considerable distance on every side. Between these square towers, and occupying the space where originally a curtain wall stood, a long low building now extended, whose high-pitched roof and narrow windows vouched for an antiquity of little more than a hundred years. It was a strange incongruous pile, in which fortress and

farm-house seemed welded together—the whole no bad type of its past and its present owners. The approach was by a narrow causeway, cut in the rock, and protected by a square keep, through whose deep arch the road penetrated —flanked on either hand by a low battlemented wall; along these, two rows of lime trees grew, stately and beautiful in the midst of all the ruin about them. They spread their waving foliage around, and threw a mellow, solemn shadow along the walk. Except these, not a tree, nor even a shrub, was to be seen—the vast woods of nature's own planting had disappeared—the casualties of war—the chances of times of trouble, or the more ruinous course of poverty, had laid them low, and the barren mountain now stood revealed, where once were waving forests and shady groves, the home of summer birds, the lair of the wild deer.

Cows and farm-horses were stabled in what once had been the outworks of the castle. Implements of husbandry lay carelessly on all sides, neglect and decay marked every thing, the garden-wall was broken down in many places, and cattle strayed at will among the torn fruit-trees and dilapidated terraces, while, as if to add to the dreary aspect of the scene, the ground for a considerable distance around had been tilled, but never subsequently restored to grass land, and now along its ridged surface noisome weeds and thistles grew rankly, tainting the air with their odour, and sending up heavy exhalations from the moist and spongy earth. If, without, all looked sad and sorrow-struck, the appearances within, were not much better. A large flagged-hall, opened upon two long ill-lighted corridors, from which a number of small sitting-rooms led off. Many of these were

perfectly devoid of furniture; in the others, what remained seemed to owe its preservation to its want of value rather than any other quality. Cracked looking-glasses—broken chairs, rudely mended by some country hand—ragged and patched carpets, were the only things to be found, with here and there some dirt-disfigured piece of framed canvas, which, whether tapestry or painting, no eye could now discover. These apartments bore little or no trace of habitation; indeed, for many years they were rarely entered by any one. A large square room in one of the towers, of some forty feet in dimensions, was the ordinary resort of the family, serving the purposes of drawing and dining-room. This was somewhat better in appearance: whatever articles of furniture had any pretension to comfort or convenience were here assembled; and here, were met, old-fashioned sofas, deep arm-chairs, quaint misshapen tables like millipedes, and fat old footstools, the pious work of long-forgotten grandmothers. A huge screen, covered with a motley array of prints and caricatures, cut off the group around the ample fire-place from the remainder of the apartment, and it is within this charmed circle we would now conduct our reader.