A Black Hole of a Garden. "With and With"

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DESTRUCTION OF DA DERGA'S HOSTEL.

(Continued).

After this MacCecht next followed the routed foe. 'Tis this that some books relate, that but a very few fell around Conaire, namely, nine only. And hardly a fugitive escaped to tell the tidings to the champions who had been at his house. Where there had been five thousand—and in every thousand ten hundred—only one set of five escaped, namely, Ingeel and his two brothers, Echell and Tulchinne, the "yearling of the Reavers"—three great grandsons of Cormac, and the two Pearls of Rocree, who had been the first to wound Conaire. Thereafter, Ingeel went into Albu, and received the kingship after his father, since he had taken home triumph over a king of another country. This, however, is the recension in other books, and it is more probably truer. Of the folk of the Hostel forty or fifty fell, and of the Reavers three-fourths, and one-third of them only escaped from the destruction. Now, when MacCecht was lying wounded on the battle field, at the end of the third day, he saw a woman passing by.

"Come hither, O woman," says MacCecht.

"I dare not go thus," says the woman, "for horror and fear of thee."

"There was a time when I had this, O woman, even horror and fear of me on some one. But now thou shouldst fear nothing. I accept thee on the truth of my honour and my safeguard."

Then the woman goes to him.

"I know not," says he, "whether it is a fly, or a gnat, or an ant that nips me in the wound."

It happened that it was a hairy wolf, and she dragged it out of the wound, and it takes the full of its jaws out of him.

"Truly," says the woman, "this is an ant of ancient land."

Says MacCecht, "I swear to God what my people swears, I deemed it no bigger than a fly, or a gnat, or an ant."

And MacCecht took the wolf by the throat, and struck it a blow on the forehead, and killed it with a blow. Then Le fri Flaith, son of Conaire, died under MacCecht's armpit, for the warrior's heat and sweat had dissolved him. Thereafter, MacCecht, having cleansed the slaughter, at the end of the third day set forth, and he dragged Conaire with him on his back, and buried him in Tara, as some say. Then MacCecht departed into Connaught, to his own country, that he might work his cure in MacBrengair. Wherefore the name came to the plain from MacCecht's misery, that is, MacBren-guir. Now, Conall Cernach escaped from the Hostel, and thrice fifty spears had gone through his arm which up-held his shield. He fared forth till he reached his father's house, with half of his two spears. Then he found his father before his garb in Faltin.

"Swift are the wolves that have hunted thee, my son," saith his father.

"'Tis this that has wounded us, thou old hero; an evil conflict with warriors," Conall Cernach replied.

"Hast thou news of Da Darga's Hostel," asked the father. "Is thy lord alive?"

"He is not alive," says Conall.

"I swear to God what the great tribes of Ulaid swear, it is cowardly for the man who went thereout alive, having left his lord with his foes in death."

"My wounds are not white, thou old hero," says Conall.

He shows him his shield-arm, whereon were thrice fifty wounds. This is what was inflicted upon it. The shield that guarded it is what saved it. But the right arm had been played upon, as far as two thirds thereof, since the shield had not been guarding it. That arm was mangled and maimed, and wounded and pierced, save that the sinews kept to the body without separation.

"That arm fought to-night, my son," says Amorgein.

"True is that, thou old hero," says Conall Cernach. "Many there are unto whom it gave drinks of death to-night in front of the Hostel."

Now, as to the Reavers, every one of them that escaped

from the Hostel went to the cairn which they had built on the night before last, and they brought thereout a stone for each man not mortally wounded. So this is what they lost by deaths at the Hostel, a man for every stone that is now in Carn Lecca. It endedth, amen; it endedth.

THE END.

A BLACK HOLE OF A GARDEN.

"WITH AND WITH."

WE of the South country, at least of Co. Limerick, have this quaint expression to describe our ordinary way of getting through life and doing business. It's a very easy-going way, the opposite of "greased lightning." Its "a bit, and a bit, and a bittock," just putting a hand's turn there, and getting along "with and with," as time and energy can be found. In a general way it's by no means a commendable style of business, but it is rather the ideal of the flower gardener who has not an extra long purse, many assistants, or much time. "With and with" and an eye to turning "every whole thing" to use, and then gardening need not cost much, for we can beg, borrow, and steal cuttings. Seeds cost little, and time is of no consequence to the amateur, if he frames his mind to the primeval condition of the Paradise that each garden should be to its owner.

Now suppose we have our black hole of a yard, and we go to work "with and with," trying to make use of every foot of ground, every wall, and every bit of rubbish.

First, we must trench the whole soil as deep as we find soil, and it is done this way. Begin at the foot of the garden, remove the whole soil two feet deep and same breadth, and "barr" (carry in a wheel-barrow) it up to top of garden and leave it there in a heap. If there are large stones, corks, or other hard rubbish, separate and lay aside. If you have manure (or even refuse after sifting out your cinders), lay it at the bottom of trench, then turn over it the earth from the second trench, which should be same width and depth as first. When you have in this manner gone up the whole garden, you fill the last trench with the soil you "barred" up from the bottom. Your land is now tilled; you have an under spit of manure and a soft top. You have your stones put in one heap, your refuse bits put in another. I would now buy two cart loads of sea sand, shred it over the whole surface and dig it in. If it were possible I would also buy two cart-loads of turf dust from the turf heaps on the quays, spread and dig it in. This will represent two cart loads stable manure, two cart loads sea sand, two cart loads turf dust, and would probably cost from one pound to thirty shillings. Labour about the same. We can do without these things, if necessary, but they will mean a great help; thorough tillage of the whole ground at first will save a world of after work.

This being done, I should dig out a large hole at the bottom of the garden, put the earth on one side or round it, and collect in the hole, kitchen rubbish and ash from which cinders have been removed. (N.B.—This heap will do for growing vegetable marrows, cucumbers, or tomatoes, with a very little added manure and earth). Some of the earth can be thrown down from time to time to deodorize and make the pit wholesome.

This is a very uninteresting letter, but I observe very many beginners simply do not know any thing of the first principles of success, and I think it, therefore, best to begin with the alphabet.

C. G. O'BRIEN.

Uninteresting! dear Miss O'Brien. Not a bit of it.—S. O'G.

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