A NOBLE LIFE.

What is a noble life? Do! some men scheme
To gather wealth till life is but a dream
Of riches. Midas-like their touch behold,
Transmuting every grosser thing to gold!
Their clutch grows closer as their hoards increase
And only with their breath their labors cease.
They die! Their fellow men some splendid gain
From these vast treasures hope, but hope in vain!
Their memories shall be compassed in this line,
They lived, waxed rich but died, and made no sign!

What is a noble life! Lo! some men toil
To conquer fame, in many a battle broil;
Shed blood, waste treasures, deal in wounds and death:
Build sudden empires, scattered with a breath;
Or fix a despot firmer on his throne;
Or hurl one thence and mount it as their own;
Or fire men's hearts with cries of specious sound:
Till with their brother's blood they stain the ground;
And these, too, die; and after many days
The senseless marble speaks their only praise!

What is a noble life? Some men grow pale
In learning's quest. Till their strained senses fail.
They struggle with strange lore and heap amain
Marvels of wisdom in their wearied brain;
Entombing, eye, vast treasures of the mind,
The hidden meaning of all things they find,
Or seek to find as they deeper go.
Keep still a jealous guard an all they know,
Till, fallen with the weight of knowledge in the race,
They wither like the leaf and leave no trace.

Wisdom and Wealth and Fame are glorious things,
And each may grace a life to which it brings
Its treasures to be shared—not garnered self—
No life is noble with a god of self!
Who so on earth a noblo life would live
Must toil to aid, and gather still to give
Succour the weakling, soothe the rugged ways
And with wise bounty sweeten all the days
He hath with man; so, laying down his staff.
A noble life shall be his epitaph.

The Mother's Curse.---A Tale of the Banshee.

Every autumn for five or six years I had, the long vacation, visited some picturesque spot in Ireland well known to tourists. Twice I had been to Killarney, and twice I had made extensive excursions in the west, and I had filled my sketch-book with many a lovely "bit" of scenery. Those sketches formed my notebook; I kept no other. That exquisite distant peep of Devenish I had drawn the morning the party of English tourists overtook me, and among them were my dear old friend Frank Vivian, and his pretty young wife; that group of guides and the little bare-legged gipsy of a girl who danced so prettily to her brother's whistle. I had made a hasty sketch of them the day I heard from home that Helen Blake was "engaged" to some fellow, an officer, she had met at a picnic to the Daryll. Well, I wished them every happiness, but I broke the points off one or two of my pencils nevertheless. And so on through the whole book; it was strange how much of the history of a life came to be traced in its pages.

One entire vacation I devoted to the beauties of the County Wicklow; and the sixth year I determined to break ground altogether new, and to visit the north, a part of Ireland as unknown to me as if it did not form a portion of my native island. So accordingly I started, and I had "done" the Giant's Causeway, and I had seen the wild and magnificent scenery of Donegal; and having still a week to spare before the term began, I determined to spend that week in the little village of Antrim, in order that I might be able to see for myself the "round towers of other days" as I wandered upon the shores of Loch Neagh. I also wished to visit the ancient castle of the O'N—s.

Antrim is a small and rather pretty little town, about fifteen miles from Belfast. There is nothing very remarkable about it, if I except the round tower in its vicinity, which is one of the most perfect in Ireland, the wide extent of bleach-greens, and the clean, well-to-do appearance of the inhabitants. I established myself in lodgings in a neat cottage in the outskirts of the town, and every day I made excursions in the neighborhood, and added to the contents of my sketch-book.

I spent hours wandering upon the shores of the lake. Shane's Castle is built upon its margin, and I sketched the old fortress from every available point of view. There was to me something inexpressibly melancholy in the ruins of this once handsome building; and as I drew, and pondered upon the brave men, the red-handed O'N—s, its founders, I found myself prepared to believe implicitly in the many startling tales I had heard and read of the banshee, whose wild wail is heard echoing among the woods and upon the shore of the lake, and even through the dark vaults of the castle, before the death of any member of the ancient house.

A very small but not uncomfortable-looking cottage, standing in a tiny garden or paddock, close to the margin of the lake, had often attracted my attention during my rambles. Unlike the majority of Irish cabins, it was slated, and the walls were cornered with ivy and other climbing plants. I had some curiosity respecting the inmates of this little abode. The garden was not altogether neglected looking, and yet I never saw any one even passing through it; there was generally smoke from one of the chimneys, and occasionally the entrance door stood open, but man, woman, or child, I never saw.

At length, one morning, when only two days of my week remained, while passing the cottage at an earlier hour than usual, I saw an old woman sitting upon a bench outside the door. Even at a distance her appearance struck me as peculiar, and a nearer view confirmed the opinion. Her face was perfectly colorless, save for a thin streak of red marking the compressed lips, and her eyes, which, although large, seemed actually receding into her head, were of the most brilliant and vivid black; their remarkable expression was increased too by thickly-defined eyebrows, also of jetty blackness, while her hair was as white as snow. She may have seen me, but I am not sure that she did; for, although her keen eyes occasionally flashing hither and thither, apparently took in every feature of the scene before her, I fancied, I know not why, that, absorbed in her own thoughts, she was in reality unconscious of what she gazed at. I went close by the little garden paling, not three yards from where she sat, and bade her "good-morning." She only shook her head in reply, and I passed on.

I spent the greater part of the day going over the castle for the last time, and for the first time under the guidance of an old dame, who had grown old, she told me, in the service of the O'N—s. She was brimful of legends connected with the family. From her I heard how, during the fire which had destroyed the castle in 1816, a ghostly lady, clad in white satin, and a knight in armor, had appeared in several windows in succession, with the flames leaping round them, and how for a week before the fire the banshee had been heard shrieking round the walls, the sure forerunner of calamity; and then followed such marvellous tales of this, the wildest and most weird of Irish superstitions (the old crone assured me that upon six different occasions she had, "with her own eyes," seen the spirit), that my blood fairly curdled in my veins, and if hair ever stood upon end on any one mine did that day.

We may ridicule as we like ghost-stories and legends of the banshee, but such mysterious tales have more or less effect upon us. I honestly confess they had upon me; and the same evening, when I had finished my solitary dinner, and when the rays of the beautiful moon, then at the full, began to throw a cold, silvery light into my little chamber, illuminating brightly enough a narrow path across the carpet, but deepening the shadows in every corner, I felt that to sit on there would be unbearable; so I went out with the intention of smoking a cigar as I strolled up and down outside; but unconsciously the quiet beauty of the scene lured me on, and ere long I found myself upon my favorite path close to the cottage of the strange old woman.

So half an hour might have passed. I took no note of time; I was standing perfectly entranced with the tranquil loveliness around. The waters of the lake were shimmering in the full flood of moonlight, and across them at intervals passed the ripple of a faint breeze; I watched the tiny curls caused by the gentle wind upon the moonlit water, watched them die away, and saw the sombre shadow of the castle appear again in the calm depths; not a moonbeam touched touched the walls themselves; so dark were they that I could scarcely discern their outline. I tried to picture to myself how it must have looked during the fire; and then the ghostly tales I had been listening to came back, giving me an inclination to shiver and feel cold. I tried to tear myself away, but the strange fascination of the scene was too great for me. Just as I was watching another light breeze play over the water, and as I began to repeat half aloud Moore's beautiful lines, beginning

"How oft has the banshee cried
How oft has Death united
Bright links that were
Sweet bonds entwined by love!"—

suddenly, and, as it seemed, from under the castle walls, I heard a sound like the low sighing of wind through the trees, but there was in it also the mournful tone of a human voice. Never had a cry so unearthly, and yet so full of the depths of humanity's despair, fallen upon my ears. I felt the beating of my heart quicken, and it seemed as if I had been suddenly plunged into a vapor-bath. The wailing cry died out, only to be heard again, as I fancied, closer to me than before; then, for what seemed a long interval, there was perfect silence, broken, at length, by the cry again, beginning low, and rising to a perfect shriek of agony. I heard it, and at the same moment a white figure flitted out of the dark shadow of the castle, and, gliding swiftly along the water's edge, crying as it went, disappeared, as I thought, into the lake.

With my teeth fairly chattering now—for of course I had not only heard, but seen, the banshee of the O'N—s—I turned, and was making my way rapidly back to my lodgings, when, in my hurry, I almost stumbled against a dark figure which was coming toward me.

"I beg your pardon," I stammered.

"I should beg yours," was replied, and I recognized the voice of Father ——, the old priest of the parish, with whom I had formed what is called a "bowing acquaintance" during the few days of my stay.

"A lovely night, is it not?" he said. "You were tempted out, I suppose, as I was. I wish we had met sooner."

"I wish we had," I replied heartily; and then, unable to restrain myself, I added, "May I ask if you heard or saw anything unusual just before I came up?"

"No," he said, "nothing unusual. Have you?"

"You will laugh, perhaps," I replied, "but I suppose—I am almost sure—it was nothing human; a wild cry—a white figure"

"Ah," he interrupted, "I forgot you were a stranger here. Poor thing! is she then out to-night? But I might have known; we seldom hear her unless the moon is full. I am not surprised," he added, seeing that I expected an explanation, "that you fancied you had heard the banshee in what may be called her legitimate home, but I can assure you that the voice you heard, and the form you saw, were both human. Would you like to hear the story? It is not long, and we may take a stroll as I tell it.

"I am sure," he began, "that you have noticed that small ivy-covered cottage upon the shore," and he pointed to the slated cabin I have already described; and you may perhaps have seen its solitary inmate. Her name is O'N—, Mrs. O'N— she calls herself, and will have others call her; but I fear no legal tie of marriage ever bound her to the gallant soldier, long since dead, whom she calls husband. But let that be as it may, she came to live in that cottage when she was still a very young woman, and a remarkably handsome woman too, with one child, a splendid boy just able to run alone, and a girl of about four, the orphan daughter of her only brother. There was no perceptible difference in her affection for the two children, and yet I sometimes fancied she loved the little girl Mona better than her own handsome boy. He was, without doubt, a splendid creature, clever, high-spirited and daring. When old enough he used to come to the parish school with his little cousin; and it was beautiful and touching to see the tender and almost protecting love of the gentle girl for the great lad who, although her junior by two years, had far outstripped her in height and in all mental attainments.

(Conclusion in our next.)

Summer Drinks.

A lady gives the Germantown *Telegraph* these: To make root beer, take a quantity of sarsaparilla roots, sassairas bark and some hops, and boil till the strength is extracted. To three gallons of the liquor, after it is strained, add one quart of molasses and a cup of yeast. After standing in a warm place eight or ten hours strain again and bottle.

For ginger beer, take one pint of molasses and two spoonfuls of ginger, put into a pail to be half filled with boiling water; when well stirred together fill the pail with cold water, leaving room for one pint of yeast, which must not be put in till lukewarm. Place it on the warm hearth for the night and bottle it in the morning.

For spruce beer, take three pounds of sugar, four gallons of water, one ounce of ginger, a little lemon peel or essence of lemon, and a little essence of spruce to give it a flavor. Stir altogether, warm it a little and add a cupful of good yeast. When fermented bottle up close.

Mead is made by by dissolving one part of honey in three of boiling water, flavoring it with spices and adding a portion of ground malt and a piece of toast steeped in yeast, and allowing the whole to ferment.

The Catholic Centennial Fountain, in Fairmount Park, was formally transferred to the City of Philadelphia on the 4th of July, in trust for the free use of the American people. Governor John Lee Carroll, of Maryland, and Governor John F. Hartranft, of Pennsylvania, delivered addresses upon the occasion. The fountain is adorned with colossal marble statues of Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, Rev. John Carroll, Commodore Barry, Father Mathew, and Moses.

Why are all chess games of equal duration? Because it always takes four knights to play a game.

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