

THE
EARL OF DESMOND;
OR
O'BRIEN'S COTTAGE.
AN IRISH STORY.
(Continued from our last.)

A night or two preceding this, the selected time, Georgiana, having no inclination to sleep, dismissed her attendant; and, taking up a book of ancient legendary tales, amused herself by perusing the following story:—

THE
HEIR OF TYRCONNEL;
OR
THE THREATNING SPECTRE.

A TALE.

Now seated secure round this bright cherry fire,
A ditty from me, why so earnest require?
A tale full of horrors, you say, "tell to me;"
Then a tale full of horrors my story shall be.

Behold yonder turrets, so high and so fair;
Of them was lord Edmund the fortunate heir;
Lord Edmund was valiant, lord Edmund was gay,
And he lov'd a fair lady more blooming than
May;
With hair of light auburn—whose ringlets of
gold,
Resembled the tresses of Venus of old
Her eyes they were blue as the hyacinth's bell,
And the fairest of virgins did Ellen excel.
Long lov'd our lord Edmund this beautiful maid;
And now for their nuptials, with costly parade,
All things are arranged; and rich jewels he buys,
Which sparkle less brightly than Ellen's soft eyes.

Not far from lord Edmund there liv'd a rich
dame,
Her birth it was noble, her beauty had fame;
A brunette was she, with eyes full of fire,
And she brook'd no restraint, when once fix'd a
desire;
And forth as lord Edmund a hunting did ride,
His fine graceful form in this lady he espied.
Ah! who is that hunter? (to Alice her maid)
Ah! who is that hunter? she eagerly said:
The earl of Tyrconnel, then Alice reply'd,
Who marries next week, and fair Ellen his bride.
Oh, no! said proud Margaret, this thing must not
be.
Lord Edmund shall never wed any but me;
And never shall mortal have Margaret's hand.
But Edmund, the boast of Hibernia's bless'd land,
By arts and by spells, I will soon make him mine,
And the pale languid Ellen he'll gladly resign.
Her arts and her spells then did Margaret pro-
vide,

That Ellen might never be Tyrconnel's bride;
For a witch once had promis'd to grant any boon,
Which she ask'd by a spell, on the full of the
moon.
Tho' the process was horrid, and made her blood
cold—
'Twas to rake from the newest made grave all the
mould;
The coffin to wrench, and the heat to obtain,
Of the victim the latest reliev'd from all pain;
And words of "strange import," which made na-
ture start,
She was to repeat as she pluck'd out the heart.
Then the heart in a fire of charcoal must burn,
Which would make the grim witch a kind answer
return.
This task, tho' so arduous, by magic made light,
Could be quickly perform'd in the dead of the
night.

Now swift thro' the church-yard did Margaret
fly,
And the newest made grave soon attracted her
eye.
In silence, at midnight, she tore up the ground,
And the screech-owl, alone, broke the air with a
sound.
The full moon now darted its lustre so blue,
And the wan-haggard corpse was expos'd to her
view.
She shudder'd with horror, but could not retreat,
And the words the witch taught her she now did
repeat:
She thought on lord Edmund—that strengthen'd
her aim.
And she built her fond hopes on the force of the
charm:
To gain her lov'd Edmund the breast open tears,
And from the cold bosom the colder heart bears.
The threw it on embers of charcoal's bright flame,
And thrice she repeated the dear Edmund's name:
'Twas awful and solemn—the warm-glowing
rays
Threw o'er the wide church-yard a dazzling
blaze.
The wind now rose high, and many a shade
Seem'd to dance round the fire which Margaret
had made:
The clock then struck one—dismal sounds reach'd
her ear—
And the heart of firm Margaret now trembled with
fear.

Lord Edmund is your's; but his love to obtain,
He never must see gentle Ellen again:
'Tis your's to secure her; but that bold deed,
Your love with lord Edmund shall surely suc-
ceed.
Return to your chamber, but rise with the sun;
Your rival secure, and your wish shall be done.

Lord Edmund was restless, no sleep clos'd his
eyes,
He thought, near his casement, he heard dreadful
cries;
Then the soft voice of Ellen seem'd to him to cry,
Oh! save me, dear Edmund—dear Edmund, I
die.
In dread for his Ellen, who thus did complain,
He jump'd from his bed, nor could slumber again:
'Twas fancy, he found; but the morning was
fair.
The sky so serene, and so balmy the air;
It inclin'd him to walk; and, whilst on his way,
He saw from her window, firm Margaret so gay
He gazed, and he thought he had never yet seen
A form so complete, with so noble a mien;

He bow'd, she return'd it; and soon 'twas int-
lot
To love lady Margaret, whilst Ellen's forgot.
I cannot love Ellen, lord Edmund, he cries,
My heart to sweet Margaret is yielded, her prize:
I'll send her a letter, by which she may see,
That never, fair Ellen, my bride you can be.

Then he sent forth his page; but soon he re-
turn
For Ellen was missing, and all her house
Fair Ellen wander'd, no one could tell where,
Which rejoic'd the false bosom of Tyrconnel's
heir.

Now gaily the bells in the parish church ring,
And garlands of flowers the villagers bring:
Lord Edmund is married—his heart swells with
pride.
As he clasps lady Margaret, and calls her his
bride:

But for the lost Ellen, so gentle and kind,
No thought, no distress, enters into his mind:
The allurements of Margaret had twin'd round his
heart,
And glad was lord Edmund with Ellen to part.
But not so her parents, they fill'd with des-
pair,

To find their lost Ellen employ every care;
On fickle lord Edmund they look with disdain,
'Tho' both are too proud of their wrongs to com-
plain:
Yet they doubt not that Ellen, refus'd for his
bride,
Had wander'd heart-broken, then laid down and
died.

Three months now had pass'd since the bells' live-
ly sound,
Had proclaim'd to the peasants and villagers
round.
The marriage of Edmund with Margaret so true,
Whose tender affection more strong daily grew.

One night, when soft slumbers had seal'd her lord's
eyes,
In vain for composure firm Margaret tries;
Her conscience reproach'd her for Ellen's sad
fate,
And an anguish she felt, which no time could a-
bate.

Ah! Ellen, she sigh'd, thy blood calls from the
ground,
Oh! why did I ever thy pure bosom wound;
But, haughty and jealous, I never could see
The meek gentle Ellen prefer'd before me:
And faithful lord Edmund to her would prove
true,
I hir'd an assassin, and Ellen he slew.

A request, as from Edmund, I ar fully fram'd,
Entreating she'd come to a place which I nam'd:
To this she consented, and took for her guide
The false cruel wretch by whose poignard she
died.

No more could say Margaret—for, strait to her
eyes,
A spectre of horrible form did arise.
Then light it was still, and the taper's faint gleam
Did fall on the face of the pale spectre beam:
A shroud wrapt its limbs, which, in part, open
laid,

When the deep-mangled breast she observ'd of the
shade:
But bloodless the wound was, and unstain'd by
gore,
And she thought the sad visage she had seen be-
fore.

Then soon recollected, with fear and dismay,
'Twas the corpse from whose breast she the hear tore
away.
Behold me, it said, and by me hear your doom,
Whilst the deep hollow sounds echo'd harsh thro'
the room:
You murder'd fair Ellen, that poor hapless maid,
And soon for her blood shall your own be re-
paid:

You tore from my breast my heart, lifeless and
cold,
And, completing your spells, you to demons are
sold:
Six months you are spar'd for the child which you
bear,
Whose innocent life in your guilt must not share:
Your child now protects you; but, heed what I
say—
Six months—then I seize you, and bear you
away.

Ah! who the deep sorrows of Margaret can tell,
Or what dreadful afflictions her bosom now
swell.
Lord Edmund, astonish'd, beheld her strange grief,
And, in kindest expressions, he offer'd relief.
He said, dearest love, why this moaning and
wail?

Why from thy bright eyes do the tears daily flow?
Oh! cheer thee, my dearest, for soon we shall
see
A sweet little babe sit on Margaret's knee.
Then droop not, my love, nor do not repine,
For know you not, Margaret, your sorrows are
mine.

Too fast for poor Margaret hours, weeks and
months, flew,
And her horrors increas'd as her time nearer drew.
At length 'tis complete, and Margaret sustains,
In addition to mental, dread bodily pains
And now thro' the castle and village 'tis spread,
That fair lady Margaret's confin'd to her bed:
And soon doth a maiden to lord Edmund run,
To say that his lady hath born him a son;
And quick by the bed-side of her lov'd so dear,
With heart full of joy, doth lord Edmund ap-
pear.

But Margaret's anguish increas'd every hour,
To keep her from them, they carefully had power,
And firm she was, with expression so mild,
Intent on her husband, and next on her child—
Oh! leave us not, Edmund, dear husband, she
cry'd,
And stay with me, Alice, good Alice, beside;
And all my attendant, stay with me, I pray,
A spectre this night, else, will fetch me away.

Then they sat round her bed, and they heard her
complain,
But they thought it the ravings occasion'd by
pain.

Now twelve struck the clock—all were falling a-
sleep—
But Margaret called to them, and sore she did
weep.
Oh! rouse you, my husband, and rouse you, each
friend,
And do not neglect me, but closely attend;
And drive away sleep for this one night, I pray,
Or the spectre will bear me for ever away:
Then they all did their best, but the effort was
vain,
And fast did they sink into slumbers again:
And, as one struck the clock, each bow'd down
their head,
And as sound was their sleep as tho' all had been
dead.

They woke not till morning, when, strange to de-
clare,
They look'd for their lady—no lady was there;
And never from that time was Margaret found,
'Tho' the infant it lay in a sleep most profound.

Lord Edmund was horror-struck, griev'd and a-
maz'd,
And round the apartment with wonder he gaz'd;
And never more comfort did lord Edmund know.
For Margaret and Ellen's fate fill'd him with woe.
A few years he did in his castle reside,
But a Monk, in a monastery, lately he died.

His son now inherits his title and name;
And, if we may credit the rumour of Fame,
The youthful lord Edmund is good as he's fair,
For great is the promise of Tyrconnel's heir.

Amused by this, and several others of
the same nature, she continued to read, un-
conscious of the lateness of the hour, when
her attention was roused by a rustling noise
in her apartment. She turned her eyes to
the part it seem'd to proceed from, and with
horror, observed a tall figure, shrouded in an
enveloping mantle, glide through an open
door at the extremity of the room. Petrified
with fear, she was nearly deprived of
breath, and sat for a length of time motion-
less and silent; but all remaining quiet,
and the large clock announcing the hour of
two, she summoned sufficient resolution to
prepare to retire, conceiving that what she
fancied she saw was merely chimerical, oc-
casioned by the supernatural stories she had
been reading—but that the door was open,
was too evident to admit a doubt; and she
resolved sufficiently to secure it before she
settled to repose.

For this purpose, by a violent effort of
self-command and presence of mind, she
arose, but had not proceeded many paces,
when a sealed paper attracted her observa-
tion. She hesitated at the sight—she was
full of dreadful apprehension, and a faint
sickness oppress'd her. At last determined,
with a firm resolution she stooped down for
it, and, holding it to the light, could scarce-
ly support herself, when the same detest-
ed characters met her eye, as those delivered
by the beggar woman.

"Rash woman!—forbear to tempt a
third warning—dare not to appear be-
fore that altar, where shame, reproach,
and repentance, will most assuredly await
you."

The terror, the grief, and amazement of
Georgiana, on this occasion, cannot be de-
scribed. To retire to bed was impossible,
and to disturb her beloved friends, at so un-
seasonable an hour, was equally so; but the
alarming apprehension of again seeing the
tall figure, which she was now well convin-
ced, she had seen glide through her apart-
ment, almost overpowered the fortitude with
which she wished to arm and support her-
self.

At length, addressing a fervent prayer to
Heaven, she vow'd to devote this night to
silent grief; and, the next morning, to de-
clare her intention of resigning the hand of
Edmund for ever.

Overcome by the vehemence of her sor-
row, as this resolve pass'd her thought, she
threw herself into a chair, and gave way to
the long-repressed tears. The mysterious
paper she still held in her hand; and the
more she reflected, the more she was lost in
conjecture.—The manner they had come
into her possession was incomprehen-
sible—yet she could not help con-
jecturing they originated in some momentous
cause.

Here her thoughts naturally turned on
Mr. Fitzhugh.—But were he yet in exis-
tence, said she, in a tremulous voice—were
he yet living. She paused at the idea; and,
with a heart-felt sigh, continued—"there
could be no reason why he should adopt so
strange, so unprovoked, a measure, to con-
tradict the erroneous accounts of his death,
or announce his return."

Her heart sunk in her breast as this pro-
bability was presented to her view. The
tender and sincere affection she entertain'd
for Edmund Netterville, and the prospects
of happiness presented to her view, by a
union with him, she now found were on the
point of being obscured for ever.

She paced her chamber in an agony; as
the thought gained strength in her ideas;
and the shades of night were succeeded by
the glowing tints of morning, ere Georgiana
had, in any degree, compos'd her anxious
apprehensions.

Exhausted, then, with sorrow, she threw
herself on her bed; and, although so deep-
ly oppress'd by the recent occurrence, fell
into an uneasy sleep, in which a variety of
harassing figures and horrible spectres lined
through her terrific dreams, more oppress'd
in spirits, and more restless, than before she
sought repose.

The whole family were alarmed when they
beheld her languid eyes and altered looks,
and their enquiries into the cause were eager
and warm.

Georgiana explained the cause of her
changed appearance with the deepest afflic-
tion; and added, that, fully persuaded there
must be some dreadful unknown cause for
these repeated warnings, she had, on the
most mature reflexion, come to the only ef-
fectual resolution which could be adopted
on so extraordinary an occasion, and that was,
to drop all thoughts of marriage, and remain
single the rest of her life.

These words were accompanied by so
violent a flood of tears, they prov'd, to her
attentive friends, how great the effort was to
form a resolution of this nature, and were
daggers to the heart of Edmund, who sat
bewildered in a labyrinth of inexplicable
ideas; the principal of which but too pain-
fully coincided with Georgiana's, that some
momentous cause produced these unpleasant,
and, most probably, unhappy effects. Yet,
notwithstanding all his own apprehensions,
whatever the most ardent lover or most sym-
pathising friend could adduce, to alleviate
her sorrow or mitigate her last resolve, he
urged, whilst the rest of the party sat mute
with wonder.

After a few moments longer given to si-
lent reflexion, the colonel thus address'd his
daughter:—

"I have well weigh'd and considered,
my dearest girl, this very disagreeable affair,
though I know not in what light to view it
with propriety.—I have, however, a few
observations to make, which, I hope, you
will fully deliberate upon, before you
reject the method I would wish you to adopt,
to discover the foundation of this unaccount-
able interruption to our happiness—re-
ceived, as the stab of an assassin, in the
dark.

"It must be evident to all, there could
be but one obstacle to your marriage—the
possibility of Mr. Fitzhugh being yet alive.
If that is so in reality, let it publicly, and
without equivocation, be made known—no
blame can be attach'd to us.—I have made
very possible enquiry into the truth of the
report which reach'd us, as no regular ac-
count was transmitted but from the express
I sent. The intelligence received, in con-
sequence of that, fully confirm'd public re-
port, and left us at liberty to pursue such plans
as we judg'd most calculated to contribute to
our happiness.

"An union, between the objects nearest
to my heart, appear'd to me the summit of
my felicity; and I had the extreme satisfac-
tion to see it on the point of taking place,
with the entire concurrence of all concern'd,
when an incendiary—a base and cruel des-
troyer—creeps, unseen, into my house, to
sap the foundation of my future fair prospects
of comfort and joy.

(To be continued.)

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PUBLISHED every TUESDAY, by
GEORGE K. LUGRIN, Printer to the King's
Most Excellent Majesty,
At his Office, in the house next to Mr. JOHN
LTON'S
FREDERICTON.

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