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Now every death must be without a ding,  
 (And who will chuse to die without a ditty ;)   
 And every marriage be without a ring,  
 Except in *circles* under-nice or witty :  
 I can't now lend my *tongue*, perhaps 'tis well,  
 At Hymen's bidding, to each comrade *belle* !

Of all our vict'ries, in the wars to come,  
 In ev'ry battle, (for we'll beat the French ;)   
 Yon stupid town will scarcely hear a hum,  
 Fame's spokesman leaving in a miry trench ;  
 Tho' *crack'd* and crazy, I have *mettle* still,  
 And burst with anger at such treatment ill.

O cruel fate ! it was a *heavy* stroke  
 Of chance, that brought me to the soft cold clay :  
 I'm hoarse, half-speechless, and, I mean no joke,  
 I'd *hang* myself, but that my *ropé's* away ;  
 It did not *end* well, one end rotted soon,  
 Denying Ding-Dong-Dell, a last sad boon !

H. Y.

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 IRISH CLASSICS—REVIEW BY A MIDDLE TEMPLE MAN.

Irish Literature !—what a spell is in the words ! And what do such Goths and Vandals as the members of the Education Society, Kildare-place, deserve, who would abolish the standard classics of our land—rich in the heroic remembrances of bog-trotting assassins, or the more sentimental recollections of the divine Moll Flanders ?—who would strip our Holy Wells of their long and splendid accumulations of recorded sanctity ? or suppress our patrons, bright with the record of many a broken head and priestly miracle ? High-souled testimonies of chivalry, love, and religion, that leave the “pugnacity” of O’Gorman Mahon, and the superstition of more ignorant men, and more uncivilized countries, immeasurably behind you, hail ! What do they deserve, we ask, who would degrade the enterprising spirits of Irishmen from the nightly sally, elevated by a sense of danger and the prospect of a gibbet into the very sublimity of midnight murder, to the common-place conduct of peaceable and industrious slaves, who, instead of feeling for the oppression of their country, instead of getting drunk, huzzaing, or carrying a torch or a pistol for the benefit of her enemies, become base enough to work as men determined to wear good coats, to have comfortable sustenance, and to keep themselves and their families safe and independent, respectable and respected ? What a barbarous hand that must be, which would thus tear out of their affections, all that time, and habit, and national prejudice, have consecrated and rendered dear to the unsophisticated hearts of our high-spirited people.

The old Irish classics ! Well, here are a dozen of them, all unchanged by time, unestranged by absence ; though, like ourselves, somewhat the worse for the wear. What a host of recollections does even the sight of them awaken in an imagination so brisk and vivid as ours ! Truly we are boys once more, though we cannot but remember that fifty-six long years have silvered our temples, and stiffened our limbs with a sense of growing rigidity, no doubt rather mortifying, though still leaving us a relish for the days of boyhood, which only increases in proportion as we get a better knowledge of that compound of villany, wickedness, knavery, and malignity, called the world. Gorgeous and

unreal pageant! art thou a dream from which we shall awaken into our real state? Alas! we have been taught too well of what stuff thou art made; and surely it is cheering, though somewhat humbling, to reflect, that our principal enjoyment rests beyond the bounds we passed when entering upon thee. We live the life of man only *once*, but how often do the miseries and disappointments of mature life send us back to tread the circle of boyhood again! Happiness and pleasure, in what do ye consist? Always either before or behind, but never *with* us. Locke, thy observation was a good one; this life is not our appointed place, and wo be to him who should be doomed to remain in it for a thousand years! he would feel the bitterness of satiety like poison in his veins, and exclaim with Solomon——Tut—Redmond O’Hanlon, my worthy old acquaintance, we are right glad to see you and your Rapparees once more!—we were beginning to moralize, gentle reader, and like most moralists, felt a complacent but somewhat dullish consciousness of our own wisdom settling upon our brain—so to drive off wisdom and care, we once more say, “how dost, our honest Redmond?” It is now some forty years since we spent many a pleasant evening with thee and thy conferees, the celebrated Cahir na Cappul, introduced by Mr. Banim into his novel of the Boyne Water, and Manus M’Oniel, or, we presume, M’Connell the gold-finder, and his man Andrew, introduced by Mr. Griffith into his story of Suil-Duiv or the Coiner. A worthy set you were, and a witty; fertile in expedients, devoted heart and hand to your profession, and remarkable withal for strong touches of generous feeling, amid all your crimes, even like the worst of your countrymen to the present day.

The old Irish classics—ye jewels of antiquity! Let us turn you over again, ye quondam treasures of our juvenile library—Irish Rogues and Rapparees! and what comes next?—The Battle of Aughrim! Ay, well do we remember to have seen you enacted in a corn-kiln, by Orangemen on the one side, and Catholics on the other—old Tom Moorehead, the single-eyed bard and ballad-singer, being manager. But what could be expected but that heads should be broken, and they were broken accordingly. General Ginkle, who was more than half drunk, got a black eye, followed by a dozen kicks and thumps that soon sobered him, and St. Ruth had the bridge of his nose mastered and broken down; whilst the ghost, who was the best in pluck, and the greatest hero in either camp, proved himself to be *all soul* upon the occasion. Perhaps we may relate the story some day when we find ourselves in the vein. What comes again? Parismus and Parismenos—good. Montelion, Knight of the Oracle—excellent. The life and adventures of Captain James Freney, dedicated to the Rt. Hon. Somerset Butler, Earl of Carrick—hair-breadth ’scapes, and daring feats, indeed! This and the Irish Rogues, we may just remark by the way, are, to the man of letters and the man of sense, particularly valuable, as affording correct exhibitions of the state of society in Ireland during their day.

But what next?—Ay—“The Garland of Love, and Royal Flower of Fidelity, a pleasant history. Written originally by Mr. John Reynolds, author of ‘God’s Revenge against Murder.’ Now much amplified by several hands. The twentieth edition, with amendments and alterations. Belfast, Printed by J. Smyth, 34, High-street. 1829.”

Belfast!—Athens of Ireland! thou shalt be henceforth a classical spot. The rescuing of this transcendant work will immortalize thee. Of a truth thou makest good newspapers, the best in the kingdom; but

the Royal Flower of Fidelity shall become, like Mr. Hunt's metaphor, a crown of "evergreens" upon thy sapient brows; and J. Smith shall also be gifted with a very handsome share of immortality. Alas, for poor Sir Walter! How he will hide his diminished head for the first two or three days after this review—for we will review the book, and all and every of the same said classics—they are worthy of review; how he will droop, and pine, and "greet," on the first week after its publication, and how all Europe will shake to the centre, when the verdict of "found in his own study suspended by a cobweb," shall be published to the world by the fiscal—we say, by a cobweb, for the finest that ever was spun from the bowels of a spider, will suffice to hang him, when he finds the crown of romance transferred from his own brows to those of the deathless Mr. John Reynolds.

*Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii  
Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade.  
Ye English, Scotch, and Irish writers,  
Novel, romance, and poem inditers,  
Give way, disperse—both great and small,  
Here comes a man who "dings" ye all!!*

But the reader is too long on the tip-toe of expectation, therefore we proceed at once to the work. And first, as to the style, we have only to give a slight extract from the preface, to afford a fair specimen of its beauty and brilliancy.

"All men are subjects to the God of Love, therefore no marvel if powerful amours so seize the hearts of princes, that they build their external felicity upon the embraces of their sacred admirers, and lay their foundation of hope and happiness in being enrolled a servant in their saint-like memories. Juvenile fancies very often shoot at rovers; yet being once in the field of Love, vanquished by the prospect of some excellent beauty, they so render themselves captive to the Circe's enchantment of partial complexions, that they will not only engage their constancy for the obtaining of the heart's desire but also lay their lives at stake, and their fidelities, for the establishing of their breast's satisfaction, as the sequel of this history will make manifest."

Now of all descriptions of style, and in the present age there is a plentiful variety of them, from the turgid of the sublime Noctes Ambrosianæ, the Antithetical of Tom Bab. Macauley, the witty slang of Dr. Maginn, the supernatural of Mrs. S. the antiquated of Leigh Hunt, the radical reform of Cobbett, the glass-bead style of Tom Moore, the swaggering style of Dan O'Connell, the rhapsodial of Richard Shiel, and the pie-bald of Lady Morgan—we say of all these, and of fifteen times as many, commend us for pure romance to that decried, persecuted, and much suffering style, the bombastic. Gentlemen with half-fledged judgments, scrambling through books like ducks too heavy behind either to run and fly, and consequently compelled to use both feet and wings, with a clatter proportioned to their heaviness and want of energy, stirring the puddle and spreading the odour of sweetness around them; boarding-school ladies, whose delicate tastes are drawn out to the most refined tenuity of the sickly and the sentimental; mercantile men, with a relish for the short and pithy; scholars enamoured of the recondite and obscure; lawyers touched by the beauty of the long-winded and equivocal—all, forsooth, may very easily throw a harsh word at your only true sublime, the bombastic. But in no other is the depth of philosophy so unplummetable, so beautifully dark, or so amazingly elevated. Then the great rule of leaving something to be found out by the understanding of the reader is so closely observed, that it may be

truly and hibernically predicated of it, that the portion of the subject which the reader sees most clearly is that which is completely out of sight.

But now for the work itself, to which what has been said of Homer might with far greater truth be applied—that if all other books, and all other kinds of knowledge were lost, yet in it sufficient would remain to set human philosophy on its legs once more. It is in truth founded upon the best kind of knowledge—that is to say, the knowledge of Irish human nature. We say Irish human nature, for although the author has laid the scene sometimes in Africa, sometimes in Asia Minor, and sometimes in Crim Tartary; yet by a species of instinct which we possess, in the face of the whole reading public we undertake to prove that the epic *ab ove usque ad mala*, is an Irish allegory; that Plivio and Thalmeno were two gallant Hibernians from Cunnemara, engaged in the pleasant pastime of wife-hunting; that they were each six feet high—had a pair of shoulders unusually broad—a large stock of assurance, and a case or two of duelling pistols, the proper equipments for a matrimonial crusade. Nothing more nor less were they than a brace of real Hibernians from “the first flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea,” whom it would be a matter of some peril for a rival suitor to catch or jostle against, in addressing any lady on whom they had previously speculated. Indeed this is evident, for how could they have risen to such distinction in a foreign court as to be appointed guardians, each to a lady of the highest quality, had it not been well known that “a friend and message” were at the service of any gentleman who might be disposed to stand in their way?

Each gains an appointment in a certain king's palace; and no sooner is this effected, than with the greatest possible ardour he commences his suit; Thalmeno laying vigorous siege to Athelia, a simple, unsuspecting damsel; and Plivio, without a moment's delay, grappling with the tender heart of Mersilva. This double amour is the most able and profound delineation of tender and *disinterested* love, as exhibited in a pair of pugnaceous Milesians, that ever was drawn by a human hand. The unflinching energy with which they continue the suit; the agreeable absence of all diffidence, when repulsed, and the fresh stock of genuine assurance, which each brings to every subsequent attack, all mark the modesty of Milesian pretensions. In several of the episodes the author pours forth the full tide of his stupendous powers—figure on figure, and metaphor on metaphor. We could not and we would not for the soul of us, attempt by any unpardonable liberty, to destroy its perfection by a partial quotation; and to give it all, would scarcely be safe for those who are gluttonous of the sentimental or sublime; besides which we should probably have many a death to answer for in the present times. It must be sufficient to say, that the dialogue in the love scenes, is as remarkable for delicacy and beauty, as for strength and elevation; the two first shadowing out the qualities of the ladies—the two last those of their suitors. In originality it stands alone, disdaining either to imitate or be imitated. The billet-doux, particularly those written by the gallant gentlemen, are jewels every one of them, and should be copied out for the use of the college library, if it were only to teach those unpractised worthies, the Fellows, how to make love by inditing, should they ever become so speculative in that affair. They could, henceforth, have them ready made, a circumstance which would save much precious time and serious study,

not to mention the protection it would afford to his majesty's persecuted English in Ireland.

Nothing, indeed, can be more admirably managed than the conduct of Thalmeno, in his intention of disinterested matrimony with Athelia : nor does the progress of Plivio's passion for the fair prisoner Mersilva, yield to it in the delicacy and truth with which the ardour of Hibernian passion is gradually developed. The interest deepens from the first day on which the worthies are introduced, which is also the first of their operations, until the happy one on which Thalmeno has the long expected privilege of fighting a challenge on behalf of Athelia, and the other of pinking a certain courtier, who insulted Mersilva. These two incidents, and a perfect knowledge of Irish character, are with great ingenuity, contrived to produce a double *denouement*, by which the lovers are each gratified with the confession of his mistress's love.

In the course of their travels our heroes reach Sicilia, and truly the splendour of their reception, the magnificence by which their happy return is celebrated, and the tournaments, tiltings, lance-breakings, and unhorsings, thereunto belonging, are given with an epic skill, which would make the author of *Ivanhoe* blush to the nape of the neck. Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* is barren ground compared to it : and so, in fact, is the production of any author of that celebrated school of the true bombastic.

On the whole, the *Garland of Love* is a romance which, in the name of the learned profession in Ireland, we hesitate not to recommend as one which, independently of its own intrinsic merits, possesses a strong claim upon their gratitude. It is, in fact, the class-book from which some of our most popular orators of the Bar, the Senate, and the Pulpit, have stored their minds with language, metaphor, and imagery. Charles Philips has, in the most barefaced manner, transferred whole pages of it to his speeches—a fact which, though not known, occasions them to be read with most unfeigned astonishment. It is not generally understood, that Mr. Shiel has committed the best portions of it to memory, and that whenever he found his brain run out of common sense in the Catholic Association, he filled up the chasm which was wanting with those splendid effusions for which he there received such thunders of applause. Most of our young orators, in fact, study it attentively, particularly those who, in the Shooting-gallery, College-green, are preparing themselves for a return of the Parliament to Dublin. O'Gorman Mahon had it in his pocket on the evening in which he challenged the whole House of Commons ; and what was a remarkable coincidence, the page containing Thalmeno's challenge to his antagonist was dog-eared : and sooth to say, the challenge in the book is, perhaps, as fine a model for an heroic bog-trotter as could be found in the intellectual records of duelling.

But we find we have been jesting, perhaps too long, with a subject which would require from us a graver and much more serious notice. The little work to which we have alluded is one of those which for so many years formed the class-books of the hedge-schools of Ireland, and which have been only very recently driven from their long-occupied stations, by being brought before the public eye by individuals really interested for the well-being of the peasantry of the country. Nor was it without considerable opposition that the people could be induced to give them up. *Moll Flanders*, *Redmond O'Hanlon*, the *Irish Rogues* and *Rapparees*, *Freny the Robber*, the work before us, and such like, possessed many attractions for the youth of Ireland : they were well

calculated to win upon the warm temperament of their minds—they recounted strange and wonderful stories of love and murder—heroic enterprises, combined with successful attainment of the object sought for—not forgetting a holy reverence and respect for accustomed and religious ceremony. And yet works more calculated to vitiate the minds, and destroy the morals of the people, could not well be conceived or executed. In proof of our assertion, we had intended to have given a few extracts from the little work before us; but we found the passages marked so very bad, that in point of truth we did not consider ourselves justified in quoting them—it may be sufficient to say, that they are full of indecent allusions, lascivious ideas, and glowing descriptions of improper actions; and there can be little doubt, that to the influence of such publications might be traced not a few of those hardy and desperate adventures of abduction and factious rivalry, which have so frequently taken place in various districts of the country, as well as many of those midnight burnings and murders which throw so dark a blot over the history of the people. And yet these are the books which the priests of Ireland retained so long in their school-rooms; and which, judging by the violent opposition they give to the present system, in which books of another description are used, and in which a portion of the Bible is required to be read during some part of the day, we might almost suppose they were still anxious to retain. While Freney and his confreres were the only school-books in use, all was quietness and peace; but the moment a change was endeavoured to be made, and that *Moll Flanders* and the *Garland of Love* were to be transplanted by useful and entertaining works, then arose the outcry of an attempt to proselytize; and we were told that such a system could not be allowed, and to the present moment we find the most determined opposition given to every exertion made by the true friends of the cause to raise the peasantry from their present degraded and abject condition.

Unhappy Ireland! ever thine own enemy, or rather ever doomed to find thine own children the principal authors of thy misery and degradation. In the days of Freney and the elder Rapparees, neither life nor property could be secure, when an organized system of robbers and thieves was established over the country, with such confidence and regularity, that many parents hesitated not to apprentice their children, with payment of a fee, to such miscreants, who, in return, initiated them in all the secrets and mysteries of their infamous craft. These are now no more; but although the government of the country has done every thing in its power to secure life and property, who will say that the moral sense of the Irish people has kept pace with the diffusion of knowledge, the improvements of the arts and sciences, and the tone of general civilization in the surrounding islands? No, no. Proper education has not yet reached the peasantry of Ireland, or only in a very slight degree. It is true, the class of books which filled their schools, and those we have just enumerated formed a prominent portion of them, has been removed: but the bitter and dark spirit of religious bigotry is still nourished, and the influence of such publications joined to this, is yet alive in the descendants of those who read them. The past state of Ireland indeed forms a dark and cheerless retrospect, while over the present and the future a dense and heavy cloud impends.

There can be no doubt that the Irish Protestant clergy are not now the sportsmen and the good fellows of former days; they are at the present moment, generally speaking, devoted to the education and moral improvement of the people, and to the zealous and becoming dis-

charge of their pastoral duties; and their efforts are well seconded by the orthodox Dissenters of every denomination. Unhappily, however, their exertions have only aroused the Catholic priesthood to a series of counter exertion, not so much proceeding from a wish to see the people educated, as to neutralize the efforts of the others, and to pre-occupy the minds of their youth with the rigorous dogmas of their own church—dogmas which are implanted with a bigotry proportioned to the apprehensions of the liberalizing effects of an enlightened and purely moral education, founded upon general Christian truth, unmodified by any peculiarity of doctrine. Perhaps, too, the bitterness of the opposition given by the priesthood to education societies, and principally to the best and least objectionable of them—the Kildare-place Society—is founded not only on the narrow principles engendered by an exclusive and excluding creed, but on the fact, that the people are beginning, despite of every manifestation of ecclesiastical tyranny, to relish education even from sources uncharitably and unfairly branded with the character of dishonesty, and an insidious wish to proselytize them; and we much fear, that despite of “the march of intellect,” the Romish priesthood will continue to defend “their peaceable predilections,” “their happy ignorance,” and “their wholesome prejudices,” while they can hold a pen or write a petition, whilst they can jingle a bell, or extinguish a candle, or maintain that basis upon which their power is founded. Nor will the Irish Rogues and Rapparees, Freney the Robber, Redmond O’Hanlon, Moll Flanders, not forgetting the Catechism of Irish History, attributed, we believe justly to that *loyal* prelate Dr. E——d, nor any one of the standard classics of the country, be given up without a noble struggle, as being connected with the historical greatness of a nation. Mr. Lawless and my Lord Cloncurry will make their perennial speeches in their defence, while learned Daniel will present the sacerdotal petition in behalf of his predecessor, *brave* Redmond O’Hanlon, between whom and the *honest* gentleman himself the only difference appears to be, that O’Hanlon’s tribute was, in many cases, not quite voluntary, whereas that of his successor is more generally so; Redmond took from the rich and gave to the poor—Dan takes from both poor and rich, and keeps what he gets.

If the government be wise it will support the Kildare-place Society; it has done much good to the country, though the opposition which education has received from its enemies may have produced unhappy effects, by sharpening the bigotry of the people. We have no Freneys now, it is true, none of the O’Hanlon breed, but we have worse; for assuredly the evil influence produced by Mr. O’Connell and his satellites upon the morals of our susceptible countrymen, is a thousand times more dangerous than any which the Gil-Blas mendicant, unfortunate O’Hanlon, could produce. If purses are not taken, throats are cut, property destroyed, and the tenure of life rendered precarious and uncertain. **LET GOVERNMENT, THEN, MAKE EDUCATION A NATIONAL WORK**—let it become in their hands the great engine of moral good to the people—let them do this, and the real friends of Ireland may rest satisfied, its influence must prevail—it must eventually triumph. Knowledge is abroad; and neither the ban of the bigotted priest, nor the torch or pike of the assassin can check its progress.