

known in England to evoke a burst of indignation that will bring the evictors and their abettors to their senses.

FOR THE OLD LAND.

(By CHARLES J. KICKHAM)

CHAPTER XVIII.

The cream-cake was a great success, and Mrs Dwyer was breathlessly happy. Strong emotions of whatever sort generally interfered with Mrs Dwyer's aspirations. Mr Armstrong, mindful of the hint he had got from Mrs Cormack, thought the opportunity a good one, while the happy woman was filling out his second cup of tea, to introduce the subject of the school at Ballinsoggarth. He dwelt upon the great advantage of a good education, and wondered at the carelessness of some parents in the matter.

"What you say is true," said Martin Dwyer, looking at Nannie and Nellie, who seemed very grave, as if Mr Armstrong had been reading them a lecture.

"So it is," their mother remarked complacently, never dreaming that her own remissness was glanced at, or even suspected.

"I hope Nannie and Nellie attend school regularly," said Mr Armstrong.

"Oh, quite regularly," Mrs Dwyer answered impressively—"except," she added, seeing the children raise their eyes and look at her in astonishment—"except when I can't spare them."

"Spare them, Mrs Dwyer," returned Mr Armstrong. "Surely nothing they could do for you is of so much importance as their education."

"I have no one to do anything for me," rejoined Mrs Dwyer pitifully. "No one but that Cauth Manogue; and I believe she wouldn't stay with me if anybody else would take her. All the good girls I ever had left me as soon as ever they could get another place. And see how they stay with Mrs Cormack, though she never lets 'em be idle for a minute, and must know where they spend their time whenever they go out. Yet, except when they get married, they never leave."

"And what can the children do for you?" Mr Armstrong asked.

"Many little things," replied Mrs Dwyer. "And, besides, I do be so lonesome and nervous, my mind becomes quite confused, and everything goes wrong."

"Well, Mrs Dwyer," said Mr Armstrong gravely, "if anyone else told me that you could not afford to send your children to school I could not believe it."

"Afford to send my children to school!" exclaimed Mrs Dwyer, surprised and offended. "Don't I pay for their schooling, whether they go or not?"

"Yes, but you say you can't spare them for want of a servant. And it is a great loss to them. Indeed, keeping children of their age from school is an irreparable loss. It never can be made up to them. They'll feel it all the days of their lives."

"I'm sure," returned Mrs Dwyer, quite frightened, "they can go to school every day of the week if they like. But the distance is so long."

"Oh, we only find it so pleasant," said Nellie; "we don't be a bit tired."

"What Mr Armstrong says is true," said Martin Dwyer. "I never looked into it before."

"Well they can begin on Monday," returned his wife, "and I am sure I'll never ask them to stay at home again," she added, fixing her eyes on Nannie and Nellie, as if she thought them very inconsiderate and ungrateful children for looking so glad and bappy at being allowed to go to school regularly.

"Well, schools must be different from what they need to be in my time," Martin Dwyer remarked, with an amused look at the two happy little girls. "'Tis glad they are instead of heart-broken. I remember how sorry we all were when the schoolmaster recovered from the ague long ago. Murty Magrath said that the recording angel kept an account of every time he ever made the schoolboys shake, and that for every shake a shake would be taken out of him before he got over the ague. To that some of us thought the account was so big he'd never be able to clear the score, but weren't we sorry when school was opened again?"

"Nannie and Nellie don't feel that way about school," said Mr Armstrong, with a smile. "The nuns don't frighten people, I am sure."

"Oh, no, sir," the children answered in a breath; Nellie adding, "We are never so happy as while we are at school."

"Murty Magrath came in yesterday morning while you were at the forge to light his pipe," Mrs Dwyer remarked; "I hate the sight of him. He always reminds me of a process or a notice to quit or something. See what a nice little man Sammy Sloane is. I declare when he handed me that process for the things I bought at the new shop and forgot to pay for, being so confused about everything, you'd think 'twas a present he was making me, he spoke so nice and civil.

couldn't help asking him into the parlour and giving him a glass. But that other long general, with his neck like a gander, I declare he always frightens me."

"I wonder what brought Murty over in this direction," said her husband, looking grave. "I didn't hear of anything going on about here."

"He said he was going over to Glenmoynan," returned Mrs Dwyer, "and that he had the devil of a job before him."

"It must be only a civil bill decree, I suppose," Martin Dwyer remarked, after a minute's thought.

"He seemed disappointed," said Mrs Dwyer, "when I told him you were gone from home. I was afraid of my life he wanted to serve you with something. But when he was going away he said the man of this house once did him a good turn, and if he ever had the opportunity he wouldn't forget it."

"Did he mean that as a threat?" Mr Armstrong asked, looking earnestly at his old friend.

"No," answered Martin Dwyer, smiling. "Con Cooney's father and I saved him from a terrible whacking one night, nearly thirty years ago, and we coming home from the fair of Carrigmora. He was waylaid by a party from the slate quarry, that were on the watch for him for a long time. We knew he deserved it; but we were afraid they'd kill him; and as he was an old school-fellow of ours, we took his part, and they said they'd let him pass that time in compliment to us. When he was parting us at the cross-roads after, he said 'twas the first time in his life he ever met a man to stand his friend, and that if it ever came to his turn he'd prove to us that a bailiff could be grateful."

"He's a very clever man," Mr Armstrong remarked, "and yet he's always in poverty."

"He was always a terrible schemer," returned Martin Dwyer. "He was a first-rate workman, but everyone got tired of him, he took such delight in humbugging people. My father had him reaping one time, and when the men were going out one day after their dinner Murty began to tell my father a story. The story was so interesting they all stopped to listen to it before they commenced to work, thinking every minute he was coming to the end of it. My father sat down against the ditch and told him to finish the story. 'Twasn't long 'till all the reapers—fifteen of 'em, I think—were sitting down listening to the story. Anyway, my father didn't feel the time passing till Murty stood up and said, 'Good evening, sir; I believe 'tis time to go home.' So it was, for the sun was just setting, and the half day was lost. 'Good evening, sir,' said Murty again, looking very innocent. 'Good evening,' said my father, 'but I won't want you to-morrow.' He never gave Murty a day's work after."

"When that unfortunate Paddy Fitzsimmons, the bailiff, was shot," said Mr Armstrong, "I went with the crowd to see what had happened. I could not believe the report that he was shot from the window of a Protestant gentleman's house—a landlord himself—whose cattle he was driving."

"Yes," interrupted Martin Dwyer, "'twas for the head rent, and the property was in Chancery."

"Well," continued Mr Armstrong, "there was the unfortunate bailiff lying stone dead on his back in the avenue. 'Twas a horrible sight, and the people looked awe-struck when they saw him—even some who shouted for joy when they heard of it first. The bullet passed through his eyebrow, quite close to the eye. But when Murty Magrath was seen approaching, the crowd, which was every moment becoming larger, drew aside and made way for him. They seemed to think that he must have a brotherly feeling for the dead bailiff, and sympathised with him accordingly as he stood over the corpse with his hands under his coat tails."

"Glory be to God!" was Murty's pious exclamation as he gazed on the dead man's face. "Didn't his eye escape wonderful?"

"I never thought he was pious," said Mrs Dwyer.

"I have known Murty Magrath to do kind acts," continued Mr Armstrong, putting his handkerchief to his mouth. "He's not so hardened as he pretends to be."

"He is not," returned Martin Dwyer, throwing back his head and laughing more at his wife's literal construction of the word "pious," as applied to Murty Magrath, than at the cynical humour which prompted the ejaculation concerning the eye of his unlucky confrere.

"The fact is," added Mr Armstrong, "the fellow has a sort of humour, and he can't resist the opportunity to exercise it."

"Did you find the greyhound, Tom?" Mr Armstrong asked, as Tom Dwyer took his place at the table, looking flushed and out of breath, as if he had had a fast run to be in time for breakfast.

"Not a sign of him," was the reply. "Alice told me he went through the grove; so I suppose he followed Ponsoby, who crossed over Poul-na-copel. Bover doesn't like water, and the river is too wide for a spring; and that explains the way he ran round by the bridge."

"He would never do so for me," said Martin Dwyer, rising briskly from his chair. "I suppose you'll stay to dinner, Amby?"