

THE
EARL OF DESMOND;
OR
O'BRIEN'S COTTAGE.

AN IRISH STORY.
(Continued from our last.)

Captain Netterville was son to the viscount Seymour—he was a man of great philanthropy, and possessed of many amiable qualities. He had been many years in the Company's service—he had lately lost a wife, of whom he was extremely fond—who had left one only son, about three years old.

He was now on the point of going a voyage up the Mediterranean for pleasure, with a particular friend, who was owner and commander of a ship which traded in those seas—who, conceiving captain Netterville would be greatly amused by it, had persuaded him to accompany him, as he could with ease return in time for his eastern business and voyage.

Not being able to bear a separation from his darling child, he had determined to take him with him; and when he first saw Patrick, he thought such a lad would be very useful to him, in taking charge of him and playing with him, as he supposed a boy would be more inclined to amuse such a child than his other attendants.

The captain therefore proposed this plan to the delighted Patrick, whose gratitude was unbounded—and that very day he became an inmate in the captain's house. It is unnecessary to dwell on particulars; I shall therefore only observe, that captain Netterville had reason to be pleased with his discernment on this occasion, as the heart of Patrick was the seat of fidelity, affection and gratitude.

The little Edmund grew so exceedingly fond of his new servant, he could not bear to be separated from him—and thus all equally pleased with each other, they embarked for their Mediterranean expedition.

Patrick, during this time, had written several letters to his friends, though they never received any, owing, perhaps, to their imperfect directions, or some other carelessness.

They had an extremely pleasant passage—captain Netterville was charmed by the beauty of the country at the different ports they touched; and was exceedingly pleased he had made this trip, as it gave him an insight into many circumstances he was before a stranger to.

The vessel having completed the purposes of her destination, was on her return home, when a violent tempest arose, which baffled every effort of the seamen; and, in spite of every exertion of skill, it drove them on the coast of Barbary, where she was wrecked.

The greatest part of the crew perished; and those who survived, amongst whom were captain Netterville, his son, and Patrick, were made prisoners and slaves, according to the cruel custom of the country—contrary to the laws of humanity and of nations.

Fortunately for those whose adventures I am relating, they were not separated. A Moor, of more humanity than usually falls to the share of the natives of Barbary, bearing of the shipwreck, and that some persons escaped from the devouring wave were to be disposed of, by those whom chance had first made their masters, came to view them. He was particularly pleased with the active Patrick, who did not appear to view his present misfortune in the dreadful light the rest did, which was in part owing to his native sprightliness, and to his utter ignorance of the nature of his situation.

But on the first intimation to Patrick that he was to be separated from the captain and Edmund, his grief became so extreme that it excited the curiosity and attention of Mustapha, which was the name of this Moor.—He looked on the child, which Patrick clasped in his arms in the most heartfelt sorrow, and observing the extreme beauty of Edmund, he determined to purchase him also. The agonies now of the distracted father again claimed his observation—he had not the least doubt, therefore, that the captain was the father of both boys—and having lately lost an only child, on whom he fondly doted, his heart was softened to pity. At the same time, he thought he saw in the captain a man of superior rank, whose ransom would prove beneficial to him. Actuated by these conspiring motives, Mustapha,

contrary to his first design, purchased all three. Thus rendered as happy as circumstances would permit, they cheerfully followed their conductor, whom they had so much reason to think well of.

On this trying and distressing occasion, the happy vivacity of Patrick, and the engaging innocence of Edmund, supported the captain's spirits. How often in the agony of his heart did he thank Heaven which had thrown Patrick in his way, for he was now the only companion he could converse with, his dear Edmund being too young to comprehend their situation; and the extreme goodness of heart the captain discovered in Patrick, which most probably, but from his present humiliating situation, he might never discovered, made him nearly as fond of him as of his own child.

Captain Netterville was not without hopes that some plan might be adopted by which their liberties could be procured; and till that happy event could be effected, he determined to bear his condition with all possible fortitude, particularly as the behaviour of Mustapha was extremely kind to him, and to the two boys both indulgent and affectionate—for Edmund, by a variety of infantine endearments, continually reminded him of his own lost son; and Patrick's happy gaiety and lively open countenance always seemed to please him.

The employment assigned them was the care of some of the most beautiful horses that the coast of Barbary could procure, as Mustapha was a most extensive dealer in them, and not only supplied all the coasts of Europe, but the East Indies also in many parts, where his horses were preferred to the Tartarian.

This task became extremely pleasing to Patrick. It was impossible, indeed, he could have had one more pleasing to him. In a short time his attachment to the horses was so great; his good management of them so conspicuous, for it had been his peculiar business to attend the horses of his father's farm; and their sagacity and knowledge of him so great, that the gratified Mustapha was highly delighted with Patrick, and treated him as well as he could wish.

Young Edmund likewise was charmed with these noble and beautiful animals, and never appeared more happy than when with Patrick in their stables; so perfectly fortunate in their master, they would have borne their captivity with great fortitude, had not captain Netterville about this time been attacked by a dangerous disorder. Mustapha, who entertained no doubt of the captain being a man of rank, and who would most probably be very advantageous to him, finding out the nature of his illness, and its alarming symptoms, took every care of him, his own interest, and I may add his humanity, prompted, for he was a good man—but in vain. In ten days after he was first taken ill, he expired in the arms of Patrick, recommending, with his latest breath, his beloved Edmund to his protection, making him promise that if ever he should be at liberty, to convey him to his grandfather, lord Seymour, in Kildare.

This Patrick, taking heaven to witness in the most solemn manner, engaged to do; and adding his most earnest assurances, that till that time arrived, he would serve him as a servant, and guard him as a father. The captain knew the heart of Patrick, and that to the utmost of his ability, he would protect his child; satisfied of this, after taking the tenderest adieu of his Edmund, and entreating the blessing of heaven on him and Patrick, he resigned his last breath in peace, and in hope.

From this hour, Patrick's attention to Mustapha and his horses was, if possible, increased; as he hoped by cultivating his favour, always to be indulged in having Edmund with him, and he continued to make it appear that he was of so much use to him, by making him do some little trifling things when Mustapha was present, that he never once thought of parting them.

About two years after the death of captain Netterville, during which little change had happened in the course of our two heroes' lives, the rajah, Ahamed Abdallah, sent a commission to Barbary for a certain number of the finest horses which could be collected.

The fame of Mustapha in this branch of commerce was soon communicated to Abdallah's messengers after their arrival; accordingly they came to him to make their purchase, and were charmed and delighted

with the beauty of his collection, for which they offered him his own price.

The bargain being concluded to the satisfaction of all parties, they observed Patrick with great attention—his method of speaking to and managing the animals, delighted and astonished them, and they expressed the greatest desire to purchase him also, to attend the horses on their passage.

Mustapha was unwilling to part with Patrick, for he was really partial to him; but his reluctance increased their inclination, and caused them to suppose he had some particular charm, and that except he was with them the horses would not be prosperous, they bid so high he could not resist the temptation, and therefore sold him to the messengers of Abdallah.

Patrick, distracted by the idea of being torn from Edmund, declared (with a violent flood of tears) that he never should have the horses under the controul he had at present, neither would they be so healthy, if his little brother was not with him, as the horses, he said, would fret after him, and would not eat, as he was accustomed to feed them; and that they never would take their food from him; as they always were so very fond of him, he should expect the horses would die, and then he should be blamed.

This scheme had the desired effect; their anxious desire for the health and preservation of the horses prevailed, and they agreed to take the young child also.

The joy and good humour of Patrick, on his success, was so great, it highly gratified his new masters; the whole of their return to India, they observed Patrick's good behaviour, and on their safe arrival at the rajah's palace, the messengers presented Patrick to him, with many encomiums on his skill and care; they likewise added how extremely unwilling his former master was to part with him, as he gave them reason to suppose there was some charm about him, which made the horses more particularly healthy than they would otherwise be.

Abdallah, charmed with the beauty of his new purchase, invested Patrick with the sole care of them. Edmund, in the character of his bother, continuing with him, about whom no farther notice was taken.

Five years had Patrick, at the time he recounted his adventures, been in the service of the rajah, during which he had obtained so great a degree of favour, that Abdallah had, in addition to many other proofs of his confidence, committed to his care his state prisoners, of whom there were several besides myself. The principal black, who had long been accustomed to this office, being lately dead.

Patrick, understanding an English officer had been long confined, was impatient to see and converse with him, in hopes, if there had been any prospect of his liberty, to commit Edmund Netterville to his care, that he might be restored to his family and honours.

This O'Brien informed me, was his principal reason for accepting this post with joy; but that it was an extremely dangerous one, as there were many jealous spies continually watching to injure those who might shew the least compassion to the wretched prisoners: he further acquainted me, he had many days brought my provision before any noise he made (for he did not dare to do much to attract my attention,) had occasioned me to look up, and he had greatly feared my senses were deranged. Happily, at last, he had succeeded in making himself observed, and had the additional pleasure to find he now conversed with a countryman, and one who could give him information respecting his family, whom it was so many years since he had heard of.

What further was to be proposed we thought proper to defer till another opportunity, as O'Brien's longer continuance with me would be attended with danger; therefore, with the usual necessary caution, he left me.

When he was gone, I reflected with great attention on what he had related to me. I was struck with admiration at his persevering fidelity to Edmund, and at the same time felt the greatest degree of pity for a youth, born to fill the station of life he was, without the least advantage from the ornaments of education and proper cultivation.

A thousand romantic schemes presented themselves to my imagination; I wished it was possible I could have him with me, and

the pleasure it would afford me to give him the few instructions my very limited means would permit, even seconded by what O'Brien could perhaps furnish, in addition. I thought this pursuit, if it could possibly be accomplished, would make my continued confinement less irksome, as it would be soothed by an amiable lad, whose mind I was endeavouring to form; in short, Edmund Netterville entirely engrossed my thoughts till I again saw Patrick, and I then found the same ideas had also occupied his mind, and that he was as anxious to communicate the little arrangements he had made to me, as I was to him.

With great difficulty he procured and kept a few books; he had also a little writing-paper, some Indian ink, and a large piece of slate. These were indeed valuable articles, and sufficient to set up our studies with; and it was agreed between us, the youth should attend him at our next meeting, and I was to pursue the best method I could adopt for his advantage.

Patrick, with the true warmth of genuine affection, assured me no boy in the world had such a capacity, and that I need be under no apprehension of discovery or interruption, as he had now the sole charge of me.

In pursuance of this plan, on his next visit he brought the young gentleman with him. I will not here expatiate on his person or amiable qualities, or even the impression they made on me. I will not forestall the very great pleasure I hope you will experience in his friendship, as he is now with me, and I shall only observe; that the cultivation of this youth's mind, and the happiness his amiable society afforded me, softened, and made supportable, a captivity which continued for eight years afterwards.

During this time, I may truly say my life was preserved by O'Brien; he continued daily to add to our comforts (for Edmund, from his first introduction to me, never left me but when it was absolutely necessary to his health); he mitigated, by the aid of a lamp, the gloom of my cell, and by his increasing favor with the rajah, he continued to ward off any additional miseries he might meditate to inflict, by artfully introducing some little anecdote concerning his horses and other things committed to his management, which diverted the ideas of Abdallah from giving any regular orders concerning his prisoners. The perfect recovery of his son, too, perhaps, tended to blunt the edge of his resentment against me; and perpetual imprisonment he judged a sufficient punishment for my crime in wounding him. In the tenth year of my being in the power of the rajah Abdallah, by some accident, the particulars of which I never was acquainted with, the palace caught fire. In the extreme confusion which ensued, Patrick thought on his prisoners, and that this was the golden opportunity which must not be neglected to obtain liberty; therefore, whilst all were providing in the best manner they could to extinguish the flames, which raged with great violence, he cautiously prepared three of the fleetest horses under his care, and concealing them in a secure place, with whatever also he could secret in preparation for flight, determined to seize the first moment that safely offered for escape.

Thus far succeeding, he returned, and exerting himself to assist in the general distress, was of infinite service, and by his means, principally, the flames were subdued, and the rajah and his family conveyed without accident to another palace he had at a small distance.

(To be continued.)

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