

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"GLENMORNAN."*

Anything from the pen of Patrick Magill will be eagerly sought after by those who have learned to appreciate his power of setting forth both humour and pathos. And nothing could be more adaptable to his style than Irish peasant life. In "Glenmornan" we have a real treat, so easily and naturally does the narrative flow that one's imagination transports one without an effort to the everyday life of the simple Irish folk, on which he has thrown the limelight.

Justice cannot be done to this volume in a few extracts, for it has a charm which cannot be caught or explained any more than one can imprison a sunbeam and put it under the microscope. But the atmosphere of the book as a whole gives a sense of refreshment and pleasure that no one ought to miss.

Maura the Rosses maiden name was Sweeney. Her marriage name was Gallagher. She met Connel Gallagher one All Hallow's Eve, when she was out to find her future husband in some mystic rite round a haystack. When she opened her eyes they rested on Connel, and in due course she married him and bore him children. He died from a very short sickness.

"The doctor's no good this tide," said Connel, "the priest is enough."

Father McGee was very fond of fishing, and had no equal in the barony for casting a fly.

"Me father has taken to his bed," said Eamon, when he met the priest leaving home with a fishing rod over his shoulder.

"God keep him!" said Father McGee; "and it's such a day for the fishing, too. You take this rod and don't keep foolin' about with hooks, and I'll go and see your father, good man that he is."

Maura the Rosses, a widow of forty-two and the mother of a boy of twenty-three, was a woman loved by her neighbours. To her children she was a very wise woman, knowing everything. What stories she could tell!

Sitting by the turf fire at night she told tales of Fin McCool, Durdree of the Sorrows, the Red Headed Man, and Kitty the Ashy Pet. Maura spoke of these people as if she had known them personally, and one had to believe her, because her words were so simple and full of conviction.

Doalty, the eldest boy, had gone to London. He was clever, and was on the staff of a newspaper, and had associated with educated people; but he told Lady Ronan, who petted him a good deal—

"I'm going home; I'm tired of London. That's all."

Maura the Rosses got a letter from Doalty. She was standing out by the hedge when she received it. Then she called to Norah, to Teague, and to little Hughie.

"Go down to Greenamore," she said to Norah. "Get a poke iv flour, a bag iv meal, a stone iv currants and raisins, a side iv bacon, and a bottle iv whiskey."

She said to Teague:—

"Get the floor scrubbed clean, whitewash the house, and pull that grass off that's growin' on the thatch."

"And you, Hughie," she said, "don't go about dirtyin' your bits of rags, for ye'll need them all next week, when Doalty's comin' home here to his own people."

Doalty's return is full of charm. The call of his native land was strong and insistent, and never for one instant did he regret that he had once more thrown in his lot with his own people.

"The smell of the midden, the turf fire, and the rich grass was in his nostrils, and all this woke pleasant remembrance in the young man. He bent his lips to the ground, kissed it, and looked round to see if anyone had observed him."

"Just as it used to be," he said. "Just the same as I mind it."

A girl could be heard shouting in a shrill clear voice—

"Come home with ye now, ye silly crathur. Have sense and get on with ye, ye wee divil ye. Do ye not want to be milked the night?"

Oiney Leahy, the old man who had a fondness for whisky at night and was ashamed of it in the morning excused himself to Doalty.

"I was bad with the corns last night," he said shaking his head.

"Yes, you were, Oiney," Doalty assented.

"I never had them so bad."

"May be your boots were too tight."

"That was it," said Oiney, a smile of relief showing on his face; "far too tight across the uppers they were."

The death of Breed Dermot, an old enemy of Maura the Rosses, but whom, nevertheless, she nursed with devotion at her end, was the occasion of a great wake, which is described with realism and forms a chapter of great interest.

Doalty's unorthodoxy was a source of secret disquiet to his mother, and it was whispered in the glen that he was "Prodestan."

His contempt for the old rogue of a priest was shown in such a manner as caused him to be "read from the altar," and everyone who knows anything about the power of the priests over the Irish peasants will understand why Doalty had once more to turn his back on the Ireland that he loved.

Our advice is to obtain the book, and we can vouch that those who do will not be disappointed with their venture. But we would draw the attention of the reader to the point that the writer would drive home—"The English don't understand the Irish, and never will."

H. H.

* By Patrick Magill. London: Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.

There is all the difference in the world between the desire to do high things, and the determination to do the next thing in a high spirit.

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