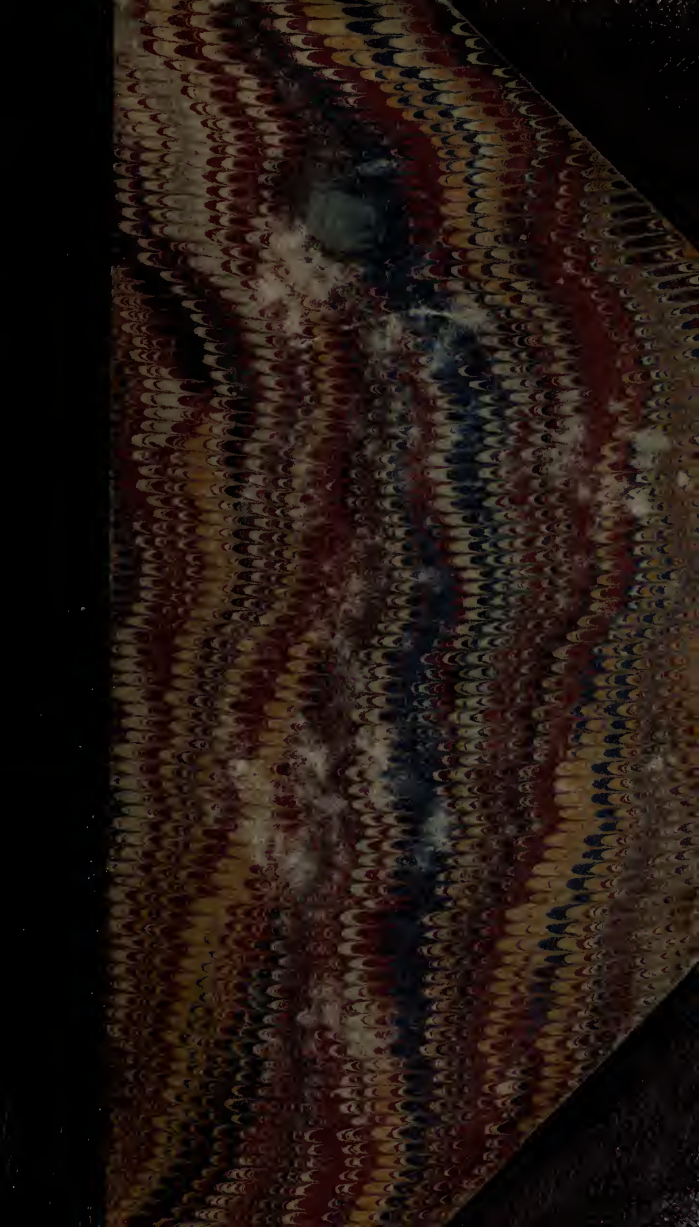

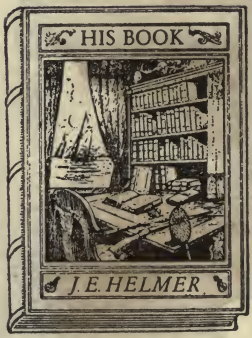

H. H. Sentte
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WILD SPORTS

OF THE WEST.

INTERSPERSED

WITH LEGENDARY TALES, AND LOCAL SKETCHES.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "STORIES OF WATERLOO."

And sure it is yet a most beautifull and sweete countrey as any is under heaven, being stored throughout with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorts of fish most abundantly, sprinkled with many very sweet islands and goodly lakes, like little inland seas, that will even carry shippes upon their waters."—*Spenser's State of Ireland*, 1596.

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

Some explanation may be necessary for obtruding upon the public the private details of a sportsman's life, and particularly when the scene of his exploits is laid within "the four seas of Britain." In the customary course of field adventure, few besides the individual concerned are much interested in the successes and disappointments he experiences; and rural sports are, in all their general incidents, so essentially alike, as to render their minute description almost invariably a dull and unprofitable record.

Circumstances, however, may occasionally create an interest which in ordinary cases would be wanting. From local connexions, a field almost untrodden by any but himself, was opened to the writer of these Sketches. He was thrown into an unfrequented district, with a primitive people to consort with. With some advantages to profit from the accident, a remote and semi-civilized region was offered to his observation; and although within a limited distance of his Majesty's mail-coach, a country was thus disclosed, as little known to the multitude as the interior

of Australasia; and where, excepting some adventurous grouse-shooter, none had viewed its highlands or mingled with its inhabitants.

That the scenic and personal sketches are faithful, the reader is assured; some were written on the spot, and others traced from vivid recollection. Those with whom the author shot these wild moors, or fished these waters, will best estimate the fidelity of the descriptions; and *one* valued friend, though now beneath another sun, will probably recall the days he spent by "fell and flood," and bring to memory those light and joyous hours when he caroused in a mountain bivouac, and rested in a moorland hut.

Of the actors in the following scenes, some are still living, while others are no more. The Colonel, that best and honestest of boon companions, sleeps with his fathers; and old John and the Otter-killer have gone the way of all flesh. The priest, "mine honoured friend," I rejoice to say, is still healthy and vigorous; in his wild but happy retirement he holds "the noiseless tenour of his way," exercises hospitality most liberally to the stranger, and throws forty feet of silk and hair better than any artist in the empire. Last of the "dramatis personæ," Hennessey is in full force, and "*mutato nomine*," may still be found in Ballycroy.

With regard to the tales and legends narrated in the succeeding pages, the former were told just as they are introduced. "The Blind Seal" is known to be substantially true—I have heard it from many, and never knew its veracity impugned. My lamented friend was himself the principal actor in "the Night Attack;" and he, poor fellow, was exactly the man who, in an affray or a carouse,

might be depended on. The heroes of the "Gold Snuff-box" are alive and merry, and long may they continue so! for truer friends and "better company" never listened to the "chimes at midnight." "Mr. Dawkins" is, I believe, engaged in seeking, through Doctors' Commons, to be relieved "*è vinculo matrimonii,*"—and "Mr. Burke" duly announced among the last arrivals in the Sydney Gazette.

Respecting the legendary stories, I have no pledge to offer for their authenticity,—old Antony believed them to the letter—I have given them nearly in his own words, and I may say with Sir Walter Scott,

> "I cannot tell how the truth may be,
> I say the tale as 'twas said to me."

"The Legend of Knock-a-thample" remains as the Otter-killer related it; but with "Rose Roche" I confess to have taken liberties, in suppressing a portion of her flirtation with the "black-eyed page," which, although, upon the lady's part, I feel convinced, was perfectly platonic, yet by uncharitable constructions might be tortured into something like indiscretion.

If I have undervalued those rural recreations in which many a worthy citizen sometimes dissipates, I hope my contempt for his avocations will be ascribed to the true cause, namely, that local advantages have spoiled my taste and rendered me fastidious. He who can shoot grouse upon the moor, will spend little time in killing pigeons from the trap; the angler who in a morning hooks some half-score salmon, would reckon it but sorry amusement to dabble in a pond. To a Galway rider, the Epping

hunt would be a bore, and he would probably treat it with the same contumely that one of this redoubted body did hare-hunting, by riding to the hounds in morocco slippers, and carrying an open umbrella to protect him from the sun.

As I have casually named "an honoured name," I lament that it was not his fortune to have visited those interesting scenes, where I have been so long a useless wanderer. The wild features and wilder associations of that romantic and untouched country, would have offered him a fresh field whereon to exercise his magic pencil—and many a tale and legend still orally handed down, but which in a few years must of necessity be forgotten, would have gained immortality from the touch of "the mighty master." But alas! the creations of his splendid imagination will no more delight an enchanted world. The wand is broken, the spell is over, the lamp of life is nearly exhausted—and even now, Scotland may be mourning for the mightiest of her gifted sons.

As a votive offering, these Volumes are inscribed to that matchless genius, by an humble, but enthusiastic admirer of Sir Walter Scott.

SYDENHAM,
SEPTEMBER 12, 1832.

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WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST.

CHAPTER I.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

London, July 1st, 1829.

NOTWITHSTANDING its dust and desertion, I am still lurking in the metropolis. The heat has become intolerable—yesterday, I imagined myself in Calcutta—for never but in the land of curries and red pepper did I experience anything so oppressive.

I breakfasted this morning at the Club-house. My air and attitude, as I caught a glimpse of them in a concave mirror, looked exquisitely disconsolate. Never was mortal more *ennuyé* than I. Town has become a desert—the world has abandoned it by general consent—the streets feel as if they had been recently fanned by a sirocco; and of divers unhappy beings whom I encountered in my walk from Grafton-street to St. James's, none seemed at ease but a bilious gentleman from Bombay, and the French fellow who exhibits in the oven. The thermometer, in a shaded corner of the room, is stationary at 82°. To remain longer here would be suicidal; but, where to go—whither to fly—alas! I know not.

Would that you were near me, then should I be certain of sympathy and counsel—for at this moment, there is not a more persecuted gentleman in the King's dominions. But I will make a clean breast—and to render my confessions explanatory, I must favour you with some particulars of my private history.

As autobiographers enjoy a prescriptive privilege of exhibiting their ancestors, I shall take the liberty of introducing my

papa. In his twenty-second year, Mr. Hector O'Brien was a bold Lieutenant of Grenadiers in his Majesty's 50th Foot, then distinguished by the flattering title of "The Dirty Half Hundred."* My father was a strapping fellow as ever wore a wing, kept a showy horse, and was decidedly the best dancer in the regiment. Being quartered in the vicinity of Bath, he attended the assemblies, and "in double quick" managed to effect a conquest. The lady had a fortune, and my father required one. Unluckily, she had a brother's consent to gain; and on being consulted, he was unmoved by importunity, and deaf to "every plea of love." The case was hopeless. Mr. Wamsley disliked Ireland, detested military men, and above all things, abominated "The Dirty Half Hundred."

To account for the gentleman's antipathy to this celebrated corps, it will be necessary to remark, that the regiment was then afflicted with a mad Major. His, the Major's delight, ley in drinking port wine and slaying pheasants. Mr. Wamsley, on the contrary, preferred water and preserved game. The Major beat up preserves without remorse, and deforced keepers who, though good men and true, prudently declined joining issue with mad Majors and double-barrelled guns. Now Mr. Wamsley resisting an invasion of his rights, applied to the Justice for redress, whereas Major O'Farrell considered that a reference to the pistol would be much more gentlemanly —a deadly feud was the consequence, and Mr. Wamsley was closely blockaded within his park walls by the military delinquent. Fortunately for all concerned, the regiment got the route; Mr. Wamsley recovered his liberty, and his detestation of the gallant 50th only ended with his life.

But his sister held a very different opinion respecting the merits of the brave "Half Hundred." She was devoted to the Lieutenant of Grenadiers, and the route hurried matters to a crisis. The result may be anticipated. Despising park walls and surly keepers, Mr. O'Brien overcame every difficulty, and with the assistance of a garden-ladder, the mad Major, and his double-barrelled gun, he carried off the lady, and at Gretna they became "one flesh."

Mr. Wamsley was irritated beyond the possibility of being appeased. Ten thousand pounds, which his wife possessed without the control of her brother, enabled my father to leave

* From their black facings, the 50th received this *sobriquet*.

the army, and settle on his hereditary estate in Roscommon; and there he hunted, shot, fished, and farmed, and lived just as Irish gentlemen lived some thirty years ago.

I was the only issue of the marriage. All communication had ceased between my parents and Mr. Wamsley, and eighteen years passed away, and no appearance of abated displeasure had ever been evinced by this implacable relative. I left a public school for the Dublin University, was destined for the church, and had nearly completed my college course, when an unforeseen event changed my prospects and profession. It was the death of both my parents within the brief space of a month.

My father's affairs were in great disorder—his estate was heavily embarrassed, and if his debts were paid, it was ascertained that I should be left nearly destitute. The intelligence reached Mr. Wamsley, and to the astonishment of all acquainted with his unrelenting animosity to my deceased parents, a letter was received from him, inviting me to visit him at his magnificent place, Lalworth Castle.

The invitation was of course accepted. I arrived, and found him a stern, disagreeable old man. My first appearance was against me—for the resemblance I bore to my father was most striking, and it seemed to recall my uncle's long-cherished prejudices. He abruptly asked me on the succeeding morning, "What course of life I had selected?" I replied, "That the army appeared best adapted to my taste and broken fortunes." His only observation was, "Be it so;" and here this laconic conversation ended.

That evening, Mr. Wamsley wrote to his neighbour, Lord Ulverston. The peer was his debtor to a large amount, and generally trafficked with him for his borough of ——bury. My uncle's request was promptly attended to. Lord Ulverston stood well at the Horse Guards; and in a few weeks, to my unfeigned satisfaction and surprise, I was gazetted to a Cornetcy in the Blues.

But my joy at this event was but of short duration. The miserly disposition of my uncle took alarm at the large outlay attendant on entering an expensive corps. Each hundred was doled out with painful reluctance, and the knowledge that a certain annual allowance would be requisite for my support, made him still more wretched. I joined the regiment; my subsidies—generally drafts for a paltry fifty—were "few and

far between." To hold a certain place in society, with an income incompetent to its expenses, is a state of inexpressible misery. Gradually I became embarrassed, and in two years found it necessary to exchange from the Blues to a Light Cavalry regiment, then stationed in the East Indies. My uncle made no objection; he was tired of what he termed supplying my boundless extravagance, bade me a cold farewell, and his parting words, as I stepped into the carriage, were a request that I would "write but seldom, as postage from the East, his lawyer told him, was enormous."

I obeyed him to the letter, I only wrote once, and that was conveying an entreaty that he would purchase a majority likely to become vacant; I got a coarse refusal, and thus our correspondence terminated. For four years I never heard from him, and had nearly forgotten that I had left a relation behind me.

I was surprised, however, at this distant period with a letter, worded in his stiff and peculiar style. It briefly stated that his health was indifferent, and that he would recommend me to return to Europe with as little delay as possible.

This recommendation was anything but gratifying. I liked India well enough—the climate agreed with me—my health was unimpaired—the mess was good—the regiment gentlemanly—and better still, I could live most comfortably upon my pay. I felt, however, that my uncle's invitation should not be neglected; applied for leave; succeeded, and made immediate preparations for a return to Europe. My brother officers congratulated me on my good fortune in so speedily revisiting my native country; but to me it was a subject of regret. I was leaving pleasant quarters, cheerful society, and comparative independence, to become a slave to the caprice and ill-humour of a morose and splenetic invalid.

It was late in December when I landed at Portsmouth. The voyage had been remarkably quick, and without delay I started for my uncle's residence, and in the gloom of a wet wintry evening re-entered the gates of Lalworth Park. I looked down the long vista of splendid elms, but in the twilight the house was not visible; not a candle glanced from a window, and no indication of its being inhabited appeared about this melancholy mansion. The postboy stopped—I alighted, ran up the steps and rang gently—no one answered

—I rang again—louder yet—and a step came hastily over the oaken floor. The old porter at last approached, cautiously affixed the chain, opened a few inches of the door, and raised his candle suspiciously to examine the late visiter. Instantly recollecting me, he uttered a suppressive exclamation of astonishment, removed the fastenings, and muttered, "Thank God, it is himself!" and, as he admitted me, whispered that my uncle was not expected to survive till midnight.

In silence I was conducted to a back drawing-room, where, on a large, old-fashioned sofa the dying man was laid. The porter advanced before, and in a low voice notified my arrival. The news appeared to gratify the invalid; he turned his dim eyes to the spot where I stood waiting for permission to advance. "Are you there, Frank!" he said in a feeble voice —"Ha, ha, ha! it was *touch and go* with you!" and he uttered a weak and sarcastic laugh.—"Call Doctor Dodwell and the lawyer—desire them to bring the *other will*—and tell Moore and Hubert to attend to witness it." While he gave these orders, I gazed on the wasted features of the dying miser, and there was a strange expression of stern satisfaction visible on his countenance, as his cold glance rested fixedly on me. Immediately the doctor, solicitor, and witnesses entered the room.—"Raise me up," he said to the ancient domestic, his personal attendant. It was done, and he motioned to the solicitor to unfold the parchment. Carefully he passed his eye over the surface to assure himself that the document was the one he required, and having ascertained the fact, he pointed to a pen. With difficulty he placed it in his trembling fingers, and with a painful exertion, affixed his signature to the deed—then looking at the witnesses as they annexed their names—"This is my last will and testament," he said with a feeble emphasis, "and thus do I revoke all others!" —then turning to me, while a ghastly smile overspread his face, "Half an hour later would have served hospitals and almshouses, Francis:" he leaned himself back and expired without a struggle.

For a few moments we were not aware that he was dead; the strength with which his last remark was uttered led us at first to believe that he had reclined in consequence of the exertion. In a few minutes the physician took his hand and sought for a pulse, but in vain; he raised the eyelid and

applied a candle to the fixed and deadly stare, and then announced that the patient had departed.

A scene, a disgusting scene ensued; the attorney, when certified of his client's death, seized my hand and coarsely congratulated me on my good fortune. The doctor abandoned the corpse to join the solicitor in his compliments—and between them the truth transpired. I had, indeed, been luckily expeditious in my journey, and the old man's phrase of *touch and go*, was fully explained. The preceding day he had signed a testament conveying his entire property to a variety of charitable institutions; and the will which had been originally made in my favour, and been kept over by this singular relative, would have remained imperfect, had I not so providentially arrived the evening of his death.

We left the room while the body was being laid out preparatory to interment. What a turn one hour had given to my fortunes! I entered Lalworth Park at four o'clock, a poor miserable dependant; at five, I was master of all around me, possessed of twelve thousand pounds a year, owner of a borough, with fifty thousand in the funds and twenty at my banker's. Such a mingled yarn is the web of human life.

The obsequies of my uncle were duly performed, and for many days I was engaged in examining papers, and taking possession of the plate and valuables of Lalworth Park. The house was sadly out of repair, and the grounds and gardens utterly neglected. The old man had limited the fuel for the mansion to such fallen wood as could be collected throughout the domain; and the few domestics he employed were scarcely sufficient to ventilate, without attempting to keep in order the numerous and once splendid apartments. For some time I was busily occupied; I hired additional servants, engaged an architect, fiated my agent's accounts, and started then for London so soon as a decent respect towards the deceased would permit my appearing in the metropolis. Of the rest, my dear Baronet, you know sufficient particulars; a presentable man, *olim* in the Blues, and recently succeeding to a large and unencumbered property, would soon "find room in any place." I was speedily admitted to those chosen circles which are impassable to those who want birth, impudence, or money. I ran the full round of dissi—— but, on this head, *you*, my constant companion, require but little information.

In human life, George, every thing has its limits. I am

probably too rich to be permanently happy. I tired of Brookes's and Willis's and Crockford's: I had little taste for the play, and betted moderately, and with even success: if I lost I was not depressed: if I won I was not exhilarated. The season was drawing to its close, and I began to discover that I was not fated to escape from sublunary annoyances. I was bored by the dull dinners of stupid placemen who calculated on my borough; I was persecuted by ancient gentlewomen who wished to rid themselves of daughters that years ago were *passées;* a young and titled widow almost wooed me to desperation; and the Dowager of ——— shocked me by an assurance that Lord Leatherby expected, from my marked attention at the Horticultural fête, that I would *forthwith* propose for that sandy-haired fright his daughter. God help me! little did I suppose that an act of common humanity, in sheltering her red ringlets with a broken umbrella, would have been thus tortured by that leaden-headed Lord her sire!

I forgot in its proper place to notify an important occurrence; it was the death of Mr. James Jones. This personage was owner of a property in Surinam, and one of the representatives for the borough of ——bury. A year before his death my late uncle had pocketed three thousand pounds, and returned as inoffensive a gentleman as ever snored upon the benches of St. Stephen's. I took his place, next the oaths, and had sufficient grace to sit quiet and listen to other declaimers, who possessed more talent or more impudence than myself. For some time I was rather undecided in my politics; but the Ministerial were the quieter benches,—there I established myself, and for half a session none slept through a debate with a quieter conscience—but curse upon blighted beauty, I was not permitted to remain in happy and unambitious celibacy.

From my first appearance I had been exposed to distant attacks, but as the weather warmed and the town thinned, my persecutors became more daring in their approaches. Did I venture to a Refugee concert, there I was waylaid by the widow. Did I endeavour to steal a ride in Rotten-row, I was directly hunted off by the *dame rouge* and that infernal Peer her father; and all that was penniless or *passé* marked me as an object of unrelenting importunity. Eventually, I was driven from every place approachable by woman, and having

no other refuge, turned to the turf, and engaged myself deeply in the Derby.

That event is over, and I shall write the man "mine enemy" who ever recalls it to my recollection—but as this is a confession to thee, George, I must make a clean breast. I was as well acquainted with the mysteries of a betting-book, as I was with the financial department of Timbuctoo; when luckily "a d——d good-natured friend" came to my aid, and with his experience, why should I not get on cleverly? A horse was going for nothing, my friend was on the alert, made the discovery, and I bought him for five hundred. He was a dead bargain, quite *a dark one*, and in proof of the same, the odds against him were thirty-five to one; but, as I was informed, *there* lay the beauty of the thing.

As the races drew near, I discovered that my book was what the *legs* call a *queer concern*. I had picked up the halt and blind as first favourites and betted accordingly. My *dark one* proved a *roarer*, and my faithful friend recommended me to hedge immediately, and I did so, as the result will tell.

Off went the horses; Phenomenon, my courser, in the chance medley got a splendid start, but from his pace the spectators alleged that he was hamstrung. In three hundred yards he was passed by the slowest of the *bad ones*, and before the leading horses reached the distance, every thing I was interested in was beaten fairly off. All I had left for consolation under this accumulation of disappointment was the smart hedge that I had so prudently effected before starting.

The settling-day came; I was at Tattersall's and so were my winners to a man; I disbursed five thousand to divers legs with and without titles, and furthermore disposed of the celebrated horse Phenomenon for fifty pounds. But where was the worthy gentleman with whom I had hedged half my losses? Till four o'clock I waited in painful expectation, and at that hour, he being still invisible, I ventured to hazard an inquiry, and was favoured with the comfortable tidings, that my absent friend was a broken wine-merchant, and that he had levanted the evening of the race.

This wind up of the season, united to sultry weather and a tender persecution, determined me to fly "east, west, or north, I care not whither." This, however, was more easily decided on than effected, for to retreat is the difficulty, as I find myself hemmed in by my enemies on every side. The widow cuts

me off from Cheltenham; the Honourable Juliana Thistleton would haunt me in Hastings; the Dowager of —— and her *protégée* abide in the pleasant town of Brighton; and my Lord Leatherby has taken out a sort of roving commission, to infest every retirement of fashionable repute; and from his cunning inquiries as to the particular point, seaside or suburban, to which I purpose to remove, I perceive I am as deliberately doomed to matrimony by this relentless nobleman, as ever a country bonnet-maker was devoted to destruction by an immoral captain of horse.

And shall I fall without a struggle to avert my fate? forbid it honour! Yes, my determination is fixed—I will counteract this conspiracy against my freedom, and call my Connaught cousin "to the rescue." He is a determined duellist, and has been regularly jilted—consequently he abominates the sex (I hope) and will protect me from the widow; while his truculent propensities for the pistol will keep the Peer at a distance. Adieu! I'll write anon—thine always.

CHAPTER II.

Letters—An Escape—Connaught—Topographical and Moral Description—Ballinasloe—A Virtuous and Flourishing Town—A Bible Meeting and Radical Reform.

I APPRIZED you in my last letter, that in this my hour of need, I would seek succour from my Irish kinsman. I wrote to him accordingly, implored him to abandon his mountain den and join me at Lalworth Park. To my invitation I received a decisive, and I would almost say, insulting refusal; "He hated puppies, avoided flirts, was neither a fool or a fortune, and therefore had no business with such society as I should expose him to." The man appears to be a misanthrope; I gave him in return a tart rejoinder, and he seems disinclined to remain my d btor. Hear what he says:

"Francis, I pity thee! Like the Moor, your 'occupation's gone,' and your letter seals your condemnation.

"You talk of exercise: pshaw! what is it? You knock some party-coloured balls over the smooth surface of a green

table; you hazard suffocation for an hour in Rotten-row, and should you survive the dust, endure eternal dread of empalement by a carriage-pole; you shoot a score of rascally pigeons within the enclosures of Battersea, or make a grand excursion to slaughter pheasants in a preserve; last and proudest feat comes the *battu*, when, with noble and honourable confederates, you exterminate a multitude of semi-civilized fowls, manfully overcoming the fatigue of traversing an ornamented park, and crossing a few acres of turnips. And is this ignoble course befitting one of 'lith and limb' like thine? *You*, the best of your day in Trinity;—you, whose prowess is still recorded in the annals of the watchhouse, and whose hurling is yet chronicled in the Park;—you, whom no six-feet wall could turn, whom no mountain-herd could tire in the dog-days;—you, who could swim with Byron, and walk with Barclay,—what are you become? an elegant and fashionable idler—lolling life away, the morning in a club-house window, the evening in the Park, and the night *gallopading* some scion of nobility, who has discovered that you possess twelve thousand pounds a year, and that her own funds are insufficient to satisfy the corset-maker in Regent-street.

"Would that I could reform your taste and habits! Could I but induce you to pass one autumn here, your conversion would be a certainty. Come to me, Frank; ay, come to the wilds of Connaught: avoid an atmosphere surcharged with villanous impurities, and brace your relaxed nerves in the waves of the Atlantic; seek life and energy in the mountain-breeze; abandon the gymnasium to scriveners and shopmen; and leave Crockford's to ruined dupes and titled swindlers.

"You have hitherto been a silent Member of the Honourable Commons, and St. Stephen's has never heard from you 'the popular harangue, the tart reply.' Hast thou any aspirations after fame? any 'longing after immortality?' Listen; the means are simple. Indict the Red-house as a nuisance, and propose a bill, making the being aiding or accessory to a *battu*, death without benefit of clergy. Thy name will live when Joe Hume, that ready-reckoner, shall be forgotten; and Dick Martin's senatorial renown will fade before the perennial glory of the present member for ——bury!"

Need I say how opportunely came this invitation? "I embraced his offer;" and here I am fairly over the border, and

safely deposited in the kingdom of Connaught, without injury or interruption worth recording.

On the subject of my travels I intend to be laconic, inasmuch as, with a temporary intervention of steam, I have resided in the royal mail since I left the lamps of London. I believe I am not exactly cut out for a traveller: I am incurious as to names of guards and coachmen—never inquire after their wives, or take the population of their families; I generally sleep from the start to the close of the stage. I did observe that the colour of corn was nearly alike in both countries; and remarked further, that English drivers seemed partial to ale and overalls, and Irish ones preferred frieze coats and naked whiskey.

And now, George, you shall have the particulars of my escape; and, since the times of the Anabasis, or the more recent exploits of Lavalette and Ikey Solomons, never was retreat effected in more masterly style. Candour obliges me to admit, that mine was unaccompanied by sound of trumpet, or other "pomp and circumstance of war;" and rather resembled the hasty retirement of a detected thief from a tabernacle, than a bold operation in noonday, and in the face of the enemy. But let that pass. I embarked a miscellaneous cargo of guns, dogs, and fishing-tackle, under the *surveillance* of a trusty servant, on board a Dublin steamer, and the following evening started quietly for "the Head;" leaving directions with mine host in Grafton-street to acquaint Lord Leatherby, and all suspicious-looking inquirers, that I had departed for Constantinople, and that any commands for me must be forwarded, under cover, to the Sublime Porte.

I have no talent for statistics, but if my memory serve, the interesting portion of the British empire from which I write, is thus laid down by a modern tourist:—"It lieth," says this intelligent traveller, "under a dark gray cloud, which is evermore discharging itself on the earth, but, like the widow's curse, is never exhausted. It is bounded on the south and east by Christendom and part of Tipperary, on the north by Donegal, and on the west by the *salt say*. It abounds in bogs, lakes, and other natural curiosities; its soil consists of equal quantities of earth and stone; and its surface is so admirably disencumbered of trees, shrubs, hedges, and ditches, that an intelligent backwoodsman from Louisiana was heard to

declare with rapture, that it was the most perfectly-cultivated territory in Europe.

"Further," saith the tourist, "its gentry are a polished and religious race, remarkable for their punctuality in pecuniary transactions, and their freedom from a litigious or quarrelsome disposition. The prevailing mode of belief among the upper classes is *anythingarianism*—that of the people, pure Popery."

This premonitory sketch will save you and me, George, an infinity of trouble. You have here the country graphically placed before you, as well as the distinguishing traits of character, for which the pleasant and virtuous community who abide in this interesting department of the Emerald Isle are so eminently distinguished.

The town of Ballinasloe is seated on a river, the name of which I neglected to inquire. It is much frequented by saints and cattle dealers, carries on a smart trade in sheep and proselytes, and Bibles and bullocks are "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa." The cabins, moreover, are whitewashed; pigs and popery are prohibited; and travellers wayfaring on the seventh day denounced, and, under perilous amercements, enjoined to take their ease in their respective inns.

While the horses were being brought out, I strolled into the street, and, in a show-room of the Farming Society, discovered a collection of biblicals in full activity. From a short gentleman with soiled linen and an impeded delivery, I learned the gratifying fact, that the spread of the Gospel was progressive in California; and, further, that a second-cousin of the King of Siam had been baptized by a Moravian Missionary. This latter annunciation elicited a thunder of applause; and a young lady with a lisp pinched my elbow playfully, and requested me to propose that a piece of plate be transmitted to the convertee. Now, pinching one's elbow on a five minutes' acquaintance is alarming; I accordingly levanted, leaving *Lispy* to propose the plate in person. I observed in my retreat a mob assembled round the chapel, and, pushing through a crowd of ragged urchins, established myself in the doorway. Within there was a meeting of Radical Reformers, and a tall man was pouring forth a philippic from the altar, in which he made an awful example of the king's English, and, in his syllabic arrangements, differed totally from modern orthoepists. The gist of his oration went to prove, that Catholic Emancipation was a

humbug—concession a farce—and luck or grace would never visit this unhappy island, until Mr. Cornelius Cassidy, of Killcooney House, was sent to represent us in the Imperial Parliament.

The horses are being put to, and I must say farewell. I shall, however, note my adventures, and in due time favour you with another epistle.

Adieu, always yours.

CHAPTER III.

Journey continued—Inn of Glantane—Tuam—A Bad Night—Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire—A Country Ball, and the Finish.

As my journey hither has been singularly propitious, I shall only trouble you with the leading incidents.

My carriage broke down close to the inn of Glantane, a solitary house, as the song goes, "delightfully placed in a bog." As some delay must necessarily occur before the repairs of the vehicle could be effected, after the example of that accomplished cavalier, Major Dalgetty, I determined to seize on this opportunity to provision the garrison. To this prudent proceeding on my part I found there was an insurmountable obstacle: the landlady assured me that the "*matériel*" was in the house—there was bacon in the chimney, and chickens in the yard, but there was no turf within, till *the boys—the devil bother them for staying!*—came home from the blacksmith's funeral. Now, that the hotel of Glantane should be deficient in this point was marvellous. The surface of the circumjacent country, in its proportion of tillage-ground to turbary, bears an acreable ratio of one to five hundred; and yet, though in the bosom of a bog, there could not be a sufficiency of fire obtained to boil a potato-pot! But human ingenuity is surprising: after a delay of three mortal hours I reascended my chaise, and, without further accident, was deposited in the town of Tuam.

On the merits of the Mitre Inn I shall be silent; it produced in good time a respectable quarter of cold lamb, and a dish of exquisite potatoes. By the way, we cannot cook this latter esculent in England. Had my fare been worse, I would have

submitted without a murmur; for the waiter assured my servant that I had got the best bedroom in the house. Now, in the course of my narrative, I omitted to mention, that on the preceding night I had scarcely closed an eye. On retiring to my dormitory, I remarked that the grate was heaped with black turfs, apparently in the same state in which they had been removed from their parent moor; but, anxious to court the drowsy god, I extinguished the candle, sprang into bed, and too late discovered that I was overloaded with a mass of ponderous blanketing, while a faint spark twinkled in the bottom of the grate, and, like the cry of wisdom in the streets, was disregarded. I fell into a temporary doze, and awoke an hour afterwards in a burning fever; for the grate, in place of cold turfs, exhibited a roaring fire. In vain I opened door and window; in vain I tumbled blanket after blanket on the floor: hours elapsed before the fever-warmth of the apartment could be abated. At last, exhausted by heat and exertion, I threw myself upon the outside of the bed-coverings, and made myself up for repose. Just then a brace of obstinate curs determined to "bay the moon:" one established himself beneath my window, and the other took up a position at the opposite side of the street, and for three long hours they barked incessantly, relieving themselves occasionally by indulging in a mournful and nerve-torturing howl. Human forbearance could not support the martyrdom I suffered: I was driven to desperation, and, collecting every missile article in the chamber, with repeated discharges routed my persecutors, and once more endeavoured to procure some rest.

I sank into a delicious slumber; but suddenly the door was flung open, and in rushed the waiter with portentous speed. "The house must be on fire!" I ejaculated as I somerseted into the centre of the floor. My fears were fortunately groundless: Dennis merely awoke me to inquire if I would drive three miles out of town to see two scoundrels fight, who had quarrelled the preceding night about a game of cribbage. Judge then, dear George, after all these visitations, whether the annunciation of a quiet bed at Tuam was not to me "a sound ecstatic!"

I swallowed a pint of rascally sherry without a murmur, fortified it with a dose of diluted alcohol, yawned my way to my room, found clean linen—no fire, and, in five minutes, was buried in sleep "fast as a watchman."

Presently arose a hum of many voices; dreams and phantasies disturbed my uneasy slumbers; a noise like distant music at times was faintly audible;—at last a crash of instruments awoke me, and the first quadrille was in full execution within four feet of my distracted head!

Heaven granted me patience, although I was on the very brink of a country ball-room, and separated from "the gay throng" only by the intervention of a slip of deal-board, while through the chinks you might have passed the poker, or interchanged a parasol.

I raised myself up on my elbow, and what a group was there! A short man, in a claret-coloured coat, was paired with a stout gentlewoman in bright scarlet: she must have been descended from "the giant;" I would as soon grapple with her in a waltz, as commit myself to the embraces of a boa-constrictor. *Vis-à-vis* was a police-officer, in state uniform, with a pale beauty in cerulean blue; and a personage of immense calf, in black *tights*, confronted a skeleton in nankeen *unmentionables*. The ladies were gloriously adorned with silver ribbon, gilt wreaths, and every flower that blows, from a pink to a peony; the lords of the creation sported stiffened cravats and a plurality of waistcoats; and the ball-room emitted "an ancient and fish-like smell"—a miasm of musk, assisted by every abomination in perfumery.

I was in an intermediate state between frenzy and fever, and turned over in my mind the expediency of setting fire to the bed-curtains, and sending myself, the quadrille, and the whole company to the skies, by igniting ten pounds of Harvey's *treble strong*, which was stowed away somewhere in my luggage. Did tired Nature quiesce for a moment, I was fearfully roused with a tornado of torturous sounds. "Places, gentlemen!"—"Ladies-chain!"—"Now, don't dance, Patsey; you know you're drunk!"—"Arrah! Charley, are you stupid?"—"*Dos-à-dos*, Miss Rourke!"—"Up with the Lancers!"—"Aisy, Mr. Bodkin! remember there are ladies here!"—"Waiter! there's porter wanted at the card-table!" Somnus! deity of my adoration! never expose me to such misery as I endured in the archiepiscopal town of Tuam!

Morning came, and the company retired to supper below stairs. Anticipating the consequences, I fortified my chamber-door with all the moveables I could collect. It was a prudent precaution; for, blessed be God! a row ensued, that finished

both delph and dancing. I suffered nothing in person, but my less-fortunate valet got a black eye from a Connemara gentleman, who, unluckily for poor Travers, mistook him for the master of the ceremonies, with whom he of Connemara was at feud.

For the present, farewell.

CHAPTER IV.

Loss of a Waiter—Precocious Talent—The Mad Major and the Mendicants of Mullingar—Cursing an Adjutant—Death of Denis O'Farrell.

It was noon when I arose, and the inmates of the Mitre were still in exquisite confusion. Breakfast, after much delay, was provided by the agency of the housemaid. She apologized for the non-attendance of the waiter, at present a patient in the Infirmary; he having, in the course of the entertainment, been ejected from the window by a pleasant gentleman of Loughrea.

Anxious to be off as soon as possible, I ordered the horses to; but an unforeseen difficulty occurred in removing my luggage to the carriage, as the door was blocked up four deep by a gang of beggars. With relation to the sizes of the respective places, the lazaroni of Naples are far out-numbered by the mendicants of Tuam. A trace broke at starting, and thus enabled me to form a pretty correct idea of this multitude. I reckoned to fifty-seven, and then became confused. Although beset on every side, I was proof against importunity, and refused parting with a sixpence. Cursing was next tried; and to the curious in that accomplishment, I would suggest a week's residence at the Mitre. One boy, a cripple in a dish, excelled the united talent of the remainder. English and Irish epithets were with him "common as household words;" he used both languages with surpassing fluency, and there was an originality of conception in his style of execration, which was what the Cockneys call most refreshing. This precocious prodigy could not be much above fifteen; and, if he lives, will in this peculiar department of national eloquence be without a parallel. I have "erst while" passed through Billingsgate, when the fair

inhabitants betrayed symptoms of irritation; I have heard hackney-coachmen cursing at a crowded opera over a fractured panel or broken pole; I have listened to a score of watermen squabbling for a fare at Westminster Bridge; I have been on board a transport in a gale of wind, with an irreligious commander; but Tuam for ever! there cursing is perfection.

Mine, George, is but a rambling narrative, and my details, however interesting, lay no claim to the *lucidus ordo*; therefore I reserve full liberty from the very start to bolt into digressions when and as I please.

Of the many anecdotes that I have heard my father narrate of his friend, the Mad Major, one was particularly characteristic.

When the gallant 50th were removed to Mullingar, it was supposed that this town produced a greater number of beggars than any in the king's dominions: a swarm of paupers rendered the streets almost impassable, and ingress or egress to or from a shop was occasionally impracticable. Now, beggars were to the Mad Major an abomination; and for two days he ensconced himself in his lodgings, rather than encounter the mendicants of Mullingar. Confinement will increase bile, and bile may induce gout; and at last, wearied of captivity, he sallied forth, and to every application for relief, he specified an early day, requesting the numerous supplicants to be punctual to the appointed time. His wish was faithfully attended to; and on the expected morning, the street where he resided was literally blocked up. The Major, under a volley of blessings, appeared at the hall-door. "Are you all here?" he inquired, in accents of the tenderest compassion. "All, your honour—all, young and owld!" responded a big beggarman. "We're all here, colonel, *avorneen!*" exclaimed a red virago, "but my own poor man, *Brieney Bokkogh*;* and he, the crater! fell into the fire a Sunday night, and him hearty, and sorrow stir he can make good nor bad."—"Ah, then," said the humane commander, "why should poor Brien be left out? Arrah! run yourself, and bring the cripple to us." In a twinkling off went the red virago, and, after a short absence, issued from a neighbouring lane, with Brieney on her shoulders. "Are you all here now?" inquired the tender-hearted chieftain. "Every single sowl of us," said an old woman in reply.

* Bryan the Cripple.

"Ogh! that the light of heaven may shine on his honour's dying hour; but it's he that's tender to the poor!"—"Amen, sweet Jasus!" responded a hundred voices. "Silence!" said the Mad Major, as he produced a small book neatly bound in red morocco. "Whisht, your sowls!" cried the big beggarman. "Are ye listening?"—"Sha, sha! yes, yes!" was responded in English and Irish. "Then, by the contents of this blessed book—and it's the Bible—a rap I won't give one of ye, you infernal vagabonds, if I remained a twelvemonth in Mullingar!" A yell of execrations followed; but the Major bore the cursing like a philosopher, and kept his promise like a monk. To the surprise of all, the beggars left the way when he walked out, and absconded from the shop he entered. They crossed themselves devoutly if they encountered him unexpectedly at a corner, adjuring the Lord to "stand between them, the Mad Major, and the devil!"

Apropos to cursing; the late Sir Charles Asgill told a story of this eccentric personage. During the time the 50th remained in Ireland, the Colonel was mostly absent from ill health, and the command of course devolved upon the Major. By one of the military abuses at that time too common, a little Scotch Doctor, who had somehow been appointed Adjutant to a Fencible regiment, was transferred from it to the 50th. Incompetent from professional inability, he was further afflicted by a constitutional nervousness, that made him badly calculated to come in contact with such a personage as the Mad Major.

Shortly after the little Scotchman joined, the half yearly inspection took place. Major O'Farrell, in the course of his evolutions, found it requisite to deploy into line, and called to his field-assistant "to take an object." "Have you got one?" cried the commander, in a voice of thunder. "Yes, Sir," replied the alarmed Adjutant, in a feeble squeak. The word was given, and the right wing kept moving, until the face of the regiment assumed the form of a semicircle. "Hallo!—where or what is your object?" roared the Major. "A crow, Sir," replied the unhappy Scotsman. "And where is the crow?" roared the Commander. "Flown off," was the melancholy response. "May the devil fly away with you, body and bones! Halt — dress! Stop, Sir Charles · do stop. Just allow me two minutes to curse that rascally Adjutant." To so reasonable a request, Sir Charles,

who was a most obliging officer, readily assented. The General mentioned often, that the damning of a stupid Adjutant was no novelty; but that he never saw a man cursed to his perfect satisfaction, until he heard the Scotch Doctor anathematized in the Phœnix Park.

The death of poor Denis was in such perfect keeping with his life, that I am tempted to give it to you.

The regiment was in garrison, and at a race-ball a trifling misunderstanding occurred between a young Ensign and a country-gentleman. It was, however, instantly adjusted. A few days afterwards, some intemperate expressions which had fallen from the gentleman at the ball, were reported to the Mad Major. These he considered as reflecting upon the character of his corps, and he despatched the senior Captain for an explanation. The answer to this demand was unsatisfactory, and the Captain was directed to deliver a hostile message. The officers of the "Half Hundred" were a brave body—they vainly endeavoured to make it a regimental affair, and insisted that the person to resent the insult should be indifferently selected (by lot) from the corps.

"Gentlemen, I thank you;" said the Mad Major, as he struck his broad hand upon the mess-table. "Your motives are personally kind—but as I am at the head of this regiment, I hold myself to be the conservator of its honour."

That evening the Major had a violent attack of gout, to which for years he had been a martyr—but he concealed it carefully, and when his friend called him on the morning, he was found dressed and powdered, but unable to move without assistance. Captain M—— pressed upon him the necessity of postponing the meeting, or permitting another officer to be his substitute; but Denis was immovable in his resolve. He proceeded to the ground, and supported by a crutch, after a discharge of pistols, received a satisfactory apology. Poor fellow! this was his last feat. Exposure to the cold of a damp spring morning brought on a renewed attack of gout—that night the disorder settled in his stomach —and the morning after he was a corpse.

The body was carried to its last resting-place, accompanied by all the pomp of a military funeral. His own beloved company, the grenadiers, who had often followed their lion-hearted leader into action, now formed his guard of honour

to the grave; and when his remains were committed to the earth there was not a dry eye among the "Dirty Half Hundred."

Two months afterwards, when an Irish soldier was questioned on the merits of his successor—"The man is well enough," said Pat, with a heavy sigh, "but where will we find the equal of the Mad Major? By Jasus, it was a comfort to be cursed by him!"

CHAPTER V.

Castlebar—Newport—Departure from Christendom—Progress into Terra Incognita—Roads and scenery—Mulranny—Passage down the Inlet—Incidents—Lodge in the Wilds of Erris—Description of the establishment.

Without any adventure worthy of a place in this itinerary, I reached in safety the capital of Mayo. From other provincial cities, this town is distinguished in having a new drop and an old gaol; a swamp in the centre of the town surrounded by an iron chain, judiciously placed there, I imagine, to prevent cattle and children being lost in the morass which it environs; a court-house, with a piazza and façade, of an original order of architecture, only known to Irish professors of the art of building; trade and manufactures are limited to felt-hats and poteen whisky; and the only machinery I could discover was the drop, aforesaid. I was informed that the chapel and petty-sessions are generally crowded, as is the market, upon a hanging-day.

I was called next morning at five o'clock by the waiter, to proceed by the Sligo mail, although on the preceding night I had taken considerable pains to persuade him that my course lay westward. One hour afterwards, the chamber-maid roused me to inquire if I had any intention of proceeding to Hollymount by a hackney car. To save these worthy people further trouble, I arose and dressed, and, wishing to avoid a vestry to be that day holden in the town, and where, in the course of argument, it was believed that divers lives would be lost, I took an early breakfast, and departed.

I stopped at Newport; it was the last cluster of houses arrogating to itself the title of a town, that I should now meet with, for I had reached the *ultima Thule* of civilized Europe—and when I had given directions to the post-master touching the transmission of my letters in my cousin's bag, I looked around me, and took a silent but mournful farewell of Christendom.

I found at the public-house that my kinsman had provided for my farther progress into *terra incognita.* A couple of rudely-constructed vehicles were waiting to receive myself and personal property, and a wild bare-legged mountaineer, with a leathern bag strapped across his shoulders, announced himself as guide. "Had he no horse?"—"*Devil a harse!* but he would warrant he would keep up with me,"—and away we went under a salute of our dogs, and the furtive glances of sundry ladies with their hair in papers.

Some distance from the town we crossed an ancient bridge of many arches, through which an extensive lake communicates with the sea, and farther on passed the old tower of Carrigahowla. Our route was contiguous to the sea—on the left were the numerous islands of Clew Bay; on the right an extensive chain of savage hills and barren moorland. The road now became hardly passable; constructed without the least regard to levelness,—*here* it dipped into a ravine, and *there* breasted some sudden hill, inaccessible to any carriage but the light machines we travelled with. Its surface was rough, and interrupted by a multitude of loose stones; while some of the bridges were partially dilapidated, and others had never been completed. In these, the ragged line of granite which formed the key-stones of the arches stood nakedly up, and presented a barrier that no common carriage could overtop without endangering its springs and harness. Yet this forlorn road is the only communication with a highly improvable country, covering at least fifty square miles, with numerous and profitable islands attached, and an immense line of sea-coast, possessing rich fisheries, and abounding in kelp-weed and manure! And why was this neglect? Were the proprietors of this deserted district so cold to that true spring of human action, self-aggrandizement, as to omit providing an outlet for the sources of their opulence? Were there no public monies allocated to these abandoned corners of the earth, and so much lavishly expended on many a useless

undertaking elsewhere? Yes: large sums have been presented and *re-presented* by the Grand Juries for the last twenty years, but they have been regularly pocketed by those to whose good faith they were entrusted. Would it be believed in England, George, that this atrocious system of peculation has been carried to such an extent, that roads have been passed, *as completed*, when their lines have been but roughly marked out—and bridges been actually paid for, the necessary accounting affidavits having been sworn to in open court, when not a stone was ever laid, and to this day the stream runs without a solitary arch to span its flood from the source to the debouchement? Ay—these delinquencies have been often and notoriously perpetrated, and none have had the courage to drag the criminals to justice.

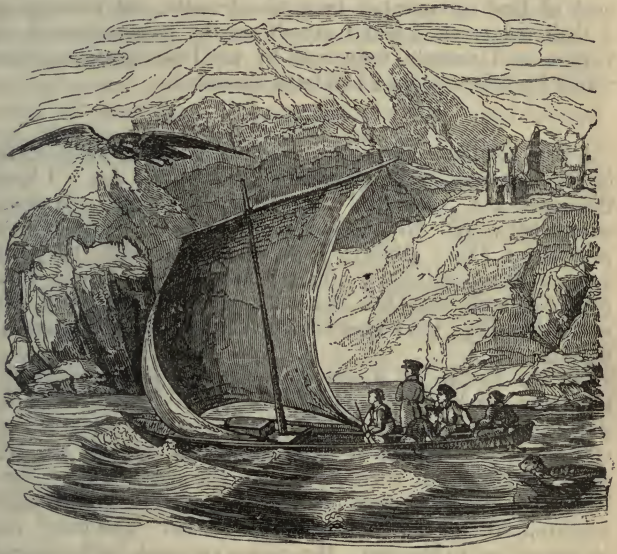
At the *clachan* of Mulranny we struck into a pass in the mountains, and turned our backs upon Clew Bay. A branch from the waters of Black Sod runs some ten miles inland, and meets this opening in the hills, affording a communication by boats with Erris. There my kinsman's galley was waiting for me, and in it I embarked my person and establishment. Taking advantage of a south-westerly wind, the boatmen hoisted their close-reefed lug, and away we shot rapidly towards the entrance of the inlet. From the high lands which rose on every side, the squalls fell more heavily and frequent than I found agreeable; but in an hour we cleared this confined and dangerous channel, and, running between Currane Point and the island of Innis Biggle, entered Black Sod Bay.

The passage down the inlet, was marked with several incidents which were in perfect keeping with the wild and savage scenery around. A seal would suddenly raise his round head above the surface, gaze for a moment at the boat, and, when he had apparently satisfied his curiosity, sink quietly from our view. In rounding the numerous headlands through which this inlet irregularly winds, we often started flocks of curlews,*

* The bill is long, equally incurvated, and terminated in a blunt point; nostrils linear, and longitudinal near the base; tongue short and sharp-pointed; and the toes are connected as far as the first joint of the membrane.

With the curlew, Linnæus begins a numerous tribe of birds under the genuine name of Scalopax, which, in his arrangement, includes all the snipes and godwits, amounting, according to Latham, to forty-two species

which, rising in an alarm at our unexpected appearance, made the rocks ring with their loud and piercing whistle. Skirting the shore of Innis Biggle, we disturbed an osprey or sea-eagle,* in the act of feeding on a bird. He rose leisurely, and, lighting on a rock, waited till we passed, and then returned to his



prey. We ran sufficiently close to the shore to observe the

and eight varieties, spread over various parts of the world, but nowhere very numerous.

Buffon describes fifteen species and varieties of the curlew, and Latham ten, only two or three of which are British birds. They feed upon worms, which they pick up on the surface, or with their bills dig from the soft earth: on these they depend for their principal support; but they also devour the various kinds of insects which swarm in the mud and in the wet boggy grounds, where these birds chiefly take up their abode.

* "Eagles are well knowne to breed here, but neither so bigge, nor so many, as books tell. Cambrensis reporteth of his own knowledge, and I heare it averred by credible persons, that barnacles, thousands at once, are noted along the shoares to hang by the beakes about the

size and colour of the bird, and concluded that a grouse had been the eagle's victim.

When we had cleared the islands, the breeze blew fresh and steadily; the boatmen shook out the reefs, which had hitherto confined their canvass; the galley, with increased velocity, rushed through the rippling water, till, doubling a neck of land surmounted by a ruined castle, and running up a sheltered creek, I found myself at the termination of my voyage, and warmly welcomed by my Irish kinsman, from whom for fifteen years I had been separated.

I have been here three days, and am as much domesticated in the mansion as my cousin's Newfoundland dog. I know the names and "*sobriquet*" of the establishment; can discriminate between "*Hamish-a-neilan*" (James of the island) and *Andy-bawn* (Fair Andy); I hold converse with the cook, and am hand-and-glove with the housemaid. Really I am delighted with the place, for every thing is wild, new, and out-of-the-way; but I must describe the *locale* of my kinsman's domicile.

At the bottom of a narrow creek, you must imagine "a low snug dwelling, and in good repair." The foam of the Atlantic breaks sometimes against the windows, while a huge cliff, seaward, defends it from the storm, and, on the land side, a sudden hill shelters it from the north wind. Here, when the tempest roars abroad, your friend Laura might venture forth and not endanger a *papillotte*. The bent* roof is impervious to the rain; the rooms are neat, well arranged, and comfortable. In the parlour, if the evening be chilly, a turf fire sparkles on the hearth; and when dried bog-deal is added to the embers, it emits a fragrant and delightful glow, superseding the necessity of candles. The long and measured swell of the Atlantic would almost lull a troubled conscience to repose; and that rural hum, which attends upon the farm-yard, rouses the refreshed sleeper in the morning. In the calm of evening I hear the shrill cry of the sand-lark; and in

edges of puttified timber, shippes, oars, anchor-holders, and such like, which in processe, taking lively heate of the sunne, become water-fowles, and, at their time of ripenesse, either fall into the sea, or fly abroad into the ayre."—*Campion's Historie.* NOBP

* The customary thatch in parts of Erris.

the early dawn, the crowing of the cock-grouse. I see the salmon fling themselves over the smooth tide, as they hurry from the sea to reascend their native river. And while I drink claret that never paid the revenue a farthing, or indulge over that proscribed beverage—the produce and the scourge of this wild district—I trace from the window the outline of a range of hills, where the original red-deer of Ireland are still existing—none of your park-fed venison, that tame, spiritless diminutive, which a boy may assassinate with his "birding-piece," but the remnant of that noble stock, which hunters of other days, *O'Connor the Cus Dhu,** and *Cormac Bawn Mac Tavish* once delighted in pursuing.

The offices of this wild dwelling are well adapted to the edifice. In winter, the ponies have their stable; and kine and sheep a comfortable shed. Nor are the dogs forgotten; for them a warm and sheltered kennel is fitted up with benches, and well provided with straw. Many a sporting-lodge in England, on which thousands have been expended, lacks the comforts of my kinsman's unpretending cottage. Where are the coach-houses? Those, indeed, would be useless appendages; for the nearest road on which a wheel could turn, is ten miles distant from the lodge.

CHAPTER VI.

Periodicals—Cockney sports and sportsmen—Mountain angler and his attendant—Fishing-tackle—Antony the otter-killer—Visit the river—Flies—Hooking my first salmon—Return to the lodge—Sporting authors — Sir Humphry Davy—Colonel Hawker—Salmonia—Criticisms.

The last post-bag brought a large supply of newspapers and monthly literature. "Gad-o'-mercy!" what notions the fishermen of Cockaign must have of the "gentle art!" It is amusing to read the piscatory articles so seriously put forth in the sporting periodicals. No persons on earth suffer more personal inconvenience than the Cockney artist, or submit so patiently to pecuniary imposition — and like virtue, their

* Blackfoot.

trouble is its own reward. Punt-fishing and perch-fishing, baiting-holes, and baiting-hooks, appear to the mountain fisherman so utterly worthless, that I do not wonder at the sovereign contempt with which he regards the unprofitable pursuits of the city angler.*

What a contrast to the Cockney bustle of a Londoner does my cousin's simple preparation for a morning's sport exhibit! If the wind and clouds are favourable, the rod, ready jointed and spliced, is lifted from beneath the cottage eave, where it "lay like a warrior taking his rest," on a continuation of level pegs. The gaff and pannier are produced by a loose-looking mountaineer, whose light-formed but sinewy limbs are untrammelled by shoe or stocking. Fond of the sport himself, he evinces an ardent interest in your success; on the moor and by the river he is a good-humoured and obliging assistant; traverses the mountains for a day, and lies out on the hill-side through the long autumnal night, to watch the passage of the red deer as they steal down from the mountain-top to browse on the lower grounds by moonlight.

How different from this wild and cheerful follower are the sporting attendants of the unhappy Cockney! he must consort with "bacon-fed knaves," be the companion of your brawny jolter-headed porter-swollen waterman, who in sulky silence paddles his employer into some phlegmatic pool, where the disciple of Walton is secure of the lumbago, but by no means certain of a sprat.

In truth, dear George, I am half ashamed of myself: I came here loaded with rods, flies, and baskets, with the "thousand and one" nameless *et cetera* furnished from a city tackle-shop, in their uses and appearance various as the cargo of the ark. When I displayed yesterday this accumulation of "engines and cunning devices," my cousin burst into a roar of laughter, and inquired if I intended to annihilate the fishery?" Then, turning, leaf by leaf, three immense fly-books over, he praised the pretty feathers, commended the brightness of the tinsel, and good-naturedly assured me

* "To induce fish to come to any particular spot, boiled wheat, grains of malt graves (from the tallow-chandler's) cut small, should be thrown in *plentifully* two or three times. A composition of *ground malt, blood, and clay* is the best for salmon and trout: to which some add ivy-gum."—*Daniel.* Rev W.B. Bib. P&p76

that this rich assemblage did not possess a fly of the value of one farthing. I fear his verdict was a true one; I have tried two days consecutively and never hooked a fish. But no, the water was too low, the wind too high, or something was amiss, for I have the best flies procurable in the best shop in London.

The storm terminated as summer gales do, in a heavy fall of rain. Although the wears are raised to intercept the passage of the fish from the sea, the late *freshes*, joined to a spring tide, have enabled both trout and salmon to overleap the barrier and fill the pools above it. Want of success had damped my ardour for piscation; and besides, I had involved myself in a most amusing article in Blackwood, and felt an unwillingness to lay aside the book. At this moment of indecision, old Antony the otter-killer, one of that numerous and nondescript personages who *locate* themselves in the houses of the Irish gentry, passed the window with a fine salmon and a brace of trout sixteen inches long. How fresh and sparkling is the phosphoric shading of the scales, as the old man turns them round for my inspection! What a beautiful fish! it barely measures thirty inches, and is fully ten pounds weight! That short and deep-shouldered *briddawn** is worth all the lubberly roach, dace, perch, and gudgeons, that the Thames contains from its source to its debouchement.

I looked after the ancient otter-hunter with envy. How lowly would he be estimated in the eyes of a Cheapside fisherman; one, who wears a modest-coloured jacket,† lest a showy garment might annoy the plethoric animals he is dabbling for, — whose white basket is constructed of the finest wicker work — with rods and reels, floats and flies, pastes and patties, lines and liqueurs sufficient to load a donkey, — how contemptuously would he look down upon honest Antony! Figure to yourself a little feeble man, dressed

* A salmon.

† "Our forefathers were wont to pursue even their amusements with great formality: an angler, a century and a half back, must have his fishing-coat, which, if not black, must at least be of a very dark colour, a *black velvet cap*, like those which jockeys now wear, and a rod with a stock like a halberd; thus equipped, he stalked forth, followed by the eyes of a whole neighbourhood."—*Daniel.*

in a jerkin of coarse blue cloth, with an otter (a fancy of my cousin's) blazoned on his arm: in one hand he holds a fish-spear, which assists him when he meets with rugged ground, in the other, a very unpretending angle, jointed rudely with a penknife, and secured by waxen threads; a *cast* of flies are wound about his hat, and his remaining stock, not exceeding half-a-dozen, are contained between the leaves of a tattered song-book: in the same depository he has some silk, dyed mohair, a hare's ear, and a few feathers from the cock, brown turkey, and mallard; and these simple materials furnish him with most efficient flies, but he requires a bright day to fabricate them, as his sight is indifferent.

It required much persuasion and a positive assurance of success, before I ventured with my kinsman to the river. Ten minutes' easy walking brought us to a noble pool above the Wear, where my friend never fails to kill a salmon, if the wind be westerly and the water not too low. The water was in beautiful order, and my cousin insisted that, under his direction, I should once more try my fortune with the fishing-rod. Discarding my gaudy flies with a malediction upon the knave who tied them, he affixed two of his upon the casting-line; and nothing could be of a simpler character than those selected from his book. The tail-fly was a plain black and orange mohair body, with a long and pointed turkey-feather wing; the dropper was formed of blue and scarlet wool, ribbed with silver, a pheasant sprit for legs, and mixed wings of the turkey and mallard.

I made several unsuccessful casts: "A bad look-out, friend Julius. Heaven forfend that the cook has placed any dependence on the angle!" Again I tried the pool, and, like all disappointed fishermen, began to prognosticate a change of weather. "I had remarked mares' tails in the sky yesterday evening, and there was rain over head, for a hundred!" My cousin smiled; when, suddenly, my nebulous speculations were interrupted by a deep, sluggish roll at the dropper. "*Monamondiaoul!*"* exclaimed *Mortien Beg*,† as he caught a momentary glance of the broad and fan-like tail. "He is fifteen pound weight!" Obedient to the directions of my Mentor, I left the spot the salmon leaped in, and commenced

* An Irish imprecation. † Little Martin.

casting a dozen yards below it. Gradually I came over him again. "A light cast, Frank, and you have him!" I tried, and succeeded gallantly. I sent the fly across the water with the lightness of the thistle's down, as at the same moment the breeze eddied up the stream, and curled the surface deliciously. A long dull ruffle succeeded—whish! span the wheel; whish-h-h-h-h, whish-h-h-, whish! I have him!

Nothing, my dear George, can be more beautiful than the play of a vigorous salmon. The lubberly struggles of a pond-fish are execrable to him who has felt the exquisite pleasure that attends the conquest of "the monarch of the stream." His bold rushes—his sudden and rapid attempts to liberate himself from the fisher's thrall—the energy with which he throws his silver body three or four feet above the surface of the water—and the unwearied and incessant opposition he makes, until his strength is exhausted by the angler's science; all this must be experienced to be adequately conceived. In ten minutes I mastered my beautiful victim; and Mortien Beg gaffed and landed a splendid summer fish, which, if the cook's scales be correct, weighed *thirteen pounds and seven ounces*.

Overjoyed with my success, I proceeded up the river. My cousin brought me to several delightful pools; and, with his assistance, I raised and hooked several capital fish, but only landed one of them, a nice and active salmon of about eight pounds weight. From half a dozen white trout fresh from the sea, I received excellent amusement; and at six o'clock returned to dinner, gratified with my sport, pleased with myself, and at peace with all mankind, excepting that confounded cozener, the tackle-merchant in —— Street.

Over our wine, the conversation naturally turned upon the "gentle art." My kinsman is both a practical and a scientific angler. "Holding, with few exceptions, all published sporting productions in disrepute, one that I remarked on your bookstand, Julius, strikes me as being at the same time clever and useful: I mean Sir Humphry Davy's."

"It is both, Frank: his account of the habits and natural history of the salmon species is just, ingenious, and amusing; and there is a calm and philosophic spirit that pervades the whole, rendering it a work of more than common interest. But, practically, it is as useless as all *Guides* and *Manuals*,

since the days of Walton. Of the uninitiated it will make fishermen, where *Colonel Hawker's* directions enable a man to shoot, who has never been five miles from Holborn-bars. I doubt not but Sir Humphry was an ardent and *scientific* fisherman, but in many practical points I differ with him. He angled well, but he fished like a philosopher. If he haunted this river for a season, unless he altered his system materially, he would not kill a dozen salmon. Flies, such as he describes, would never, in any seasons or weathers, be successful here. He fairly says, that 'different rivers require different flies;' but nothing like those he recommends would answer this one;—and, although many of the theories and speculative opinions are very ingenious, I question much their validity.

"Admiring Sir Humphry as I do, I would pardon his philosophy and fine flies, his 'golden pheasant, silken-bodied, orange, red, and pale-blue, silver-twisted, and king's-fisher mixtures,' even to his 'small bright humming-bird' itself; but, with all my Christian charity and personal affection, there is one fatal passage, for which, like Lady Macbeth's soiled hand, there is no remedy. Would that I could 'pluck from the memory' that luckless page! But, alas! whenever I see *Salmonia,* it rushes to my recollection. Think, Frank, of a man who limited a party of sporting tourists to *half a pint of claret!* and threatened an honest gentleman, who called for another bottle, with 'an overflow of blood,' 'a suffusion of the hæmorrhoidal veins,' and, worse than all, 'a determined palsy,'* if he persevered! I could have forgiven the philosopher any thing—every thing—even to the comparison of that rascally fish, the perch, with the rich and luxurious mullet; but to *fob off* four stout gentlemen with a solitary

* Doctors will disagree—*vide* Daniel's Account of Joe Man, gamekeeper to Lord Torrington. "He was in constant strong morning exercise; he went to bed always betimes, *but never till his skin was filled with ale.* This," he said, "would do no harm to an early riser, and to a man who pursued field-sports. At seventy-eight years of age he began to decline, and then lingered for three years;—his gun was ever upon his arm, and he still crept about, not destitute of the hope of fresh diversion."—Vol. ii. p. 172.

"Inhabitants (especially new comers) are subject to distillations, rhumes, and fluxes; for remedy whereof they use an ordinary drink of aqua-vitæ, so qualified in the making, that it dryeth more, and infiameth lesse, than other hote confections."—*Campion's Historie,* 1571.

bottle of the *vin ordinaire* ycleped claret, that one meets with in a country inn! For God's sake, ring the bell! Here, John, some wine! Nothing but a fresh bottle can allay my indignation, and restore my tranquillity."

"Well, we must admit that Sir Humphry would not be exactly the man to fill the chair at an Irish 'symposium;' but, his Bacchanalian antipathies apart, he really is an agreeable and instructive writer."

"Why, ye-es; still there is a dash of milk-and-water throughout *Salmonia*, that nothing but its ingenious account of the affinities and natural history of fishes could compensate. Take, for example, the introduction of the Fishing-Party, and remark the colloquy between Halieus and Poietes:—

"*Hal.*—'I am delighted to see you, my worthy friends, on the banks of the Colne; and am happy to be able to say, that my excellent host has not only made you free of the river for this day's angling, but insists upon your dining with him—wishes you to try the evening fishing, and the fishing to-morrow morning—and proposes to you, in short, to give up twenty-four hours to the delights of an angler's May-day.'

"*Poiet.*—'We are deeply indebted to him; and I hardly know how we can accept his offer, without laying ourselves under too great an obligation.'

"*Hal.*—'Fear not: he is as noble-minded a man as ever delighted in good offices: and so benevolent, that I am sure he will be almost as happy in knowing you are amused, as you can be in your sport: and hopes for an additional satisfaction in the pleasure of your conversation.'

"*Poiet.*—'So let it be.'

"*Hal.*—'I will take you to the house; you shall make your bow, and then you will be all free to follow your own fancies. Remember, the dinner-hour is five; the dressing-bell rings at half-past four; be punctual to this engagement, from which you will be free at seven.'

"Now, because a country gentleman takes heart, and invites four philosophers to dinner, Hal can scarcely find words to communicate the hospitable message, and Poietes opines that the obligation shall be eternal. After the worthy host is lauded for this generous act to the very skies, it appears that he bundles off the company at seven o'clock, and, before they had time to look around the table, quoits them out, 'like a shove-groat shilling!'—But hark; the diner is in

the hall. *Shin suis, Cormac !** Pass the wine, and a fig for philosophy !"

CHAPTER VII.

Symptoms of a coming storm—A Sportsman's Dinner—Old John—Pattigo—Gale comes on—Shawn a tra buoy—Seals—The blind Seal.

THE morning had a sullen look; *Slieve More* retained his nightcap; the edge of the horizon where the ocean met the sky was tinged with a threatening glare of lurid sunshine; the wind was capricious as a woman's love—now swelling into gusts, now sinking to a calm, as the unsteady breeze shifted round to every point "i' the shipman's card." As evening approached, the clouds collected in denser masses, and the giant outline of Slieve More was lost in a sheet of vapour. The swell from the Atlantic broke louder on the bar; the piercing whistle of the curlew was heard more frequently; and the small hard-weather tern, which seldom leaves the Black Rock but to harbinger a coming tempest, was ominously busy; whirling aloft in rapid circles, or plunging its long and pointed wing into the broken surface of the billow. All portended a storm; the wind freshened momentarily, and at last blew steadily from the south-east.

I was at the door, engaged in speculating upon the signs of the approaching gale, when old John, my kinsman's grey-headed butler, summoned me to dinner.—Some say that a bachelor's repast has always a lonely and comfortless appearance; and it may be so. I grant that a sprinkling of the sexes adds to the social character of the table; but this apart, with the abatement of that best society—*lovely woman*, who shall dine more luxuriously than I? Two hours' rabbit-shooting in the sand-hills has given me a keen and wholesome appetite. That salmon at noon was disporting in the sea, and this kid was fatted among the heath-flowers of the mountain-glen. *Kitchener* and *Kelly* could take no exception to the cookery; and had these worthies still been inhabitants of "this fair round globe," the Doctor would have found

* Play up, Cormac!

ample amusement for "every man's master, the stomach," and honest *Myke* might have safely ventured to dinner without his "*sauce piquante*."

In due time the cloth disappeared; a bundle of split bog-deal was laid upon the hearth, and speedily lighted into a cheerful blaze. Old John, with the privilege of an ancient retainer, conversed with us as he extracted a fresh cork for the evening's potation. "Awful weather in July, sir. Well, that *Shawn a tra buoy** is a wonderful beast; I knew a change of weather was at hand when he rose beside the shore last night, and showed his grey head and shoulders over the water."

"Is the seal, John, a sure foreteller of an approaching storm?"

"A certain one, sir: I remember him from I was a boy in the old master's kitchen—the Lord be merciful to his soul! *Shawn a tra buoy's* features are as familiar to me as my own; I would swear to him among a thousand."

"You see him frequently?"

"Oh, yes, sir. When the salmon come in, he is every day upon the yellow strand opposite the lodge: there you will see him chase the fish into the shoal-water, catch them beside the boats, ay, or if that fails, take them from the nets, and rob the fishermen. Year after year he has returned with the salmon, spending his summer on the 'tra-buoy,' and his winter near Carrig-a-boddagh."

"How has he escaped so long, John? Has he not been often fired at?"

"A thousand times; the best marksmen in the country have tried him without success. People say that, like the *master otter*, he has a charmed life; and latterly nobody meddles with him."

Old John's narrative was interrupted by the entrance of another personage; he was a stout burly-looking man, with indifferent good features, a figure of uncommon strength, and a complexion of the deepest bronze. He is the schipper of my cousin's hooker. After a career of perilous adventure in piloting the Flushing smugglers to the coast, he has abandoned his dangerous trade, to pass an honester and safer life in future.

"Well, *Pattigo*,† what news?"

* Jack of the yellow strand.

† A by-name.

"The night looks dirty enough, sir; shall we run the hooker round to Tallaghon, and get the rowing-boats drawn up?" His master assented, and ordered him the customary glass of poteen, Pattigo received it graciously in the fingers of his right hand—for he has lost his thumb by the bursting of a blunderbuss in one of his skirmishes with the Revenue—made his ship-shape bow, clapped his *sow-wester* on, and vanished.

The storm came on apace; large and heavy drops struck heavily against the windows; the blast moaned round the house; I heard the boats' keels grate upon the gravel, as the fishermen hauled them up the beach; I saw Pattigo slip his moorings, and, under the skirt of his main-sail, run for a safer anchorage. The rain now fell in torrents; the sea rose, and broke upon the rocks in thunder; mine host directed the storm-shutters to be put up, ordered in candles, with a fresh supply of billets for the fire, and we made final preparations to be comfortable for the night.

Were I required to name the most *recherché* of my kinsman's luxuries. I should specify his unrivalled "canastre." An ample quantity of this precious *tabac*, (brought from Holland by a smuggler), with excellent Dutch pipes, was produced by honest John, who rises hourly in my estimation. There was also an *addendum* in the shape of a foreign-looking bottle, which the ancient servitor averred to have been deposited in the cellar since the time of "the master's father." If it were so, the thing is a marvel; for such liquor is rarely vouchsafed to mortals. Alas! George, while my aching head testifies a too devoted attachment to that misshapen flask, the unequalled flavour of the exquisite *schiedam* it contained will ever haunt my memory.

"I remarked," said my kinsman, as he struck the ashes from his meerschaum, "that you appeared amused with old John's history of *Shawn a tra buoy*. Although, in its wild state, the seal is always shy, and sometimes dangerous, yet when taken young it is easily domesticated, and susceptible of strong attachment to its keepers.* There is a curious story told of

* In January, 1819, in the neighbourhood of Burnt Island, a gentleman completely succeeded in taming a seal: its singularities attracted the curiosity of strangers daily. It appeared to possess all the sagacity of the dog, and lived in its master's house, and ate from his hand. In his fishing excursions, this gentleman generally took it with him; upon

one of these animals—I believe the leading incidents of the narrative to be perfectly authentic; and it is a memorable record of enduring attachment in the animal, and exquisite barbarity in the man. The tale runs thus:—

"About forty years ago a young seal was taken in Clew Bay, and domesticated in the kitchen of a gentleman, whose house was situated on the sea-shore. It grew apace, became familiar with the servants, and attached to the house and family; its habits were innocent and gentle; it played with the children, came at its master's call, and, as the old man described him to me, was 'fond as a dog, and playful as a kitten.'

"Daily the seal went out to fish, and, after providing for his own wants, frequently brought in a salmon or turbot to his master. His delight in summer was to bask in the sun, and in winter to lie before the fire, or, if permitted, creep into the large oven, which at that time formed the regular appendage of an Irish kitchen.

"For four years the seal had been thus domesticated, when, unfortunately, a disease, called in this country *the crippawn*—a kind of paralytic affection of the limbs, which generally ends fatally—attacked some black cattle belonging to the master of the house; some died, others became infected, and the customary cure produced by changing them to drier pasture failed. A wise woman was consulted, and the hag assured the credulous owner, that the mortality among his cows was occasioned by his retaining an unclean beast about his habitation—the harmless and amusing seal. It must be made away with directly, or the crippawn would continue, and her charms be unequal to avert the malady. The superstitious wretch consented to the hag's proposal; and the seal was put on board a boat, carried out beyond Clare Island, and there committed to the deep, to manage for himself as he best could. The boat returned, the family retired to rest, and next morning a servant awakened her master to tell him that the seal was quietly sleeping in the oven. The poor animal

which occasion it afforded no small entertainment. When thrown into the water, it would follow for miles the track of the boat, and although thrust back by the oars, it never relinquished its purpose; indeed, it struggled so hard to regain its seat, that one would imagine its fondness for its master had entirely overcome the natural predilection for its native element.

overnight came back to his beloved home, crept through an open window, and took possession of his favourite resting-place.

"Next morning another cow was reported to be unwell; and the seal must now be finally removed. A Galway fishing-boat was leaving Westport on her return home, and the master undertook to carry off the seal, and not put him overboard until he had gone leagues beyond Innis Boffin. It was done: a day and night passed; the second evening closed; the servant was raking the fire for the night; something scratched gently at the door—it was, of course, the house-dog—she opened it, and in came the seal! Wearied with his long and unusual voyage, he testified, by a peculiar cry expressive of pleasure, his delight to find himself at home; then stretching himself before the glowing embers of the hearth, he fell into a deep sleep.

"The master of the house was immediately apprised of this unexpected and unwelcome visit. In the exigency, the beldame was awakened and consulted: she averred that it was always unlucky to kill a seal, but suggested that the animal should be deprived of sight, and a third time carried out to sea. To this hellish proposition the besotted wretch who owned the house consented; and the affectionate and confiding creature was cruelly robbed of sight on that hearth, for which he had resigned his native element! Next morning, writhing in agony, the mutilated seal was embarked, taken outside Clare Island, and for the last time committed to the waves.

"A week passed over, and things became worse instead of better; the cattle of the truculent wretch died fast, and the infernal hag gave him the pleasurable tidings that her arts were useless, and that the destructive visitation upon his cattle exceeded her skill and cure.

"On the eighth night after the seal had been devoted to the Atlantic, it blew tremendously. In the pauses of the storm a wailing noise at times was faintly heard at the door. The servants, who slept in the kitchen, concluded that the *Banshee** came to forewarn them of an approaching death, and

* The *Banshee* is a nondescript being, supposed to be attached to particular families, and to take a lively interest in their weal or misfortunes; and there are few ancient houses in Ireland unprovided with this domestic spirit. It gives notice of impending calamity—and a death

buried their heads in the bed-coverings. When morning broke, the door was opened—and the seal was there lying dead upon the threshold!"

"Stop, Julius!" I exclaimed, "give me a moment's time to curse all concerned in this barbarism."

"Be patient, Frank," said my cousin, "the *finale* will

in the family is always harbingered by the lamentations of the ill-omened *attaché*. The sex of the banshee is usually feminine; but I knew one instance where a male familiar attended on an old house, and was known by the title of the "Far-a-crick." The banshee was contented with frightening the family she patronised with her laments; but the Far-a-crick was a more troublesome neighbour. On one occasion he beat severely a drunken servant who was belated returning from a fair—and a quarter of mutton, which the unhappy man was bringing home, confirmed the story, for after the "Hill man's" assault, it was found to be as black as the ribs of the unfortunate sufferer.

The appearance of the banshee is variously described—as she sometimes assumes the form of "a little wizened old woman," and at others takes the semblance of "a black bitch."

probably save you that trouble. The skeleton of the once plump animal—for, poor beast, it perished from hunger, being incapacitated from blindness to procure its customary food—was buried in a sand-hill, and from that moment misfortunes followed the abettors and perpetrators of this inhuman deed. The detestable hag who had denounced the inoffensive seal, was, within a twelvemonth, hanged for murdering the illegitimate offspring of her own daughter. Every thing about this devoted house melted away: sheep rotted, cattle died, 'and blighted was the corn.' Of several children, none reached maturity, and the savage proprietor survived every thing he loved or cared for. He died *blind* and miserable.

"There is not a stone of that accursed building standing upon another. The property has been passed to a family of a different name, and the series of incessant calamity which pursued all concerned in this cruel deed is as romantic as true."

It was midnight: I laid down my pipe, took a candle from the sideboard, wished my cousin "a good night, and went to bed, full of pity for the gentle and affectionate seal.

CHAPTER VIII.

A wet day—Fly-tying—Piscatory disquisitions—The tinker—Lessons in the "gentle art"—An unexpected ally.

The night throughout continued wild and blustrous; the squalls which shook the casements became less frequent and violent towards morning; the wind settled in the south, and dying gradually away, was succeeded by a heavy and constant fall of rain. To stir out of doors was impossible; the Lodge is unprovided with a billiard-table, and it requires ingenuity to contrive some occupation for the long duration of a summer's day.

The breakfast was prolonged as much as possible; it ended, however, and my kinsman left me to give some necessary directions to his household. I seated myself in the window; the view seaward was interrupted by the thick-

ness of the weather, the rain dropped from the thatch incessantly, the monotonous splash of the falling water, with the sombre influence of a dull and torpid atmosphere, gradually produced a drowsiness, and I fell fast asleep over a dull collection of sporting anecdotes. My cousin's return roused me; he placed a spider-table beside the window, and, having unlocked a box filled with angling materials, "in great and marvellous disorder," proceeded to extract, from a mass of unmentionable things, the requisites for dressing a cast or two of flies. As my own voluminous book had been sadly discomposed in the numerous interchanges I made, when vainly trying to seduce a salmon to try my "tinsel and fine feathers," I proceeded to arrange my splendid collection, while my kinsman was busied with his own simple stock. The disappointment I had endured in finding my flies so unprofitable, had made me hold the entire outfit of the London artist in disrepute; and I would have given my most elaborate and expensive fishing-rod for the hazel angle of the ancient otter-killer.

"Frank," said my cousin, "you must not undervalue what really is unexceptionable; I mean the mechanical part of your collection. Those rods are beautiful; and your reels, lines, gut, and hooks, cannot be surpassed; your flies may be excellent in an English river, so put them carefully aside, as I will supply you with some better adapted to our mountain streams. But what a size that book is! In fishing, as in literature, the schoolmen's adage holds, *Mega biblion, mega kakon.* Why, nothing but a soldier's pack would carry it! we will soon, however, render you independent of this mighty magazine, by teaching you to fabricate your own flies."

"I fear I am too old to learn; the art of tying must, I presume, be acquired early in life, and brought to perfection by after experience."

"This does not always follow; I did, when a boy, tie flies passably; but, having left off fishing when I removed from my native river, I forgot the art, and depended on others for my supply. The person who furnished my casting-lines fell sick, and it unluckily happened that his illness occurred in the best period of the season; and as the river was filled with fish, constant service soon wore out my scanty store. Necessity is the mother, — you know the proverb, — I was

sadly reduced; ground blunted hooks and patched ravelling bodies, till at last my stock was reduced to half-a-dozen, and that half-dozen to perfect skeletons. What was to be done? Man is an imitative animal—I endeavoured to fabricate—produced something between a bird and a bee—tried again, succeeded better; and before my artist had recovered, by the shade of Walton! I could turn out a reputable fly."

"I believe I must make an attempt."

"You shall succeed, and, as a preliminary, I will put you under the tutelage of my worthy neighbour, the priest. Observe his style of casting, and mark the facility with which he sends five-and-thirty feet of hair and gut across the broadest pool. I fish tolerably, but have repeatedly laid aside my rod to admire the beautiful casting of this perfect master of the angle."

"He ties a very handsome fly, no doubt."

"I won't say that,—he ties a very *killing* one. I expect him presently; and as the day is wet, I'll leave the materials ready, and to-morrow, if the rain ceases soon, we shall prove the value of his flies.

"As we are on the subject of tying, I must observe, that the advantage one derives from being able to construct his own flies is wonderful; in fact, without attaining this accomplishment in the 'gentle art' no one can fish comfortably or successfully. No stock, however extensive, will afford a supply adapted for every change of weather and water; and a man may lose a day overlooking an interminable variety of kinds and colours, in a vain search after one killing fly. Not so the *artist:* the favourite insect being once ascertained, he speedily produces an imitation, and fills his basket; while his less fortunate neighbour is idly turning the pages of his overstocked fishing-book.

"I had two sporting friends, who were excellent instances of this. Colonel S——— was an ardent, and, I may add, a very tolerable angler; and no one went to more trouble and expense in procuring the most approved flies. He never tied, or attempted to tie one, and he assured me he had many hundred dozens in his possession. To find a new fly was with him sometimes the labour of a day; and when about to try another water, he would spend hours toiling through his immense collection, before he could succeed in discovering

the necessary colour and description. I have seen him, with Job-like patience, labouring through endless papers and parcels, in search of a paltry insect that I could fabricate in five minutes.

"His companion, Captain B——, ran into an opposite extreme. He rarely had a second casting-line, and seldom a second set of flies. Did the day change, or the river fill or lower, he sat down on the bank, ripped wings and dubbings from his hooks, and prepared a new outfit in a twinkling. I never met an angler who was so certain of filling a basket as my friend B——. His system, however, I would totally disapprove of. Without burthening oneself with enough to furnish out a tackle-shop, a small and effective collection is desirable; and it is absurd to lose a fortunate half-hour tying on the river bank, what could be more conveniently fabricated during the tedium of a wet day within doors. An accident may rob the most discreet angler of his flies, and surely it is necessary to have a fresh relay to put up. But though I take a sufficiency along with me, I never leave home without being provided with the materials for constructing new ones. An hour may bring ephemeræ on the waters, which you must imitate, or you will cast in vain; before evening they have vanished and given place to some new variety of the insect world. Thus far, at least, the tyer possesses an advantage over him who cannot produce a fly, that no collection which human ingenuity can form will compensate.

"The best practical lesson I ever got originated in the following accidental occurrence. Some years ago I received private information, that a travelling tinker, who occasionally visited these mountains to make and repair the tin stills used by the peasantry in illicit distillation, was in the constant habit of destroying fish, and he was represented as being a most successful poacher. I was returning down the river after an unfavourable day, a wearied and a disappointed fisherman, and observed, at a short distance, a man chased across the bogs by several others, and eventually overtaken and secured. It was the unfortunate tinker, surprised by the keepers in the very act of landing a splendid salmon; two, recently killed, were discovered in his wallet, and yet that blessed day I could not hook a fish! He was forthwith brought in durance before *my honour*, to undergo the pains and penalties of his crime. He was a strange, raw-boned, wild-looking animal, and I

half suspect Sir Walter Scott had seen him before he sketched Watt Tinlin in the 'Lay.' He was a convicted felon—he had no plea to offer, for he was taken in the very fact. But he made two propositions wherewithal to obtain his liberty—'He would never sin again—or he would fight any two of the captors.' My heart yearned towards him—he was after all a brother—and admitting that rod and coat were not worth threepence, still he was an adept in the 'gentle art,' although the most ragged disciple that ever Walton boasted. I forgave him, dismissed the captors, and ordered him to the Lodge for refreshment. 'My honour had no sport,' and he looked carelessly at my flies. 'Would I condescend to try one of his?' and he put a strange-looking combination of wool and feathers on the casting-line. There was a fine pool near us—I tried it, and at the second cast I was fast in a twelve-pound salmon! My ragged friend remained with me some days; and in his sober intervals, 'few and far between,' gave me lessons in the art, that have been more serviceable than any I had hitherto acquired.

"Two years after, I was obliged to attend the winter fair of Ball to purchase cattle. It was twilight when I left it, and I had proceeded only a few miles towards a gentleman's house, where I was to dine and sleep, when my horse cast a shoe, and forced me to leave him at a smith's shop, which was fortunately at hand. The evening was chilly, and I determined to proceed on foot, directing my servant to follow. I passed a lonely *poteen-house*—several ruffian-looking fellows were on the road beside it. They were half-drunk and insolent—I was rash—words borrowed blows, and I soon discovered that I should have the worst of the battle, and was tolerably certain of a sound drubbing. Suddenly, an unexpected ally came to my assistance; he *dropped* the most formidable of the assailants as if he had been struck down by a sledge-hammer. A few blows settled the contest; and I turned round to recognise and thank my deliverer. ''Pon my sowl, you're mighty handy, Master Julius; it's a murder that ye don't practise oftener!' The speaker was my gifted friend—the tinker."

CHAPTER IX.

Sporting topography of Mayo—Hunting country—Fox covers—Cakes, rivers, and fish—A domiciliary visit—Revenue foray—Capture of drunken distillers—Alarm—Midnight meditations—Angling excursion—Goolamore—Salmon fishing—English and Irish hooks—Limerick preferable to all others.

To look, my dear George, at the map of Mayo, one would imagine that Nature had designed that county for a sportsman. The westerly part is wild and mountainous; alpine ridges of highlands interpose between the ocean and the interior, and from the bases of these hills a boundless tract of heath and moorland extends in every direction. To the east, the face of the country undergoes a striking change—large and extensive plains cover the surface, and as the lands are generally occupied in pasturage, and consequently not subdivided into the numerous enclosures which are requisite in tillage farming, this part of Mayo is justly in high estimation as a hunting country, and for centuries has been a favourite fixture of the neighbouring fox-hunters. *The Plains*, as this sporting district is usually denominated, afford constant opportunities for the horse to show his powers, and the rider his nerve. The parks are of immense size; the fences stiff and safe; the surface agreeably undulated, and from the firmness of the sward, affording superior galloping ground. One may occasionally ride over miles without being necessitated to take a leap; but when one does meet fences, they are generally *raspers;* and if the scent lies, and the dogs can *go*, nothing but a tip-top horse, and a man "who takes everything as God sends it," will hold a forward place upon *the plains*.

The covers in the vicinity of the plains are numerous and well supplied with foxes. Of these animals there is no scarcity anywhere in Mayo; but in the mountain districts there is, unfortunately, a superabundance. The herdsman and grouse-shooter complain sadly of their devastations; and notwithstanding numbers are annually dug out for hunting, or destroyed by the peasantry, there seems to be an anti-Malthusian property in the animal, which enables its mischievous stock, maugre traps and persecution, to increase and multiply.

While the country is peculiarly adapted for field-sports, the extensive lakes and numerous rivers offer every inducement to the angler: the streams are plentifully stocked with trout, and the rivers which communicate with the sea have a good supply of salmon. Curious varieties* of the finny tribe are to be found in the mountain loughs; and in those noble and expansive sheets of water, Lough Con, Lough Mask, and Lough Corrib, the largest and finest specimens of fish are easily obtained.

We have just had a domiciliary visit from the revenue police. Under cover of the night, they made a descent upon our valleys from their station, some fifteen miles off. Excepting causing dire alarm—a general abduction of stills, worms, and all the apparatus of the craft, and the concealment of malt, and the burying of kegs—the consequences of the foray have not been important. One fatal casualty occurred: a distillery had finished its brewing, (*i.e.* distilled the quantity brewed,) and principals and accessories were indulging a little after their exertions. Unluckily, the revenue stumbled upon the convivial meeting; and although the *stuff* was gone, the still, apparatus, and unextinguished fire, were proofs positive that the king—God bless him! had been wofully defrauded. Such of the party as could strike a walk escaped without difficulty; but two unhappy gentlemen who were blind drunk, and fast asleep in all security before the smouldering embers of the still-fire, were captured and conveyed to my loving cousin, to undergo the pains and penalties of their crime. He, as a matter of course, committed them to gaol; and the next going judge, as another matter of course, will discharge them. Meanwhile they are taken from their families, and supported at the expense of the county; their utility is lost when it is most requisite, and they are, during the term of incarceration, a useless burden upon the community. I cannot see the moral and legal expediency of all this; but the men who framed the revenue laws were probably more clear-sighted than I am.

When I first observed a score of banditti in blue jackets

* For example, the Gillaroo and Par.

and white cross-belts arranged before the Lodge, I felt particularly nervous; and old John, my refuge in perplexity, was immediately consulted. "John," said I, in a masonic whisper, "are we safe?"—"Safe! from what, Sir?"—"The gauger."—"Lord, Sir! he dines with us."—"But—but is there any *stuff* about the house?"—"Any! God alone can tell how much there is above and under."* "If any body told the gauger, John—"—"They would only tell him what he knows already. The gauger!—Lord bless you, Sir! he never comes or goes without leaving a keg or two behind him. If the master and he did not pull together, what the devil business would he have here? Don't mind, Sir; we know what we are about: *Tiggum Tigue Thigien!*"†

Midnight. I hope the weather has settled: the moon looks well, and, as John avers, the sun set favourably. There is, however, one solitary scintillating star;—one! there are two. Confound the *poteen!* it is the queerest, pleasantest, out-o'-the-way drink imaginable!—and the gauger told such odd stories, and sang such extraordinary songs! The sooner I am in bed the better! What a field the Temperance Society would have here for their exertions! Well, if I rise without a headache, I'll immortalize the man who first invented distillation.

We start under favourable auspices; a sweet, steady westerly wind is blowing, clouds and sunshine alternately prevail, the river should be in good order, and we anticipate that this will be a killing day.

We have determined to fish the sister stream; the waters of Goolamore unite in the same estuary with those of our own river, and yet the fish vary with regard to season as much as if they inhabited waters a thousand miles apart. In Goola-

* *Poteen* is commonly buried in the earth in small-sized vessels. This is done for the double purpose of improving the whisky and concealing it from the revenue. If detected in a dwelling-house, the owner incurs a penalty of one hundred pounds; notwithstanding which, there are few gentlemen in this part of Connaught who are not plentifully supplied with this proscribed spirit.

† An Irish proverb, literally meaning "Tim understands Teady."

more, throughout the whole year, white* salmon are found in high condition; in Aughniss, from October till April, the fish are red, spent, and worthless. In size, in character, the streams are much alike: they unite in their debouchement in the sea, and flow, but a few miles asunder, through a flat and moory country. That the fish of these sister streams should differ so much is surprising, and can only be attributed to one circumstance: Aughniss is a union of mountain-streams, Goolamore flows from an extensive lake, and affords an outlet to the waters of Carramore. Judging, therefore, from the constant supply of white fish which Goolamore yields all through the year, one would conclude that the lake offers better food and winterage to the salmon, than the shallower and colder waters of Aughniss.

Our expectations were fully realized, and we found the pools in excellent order. Independently of a west wind being a favourite point for the angler—in these rivers it blows against the current of the stream, and consequently increases the ruffle on the surface of the water, which in salmon fishing is so favourable. My cousin, who is perfectly acquainted with the local haunts of the salmon, placed me where I seldom failed to rise or hook a fish. What splendid angling this wild country offers! It spoils one in after-life, however. The man who has held a salmon on his line disrelishes the inferior amusements of the craft; the fox-hunter will seldom condescend to ride to beagles; the deer-stalker will not waste time and powder in a rabbit-warren; and the disciple of Izaac, who has once indulged in the exquisite delight of salmon fishing, will feel little satisfaction in the commoner pursuits and lesser pleasures of the gentle art.

We landed five salmon, besides taking a pannier full of sea-trouts. Had I been an adept, or better appointed than I was, we might have killed double the number of salmon. My flies were unluckily tied on London hooks, and from their defective quality and formation several fish escaped me. Repeated failures caused me to examine the hooks,

* By the simple appellation of white and red fish, the peasantry distinguish salmon when in and out of season. Indeed, the colour is such a perfect indicative of health and disease, that any person who has frequented a salmon river will, on seeing a fish rise, be enabled to tell with accuracy the state of his condition.

and I ascertained that they were both ill-shapen and badly tempered. My cousin had warned me against the consequences of using them, but I believed that he was prejudiced, and concluded that this department of my London outfit must be unobjectionable. The event, however, proved that I was deceived. My kinsman rarely lost a salmon, and mine broke from me continually. I find by sad experience, that in hook-making the Irish are far before us; our workmen either do not understand the method of forming and tempering hooks, or they do not take sufficient pains in their manufactory. It is strange when so much of the angler's pleasure and success depends upon the quality of his hooks, that more attention is not bestowed upon their fabrication. The art of forming, and the process of tempering them, appears simple enough; and that little difficulty is required to attain it, is evident from the fact, that many fishermen make their own hooks.* For my own part, however, I consider hook-making to be an unnecessary accomplishment for the angler, as the best hooks in the world can be procured without trouble, and at a trifling expense, from O'Shaughnessy of Limerick.†

CHAPTER X.

Salmon—Fishing described—Draughting—Fishing precarious—Change of season and condition—Poaching—Private distillation—Size and weight of Salmon—Sir H. Davy—Migration of Salmon—Natural history—Anecdotes and experiments—Lernææ Salmoneæ.

To those unacquainted with the method of taking salmon, a brief detail may not be uninteresting: premising that in other fisheries different means are employed, yet the simplest and general method is that used at Aughniss.

* "I have even made a hook, which, though a little inferior in form, in other respects, I think, I could boast as equal to the Limerick ones."—*Salmonia.*

† "I never use any hooks for salmon fishing except those which I am sure have been made by O'Shaughnessy of Limerick; for even those made in Dublin, though they seldom break, yet they now and then bend; and the English hooks, made of cast-steel, in imitation of Irish ones, are the worst of all."—*Salmonia.*

About March fly-fishing commences, and a strong and active spring fish will then frequently be killed, if the river is sufficiently supplied with water, and the wind brisk and *westerly*. As the season advances, the fishing materially improves; and from the month of April, salmon in the highest condition, with red and white trout, will rise here freely at the fly.

In June, however, the regular fishing with nets commences, and then the wear is raised to stop the passage of the fish, and the river water vented through a small aperture provided with a trap, or as it is technically called, a *box*. By these traps and artificial canals, in other fisheries the salmon are principally taken; but here, except some straggling fish, the box produces little.

The fishing is confined to the estuary, where the river meets the sea. Here, according to naturalists, the salmon undergo a probationary course, before they exchange the salt for the fresh water, as a sudden change from either would be fatal to the fish, and a temporary sojourn in water of an intermediate quality (brackish) is supposed to be requisite, before they can leave either the ocean or the river.

The draughting is carried on at the last quarter of the ebb, and during the first of flood—five or six boats, with as many men in each, are necessary. When the salmon are seen, the nearest boat starts off, leaving a man on shore, with a rope attached to one extremity of the net, which is rapidly thrown over, as the boat makes an extensive circle round the place where the fish is supposed to lie. Returning to the shore, the curve of the net is gradually decreased. Stones are flung in at each extremity, to prevent the salmon from escaping; the net reaches the bank, the semi-circle is complete, and all within effectually secured. The fish are then carefully landed, and at a single draught five hundred salmon have been taken. This is, however, an event of rare occurrence, and unless the net were powerfully strong, and the fishers skilful, a fracture, and consequently a general escape, would be inevitable.

The fishing here is exceedingly precarious. If the season be favourable from the 1st of July to the 12th of August, the daily average would be probably five hundred salmon, exclusive of an immense quantity of white trouts. But success depends entirely upon the weather. Should the season prove rainy or

tempestuous, the salmon directly leave the estuary, and remain at sea until the water clears and the storm abates; and the time allowed by law often expires before a moiety of the fish can be secured.

It is extraordinary how much the flavour and quality of the salmon depend on circumstances apparently of trifling moment. A single day in the river will injure, and a flood spoil their condition; and the difference between a fish taken in the nets, and one killed with a rod, will be easily perceptible.

Although in this water angling may be considered as ending in September, yet, through the succeeding months till spring, the fish rise freely at a fly. But the sport is very indifferent compared with summer angling; the salmon now has lost his energy; he struggles *laboriously* to get away, but his play is different from the gallant resistance he would have offered had you hooked him in July. I have landed and turned out again as many as nine salmon in one day, and their united exertions did not afford me half the amusement I have received from the conquest of one sprightly summer fish. Salmon appear to lose beauty and energy together. They are now reddish, dull, dark-spotted, perch-coloured fish, and seem a different species from the sparkling silvery creature we saw them when they first left the sea. As an esculent, they are utterly worthless—soft, flabby, and flavourless, if brought to table; and instead of the delicate pink hue they exhibited when in condition, they present a sickly, unhealthy, white appearance, that betrays how complete the change is that they have recently undergone.

And yet at this period they suffer mostly from night-fishers. This species of poaching* is as difficult to detect as it is ruinous in its consequences. It is believed that the destruction of a few breeding fish may cost the proprietor one thousand; such being the astonishing fecundity of the pregnant salmon!

Night fishing is carried on when the river is low, and the

* "When I made the tour of that hospitable kingdom in 1754, it (the Coleraine fishery) was rented by a neighbouring gentleman for £620 a year, who assured me that the tenant, his predecessor, gave for it £1600 per annum—andthat he was a greater gainer by the bargain, on account of the number of poachers, who destroy the fish during the fence month."—*Pennant.*

night moonless. The poacher, with a gaff and torch, selects some gravelly ford—for there, by a law of nature, the salmon resort to form beds in the stream, wherein to deposite their ova; and they continue working on the sand, until they are

discovered by the torch-light,* and gaffed by the plunderer. Hundreds of the breeding fish are annually thus destroyed; and although the greater fisheries may be tolerably protected, it is impossible to secure the mountain streams from depredation. If detected, the legal penalty upon poaching is trifling; and, as appeals on very frivolous grounds are allowed from the summary convictions of magistrates, it too frequently happens that delinquents evade the punitory consequences attendant on discovery.

Here, too, the evils of private distillation may be traced; for most of the depredations committed upon the salmon are effected by persons concerned in this demoralizing trade. They are up all night attending to the still. The watch kept against the revenue police, enables them to ascertain when the bargers are away, and the river consequently unguarded. A light is snatched from the still-fire, the hidden

* "There are a good many pike in the river near to Trolhatten. In the course of two successive days, I once took with my rod sixty-three of those fish; they were, however, small, their aggregate weight being little more than one hundred pounds. The largest fish weighed eight pounds. Great quantities of pike and other fish, salmon amongst the rest, are speared in the vicinity of Trolhatten by torch-light, many of the people thereabouts being adepts at that amusement."—*Lloyd.*

fish-spear speedily produced, and in a very short space of time an infinite deal of mischief is perpetrated.

I should be inclined to question the accuracy of weight which Sir Humphry gives his salmon. Fish, of the sizes he describes, are rarely met with here, and out of one thousand taken in the nets, there will not be ten fish of twenty-five pounds weight.

The average size is from seven to fifteen pounds. Within thirty years, but one monster has been taken; he weighed fifty-six pounds. Four years ago one of forty-eight pounds was caught: but of the thousands which I have seen taken, I would say, I never saw a fish weighing more than thirty-five pounds, and not many reaching even to twenty-five pounds.

The Priest, my neighbour, who lives on the banks of Goolamore, told me he once killed a salmon of twenty-seven pounds weight, and that the feat gave him an infinity of trouble, and occupied three mortal hours. The Priest fishes with tackle of amazing strength, and is one of the best practical anglers I have ever met with. Sir Humphry Davy mentions salmon of twenty-five and thirty pounds as being commonly taken with a fly. The largest I ever killed was eighteen pounds four ounces, and it gave me abundant exercise for an hour. Either Sir Humphry overrates the weight of Scottish salmon, or in the rivers he frequented they must be immensely superior to those found in the Irish waters. In the Shannon, I believe, the largest fish are found, and I am inclined to think, that even there the capture of salmon of this unusual magnitude, is an event of very rare occurrence.

Pennant states, "that the largest salmon ever known weighed seventy-four pounds. In September 1795, one measuring upwards of four feet from nose to tail, and three in circumference, weighing within a few ounces of seventy pounds, was sold at Billingsgate, and was the largest ever brought there. The Severn salmon are much inferior as to their bulk, for one taken near Shrewsbury, in 1757, weighing only thirty-seven pounds, is recorded in the British Chronologist, as exceeding in length any ever known to be taken in that river, and being the heaviest except one ever remembered in that town, They have in many parts been caught by angling,

with an artificial fly and other baits, upwards of forty pounds in weight."

Passing Grove's shop in Bond-street about a month ago, I remarked an immense fish extended in the window; I stopped to inquire what its weight might be, and was informed that it weighed forty-five pounds. It had been a little too long on its passage from Scotland, and I should be inclined to say, that at best it was a coarse flavoured fish, but in its present state a most indifferent one.

The migratory habits of the salmon, and the instinct with which it periodically revisits its native river, are curious circumstances in the natural history of this fish. As the swallow returns annually to its nest, as certainly the salmon repairs to the same spot in which to deposit its ova. Many interesting experiments have established this fact. M. de Lalande fastened a copper ring round a salmon's tail, and found that for three successive seasons it returned to the same place. Dr. Bloch states, that gold and silver rings have been attached, by Eastern princes to salmon, to prove that a communication existed between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian and Northern seas, and that the experiment succeeded. Shaw, in his Zoology, mentions that a salmon of seven pounds and three-quarters was marked with scissors on the back, fin, and tail, and turned out on the 7th of February, and that it was retaken in March of the succeeding year, and found to have increased to the amazing size of seventeen pounds and a half. This statement, by the by, is at variance with the theory of Dr. Bloch, who estimates the weight of a five or six year old salmon at but ten or twelve pounds.

That the salmon should lose condition rapidly on quitting the sea for the fresh water, may be inferred from a fact agreed upon by naturalists, that during the period of spawning, the fish neglects feeding. In this peculiar habit the salmon, however, is not singular, for animals of the Phocæ tribe, in breeding-time exercise a similar abstinence. On opening a salmon, at any season, no food will be discovered, and the contents of the stomach will be confined to a small quantity of yellowish fluid and tape-worms, which are generated there. Sir Humphry Davy believes that occasionally food may be found. I have seen thousands opened preparatory to being salted, and I never observed any thing but this fluid and tape-worms. Another circumstance may be stated as a curious proof of

health, as well as of the period of time the salmon has been resident in a river. When the fish leaves the sea, and of course is in its best condition, insects (the Lernææ Salmoneæ of Linnæus) will be perceived firmly adhering to the skin. Immediately on entering the fresh water, these insects begin to detach themselves from the salmon, and after a short time they gradually drop off and disappear.

CHAPTER XI.

Mullet—Preparations for mullet-fishing—Seals—Anecdotes—The Red Dwarf—His mode of killing seals—Catching a tartar—Pitching mullet nets—Excursion on the island—A wild guide—Coursing—Comparison between English and Irish greyhounds—Take of mullet—Return—Anecdotes of mullet fishing—The homicide.

Early this morning we received intelligence that a school* of mullet† had been seen on the preceding evening, working in a sandy bay some six miles distant from the Lodge—and as we determined to devote the day to fishing, the household were soon upon the alert, and a galley and row-boat were laden with nets, poles, and spars; half-a-dozen rifles and muskets put on board, and a stout and numerous crew, we started for the scene of action.

It was a bright and cheerful day; the sun sparkled on the blue water, which, unruffled by a breeze, rose and fell in the long and gentle undulations which roll in from the westward when the Atlantic is at rest. While pulling to the cove, we amused ourselves in shooting puffins as they passed us, or trying our rifles at a distant seal, while my kinsman's anecdotes whiled away the tedium of the voyage.

* Shoal.

† Although the grey mullet is common in the Mediterranean, it is in such indifferent repute that none but the lower classes use it. The red mullet is, however, held in the highest estimation, and from its scarcity and peculiar flavour is much sought after as a delicacy. It seldom exceeds a pound or two in weight, and it is dressed with the inside entire, as the woodcock is sent to table with his trail.

On our coasts it is rarely seen. At particular seasons the grey mullet visits us abundantly, and nothing can be more delicate, when *uninjured by keeping or carriage.*

"Seals are very numerous on the coast, and at this season a number may be seen any warm day you make an excursion up the sound of Achil. We shoot them occasionally—the skin makes a waterproof covering, and the fat affords an excellent oil for many domestic purposes. It is difficult however, to secure the animal, for numbers are shot and few gotten. The head is the only place to strike them, for even when mortally wounded in the body, they generally manage to escape. This fact we have ascertained, from finding them dead on shore many days after they were wounded, and at a considerable distance from the place where they had received the bullet. I shot one last autumn at the mouth of the river, and a fortnight afterwards he was taken up in the neighbourhood of Dhuhill. There could be no doubt as to the identity of the creature, for on opening him to extract the oil, a rifle-ball, such as I use, of the unusually small size of fifty-four to the pound, was found lodged in his lungs. Unless when killed outright, they sink instantly; and I have seen the sea dyed with blood, to an extent that proved how severely the seal had been wounded, but have never been able to trace him further.

"Formerly, when seal oil and skins were valuable, some persons on the coast made the pursuit of the animal a profession. There is one of these persons living near the Sound, a miserable dwarfish red-bearded wretch, whom you would consider hardly equal to grapple with a salmon, and yet he secures more seals than any hunter in the district. His method of effecting it is singular: he uses neither gun nor spear, but kills the animal with a short bludgeon loaded at the end with lead.

"Adjacent to the seal-killer's residence, there is a large rock uncovered at half-tide, and this appears the most favourite haunt for the animal to bask upon. The rock is easily approached from the main-land, and on a sunny day, when the wind favours the attempt, the hunter, undressed, and armed with his bludgeon, silently winds among the stones, and steals upon his sleeping prey. Wary as the creature is, the *Red Dwarf* seldoms fails in surprising him, and with astonishing expertness generally dispatches him with a single blow.

"The number he kills annually proves his extraordinary success. If the first blow fails, an event that seldom happens,

the dwarf is in considerable danger. When attacked, and especially at such a distance from the water as renders his escape doubtful, the seal will turn with amazing ferocity on the assailant. If it be an old one, in case his first essay is unsuccessful, the dwarf declines the combat and flies from his irritated enemy; but the cubs are taken without much difficulty.

"Last summer I was witness to a curious scene. Running through the Sound of Achil in my hooker, at a short distance to leeward I observed several men, who appeared to be practising a quadrille over the thafts and gunnels of a row-boat, as they never rested for a moment, but continued jumping from stem to stern, and springing from bench to bench. Struck by the oddity of their proceedings, I eased away the sheets and ran down upon them—and I was a

welcome ally, as the result proved. It turned out, that having espied a seal and her cub sleeping on the sand, they had procured an old musket and rowed over to attack them. They were partially successful, and seized the cub before it

could regain its native element, although the dam rendered all assistance possible to relieve the young one. Having placed their prize in the boat, they were returning, followed by the old seal, who kept rising beside them, attracted by the cries of the cub—till after many bootless attempts, their gun at last exploded, the ball entered the seal's head, and for a moment she appeared dying. The captors, seizing her by the tail and fins, with an united exertion dragged her into the boat—but this exploit had nearly ended in a tragedy. Stunned only by the wound, the animal instantly recovered, and, irritated by pain and maddened by the cries of her cub, attacked her captors fiercely. Every exertion they could make was necessary to save them from her tusks, and their oars were too long and clumsy to enable them to strike her with effect. I came most opportunely to the rescue, and by driving a carbine-bullet through the seal's brain brought the battle to a close. Never was the old saw of 'catching a Tartar' more thoroughly exemplified; and though we laughed at their terror-stricken countenances, the deep incisions made in the oars and gunnels by the tusks of the enraged animal, showed that *galopading* with an angry seal is anything but pleasure."

Although the mullet are generally first seen here in the month of June, from the wetness of this summer the shoals are later in their appearance than usual. Mullet are taken in draught-nets like salmon, but on this coast a different mode of fishing is pursued. The shoals in hot weather run in with the tide, and after remaining on the shores and estuaries during flood, they return with the ebbing water. The following method we employed in our fishing to-day. Being provided with a sufficient quantity of herring-nets and a number of spars and poles, we selected at low-water a sandy creek for our operations, and commenced erecting a line of poles across the entrance of the cove. The nets were then extended along these uprights, and also secured firmly to the bottom of the spars; the lower part of the net is kept upon the bottom by a row of stones, and the remainder laid flat upon the sands. With the flowing tide the fish pass over the prostrate net, and run along the estuary: at high water the buoy-ropes are raised and secured to the upright poles—and with the assistance of a boat the whole is effected in a few minutes, and a net-work barrier effectually

cuts off the retreat of all within. When the ebb of tide commences the mullet begin to retire, and when they discover that their egress is obstructed, their attempts to effect a passage are both constant and curious—now running down the nets, trying for a broken mesh by which to force an aperture —now with a bold spring endeavouring to clear the buoy-ropes, and even after repeated failures, leaping at it again and again. The last effort is directed to the bottom; but there the heavy stones resist every attempt to dislodge them, and deserted by the treacherous water, the mullet are left upon the bare sands.

As hours must elapse from the time the nets are laid down until the fish can be secured, I left my kinsman, who officiated as chief engineer. Having brought two brace of greyhounds with us, I set out to course, under the guidance of a man who joined my cousin on the island.

There was a striking air about the stranger, joined to his wild and haggard look, that at once riveted my attention. His clothes were much better than those of any of the peasantry I had yet seen, and in address and manner he was far superior to the rest of my cousin's retainers. He was not above five-and-twenty, his figure tall, gaunt, sinewy, and almost fleshless,—but his square shoulders and well-knit joints proved him to be a powerful and active man. I shall never forget the singular expression of his countenance. It was settled sorrow bordering on despair; the hollow cheek, the sunken rayless eye, the wandering and suspicious glance around him, all showed a mind fevered with apprehension and harrowed by remorse. He shunned observation, and if my eye met his by accident, he instantly looked another way. He was armed with a new carbine; and his whole bearing and appearance were so singular and alarming, that more than once I wished my kinsman had allotted me some other guide.

My companion was, however, shrewd and intelligent—and he appeared fond of field sports, and perfectly conversant with the arcana of shooting and coursing. He enumerated with the science of a connoisseur the points, and praised the beauty of a pair of English dogs I had brought with me; but told me "*the master's* (my kinsman's usual title) would outrun them *here*." I differed with him in opinion. Mine

were of distinguished breeding, the produce of a Swaffham sire, and compared with my cousin's, appeared descended from a giant-stock. His, certainly, were beautiful diminutives; but as I conceived, very unequal to compete with animals of such superior strength and size as mine—yet the result proved how correctly my wild companion judged.

Our first start was on hard, firm ground—and here my dogs outstripped my kinsman's, although they displayed uncommon fleetness. Being hard pressed, puss crossed a morass and ran into an unsound bog. Then were my guide's predictions verified. From their own weight, my dogs sank and floundered in the swamp; while my cousin's topping the surface with apparent ease, turned and killed the hare, while their larger companions were struggling through the mire.

On the second start puss left the moor, and took to the sea-shore, always a favourite run of island hares. Rushing headlong through rocks, and running over pointed pebbles, the English dogs were speedily disabled. But my cousin's, accustomed to the beach, ran with caution till they cleared the rocks, then taking advantage of the open strand, killed without a scratch, while my unpractised dogs were rendered unserviceable for a fortnight.

Generally speaking, the large and high-bred English greyhound is not adapted for Irish coursing. *There* he will encounter a soft and difficult surface, instead of the fine firm downs he has been accustomed to in his native country. And any plains on which he could exert his powers and prove his superiority, are, with few exceptions, in the possession of some pack, and of course preserved as hunting-grounds, and grey-hounds rigidly prohibited.

On returning to the estuary where I had left the fishing-party, I found the tide had fallen, and in a little time we were enabled to secure the spoil. We had enclosed upwards of a hundred mullets, weighing from four to ten pounds each. While embarking our nets and poles I observed several boats filled with men row towards us from a distance; and, after a short *reconnoissance*, return to the place from whence they came. The evening breeze blew fresh, and in our favour; the boatmen hoisted a large square sail; my kinsman took the tiller, and with wind and tide along with

us, in an hour we crossed the bay and reached our destination, accompanied by the tall melancholy looking man, who had been my companion in the island.

We dined sumptuously. The flavour of a mullet, fresh from the water, neither injured by land-carriage* nor spoiled by exposure to the sun, is exquisite. I mentioned casually, the noble addition which this delicious fish must give to my cousin's *cuisine*. "And they are so abundant, that I presume you seldom want them?" "The contrary is the case," he replied; "a remnant of barbarous usage prevents this wild population from benefiting by the ample supply which Providence sends to the shores. Did you remark several boats approach and reconnoitre us?"

"Yes, and what of it?"

"Nothing more than that they came with the laudable design of relieving us of the produce of our fishery. The natives believe that there is a prescriptive right to rob mullet-nets; and in consequence, none will be at the trouble of laying them down, if they have not a sufficient party to protect the fish when taken. You remarked the formidable preparations made this morning; they were requisite I assure you, or we should have returned home as lightly laden as we left it. Those people are not upon my territory, and I am on bad terms with their landlord. They would spoil me of fish without ceremony, and think themselves too indulgent in permitting me and my dependants to return with undamaged heads. Last year they robbed and beat my boatmen cruelly—and on the next occasion of a mullet *chasse*, I went in person. They soon discovered us, and with three boats full of men came to despoil us. I warned them off—but they were resolutely bent on mischief. Finding them determined, I let the leading boat approach within forty yards, and having them well under my fire, threw in two barrels loaded with B.B. shot. The effect was decisive, for out of a dozen marauders

* The general length of the common mullet *(mugil)* is from twelve to eighteen inches. When used immediately after being taken, the fish is excellent; carriage, even for a short distance, injures it, Dr. Bloch recommends *oil and lemon-juice* to be used with it at table. Vinegar, with parsley and melted butter, is better—"probatum est." This fish is sometimes preserved by salting; and from its spawn an inferior kind of caviar, called *Botargo*, is prepared by using the common process of curing and drying.

who formed the crew, not one escaped without receiving a fair proportion of the charge. They put about instantly, and for a fortnight afterwards, a country quack had full employment in extracting my double B. I sent a *message* to their master, for which he *Benched* me; and it cost me a cool hundred before I got clear of the Honourable Justices. 'A plague upon all cowards!' as honest Jack says."

"But, Julius, who was that wild and melancholy man to whose guidance you entrusted me in the island?"

"Oh, Hennessy, my foster-brother! Poor fellow, he has been rather unlucky!"

"Unlucky?"

"Why, yes—he hit a fellow a little too hard, and finished him. He is keeping close until the assizes are over, and then he will have time to settle with the friends. It would not signify a farthing, had he not been in two or three scrapes before."

"Has he been always riotous?"

"Oh, no, quite the contrary. When sober, he is the civilest creature on earth. No, poor fellow! they were only two homicides, and an abduction."

"And do you countenance and shelter such a character?"

"What! abandon my own foster-brother for an accident or two?—Pshaw, Frank, you jest. I'll tell you the particulars another time."

It was late, and we separated.

CHAPTER XII.

Angling—Fish found in Mayo—Peasantry—Their mode of fishing—The Pooka—Description and use—Pike and trout—Their size—Perch—Their fecundity—Trout destroyed—Greater lakes described—Subterraneous communication between them—Lesser lakes—Their fish—Lake of Derreens—Its trout extinct—Lake of Castlebar.

In a country whose surface is covered with numerous and extensive sheets of water like Mayo, it may be considered that the angler will find ample occupation. Independently of salmon and trout fishing, to those who will employ themselves in killing pike and perch, the lakes and

rivers here offer superior amusement. In the greater waters, Lough Mask, Lough Carra, and Lough Conn, the coarser species of fishes are taken in immense numbers, and in the lesser lakes many interesting varieties of the trout tribe will be found, from the little speckled samlet to the large and curious gilaroo.*

It is true, that the scientific angler generally confines himself to the use of the fly, and for salmon and trout, he will forego the commoner department of bait and float fishing. Hence, angling for pike and perch is usually an amusement of the peasantry ; and to those contiguous to the banks of the large lakes, it yields occupation for idle hours, which might be less innocently dissipated, and occasionally supplies their families with a welcome addition to their unvarying food, the potato.

Besides the established system of bait-fishing, other and more successful methods are resorted to by the lake-fishers

* The natural history of the samlet, or par, is very doubtful. Some assert it to be a mule produced by the salmon and trout; and as a corroboration of this theory, it is stated that the rivers where the par is found, are always resorted to by salmon. Others conjecture it to be a hybrid of the sea and river trout; and Sir Humphry Davy mentions, that fishing in October, in a small stream communicating with the Moy, near Ballina, he caught a number of sea trout, who all proved males, and accordingly infers that "these fish, in which the spermatic system was fully developed, could only have impregnated the ova of the common river trout."

The par differs from the small mountain trout in colour, and in having additional spines in the pectoral fin. It has also certain olive bluish marks upon the side, similar to the impressions made by the pressure of a man's fingers.

Great numbers of salmon are found in the upper streams of the Ballycroy river. They will rise voraciously at a fly, provided it be gay and small enough. I remember my friend Sir Charles Cuyler and I amused ourselves on a blank shooting-day, when there was neither a sufficiency of wind nor water to warrant salmon-fishing, in angling for this hybridous diminutive. We nearly filled our basket; we reckoned them, and they amounted to above two hundred.

Pennant says:—"In all these lakes the gillaroo is found. It varies in weight from twelve to eighteen pounds, but sometimes reaches thirty;" and Daniel states these fish to be "esteemed for their fine flavour, which is supposed to exceed that of any other trout. Their make is similar to the common, except being thicker in proportion to their length, and of a redder hue, both before and after being dressed. The gillaroo is remarkable for having a gizzard resembling that of a large fowl or turkey." He also says:—"It is usual to dress the gizzards only, which are considered as very favourite morsels."

By mesh-nets immense numbers of pike are annually taken; and with night-lines, and a very simple contrivance called the *pooka*, these fish, with the largest trout and perch, are constantly killed.

This latter implement is formed of a piece of flat board, having a little mast and sail erected on it. Its use is to carry out the extremity of a long line of considerable stoutness, to which, at regulated distances, an infinity of droppers or links are suspended, each armed with a hook and bait. Corks are affixed to the principal line or *back*, to keep it buoyant on the surface; and from a weather-shore, if there be a tolerable breeze, any quantity of hooks and baits can be floated easily across the water. The corks indicate to the fishermen when a fish is on the dropper, and in a small punt or *curragh*, he attends to remove the spoil and renew the baits when necessary. Two hundred hooks may be used on the same line, and the *pooka* at times affords much amusement, and often a well-filled pannier.

There are no waters in Great Britain, with the exception of the river Shannon, where larger pike* are caught than those taken in Loughs Mask and Corrib. It would appear, that in these lakes the fish are commensurate to the waters they inhabit. It is no unusual event for pikes of thirty pounds weight to be sent to their landlords by the tenants; and fish of even fifty pounds have not unfrequently been caught with nets and night-lines. The trout in those loughs are also immensely large. From five to fifteen pounds is no unusual size, and some have been found that have reached the enormous

* "About seventeen years since, when visiting the late Marquis of Clanricarde, at Portumna Castle, two gentlemen brought to the marquis an immense pike, which they had just caught in the river Shannon, on the banks of which they had been taking their evening walk. Attracted by a noise and splashing of the water, they discovered in a little creek a number of perch driven on shore, and a fish, which, in pursuit of them, had so entangled himself with the ground, as to have a great part of his body exposed, and out of the water. They attacked him with an oar, that by accident lay on the bank, and killed him. Never having seen any fish of this species so large, they judged it worth the observation of the marquis, who, equally surprised at its magnitude, had it weighed, and to our astonishment it exceeded the balance at *ninety-two pounds;* its length was such, that when carried across the oar by the two gentlemen, who were neither of them short, the head and tail touched the ground.

weight of thirty. The perch tribe appear the smallest in the scale of relative proportion. These seldom exceed a herring size; but they, too, have exceptions, and perch of three or four pounds weight have been sometimes seen. Within fifty years, this latter fish has increased prodigiously, and, in the lakes and rivers where they abound, trout have been found to diminish in an equal ratio. If any doubt remained touching the fecundity of the perch, some of the Mayo waters would prove it satisfactorily. Half a century since, I have been assured that pike and perch were almost unknown in the rivers of Belcarra and Minola, and the chain of lakes with which they communicate, and that these waters were then second to none for trout fishing. Within ten years, my cousin tells me that he often angled in them, and that he frequently killed from three to six dozen of beautiful middle-sized red trout. Now, fly-fishing is seldom practised there. The trout is nearly extinct, and quantities of pike and perch infest every pool and stream. The simplest methods of taking fish will be here found successful, and the lakes of Westmeath will soon be rivalled by the loughs of Mayo.*

Of the great Western lakes, Conn and Carra belong to Mayo; Corrib to Galway; and Mask lies between both counties. The most northerly, Lough Conn, is about nine miles long, by two or three in breadth. Part of its shores are beautifully wooded; and where the lower and upper lakes unite, the channel is crossed by a bridge of one arch, called the Pontoon; and there the scenery is indeed magnificent.

Lough Carra is smaller than Conn; but, as a sheet of water, nothing can be more beautiful; and everything that the painter delights to fancy may here be realized. Islands and peninsulas, with rich overhanging woods, a boundless range of mountain masses in the distance, and ruins in excellent keeping —all these form a splendid study for the artist's pencil.

Mask communicates with Carra, and their united waters discharge themselves into Lough Corrib by a very curious

* Mr. Young mentions that, at Packenham, Lord Longford informed him, respecting the quantities of fish in the lakes in his neighbourhood, that the perch were so numerous, that a child with a packthread and a crooked pin would catch enough in an hour for the daily use of a whole family, and that his Lordship had seen five hundred children fishing at the same time; that, besides perch, the lake produced pike five feet long, and trout of ten pounds each.

subterraneous channel at Cong.* Lough Corrib is largest of all; it stretches twenty miles to its southern extremity at Galway, where, through a bold, rocky river, it discharges its waters into the Atlantic. Its breadth is very variable, ranging from two to twelve miles. Besides its singular connexion with the Mayo lakes by the underground channel at Cong, Lough Corrib produces a rare species of muscle, in which pearls are frequently discovered. Many of them are said to afford beautiful specimens of this valuable gem.

The smaller lakes, which are so profusely scattered over the surface of this country, vary in the species of fish which they respectively produce, as much as they do in their own natural size and character. Some of them afford trout, others pike only, and many are stocked with both. That this union cannot long subsist, I should be inclined to infer from one remarkable circumstance, and it is a convincing proof of the rapid destruction which the introduction of pike into a trout lake will occasion. Within a short distance of Castlebar, there is a small bog-lake, called Derreens; and ten years ago it was celebrated for its numerous and well-sized trout. Accidentally pike effected a passage into the Lough from the Minola river, and now the trout are extinct, or, at least, none of them are caught or seen. Previous to the intrusion of the pike, half-a-dozen trout would be killed in an evening in Derreens, whose collective weight often amounted to twenty pounds.

Indeed, few of the Mayo waters are secure from the encroachments of the pike. The lakes of Castlebar, I believe, still retain their ancient character;† but I understand that pike have been latterly taken in the Turlogh river, and of course they will soon appear in a lake which directly communicates with this stream.‡

* "At Cong, about five miles from Ballinrobe, is a subterranean cave, to which there is a descent of sixty-three steps, called the Pigeon Hole; at the bottom runs a clear stream, in which the trout are seen sporting in the water; these fish are never known to take a bait, but are caught with landing-nets."—*Daniel.*

† "In the lake of Castlebar, near that town, is the charr and the gillaroo trout, and it is remarked that there are no pike in this and some of the adjacent lakes."—*Daniel.*

‡ The voracity of the pike is strongly exemplified in the following extract from a *Provincial Newspaper.* Of the truth of the occurrence we presume there can be no reasonable doubt, even in the minds of the most sceptical; but we believe there is no instance of animal ferocity on

CHAPTER XIII.

Nineteenth of August—Preparations for the mountains—Order of march—A cook broiled to death—Interruption of a funeral—Drowned shepherd—Grouse shooting—Evening compotation—Morning—Locale of a shooter's cabin—Life in the mountains—The red deer—Return to the hut—Luxury of a cold bath.

THE nineteenth of August, that busy day of preparation with Irish sportsmen, came at last. An unusual commotion was evident among my kinsman's household, and there was a wondrous packing up of camp-beds, culinary utensils, baskets and bottles, arms and ammunition—in short, of every necessary article for the support and destruction of life. At dawn of day four horses set off heavily laden; shortly after, a second division of dogs and guns moved under a careful escort; the "otter-hunter" hobbled off while I was dressing; and the piper, the lightest-laden of all concerned, closed the rear. After breakfast, two ponies were brought to the door, and, with a mounted attendant to carry our cloaks, my cousin and I pursued the same route that the baggage had already taken.

Talk not of India! Its boasted gang of servants is far surpassed by the eternal troop of followers appertaining to an Irish establishment. Old John tells me that sixteen *regulars* sit down to dinner in the servants'-hall, and that at least an equal number of *supernumeraries* are daily provided for besides. When I hinted to my cousin the expense that must at-

record which could parallel it, except in the celebrated case of the Kilkenny cats, whose respective demolition of each other is as wonderful as authentic.

"A party angling at Sunbury, one of them sat across the head of the boat, as a punishment inflicted on him for wearing his *spurs*. Another, having caught a *gudgeon*, stuck it on one of the spurs, which he (the delinquent in the bow) not perceiving, in a few minutes a large jack bit at the gudgeon, and the *spur being crane-necked*, entangled in the gills of the jack, which, in attempting to extricate himself, actually pulled the unfortunate person out of the boat. He was with difficulty dragged on shore, and the fish taken, which was of *prodigious size*."

Now, after this cautionary notice of ours, we do assert that any gentleman who goes to fish in *crane-necks*, and disposes of his legs overboard, with *a gudgeon on the rowel*, is not exactly the person on whose life, were we agent to a company, we should feel justified in effecting a policy of insurance.

tend the supporting of this idle and useless multitude, his reply was so *Irish*. "Pshaw! hang it!—*sure they have no wages, and what the devil signifies all they eat?* My father, before the landing of the *Paul Jones*, fed two hundred men for a fortnight, and used to declare, that never were there such plentiful times. It killed the cook, however, poor woman! she was literally broiled into a pleurisy—but such a wake as she had! I remember it as if it occurred but yesterday. She was carried to the old grave-yard of *Bunmore* the very evening the *Paul Jones* landed her cargo, and although five hundred men left the house with the corpse, the cook remained over-ground till the following morning, for want of sufficient persons to fill the grave. The fact was, that just as the funeral reached the church-yard, the lugger was suddenly discovered rounding the Black Rock. Instantly the mourners absconded, the bearers threw down the body—the priest, who was deeply concerned in the cargo, was the first to fly;—and the defunct cook was left accordingly in peaceable possession of Bunmore."

To arrive at our mountain-quarters we were obliged to cross the river repeatedly. When swollen with rain, the stream is impassable, and the communication between the hill country and the lowlands interrupted, until the flood abates. At one of the fords, my kinsman pointed out a little *cairn*, or heap of stones, erected on the summit of a hillock which overhung the passage we were crossing. It is placed there to commemorate the drowning of a shepherd, and, as an incident in humble life, it struck me as being particularly affecting.

"In 1822, when the western part of Ireland was afflicted with grievous famine, and when England stepped forward nobly, and poured forth her thousands to save those who were perishing for want, a depôt of provisions was established on the sea-coast, for the relief of the suffering inhabitants of this remote district.

"A solitary family, who had been driven from their lowland home by the severity of a relentless *middle-man*, had settled themselves in this wild valley, and erected the clay walls of that ruined hut before you. The man was shepherd to a farmer who kept cattle on these mountains. Here, in this savage retreat, he lived removed from the world, for the nearest cabin to this spot is more than four miles distant.

"It may be supposed that the general distress afflicted this

isolated family. The welcome news of the arrival of succours at Ballycroy at length reached them, and the herdsman set out to procure some of the *committee-meal* to relieve the hunger of his half-starved family.

"On arriving at the depôt, the stock of meal was nearly expended: however, he obtained a temporary supply, and was comforted with the assurance that a large quantity was hourly expected.

"Anxious to bring the means of sustinence to his suffering little ones, the herdsman crossed the mountain with his precious burden, and reached that hillock where the stones are loosely piled.

"But during his absence at Ballycroy, the rain had fallen

heavily in the hills; the river was no longer fordable, a furious torrent of discoloured water rushed from the heights, and choaked the narrow channel. *There* stood the returning parent, within twenty paces of his wretched but dearly loved

hovel. The children with a cry of delight rushed from the hut to the opposite bank to welcome him; but, terrified by the fearful appearance of the flood, his wife entreated him not to attempt its passage for the present.

"But would he, a powerful and experienced swimmer, be deterred? The eager and hungry looks of his expecting family maddened the unhappy father. He threw aside his clothes, bound them with the meal upon his back, crossed himself devoutly, and, 'in the name of God,' committed himself to the swollen river.

"For a moment he breasted the torrent gallantly—two strokes more would bring him to the bank—when the treacherous load turned, caught him round the neck, swept him down the stream, sank, and drowned him. He struggled hard for life. His wife and children followed the unhappy man as he was borne away—and their agonizing shrieks, told him, poor wretch! that assistance from them was hopeless. At last the body disappeared, and was taken up the following morning four miles from this fatal place. One curious circumstance attended this calamity: to philosophers I leave its elucidation, while I pledge myself for its accuracy in point of fact. A herd of cattle galloped madly down the river-side at the time their unfortunate keeper was perishing; their bellowings were heard for miles, and they were discovered next morning, grouped around the body of the dead shepherd, in the corner of a sandy cove, where there the abated flood had left it."

Every one shoots grouse; the operation is so commonplace, that none but a cockney would find novelty in its detail. Our morning's sport was excellent. The dogs were in good working condition, and under perfect command; but at noon the breeze died away, the day became oppressively hot, and the biting of gnats and horse-flies intolerable. Not being exterminators, we ceased shooting at three o'clock, and returned to our cabin with *two-and-twenty* brace of birds.

The particulars of the evening compotation I shall be excused in passing over. I must allow that the portion of wine allotted to sportsmen by the *Author of Salmonia* was awfully exceeded. We anointed our faces with cold cream, which speedily removed the pain and inflammation consequent on the stinging we had endured from the insects, and, after

"blowing a comfortable cloud," went to bed and slept; but a man must exercise and carouse with a grouse-shooter, to conceive the deep and delicious repose which attends the sportsman's pillow.

This morning we were early astir. There was a mutual admission of slight headache, but coffee and fresh air will soon remove it. Having finished breakfast, and, in spite of Sir Humphry's denunciations, fortified ourselves against damp feet with a glass of *Mareschino,* we left the cabin for the moors.

Never was there a wilder spot than the dell in which we have taken up our shooting quarters. It is a herdsman's hovel, to which my kinsman has added an apartment for his accommodation in the grouse season. This is our banquet-room and dormitory; a press in the corner contains our various drinkables, and upon a host of pegs, stuck into the interstices of the masonry, hang guns and belts, and all the unmentionable apparatus of a sportsman. The cabin itself is appropriated to culinary purposes, and to the accommodation of our dogs and personal attendants. The quadrupeds are quartered in the farther extremity of the house, and, after their fatigue, luxuriate gloriously upon a fresh bed of sun-dried fern.

In a *calliogh** beside the fire, the keeper and old John, who officiates as cook, are deposited at night, while the otter-hunter and piper canton themselves in the opposite den. A detachment of *boys,* or irregulars, who have followed the *master* to the mountains, *bivouac* somewhere in the vicinity of the cabin. In a sod-walled sheeling erected against a huge rock, the herdsman and his family have taken up their temporary residence, while we occupy the hut; but its limited dimensions would be quite unequal to shelter a moiety of our extensive train. But while a mountain sheep hangs from

* "Calliogh" are recesses built in the side walls of an Irish cabin, convenient to the hearth, and sufficiently large to contain a bed. Some of them are quite open to the fire; while others are partially screened from view by a rude matting of bent or straw.

If you enter a peasant's hovel on a wet day, and inquire for the owner of the house, a strapping *boy* will generally roll out of one of these dark cribs, yawn, stretch his arms, scratch his head, and bid "your honour" welcome, and then inform you that he "was just *strichin'* on the bed."

"the couples"* of the cabin, and the whisky-keg continues unexhausted, those worthies matter little in what cranny they ensconce themselves at night. To a late hour the piper is in requisition, and these careless devils dance, and laugh, and sing, until my cousin's mandate scatters them like ghosts at cock-crow; off they scamper, and where they bestow themselves till morning none but themselves can tell. Although the quantity of whisky consumed here, in the short space of three days, appears almost incredible; yet upon these seasoned vessels its effects are so very transitory as almost to authenticate the boasted virtues of the mountain-dew—"that there is not an aching head in a hogshead full!"

While traversing a low range of moors, an incident occurred which at this season was unaccountable. A red and white setter pointed at the top of a little glen. The heathy banks on both sides of a mountain rivulet undulated gently from the stream, and caused a dipping of the surface; and the ground seemed a favourable haunt for grouse, and our dogs were beating it with care. Observing the setter drop, his companions backed and remained steady, when suddenly Hero rose from his couchant attitude, and next moment a wild deer, of enormous size and splendid beauty, crossed before the dog and sprang the birds he had been pointing. The apparition of the animal, so little expected, and so singularly and closely introduced to our view, occasioned a sensation I had never hitherto experienced. I rushed up the bank, while, unembarrassed by our presence, the noble deer swept past us in a light and graceful canter, at the short distance of some seventy or eighty yards. I might have fired at and annoyed him — but on a creature so powerful, small shot could have produced little effect, and none but a Cockney, under similar circumstances, would waste a charge; and to tease, without a chance of bringing down the gallant beast, would have been a species of useless mischief, meriting a full month upon the tread-mill. I gazed after him as he gradually increased his distance; his

* The couples are the principal timbers that support the roof; they are placed at stated distances, and an Irishman describes the size of a house by telling you that it has so many "couples."

antlers were expanded as fully as my arms would extend; his height was magnificent; and, compared with fallow-deer, he seemed a giant to a dwarf. The sun beamed upon his deep bay side, as he continued describing a circular course over the flat surface of the moor, till reaching a rocky opening leading to the upper hills, he plunged into the ravine, and we lost sight of him.

What could have driven the red deer so low upon the heath was marvellous. Excepting when disturbed by a solitary hunter, or a herdsman in pursuit of errant cattle, or driven from the summit of the hills by snow and storm, those deer are rarely seen below the Alpine heights they inhabit. But the leisure pace of the beautiful animal we saw to-day, proved that he had not been alarmed in his lair, and led one almost to fancy, that in freakish mood he had abandoned his mountain home, to take a passing glance at the men and things beneath him.

At five o'clock, we left the moors, and returned to our cabin. The day throughout had been propitious; the breeze tempered the heat which yesterday oppressed us, and our

walk this morning had been only pleasant exercise. We were neither exhausted by an ardent sky, nor annoyed by the dazzling glare of constant sunshine. The gnats, which lately had been intolerable, had vanished, and we were thus enabled to perform our ablutions in the clear and sparkling river; a feat last night impracticable, from the number and virulence of the insects. He who has bathed his limbs in the cool and crystal waters of a mountain-stream after a busy day upon the heath, can only estimate its luxury. Twenty brace of grouse, three hares, and a half score of gray plovers, was the produce of our *chasse*.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ball opens—Moonlight—Mountain scenery—Old Antony—Adventure with the Fairies—Ball continues—The otter-hunter's history—Bal. concludes—The pater-o-pee.

THE moon rose in great splendour over the bold chain of mountains which belts the valley where we are cantoned. The piper is merrily at work, for some of the peasant girls have come to visit us, attracted by the joyful news that a *pie-beragh** was included in our suite. The fondness of these mountain maidens for dancing is incredible; at times of festival, on the occasion of a wedding, or *dragging-home*,† or whenever a travelling musician passes through these wilds, they assemble from prodigious distances, and dance for days and nights together.

My kinsman and I having duly executed a jig with a brace of Nora Crinas, left the hut and strolled a short way up the river. The quiet of "lonely night" contrasted strikingly with the scene of turbulent and vivacious mirth

* *Anglice*, piper.

† "Dragging home," is the bringing the bride for the first time to her husband's house. An immense mob of relatives and *clevines* of "both the houses," are collected on the occasion, and as an awful quantity of whisky must of necessity be distributed to the company, this "high solemnity" seldom concludes without subjecting the host's person and property to demolition.

we had but just quitted. A jutting bank suddenly shut the cabin from our view, and its lights and music ceased to be seen or heard. A deep unbroken silence reigned around. The moon's disc appeared of unusual size, as she rose in cloudless majesty over the mountain masses which earlier in the evening had concealed her. Not a cloud was in the sky, and the unequal outline of the hills displayed a fine picture of light and shadow—and the stream rippled at our feet, as, "tipped with silver," we traced its wanderings for miles, while its sparkling current was lost or seen among the moor-land.

Just then a human figure turned the rock abruptly, and the old Otter-killer stood beside us. The rushing of the stream prevented us from noticing his approach. He had been examining his traps, and as the way was rugged, he was delayed till now. The old man's appearance in this place, and at that hour, was picturesque. His dark dress, his long white hair falling down his shoulders, the seal-skin wallet, the fish-spear, and the rough terrier his companion, all were in perfect keeping.

"Well, Antony, what sport?"

"Little to speak of, Master Julius. I suspect the trap wants oiling, for there was an otter's spraints* every place about it. I went to the lake yonder, and while the breeze kept up the fish took well. I killed a dozen red trout."

"Did you meet any of the '*gentlefolk*,'† friend Antony? This is *just* the night that one would expect to find them *quadrilling* upon some green and mossy hillock."

The old man smiled and turned to me,—

"Well, well, the master won't believe in them; but if he had seen them as I did—"

"And did you *really* see them?"

"God knows, I tell you truth, Sir." Then, resting himself on a rock, he thus continued:—

"It will be eleven years next month, when I was hunting otters at Lough na Mucka;—the master knows the place, for many a good grouse he shot beside it. I then had the two best *tarriers* beneath the *canopy;* this poor *crater* is their daughter," and he patted the dog's head affectionately. —"Well, I had killed two well-sized cubs, when Badger,

* Marks or traces left by the animal. † Fairies.

who had been working in the weeds, put out the largest bitch I ever saw: I fired at her, but she was too far from me, and away she went across the Lough, and Badger and Venom after her. She rose at last; Badger griped her, and down went dog and otter. They remained so long under water, that I was greatly afraid the dog was drowned; but, after a while, up came Badger. Though I was right glad to see my dog, I did not like to lose the beast; and I knew, from the way that Badger's jaws were torn, that there had been a wicked struggle at the bottom. Well, I encouraged the dog, and when he had got his breath again, he dived down nothing daunted, for he was the best *tarrier* ever poor man was master of. Long as he had been before at the bottom, he was twice longer now. The surface bubbled, the mud rose, and the water became black as ink: 'Ogh! murder,' says I, 'Badger, have I lost ye?' and I set-to clapping my hands for trouble, and Venom set up the howl as if her heart was broke. When, blessed be the Maker of all! up comes Badger with the otter griped by the neck. The bitch swam over to help him, and I waded to the middle, and speared and landed the beast. Well, then I examined her, she had her mouth full of *ould* roots and moss, for she had fastened on a stump at the bottom, and the poor dog was sorely put-to to make her break her hold. I mind it well: I sold the skin in Galway, and got a gold guinea for it."

"Was that the night you met the fairies?"

"Stay, Master Julius; I'm coming to that. Well, three otters were a heavy load, and I had four long miles to travel before I could reach Morteein Crassagh's.* The master knows the house well. The night was getting dark, and it's the worst ground in Connaught. Well, I was within a mile of Morteein's, when it became as black as pitch; and I had the shaking bog to cross, that you can hardly pass in daytime, where, if a man missed his way, he would be swallowed up in a moment. The rain began, and the poor dogs were famished with cold and hunger. God! I was sure I must stay there, starving till the morning; when on a sudden, little lights danced before me, and showed me the hard tammocks as plain as if the sun was

* Martin with the rough face.

up. I was in a cruel fright, and the dogs whimpered, and would not stir from my foot. I was afraid to stay where I was, as I knew the *gentle-people* were about me; and I was unwilling to attempt the quagh,* for fear the light would leave me, and then I would get neither back nor forward. Well, the wind began to rise; the rain grew worse; I got desperate, and resolved to speak to the fairies civilly. 'Gentlemen and ladies,' says I, making a bow to the place where the lights were dancing, 'may be ye would be so obliging as to light me across the bog.' In a minute there was a blaze from one end of the quagh to the other, and a hundred lights were flashing over the bogs. I took heart and ventured; and wherever I put my foot, the place was as bright as day, and I crossed the swamp as safely as if I had been walking on a gravelled road. Every inch the light came with me, till I reached the *boreein*† leading to Morteein Crassagh's; then, turning about, I made the fairies a low bow: 'Gentlemen and ladies,' says I, 'I'm humbly thankful for your civility, and I wish ye now a merry night of it.' God preserve us! The words were hardly out, when there was a roar of laughter above, below, and around me. The lights vanished, and it became at once so dark, that I could scarcely make out my way. When I got fairly inside Morteein's kitchen, I fainted dead; and when I came to, I told them what had happened. Many a time, fairy candles are seen at Lough na Mucka; but sorrow mortal was ever lighted across the quagh by the *gentle-people* but myself, and that the country knows. Well—the master is laughing at me; but I'll hobble to the cabin, or they'll think that the *good people* have carried me off at last, as they did Shamus Bollogh,‡ from Ballycroy."§

* A morass. † A horsepath leading into bogs.

‡ James the Stutterer.

§ This gentleman's temporary sojourn with the fairies is generally credited in Ballycroy. Why the gentlefolk, who are accounted scrupulous in selecting youth and beauty when they abduct mortals, should have pitched upon Shamus, is unaccountable. His charms are of the plainest order, and he had long passed his teens before the period of his being carried away. His own account of the transaction is but a confused one—and all I recollect of the particulars is, that he crossed to Tallaghan, over an arm of the sea, on a grey horse, behind a little man dressed in green. Neither good nor evil resulted from this nocturnal gallop of "the Stutterer," if we except a sound horse-whipping which he received from

Presently we returned to the hut: the whisky had began to operate on the *corps de ballet* in the kitchen, for the pipes played louder, and the girls danced with additional *esprit*. To think of bed, with such a company beside us, would be idle: my cousin accordingly recharged his meerschaum, and, between many a puff, gave me the following memoir of the otter-hunter.

"The old man is a character. In his early days he was a travelling pedlar, a dealer in furs and Connemara stockings. He had always an unconquerable fancy for angling and otter-killing; and, with a pack upon his shoulders and a fish-spear in his hand, he traversed the kingdom in the double pursuit of pleasure and profit.

"When he disposed of his merchandize, he returned home laden with the skins he had collected in his wanderings. He has frequently brought thirty furs together to Limerick for sale; and as they were then a valuable commodity, he acquired in a few years a considerable property.

"In one of his excursions, however, Antony managed to pick up a wife. She was young and handsome; and, tiring of his unsettled life, persuaded the unhappy otter-killer to forego his favourite calling, and turn his fish-spear into a spigot. In short, he took a house in town, became a publican, got extensive business, gave credit, and soon was drunken and embarrassed; his wife flirted, his property melted away, and his frail rib at last levanted with an English showman. Antony was astounded, but he bore misfortune like a philosopher. Renouncing whisky, except in limited quantities, he resumed the otter-trap, which had been rusting in a garret; and one fine moonlight night, turned the key in the door, abandoned goods and chattels to the landlord, and disappeared, 'leaving his curse with Limerick.'

"No Bedouin returned from captivity to his parent's tent—no Swiss revisited his native valley, with more delight, than the cornuted otter-killer, when he hurried back to his beloved mountains. From that moment he forswore the town; and, excepting on his annual visit to the furrier. Antony has avoided the busier haunts of mankind. Having added bleed-

the priest, for attempting to abuse the credulity of the peasantry, by detailing the fairy revels in which he alleged that he participated.

ing to the number of his acquirements, he practises pharmacy in this wilderness, and for forty years has led a careless, migratory life, tolerated in the hall, and welcomed in the cabin, until increasing years and bodily infirmity confined him to his wild birth-place, where the otter can be trapped without fatigue, and the salmon will yet reward the old man's skill. The Lodge is now Antony's head-quarters, and the remnant of his wandering life will probably be spent with me.

"But it is not as a hunter and leech that the ancient otter-killer is alone valuable. In his wanderings, he picked up tales and traditions among the wild people he consorted with: his memory is most tenacious, and he narrates strange legends which, in wildness and imagination, rival the romances of the East. In winter, when the snow falls and the fury of the storm is unloosed, Antony is settled in his rude but comfortable chair, formed of twisted bent. The women of my household listen to his love-stories with affected indifference, but there is always some apology for remaining near the otter-killer. At times, when the old man is summoned after dinner to receive his customary glass, I, if I be '*i' the humour*,' listen to his wild legends; and here, in this mountain-hut, seated in this room, 'mine own great chamber,' while I luxuriate over a bright bog-deal fire, an exquisite cigar, and an admixture of pure hollands with the crystal water that falls from the rock behind us, I listen in voluptuous tranquillity to Antony's romances, as he recites to his attentive auditory in the kitchen his narratives of former times.

"If the otter-hunter's tales be true, the primitive gentlewomen of the Emerald Isle were no vestals; and the judge of the Consistorial Court, had such then existed, would have had scarcely time to bless himself."

It was twelve o'clock, and no abatement of revelry was yet manifest among the dancers in the kitchen. The piper's music appeared inexhaustible, and, maugre fatigue and whisky, the company were as fresh and effective as when the ball commenced. "I must rout them," said my cousin; "the devils would dance till doomsday." He opened the door, but stopped and beckoned me to approach. I looked out; the boys and girls had left the floor, the men settling themselves on the *colliaghs*, empty casks, and turf *cleaves*,* while the

* *Anglice*, baskets.

ladies were comfortably accommodated upon their partners' knees. One gentleman alone was standing. Presently two sticks were laid crosswise on the ground; the pipes struck up an unusual sort of jig, and the feat commenced. "This," said my kinsman, "is called the '*pater-o-pee*,' and none but an accomplished dancer would attempt it."

To describe this dance would be impossible: it consisted of an eternal hopping into the small compartments formed by the crossing of the cudgels on the floor, without touching the sticks.

Now, holding reasonable doubts whether, upon Mr. Cooney presenting himself to Monsieur Laporte, this gentleman would favour him with an engagement, I'll bet the manager, notwithstanding, *a cool hundred*, that, on the strength of the King's Theatre, he has no *artiste* who will *touch* Tim Cooney at the *pater-o-pee!*

CHAPTER XV.

Moon looks suspicious—Heavy fall of rain—River flooded—Sporting writers—Criticism on Hawker—Originality of the Colonel—His outfit of a wild fowl shooter—Samuel Singer and his gun.

When we took a last look from the window of our hut, before we retired to our respective mattresses, there was a broad belt observable around the moon's disc, which is the well-known token of an approaching change of weather; and early this morning, the constant plashing from the roof told us that the rain was falling heavily. The river rose apace, and the flood thundered past the cabin, momentarily increasing by the frequent torrents from the high grounds. The gentle and sparkling stream, on whose moonlight banks I had been musing at midnight, disappeared, and a fierce and turbulent body of discoloured water rushed through its swollen channel, bearing along huge portions of the banks, which had yielded to its fury.

"We are fairly caught, Frank," said my kinsman. "Hemmed in by the stream, if life depended on it, we could not now communicate with the Lodge. Fortunately the cabin roof is impervious to the water; and, thanks to the foresight

of old John, I see the backgammon box has not been forgotten. Come, shall we have a hit; tie a fly; cut card-waddings; play écarté; or listen to one of Antony's amatory narratives, showing how a baron's lady left her liege lord for a black-eyed page, and how a holy monk proved in the end to be no better than he ought to be? And we have books too; shall we speculate and star-gaze with Sir Humphry, or paddle in a punt with Hawker, after 'blue-billed curres" 'dun-birds and divers,' 'Tommy Loos and Isle of Wight parsons?' "*

"Anything for me but Colonel Thornton; for I am heart-sick of Mrs. T—— and 'red-legged partridges.' "

"I confess I would rather wade through the mud with honest Philip, after all, than accompany the Colonel in his researches for French estates, which he never had an intention to purchase. I own that Hawker is in many things exquisitely absurd, but he is amusing also, although in his adaptation of matter his work does not precisely exhibit the happiest specimen of good arrangement. See, for example, page 136; here he recommends you to 'dine at one o'clock,' 'not to snore away the evening in concert with your dog,' and admits that, 'if a man likes grog, he may finish the evening with a bucket-full;' assures you that soap and water is 'the sovereignest thing on earth' for soiled hands; and that kid gloves are sold by Mr. Painter, No. 27, Fleet-street; concluding with the following valuable recipe:

"'If a person is extremely nervous from hearing the report of his gun, or from the noise of the rising game, let him prime his ears with cotton, and his inside with tincture of bark and sal volatile.'

"This fortification of the ears is, no doubt, an excellent precaution for a cockney, and certainly less hazardous than the aerial mode propounded by the Colonel for killing rabbits. To perch in a tree, I think, would be a sufficient punishment; and what assistance a dog would render in the branches is inconceivable.

"What say you also to the association in one sentence, of 'game, flies, rats, red-herrings, and corrosive sublimate?'† The information, further, that mercury will kill bugs, and a nota bene, warning the King's subjects against poison; con-

B.P.115.

* Hawker, p. 177. † Ibid, p. 240.

cluding with a valuable recipe for a *sauce piquante*, that would 'tickle the gustatory nerves where fifty failed.'*

"The Colonel, indeed, may fairly claim the palm for being as diffusive as successful. He opens up the mysteries of gun-making in one page, and in another gives you instructions for correcting sour beer—proves that publicans dilute spirits—damp sheets produce rheumatisms—and draughts of air bring on the tooth-ache; gives you a recipe for making cold punch, 'which was given him some years ago in Glasgow,' where the said cold punch was universally drunk; and furnishes such information upon 'game laws,' 'tartar emetic,' fleecy hosiery,' and 'tincture of bark,' as must astound the reader, and cause him to marvel at the astonishing capacity of the commander's cranium."

"All these are excellent in their way. The Colonel, however, owns that he has borrowed much from others; but for originality take him upon dress, and listen to his equipment of a wild-fowl shooter.

"*Imprimis*—the nether extremities are to be thus garnished—'one *extra* pair of coarse yarn stockings; one ditto of the thickets *wads;* one ditto of under-stockings of the *warmest quality*; a pair of *water-proof boots*, and a ditto *Flushing trowsers.*' The worthy Colonel proceeds:

"'It is needless to say, that (except the feet, which we have already defended) *every part of the body* should be clothed with *flannel.*

"'With regard to further covering for the body, could we ensure not getting wet — *leather* would, perhaps, be *warmest;* but, at all events, the waistcoat, both *before and behind*, should be made of *shag, or Bath-coating*, which certainly, taking all weather, answers best, and is the most comfortable. *Under* the waistcoat should be worn a *Flushing-frock*, and *over it* a *sort of jacket*, of either drab cloth or swan-skin. *The cap* may be made of the same (or any thing that has the same appearance), and, if cold, worn over a *Welsh wig.* Mr. Lloyd, 13, Old Bond-street, has

* Recipe for sauce to wild-fowl: Port wine or claret, one glass; sauce *à la Russe* (the older the better) one table-spoonful; ketchup, one ditto; lemon-juice, one ditto; lemon-peel, one slice; shalot (large) one sliced; Cayenne pepper (the darkest, not that like brick-dust) four grains mace one or two blades. To be scalded, strained, and added to the mere gravy which comes from the bird in roasting.

invented an excellent, though simple *defender for the chest* (which he calls an "Anglesey,") and a *large shawl* handkerchief may be worn over the collar. A pair of *worsted wristbands* (sold by the name of "muffatees") should be worn with *cloth gloves*, and, over all, a large and long pair of *double swan-skin cuffs.'*

"But what signify all these flannels and Flushings—shag and swan-skin—wads, water-boots, and Welsh wigs, to that immortal garment invented by one Larry Rogers, who calls it his '*sou' wester*,' 'and gets it all for nine shillings,' of which *loquitur* the Colonel—

"Now to the point!—'Make, with an article called Russia-duck, (which, as well as swan-skin, should be previously wetted and dried, to prevent shrinking,) a loose over-all frock-coat, and a hood or cap, with a flap behind, similar to *a coal-heaver's hat*, and dress them as follows:

"'Take three quarts of linseed oil, and boil them till reduced to two quarts and a half, the doing which will require about three hours; and when the oil is sufficiently boiled, it will burn a feather. (The addition of some India rubber was suggested to me, but of this I did not make a trial.) When the oil is quite cold, take a clean paint brush, and work it well into the outside of the whole apparel, *and it will soon find its way to the inside.'*

"There is here a judicious and cautionary nota bene, requesting the operator *neither to burn himself nor the house*—with an admission that the savour of the garment is abominable. The Colonel concludes, that with '*a very large old umbrella, fitted up with brown holland*—a bag full of straw, or something of the kind, *a pair of goggles*, and a sufficient supply of *Messrs. Fribourg's mixture*, the sportsman has all the necessary *covering* that can be required for *real* wild-fowl shooting.

"Nothing, indeed, can exceed the author's ingenuity, from the construction of a *hare pocket* to making *an old gun shoot straight*, and firing *two pounds of shot to the best advantage*. Not that I would ambition being the operator in the latter exploit, and would rather leave the affair to 'one Samuel Singer, of Pool, who shoots with a gun, weight 141 lbs.!' Still the Colonel is a merry soul; and provided with his 'pocket-nightingale,' I wish we had him here. He should compound cold punch *ad libitum*, and receive the *ceade fealteagh* of our highland hut.

"Yes;—Frank, I'll bet my new Purday to a Queen Anne,* that he would never have used his friends, as Sir Humphry treated the unhappy philosophers whom he seduced into Scotland, and shabbed off with half-a-pint of claret in a rascally sheebein-house. No; Hawker is a worthy fellow; one, who, as our lamented countryman, Lord L——, told Abernethy, 'puts his trust in Providence, and takes a big drink.' By the way, I have often wondered that any honest gentleman, having a christian propensity for the bottle, would venture within arms-length of that unjoyous and dispiriting doctor,—and here comes dinner!"

CHAPTER XVI.

Flood subsides—My cousin's henchmen—Their description—Post-bag arrives—Messenger belated in the mountains—The Fairy Glen—Herd of red deer—Their destruction by poachers—Gradual decrease—Difficulties in continuing them—Anecdotes—Rearing the fawns—Sterility when domesticated—Red deer in parks—The tame hind—The Tyrawly stag—Skill requisite in shooting deer—Curious anecdote.

How rapidly the waters of a mountain river swell and subside! Last night the steep bank before the cabin-door

* "Queen Anne's muskets" are in great repute among the Irish peasantry, who assert that the barrels of these antiquated implements are excellent. The following curious notice of these guns is extracted from "An Appeal to the Public," by the unfortunate George Robert Fitzgerald.

"Informant was with his said master, and in the carriage with him, when the said Geerge Robert Fitzgerald came up alone and unarmed, and peaceably and politely addressed his father, the said George Fitzgerald, who went home with his said son to Rockfield-lodge; and had he wished not to go with his said son, he might have refused going, he having in his carriage, in which informant was, *three bell-muzzled blunderbusses, loaded with swan-drops, and a small ditto, and also three Queen Anne's muskets, with bayonets, loaded as aforesaid, and three fuzees, one of which was loaded, together with a small sword. Four powder-horns, all filled with gunpowder, one of which contained three pounds of gunpowder, besides several large bags of musket balls, swan-drops, and slugs*; and had the said George Fitzgerald, this informant's master, been disposed to make any opposition in going home with his said son to Rockfield-lodge, informant would have made use of said arms and ammunition in his said master's defence." Now we opine, that Colonel Hawker, and his "new double-swivel gun," with Sam Singer at his back, would scarcely hazard an engagement with this formidable vehicle.

was scarcely visible above the swollen and discoloured stream. The flood is gone; the river has recovered its silvery hue, and no traces of yesterday's violence appear, save the huge masses of turf left by the receding waters on the shore, which, from their size, prove how fierce the torrent was when at its height.

We have been expecting anxiously a messenger with the post-bag, for three days have elapsed since its last arrival. There will be an accumulation of newspapers. What a treasure they would have been yesterday! Ha! there is a bustle in the outer cabin; no doubt an arrival. It is the messenger.

I never saw finer samples of the mountain peasantry than this man and his brother exhibit. They are scarcely to be known asunder; young, particularly handsome, five feet eleven inches, light, active, clean-limbed, perfect specimens of strength and symmetry combined; good-humoured, indefatigable, and obliging, submissive to *the Master's* nod, and yet the boldest and *handiest* boys in Ballycroy. I sometimes look after my kinsman as he strides over the moors with his handsome *henchmen* at his back. He walks as if the province was his own; bold, and careless, and confident—no wonder—those wild fellows are his *fosterers*, and they would shed the last drop of their blood for "the Master,' if he required it.

This fidelity and devotion on the one side, is requited by kindness and protection on the other. These men have lived about the Lodge from boyhood—and they come and depart as they please. At spring and harvest-times they repair to the village where their parents reside, to assist the old couple and *the girls* in getting the potatoes in and out of ground; they tend the cattle in the mountains when requisite, and pass the remainder of the year following *the Master* to the moors or to the river, catching fish, netting rabbits, or killing wild-fowl in the winter; and dancing, drinking, and fighting on holiday. and festivals, as becomes good men and loyal subjects.

When they marry—for Malthus and restrictions upon population are no more recognised in Erris, than the Pope is by a modern Methodist—they will obtain a patch of mountain from their patron, erect a cabin, construct a still, and setting political dogmas at defiance, then and there produce most excellent whisky, and add to the "seven millions" considerably.

The messenger presented himself with the post-bag, being anxious to render a personal account of the causes of his delay. His night's adventure is quite characteristic of the wild life, and bold and reckless spirit of these mountain peasants.

The route to the next post-town lies through the ridge of hills which I have already described, as bounding the valley where we are quartered. The usual way to reach it is by an old and rugged horse-path, which, although seldom frequented now, was fifty years since the only means of communication which Erris had with the southern baronies. This easier, but more circuitous route was abandoned by the young peasant, who hoped, by directly crossing the heights, to arrive at the cabin before the night shut in. He took this perilous direction accordingly; but the rain was still falling fast, and when he topped the ridge of the hills, the valley beneath was covered by a dense mist. Presently the mountain streams rose, the light failed—to advance or retreat was impossible; and the isolated peasant had no choice left but to seek a shelter in the rocks, and remain there until morning dawned. He easily discovered a fissure in the steep bank above the river, crept in—"*blessed himself*"—and lay down to sleep upon his cold and rugged bed.

What situation could be more desolate and heart-sinking than this? Imprisoned among savage mountains, perched in a wild rock far above the rest of mankind, separated from human help by an impassable torrent, cold, hungry, and exhausted; yet all these dejecting circumstances were unheeded by the hardy mountaineer. He had but one source of terror; the otter-hunter had often described this glen as a favourite haunt of fairies; and "what would become of him if the *gentle-people* caught him there?"

The midnight hour passed, however, without any supernatural visitation. No fairy revelry disturbed the peasant's slumbers; the rain ceased; the flood was falling; the chough* and raven were preparing to take wing; and while the first

* Cornish chough, or red-legged crow. (*Corvus Gracilis*, Linn.—*Le Coracias*, Buff.) This bird is about the size of the jackdaw. The bill is long, curved, sharp at the tip, and of a bright red colour; the iris of the eye is composed of two circles, the outer one red, the inner one blue; the eyelids are red; the plumage is altogether of a purplish-violet black; the legs are as red as the bill; the claws are large, hooked and black.

faint light was breaking through the mountain mists, Cormac, anxious to quit his cheerless *bivouac*, crawled out from his cold retreat.

Suddenly, from above, an indistinct noise alarmed him. Feet clattered down the rocky path; a rush, a snorting, announced their near approach, and a herd of deer appeared within half a stone's cast. They traversed the narrow track in single files, and were moving rapidly down the mountain side to browse in the glen beneath.

When the leading stag discovered the startled peasant, he halted, tossed his antlers wildly, and gave a loud and peculiar neigh. The pause, though momentary, permitted the rear to come up, and the herd were clustered in a group. The panic lasted but an instant: they turned round, and with amazing speed rushed up the hill, regained the heights, and were lost in the thick mist. Cormac could not reckon them accurately, but imagined their number to be about sixteen.

It is seldom, now, that the red deer are seen in herds. Within late years they have diminished sadly, and unless vigorous means are promptly adopted to prevent their destruction by poachers, like their ancient enemy, the rough Irish greyhound, they too will become extinct. My cousin, when a boy, has often met forty deer herded together; but, from their decreased numbers, one rarely sees now more than a few brace. Since the French descent upon this coast in Ninety-eight, their destruction has been rapid. Unfortunately, many of the fire-arms then distributed among the peasantry, remain in their possession still, and in the winter months, when the severity of the season forces the deer to leave the hills and seek food and shelter in the valleys, idle ruffians, too well acquainted with the passes of the mountains, take that opportunity to surprise and slaughter them.

There are many circumstances connected with this scarce and beautiful species, that should render their preservation a matter of national interest. They are the last relic of other times; and all besides of the once famed stock which tenanted the Irish forests have disappeared. The wolf, the morse-deer, the greyhound,* exist no longer; and this noble creature is

* Captain Brown places this animal in the class of "domesticated dogs which hunt in packs or singly, principally by the eye, although sometimes by the scent."

"The Irish Greyhound. *Canis Graius Hibernicus.—Ray.* ["This

the sole remnant of her aboriginal animals, when Ireland was in her wild and independent condition.

"This is one of the largest of the canine race, with an air at once beautiful, striking, and majestic. He has been known to grow to the extraordinary height of four feet, although the general standard is about three feet.

"In shape the Irish greyhound somewhat resembles the common greyhound, only that he is much larger and more muscular in his formation, clumsy in all his different parts, and is quite unserviceable in hunting either the stag, fox, or hare. His chief use in former times was in clearing the country of wolves and wild boars, for which his great size and strength peculiarly adapted him.

"The colour of the Irish greyhound is a pale cinnamon or fawn. His aspect is mild, and his disposition gentle and peaceable. It is said he is greatly an overmatch for either the mastiff or bull-dog; and when he fights he generally seizes his antagonist by the back, and shakes him to death, which his great strength enables him to do with ease.

"M. Buffon supposes the great Danish dog to be only a variety of the Irish greyhound; and Mr. Pennant was of opinion that the French mâtin and the Albanian dog were also varieties of the same.

"The Irish greyhound is now rarely to be met with, even in his native country.

"The Marquis of Sligo is among the few individuals who possess that fine animal in a state of tolerable purity; he keeps a number at Westport, in the county of Mayo, Ireland, where there is a person employed to look after them. It is said that great care is necessary to preserve the breed, and keep them in good health.

"Aylmer Bourke Lambert, Esq. one of the vice-presidents of the Linnæan Society, took the measure of one of the Marquis of Sligo's dogs, which was as follows:—'From the point of the nose to the tip of the tail, sixty-one inches; tail, seventeen and a half inches long; from the tip of the nose to the back part of the skull, ten inches; from the back part of the skull to the beginning of the tail, thirty-three inches; from the toe to the top of the fore shoulder, twenty-eight inches and a half; the length of the leg, sixteen inches; from the point of the hind toes to the top of the hind shoulders, thirteen inches; from the point of the nose to the eye, four inches and a half; the ears, six inches long; round the widest part of the belly, (about three inches from the fore legs), thirty-five inches; twenty-six inches round the hind part, close to the hind legs; the hair short and smooth; the colour of some brown and white, of others black and white.'

"They seem good-tempered animals, but from the accounts Mr. Lambert received, it is obvious that they must have degenerated, particularly in point of size.

"Dr. Goldsmith says he has seen a dozen of these dogs, and assures us the largest was about four feet high, and as tall as a calf of a year old."

We are sorry to remark, that Captain Brown's statement, "that the Irish greyhound is still preserved by the Marquis of Sligo," &c. is totally

Individual exertions to continue the red deer are found to be of little use. They seldom breed when deprived of liberty, and restricted to the enclosures of a park. If they do, the offspring degenerates, and the produce is very inferior in size to what it would have been, had the animal remained in its state of natural freedom. Even when taken young in the mountains, to rear the fawns is a difficult and uncertain task. My cousin has for many seasons made the attempt, and generally failed three times for once that he succeeded. Last year one young deer that he procured throve well and grew apace until he was sufficiently stout to go out and graze with the cows. Unfortunately, a visitor brought a savage-tempered greyhound to the Lodge, the dog attacked the fawn, and it died of the worrying it received, before the greyhound could be taken off.

It is almost impossible to procure the fawns from the mountains in an uninjured state. They generally receive a blow of a stick or stone from the captor, or undergo such rough usage in conveying them to the low-lands, that death commonly ensues. A fine well-grown male was brought to the Lodge last week. For a day or two nothing could be more promising than its appearance. It began, however, on the fourth morning to pine away, and soon after died. We opened it to ascertain, if possible, the cause of its death, and discovered a gangrened wound in the side, evidently produced by a blow. The peasant who brought him declared that he was sound and uninjured; and to account for his caption swore lustily that he *caught the fawn asleep*, but it appeared that the rogue had knocked the poor animal over with a stone, and thus produced the inward bruise which terminated fatally.

It is strange that a creature of such strength and endurance when arrived at maturity, should be so very difficult to bring up. Means were resorted to by my kinsman to have the cow's assimilated to the wild deer's milk, by changing the fawn's nurse to a heathier and poorer pasturage; a lichen, indigenous to the mountains on which the deer principally feeds, was also

unfounded. No dog of this description has been for many years in the possession of the noble lord. In his father's time, there were, I believe, some descendants of this splendid stock at Westport House—but for years they have been extinct. The present Marquis introduced some double-nosed boar-hounds into the country, which possibly were mistaken for the Irish greyhound, although no animals could be more dissimilar in shape, courage, and docility.

procured, and intermixed with the cow's hay; and yet this attention and trouble were attended with but indifferent success.

When once, however, the period of infancy is passed, the wild deer is hardy, vigorous, and easily provided for. At different times, many have been located in the neighbouring parks, and lived there to a great age. In the domain of a nobleman in Roscommon, there are several brace—and in the park of Clogher, a stag and hind are confined at present; they are all vigorous and healthy, but have never continued their species.

Many curious anecdotes are recorded of the red deer. Some years since, a hind was domesticated by a neighbouring baronet; it was a fine and playful animal, and gave many proofs of extraordinary sagacity. Like many fairer favourites, she was a very troublesome one, and from her cunning and activity, a sad torment to the gardener. No fences would exclude her from the shrubberies, and if the garden gates were for a moment insecure, the hind was sure to discover the neglect, and avail herself of the opportunity to taste the choicest vegetables. This beautiful but mischievous pet met with some accidental injury, and died, to the great regret of her proprietor.

Many years ago, a stag was in the possession of a gentleman of Tyrawley. He grew to be a powerful and splendid beast, but his propensities and dispositions were very different to those of the playful and innocent hind.

The stag was bold and violent, detested strangers and women, and from his enormous size and strength, was frequently a very dangerous playfellow. He had a particular fancy for horses, resided mostly in the stable, and when the carriage was ordered to the door, if permitted, he would accompany it. A curious anecdote is told of him. He had no objection whatever to allow a gentleman to enter the coach; but to the fair sex he had an unconquerable aversion, and with his consent no lady should be an inside passenger. The servants were obliged to drive him away, before their mistress could venture to appear; and at last, he became so troublesome and unsafe, as to render his banishment to an adjoining deer-park the necessary punishment of his indocility. He did not survive this disgrace long; he pined away rapidly, avoided the fallow deer, and died, as my informant declared, of a broken heart.

In killing deer, it is necessary to select the head, or aim directly behind the shoulder. A body-wound may eventually destroy the animal, but the chances are, that he will carry off the ball. Many, when severely struck, escape the shooter; and there have been stags killed in these mountains, who bore the marks of severe wounds, from the effects of which they had entirely recovered. The following singular and authentic instance of a bullet lodging in what is usually considered a mortal place, and failing to occasion death, is extracted from a scientific periodical.*

"A buck, that was remarkably fat and healthy in condition, in August, 1816, was killed in Bradbury Park, and on opening him, it was discovered, that at some distant time he had been shot in the heart, a ball being found in a cyst in the substance of that viscus, about two inches from the apex. The surface of the cyst had a whitish appearance; the ball weighs two hundred and ninety-two grains, and was quite flat. Mr. Richardson, the park-keeper, who opened the animal, is of opinion the ball had struck some hard substance before entering the body of the deer. That the animal should subsist long after receiving this ball, is endeavoured to be accounted for from the instance of a soldier, who survived forty-nine hours after receiving a bayonet wound in the heart: however, the recovery from a gun-shot wound in an animal inferior to man can, in no respect, materially alter the importance of the fact, and of the great extent to which this vital organ may sustain injury from external violence."

CHAPTER XVII.

An alarm—Deceptive appearance of the weather—A blank fishing day—Recovery of the setter—Hydrophobia—Melancholy anecdote—Loss of a kennel—Strange apathy of Irish servants—Extraordinary preservation.

A CIRCUMSTANCE to-day has given us considerable uneasiness; one of our best setters, who had been observed to look rather dull yesterday, has refused his food, and continues listless of what is passing around him. He was a sprightly,

* The Edinburgh Medical Journal.

active-minded dog, and his torpidness is alarming. We promptly separated him from his companions, and have chained him in na adjoining cabin, under the especial observation of old Antony. The otter-killer is preparing to use his leechcraft, and I trust with good effect. Canine madness is a frightful visitation, and no caution can be too strict to guard against its melancholy consequences.

Who shall say that success in angling can be calculated upon with any thing like certainty? If a man were gifted with the properties of a walking barometer, the weather of this most capricious corner of the earth would set his prognostics at defiance. Never did a morning look more favourable; it was just such a one as an angler would swear by; a grey, dark, sober, settled sky, without any vexatious glare of threatening sunshine to interrupt his sport. The otter-killer was not so sanguine of this happy promise of good weather as we were. He observed certain little clouds, to which he gave some Irish name. "The wind, too, had shifted a point southerly since daybreak, and the pinkeens* were jumping, as they always jump, when they expect more water." We laughed at him, but Antony was right.

We tried some beautiful pools; the fish were rising fast; they sprang over the surface of the water frequently, and no worse omen can threaten the fishermen with disappointment. If they did condescend to notice our flies, they rose as if they wished merely to reconnoitre them, or struck at them scornfully with their tails.

Still hoping that a change in the temper of the fish—for a lady is not more fanciful—might yet crown our efforts with success, we proceeded down the river and pushed on for Pullgarrow. To angle here with the water clean and full, and the wind brisk from the westward, would almost repay a pilgrimage. For its extent, there is not a better salmon haunt in Christendom. The fish were rising in dozens, and where the river rushes into the neck of the pool, the constant breaking of the surface by the rolling or springing of the salmon, was incredible. The number of fish collected in this pool must have been immense, for in every part of it they were rising simultaneously. *But not one of them would touch the fly.* I hooked a salmon accidentally in the side, and after a short

* The usual name among the peasantry for samlets and trout fry.

and violent struggle the hold broke and I lost him, The mode of fishing attributed by Sir Humphry Davy to the Galway fishermen* must be as unprofitable as *unartistlike*. If ever it could avail, we should have succeeded to-day in Pullgarrow.

Meanwhile the breeze gradually died away, or came in gusts from the south; the sky in the same quarter grew thick and misty; large drops fell, and in a short time the rain came down in torrents. The reason why the salmon had declined our flies was now disclosed; although we had not foreseen the coming change, the fish had evidently expected it. Wearied and drenched, we returned to our shooting quarters. But we speedily forgot our fatigue and disappointment. Antony's report of the health of his canine patient was satisfactory. The animal's stomach had been disordered, and the otter-hunter's remedies were promptly administered, and successful. My cousin had a dread of madness breaking out in his kennel; and from his melancholy experience of the fearful consequences of neglect, I do not marvel that on the first symptom of loss of appetite or abated spirits, he forthwith causes the suspected dog to be removed, and places him under a strict *surveillance*.

Our conversation after dinner naturally turned upon the indisposition of the setter.—"You may think, my dear Frank," said my cousin, "that I carry my apprehensions of the slightest illness in my dogs to a ridiculous and unnecessary length; but when I tell you that I have witnessed the fatal course of hydrophobia, in the human as well as the brute victim, you may then conceive the horror I feel when any thing recalls to my memory this hopeless malady.

"During my first season at the Dublin University, I was invited to pass a short vacation with a relative of my mother. He lived in the south of Ireland, in an ancient family mansion-

* "In the river at Galway, in Ireland, I have seen above the bridge some hundreds of salmon lying in rapid streams, and from five to ten fishermen tempting them with every variety of fly, but in vain. After a fish has been thrown over a few times, and risen once or twice and refused the fly, he rarely ever took any notice of it at that place."

"When the water is low and clear in this river, the Galway fishermen resort to the practice of fishing with a naked hook, endeavouring to entangle it in the body of the fish; a most unartistlike practice."—*Salmonia.*

house, situated in the mountains, and at a considerable distance from the mail-coach road.

"This gentleman was many years older than I. He had an only sister, a girl of sixteen, beautiful and accomplished; at the period of my visit she was still at school, but was to finally leave it, as my host informed me, at Midsummer.

"Never was there a more perfect specimen of primitive Milesian life, than that which the domicile of my worthy relative exhibited. The house was enormously large—half ruinous—and all, within and without, wild, rackety, and irregular. There was a troop of idle and slatternly servants of both sexes, distracting every part of the establishment: and a pack of useless dogs infesting the premises, and crossing you at every turn. Between the biped and quadruped nuisances an eternal war was carried on, and not an hour of the day elapsed, but a canine outcry announced that some of those unhappy curs were being ejected by the butler, or pelted by the cook.

"So common-place was this everlasting uproar, that after a few days I almost ceased to notice it. I was dressing for dinner, when the noise of dogs quarrelling in the yard, brought me to the window; a terrier was being worried by a rough, savage-looking fox-hound, whom I had before this noticed and avoided. At the moment, my host was crossing from the stable; he struck the hound with his whip, but, regardless of the blow, he continued his attack upon the smaller dog. The old butler in coming from the garden, observed the dogs fighting, and stopped to assist in separating them. Just then, the brute quitted the terrier, seized the master by the leg, and cut the servant in the hand. A groom rushed out on hearing the uproar, struck the prongs of a pitchfork through the dog's body, and killed him on the spot. This scene occurred in less time than I have taken in relating it.

"I hastened from my dressing-room; my host had bared his leg, and was washing the wound, which was a jagged tear from the hound's tooth. Part of the skin was loose, and a sudden thought appeared to strike him. He desired an iron to be heated; took a sharp penknife from his pocket, coolly and effectually removed the ragged flesh, and, regardless of the agony it occasioned, with amazing determination, cauterized the wound severely.

"The old butler, however, contented himself with binding up his bleeding hand. He endeavoured to dissuade his master from undergoing what he considered to be unnecessary pain. '*The dog was dead, sure, and that was quite sufficient to prevent any danger arising from the bite;*' and, satisfied with this precaution, he remained indifferent to future consequences, and in perfect confidence that no ulterior injury could occur from the wound.

"Three months passed away—my friend's sister was returning from school—and, as the mountain road was in bad repair, and a bridge had been swept away by the floods, saddle-horses were sent to meet the carriage. The old butler, who had some private affairs to transact in the neighbouring town, volunteered to be the escort of his young mistress, and obtained permission.

"That there was something unusual in the look and manner of her attendant, was quickly remarked by the lady. His address was wild and hurried, and some extraordinary feelings appeared to agitate him. To an inquiry if he was unwell, he returned a vague and unmeaning answer; he trembled violently when assisting her on horseback, and it was evident that some strange and fearful sensations disturbed him.

"They rode some miles rapidly, until they reached the rivulet where the bridge had been carried off by the flood. To cross the stream was no way difficult, as the water barely covered the horse's fetlock. The lady had ridden through the water, when a thrilling cry of indescribable agony from her attendant arrested her. Her servant was on the opposite side, endeavouring to reign in his unwilling horse, and in his face there was a horrible and convulsed look that terrified his alarmed mistress. To her anxious questions, he only replied by groans, which too truly betrayed his sufferings; at last he pointed to the stream before him, and exclaimed, '*I cannot, dare not cross it! Oh God! I am lost!—the dog—the dog!*'

"What situation could be more frightful than that in which the lady found herself? In the centre of a desolate and unpeopled moor, far from assistance, and left alone with a person afflicted with decided madness. She might, it is true, have abandoned him; for the terrors of the poor wretch would have prevented him from crossing the rivulet; but, with extraordinary courage, she returned, seized the bridle

fearlessly, and, notwithstanding the outcries of the unhappy man, forced his horse through the water, and never left his side, until she fortunately overtook some tenants of her brother returning from a neighbouring fair.

"I arrived on a visit the third evening after this occurrence, and the recollection of that poor old man's sufferings has ever since haunted my memory. All that medical skill and affectionate attention on his master's part could do to assuage his pain, and mitigate the agonies he occasionally underwent, was done. At length, the moment that was devoutly prayed for came. He died on the sixth morning.

"From this horrible fate nothing but his own determination preserved my relative: and, by the timely use of a painful remedy, *excision and cautery of the wound,* he escaped this dreadful disease.

"I have related the calamity of another; but I, too, have been a sufferer, although, thank God! not in person.

"A setter of uncommon beauty was presented to me by a gentleman under peculiar circumstances. He had been the favourite companion of his deceased wife; and, during her long and hopeless illness, had seldom left her chamber. He begged me to allow him a place in the Lodge, and not subject him to the restraint of the kennel. His wishes were obeyed, and Carlo was duly installed into all the rights and privileges of a carpet-dog.

"I left home on a shooting-visit, and luckily brought a brace of my best setters with me. A week after my departure, an express reached me to say that Carlo 'was very odd, would not eat,* and bit and worried every dog he met with.' I took alram instantly, and returned home without delay. I found the household in desperate alarm, and Carlo was confined in a separate out-house, but not until he had worried and torn every dog in my possession!

"I went to reconnoitre him through an iron-stanchioned

* Dr. Clarke, of Nottingham, relates a case in that neighbourhood, of a dog that was not suspected to labour under rabies until *ten days* after he had bitten an unfortunate man, who, in six weeks after the bite, died of hydrophobia. This dog ate and drank heartily, showed no signs of indisposition, hunted as usual, and occasionally went into a neighbour's house among children, without injuring any of them; but, on the morning of the tenth day (that is, ten days after communicating the disease by the bite, and when he had no hydrophobia) he was seen snapping at every dog in the street, and was in consequence destroyed.

window: he was in the last and frightfullest stage of confirmed hydrophobia. I sent for a rifle and terminated the animal's life.

"I was at first afraid to inquire into the extent of my calamity. I mustered courage to enter the kennel, and personally investigated the state of my dogs. Every one of them, ten in number, had been bitten, and several of them were fearfully mutilated by the rabid animal I had despatched. Even the terriers had not escaped; and they, poor animals! were necessarily included in the general order for execution that I issued to the keeper. That noble house-dog, who has been the subject of your admiration, was fortunately preserved, by having been sent for by a gentleman who resided in the next county.

"A most extraordinary insensibility to danger was evinced by the female members of my household. Unluckily, Antony was absent in the mountains, setting a broken bone; the keeper had accompanied me; every one acquainted with the habits and management of dogs was from home; and the kennel was entrusted to the kitchen-boy. On this occasion, the disease appears to have come on gradually, and for days the setter betrayed the customary signs of incipient madness. Had he been tied up even when the malady was fully established, no mischief might have resulted. But until his violence became frightful, he was actually permitted to run about the house, and got access to the kennel, while the boy was carrying food to his charge.

"The escape of the servants was miraculous. The day only before my arrival, the dog, in a paroxysm of suffering, had thrown himself across the fire-place. 'Come away from that, Biddy,' said the old cook, with perfect *nonchalance*, to her attendant: '*Don't ye see the dog is mad?*' and continued some culinary operation, in which, at a distant corner of the kitchen, she was engaged. The boy's preservation was unaccountable. The poor lad made many unavailing efforts to part the dogs when fighting in the kennel, and prevent the setters from being bitten. In this perilous attempt his clothes were literally torn to ribbons; but, fortunately for himself, there was not a scratch visible on his skin."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Preparations for visiting Achil—Embarkation and passage to Dugurth—Fishing—Sea-fowl shooting—Meeting the lugger—Picturesque appearance of the vessel—Our landing—Coast-guard watch-house—Slieve More—Grouse scarce—Rabit-shooting—Interior of the watch-house—Culinary proceedings—The Dutchman—Morning, and a headache—A sea-bath—The eagle's aërie—Curious anecdote of these birds—Grouse-shooting—Demolition of a pack—Rock-fishing—Dangerous employment—Fatal accident—John Dory—A temperate evening.

For three days it has continued raining and blowing violently. We fortunately abandoned the mountain-hut, on noticing the unpromising state of the weather, before the flood rose to a height aspect would have insulated us in the hills. We have determined on an excursion into Achil, and wait impatiently until the wind and clouds give some indications of amendment. The moon enters her second quarter to-night, and we trust her ladyship's influence may mitigate the unusual severity of the weather.

This morning my servant's report was favourable; the sky looked settled, the wind blew from the north-west, and old Antony was satisfied with the prognostics. My cousin was already a-foot, and his voice at my window loudly summoned me to "turn-out." I opened the curtains—the sun was shining, as if he intended to keep a fair face throughout the day, and there was a cheerful bustle in front of the Lodge which gave "note of preparation." The main-sail of the hooker was already *chalk up* and shivering in the morning breeze; and the boatmen, sitting on the grass before the window, were preparing lines and baiting spillets. The piper looked on, stretching one arm lazily out, while with the other he hitched up the waistband of his *unmentionables;* and frequent visits of the dog-boy to the kennel, showed that both bipeds and quadrupeds would be shortly in requisition. Hammocks, hampers, and gun-cases, were subsequently embarked, and about eight o'clock we had finished our *déjeuner* and committed our persons and fortunes to the waves.

Never was there a lovelier day or wilder scenery; after we had cleared the river and opened the bay, a view of

surpassing grandeur was presented. We were surrounded on every side by an amphitheatre of bold and endless hills, except where the opening to the Atlantic showed us the dark waters of a boundless ocean—the surface was clear and undisturbed—and the light breeze rippled the long and measured undulations from the sea, and bore us gently towards the island. The bay was filled with mackerel, and consequently it was crowded with sea-fowl. In clamorous groups the gulls were darting on the fish below, and an endless variety of puffins and cormorants were incessant in pursuit of the smaller fry, which had attracted the shoals of mackerel from the deep. But the wind was too scanty, and the hooker's sailing not sufficiently fast, to allow us to kill fish in any quantity. We occasionally, however, caught a mackerel, and shot among a number of water-fowls a beautiful specimen of the sea-hawk, which I shall endeavour to preserve.*

We had gradually neared Dugurth, which is the only spot on which for many miles a boat, even in moderate weather, can safely effect a landing, when a galley stood out of Elly bay and bore down upon us. Our courses nearly crossed: they were running off the wind, we close-hauled as possible. Nothing could be more picturesque than the light and elegant appearance of this "fairy frigate." At a little distance she seemed a cloud of canvass flitting across the sea, for the long low hull was not visible until her close approach revealed it. Her large lugs and topsails where of the whitest duck, and as all her sails *drew*, light as the breeze was, she

* Large birds should be carefully skinned, the head, tail, and feet, left entire; the skin may then be either put into a vessel of spirits, or rubbed well on the inside with the following mixture:—One pound of salt, four ounces of alum, and two ounces of pepper, pounded together. Small birds may be thus treated. Take out the entrails, open a passage to the brain, which should be scooped out through the mouth, introduce into the cavities of the skull, and the whole body, some of the above mixture, putting it also through the gullet and entire length of the neck. Hang the bird in a cool airy place, first by the feet, that the body may be impregnated by the salt, and afterwards by a thread through the under mandible of the bill, till it appears to be sweet, then expose it in the sun, or near a fire; after it is well dried, clean out what remains loose of the mixture, and fill the cavity of the body with wool, oakum, or any soft substance.

passed us with the velocity of a race-horse. The airy motion of this "light shalloop" as she glided through the water, might to the fancy of a poet, present a similitude of that imaginary bark, in which the spirits of departed mariners are seen flitting over the dark billows beneath which their bodies rest.

Having weathered the Ridge Point, we made a signal for a rowing-boat, and one immediately came off. Our boatmen, having ascertained by their landmarks that they were upon clean ground, prepared to shoot their spillets. We left them, taking with us our dogs and attendants, and landed on a small sandy beach.

Having established our head-quarters in the watch-house of the coast-guard, and procured an adjoining cabin for the suite, we set out to look for grouse, taking a westerly direction along the base of Slieve More. Deceived by the false report of the villagers, we found the beat we had chosen neither a pleasant nor productive one. The heath was short and withered, the side of the mountain unsheltered, and exposed to the severe and almost eternal west wind: and, with the exception of a very few banks beside the water-courses, and one or two natural ravines, there was not a spot in which a grouse could shelter. In these hollows we generally found a *stager*,* and in one rugged dell shot three old cocks. Contrary to their general caution they stood the dogs well, or, from the short cover and stunted heath, had the weather been wet and the birds wary, it would have been almost impossible to have approached them.† The peasants, while looking after cattle and cutting peats upon the

* An old cock grouse which has not paired.

† Against running after grouse I uplift my voice. If they are wild, and will not stand or sit, a commonplace occurrence in wet cold weather, I would recommend gentlemen to remain at home. If circumstances bring them to the moors, or they are particularly solicited (as I have often been) to procure birds, let them depend on *close-marking*, tie up every dog but the steadiest one, and quietly, patiently, and silently endeavour to come within range of their object. If the bird moves, then to *out-flank* him is the best chance. Take a considerable circuit, and the more apparent carelessness you show in striving to close with a wild grouse, the more likely you will be to succeed. If the bird observes any hurry in the approach of the shooter, he will take alarm instantly, and an immediate flight will show that he has been perfectly on the *qui vive*.

hill, had frequently disturbed those solitary birds, and concluded from meeting them so often, that there must be some packs convenient.

Too late we found out our error; it was four o'clock, and we determined to abandon the heath for the day; and, having from a high ground examined the interior of the island, we arranged to-morrow's beat accordingly.

Quitting the hill, we walked for a mile along the beach to some bent banks, where we were told that rabbits were abundant. In an hour we shot eight pair, and two couple of whimbrels; and perceiving that the hooker had anchored off the landing-place, we gave up shooting and returned to the watch-house.

In our absence the servants had been active; they slung our hammocks, and made the necessary preparations for cooking dinner. The chief officer of the coast-guard kindly gave us his own apartment. His little cabin was crowded with every necessary requisite for one so far removed from the civilized portion of mankind, and it was amusing to remark the ingenuity with which the occupier had arranged his numerous goods and chattels; nothing could exceed the cleanliness of his cottage, and it formed a striking contrast to the filth and misery of the surrounding hovels.

The boatmen were just landing in their punt, and we descended to the beach to ascertain what addition to our *cuisine* the spillets had afforded. They produced a pair of fine soles, and a score of large plaice. These, with the mackerel taken in the morning, supplied the fish department admirably. Our purveyor had purchased a *Keim sheep*;* and at six o'clock we went to dinner. Nothing could be more delicious than our fare;—fish transferred from the sea to the kettle, and diminutive mutton, whose only fault was excessive fatness. We had a grouse, too, one of our stagers, but it was coarse and flavourless; and if toughness be a test of years, I should set him down as coeval with Saint Patrick.

The host joined us after dinner, and presented us with a bottle of genuine Inniskea. If such be the customary produce

* Keim is a mountain district of Achil, celebrated for the flavour and fatness of its sheep.

of their stills, those gifted islanders are worthy of being canonized. Although our host's flask was a true Hollander, having an amplitude of bottom that would have put two degenerate wine-bottles to the blush, I regret to say such unyielding thirst beset us, that before any of the company sought a hammock, the honest Dutchman was left without a drop!

We were astir betimes next morning. It was an excellent shooting-day; a brisk breeze had sprung up with the first of flood, and the fog rising gradually up the mountain-side, cleared the summit of Slieve More, leaving its rugged pinnacle—a disordered mass of shivered granite—sparkling in the sunshine. Our dogs were in beautiful condition; and we were gratified to hear from a water-guard patrol, that, but an hour before, he had sprung a strong pack of birds on our purposed beat.

But, alas! the departed Dutchman had left us certain twinges in the head to make us recollect him, and we felt a nervous sensibility that was anything but favourable to good shooting. An immersion in the sea was recommended as a certain remedy, and our host conducted us to a rock, from which we could plunge into water four fathoms deep, and yet clear enough to enable us to observe the shells and pebbles at the bottom. We enjoyed a delightful ablution, returned *new men* to the watch-house, and, like giants refreshed, prepared for a good day's fag.

So salutary proved our bath, that we breakfasted as if we had never drained a Dutchman in our lives. The dogs were duly coupled, and sundry disengaged gentlemen of the village, whom we found lounging at the door, were being invested with shot and game bags, when, roused by an exclamation of the keeper, we witnessed a curious scene.

In a huge and inaccessible crag, on the east side of Slieve More, and immediately above the coast-guard station, the eagles had formed an aërie;—a fissure in the cliffs beyond the possibility of being disturbed by the approach of man, afforded these birds for many years a secure retreat. Here, annually, they produced their offspring, to the sad annoyance of the islanders, and more particularly the villagers of Dugurth. This morning they had descended from their rocky habitation, accompanied

by two eaglets, evidently to teach their young to stoop and lift their prey.* The old birds tore up turfs from the mountain side, rose high in the air, and dropped them. The eaglets, in turn, stooped, and took them up again. This was frequently repeated, and the course of instruction having lasted half-an-hour, the eagles mounted to their aërie, and, leaving their progeny safely in the nest, sailed off upon the rising breeze to provide for the evening meal. We viewed the proceedings of this predatory family through the telescope of the coast-guard, who gave us many curious anecdotes of those daring and destructive birds.

We took an opposite course to the barren beat we had yesterday pursued. The bogs were intersected by several mountain-streams, whose dry and heathy banks offered excellent feeding and shelter for grouse. Our success, however, was very indifferent to what we had anticipated, from the promising appearance of the ground, and we had spent an hour, hunting with two brace of prime dogs, before we saw a bird. We met numerous indications of a strong pack having recently visited the river, and left no place untried which birds might be expected to frequent. At last, we began to imagine that the eagles had been here before us, when at some distance a young setter dropped on a heathy brow that overhung the rivulet. We were advancing, but the pack, alarmed by the sudden appearance of the dog above them, took wing, and we had to content ourselves with reckoning them, as they got up bird by bird. We counted nineteen, and concluded that two broods had packed accidentally.† They all pitched in a scattered manner on the side of a neighbouring eminence, and having marked them carefully down, we took up one brace of dogs, and with the other proceeded quietly to work. I never in my sporting experience saw a pack disposed of in better style. The dogs picked up the broken birds immediately, and with one miss (mine was the deed!) we brought nine brace

* "The story of the eagle brought to the ground, after a severe conflict with a cat, which it had seized and taken up into the air with its talons, is very remarkable. Mr. Barber, who was an eye-witness of the fact, made a drawing of it, which he afterwards engraved."—*Bewick.*

† I have never known red grouse flock in Ireland. Excepting an accidental junction of two broods, I have not met with grouse in any considerable number. Broods will occasionally pack together, but it is not a commom occurrence.

to bag. The sole survivor probably *roaded off* during the slaughter, or threw himself into a hole in the heath, for we could not make him out.

From our opening essay, we reckoned that this would prove an exterminating day; but with the destruction of this pack our sport might be said to cease. For hours we traversed hills and crossed moors, meeting but one weak brood and a few *stagers*. We did find another brood, but the poults were scarcely able to leave the ground, and consequently were too weak for shooting. From their appearance, we concluded them to be a second progeny of birds, who had lost their first eggs by robbery or vermin. We met, however, a number of hares, and shot seven. These, with thirteen brace of grouse, filled the game bags.

Our course homewards lay along the base of Slieve More. The evening was calm and sultry, and a number of men and women of all ages were seated on the rocks fishing for gunners,* or gaffing the horse-mackerel, which were seen in numbers on the surface of the water.

This rock-fishing is more dangerous than productive, and many lives have been lost in pursuing it. Descending the precipices to reach the water's edge is attended with imminent risk: and as sudden and terrible swells come in frequently and unexpectedly from the Atlantic, many fishers have been swept off the rocks, and perished. Another perilous occupation of the female peasants is what they term "picking cranagh." This sea-weed, which forms a favourite esculent of the islanders, grows on the rocks that are but occasionally covered by the sea. Exposure to sudden swells from the ocean attends those who search for it, and loss of life has too often occurred.

* The *gunner* is the common name given to the *sea-bream* by the fishermen of the western coast. They are found near the shore, in from five to fifteen fathom water, where the bottom is foul and rocky. The gunners are pretty, but insipid fish, and in variety of colour differ from each other more than any species of the finny tribe I have met with. In size, they seldom exceed three or four pounds: but from the avidity with hich they bite, they afford excellent amusement when the breeze is not sufficiently stiff to allow a take of mackerel and coal-fish. The bait generally used for gunners, is a small crab, broken, and bound about the hook with a thread; and two hooks affixed to a trap-stick, with a light leaden plummet, comprise the simple apparatus requisite for this kind of sea fishing.

One accident, which happened not long since, was truly melancholy. A woman, the mother of several helpless children, and who but a month before had given birth to twins, perished in the sight of her family. No relief in such cases can be given: the reflux of these mountainous waves bears the victims away, and, with rare exceptions, the bodies are never found, as they are either borne out to sea, or entombed in one of the many deep caverns with which the bases of these fearful precipices are perforated.

We reached home at seven, made a hasty toilet, and dined sumptuously from mountain mutton and a fine *John Dory*, which the priest had sent us in our absence. Determined to eschew temptation, we avoided engaging a fresh Dutchman, which our host pressed upon us, and put in a quiet evening. After smoking a cigar, and discussing its necessary association of *schnaps* and water, we turned into our hammocks in such grave and philosophic moderation, as might have claimed the approbation of Sir Humphry, and entitled us to a place of honour in any Temperance Society in Great Britain.

CHAPTER XIX.

Prepare to leave Achil—Visit to the Eagle's Cliff—Attempts to destroy these birds—Their depredations—Partiality for black fowls—Destroy fish—Anecdote of an eagle and salmon—Exterminate hares—Their mode of coursing and catching salmon—Foxes, numerous and destructive—Smaller birds of prey—Run to Inniskea—Devilawn—Tarmon—Difficult coast to land on—Woman and Curragh—Rabbit shooting—Local sketches—Twilight scenery—Dangerous idiot—Whisky—Its excellence—Copper stills—Island seldom visited by the revenue—Character of the islanders—Particular in burying their dead—Prone to litigation—The lawsuit.

From the scarcity of grouse in Achil, we altered our original plans, and decided upon sending our dogs back to the Lodge by a rowing-boat, and going in the hooker to visit the island of Inniskea.

After breakfast we proceeded to embark our personals; and having despatched our heavy luggage by the attendants, whom we ordered home, we ascended the hill, (while the crew were

clearing and baiting their spillets,) in the vague hope of getting a shot at those predatory birds, of whose spoliations we had heard so much on the preceding evening.

On reaching the bottom of the rock in whose face the aërie stands, we discovered that the old birds were absent; and as the nest was formed in a deep fissure, we could not ascertain its situation exactly. But that the eagles' dwelling was above us was evident enough: the base of the cliff was strewn with bones and feathers, and the accumulation of both was extraordinary. The bones of rabbits, hares, and domestic fowls, were most numerous; but those of smaller game, and various sorts of fish, were visible among the heap.

Many attempts are annually made to destroy this predatory family; but it is impossible to rob the nest. Situated two hundred feet above the base of the rock, it is, of course, unapproachable from below; and as the cliffs beetle over it frightfully, to assail it from above would be a hazardous essay. An enterprising peasant some years since was let down by a rope and basket; but he was fiercely attacked by the old birds, and the basket nearly overturned. Fortunately, the cord was strong, and had sufficient length to allow his being lowered rapidly, or he would have undoubtedly sustained some bodily injury from the wings and talons of those enraged and savage birds.*

* The following interesting anecdote is well authenticated: "Two eagles, in the wildest part of a neighbouring county, had for some time depredated on the neighbourhood, and bore away lambs, kids, &c., for the sustenance of their young. Some peasants determined, if possible, to obtain the young birds; and ascended the mountains, but found that the nest was in a part of the perpendicular rock, near one hundred feet below the summit, and about three hundred above the sea, which, with terrific appearances, dashed against its base. They had provided themselves with ropes, and a lad, armed with a cimetar, was by this means lowered by the rest. He arrived in safety at the nest, where, as he expected, he was attacked with infinite fury by one of the old eagles, at which he made a stroke with his sword, that nearly cut asunder the rope by which he was suspended. Fortunately, one strand of it remained. He described his state to his comrades, waiting in horrible expectation that the division of the cord would precipitate him to the bottom; but though he might have been to die by a rope, it was not in this manner. He was cautiously and safely hauled up; when it was found that his hair, which a quarter of an hour before had been of a dark auburn, had in that short period become perfectly white."

The village of Dugurth suffers heavily from its unfortunate proximity to the aërie. When the wind blows from a favourable point, the eagle in the grey of morning sweeps through the cabins, and never fails in carrying off some prey.

To black fowls, eagles appear particularly attached; and the villagers avoid as much as possible rearing birds of that colour.

A few days before our arrival, one of the coast-guard, alarmed by the cries of a boy, rushed from the watch-house: the eagle had taken up a black hen, and as he passed within a few yards, the man flung his cap at him. The eagle dropped the bird; it was quite dead, however, the talons having shattered the back-bone. The villagers say (with what truth I know not) that turkeys are never taken.

That the eagle is extremely destructive to fish, and particularly so to salmon, many circumstances would prove. They are constantly discovered watching the fords in the spawning season, and are seen to seize and carry off the fish. One curious anecdote I heard from my friend the priest. Some years since, a herdsman, on a very sultry day in July, while looking for a missing sheep, observed an eagle posted on a bank that overhung a pool. Presently the bird stooped and

seized a salmon, and a violent struggle ensued. When the herd reached the spot, he found the eagle pulled under water

by the strength of the fish, and the calmness of the day, joined to drenched plumage, rendered him unable to extricate himself. With a stone, the peasant broke the eagle's pinion, and actually secured the spoiler and his victim, for he found the salmon dying in his grasp.

When shooting on Lord Sligo's mountains, near the Killeries, I heard many particulars of the eagle's habits and history from a grey-haired peasant, who had passed a long life in the wilds. The scarcity of hares, which here were once abundant, he attributed to the rapacity of those birds; and he affirmed that, when in pursuit of these animals, the eagle evinced a degree of intelligence that appeared extraordinary. They coursed the hares, he said, with great judgment and certain success; one bird was the active follower, while another remained in reserve, at the distance of forty or fifty yards. If the hare, by a sudden turn, freed herself from her most pressing enemy, the second bird instantly took up the chase, and thus prevented the victim from having a moment's respite.

He had remarked the eagles, also, while they were engaged in fishing. They chose a small ford upon the rivulet which connects Glencullen with Glandullah, and, posted on either side, waited patiently for the salmon to pass over. Their watch was never fruitless; and many a salmon, in its transit from the sea to the lake, was transferred from his native element to the wild aërie in the Alpine cliff, that beetles over the romantic waters of Glencullen.

Nor is it to birds of prey alone that the extreme scarcity of game upon this island may be attributed. Foxes are found here in numbers that appear incredible. The sides of Slieve More, in places formed of masses of disrupted rock, afford numerous and inaccessible burrows to those mischievous animals; and the sand-banks, stocked with rabbits, offer them an easy and certain means of subsistence. Hence, their annual increase is wonderful; and the numbers on the island may be estimated from this simple fact, that one of the coast-guard, who happened to have a couple of good terriers, destroyed, in the space of a season, eighteen full-grown foxes.*

* Dr. Johnson, in his Tour to the Hebrides, remarks, "To check the ravages of the foxes in the Isle of Sky, the inhabitants set a price upon their heads, which, as the number diminished, has been gradually

The multitude of lambs lost by these depredators, has nearly deterred the islanders from keeping ewes; and there is not a spot in Great Britain so persecuted by winged and footed vermin as this wild district. Of smaller birds of prey, there is a plentiful variety; but the devastations of the greater tribe cause their minor larcenies to be unnoticed.

With a light leading breeze, we stood across the bay, passed the Island of Devilawn, and, running through a sound, which separates Tarmon from Inniskea, came to at a distance of a quarter of a mile from the landing-place. It was low water, and the boats were all hauled up upon the beach. Even in the calmest weather, the greatest caution is requisite to protect them from the heavy and sudden swells that eternally break on this wild coast; and, if left within the reach of the surf, they are frequently stove before the careless crew are aware of danger. Anxious to land, we fired a gun, and, being upon an excellent bank for spillet-fishing, the boatmen adjusted their buoys, and commenced throwing their lines overboard.

I was watching the progress made by a dozen of the islanders to launch a row-boat to the water, when suddenly, from beneath the opposite cliff, a floating substance appeared to issue from the side of the precipice. We had neared the shore considerably, and the object, of which I had previously but an indistinct view, was now more clearly seen. It was a woman sitting in a curragh, fishing for codling and gunners. Startled by the discharge of the musket, she pulled a short distance from the cliffs, and then lay-to upon her paddles, watching the hooker as she shot the spillets.

"These lazy lubbers will be half an hour getting that heavy row-boat across the sand-ridge," said my kinsman. "Hail the curragh, Pattigo, and let us get ashore."

To the shout of the skipper, a "cead fealtagh," was returned; the paddles dipped in the water, the light curragh skimmed over the surface like a sea-bird, and in a few minutes the female and her frail bark were rocking beneath the counter of the sailing-boat.

raised, from three shillings and sixpence to a guinea; a sum so great in this part of the world," adds the Doctor, "that in a short time Sky may be as free from foxes as England from wolves." The fund for these rewards is a tax of sixpence in the pound, imposed by the farmers on themselves, and said to be paid with great willingness.

I shuddered as I looked over the hooker's side at this crazy vehicle; it was but a few slight hoops, secured together by cords, and overlaid by a covering of canvass, rendered waterproof by a coating of tar and tallow. The machine was so unsubstantial, that a schoolboy could carry it easily upon his shoulders. Nor was its fragility alone that which rendered this bark so perilous; from its peculiar construction, it scarcely rested on the surface of the sea; and, consequently, the least change of position in the occupant, would inevitably capsize it; and yet in this frail vessel the young islander sat in perfect security, a couple of hand-lines coiled at her feet, and the bottom of the curragh overspread with the produce of her fishery. Without the romance of Scott's beautiful boatwoman, there was something more than interesting in the air and look of this wild female. Free from that timidity which might be expected in the inhabitant of a remote coast, on her first introduction to strangers of a different grade in society, she laughed and jested with the boatmen; and the play of her merry hazel eye, and the smile which disclosed a row of pure and even teeth, had really more in them to captivate, than the cold and regular charms of many a high-born beauty.

"We must land singly," said my cousin; "for your curragh is but a crank concern. Mind how you step in, Frank." But I had already determined against an embarkation, and accordingly declined the honour of being first adventurer. My timidity only excited the mirth of the sea-nymph; and, unwilling to be laughed at by a woman, I took courage, and cautiously committed my person to the skiff; a change of position was of course necessary on the lady's part, and this she managed with such adroitness, that the equilibrium of the coracle was undisturbed. In a moment, her sculls were flashing in the waters, and we speedily reached the strand.

The rowing-boat was now afloat, and pulling to the hooker to bring off my kinsman. My sea-nymph tossed her fish and paddles to a little boy, who was expecting her, received with a low curtsey the silver I presented as my passage-money, and, having returned her small purse to her bosom, she threw the curragh across her back, and left me, invoking "God to bless my honour."

The boat returned my cousin and our guns; and while the dinner requisites were being brought ashore, we strolled towards the side of a hill, where we observed a number of rabbits at

play. They were very numerous, and exhibited a greater variety than those of the other warrens that I had as yet visited. We selected some of the gayest colour for our practice, and whiled an hour away, until a summons from the cook recalled us to the village.

The spillets had provided us sumptuously with flat-fish, and a present of shrimps and lobsters completed our *cuisine*. The best house in the island had offered us its accommodation, and there was an appearance of comfort and rustic opulence in the furniture, that we had not anticipated when we landed.

There are numerous chances and godsends incident to these islands, which the other lines of sea-coast seldom obtain. Frequent and valuable wrecks furnish the inhabitants with many articles of domestic utility. The drift timber from the Atlantic gives them an abundant supply for the building and repairs of boats and houses; and immense quantities of sea-fowl feathers are annually collected upon the Black Rock, which is contiguous to Inniskea. The island affords excellent pasturage for sheep; and thus timber, feathers, and wool, enable the inhabitants to have domestic comforts in abundance. In winter, the take of cod, hake, and ling, is inexhaustible; peats are excellent and plenty, and food and fuel are consequently never scarce in Inniskea.

These are, doubtless, great advantages over the interior districts, but they are barely necessary to compensate the other local inconveniences. Throughout the greater portion of the winter, all communication with the main is interrupted. The sick must die without relief, and the sinner pass to his account without the consolations of religion. Should anything beyond the produce of the island be requisite in the stormy months, it must be procured with imminent danger; and constant loss of life and property, forms the unhappy theme of the tales and traditions of this insulated people.

A calm and misty twilight had fallen on Slieve More, and abridged the almost boundless range of ocean, over which the eye passed when we first landed. At a little distance the village girls were milking, carolling those melancholy ditties to which the Irish are so partial. I strolled among the rocks, and chose the narrow path, which the full tide left between its margin and the cliffs. The moon was rising now in exquisite beauty—the water was rippling to the rocks—one

long and wavy line of molten silver undulated across the surface of the sea—and there were wild cliffs and bolder headlands in glorious relief. No scene on earth could be more peaceful or romantic.

I was indulging in delicious reverie, when something like a bird flitted hastily by—again, and there was a heavy plump in the water. I looked up,—a wild unearthly looking creature stood on the cliff above, in the very act of launching a huge stone at me! Just then a female figure rose beside him, and with threats and blows drove him from the rock. It was my fair friend of the curragh, who seeing me take the lonely path I did, hastened after to warn me of the danger. She told me that the assailant was a dangerous lunatic; he was treacherous beyond description, and his antipathy to women and strangers was remarkable. Many accidents had occurred from his savage disposition. He feared men and rarely attacked them; but if he saw a female at a distance from the village, he would lurk with malignant perseverance for hours behind a bank or cliff to attack her unawares. Some of the island women had narrowly escaped death from this truculent monster, and few of the males but had at some time or other suffered injury from his hands; a stone was his favourite missile, which he threw with wonderful force and precision. To my inquiry "Why this dangerous being was not removed to some asylum?" my protectress replied with a smile, "He was but a poor natural, after all; he was born in the island, and God forbid that they should send him among strangers." On conversing with my cousin afterwards, he told me that, in the west of Ireland, the peasantry had a superstitious veneration for idiots and madmen, and, like the Turks, believed that insanity and inspiration were only synonymes.

The illicit whisky made in this island holds a first rank in the estimation of the *poteein* fancier. The cause of its superior excellency may arise from the insular situation of the place, enabling the distiller to carry on his business leisurely, and thus avoid the bad consequences attendant on hurrying the process,—for to rapid and defective distillation may be ascribed the burnt flavour, so common in whisky produced within the range of the Revenue. The barley, also, grown in this and the other adjacent islands, is excellent—and as the spirit is drawn from a copper still, it has many advantages to recommend it. The illicit apparatus in common use is, with

few exceptions, made of tin—the capture of a copper still, from the superior value of the metal, would be a serious loss, and consequently a cheaper substitute is resorted to.

Here, the still is considered a valuable heirloom in a family, and descends in due succession from father to son. When not in use, it is lowered by a rope into one of the deep caverns, with which the western face of the island abounds, and nothing but a treacherous disclosure by some secret enemy could enable the Revenue to discover the place where it is concealed, in any of the unfrequent visits they make to this remote spot.

That the attention of the Preventive officers is not more particularly turned to a place notorious for its inroads on the Revenue, may appear strange. In fact, this island enjoys a sort of prescriptive privilege to sin against the ordinances of the Excise. This indulgence arises, however, not from the apathy of the Revenue, but from natural causes which are easily explained. A boat may approach Inniskea in the full confidence of a settled calm, and before an hour a gale may come on, that will render any chance of leaving it impracticable, and weeks will elapse occasionally before an abatement of the storm would allow the imprisoned stranger to quit those dangerous shores. Hence, in his professional avocations, the priest is obliged to watch the weather carefully before he ventures to visit Inniskea—and it has not unfrequently occurred, that the rites of religion have been interrupted, and the celebrant obliged to embark at a moment's notice, to avoid the consequences of being caught by a coming gale. The islanders, from constant observation of the phenomena of sea and sky, generally foresee the storm before it blows; but even the oldest and most skilful inhabitant will frequently be surprised by an unexpected tempest.

There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of the dead, than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom exists of burying different families, resident on the main, in island cemeteries, and great difficulty, and oftentimes imminent peril, attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting-place. No inducement will make those wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the

deceased is kept for many days unbuired in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay, will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger.

It is asserted, but with what truth I cannot pretend to state, that the inhabitants of Inniskea are prone to litigation, and a curious legend of a lawsuit is told upon the main, illustrative of this their quarrelsome disposition. A century ago, two persons were remarkable here for superior opulence, and had become the envy and wonder of their poorer neighbours. Their wealth consisted of a flock of sheep, when, unfortunately, some trifling dispute occurring between them, a dissolution of partnership was resolved upon. To divide the flock, one would suppose, would not be difficult, and they proceeded to partition the property accordingly. They possessed one hundred and one sheep; fifty fell to each proprietor, but the odd one—how was it to be disposed of? Neither would part with his moiety to the other, and after a long and angry negotiation, the animal was left in common property between them. Although the season had not come round when sheep are usually shorn, one of the proprietors, requiring wool for a pair of stockings, proposed that the fleece should be taken off. This was resisted by his co-partner, and the point was finally settled by shearing one side of the animal. Only a few days after, the sheep was found dead in a deep ditch; one party ascribed the accident to the cold feelings of the animal having urged him to seek a shelter in the fatal trench; while the other contended, that the wool remaining upon one side had caused the wether to lose its equilibrium, and thus the melancholy catastrophe was occasioned. The parties went to law directly, and the expenses of the suit actually devoured the produce of the entire flock, and reduced both to a state of utter beggary. Their descendants are pointed out to this day as being the poorest of the community, and litigants are frequently warned to avoid the fate of "*Malley and Malone.*"

Notwithstanding the uncertainty of weather in Inniskea is proverbial, we had no reason to complain. The sun rose gloriously from the ocean—every cloud vanished from the rocky pinnacle of Slieve More—a stiff breeze from the north-west blew steadily, and by nine o'clock we had embarked our goods and persons; and with as much wind as the

hooker could carry her three sails to, we ran through the Sound of Devilawn, and bade adieu to this interesting and hospitable island.

CHAPTER XX.

Signs of Fish—Mackerel—Spillet-fishing—Seal and Mermaids—Anecdote—The Bull's Mouth—Preservation of a Ship—The Fox and Cruiser—The Lodge in a consternation—Arrival—The Colonel's Portmanteau—Robbing, and its consequences.

It was evident that the bay was full of mackerel. In every direction, and as far as the eye could range, gulls and puffins were collected, and, to judge by their activity and clamour, there appeared ample employment for them among the fry beneath. We immediately bore away for the place where these birds were most numerously congregated, and the lines were scarcely overboard when we found ourselves in the centre of a shoal of mackerel.

The hooker, however, had too much way. We lowered the foresail, double-reefed the mainsail, and then went steadily to work. Directed by the movements of the birds, we followed the mackerel, tacking or wearing the boat occasionally, when we found that we had overrun the shoal. For two hours we killed those beautiful fish, as fast as the baits could be renewed and the lines hauled in; and when we left off fishing, actually wearied with sport, we found that we had taken above five hundred, including a number of the coarser species, known on this coast by the name of *Horse Mackerel.*

There is not on sea or river, always excepting angling for salmon, any sport comparable to this delightful amusement. Spillet and long-line fishing are generally tedious and uninteresting; and, unless the fish take freely, it is even with moderate success a tame and spiritless employment. How different is mackerel fishing!—full of life and bustle, every thing about it is animated and exhilarating; a brisk breeze, a fair sky, the boat in quick and constant motion,—all is calculated to interest and excite. But hanging for hours above a spillet, or enduring the drudgery of lowering and

hauling in an almost interminable length of line over the side of a motionless boat, is an abomination. Like *mud-shooting*, this is only work for a peasant, and should accordingly be excluded from the list of gentlemanly pursuits, and consigned entirely to those with whom fishing is a trade; and profit, not pleasure, the object of their piscatory occupations. He who has experienced the glorious sensations of sailing on the western ocean, a bright autumnal sky above, a deep green lucid swell around, a steady breeze, and as much of it as the hooker can *stand up* to, will estimate the exquisite enjoyment our morning's mackerel-fishing afforded.

In following the shoal, we had crossed the bay, and got under the Achil shore. Having made sail again, we stretched over towards the Bull's Mouth, attracted by an immense play of sea-fowls. It was nearly low water, and while running past Innisbiggle, we observed several seals basking on the rocks. One was so curiously couched among the seaweed, as to render its species a subject of doubt and discussion, until the close approach of the boat obliged it to quit the rock, and thus afford a distinct view, while, to use the skipper's phrase, it *wabbled* to the water. From the strange and undefined ideas the seal's first appearance occasioned, accustomed as we were to see the animal in its varied attitudes of action or repose, it is not surprising that numerous and ridiculous extravagances have had their origin in the Phocæ tribe being seen under accidental circumstances by the wild and credulous peasantry of this remote district. To these animals, the submarine beings, who have for ages delighted the lovers of the marvellous, may, without much difficulty, be traced; and many a wonder-stricken fisherman imagined himself watching the movements of a mermaid, while all the time he was only staring at a *sea-calf*.

A whimsical instance of the credulity of the peasantry was mentioned by my kinsman. Some years ago, a party engaged in a fishing excursion on the coast, came-to in Achil Sound, and, leaving the boat, took up their quarters for the night in the priest's house, which was situated in a neighbouring village. One of the company was hunch-backed, with a face of singular and grotesque expression. Having indulged gloriously over-night in the native beverage, which the honest priest most liberally supplied. the little gentleman found

himself rather amiss in the morning, and determined to try what salutary effect the cool sea-breeze might have upon the fever warmth his nocturnal revelry had raised. He left the cabin accordingly,—and the early hour, with the islanders' celebrity for a simplicity of costume, induced him to postpone the business of the toilet to a more convenient season, and to sally forth in perfect dishabille. For a time he straggled along the shore, until reaching the point of land which forms the entrance of Achil Sound, he selected a smooth stone, and deposited his person among the rocks, to meditate the hour away, before whose expiry he could not expect that breakfast would be paraded in the cabin.

It was dead low-water. Half-a-dozen row-boats, bound for the fair of Newport, and filled with men and women, were rowing merrily to the Bull's Mouth, intending to enter it upon the first of flood. Having approached close to the spot where the little gentleman was ensconsed among the seaweed, up popped an *outré* countenance, surmounted by a scarlet nightcap! The effect was sudden, for till now a rock had concealed him from the boats. Instantly the women screamed, and the men betrayed unequivocal symptoms of dismay. But when the dwarf, remarking their alarm, skipped upon the stone, and uttered a wild unearthly yell which reverberated from rock to rock, the boats put about directly, and abandoned the fair of Newport, men and women, with one consent, made off for their respective homes as fast as four oars could carry them. The awful intelligence was promulgated with incredible rapidity through Erris and Ballycroy. The same *Leprehawn* who was seen *the year before the French,** had reappeared, to harbinger, no doubt, some local or national calamity. To this day, the credulity of the islanders has never been disabused, and Tom's uncouth face and scarlet nightcap is often fearfully expected to rise over the rocks by the belated fisherman, as he runs through its dangerous opening to shelter for the night in Achil Sound.

The Bull's Mouth is rarely entered but with flood-water, or

* The landing of the French is a common epoch among the inhabitants of Ballycroy. Ask a peasant his age, and he will probably tell you, "he was born two or three years before or after *the French.*"

a powerful leading wind; and the southern outlet of the sound at Achil Beg is similarly circumstanced. These straits are deep and dangerous, for through them the waters which flow from Blacksod and Clew Bay, and fill this extensive channel and its surrounding estuaries, rush with amazing violence; and the rapidity with which the tides enter and recede is frightful. The opposing currents flow nearly north and south, and meet and separate at the ruins of an ancient salt-house. Here, the old mountain-road terminated, and at the *Farsett*—as the ford across the estuary is termed—the passenger can earliest cross to the island from the mainland. Indeed, the intercourse with Achil was in former days limited enough. Few persons, except those engaged in smuggling, visited this insulated district; and many an islander lived and died without having ever seen a town.

The fishing-boats and hookers, whose easy draught of water will permit it, naturally prefer a passage through the sound, when voyaging from Erris to Clew Bay, rather than the longer and more exposed course of rounding Achil Head. To effect it, however, requires some skill, and a strict attention to the tides. On the *Farsett*, the depth at high-water seldom exceeds eight or nine feet: and as the flow and recession of the opposing waters is astonishingly rapid, the boat must enter upon one and retire upon the other. The passage, if effected, is consequently but very short, and the sound may be cleared in an hour, with the same wind that would occupy an entire day, if Achil Head were doubled.

In bad weather, both entrances, however, are dangerous in the extreme, and care and seamanship are necessary to pass either with safety. The peasantry are habituated to this voyage, and comparatively little risk ensues. Still many accidents have occurred—small boats have foundered in the attempt—and large hookers, when deeply laden, have perished in the conflicting eddies which opposite winds and tides occasion. The most cautious boatmen are sometimes overtaken by squalls from the surrounding hills—and night and drunkenness have, alas! been more fatal than all besides.

Yet the Bull's Mouth, like the ordeal of mortal inquietude, leads to its haven of rest. In a gale from the westward, when the Atlantic tumbles with mountainous fury into Blacksod Bay, the fishing-boat, once within the sound, finds smooth

and unbroken water. Hence, when the weather breaks, the hookers seek its shelter, there to wait until the storm moderates.

Nor is it to the fisherman alone that the Bull's Mouth has afforded shelter and protection. Not many years ago, a large American vessel was driven upon the coast by a continuance of westerly winds, and unable to work off, was fairly embayed within Blacksod. Shipwreck appeared inevitable—anchor after anchor was let go, but the tremendous swell from the ocean parted the cables, and the vessel drifted rapidly towards the shore. The wild and rock-bound coast to leeward terrified the crew, and, in despair, they committed themselves to their boat, abandoning the ship to her fate. A hooker's crew, which had been caught by the gale, witnessed the desertion of the vessel, and although boarding her was a service of danger, they determined to attempt her rescue. They succeeded, and the *derelict* bark was carried safely within the sound.

To the Bull's Mouth, also, one of his Majesty's cruisers was indebted for her deliverance. During the last American war, an enemy's schooner of formidable force dragooned the coast from Arran to the Stags of Broad Haven. She landed where she pleased, and amused herself by burning every coaster that was silly enough to leave her harbour. In Achil the *Fox* was quite at home,—the crew trafficked, danced, and drank among the islanders, with as much *sang-froid* as if Paul Jones had been commander. But this could not last for ever. Some heavy sloops and brigs were ordered from the southward, and the Fox was reluctantly obliged to disappear. A revenue cruiser, that had been long blockaded in Westport Bay, took heart and ventured out. The enemy was out of sight, and, with a clear sea, old Morris rounded Achil Head. When the scarecrow vanishes, it is marvellous how rapidly one's courage is rekindled ; and too late the Nepean discovered that the odds between herself and the privateer were not so desperate. In point of men and metal the Fox was indeed overwhelming, but still, steady discipline and close fighting might do wonders. Morning dawned—and its first light showed the infernal Fox but two short miles to *windward!* Away went the cutter, and away went the privateer. With singular audacity the Fox followed into the bay, came up hand-over-hand, and gained upon the cruiser, until the long *two-and-thirty*, which the

Yankee mounted amidships, began to throw its shot to a most alarming proximity. The Bull's Mouth was before, and a rakish schooner that, to use a fancy phrase, "would not be denied," was astern;—there was no alternative, and for the first, the most probably the last time, the King's *bunting* sought safety within the sound of Achil. Finding her water lessen—for she had actually crossed the Ridge Point before she hauled her wind—the Fox abandoned the pursuit, and left the Irish coast for America, where she duly arrived, after a daring and destructive, but a very unprofitable cruise.

Safely landed at the Lodge,—but all is in an uproar! Colonel Dwyer, an honoured and expected visitor, has arrived in safety, but he comes *minus* his portmanteau, which some delinquent, neither having the fear of hanging or my kinsman's wrath before his eyes, abstracted from Andy Bawn, to whom its safe delivery was entrusted. Nothing can surpass the surprise and consternation this event occasions—the women are clamorous—the men curse fluently in Irish—and, from the vows of eternal vengeance which are uttered against the spoliator of the Colonel's wardrobe, I should imagine, in case of apprehension, that the ceremony of waiting till the next assizes will be dispensed with. Antony "remembers the country these seventy years: many a robbery happened in his time, but—God stand between him and evil!—to take a gentleman's property, and he coming to the master!—If it was a stranger, why there would be no great harm," &c. &c.

Fear and poteein disturb the concatenation of ideas, and Andy Bawn's is anything but a lucid narrative. There is a confused account of the Bridge of Ballyveeney, and a dark man, and the clicking of a gun-cock. Now it appears that Andy is at feud with a Mr. Burke, who finished a relative of his with a *turf-slane*,* and in consequence has deemed it advisable to take to the mountain until terms can be arranged with the widow. Meantime, being a gentleman of active disposition, he occupies his leisure hours upon the highway, and all parties are unanimous in saddling him with the spoliation of the portmanteau. I am inclined to suspect, that my kinsman hitherto sported *deaf-adder* to any rumour of Burke

* An implement used for cutting turf, and *heads* occasionally.

being concealed within his territory—but I think now, the sooner Mr. Burke levants the better. There is a settled gloom upon my cousin's brow, and yonder consultation with his foster-brother, my island friend, bodes the present proprietor of the portmanteau little good. To intercept a visitor's effects, was indeed to

> "Beard the lion in his den,
> The Douglas in his hall.—"

But dinner is announced.

I wish the value of the Colonel's assets could be ascertained, and that I dared liquidate the amount. An earthquake, I think, would not have created half the sensation. My kinsman is dreadfully irate—his feudal power is shaken to the centre, and either he or Mr. Burke must leave Ballycroy. It is quite evident that he tacitly permitted the outlaw to conceal himself in this neighbourhood, and considered that he existed but by his sufferance. There is a strange dash of barbarism among the old proprietors still. To hunt a felon down, who acknowledges the supremacy of the master, would be *infra dignita tem.* The good old system would then be at an end—and, in time, even a bailiff might pass what has been the *Ultima Thule* of the law, and *live.* My cousin is aware of this. He feels that the rights and immunities of his modern Alsatia must not be lightly compromised. His rent-roll may be small, but he can boast, as Dick Martin did of Connemara, that "here, thank God! the King's writ is not worth a halfpenny." Hence the impudence* of Mr. Burke is intolerable. An embassy will be dispatched, and if the Colonel's wardrobe be not forthwith restored, with full satisfaction for the insult, I hold the value of the outlaw's life to be not worth a pin's fee.

* I remember hearing this word used in a court of justice in a most curious sense. A man was on trial, capitally indicted for murder. The chief witness on his examination detailed the leading incidents—his being awakened by cries of help, rising, striking a light, opening his door, and finding a man dead upon the threshold. "And what did you do next, my friend?" interrogated the crown lawyer. "Why," replied the witness, with amazing *sang froid,* "I called out, 'Are any of ye there that kilt the boy? By J——s, I'll give a *thirteen* to him who'll tell me who it was that had the *impudence* to murder a man at my door!'"

Indeed the whole *esprit de corps* is up—the multitudinous idlers of the Lodge are concocting schemes of vengeance. The honour of the "ancient house" is at stake; and the very women are roused to action. Old Antony himself is not supine—he does not, like Diogenes at Sinope, contemplate the general activity with indifference: while all besides are turning the secular arm against the delinquent, the Otter-killer will call in the assistance of the Church, and, by the blessing of God, he will have Mr. Burke *cursed* in two chapels next Sunday, and in a style too, that he expects shall give universal satisfaction to all concerned.

Nor am I, though unassailed in dignity or effects, upon a bed of roses. Who shall say where this business will terminate? We shall exchange deer-shooting for robber-hunting; and night and the mountains being unfavourable to identity of the person, I may be shot by mistake for an outlaw, or find myself in some ravine, *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Burke! I plead guilty to constitutional nervousness, and for the last hour my kinsman and his visiter have been seeking a parallel case in a number of outrages, that are quite sufficient to ruin a man's rest for the winter. What memories they have! There has not been a house robbed for the last century with whose localities they are not as well acquainted as the builder; and in murder-cases, they display an anatomical experience that is surprising! Hennessey, who seldom shows, has been eternally with us since the cloth was lifted, and having received his final instructions, (I hope,) has disappeared. Lord! the tall, gaunt, care-worn, homicidal look of the man, as with a double gun across his arm, and a case of pistols projecting from his coat-pockets, he took the wine his patron gave him! but, "*chacun à son goût,*"—my kinsman would not lose him for a thousand, while his very look gives me the horrors! Even the Piper appears to have caught the general infection: he has been lilting a full hour—not a jig or strathspey, but love-lorn ditties, and the most lamentable compositions that ever issued from the bag or chanter.

Would I were in England again! for what is matrimony to manslaughter? I have been for a moment out to breathe the cool sea-breeze, and passing the window peeped into that *refugium peccatorum* the kitchen. The keeper is flinting a blunderbuss! There is security in Terracina contrasted with this cabin, and the Abruzzi is a land of Goshen compared

with the mountains of Ballycroy! I wish I were in bed; and why there—to dream of everything felonious! I may as well submit with Turkish endurance—it is the will of Allah. The Colonel replenishes the fire, apportioning turf and bog deal in such scientific proportion, that it is evident he is making himself up for a *wet evening*; and the cork our host is now extracting, will be merely *avant-courier* to three flasks which I see lurking in the cooper. Oh, that a deputation from the Temperance Society would drop in! But why complain?—'tis useless. The Colonel has discharged a bumper to the speedy demolition of Mr. Burke! Nor has he forgotten to replenish again. The man is honest—a person that one might safely drink with in the dark. He clears his throat, and that cough preliminary is the prologue of a story. I must, in common courtesy, be attentive. This long and steady pinch is alarming, and we are on the brink of some desperate detail!

CHAPTER XXI.

The Colonel's Story—The Night Attack.

"It is thirty-five years this very month, since I was quartered with my regiment in ———ford; I recollect the time particularly, for I got my Company in the thirty-seventh on the same day that I received an invitation from a Mr. Morden, with whom I had formed a mail-coach acquaintance, to spend a week with him, and join his nephew in partridge-shooting. This gentleman's house was fourteen miles distant from the town, and situated in a very retired part of the country. It was a wild but beautiful residence, placed upon the extremity of a peninsula which jutted into an extensive lake. To a sportsman it offered all the inducements that shooting and fishing could afford. But it had others besides these; no man lived better than Mr. Morden—and his daughter Emily, and an orphan cousin, who resided with her, were decidedly the finest women who had attended the last race-ball. No wonder then that I accepted the old gentleman's invitation willingly, and on the appointed day put myself into a post-chaise, and reached the place in time for dinner.

"The house was one of those old-fashioned, comfortable Irish lodges, which are now extinct, or only to be seen in ruins. It was a long low building, covered with an infinity of thatch, which bade defiance to rain, cold, and storm. The tall and narrow casements reached the ground, a handsome flower-knot extended in their front bounded by a holly hedge, and woodbine and other creepers festooned the windows with their leaves and berries. At some distance a well-stocked haggard peeped over a spacious range of offices; the lawn was studded with sheep, which appeared overburdened with good condition; and as I drove up the avenue, I passed a well-featured, well-clad simpleton, urging before him from a neighbouring stubble-field, a flock of turkeys as formidable for numbers as for size. In short, everything about the place bespoke the opulence and comfort of the proprietor.

"Mr. Morden was a clever and respectable man; he was land-agent to several large estates—noted for plain and unpretending hospitality, punctuality in business, and a character of unusual determination.

"The old gentleman received me with friendly sincerity, and his handsome daughter added a warm welcome. They apologized for not having company to meet me, but 'two families which they had expected, had been detained by some unforeseen occurrences at home.' Dinner was shortly after served. Like the host, it was excellent without display—the wines were superior—and when the ladies left us, the claret went round the table merrily.

"'We are in trouble here,' said Mr. Morden, addressing me, 'and you have come to a house of mourning. We have just suffered a serious, I may say irreparable loss, in the sudden death of two favourite dogs. They were of the genuine breed of Newfoundland, and for size, courage, and sagacity, unequalled. Poor Emily has cried incessantly since the accident.'

"'Were they stolen?'

"'Oh, no! I wish they were, for that would afford a hope that chance or money might recover them. No, Sir, they would not follow a stranger; alas! they died yesterday by poison. We unfortunately laid arsenic in a meal-loft to destroy rats—and yet how the poor animals could have got to it is a mystery; the steward declares the key never left his possession. I would give a hundred guineas the meal

had been in the bottom of the lake. By Jove! no loss, short of the death of a friend, could have given us all so much uneasiness. They were my daughter's companions by day, and my protectors at night. Heigh ho!—Come, Sir, pass the wine.' Tears stood in the old gentleman's eyes as he spoke of his unhappy favourites, and from the valuable properties of the lost dogs, it was not surprising that their death occasioned so much regret to the family.

"We joined the ladies in the drawing-room. After tea Mr. Morden took a bedroom-candle, and apologised for retiring. 'Old habits best suit old people, Captain; but I leave you with the ladies, who will sit up till cock-crow, if you please:' and bidding us a good night, he departed.

"'Emily,' said young Morden, 'you are still thinking of your favourites; well, I will ride the country over, till I find you a handsome dog. Julia, hand me that violin from the piano, and Captain Dwyer will dance a reel with you and Emily.'

"'Heavens! who is at the window?' exclaimed Miss Morden, suddenly; 'it looked like that nasty beggarman who has been haunting the house and grounds these three days. Ah, Wolf and Sailor! had you been living, that vagabond would not have ventured here at this late hour.' Henry Morden had left the room on hearing his cousin's exclamation, but soon returned, assuring the lady that the beggar was a creature of her imagination; he had searched the shrubbery and flower-garden, and no mendicant was to be found in either.

"The alarm was speedily forgotten, and we danced reels till supper was announced. The doors were locked, the windows fastened, the ladies wished us good night, and retired to their respective chambers.

"Henry and I remained for some time in the eating-room; the clock struck twelve, and young Morden conducted me to my apartment, and took his leave.

"I felt a strange disinclination to go to bed, and would have given anything for a book. For temporary employment, I unlocked my gun-case, put my fowling-piece together, and examined whether my servant had sent all necessary apparatus along with me. I opened the window-curtains. The moon—a full bright harvest moon was shining gloriously on the lawn and lake: I gazed on the sparkling surface of the waters till

I felt the chill of the night-breeze; then closing the shutters, reluctantly prepared to undress.

"I had thrown my coat and vest aside, when a distant crash was heard, and a fearful noise with oaths and screams succeeded. I rushed into the corridor, and encountered a terror-stricken maid-servant running from the extremity of the passage. Miss Morden next appeared; she was in complete dishabille, and had hastily thrown on a dressing-gown. 'Good God! Captain Dwyer, what has occurred?' A volley from without prevented my reply, and the crashing of the windows, as the glass was splintered by the bullets, made it unnecessary. 'The house is attacked,' she said; and then with amazing self-possession added, 'There are always loaded guns above the kitchen fire-place.' We both ran down the corridor, she to alarm her father, and I to procure a weapon; young Morden, armed with a sword, met us. 'The attack is upon the kitchen,' he said, hastily; 'it is our weakest point; this way, Captain,'—and we both entered it together.

"There was a bright fire burning on the hearth. The large window was shattered to pieces, and the idiot I had noticed on the lawn, was standing beside the ruined casement armed with a spit, making momentary passes at the breach, and swearing and bellowing frightfully. I leaped upon a table to seize two muskets which were suspended in the place Miss Morden had described. I handed one to Henry, when the fire blazed out suddenly, and discovered me to the banditti without. Instantly, three or four shots were discharged. I heard a bullet whistle past my head, and felt something strike my shoulders like a sharp cut from a whip, as a slug grazed me slightly—but having secured the gun I jumped from the table uninjured. We heard Mr. Morden in the passage—his manner was calm and collected, as he ordered the servant-men to the front of the house, and dispatched his daughter for ammunition.

"Meanwhile, a dropping fire continued from without—for from within no shot had been returned, as the robbers sheltered themselves effectually behind the angles of the offices and the piers of the gates. From some hurried words we overheard they were arranging a determined attack.

"'They will make a rush immediately,' said the elder Morden coolly, 'and here comes Emily in good time; don't

come in, love!'—and he took some forty or fifty cartridges which she had brought in the skirt of her dressing-gownd. Notwithstanding the peril of our situation, I could but not gaze a moment on the white and statue-looking limbs of this brave and beautiful girl. 'Go, love, tell John to bring the Captain's gun-case from his chamber; and do you, Emily, watch from the end window, and if you perceive any movement that side, apprize us of it here.—Now, my boys, be cool—I'll give my best horse to him who shoots the first man. You have a good supply of ammunition, could we but coax the scoundrels from their shelter—and I'll try a *ruse*.' The old gentleman took the idiot's spit, placed a coat upon it, while Henry and I chose a position at either side of the broken window. Mr. Morden raised the garment to the breach; it was indistinctly seen from without; three bullets perforated it, and it fell. 'He's down, by —— !' roared a robber, exultingly. 'Now, Murphy, now's your time; smash in the door with the sledge!' Instantly a huge ruffian sprang from behind a gable, and his rush was so sudden that he struck twice with shattering force. We heard the hinges give—we saw the door yielding—and at that critical moment young Morden's gun missed fire! 'Curses light upon the hand that loaded it!' he cried as he caught up an axe and placed himself determinately before the door, which we expected to be momentarily driven in. Murphy, perceiving the tremendous effects of his blows, called to his comrades to '*be ready*.' He stood about five yards from me—the sledge was raised above his head—and that blow would have shivered the door to atoms. I drew the trigger—the charge, a heavy one of duck-shot, passed like a six-pound bullet through the ruffian's body, and he dropped a dead man upon the threshold. 'Captain Dwyer,' said Mr. Morden, calmly, '*the horse is yours!*'

"I had now received my own double gun, and gave the musket I had used so successfully to Henry Morden. The death of the ruffian with the sledge brought on a heavy fire from his comrades. Between the volleys they summoned us to surrender, with fearful denunciations of vengeance if we resisted longer. We were within a few yards of each other, and during the intervals of the firing, they poured out threats, and we sent back defiance.—'Morden, you old scoundrel!' exclaimed the captain of the gang, 'in five

minutes we'll have your heart's blood.' 'No,' was the calm reply, 'I'll live to see you arrayed in cap and halter.' 'Surrender, or we'll give no quarter.'—'Cowardly scoundrel! come and try your hand at the sledge!' said the old gentleman, with a cold and sarcastic smile, as he turned his eye on me, where I was watching the door, with the confidence a man feels who has his own trustworthy weapon to depend upon.

"'Morden! we'll burn the house about ye.'—'Will you put the coal in the thatch, Bulger?'—'Morden, you have a daughter!' and the ruffian pronounced a horrid threat. The old man shuddered, then in a low voice, tremulous with rage he muttered,—'Bulger, I'll spare five hundred pounds to hang you, and travel five hundred miles to see the sight.'

"'The coal! the coal!' shouted several voices, and unfortunately the scoundrels had procured one in the laundry. 'By heaven! they will burn us out,' said Henry, in alarm. 'Never fear!' replied his cooler uncle; 'the firing must have been heard across the lake, and we'll soon have aid sufficient.' But a circumstance occurred, almost miraculously, that averted the threatened danger. The moon became suddenly overcast—heavy rain-drops fell—and in an instant an overwhelming torrent burst from the clouds, rendering every attempt the robbers made to ignite the thatch abortive. 'Who dare doubt an overruling Providence?' said the old gentleman, with enthusiasm: 'surely God is with us!'

"The storm which came to our relief appeared to dispirit our assailants, and their parley recommended. 'Morden,' said the captain of the banditti, 'you have Lord ——'s rent in the house; give us a thousand pounds, and we'll go off and leave you.'

"'All I promise I'll perform" said the old gentleman, coldly. 'Bulger, for this night's work you have earned a halter, and I'll attend and see you hanged.'—'Dash in the door,' exclaimed the robber in a fury; 'we'll have the old rogue's heart out!' A volley of stones rattled against the door, but produced no effect, and again the robber parleyed. 'Will you give us a hundred, Morden?' 'Not a sixpence,' was the laconic answer. Once more stones were thrown, shots discharged, and threats of vengeance fulminated by the exasperated villains. At last, the demand was reduced to 'Twelve

guineas—a guinea for each man.' 'They'll be off immediately,' said the old gentleman; 'they know assistance is at hand: would that we could amuse them for a little longer!' But the ruffians were already moving, and Miss Morden presently announced that they were embarking, twelve in number, in a boat. 'Now for a parting shot or two,' said Henry Morden. We picked up a dozen cartridges, and sallied from the house as the banditti were pulling hard across the lake. We opened a quick and well-directed fire, which they feebly and without effect replied to. While a musket-ball would reach them, we plied them liberally with shot; and, as we learned afterwards, mortally wounded one man, and slightly injured two others. As we returned to the house, we met some fifty countrymen, armed with all sorts of rustic weapons coming to our relief. Without a moment's delay, we launched boats, and set off to scour the country, and at noon, so prompt and vigorous had been the pursuit, that six of the gang, including the wounded robbers, were secured.

"We reached '*the Wilderness*' completely exhausted by the exertions of the morning, and the fatigue of the preceding night. We refreshed ourselves, and went to bed—but previous to returning to my room, I visited the scene of action. Another blow, even a very slight one, must have driven in the door; and in the rush of twelve desperate ruffians, the chances would have been fearfully against us. Murphy lay upon his back—he was a disgusting object. The ground was saturated with blood, for the charge of heavy shot made as large a wound as a cannon-bullet would occasion. He was the strongest brute I ever saw; not more than five feet eight inches in height, but his limbs, body, and arms were a giant's; he was a blacksmith,—a man of infamous character, and most sanguinary disposition.

"Our escape from robbery was fortunate indeed; Mr. Morden had seven thousand pounds that night in the lodge, for he had just received the rents of two estates. It was almost entirely paid in specie—and this was of course known, and induced two desperate bands, who had kept the adjoining counties in alarm since the rebellion was suppressed, to unite for the purpose of robbing 'the Wilderness,' and securing this immense booty.

"The body of the smith was sent away, and buried in the jail-yard of the neighbouring town; and having brought the

battle to a close, I shall explain some matters connected with this daring outrage.

"A man named Mitchell originated the intended robbery, and arranged the method of attack. He was a slight, low-sized person, but his activity was amazing, and no attempt was too hazardous for his desperate courage to undertake. On the morning of his execution—(he, with the three others, was hanged the subsequent assizes)—he gave us a cool detail of his plans.

"The dogs were to be destroyed, and the premises reconnoitred. In the disguise of a beggar he effected both; laid meat prepared with arsenic for the poor animals; then made his way into the kitchen, and ascertained that the fastenings of the back-door were defective. He purposed surprising the family at supper, or forcing an entrance when they were asleep. The first attempt he made at the drawing-room, but quickly perceiving that he had been observed by Miss Morden, he retired hastily. A council was held by the robbers, and it was fortunately determined to postpone the attack until the family had gone to rest.

"Nothing could be bolder, or more likely to succeed, than Mitchell's desperate resolution. It was to leap feet foremost through the window, and, armed with a dagger, to fight his way, if opposed, and open the back door for his associates. He made the attempt, and providential circumstances alone prevented its being successful. That very morning a small iron bar had been placed across the window; it caught the robber in his leap, threw him back with violence, and the noise, united to the outcries of the idiot, alarmed the family instantly.

"Circumstances, they say, will often make men courageous. In this case it had the same effect on two beings of a very different description—a lovely girl and an idiot boy. Miss Morden, throughout the trying scene, displayed the coolest courage; and the poor simpleton, who commonly would avoid the appearance of a gun, armed with his spit, defended the breach like a hero.

"We met at dinner. Julia, Miss Morden's cousin, would hardly venture to join us, for her brother rated her timidity severely. When the alarm was heard, the fearful girl buried her face beneath the bed-coverings, and remained in pitiable agitation until the contest ended. Mr. Morden took her from

his daughter's arm, kissed her, and congratulated her on their delivery from the last night's danger.

"'You little coward!' said the old man jocularly; 'you must give your deliverer one kiss at least for your preservation.' The blushing girl received my salute. Miss Morden took my hand. 'You, too, Emily, will you not reward your protector?' Without coquetry, she laid her lips to mine, and that kiss was a sufficient recompense for twice the peril I had encountered.

"But for me no praises seemed sufficient: the successful defence was attributed to my exertions; and the fortunate shot that killed the villain smith was never to be sufficiently commended.

"My visit ended. *I was in love with Emily;* but then I had little chance of succeeding to the property which afterwards, by a chapter of accidents, fell to me; and a company of foot was all my earthly riches. She was an heiress; and would it be generous to take advantage of a casual service to press a suit that would be as painful to refuse as unlikely to be granted? I mean (so says vanity) by Mr. Morden. No! I overcame the temptation of risking a trial, and returned to ——ford, possessing the esteem and good wishes of every inhabitant of 'the Wilderness.'

"I was on parade some mornings after I rejoined the regiment, when a horse, splendidly accoutred with a superb tiger-skin, holsters, saddle, and every housing fit for a field-officer, was led into the barrack-yard by a groom. The animal was a perfect picture of symmetry and strength; a dark chestnut, sixteen hands high, and worth at least two hundred guineas. The groom presented me a letter; it was from Mr. Morden—the horse was a present.

"Emily and her cousin married most happily, and we have often met since. They treat me as sisters would a brother; and we frequently talk of the night attack upon 'the Wilderness.'

"Three years passed away: the gang had been incessantly followed by Mr. Morden, and were extirpated with the solitary exception of Captain Bulger. Dreading the sleepless vengeance of that determined old man, this ruffian fled the country, and established himself in a disaffected district of the south.

"In the interim I got a majority in the Seventieth, then

quartered in Cork. Soon after I joined, I happened to be field-officer of the day on which a notorious criminal was doomed to suffer. The regiment had given a guard, and curiosity induced me to attend the execution.

"I entered the press-room. In a few minutes the malefactor appeared in white grave-clothes, attended by two priests. It was 'mine ancient enemy,' Bulger! Suddenly the sheriff was called out, and after a short absence returned, accompanied by a plain, vigorous country gentleman, enveloped in a huge driving-coat, and apparently like one who had travelled a considerable distance.

"I looked at the criminal; he was the ruin of a powerful man, and the worst-visaged scoundrel imaginable. He was perfectly unmoved, and preserved a callous sort of *hardiesse*; and as the priests hurried over their Latin prayers, made a careless response whenever they directed him. The door leading to the drop was open, and the felon looked out upon the crowd most earnestly. '*He is not there*,' he murmured: '*he caused my apprehension, but he will not see me die*;' and added, with a grim smile, '*Morden, you neither kept your word, nor proved your prophecy!*' The muffled stranger stood suddenly forward: '*I am here, Bulger! I paid for your apprehension, and have come some hundred miles to witness your execution!*'

"'Morden,' said the dying felon, solemnly, 'if a ghost can come back again, *I'll visit you!*'

"The person addressed smilded coldly: 'I found you unable to execute your threats while living; and, believe me, I apprehend nothing from you when dead.'

"The clock struck—the sheriff gave the signal—Bulger advanced to the scaffold—the drop fell, and in two minutes he was a corpse."

CHAPTER XXII.

Conversation—A Brave Resistance—The Contrast—The Burglary.

"WELL, I like a man to keep his word," said my relative; "and I admire your friend Morden prodigiously for his punctual attendance on Mr. Bulger, when he made his parting bow to an admiring multitude, and, as the song goes, 'died with his face to the city.'"

"There is little danger, after all," said the Colonel, "to be apprehended from ruffian force, if a man's nerve and coolness desert him not at the pinch. In house attacks, the odds are infinitely against the assailants. The attempt is generally made in the dead of night; a robber-party are never sufficiently organized to combine their efforts judiciously, and two men within, if properly armed and plentifully supplied with ammunition, are in my opinion an overmatch for a dozen outside the doors."

"Calm and steady courage does wonders, certainly; and, even when surprised and unprepared, a cool man will rarely be left without some means of defence. The Scotch proverb is a true saw—'A gleg (ready) hand never wanted weapon.'"

"There never was a better illustration of that truth than the heroic resistance offered by an aged gentleman in the south to a band of ruffians, under most discouraging circumstances. I knew him intimately," continued the Colonel; "and I'll briefly give you the story.

"Several years ago, when the south of Ireland was, as it has ever been within my memory, in a disturbed state, a gentleman advanced in years lived in a retired country-house. He was a bachelor; and whether trusting to his supposed popularity, or imagining that the general alarm among the gentry was groundless, he continued in his lonely mansion long after his neighbours had deserted theirs for a safer residence in town. He had been indisposed for several days; and on the night he was attacked had taken supper in his bedroom, which was on the ground-floor, and inside a parlour with which it communicated. The servants went to bed; the house was shut up for the night; and the supper-tray, with its appurtenances,

by a providential oversight, forgotten in the old man's chamber.

"Some hours after he had retired to bed, he was alarmed at hearing a window lifted in the outer apartment; his chamber-door was ajar, and the moon shone brilliantly through the open casement, rendering objects in the parlour distinct and perceptible to any person in the inner room. Presently a man leaped through the window, and three others followed him in quick succession. The old gentleman sprang from his bed, but unfortunately there were no arms in the apartment. Recollecting, however, the forgotten supper-tray, he provided himself with a case-knife, and resolutely took his stand behind the open door. He had one advantage over the murderers—they were in full moonlight, and he shrouded in impenetrable darkness.

"A momentary hesitation took place among the party, who seemed undecided as to which of them should first enter the dark room; for, acquainted with the localities of the house, they knew well that there the devoted victim slept. At last one of the villains cautiously approached, stood for a moment in the doorway, hesitated, advanced a step—not a whisper was heard, a breathless silence reigned around, and the apartment before him was dark as the grave itself. 'Go on, blast ye! What the devil are ye *afeerd* of!' said the rough voice of an associate behind. The robber took a second step, and the old man's knife was buried in his heart! No second thrust was requisite, for, with a deep groan, the villain sank upon the floor.

"The obscurity of the chamber, the sudden destruction caused by that deadly thrust, prevented the ruffians in the outer room from knowing the fate of their companion. A second presented himself, crossed the threshold, stumbled against his dead associate, and received the old man's knife in his bosom. The wound, though mortal, was not so fatal as the other: and the ruffian had strength to ejaculate that he was 'a dead man!'

"Instantly several shots were fired, but the old gentleman's position sheltered him from the bullets. A third assassin advanced, levelled a long fowling-piece through the doorway, and actually rested the barrel against the old man's body. The direction, however, was a slanting one; and, with ad-

mirable self-possession, he remained steady until the murderer drew the trigger, and the ball passed him without injury. But the flash from the gun unfortunately disclosed the place of his ambush, and then commenced a desperate struggle. The robber, a powerful and athleti ruffian, closed and seized his victim round the body: there was no equality between the combatants with regard to strength; and although the old man struck often and furiously with his knife, the blows were ineffectual, and he was at last thrown heavily on the floor, with the murderer above him. Even then, at that awful moment, his presence of mind saved this heroic gentleman. He found that the blade of the knife had turned, and he contrived to straighten it upon the floor. The ruffian's hands were already on his throat—the pressure became suffocating—a few moments more, and the contest must have ended; but an accidental movement of his body exposed the murderer's side: the old man struck with his remaining strength one desperate blow—the robber's grasp relaxed—and, with a yell of mortal agony, he fell dead across his exhausted opponent!

"Horror-struck by the death-shriek of their comrade, the banditti wanted courage to enter that gloomy chamber which had been already fatal to so many. They poured an irregular volley in, and leaping through the open window, ran off, leaving their lifeless companions behind.

"Lights and assistance came presently—the chamber was a pool of gore—and the old man, nearly in a state of insensibility, was covered with the blood, and encompassed by the breathless bodies, of his intended murderers. He recovered, however, to enjoy for years his well-won reputation, and to receive from the Irish Viceroy the honour of knighthood, which never was conferred before upon a braver man."

"I know a melancholy contrast to this gallant story," said my cousin; "it occurred not many years ago in an adjoining county. I heard it detailed in a court of justice as well as privately from the lips of the unfortunate gentleman, and I never shall forget his nervous agony, as he gave me a partial narrative of the outrage."

"Oh! let us have the particulars, Julius; next to a good ghost-story, a cruel burglary is delightful."

"In 181—," said my kinsman, "a gentleman with his family left Dublin, and removed to an extensive farm he

had taken in the wild and troublesome barony of ————. There was no dwelling-house procurable for some time, and the strangers took up their residence in a large cabin upon the road-side, about a mile distant from the little town of ——ford.

"It was naturally supposed, that coming to settle in a strange country, this gentleman had brought money and valuables along with him; and a gang of robbers who infested that lawless neighbourhood under the command of the notorious Captain Gallagher, marked the stranger for a prey.

"This new settler had been married but a few months, and his wife was a young and very lovely woman. On the third night after their arrival they retired at their customary hour to rest—he slept upon the ground-floor, and the lady and her female attendants occupied some upper chambers.

"It was past midnight; the unsuspecting family were buried in deep repose, when Mr. ——— was fearfully awakened by a stone shattering the window and breaking the looking-glass upon the table. He was unhappily a nervous timid man; he was aware the house was being attacked; a loaded carbine lay within his reach, but he appears to have abandoned all hope or thought of defending himself;—he heard the crashing of the cabin windows—he heard the appalling sound of women's shrieks—but, trembling and agitated, he had not power to leave his bed.

"Never did a more dastardly gang attack a house than Gallagher's. After every window was driven in, more than half an hour elapsed before one of them would enter, although no show of resistance had been offered by the inmates of the house. The cowardly villains would occasionally peep through a shattered casement and instantly withdraw.

"A single blow struck with good effect, one shot from the loaded carbine, would have scattered the scoundrels, and saved the family from plunder and a dreadful insult. But the unhappy man, paralyzed with terror, lay in helpless imbecility upon his bed, and the banditti, satisfied that no resistance would be offered, at last made good an entrance.

"They lighted candles, bound the unfortunate gentleman, left him half dead with terror, and proceeded to ransack the premises. Soon after, shrieks from the lady's chamber an-

nounced their being there. They drank wine, and broke every place and thing in the expectation of plunder.

"But unfortunately they were disappointed; I say *unfortunately*, for had they found money, it is possible the lady would have been preserved from insult. Maddened by liquor, and disappointed in their expected booty, the helpless women were subjected to savage insult.

"What must have been that wretched man's sufferings, as he listened to the supplications of his beautiful wife for pity? Some of the villains were 'of milder mood' than their fellows, and a partial protection was afforded to the miserable lady.

"After a dreadful visit of three hours, the ruffians left the house. Their apprehension was almost immediate. I was present at the trial, and the testimony of that beautiful woman, who sat on the bench beside the Judge, with the evidence of the wretched husband, was melancholy.

"Conviction followed, and I attended at the place of execution. Gallagher, the most horrible-looking scoundrel imaginable, came out. The buzz among the crowd subsided into muttered prayers and compassionate ejaculations. He, the felon, was unmoved; his deportment was desperately hardened; he looked without emotion on the multitude, and from amid the mass recognised some acquaintances, and acknowledged them with a demoniac grin. He was turned off in savage callousness — but his life was miserably prolonged.

"From his immense weight — for the ruffian was of Herculean proportions—the rope gave way, and he fell with violence to the ground. His thighs were badly fractured, and he was carried to the scaffold again, a maimed and trembling wretch. All his hardihood had forsaken him, and if it were possible for a man to undergo the agonies of death a second time, assuredly they were twice endured by that loathsome criminal—Captain Gallagher."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Midnight Reflections—A good Story-teller—The affair of Ninety-eight.

We separated for the night, and I retired to my well-appointed dormitory; every thing bespoke cleanliness and comfort, from the snowy coverlet to the sparkling fire of brilliant bog-deal. The room was papered with caricatures, and crowded with prints on sporting subjects. This was cheerful and bachelor-like. I looked at the mantelpiece; a brass blunderbuss and a case of pistols were there suspended in most effective order. This brought on a train of thought, and all the pleasant narratives of my kinsman and his visiter rushed back to my recollection.

I have, God help me! no fancy for what the Irish call *active amusements*. I would have no ambition to hold a nocturnal colloquy with Mr. Bulger—nor would it afford me satisfaction to listen to solemn assurances of his determination to cut my throat. I would not give one farthing, to spend half-an-hour in a dark closet with three robbers and a case-knife. I love uninterrupted repose, and it would annoy me to have my window dismantled at midnight, and my entire toilet annihilated by a well-directed volley of paving-stones. On earth there is not a more enchanting object than the exquisite symmetry of a woman's well-formed leg; but Miss Morden's would have no charms for me, if *preluded* by a discharge of musketry. There is moreover a murderer quietly cantoned within a room or two of mine; and though the man may be "honest," as my loving cousin believes and verifies, yet one feels nervous in being within a dozen yards of a man who has thinned the population for the third time.

Your stupid Englishman retires to bed after his daily labour is ended—your livelier Milesian then only lays himself out for pleasure, and betakes himself to shoot at a Justice of the Peace, or still better, amuse himself with a *too-roo among the Peelers*. Do you go out to dinner?—Calculate at being fired at when returning. Do you require a physician?—The odds are, that the honest doctor is qualified for a patient himself, before he leaves your lawn. Do you delight in hunting?—You will find the monotonous

period of waiting at the cover-side, agreeably diversified by the occasional whistle of a musket-bullet from some ambushed *Rockite*; and if you venture to send a horse out to exercise, your groom returns *solus*, to acquaint you that the quadruped is no more, and that the gentleman who despatched him, sent you his regrets that he was so unlucky as to miss yourself, but, by the assistance of the Blessed Lady—for they are a pious and religious race—he hoped to be more successful on a future opportunity. Are you fond of a quadrille?—Ascertain before you attempt your first *chassez*, that the ball-room windows are *bricked-up*, and a guard of honour stationed at the door. Are you, *unfortunately*, a parson?—Insure your life to the uttermost farthing you can raise—arrange your affairs—perfect your will — and, if you be curious in posthumous renown, prepare your epitaph; then demand one *thirtieth* of your tithes—*you are a dead man to a moral*—and your heirs, executors, and assigns, secure of opulence within a fortnight.

All this is pleasant and exciting, but I, as I premised, "have no ambition." In spite of female persecution, I will return to England (if my life be spared) before the "morrow of All Souls," a day for ever ingrafted on my memory, it being the appointed period that a rascally tailor (when I was in the Blues) allotted for producing my body before his Majesty's Barons of the Exchequer.

Thus resolved I went to sleep. Next morning my cousin rallied me at breakfast. "I think, Colonel Dwyer, we gave my friend Frank enough of robber narratives last night. Confess, was your couch visited by any of the departed heroes, whom illiberal enactments consign to the gallows, while lesser men are sent in state to Westminster? Dreamed you

> Of cutting foreign throats;
> Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades?"

"Ah no," said the Colonel, "our dull tales require the seasoning of good story-telling to render them impressive. I wish my quondam acquaintance, Mr. ——, had been here, and, by the shade of Munchausen, he would have embellished a simple burglary to such superlative perfection, that I am

persuaded your kinsman could not have counted on a second night's sleep for a fortnight."

"Is the gentleman happy in description?" I inquired.

"Inimitable. 'He lies like truth.' I shall never forget the first evening I met him." The Colonel took a preparatory pinch of brown mixture, and thus proceeded:

"Before I retired from the army, I was ordered to Castlebar to attend a court-martial. It was then a most hospitable town, and during our stay I and the other members of the Court had more invitations than we could possibly accept of.

"At a large dinner-party, the conversation turned on circumstances connected with the disgraceful defeat of the King's troops here, in Ninety-eight, by Humbert. An elderly gentleman, opposite to me at table, favoured us with a striking and spirited account of the affair, and none could give it with more effect, for he had been a prominent actor in the scene.

"It was really the most soul-stirring narrative I had ever listened to,—and when in course of the detail the fortune of the day threatened to become disastrous, the individual exertions of this gallant gentleman appear to have been incredible. He flew through every arm of the Royal Forces—objurgated the militia, lauded the artillery, encouraged the irregulars, and d—d the carbineers;—held momentary consultation with three field officers, and the Lord only knows how many subordinates besides—and traversed the line from one extremity to the other with such rapidity, as proved that he must have been mounted on a race-horse, or possessed of the gift of ubiquity itself.

"When the panic became general and a rout inevitable, it was melancholy to hear this veteran mourn over blighted glory and blasted renown. He was forced away at last, it appeared, by the remnant of the combatants; but still, 'in the ranks of death you'd find him,' retiring reluctantly through the town, a sort of intermediate speck between his own rear-guard and the French advance. How the deuce he escaped the cross-fire of both, I never could comprehend.

"I looked at him with wonder and respect—no truculent traces of war lined a harsh and merciless countenance—no

'token true of foughten field' disfigured him with scar or blemish; but there was a quiet tradesman sort of simper eternally mantling over his features, which would have been worth a hundred a-year to any city dealer in ladies' mercery. Surely, thought I, he has at all events the true military enlargement on the *occiput*, and I'll warrant it a *splendid development*. In short, I was astonished, and marvelled how well such apparent benignity concealed a heart, that only throbbed with rapture amid the roar and blaze of battle.

"How long this train of thought might have continued is uncertain; it was broken by a twitch upon the elbow from my neighbour.—'Curse him,' he said in a whisper that paralyzed me, 'his story is nothing to-night; he forgot to kick down Humbert's aide-de-camp.'

"'*Kick down an aide-de-camp!* that would indeed be an unusual feat.'

"'Well, Sir, that very feat is worth the remainder of the battle. It happened that our fat friend opposite had a horse that never could endure a crupper; the rider was disabled in a charge, broke his sabre, and was, or rather any other man would be, completely *hors de combat*. What did he do in this dilemma?'

"'Call out lustily for quarter, I presume.'

"'The farthest thing from his intentions. No, he slipped his hand slily over the croup, and with the first fling knocked out the brains of Humbert's principal aide-de-camp. There was a simple and ingenious method of making a vacancy in an enemy's staff! Oh, the story is nothing, wanting it! Had I not better make him tell it over in the new?'

"Just then we were summoned to the drawing-room, and whether the narrative was again given to the company, with the interesting addendum of the kick, I cannot take on me to say."

"Was the man even present at the battle?" I inquired.

"As much, my friend, as you were at Camperdown; and I have reason to believe, that that affair was transacted before you were born. He absconded the moment it was known the French had landed at Killala, and never appeared in the county afterwards until the rebellion was suppressed, and the country as quiet as it is at present."

"Heaven protect us!" I exclaimed. "It is a lying world that we live in."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Spring tides—Hennessey and the portmanteau—Spillet-fishing—Coal fishing—Mackerel—Sea-fowl—A failure—Preserving gunpowder—An explosion—Another accident—A house burned—The dinner signal.

The springs have commenced, and the gray and lowering atmosphere which the influence of these tides occasion has set in. Ailhough the darkness would intimate a change, the fresh breeze and sky appearances portend, as they tell me, good weather.

We are bound for the bay to lay down spillets; and during the tedious interval which of necessity occurs before they can be lifted, we shall kill coal-fish, shoot sea-gulls, smoke cigars, and no doubt, have a further detail of atrocities from the Colonel, which would put the Newgate Calendar to the blush.

The mainsail is *chalk-up*,—the hooker has slipped her cables, and hangs by a single end to the pier,—and we are waiting for a row-boat, which four sturdy peasants propel with might and main from the opposite shore. There is a man in the stern-sheets who engrosses the undivided attention of my cousin and his followers. The boat approaches, and "Blessed Mary! can it be?" there sit Hennessey and the Colonel's portmanteau! The embassy has succeeded, the bustle of the boatmen is commensurate to the importance of the freight, and they *give way* in the full consciousness, that they carry "Cæsar and his saddle-bags."

Mr. Burke has made the *amende honorable*; my cousin looks two inches taller, and hints slily that feudal power in Ballycroy is not yet extinct; and well he may, for the Colonel's chattels are uninjured—no rude hand has undone a buckle—not a shirt is wanting, or even the fold of a neckcloth disarranged. There is a mysterious whispering between the ambassador and Pattigo; the commander rejoices over his wardrobe; my kinsman looks "every inch a king;" and I

am probably the happiest of all, for I trust that the pleasant narratives which for two nights robbed me of my rest, like "the thousand and one" of Scheherazade, have at last drawn to a close.

Did a man wish to moralize upon the unrealities of human expectations, let him hang over a spillet, and be interested in its success. Conceive an eternity of line with a thousand hooks at given distances—as every snoud is placed a fathom apart, a person less conversant with figures than Joe Hume, may guess *the total.* This endless continuity of hemp must be carefully taken up. Do it slowly, and the thing is worse than a penance to Lough Dergh; and if you attempt rapidity, the odds are that the *back-line* breaks, and a full hour will scarcely remedy the mischief.

It would puzzle a philosopher to determine the state of affairs in ten-fathom water; and if you *shoot* in *foul ground,* you will probably lose the spillet, or with a world of labour disentangle a moiety from rocks and sea-weed. Should it, however, have escaped those casualties, after a two hours' probation, while you listen to a *Drimindhu** from the skipper, and the exact state of the herring-market from the crew, you proceed to raise it. Up it comes—that vibratory motion announces that a fish is fast upon the snoud; conjecture is busily at work, and there is a difference of opinion, whether "the deceived one" be a codling or red-gurnet. It appears—a worthless, rascally, dog-fish! A succession of line comes in—star-fish, and "few and far between," some solitary plaices and flounders—at last *a victim*—heavy and unresisting. An indistinct glance of a dark object broad as a tea-tray, brings the assistant *spilleteer,* gaff in hand, to the quarter. Alas! *the turbot* in expectation, turns out to be *a ray!* Often have I shot a spillet under favourable circumstances and in approved ground, and lost time, hooks, and snouds, and my whole reward was a boat-load of skates and dog-fish.

We ran quickly with a leading wind, to the fishing-bank, and having shot the spillets—a tedious thing enough—stood for a rocky part of the coast, where the coal-fish are always abundant. This water-sport (viz., coal-fishing) is unknown "to the many," and yet to him whose hands are not unac-

* A melancholy Irish ditty.

quainted with rope and oar, it affords at times an admirable amusement.

The coal-fishing requires a stiff breeze, and if there be a dark sky it is all the better. In its detail, it is perfectly similar to mackerel-fishing, only that the superior size of the coal-fish makes stronger tackle and a heavier lead indispensable.

An eel of seven or eight inches long is the bait. The head being removed, the hook is introduced as in a minnow, and the skin brought three or four inches up the snoud. This latter is a fine line of two or three fathoms length, affixed to the trap-stick and lead, the weight of which latter is regulated by the rate of sailing.

The coal-fish, in weight, varies from two to fourteen pounds; it is finely shaped, immensely rapid, uniting the action of the salmon with the voracity of the pike. If he miss his first dash, he will follow the bait to the stern of the boat, and I have often hooked them within a fathom of the rudder.

Four or five knots an hour is the best rate of sailing for killing coal-fish, and upon a coast where they are abundant, the sport at times is excellent.

Like the pike, the coal-fish is very indifferent to the tackle used, which is generally very coarse. Not so the mackerel; he requires much delicacy of line and bait to induce him to take.

In light winds, or when the fish are out of humour, I have killed mackerel by substituting a salmon casting-line of single gut, for the hempen snoud commonly employed by fishermen, which with a newly-cut bait of phosphoric brilliancy commonly overcame his resolve against temptation. But there are times when a change of weather, or some inexplicable phenomena of sea or sky, render these fish dull and cautious: for usually it requires but trifling art to kill them.

A little experience is necessary. The bait must be cut from the freshest mackerel, and assimilated in size and shape to the herring-fry, which they generally follow; and the *way* of the boat must be so regulated, as to preserve the deception by a sufficient velocity, without breaking by its *rapidity* the mackerel's hold. The mouth of this fish is particularly tender; and if care be not taken, many will drop from the hook, before they can be secured on board.

Unaccustomed to the painful effects which friction and salt water occasion hands unused to *hemp*, I transferred my line to an idle boy, who proved a much more fortunate *coal-fisher* than I, notwithstanding the instructions of my friend Pattigo.

We were bearing down to a glorious play of sea-birds, and I got a gun *uncased* to practise at the gulls. It was a curious and bustling scene. Above, thousands of these birds were congregated in a small circle, screaming, and rising, and dipping over a dense mass of fry, which appeared at times breaking the surface of the water, while grebes and puffins of many varieties were persecuting those unhappy sprats underneath. As we bore down, I fired at a few straggling puffins. Some were missed, some disabled, but not a *clean-killed* bird! The great body of sea-fowl appeared so much engrossed with their predatory pursuits, as to neither attend to the reports of the gun, or notice the approach of the hooker until the boat's bolt-sprit seemed almost parting this countless host of floating and flying plunderers.

Bent on destruction, I waited until we cleared the ball, and reached that happy distance when the charge should open properly. Pattigo estimated the shot would, *moderately*, produce a stone of feathers. I fired; a solitary gull dropped in the water, and half-a-dozen wounded birds separated from the crowd, and went screaming off to sea. The failure was a melancholy one. I sank immeasurably in the estimation of the crew as an *artiste*. Pattigo's bag of feathers was but an unrealized dream—while my kinsman muttered something about *the best single* he ever possessed—and I, to cover my disgrace, occupied myself with reloading.

"I can't congratulate you on your gunnery," said my cousin, "although I must admit, that it required some ingenuity to avoid accidents among the crowd. But give me the gun,—and here comes a victim," he continued, as a huge grey gull, reckless of danger, wheeled as they will do round and round a wounded companion.

"I would not be in his coat for half the hooker," said Pattigo, in a stage whisper.

"The Lord look to him!" exclaimed another boatman, "if it be not a sin to pray for a bird."

"He shall not carry his life to the water," rejoined the Master, as he laid the barrel to his eye.

But, notwithstanding prayer and prophecy, the gull merely

parted a few feathers, and flew off to all appearance with little injury.

"By every thing blind!" exclaimed my kinsman, "the gun must have been charged with sawdust. Ha! let's see the flask! Frank, Frank, thou art a careless gunner; the powder is not worth one farthing."

It was true. I had forgotten my flask in the pocket of a wet *cota more*,* and consequently the powder was spoiled.

Nothing puzzles me more, with the exception of keeping the Sheriff at a distance, than preserving gunpowder, and preventing my arms from rusting; and it is incredible how soon the humidity of this climate spoils the one, and causes the other.†

* *Anglice*, great-coat.

† Gunpowder is composed of very light charcoal, sulphur, and well-refined saltpetre. The powder used by sportsmen in shooting game, is generally composed of six parts of saltpetre, one of charcoal, and one of sulphur; but these proportions, as well as the introduction of other ingredients, and the sizes of the grains, are undoubtedly varied by the different manufacturers in the composition of the powders of the same denomination, and are always kept profoundly secret.

The materials are put into a wooden trough, where they are ground together, to render the contact of the nitrous and combustible particles intimate and equal throughout the whole mass. The mixture is occasionally sprinkled with water, to form an amalgam, which is afterwards granulated, and to prevent the finer particles of the sulphur and the charcoal from flying off, which would necessarily alter the proportion of the composition. The powder-makers employ more or less time in the operation of grinding, in proportion to the quantity and quality of the saltpetre. When they conceive that the ingredients are properly mixed together, they from the paste form those little grains, which, being dried, obtain the name of gunpowder.

There are two general methods of examining gunpowder; one with regard to its *purity*, the other with regard to its *strength*.

Its *purity* is known by laying two or three little heaps near each other, upon white paper, and firing one of them. For if this takes fire readily, and the smoke rises upright, without leaving any dross or feculant matter behind, and without burning the paper, or firing the other heaps, it is esteemed a sign that the sulphur and nitre were well purified, that the coal was good, and that the ingredients were thoroughly incorporated together; but if the other heaps also take fire at the same time, it is presumed, that either common salt was mixed with the nitre, or that the coal was not well ground, or the whole mass not well beat or mixed together; and if either the nitre or sulphur be not well purified, the paper will be black or spotted.

To determine the *strength* of powder, dry it perfectly, and ascertain how many sheets of paper it will drive the shot through at the distance

"My grand magazine is a sort of basket, secured with a lid and padlock, and covered with a sheep-skin, which, like the coffin of Mahomet, hangs suspended between sky and earth, from the couples of the kitchen. This disposition secures it alike against damp and accident. My arms give me an infinity of trouble, but by a weekly inspection, I manage to keep all in order.

"It is marvellous how quickly, even with moderate care, powder spoils. With my attention I experience little inconvenience, as I always warm my flask by plunging it in boiling water before I take the field. This renders the powder sufficiently dry, without deteriorating from its strength, which exposure to a stronger heat will inevitably occasion.

"By the way, I have had more actual experience in this necessary article than was exactly agreeable. Come, we will bear away for the Lodge, and as the Colonel is immersed in 'The Packet,' and deep in the debate, I will give you the particulars. In powder I am not '*ignarus mali*,' for I blew myself up, or made an excellent attempt,—and burned a cabin to the very ground.

"Both tales are briefly told. We were on a Christmas visit, when, a slight fall of snow having taken place overnight, the host proposed that I, and Captain H—— of the 7th dragoons, should go out and shoot snipes among the numerous drains by which his lawn was irrigated. Guns were procured but only *one* powder-flask was attainable, and it was to be a part-

of ten or twelve yards. In this trial we should be careful to employ the *same sized shot* in each experiment—the quantity both of the shot and the powder being regulated by exact weight; otherwise we cannot, even in this experiment, arrive to any certainty in comparing the strength of different powders, or of the same powder at different times.

To protect guns from rust in the humid climate I have been latterly accustomed to, I found nothing answer well but *strong mercurial ointment*. On the western coast, oil, no matter how good in quality, is useless, but for cleaning. Those who are acquainted with the localities of that country know that *turf* is of trifling value. No limit is consequently placed upon its consumption; it is calculated only by the *stack* or the *boatful*, and hence more fuel was wasted iu my lodge than would supply three moderate houses. Yet so penetrating is the damp from the ocean breeze, that the house-arms rusted above the fire-places, and the pistols I kept upon my table would spot if not frequently examined, and dry-rubbed with a flannel cloth.

nership concern. For this purpose it was large enough in all conscience, being an old-fashioned horn, bound with brass, and capable of holding a pound of powder. *We filled it to the top.* At a short distance from the house, a snipe sprang unexpectedly—I killed it—and in attempting to reload, the charge ignited in the barrel, and the horn blew up in my hand. My clothes were reduced to tinder, my hat scorched, my hair and eyebrows burned off, but excepting a slight cut in my hand, otherwise I was perfectly uninjured. *Not a fragment of the flask, but one shattered piece of horn, could be found upon the unbroken surface of the snow.* H——, who was about one hundred yards distant from me, described the explosion as louder than the report of a nine-pounder; yet, to me, the noise seemed trifling. Was not this escape miraculous?

"The second explosion, in which I perpetrated *arson*, occurred some ten miles up the river. By some uuhappy mischance, I took out a flask of condemned powder, and the accident was not discovered until it was too late to be remedied. To dry the powder was the alternative; and we repaired for this purpose to the only house within four miles of the place, a *shieling* occupied by an old herdsman and his wife.

"The powder was spread upon a wooden platter, and laid at a sufficient distance from the fire; and while I stirred it with a ramrod at a distance, one of my attendants conceived it a fitting opportunity to roast *a cast of potatoes* in the embers. Both operations went forward successfully. The powder was almost dry—the potatoes nearly roasted, when my follower ingeniously contrived to introduce a coal into the loose powder. This incident, though trifling in itself, made an immediate alteration in affairs. The roof of the cabin was dry as tinder, while tow, flax, and other combustible matters, were stored immediately above the hearth. In a moment all was in flames—the potato-roaster blown into the corner, and I, either by fear or gunpowder, *capsized* in another direction.

"The agony of the poor old woman, who fortunately was outside the hovel when the explosion took place, was pitiable. In five minutes her cabin was a ruin—and to her that wretched *shieling* was worth a marble palace. For a time she could not be pacified. In vain she was assured 'that the master would build her a new house, *wider, and bigger, and*

warmer, ay, and that should have *a wooden door!*' but, like another Rachel, she mourned, and refused to be comforted.

"Two or three days removed her sorrow. I sent assistance, and, progressing, like another Aladdin, the cabin rose, Phœnix-like, from its ashes. It is now the envy of the passing traveller; and as the old couple close their *wooden door* at night, they pray for *the Master's* long life, and bless God that 'a pound of powder blew up at their fire-side.'

"But see! old John's signal flies at the flag-staff. In with that endless spillet, Pattigo! Pshaw! red gurnets, codlings, flat-fish, with skates and rays eternally. Now, *out reefs*—on with the *big jib*—nay, my dear Colonel, I am commander. *Ease away the sheets*. Ha! she stoops to it! Hish! she travels *Carry on*, Pattigo—the Colonel is aboard, '*Cæsarem vehis!*' *She does scrape the sand a little*; but we are fairly over *the bar*—John's dinner signal would make any man a hero."

CHAPTER XXV.

A calm night—Sand-eel fishing—Dangerous to the fair sex—Cockles—Crabs—Scallops—Oysters—Punt adrift—My brother's shoes—Seal surprised—Incident—Gun burst—Birmingham guns—Percussion locks—London makers—Barrel-making—Gun-making—Inferior guns—Shooting accident.

It was nearly dark, but the night was calm and warm. I stole from the heated room to indulge in a luxurious smoke *al fresco*; and seated upon the wall of the little pier, puffed away in Turkish indolence. The swell upon the bar was particularly distinct, as, in successive falls, the wave burst upon the sands, and ran hissing up the beach, till its volume of water broke and subsided. The tide was almost out, and the river which forms the channel of the estuary, would hardly reach beyond the knee; and I thought of the singular contrast that existed between the quiet stream, now scarcely a stone's throw over, and the fierce and lowering water which a westerly gale forces in, rushing every moment with increased violence from the ocean, and threatening to burst over bank and rock that opposed a barrier to its rage. My

musings were, however, speedily interrupted; voices came towards me from opposite directions, and loud and frequent laugh replied to rustic badinage and youthful romping. My cousin joined me, and from him I ascertained that the jolly parties who seemed every were scattered over the sands beyond the river, where the village girls assembled to collect sand-eels, an employment they would pursue till the returning tide filled the estuary again. A little flat punt, which the servants use for bringing spring water from the bent banks, was speedily placed upon the river, and we pushed over to the opposite strand, and found ourselves surrounded by several hundreds of the young villagers of both sexes, who were busily engaged in this curious species of night-fishing.

The sand-eels are generally from four to nine inches in length, and lie beneath the surface seldom deeper than a foot. The method of taking them is very simple; it is effected by passing a case-knife or sickle with a blunted edge, quickly through the sands; and by this means the fish is brought to the surface, and its phosphoric brilliancy betrays it instantly. At the particular times during the summer months when these eels run in upon the estuary, quantities sufficient to fill several barrels have been collected during a night. When dressed the fish is reckoned by the peasantry a great delicacy, but to my taste it is much too strong. But they are sought after for other purposes: from the particular brilliancy of the skin they make an admirable bait for flat-fish; and hence a spillet-settee prefers them to every other kind, as they are much more durable than the lug,* and infinitely preferable to eels of a coarser size.

In speaking of this nocturnal fishery, if a search in the sands may be so termed, my cousin said that it was a source of considerable trouble to himself and the priest in their respective vocations: for accidents of a delicate description were occasionally to be lamented, and many an unhappy calamity was traced to "the returning from the sand-eels." Whether the danger of this curious pursuit enhanced its enjoyment is questionable; but, regardless of the frequent mishaps, which prudent mothers would of course duly enumerate, the fair por-

* The sand-worm used by fishermen.

tion of the peasantry waited anxiously for twilight, and then, fortified by maternal advice and female resolution, set off in troops to the strand to share the pleasures and the perils of this interesting but dangerous amusement.

A crowd of a more youthful description of the peasantry, are collected every spring-tide to gather cockles on the same sands by daylight when the tide answers. The quantities of these shell-fish thus procured would almost exceed belief; and I have frequently seen more than would load a donkey, collected during one tide by the children of a single cabin. They form a valuable and wholesome addition to the limited variety that the Irish peasant boasts at his humble board; and afford children, too young for other tasks, a safe and useful employment.

Indeed, its plentiful supply of shell-fish may be enumerated among the principal advantages which this wild coast offers to its inhabitants. Along the cliffs, whether in the islands or on the main, lobsters are found in abundance; and, if the peasantry possessed the necessary means for prosecuting the fishery, it might at times afford them a lucrative employment. But, simple as the apparatus is, they do not possess it; and the lobsters obtained by sinking pots and baskets in the deep sea, are taken by strangers, who come for this purpose from a considerable distance. Those killed by the islanders are only procurable at low springs, when the ebbing of the water beyond its customary limits, permits caves and crannies in the rocks being investigated, which in ordinary tides could not be entered.

Crabs are found on this coast of considerable size and sufficiently numerous. Like the lobsters, they are only accidentally procured; but there is no doubt but a large supply could be obtained if proper means were employed to take them.

The most esteemed of all the shell-fish tribe by the western fishermen is the scallop, which here is indeed of very superior size and flavour. They are commonly found by the oyster-dredgers in deep water; and are estimated so highly as a luxury, as to cause their being transferred to the next gentleman who may have been serviceable to the peasant who finds them, or whose future favour it may be advisable to propitiate. Indeed, in former days, and those too not very distant from our own times, to approach a justice of the peace without

"a trifle for his honour," would be an offence of passing magnitude; a basket of chickens, a cleave of scallops, or an ass-load of oysters, harbingered the aggriever and the aggrieved. If these formulæ were not duly attended to, the fountain of law was hermetically sealed; and a house functionary—for all the servants on the establishment were "four pound constables"—announced that "his honour would do no justice," and bundled off the applicant to some one more approachable of his Majesty's numerous and poor esquires.

The oysters found in the bays and estuaries along this coast are of a very superior quality; and their quantity may be inferred from the fact, that on the shores where they are bedded, a turf-basket large enough to contain six or seven hundred, can be filled for a sixpence. A couple of men will easily, and in a few hours, lift a horse-load!—and, notwithstanding the numbers carried off by sailing-boats from Clare and Munster, the stock appears to be little reduced by the constant dredging. There are besides these, other shell-fishes greatly prized by the peasantry, but which I had never had the curiosity to eat, such as razor-fish, clams, and various kinds of muscles. These occasionally make a welcome change in the otherwise unvarying potato diet; and, better still, employ the idler members of the family, whose youth or age unfits them for more laborious exertions.

We dallied so long among the fairer portion of the sand-eel fishers, that the tide insensibly rose; and when we reached the place where our punt had been secured, we discovered that the water had crept up the sands, and floated the frail skiff away. To hail and get a boat from the Lodge, from the calmness of the night, was readily effected; and while it was being launched down the beach, my kinsman told me that it was not the first time that the treacherous punt had played truant to its crew.

"On a stormy evening, one of the boatmen was ordered to cross the estuary for spring-water, and set out accordingly for a supply, accompanied by a wild-looking and nondescript animal who infests the premises, who is known to the establishment by the name of '*Achil*.' The river was flooded, the evening stormy, and Peeterein, after leaving his coadjutor in strict charge of the skiff, set off to fill his water-vessels, and to return, if possible, before the dusk had fallen into darkness. *Achil*, as the evening was chilly, lay down in the

bottom of the skiff to shelter himself from the piercing east wind; and, in place of keeping watch and ward like an able mariner, composed himself to sleep. Meanwhile the river rose fearfully; the breeze freshened into a gale; and when Peeterein hurried back with his water-vessels, he had the satisfaction of seeing the punt half a mile down channel, hurrying as fast as a flooded river and a freshening storm could urge it to the bar, which now broke in thunder. I had been shooting on this side, and reached the strand while Peeterein was hallooing for assistance. A boat was rapidly despatched —the skiff, when its destruction appeared inevitable, was overtaken, and *Achil* found as comfortably asleep as if he were in his accustomed crib in the barn. The ebullitions of Peeterein's sorrow, while the fate of skiff and boy was still uncertain, astonished me; and when I saw the punt in tow, I observed that, as the boy was recovered, he might now cease his lamentations.—'The Lord be blessed! there she is: another minute would have made noggin-staves of her! Arrah! and did ye think it was *Achil* I was frettin after—the devil pursue him for an unlucky member! No, faith—I was in sore distress, for *my brother's shoes were aboard!*'"

We were assembled round the breakfast-table this morning, and it was a questionable affair whether we should pass the forenoon in the warren, or shoot a spillet on the banks, when the conclave was dissolved by one of those incidental alarms that diversify the rustic monotony of our common-place existence. The spring-tide had left the channel nearly dry, and, except in some deep pools, the water was but ankle-deep. Into one of these an unlucky seal had been seduced in pursuit of a salmon, and his retreat was cut off before he was aware that his ill-timed chassé would cause his ruin. On his being discovered, a host of cockle-gatherers formed across the neck of the hole, while a breathless courier brought the tidings to the Lodge. Instantly all was bustle; a salmon-net was procured, and the whole of the "Dramatis Personæ," even to the Colonel and the Priest, were speedily armed with divers and deadly implements. Old Antony had hobbled off at the first alarm, and, by the prudent plan of taking time by the forelock, managed to be the first man at

the scene of action. It was a deep and rather an extensive pool, and the unfortunate seal absconded to the place most likely to afford concealment till the flood-tide should liberate him from the hand of his enemies. But, alas! they were many and malignant; and, driven from his deepest and last retreat, to avoid being meshed in the net, he was forced upon the shoal, when an otter-spear, struck to the socket of the grains by the vigorous arm of Hennessey, killed him without a struggle. When the net was brought ashore, the moiety of a large salmon remained in the meshes, and told the errand which induced the defunct seal to commit himself to the faithless shoals which proved so fatal to him.

This is, indeed, a day of incidents. Dinner was just removed, when, on the top of flood, a coast-guard galley ran in with a leading breeze from the westward. The very elegant proportions of the boat, the happy attitude, the snowy whiteness of her large lugs, as with the favourable light which a sunless but clear blue sky gave, she rounded the headland, and came up like a race-horse to the pier, had called our undivided attention to her arrival. While conjecture was busy as to what her business might be, we observed a man with his arm slung in a handkerchief, and apparently in considerable pain, leave her. The cause was soon ascertained, for a serious accident had occurred, and we all adjourned to the kitchen, where Antony was already occupied with the wound.

It appeared that a gun, with which the poor fellow had been shooting rabbits, had burst and shattered his hand; and when I saw the whole of the palm sadly lacerated, and the thumb attached by a small portion of the muscles, I really feared to save it was a hopeless task. But Antony and my kinsman thought differently. The old man bound the wound up with a professional neatness that I could not have expected from him; the patient was accommodated in the Lodge, and in a fortnight the galley again returned, to bring him, thoroughly convalescent, to his station.

I had some curiosity to examine the unlucky gun that caused the mischief. There was a longitudinal rent along the barrel, of seven or eight inches, terminating where the left hand usually grasps the stock. There had, no doubt, been a

deep flaw in the inside of the metal; for the wounded man declared that he had not loaded the gun beyond the customary charge.

It proved to be one of those wretched affairs which are constantly smuggled into Ireland, and sold under the denomination of London guns, but which, it is well known, are fabricated in Birmingham; and the extent to which this dangerous imposition upon public safety is carried, would scarcely be credited. There is a constant demand in this unhappy country for fire-arms; the well affected and disaffected seek them for very different purposes;—one wants them for defence, the other requires them for aggression; and every steamer that arrives from Liverpool has generally some stands of contraband arms on board.

That our times should be as far distinguished for increased effect and superior elegance in the formation of fire-arms, as for any other mechanical improvement, will be admitted by all but the most prejudiced of the old school. Antique gunners may still be found, who are obstinate in preferring the flint to the percussion plan; but any person who has suffered the disappointments that the best guns on the former principle will entail upon those that carry them, and particularly in wet and stormy weather, will freely admit the wonderful advantages that simple and effective invention, the copper cap, confers upon the modern sportsman. The misery entailed upon the man who in rain and storm attempts to load and discharge a flint gun, may be reckoned among the worst upon the human catalogue; and if he who has suffered repeated disappointments of eternal misses and dilatory explosions, from a thick flint and a damp pan, tried the simple and elegant improvement now in general use, he would abandon the stone gun for ever.

It has been said that gun-making is only brought to perfection in London, and that the Irish are not able to compete with their English rivals. I am of this opinion, I confess, and decidedly partial to a London gun; and while I admit that I have occasionally met with excellent fire-arms produced by Dublin makers, yet they are, in finish and elegance, far behind those which one gets from any of the leading artists in the great metropolis. To point to any particular name,

among the host of London makers, would be absurd. From any of a dozen a person will be certain of obtaining a first-rate implement; and from the Mantons, Purday, Egg, and many others, guns of the most efficient qualities and beautiful finish will be procured.

Some sportsmen are partial to such makers as forge their own barrels, and who thus afford them an opportunity of seeing their gun in progress from its commencement to its finish; and I acknowledge that I like to see my barrels fabricated; not but that I believe the greatest pains are bestowed upon proving his barrels by every gunmaker of character, and that none will be permitted to leave the shop of any reputable artist that have not been faithfully tested as to strength and safety.

So much depends on individual fancy, as well as the personal formation of the shooter, that no two persons will exactly select the same gun. He who has long or short arms, or any peculiarity in the formation of neck or shoulders, will require, according to circumstances, a differently shapen stock. Every man knows the gun best suited to his taste and figure, and few can shoot with one that differs materially from that which he has been accustomed to. To tell an experienced sportsman the qualities a finished gun should possess, would be giving him unnecessary information; and should the neophyte on this head wish for ample instructions, let him consult Colonel Hawker, and he, honest man, will open up all the arcana of the craft;—and though he may not teach him "the cunning trick of shooting;" he will, if his advice be attended to, enable him to thoroughly comprehend the requisite qualities of an efficient and well-finished fowling-piece.

Indeed, it is a miserable species of economy for a sportsman to purchase an inferior gun. To expect that the low-priced ones which are manufactured in country towns will be either safe or durable, is an absurdity. No doubt the charges of some fashionable makers are exorbitant; and from more moderate tradesmen, of excellent repute, an equally good gun may be procured at a considerably less price. But if a London maker be expensive, he certainly gives you the best article that improved machinery and the first workmen in the world can produce. With common care it will nearly last a lifetime; and the small consideration between a warranted, and a flimsy and hastily-formed fowling-piece, will be too contemp-

tible for a person to place in competition with personal security and sporting comfort.

When a gun begins to exhibit symptoms of having done its work, the sooner a man discards it the better. An injured barrel, or enfeebled lock, may prove fatal to the owner or his associates. Accidents every day occur, and very lamentable consequences arise from a culpable neglect, in retaining arms that should be declared unserviceable, and of course disused.

I had once a favourite gun, which, from constant wear and tear, exhibited unequivocal weakness in the lock, and which I had been earnestly recommended by a veteran sportsman to discard. On a cold and rainy day I was with my friend, O'M——, shooting woodcocks in the heath, and having sprung several, which, from the severity of the weather, were as wild as hawks, we marked them into a ravine, and determined to tie up the dogs, and endeavour to steal upon them. To keep my gun dry, I placed it under the skirt of my jacket, with the muzzle pointing downwards. My companion and our attendant were busy coupling the dogs, when the gun exploded, and the charge passed between O'M——'s bosom and the back of a dog he was in the act of securing, buried itself at the foot of the keeper, covering him with mud and gravel. From the close manner in which we were all grouped, how the shot could have entered the ground, without killing men or dogs, or both, was miraculous. I was desperately frightened, and from that moment forswore, for ever, the use of weakened locks and attenuated barrels.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Bad roads—Native horses—Carins—Bridge of Ballyveeney—Our beat—Midday on the Moors—Hints to grouse-shooters—Finding game—Wild scenery—The ruined chapel—The well—Act of penance—Storm in the mountains—The deserted burying-place—Our return—The Colonel's method of rabbit-shooting—A disappointment.

I VERILY believe that no people upon earth are more easily satisfied in roads, than the natives in Ballyveeney. A narrow strip of rough gravel along the sea-beach—a mountain water-course, tolerably disencumbered of its rocks, or practicable

passage across a bog, provided it be but fetlock deep, are considered by the inhabitants of this wild peninsula to be excellent horseways.

That accidents do not more frequently occur is marvellous. But the horse is born in the wilderness, and if there be a practicable path, he appears to know it by intuition. Hence, the rider traverses with impunity a morass in which Colonel Thornton would have been ingulfed, and skirts a dizzy precipice, with no more apprehension than a cockney wayfaring upon a turnpike trust. "Use lessens marvel," quoth Sir Walter Scott,—and I, who formerly witnessed the accoutrement of these Calmuck-looking coursers, with a lively anticipation of broken bones, now stumble through a defile, or cross a bog, with all the indifference of a native.

Having despatched the dogs and keeper, we arranged our beat, and started after breakfast. The road by which we reached our shooting-ground, is the sole means by which this, our *terra incognita*, is connected with the rest of Christendom. It is rough and dangerous in the extreme, and impracticable to every quadruped but the ponies of the country. In place of mile-stones, which mark better frequented roads, heaps of irregularly-sized pebbles meet the eye, and a stranger will be at a loss to assign their uses. They are melancholy memorials of uncivilized society, and either mark the scene of murder, or the place where a corpse has been rested in the progress of a funeral. These tumuli are numerous—and many a wild and fearful record of former violence is associated with them. The greater portion of these *cairns* record loss of life, consequent upon drunkenness; and the stone, at present, appears as fatal as the *middoge** in former days.

* This weapon, I believe, was almost confined to the west of Ireland, and at this time is rarely met with. Yet some centuries back, it was as constantly borne by the Milesians, as the dirk in the Highlands, and the stiletto in Italy. All the legendary tales of blood usually employ it as the means of violence; and old Antony says, that in his youth the old people shuddered when they named it. I never saw but one; it was a broad-bladed dagger, about fifteen inches long, of clumsy workmanship, and hafted with a piece of deer's horn. From the formidable figure the *middoge* cuts in ancient chronicles, the temper of the blade was supposed to be superior to any weapon forged in these degenerate days; and I heard an old man assert that he had seen one, which, when held up and let fall perpendicularly but a few feet, would pierce through *three half-crown pieces—Credat Judæus!*—This interesting and valuable implement,

We left our horses at the old bridge of Ballyveeney, and proceeded to make an extensive circle of the moors, skirting, as we went along, the bases of the ridge of hills, which shuts out Erris from the interior.

It was eleven o'clock when the dogs were uncoupled. The breeze was brisk and warm, and the ground was either undulated into hillocks, or intersected by rivulets, whose broken banks were thickly covered with luxurious heath. It was a beat, on which a grouse-shooter would risk a kingdom,—it realized our expectations, and we found game abundantly.

Hunting for grouse during the basking hour of the day, is rigidly prohibited by all gentlemen who compile sporting directories; and yet every shooter knows, that at these proscribed hours, himself is commonly on the moors. Morning and evening, when the birds are on foot in search of food, is undoubtedly preferable to the duller portion of the day, when they are accustomed to indulge in a *siesta*. But generally some considerable distance must be travelled before the sportsman can reach his beat from his quarters. The morning is consumed on horseback or in the shooting-cart; the same road must be again accomplished before night; and hence, the middle of the day is, of necessity, the portion devoted to the pursuit of game.

To find the birds, when, satisfied with food, they leave the moor to bask in some favourite haunt, requires both patience and experience; and here the mountain-bred sportsman proves his superiority over the less practised shooter. The packs then lie closely, and occupy a small surface on some sunny brow or sheltered hollow. The best-nosed dogs will pass within a few yards, and not acknowledge them; and patient hunting, with every advantage of the wind, must be employed to find grouse at this dull hour.

But if close and judicious hunting be necessary, the places to be beaten are comparatively few, and the sportsman's eye readily detects the spot, where the pack is sure to be discovered. He leaves the open feeding-grounds for heathery knowes and sheltered valleys—and, while the uninitiated wearies his dogs in vain over the hill-side, where the birds, hours before, might have been expected, the older sportsman profits by his experience, and seldom fails in discovering the dell

according to his account, was lost "during the French," that is, at the period of the French invasion in '98.

or hillock, where, in fancied security, the indolent pack is reposing.

We had been upon the moors some hours—our walk was enlivened by success, and the time had arrived when the commissariat was required, and old John's supplies were ordered from the rear. A rivulet was reported to be *just round the hill*, and thither our course was directed.

We turned a rugged brow suddenly, and never did a sweeter spot present itself to an exhausted sportsman; and resting on the bank of a ravine, where a small stream trickled over a precipice, forming beneath its brow a basin of crystal water, we selected this for our "*bivouac.*" Wild myrtle and shrub-like heather closed the opposite sides, and one spot, where the rivulet *elbowed* back, was covered with short green moss, that seemed rather an effort of human art, than a piece of natural arrangement.

Here we rested—and while baskets were unpacked, and the cloth extended upon the velvet surface we reposed upon, I looked with feelings which I cannot describe, upon the wild and melancholy scene below.

It was a ruined chapel and deserted burying-place—one gable of the building alone was standing, and, from beneath the ivied wall, a spring gushed out and united itself with the rivulet I have described. A stone cross, whose rude workmanship showed its antiquity, was erected beside the fountain; and although the cemetery had long since been deserted, a circle round the well* was freshly worn in the turf, and a

* The following passage is quoted from "*The Minstrelsy of the Border:*"—"Many run superstitiously to other wells, and there obtain, as they imagine, health and advantage; and then they offer bread and cheese, or money, by throwing them into the well." And again: "In the bounds of the lands of Eccles, belonging to a lineage, of the name of Maitland, there is a loch, called *the Dowloch*, of old resorted to, with much superstition, as medicinal both for men and beasts, and that with such ceremonies as are shrewdly suspected to have begun with witchcraft, and increased afterwards by magical directions. For bringing of a cloth or somewhat that did relate to the bodies of men and women, and a shoe or tether belonging to a cow or horse, and these being cast into the loch, if they did float it was taken for a good omen of recovery, and a part of the water carried to the patient, though to remote places, without saluting or speaking to any they met by the way; but if they did sink, the recovery of the party was hopeless. This custom was of late much curbed and restrained; but since the discovery of many medicinal fountains near the place, the vulgar, holding that it may be as medicinal as these

woman at the moment was performing an act of devotion, on her bare knees, making an occasional pause, to offer up a prayer and drop a bead from her rosary.

The valley had a solemn and imposing character; everything about it was lonely and desolate. No traces of human visits were discernible; no pathway led to the ruin,—all was deep unbroken solitude; a hallowed and melancholy spot, where the living seldom presumed to approach the mansions of the dead.

The breeze fell, the air became unusually oppressive, the hill behind robbed us of the little wind that still partially cooled the sultry atmosphere; a distant muttering among the mountains was faintly heard, and a sound like a rising stream, was audible. Suddenly, a black cloud rose like magic upon the summit of the mountain, and a flash of light succeeded. "The storm is on," said my kinsman, and leaving the attendants to discuss the fragments of the feast, where they might best obtain shelter, we hurried down the hill, and couched beneath the ruins of the chapel.

There is more grandeur in an Alpine storm, than can be imagined by those who have not witnessed its effect. As the thunder crashes over the hills, and miles away is reverberated from the opposite mountains, the loneliness of the wilderness is in fine keeping with the anger of the elements. The rain-drops now fell faster—quick and vivid flashes burst from the southern heavens, and roll after roll succeeded, like sustained discharges of artillery. The dogs, in evident alarm, cowered at our feet, soliciting mortal protection from what, instinct told them, were the visitations of an awful power. Suddenly, one prolonged and terrific crash burst overhead—a deluge of rain descended—and rapidly as it came on the storm passed away—the peals became fewer and more distant, and in five minutes died in sullen murmurs among the distant hills.

"Is not this, indeed, sublimity?" said my kinsman, as he broke a silence of some minutes. "To convey ideas of the grand and terrible, give me a storm in the mountains, and let it be viewed thus: sheltered by the ivied walls of

are, at this time begin to reassume their former practice."—*Macfarlane' MSS.*

a 'toppling' ruin, and surrounded by the dwellings of the dead."

"How comes it," I inquired, "that, contrary to the known attachment of the lower Irish for ancient places of interment, this seems to be neglected and disused?"

"You are right," he replied; "although it was once the only burying-ground to which the inhabitants of this district conveyed the dead for interment, more than two centuries have elapsed since it has been abandoned. There is a curious tradition connected with its desecration, which Antony will be too happy in narrating, and as the clouds appear collecting on the hills, I propose that we retreat in good time, for it is rare to find such shelter on the moors, as that afforded us by the ruins of Knock-a-thample."*

Even the sublime and beautiful may be enjoyed to satiety, and we agreed that one thunder-storm is sufficient for the day. The game-bags, upon examination, produced twenty brace of grouse, and a leash of mountain hares. For moderate men we had done enough, and we could dispense with the evening shooting. Accordingly, we left our attendants to follow at their leisure, and mounting our Cossack cavalry, set off at a killing pace, "over bank, bush, and scaur," nor drew bridle until we reached the sand-banks, where the boat, with Pattigo and his companions, was awaiting our arrival.

Nor have we been the only denizens of the lodge whose exertions have this day been successful. The Colonel has spent the forenoon in the sand-banks, much to his own satisfaction, in slaying rabbits, and studying the Morning Post. To unite the sportsman and politician, may at first sight seem difficult—but, ensconcing himself in a good position, the commander waits patiently for a shot, and, confiding loading and look-out to *Andy Bawn*, whose attentions since the unfortunate affair of the portmanteau have been redoubled, he coolly proceeds with *the debate*, until a rabbit is reported within range of the favourite *Spanish barrel*,† by his assistant

* *Anglice*, The church of the hill.

† *Spanish barrels* have always been held in great esteem, as well on account of the quality of the iron, which is generally considered the best in Europe, as because they possess the reputation of being forged and bored more perfectly than any others. It should be observed, however, that of the Spanish barrels, those only that are made in the capital are accounted truly valuable; in consequence of which, a great many have

gunner. This mode of shooting the Colonel recommends, provided the day and the debate be *warm*. In winter, he may be induced occasionally to take the side of a sunny cover, but gout and rheumatism are ever present to his imagination, and he would not "wet a foot for all the birds upon Brae Mar."

After dinner, I reminded my kinsman of the promised legend of Knock-a-thample, and the otter-killer was ordered to the presence. But on inquiry, Antony had been professionally called off to a distant village upon the coast, to minister to a broken head, and had taken his departure in a four-oared boat, with as much ceremony as though he had been *surgeon-general*. I felt, and expressed my disappointment. "And are you really curious about this wild tradition?" asked our host. "I believe this is one of many legends, which, during a terrible winter, I amused myself by transcribing." Opening a drawer he took out a common-place book, and marked the page. Finding no inclination to sleep when I retired for the night, I heaped more bog-wood on the fire, and, before I slept, read the following specimen of the "wild and wonderful."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LEGEND OF KNOCK-A-THAMPLE.

In the valley of Knock-a-thample, beside a ruined church and holy well, the shattered walls of what had been once a human habitation, are still visible. They stand at a bow-shot distance from the fountain, which, instead of a place of penance for ancient crones and solitary devotees, was visited two centuries since for a very different purpose.

The well, although patronised by St. Catharine, a lady of as determined celibacy as ever underwent canonization, had one peculiar virtue, which, under her especial superintendance,

been made at other places in Catalonia and Biscay, with the names and marks of the Madrid gunsmiths; they are also counterfeited at Liege, Prague, Munich, &c., and a person must be a good judge not to be deceived by these spurious barrels.

it might not have been expected to possess. Indeed, in every-day complaints, its waters were tolerably efficacious; but, in cases of connubial disappointments, when the nuptial bed had been unfruitful, they proved an absolute specific; and in providing an heir for an estate, when "hope deferred had made the heart sick," there was not in the kingdom of Connaught, a blessed well that could hold a candle to that of Knock-a-thample.

Numerous as the persons were, whom the reputation of the fountain collected from a distance, few returned without experiencing relief. Occasionally, a patient appeared, whose virgin career had been a little too protracted, and to whom the rosary, rather than the cradle, was adapted.—And so thought St. Catharine—though her water was unequalled, yet she had neither time nor inclination to work miracles eternally; consequently, those ancient candidates for the honours of maternity returned precisely as they came: to expend holy water on such antique customers was almost a sinful waste—their presumption was unpardonable—it was enough to vex a saint, and even put the blessed Patroness of Knock-a-thample in a passion.

Holy water, like prophecy, appears to be of little value at home, and hence the devotees usually came from some distant province. The soil, indeed, might then have possessed the same anti-Malthusian qualities for which it is so remarkable at the present day. Certainly, the home consumption of Knock-a-thample was on a limited scale—and the herdsman and his wife, who then occupied the ruined cottage near the church, owed their winter comforts to the munificence of the strange pilgrims, who during the summer season resorted in numbers to the well.

It was late in October, and the pilgrimages were over for the year—winter was at hand—the heath was withered, and the last flower had fallen from the bog-myrtle—the *boollies**

* The *Boolies*, in the mountain districts, are an interesting remnant of antiquity; and refer evidently to that period when Ireland was in its wild and unsettled state. They are simply one or more temporary *sheilings*, or huts, constructed with rude materials, in spots the most convenient for attending to the cattle in the summer and autumn, when they are allowed to depasture on the mountains.

According to the usual leases granted by the landlord to the tenant in this wild country, villages in the lowlands, or on the coast, have a reserved

were abandoned, and the cattle driven from the hills. It was a dark evening; and the rain which had been collecting on the mountains began to fall heavily, when a loud knock disturbed the inhabitants of the cabin. The door was promptly unbarred, and a young and well-dressed stranger entered, received the customary welcome, with an invitation to join the herdsman's family, who were then preparing their evening meal. The extreme youth and beauty of the traveller did not escape the peasant's observation, although he kept his cap upon his head and declined to put aside his mantle.

An hour before the young stranger had arrived, another, and a very different visiter, had demanded lodging for the night. He belonged also to another country, and for some years had trafficked with the mountain peasantry, and was known among them by the appellation of *the Red Pedler*. He was a strong, under-sized, and ill-visaged man; mean in his dress, and repulsive in his appearance. The Pedler directed a keen and inquisitive look at the belated traveller, who, to escape the sinister scrutiny of his small but piercing eyes, turned to where the herdsman's wife was occupied in preparing the simple supper. The peasant gazed with wonder at her guest; for never had so fair a face been seen within the herdsman's dwelling. While her eyes were still bent upon the stranger, a fortuitous opening of the mantle displayed a sparkling cross of exquisite beauty, which hung upon the youth's bosom; and more than once, as it glittered in the uncertain light of the wood fire, she remarked the rich and sparkling gem.

When morning came, the Pilgrim took leave of the hospitable peasants, and as he inquired the road to the holy well, slipped a rose-noble into the hand of the herdsman's

right of pasturage on particular portions of the adjacent hills; and in some cases the distance from the tenant's habitation to this mountain pasturage will exceed a dozen miles. Hence it is impossible to pay the requisite attention to the cattle, without residing on the spot; and a part of the family, generally the young girls, are detached to *bivouac* in the hills, and attend to the herding and milking of the cows.

These huts are always erected in lone and beautiful valleys, generally on the bank of a rivulet, and placed beneath the shelter of a cliff. When the season closes, they are deserted until the following year; and a few hours' work suffices to render them habitable when the returning summer obliges the fair villagers to resume their wild and pastoral employment.

wife. This was not unnoticed by the Red Pedler, who proffered his services as guide, which the youth modestly, but firmly, declined. The Pilgrim hastened to the fountain, performed the customary ceremonies before noon, and then took the mountain path, leading through an opening in the hills, to a *station*,* which, though particularly lonely, was usually selected by good Catholics for a last act of devotion, when returning from visiting at the blessed well. The Pedler, who, on various pretences, had loitered near the place, soon afterwards departed in the same direction.

That night the herdsman's family sought repose in vain:—wild unearthly noises were heard around the hovel; and shriek and laughter, awfully mingled together, were borne upon the breeze which came moaning from the mountains. The peasant

barred his door, and grasped his wood-axe; his wife with trembling fingers, told her rosary over again and again.

* A place of penance frequented by Catholic devotees.

Morning broke, and, harassed by alarms, they sunk to sleep at last. But their slumbers were rudely broken—a gray-haired monk roused them hastily—horror was in his looks, and with difficulty he staggered to a seat. Gradually he collected strength to tell his fearful errand—the young and lovely devotee lay in the mountain glen, before St. Catharine's cross, a murdered corpse.

The tidings of this desperate deed flew through the country rapidly. The body was carried to the herdsman's cabin. For many hours life had been extinct, and the distorted countenance of the hapless youth bespoke the mortal agony which had accompanied the spirit's flight. One deep wound was in his side, inflicted evidently by a triangular weapon; and the brilliant cross and purse of gold were gone.

The women from the adjacent villages assembled to pay the last rites to the remains of the murdered Pilgrim. Preparatory to being laid out, the clothes were gently removed from the body, when a cry of horror burst from all—*the Pilgrim was a woman!* Bound by a violet ribbon, a bridal ring rested beside her heart; and, from unequivocal appearances, it was too evident that the fell assassin had committed a double murder.

The obsequies of the unhappy lady were piously performed; the mountain girls decked her grave with flowers; and old and young, for many a mile around, offered prayers for the soul of the departed. The murder was involved in mystery—the peasants had their own suspicions, but fear caused them to be silent.

A year passed—the garland upon the stranger's grave was carefully renewed—the village maidens shed many a tear as they told her melancholy story; and none passed the turf which covered the murdered beauty, without repeating a prayer for her soul's repose.

Another passed—and the third anniversary of the Pilgrim's death arrived. Late on that eventful evening, a tall and noble-looking stranger entered the herdsman's cottage. His air was lofty and commanding; and though he wore a palmer's cloak, the jewelled pommel of his rapier glanced from beneath the garment, and betrayed his knightly dignity. The beauty of his manly countenance forcibly recalled to the peasants the memory of the ill-starred stranger. But their

admiration was checked by the fierce, though melancholy, expression of the handsome features of the stranger; and if they would have been inclined to scrutinize him more, one stern glance from his dark and flashing eye imperiously forbade it. Supper was prepared in silence, until, at the Knight's request, the herdsman detailed minutely every circumstance connected with the lady's murder.

While the peasant's narrative proceeded, the stranger underwent a terrible emotion, which his stern resolution could not entirely conceal. His eyes flared, his brows contracted till they united; and before the tale was ended, he leaped from his seat, and left the cabin hastily.

He had been but a few minutes absent, when the door opened, and another visiter entered with scanty ceremony, and, though unbidden, seated himself upon the stool of honour. His dress was far better than his mien, and he assumed an appearance of superiority, which, even to the peasants, appeared forced and unnatural. He called authoritatively for supper, and the tones of his voice were quite familiar to the herdsman. With excited curiosity, the peasant flung some dried flax upon the fire, and, by the blaze, recognised at once the well-remembered features of the *Red Pedler*!

Before the peasant could recover his surprise, the tall stranger entered the cottage again, and approached the hearth. With an air which could not be disputed, he commanded the intruder to give place. The waving of his hand was obeyed, and, with muttered threats, the Pedler retired to the settle. The Knight leaned against the rude walls of the chimney, and remained absorbed in bitter thought, until the humble host told him that the meal was ready.

If a contrast were necessary, it would have been found in the conduct of the strangers at the board. The Knight ate like an anchorite, while the Pedler indulged his appetite largely. The tall stranger tempered the *aqua vitæ* presented by the host copiously with water, while the short one drank fast and deep, and appeared anxious to steep some pressing sorrow in the goblet. Gradually, however, his brain felt the influence of the liquor, and, unguarded from deep and repeated draughts, he thus addressed the host:—

"Markest thou a change in me fellow?"

"Fellow!" quoth the peasant, half affronted; "three years ago we were indeed *fellows;* for the *Red Pedler* often sought shelter here, and never was refused."

"*The Red Pedler!*" exclaimed the tall stranger, starting from his reverie, as if an adder had stung him; and fixing his fiery glance upon the late visiter, he examined him from head to foot.

"You will know me again, I trow," said the Pedler, with extraordinary assurance.

"*I shall,*" was the cold reply.

"Well," said the new-comer, "though three years since I bore a pack, I'll wager a rose-noble that I have more money in my pouch than half the beggarly knights from Galway to Athlone. There!" he exclaimed, as he flung his cloak open, "*there* is a weighty purse, and *here* a trusty *middoge*, and a fig for knighthood and nobility!"

"Slave!" said the stranger, in a voice that made the peasants tremble, "breathe not another word until thou hast satisfied my every question, or, by the Mother of Heaven! I'll cram my rapier down thy false throat;" and, starting on his feet, he flung his mantle on the floor.

Though surprised, the Pedler was not discomfited by the dignity and determination of his antagonist.

"Yes!" he sullenly replied, "I wear no rapier—but this *middoge* has never failed me at my need," and drawing from his bosom a long triangular weapon, he placed it on the table.—"Sir Knight," he continued, "the handle of my tool is simple deer-horn; but, by the mass! I have a jewel in my breast, that would buy thy tinselled pommel ten times."

"Thou liest, slave!" exclaimed the Knight.

"To the proof, then," said the Pedler; and opening a secret pocket, he produced a splendid cross.

"Villain!" said the tall stranger, under deep emotion, "surely thou hast robbed some hapless traveller!"

"No!" replied the Pedler, with a cool smile; "I was beside the owner of this cross when his last sigh was breathed!"

Like lightning the stranger's sword flashed from its scabbard.

"Murderer!" he shouted in a voice of thunder, "for three years have I wandered about the habitable earth, and my sole

object in living was to find thy caitiff self; a world would not purchase thee one moment's respite!" and before the wretch could more than clutch his weapon, the Knight's sword passed through his heart—the hilt struck upon the breast bone, and the Red Pedler did not carry his life to the floor.

The stranger for a moment gazed upon the breathless body, and having with the dead man's cloak removed the blood from his blade, replaced it coolly in the sheath. The Pedler's purse he flung scornfully to the peasant, but the cross he took up, looked at it with fixed attention, and the herdsman's wife remarked, that more than one tear fell upon the relic.

Just then the gray-haired Monk stood before him; he had left his convent to offer up the mass, which he did on every anniversary of the pilgrim's murder. He started back with horror as he viewed the bleeding corpse; while the Knight, having secured the cross within his bosom, resumed his former cold and haughty bearing.

"Fellow!" he cried to the trembling peasant, "hence with that carrion. Come hither, Monk—why gapest thou thus? hast thou never seen a corpse ere now? Approach, I would speak with thee apart"—and he strode to the further end of the cottage, followed by the churchman.—"I am going to confide to thee what—"

"The penitent should kneel," said the old man, timidly.

"Kneel!" exclaimed the Knight, "and to *thee*, my fellow mortal! Monk, thou mistakest—*I am not of thy faith*, and I laugh thy priestcraft to derision. Hearken, but interrupt me not. The beauteous being whose blood was spilled in these accursed wilds, was the chosen lady of my love. I stole her from a convent, and wedded her in secret; for pride of birth induced me to conceal from the world my marriage with a fugitive nun. She became pregnant, and that circumstance endeared her to me doubly, and I swore a solemn oath, that if she brought a boy, I would at once announce him as my heir, and proclaim my marriage to the world. The wars called me for a time away. Deluded by the artifice of her confessor, my loved one was induced to come hither on a pilgrimage, to intercede with thy saint, that the burden she bore might prove a son. Curses light upon the shaveling that counselled that fatal journey! Nay, cross not thyself, old man, for I would execrate thy master of Rome, had he been the false adviser. Thou knowest the rest, Monk. Take this purse. She was of

thy faith, and thou must say masses for her soul's health. Yearly shall the same sum be sent to thy convent; see that all that prayers can do, be done, or by my hopes of grace, thy hive of drones shall smoke for it. Doubt me not.—De Burgo will keep his word to the very letter. And now, farewell! I hurry from this fatal spot for ever; my train are not distant, and have long since expected me."

As he spoke, he took his mantle from the floor, and wrapped it round him carelessly; then, as he passed the spot where the body of the murderer lay, he spurned it with his foot, and pausing for a moment, looked at the Monk—

"*Remember!*" he said in a low voice, which made the old man shudder, and passing from the cabin, he crossed the heath, and disappeared.

But the terror of the herdsman's family did not abate with his departure; a dead man lay before them, and the floor was deluged with his blood. No human help was nigh; before daylight assistance could not be expected; and no alternative remained, but to wait patiently for the morrow. Candles were lighted up, the hearth was heaped with fuel, and a cloth thrown over the corpse, which they lacked the courage to remove. To sleep was impossible, and in devotional acts they endeavoured to while the night away, Midnight came; the Monk was slumbering over his breviary, and the matron occupied with her beads, when a violent trampling was heard outside, and the peasant, fearing the cattle he had in charge were disturbed, rose to ascertain the cause. In a moment he returned. A herd of wild deer surrounded the cabin, and actually stood in threatening attitude within a few paces of the door! While he told this strange occurrence to the Monk a clap of thunder shook the hovel to its centre—yells, and shrieks, and groans succeeded—noises so demoniac, as to almost drive the listeners to madness, hurtled through the air—and infernal lights flashed through the crevices of the door and window. Till morning broke, these unearthly terrors continued, without a moment's intermission.

Next day the villagers collected. They listened to the fearful story with dismay, while the melancholy fate of the gentle pilgrim was bitterly lamented, To inter the Pedler's corpse was the first care; for the Monk swore by his patron saint, that he would not pass another night with it overground

to be made a "mitred abbot." A coffin was forthwith prepared, and, with "maimed rites," the murderer was committed to the earth.

That masses were requisite to purify the scene of slaughter was indisputable—and with the peasants who had flocked from the neighbouring villages, the Monk determined to pass that night in prayer. The blood-stains were removed from the floor—the corpse had been laid in consecrated earth—and the office had commenced at midnight, when suddenly, a rushing noise was heard, as if a mountain-torrent was swollen by the bursting of a thunder-cloud. It passed the herdsman's cabin, while blue lights gleamed through the casement, and thunder pealed above. In a state of desperation, the priest ordered the door to be unclosed, and by the lightning's glare, a herd of red deer was seen tearing up the Pedler's grave! To look longer in that blue infernal glare was impossible—the door was shut, and the remainder of the night passed in penitential prayer.

With the first light of morning, the Monk and villagers repaired to the Pedler's grave, and the scene it presented showed that the horrors of the preceding night were no illusion. The earth around was blasted with lightning, and the coffin torn from the tomb, and shattered in a thousand splinters.—The corpse was blackening on the heath, and the expression of the distorted features was more like that of a demon than a man. Not very distant was the grave of his beautiful victim. The garland which the village girls had placed there was fresh and unfaded; and late as the season was, the blossom was still upon the bog-myrtle, and the heath-flower was as bright and fragrant as though it were the merry month of June. "These are indeed the works of hell and heaven," ejaculated the gray friar. "Let no hand from this time forth pollute itself by touching yon accursed corpse."

Nightly the same horrible noises continued. Shriek and groan came from the spot where the unburied murderer was rotting, while by day the hill-fox and the eagle contended who should possess the body. Ere a week passed, the villain's bones were blanching in the winds of heaven, for no human hand attempted to cover them again.

From that time the place was deserted. The desperate noises, and the frequent appearance of the Pedler's tortured

spirit, obliged the herdsman to abandon his dwelling, and reside in an adjacent village. The night of the day upon which he had removed his family and effects, a flash of lightning fell upon the cabin, and consumed the roof; and next morning nothing remained but black and rifted walls. Since that time the well is only used for penance. The peasant approaches not the desecrated burying-place if he can avoid it. The cattle are never known to shelter underneath the ruined walls—and the curse of God and man have fallen on *Knock-a-thample*.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Visit to the mountain hut—The Colonel—An argument and a wager—No honesty among anglers—State of the river—Mogh-a-dioul—Father Andrew's flies—Splendid scenery—Its effect upon me and my companion—Beautiful pool—The otter—A curious scene—The Colonel's troubles—Wager decided—A new bet—A salmon killed—Conversation—The Colonel outmanœuvred.

THE Colonel has girded up his loins for the mountains, and with the assistance of Mogh-a-dioul, a pony of unhappy name, but good and enduring qualities, he purposes to favour us with his company during our sojourn at the cabin in the hills. While we traverse the moors, the commander will infest the river; or, if the day be questionable, like honest Sancho, he will patiently remain beside the flesh-pots. To him the "meminisse juvabit" will apply. Thirty years ago, with his lamented contemporary, our host's father, the soldier, who was then a keen and accomplished sportsman, spent many a happy hour upon the heath. To his memory every dell and hillock is still green; and hence our evening details will recall to him those happier recollections of youthful pastime, which, when "life was new," he had once delighted to indulge in.

The Colonel fishes well! and I, at least my vanity believes it, have improved marvellously—I really *can* throw a line, and this the priest avers upon the word of a churchman. I begin also to have what the Scotch call a *gloamin'* of what forms the composition of a killing fly. But my pride has sadly abated. Last night, during a stormy controversy, touching the comparative merits of Pull-garrow and Pull-bouy, upon which the host and commander held opinions opposite as the an-

tipodes, to prove that I belonged to a "thinking people," I raised my voice in favour of the *yellow pool*. Our host in dudgeon having premised that one of us was blind, and the other a botch, declared by the shade of Walton, that on any given day he would kill more than we both could produce together. This, as every Irish argument ends in a duel or bet, has terminated, *fortunately*, in the latter: and though the wager be not so deep as Hamlet's "Barbary horses" to "French rapiers, poniards, and their assigns," yet the respective parties appear deeply interested in the result. To-morrow will decide the question, and settle the doubtful point of scientific superiority between the rival artists.

It strikes me forcibly, that among Irish anglers the doctrine of *meum et tuum* is but indifferently understood. My kinsman and the commander are constantly lamenting a loss of property, and certainly they do not indulge in these *jeremiads* without good reason. I never observe the Colonel's huge book forgotten for a few minutes, but it is unmercifully plundered by the host—and if the key of the latter's fly-drawer can be procured, the commander unlocks it without ceremony, and having explored its *arcana*, adopts liberally such articles as find favour in his sight. The housemaid has been suborned to abstract the Colonel's casting-lines from his dormitory; and, as the host generally hides a favourite fly or two in the lining of his hat, I never pass the hall without finding the commander fumbling about the hat-stand. It was clearly stipulated and understood that the flies with which to-morrow's match should be decided, were to be *bona fide* the handy-work of the respective parties; yet the colonel privately informs me that he has despatched a trusty envoy to the priest, to implore that gifted churchman to furnish him, *sub sigillo*, with a *cast* or two for the occasion; and the said envoy has covenanted to be at the commander's window with an answer, "before a *mother's soul* is stirring."

The thunder-storm produced a considerable fresh in the river, as the rain fell abundantly in the hills. The stream, however, had sufficient time to clear after the flood, and we found it in beautiful order. The wind is steady at north-west; and as the drafting has long since been discontinued, and the wears lowered to permit the fish to enter from the sea without obstruction, old Antony declares that, as a fishing-day, nothing could be more favourable. We tossed for choice, and

lost it. My kinsman commences his work three miles up, at his favourite Pull-garrow, while we fish from the mouth of the river. At five we meet at the cabin, and the party then producing the greater weight of fish is conqueror. These preliminaries being adjusted, our opponent went off like an Arab, to join his aide-de-camp, Mr. Hennessey, who has all in readiness for his commencement, and, I suspect, a salmon or two already in the pannier.

The opening of our campaign is every thing but satisfactory —Mogh-a-dioul seems possessed with the demon of obstinacy; any advance towards the river is his aversion, and, as Pattigo expresses it, "the beast will neither *wear or stay*." The commander's seat has been more than once perilled by his gambadoes; and, as we are informed that he is caparisoned with a bit, which is his abomination, there is but little chance of amendment in Mogh-a-dioul. This appears very like a plot against the Colonel's person; and I fear that the midnight embassy to the priest will be more than countervailed, by the manœuvres of our abler antagonist.

Both adepts made excellent professions of good faith at starting; but, as my kinsman left us, there was a "lurking devil in his eye," that augurs us no good fortune. The commander, too, talked in good set terms of "honourable conduct;" but precept and practice, I lament to say, are somewhat irreconcilable.

"*Andy*," he said, in his most insinuating manner, to our attendant; "*Andy Bawn*, you were always an obliging boy, and very handy with the gaff. Just keep your eye about the banks as we go along; and if you can *snaffle* a salmon or two, why, the pannier will tell no tales, and weigh all the better."

To me there never was a more delightful expedition; but my companion was cold to all the romance of nature, and engrossed with one consideration—to win his wager. While I was enraptured with the splendid scenery that each new point presented, the colonel was cursing his flies, and pouring anathemas on the priest. "How beautiful!" I exclaimed, as the sunshine fell upon a mountain valley, through which a little rivulet was winding, and whose waters, in the glare of light, danced downwards like a streak of molten silver. "How damned provoking," responded my brother fisherman, "that the only decent fly in that cursed priest's collection, should be tied upon a hook with no more point upon it than a hobnail!

Ah, Father Andrew! was this treatment for an old acquaintance—a man who would have trusted his life to you, and drink with you in the dark? Here, *Andy Bawn*, give me my book, and fling this most villanous assemblage of faded wool and ragged feathers into the next bog-hole. And now, my friend and fellow-labourer, leave the mountains alone, and think more of filling the fishing-baskets, or we are beaten men!"

We followed the course of the river for a distance of ten miles, stopping at the pools as we went along, but leaving the streams and shallows without a trial. As we proceeded up the hills, the scenery became wilder and more interesting; here and there, the moors were sprinkled with green hillocks, and the range of mountains behind was splendidly picturesque. The pools alone had beauty in my companion's eyes, and some of them were indeed magnificent. One was particularly romantic—it was a deep natural basin, formed by a sudden turning of the river, where the banks on either side were nearly perpendicular, and rose to a considerable height, and, to the water's edge, were thickly covered with hollies and hardy shrubs. At the upper end of the pool, a rock of immense magnitude reared its naked front, and shut out every other object. Round its base, the river forced its waters through a narrow channel, and at the other extremity, falling over a ledge of rocks, turned sharply round a hillock, and was lost sight of. There were but two points from which the angler could command the pool, for elsewhere the banks and underwood prevented his approach: one was a sand-bank about the centre, to which, by a narrow goat-path, the fisher could descend; the other, a small space immediately beneath the rock, of green and velvet-looking herbage. At this point the shepherds had erected a hut for occasional shelter, and never was a sweeter spot selected, wherein to dream away a summer night. No human dwelling was in sight—deep and undisturbed solitude breathed around—the blue and lucid pool before the cabin danced in the moonlight, or glittered in the first rays of morning—while the rushing waters of the river produced such melancholy and tranquillizing sounds, as would lull to rest any bosom untortured by mortal passions.

"Julius has been here before us, and has left some mementos of his visit," said the Colonel, pointing to foot-marks in the sand, and blood and fish-scales upon the pebbles; "I fear our be is in jeopardy; verily, our worthy relative will never shame

the proverb, that 'De'il's bairns have de'il's luck!' But what can the matter be among the salmon? in faith, the pool appears bewitched."

As he spoke, I remarked the occurrence which the commander noticed. The fish, which upon our first arrival had risen merrily at the natural flies, ceased on a sudden altogether —now they rushed confusedly through the water, or threw themselves for yards along the surface. It was not the sullen plunge at an insect, or the vertical spring, when sport, not food, brings the salmon over water; but it was evident there was some hidden cause of alarm, and we were not long left in doubt. Near the neck of the pool, an otter of the largest size showed himself for a moment, then darting under water, the same commotion ensued again. Before a minute elapsed, *Andy Bawn* pointed silently to a shoal beneath an overhanging bush, and *there* was the spoiler, apparently resting himself after his successful exertions, and holding a *four-pound* white trout in his mouth. Either he noticed us, or had some more favourite haunt to feed in, for he glided into the deep water, and we saw no more of him.

Although we found out that the otter and ourselves could not manage to fish in company, we ascertained that the pool was abundantly stocked with salmon; during the period of the greatest alarm, at least a dozen fish were breaking the surface at the same time.

We reached the cabin after a day of excellent sport; but every thing on earth has its alloy, and two circumstances appear to cloud the sunshine of the commander's bosom. One is the inexplicable conduct of the priest; the other the repeated misconduct of Mogh-a-dioul. We have, to be sure, four fine salmon, and a score of good-sized sea-trouts; but the Colonel swears, that he lost his best fishing until he discarded the priest's flies; and it is probable, if their defects had been apparent at an earlier period, our baskets would have been considerably benefited by the discovery.

As we ascended the bank before the cabin door, our rival met us. He had left off fishing for some time, and had changed his dress entirely—"Come, brush up, or dinner will be spoiled. Colonel, I trust that you and Mogh-a-dioul are on pleasing terms with each other. You stole my bridle, but, no apologies—I can ride *Crughadore* with a hayband. Come, —to scale at once, or dinner is not worth a gray groat.

Hennessey, the steel-yard—produce—despatch—*one, two, three, four.* You killed *one* apiece, I presume, and Andy gaffed the other *two*; nay, commander of the faithful, look not so ferocious. What, no more! and is this paltry *creel* of fish the produce of the day? Colonel, I blush for you. Barely *forty pounds.* Turn that *clave** over, and put these gentlemen of the angle out of pain." As he spoke, the attendant emptied the contents of the pannier, and *nine well-sized salmon,* with a multitude of sea-trouts, rolled out upon the sward.

"By my faith!" exclaimed the commander, "these fish were never fairly killed; you drafted a hole or two, as surely as I am a sinner."

"The latter part of your remark I admit," said my kinsman, "the former I deny. By this virgin hand! every fish before you was killed by hook and line. Come, are you for

* A horsebasket

another bet? For five pounds, and *within five minutes*, I'll kill another salmon, and make the number *ten!*"

"Done!" we exclaimed together.

"Hennessey, the rod; wet the flies below the pool, and in in twenty seconds, yon cloud will be over the sun."

Before the cabin there is a tolerable hole, deep, but narrow. Where the stream runs in, the ripple is considerable, and between it and the bank, the deepest water lies. If there be a salmon in the pool, *there* is the spot to find him. My cousin sent the casting line in such masterly style into the opposite eddy, as proclaimed him at once an adept, and the second cast a salmon rose and took him.

He was but a light fish, and in less than three minutes was bounding upon the grass, beside his dead companions. My kinsman handed the rod to the attendant.—"Gentlemen," he said in mock heroics, "in your memories be all my bets remembered! And now to dinner, with what appetite you may."

"Well," said the commander, "*this beats Bannagher.** I would have given my corporal oath the knave had swept the river. His flies are absolute perfection! There's villany somewhere; but come along. The dinner must not cool, and the wine shall pay for it!"

"Julius," said the commander, as he extracted the third cork, "thy star predominated; a villanous combination of circumstances, with infernal flies, and an intractable pony, destroyed me. *Andy Bawn* (we are *beaten*, and the truth may be told) for the first time in his life was taken with a fit of conscience, and actually refused to gaff a salmon. The very otters were combined against us, and disturbed the best pool upon the river but *Pull-buoy*. I had no time to tie fresh flies."

"Or even send to Goolamere, to *borrow*," said my kinsman, drily.

"Ah, hem," and the colonel appeared a little *bothered* —"I want no man's flies; my own, I find, will generally answer."

* An Irish phrase synonymous with "this exceeds everything."

"And yet," said the host, "the priest, when he pleases, can tie a *killing one*."

"Why—ye—es, he does—a *leetle* coarse—but let me see your casting-lines; I fear, my friend, that we had not the right colours up."

"*I fear so too*," said our host, with much expression.

"By my conscience!" exclaimed the colonel, as he scrutinized the casting-lines that were wound about my kinsman's hat, "I would have taken my oath on a bag-full of books, that this *mallard's wing* was tied by Father Andrew."

"And by *my* conscience," returned the host, "you would not have been very far astray."

"And was this fair, Julius—to fish with any but your own?"

"Why, really, they looked so beautiful, that for the life of me, I could not but put them up. But, my friend, the next time you despatch a midnight messenger, select a trustier one than *Currakeen**—and take a better opportunity to praise young Alice's '*black eyes*,' than when issuing your secret instructions. Nay, I will respect those blushes. The fact is, Currakeen was at your window before '*a mother's soul was stirring*'—but, my dear Colonel, he did me the favour to *first* call at *mine*. I merely took the liberty of exchanging a few flies—you fished with some old acquaintances, while I tried experiments with *Father Andrew's*. Come, the bets are off—we both violated treaties, and thus, I renounce my victory, though my opinion of *Pull-garrow* is unalterable."

"Julius," said the commander solemnly, "you'll be on the highway next. Breaking a letter open, I think is an excellent preparative for stopping his majesty's mail."

"And in that case, I trust that you will be an accomplice. If one must swing, good society is every thing. Your demeanour at 'the fatal tree.' I am persuaded, would be exemplary. And yet, my dear Frank, although I treated Father Andrew's despatch with scanty ceremony, I never came within the clutches of the law but *once*, and that was, as old Jack says, through *villanous company*."

* A bye-name given to one of the endless tribe of *Malley*.

"Was that the time you stole the snuff-box?" asked the commander.

"*I steal a snuff-box*! No—I deny the *theft*—I was only *an accessary* after all. But, to clear my character, I must tell the story to my cousin."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE GOLD SNUFF-BOX

It was the spring before my father's death. A vacation was at hand, and for some college irregularities, I had been deprived of my chambers as a punishment, and turned upon the town to shift as I best could. I fixed myself at the *Wexford Hotel* for the short time I intended remaining in the capital, and there formed my first acquaintance with Colonel B—— and Lieutenant K——, both of the —— Militia.

They arrived at "The Wexford" late one evening from Naas, where the regiment was then quartered, and were on their route to visit, on private business, "the realms beyond the Shannon."

I was alone in the parlour when the strangers arrived. They cast a wistful eye at a choice haddock, then in the very act of being served up as exordium to the dinner. The waiter in a whisper assured the belated travellers that he was convinced the young gentleman, meaning me, would share his fish and table-cloth. The request was very politely made, very politely granted, and down we sat, as if we had been bosom friends for a twelvemonth.

The colonel was an overgrown bombard—a vessel full-charged with good-humour and old port. He said odd things, and did them too. The subaltern was a squab-built snub-nosed strange sort of merry fellow, having a rich brogue and racy wit; and while the corpulent commander believed that he was humbugging the short lieutenant, the short lieutenant, all the while, was playing the devil with the corpulent commander. No two persons were ever better constructed

to elicit reciprocal amusement; and they were, though opposites in every thing, as necessary to each other, as "sheath to sword."

But there was a circumstance that united the strangers and myself directly. My friend, Lord L———, had just got a majority in the colonel's regiment; and the said colonel and his companion were going that very night to a ball at the dowager's, who then lived in Rutland-square.

We finished a formidable portion of *Page's best**—retired to dress, and afterwards set off in a hackney-coach to the scene of our evening's amusement. I was three deep in dancing engagements, and my first partner was already in the room—of course I separated from my companions directly, of whom, however, I caught a distant glance as they were formally presented to his aunt, by Lord L————.

It was a crowded ball. I was dancing busily, and how my companions employed themselves, never occasioned me a thought. At last supper was whispered to be on the *tapis*. Miss Carden and I—she was then a very pretty girl—had quietly slipped away from *the set*, to be in readiness for the crush, when we stumbled upon a snug whist-table in an unfrequented corner, and there I discovered my gallant friends actively engaged.

The unhappy men were partners. They had, moreover, been delivered into the hands of the dowager and Mrs. P——, an antiquated commoner. Both ladies were notorious for extraordinary luck, and a fortunate arrangement of always *cutting together*. It was further believed, that both were given to the good old rule of winning, *honestly if they could*—but *winning*.

It was evident at first sight that the soldiers were no matches for the gentlewomen. The rubber game was on the point of being decided just as we reached the table—the soldiers had it by honours, but, by a barefaced revoke, that would have been detected by any but the buzzards they were playing with, the ladies gained the point required, and had their claim allowed. "Supper is served," said Mrs. P.——, with a satisfactory grin; "had we not better stop, Lady L——?" The gentlemen simultaneously popped

* A celebrated wine-merchant, some thirty years ago.

their hands into the pockets of their nether garments. "In how much have I the honour to be your ladyship's debtor?" inquired the colonel, with a gracious smile. Mrs. P—— instantly mumbled, with the rapidity of a barmaid, "Ten points — three rubbers — *only nine guineas.*" The colonel started and stared. "*Nine devils!* — I mean, *guineas!*" exclaimed *the Sub*, in awful consternation. But the decree had gone forth. "They never played *higher*—deep play was detestable." The money was accordingly doled out, and I observed that the contents of the lieutenant's purse, after rendering this sweeping subsidy, were reduced to a solitary guinea.

At this moment the supper-rooms were thrown open, and away went the crowd. The Dowagers were left to scramble up their winnings, and the soldiers, I presume, to execrate their own bad luck. Miss Carden and I, who witnessed the impudent revoke perpetrated by Mrs. P———, and passed over by my Lady L———, mutually decided, that in common justice, both ladies should have been consigned for a month to the house of correction.

Supper, as all suppers have done, ended. I placed my handsome partner in her mother's carriage, and was then depositing myself in a hackney-coach, when I espied my military friends upon the steps, hailed them immediately, and, embarking in the same vehicle, we were duly landed at "the Wexford."

"Waiter!" cried the colonel, in a voice of thunder, "some brandy and *red hot* water. I wore my *thin tights*, for the first time these six months," addressing me, "and, by St. Patrick! my limbs are icicles. I drank two glasses of execrable Teneriffe! and, God knows *one* would be a sufficient dose of poison for a gouty man like me. Arrah! waiter, have you it in the house? If you have not, say so, and I'll run out and save my life at the next tavern." But the waiter was prompt, and the *house honest*. Up came the brandy and *materials*; and the colonel, relieved from the anticipated attack in his stomach, "breathed again."

I looked at my unfortunate friends, and never did men bear their misfortunes so differently. While the subaltern was in a phrensy, the commander was calm as a philosopher.

"Well, if the devil had his own," exclaimed the irritated lieutenant, "my lady L—— would fry."

"Rowland," said the colonel, solemnly, "what the deuce tempted you to play? You don't understand the game, and I often told you so."

"But," said I, interrupting him, "the rubber was yours. Mrs. P—— made a scandalous revoke. How could it escape your observation? The young lady, who was leaning on my arm, was horrified at such barefaced cheating."

"I remarked it," said the lieutenant; "but I was ashamed to speak. I thought we were playing half-crown points!"

"I wish I had seen it," said the colonel. "Ah, Rowly, you're no wizard!"

"Well, no matter; I have suffered enough," said the subaltern, testily. "If I have a rap left, after these swindling jades, but one solitary guinea to carry me to Connemara!"

"Pshaw! *beg*, man, *beg!* You have a face for any thing. I wonder how *I* stand upon the night's play."

"Nine guineas *minus*," said the subaltern, "unless you managed to fob off a light piece, or pass a counterfeit."

"That would be impossible," remarked the colonel; "for though the crush was desperate, and I thought, and I wished, that the table would be overturned, the dowager thumbed every guinea over as if she had played with a pick-pocket. It was just then that I managed to secure a keep-sake;" and he produced a huge snuff-box of fine gold and antique workmanship from his side-pocket. I stared with wonder, while the subaltern ejaculated, "What a chance! Ah, colonel, you are the jewel! The box will pay our losses beautifully."

"I beg to be excused from co-partnership," said the colonel, drily. "Rowly, you might have stolen for yourself. I saw a pair of gold-mounted spectacles upon the table, and a *vinaigrette* of silver device lay beside you. No, no, Rowly! rob for yourself."

"And," said I, "my dear colonel, might I ask what may be the ultimate design which you harbour against the dowager's snuff-box!"

"Why, faith, my young friend, my plans are simple

enough. I'll give you and that *ommadawn*,"* pointing to his lieutenant, "an early dinner, and bring you to the play afterwards. Well, it will be tolerably dark by that time. We'll pass St. Andrew's church, call next door, and get a worthy man who lives convenient, and who is very liberal in lending money to any body who leaves sufficient security behind him,—"we'll get him, in short, to take the box at his own valuation."

"And if it should be discovered?"

"Oh, little fear of that. No, my friend, before you and I are in the boxes, *this box* will be in the melting-pot. The man is a considerate and conscientious dealer. No, no, all's safe with him."

We parted for the night. At noon, next day, we met at breakfast. I, although pretty conversant in odd adventures and mad freaks, was dying to see the conclusion of the snuff-box affair. We, of Trinity, often touched upon street-robbery in poles and rattles; and, as far as public property went, were nowise scrupulous. I had once achieved a petty larceny, by running off with a pine-apple from a fruiterer's, for which, however, I had the grace to send payment in the morning. Still the colonel's *coup* was so superior to all this, that I was so much interested in the *dénouement*, as if I had been a principal concerned. At the appointed hour we regularly met in Dawson-street. Our host gave us the best dinner in Morrison's *carte*, and we had champagne, liqueurs, and a superabundant supply of the primest claret in the cellar.

Pending dinner, the parties made an amicable arrangement touching the disposition of the booty.

The field-officer was to share the surplus produce over the payment of the tavern bill; and the subaltern was to be the vender of the spoil.

It was nearly eight o'clock when we left Morrison's, and directed our course to the civil gentleman who lent money on good security. We entered an outer hall, and thence advanced into one encompassed by a tier of compartments, like confession-boxes. Rowly stepped into a vacant stall, and we stood close behind, to "aid, comfort, and counsel."

The money-dealer left an unfinished bargain with a trades-

† *Anglice*, an idiot.

man's wife, to attend upon his better-dressed customer. "Ah! hem—hem!" said the subaltern, rather *bothered* to open the negotiation—but the *Lombard* gave an encouraging simper,—"A small advance wanted, I presume?" "Why, no—ah, hem!—wish to dispose of a trifle—a present,—no use for it,—but would not for the world it was known." The pawnbroker instantly presented his finger and thumb, to receive watch, ring, or jewel, according as the case might be.

The snuff-box was promptly displayed, and the happy eye of the money-dealer turned rapidly from the box to the presenter: "Well, sir, pray what be the value?"

"Really, can't say—a present—and—"

"Oh! ye-e-e-s—old gold—mere drug now-a-days—about three pound ten an ounce—once valuable—bullion then scarce—a year ago it would have been a very pretty *swag*."

"*Swag*! What do you mean?" cried the alarmed seller. "Zounds! do you think I stole it?"

"Oh, dear, *no-o*!—beg pardon—meant present. Here, the scales, John. Ah! ah! let me see—ay—standing beam—ah!—say fifteen pounds—full value, I assure you—the price to a pennyweight."

"Very well; I'm content: but if my friend discovered that I would part with his present—"

The broker raised his forefinger to his nose, and dropped his left eyelid with a striking expression—the look would have done honour to an Old Bailey practitioner. The money was told down upon the counter:—"The hammer, John!" A lean, ill-grown, ill-visaged dwarf, produced a weighty one. There was a small anvil affixed to the bench; my Lady L——'s box received one mortal blow, and the attending imp swept the shattered fragments into a crucible.

What was the exact disposition of the assets, I cannot pretend to say; but I believe they were fairly partitioned between the parties concerned.

About six months afterwards, when passing through the city, after my father's death, I met Lord L——, and he received me with his customary kindness. "You must dine with me to-day," he said. I pointed to my mourning coat. "Oh, you *must* come—the very place for one wishing to avoid the world. Since you left Dublin, my poor aunt has undergone such a change!—an infernal gang has got round her

entirely; and she, who once only lived for whist, cannot be persuaded to touch a card. By Jove, the good lady is bewitched. But I have arranged with her, that the first crop-eared scoundrel, or female ranter, I meet in Rutland-square, shall be the signal for my final abdication to Kildare-street—and she knows that I am positive. Do come: not a soul dines with me, but that good, fat fellow, my Colonel." I smiled as I recollected our last visit to the square, and promised to be punctual.

I arrived some time before Lord L——, and found the dowager and my fat friend, the Colonel, *tête-à-tête*. Beyond the customary interchange of civilities, I did not interrupt them, receiving, however, from the commander a warm squeeze, and an inexpressibly comic look, that recalled a volume of adventure. The old lady resumed the conversation which my entrée had suspended:—

"And you are six months absent, Colonel!—Protect me! how time passes!—it should be a lesson—a tacit monitor, as Mr. Hitchcock happily expresses it. Well, there was a carnal-minded, noisy crowd here; and I remember you lost three rubbers. How such vain imaginations will push aside the better seeds! Your partner was a well-meaning gentleman, but never returned a lead. Oh, me! that these vanities should be remembered. That very night, Colonel, I met with a serious, I may say distressing loss. My cousin, General Pillau's Indian snuff-box was stolen! I suspected—but judge not, as Mr. Heavyside said at the chapel yesterday. It was in my partner's hand the last time I ever saw it; the rush to supper came—she—but we must be charitable. But here's my nephew—O that he was awake to Gospel truth! Well, my dear George, what news since?"

"None, madam: only that our old friend's over—dead as Julius Cæsar. Mother P—— will never cut out another honour."

"Oh, George! do stop—for once be serious. Mrs. P—— dead! and, I fear, not prepared. Ah, me! poor Mrs. P——! Many a rubber she and I have played—she knew my system so well—finessed a *leetle* too much—but where am I running?—Well, *I hope* she was prepared, *but she stole the General's box*!"

"Phew! if she stole snuff-boxes, she'll fry for it now," said the Colonel, taking share in the lament; "I hope, madam, it was merely a pretty toy, something not valuable?"

"*A toy!* my dear sir; fine pale gold—invaluable for weight, age, and workmanship. Had you ever held it in your hand, you would never have forgotten it."

"Faith! and likely enough, my lady."

"George, love, if you would just speak to the executor. Put it on the score of a mistake."

"I speak! Madam, do you want to have me shot?"

"No, no, it's useless. Her nephew is an attorney. 'Do men gather grapes?' as Mr. Heavyside says."

"Damn Heavyside!" exclaimed the peer, "I must go see about some wine;" and he left the room.

The old lady recommenced with a groan—"What a memory Mrs. P—— had! she would remember cards through a rubber, and never omitted marking in her life. *She took the General's box;* she had always a fancy for knickknackeries, and wore ornaments very unsuitable to her years—forgetting the lilies of the valley. I wish Miss Clarke was here, a worthy comely young woman, Colonel, recommended to me as a spiritual assistant by Mr. Wagstaff, of the Bethesda. My nephew can't bear her, because she was bred a dress-maker, and a vile dragoon officer told him some nasty story to her disadvantage. Oh, Colonel, I wish George was awakened—you go to church regularly?"

"I cannot assert that I do *regularly;* not that I see any harm in it."

"Very prettily remarked, Colonel; and you often, no doubt, reflect upon the place you're going to?"

"Yes, indeed, madam; one must join one's regiment sooner or later."

"Ah, Colonel, I wish George had your serious turn; and, between ourselves, he is by no means *a safe whist player.* His game is very dangerous. Ah, if I could have had Mr. Wagstaff to meet you! but my nephew's prejudice is so violent. He is a sweet, spiritual-minded young man—comes often to sit an evening with me; and he is so obliging!—takes *Miss Clarke* home at midnight to save me the expense of coach-hire, although she lives beyond the lamps. Poor Mrs. P——! I wonder who will get her card counters. They

were superb. Well, *she stole the box, however;* but as the inspired psalmist—I mean penman, says—Ah, me! I have no memory; I wish *Miss Clarke* was here.—Well, George, any appearance of dinner?"

"So says the butler, madam, and here he comes."

"Colonel, take down my aunt;" and thus ended Lady L——'s lamentation over *sin, snuff-boxes, and Mrs. P*——.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Otter-killers return—Craniology—Superstitions—Sea-horse—Master-otter—Anecdotes of it—Ghosts and fairies—Their influence upon man and animals—Cure of witchcraft—Holy lakes—Lough Keirawn—Its butter fishery—The Faragurta—Its causes, imaginary and real—Cures and cases—Swearing—Comparative value upon the book, the vestment, and the skull—The clearing of Miss Currigan—An uncatholic cook.

The otter-killer arrived here last evening, after having, according to his own account, worked wonders upon a damaged head. From the specimens I have seen during my short sojourn at *Ballycroy*, I have come to a conclusion, that the skulls of the natives are fabricated of different materials to those of all the world besides. Their endurance is miraculous—a fellow who was reported as "beaten to a jelly, and anointed by the priest," last week, actually cleared a fair with an unpronounceable name, yesterday, after qualifying for admission to the next infirmary some half-score of his Majesty's liege subjects. This is an every-day exploit; and of all the corners of the earth that I have visited, I would name this as the place wherein to establish a resident craniologist.

Like all wild people, these aborigines are absurdly credulous, and open to the grossest superstitions. Charms, as they believe, are employed with decided success, in every disease you name. The existence of ghosts and fairies is universally acknowledged; and animals of extraordinary formation, and strange virtues, are supposed to inhabit lakes and rivers. Among these the *sea-horse* and *master-otter** are pre-

* There is a strange coincidence between the master-otter of the Irish and the Jungunus crocodile of the Japanese.

eminent. By a singular anomaly, the first is said to be found in certain inland loughs, and his appearance is imagined to be fatal to the unfortunate person who encounters him. The latter, however, should be an object of anxious research, for he is endued with amazing virtues. Where a portion of his skin is, the house cannot be burned, or the ship cast away, and steel or bullet will not harm the man who possesses an inch of this precious material. Antony, indeed, confesses, that in the course of his otter-hunting, he has never been fortunate enough to meet this invaluable brute; but he tells a confused story of one having been killed "far down in the north," by three brothers called Montgomery, who, from poverty, became immensely rich, and whose descendants are opulent to this very day. He says, the master-otter was seen twice in this neighbourhood. At Dhu-hill, he appeared about sixty years ago, attended by about one hundred common-sized animals, who waited upon "the master," like loyal and dutiful beasts. He was also observed by one of the O'Donnel family, whilst passing through Clew Bay in a sailing-boat. Requiring a supply of fresh water, O'Donnel landed on an island for the purpose of filling his keg, but found the spring already occupied by a strange and nondescript animal. After his first surprise had subsided, he returned to the boat, and procured a gun. This he loaded carefully with five fingers and a half*—for Antony is minute in all his narratives—and then, and within a dozen yards, levelled at *the master*. Thrice he drew the trigger, and thrice the gun missed fire. The otter wisely determined not to give him a fourth chance, and left the well for the ocean. Mortified at his failure, O'Donnel tried his gun at a passing gull; it exploded without trouble, and finished the unfortunate bird—thus proving, beyond a doubt, that the gun was faultless, and the preservative qualities of the animal were alone to blame—"And, indeed," quoth Antony, "he might have snapped at *the master* to eternity; for if an inch of skin can save house, ship, and man, what a deal of virtue there must be in a whole hide!"

The legendary tales touching the appearance of ghosts, and the exploits of fairies, are endless. The agency of the former appears directed principally to men, while the latter exercise

* The lower class of Irish describe the charge of a gun, not by quantity of powder and shot, but by *long measure*.

their powers upon children and cattle. Indeed, the sinister influence of the "faëry race" appears to fall almost exclusively upon the brute creation in Ballycroy; and through it many an unhappy cow comes to an untimely end, and if she escape loss of life, she suffers what is nearly as bad, loss of butter.* For the *first* calamity, Antony acknowledges there is no cure; but

* While staying at a gentleman's house, I heard, when passing the porter's lodge, that the gate-keeper's cow was ill. As she was a fine animal, the loss would have been a serious one to the family, and hence I became interested in her recovery. For several days, however, the report to my inquiry was more unfavourable, and at last the case was considered hopeless.

The following morning, as I rode past, I found the family in deep distress. The cow, they said, could not live many hours; and the gate-keeper had gone off to fetch "the charmer," who lived some ten miles distance. I really sympathised with the good woman. The loss of eight or nine guineas to one in humble life is a serious calamity; and from the appearance of the cow I concluded, though not particularly skilful, that the animal would not survive.

That evening I strolled out after dinner. It was sweet moonlight, and I bent my steps to the gate-house to inquire if the cow still lived.

The family was in great tribulation. "The charmer had arrived—had seen the cow—had prepared herbs and nostrums, and was performing some solitary ceremony at an adjacent spring-well, from which he had excluded every member of the family in assisting." I was most curious to observe the incantation, but was dissuaded by the gate-keeper, who implored me "to give the conjuror fair play."

In five minutes the charmer joined us—he said the case was a bad one, but that he thought he could *bring round* the cow. He then administered the "unhallowed potion," and I left the lodge, expecting to hear next morning that the animal was defunct.

Next day, "the bulletin was favourable;" and "the charmer" was in the act of receiving his reward—I looked at him: he was as squalid and heart-broken a wretch in appearance as ever trod the earth. The cow still seemed weak, but "the charmer" spoke confidently of her recovery. When he left the lodge and turned his steps homewards, I pulled up my horse and waited for bim. He would rather have avoided an interview, but could not. "Well, fellow, you have humbugged that poor family, and persuaded them that the cow will recover?"—"I have told them truth," said the charmer, coldly.—"And will your prophecy prove true?" I asked, in a tone of scornful incredulity.—"It will," said he; "but, *God help me! this night I'll pay dearly for it!*" I looked at him—his face was agonized and terror-stricken; he crossed the fence, and disappeared.

When I passed the gate-house on my return, the cow was evidently convalescent; and in a few days she was perfectly well.

I leave the solution of the mystery to the learned; for in such matters, as they say in Connaught—*Neil an skeil a gau maun.*

for the *second*, there *is* "balm in Gilead," and certain holy loughs afford an antidote to this elfin visitation.

The cow, I believe, should be present at the operation, which is performed by committing her tether and some butter to the waves, with (of course) a due proportion of prayers for her recovery. Whether the animal be benefited or not, there be others who reap sure and solid advantages. At the proper period, some saint's day, no doubt, when Lough Keirawn is frequented by the proprietors of bewitched cattle, many of the poor of the neighbourhood congregate on the lee-side of the lake, and a lively and profitable fishing of fresh butter continues, until the oblations to the saint or saintess of the lake, on the part of the afflicted cows, have ended.

Among the human diseases ascribed to supernatural causes, the *faragurta* is the principal. Conjectures touching its origin are numerous and contradictory, and it is attributed to everything but the true cause. The *faragurta* comes on suddenly—a general weakness precedes the attack—the sufferer's strength is prostrated in an instant—he sinks down, and, if assistance be not at hand, perishes. Many persons are lost through this disease, while crossing the extensive wilds around us, where human relief is generally unattainable.

The causes, to which in popular belief it is ascribed, are many. Some assert that it is brought on by treading upon a poisonous plant; others, that it is occasioned by fairy influence; while more affirm, that it is produced by passing over the place where a corpse has been laid down. But this mystified disorder is, after all, nothing but exhaustion consequent upon hunger and fatigue. The lower classes are particularly obnoxious to its attack. They eat but seldom, and at irregular seasons; and commonly labour for many hours before they break their fast. Want of food produces faintness and exhaustion; and a supernatural cause is sought for a simple malady, which is only the natural consequence of dyspepsia and an empty stomach.

One would imagine that the specific for *faragurta* would at once point out its origin. Bread, or even a few grains of corn, are believed to cure it instantly; but any kind of food is equally efficacious. "I have seen," said my kinsman, "many persons attacked with *faragurta*, and have myself een patient and physician. Some years ago, a fine

active boy, called *Emineein,** commonly attended me to the moors, and one day he was suddenly taken ill, in the very wildest part of the hills. He lost all power of limb, and lay down upon the heath unable to proceed a step. We had no grain of any kind to administer, and in this emergency tried that universal panacea—a glass of whisky. After he had swallowed the cordial, the boy rather got worse than better, and we were obliged to carry him to a still-house, at nearly two miles, distance. On our arrival, fortunately for *Emineein,* we found the operators collected round a *skibb*† of potatoes. After eating one or two, the patient was able to join the party, and next morning proceeded stoutly home.

"In my own case, the predisposing cause was no enigma. I had been one of a knot of foxhunters who, on the preceding night, had indulged in a desperate jollification. Finding a disinclination for breakfast, I repaired, contrary to my general habit, without it to the mountains. I had exercised severely for several hours, when at once I became helpless as an infant, and sank upon a bank incapable of motion. My pony and some food were speedily obtained, and the *faragurta* banished. But assuredly, if unassisted, I must have lain upon the heath, for I could not make the slightest exertion to get forward."

It is a lamentable fact, that the obligation of legal oath is *here* of trifling importance. Cases of determined perjury occur every day; and an adjuration upon the evangelists, is considered as being far inferior in solemnity to one upon the *priest's vestment.* Whether there be any regular formula to be observed in this comparative swearing, I know not; I say *comparative,* for in Ballycroy, oaths, like adjectives, have three degrees of value. First, that upon the evangelists; the second, upon the vestment; and the last upon the *skull.* Nothing is more common than to hear a fellow, who had just laid down the book, offer to fortify his doubtful evidence, by taking *number two.* But even the *vestment* is not always conclusive; and the following anecdote will best describe the value of comparative swearing:

* Synonymous to *Neddy.* † A basket.

Andy Bawn has felt the arrow of "the villain," and believed "fond wretch!" that he was beloved again. The night of the portmanteau affair will ever be chronicled upon his memory; for while he was under fear and terror at the bridge of Ballyveeney, she, the lady of his love, was at a *prinkum** at Latrah, performing "apples for gentlemen,"† with another suitor. Nay, more, the quondam lover, as was reported, had actually *cecisbeo'd* Miss Biddy Currigan across the bogs; and dark and dangerous inuendoes arose from this imprudent escort. Andy Bawn was unhappily a man "who doubts, but dotes; suspects, yet fondly loves." Alas! what was to be done? Could Miss Currigan become Mrs. Donahoo, after suffering a *regular blast*, as they call it, in the kingdom of Connaught? Impossible! her character must be cleared, and Andy satisfied.

The magistrate was proposed—well, that was good enough, if it were the identity of a strayed sheep, or the murder of a man; but in a nice case, like Miss Currigan's, it was totaly inefficient. "The vestment would be taken,"—still better; but the world was censorious: and, after all, Biddy Currigan was a giddy girl to cross a couple of miles of moorland, after midnight, with a declared lover, and him *hearty*;‡—and so thought Andy Bawn. At last the suspected virgin volunteered to "take the skull," dispel the fears of her liege lord, and put calumny to the blush for ever. Andy Bawn "breathed again;" and the otter-killer was directed to provide the necessary articles for the ceremony.

A skull was accordingly procured from a neighbouring burying-ground; and Andy's mother, anxious for the honour of the family, threw into the relic a bunch of keys—for iron, they say, adds desperately to the solemnity of the obligation. The apparatus being paraded, Antony explained, in the mother tongue, that the sins of the lady or gentleman to whom the skull had once appertained, would be added to Miss Currigan's, if she, Biddy, swore falsely; and Mrs. Donahoo jingled the old iron, and showed that she was "awake

* A Ballycroy ball, on the "free and easy" plan, where much whisky and no ceremony, is used.

† A favourite *contre danse* a the above assemblies.

‡ *Anglice*, half drunk.

to time," and had left nothing on her part undone, that could give effect to the ceremonial. Miss Currigan, with a step and bearing that might silence slander, advanced under the direction of the otter-killer:—like a maid "in the pride of her purity," she devoutly placed her hand upon the skull—and Andy Bawn was made a happy man for ever!

That the saints are often and scandalously overreached by sinners, is a fact which must be admitted and lamented. One case of base dishonesty has but recently occurred in the establishment of my cousin. A cook, whom he had procured through the agency of a friend, has proved a heavy defaulter, and, as Antony says, "scandalized the family." For a considerable time her conduct was unquestionable: she went regularly to mass, gave half-a-crown at Easter, never missed confessions, and, better still, conducted the culinary department with excellent propriety,—so much so, that Father Andrew declared from the altar, that she was an exemplary *artiste*, and a capital Christian. "Frailty, thy name is woman!" This paragon of cooks levanted one frosty night with a travelling pedler? Then, and not till then, was the dark side of her character exhibited. "She did not value *Lent* a *traneein*—had *shared a rasher* with Sir Charles's man upon a blessed Friday—and, if a skillet went astray, she would promise a pilgrimage to *the Reek* for its recovery, without the least intention of ever laying a leg upon that blessed hill."

The morning after her disappearance, her sins were freely canvassed in the kitchen. "The Lord forgive her!" said the keeper, "for I can't; she treated the young dogs abominably. *Spot* will lose a claw; and I am sure it was Sibby, the devil speed her! that scalded him."

"She could hide a quart of spirits, and it would never show upon her," cried Pattigo.

"She was mighty dangerous in a house," exclaimed the black-eyed chamber-maid; "I never settled the master's room, but she was sure to pass the window."

"She's gone," said the otter-killer; "there's worse in the north than Sibby. Many a good bowl of broth she gave me. *Tho she mur tho she; agus neil she gun lought.** She was

* *Anglice*, "She is as she is; but she's not without her fault."

no *great Catholic* it is true! for she owned to me last Saint John's—and she *hearty* at the time—that she was in debt *four stations at Ball, and three and twenty at Croagh Patrick!* She was, the crature, a fine warrant for a promise, but the worst performer under the canopy of heaven—She'll never," said the old man, with his own peculiar chuckle, "clear scores with the Reek and Father Nolan. In troth, I think it would almost puzzle *Bobby*!"*

CHAPTER XXXI.

Fresh arrivals—The priest's reception—The lodge alarmed—Preparations for deer-stalking—State of the garrison—The mountain lake—The peasant's adventure—The ravine and red-deer—A Highland ambuscade—The catastrophe.

If a man were obliged to chronicle with brevity the leading events of our *terra incognita,* I would advise him to reduce them to "arrivals and departures." As the door is never locked, the stream of visiters is incessant. Every man coming from "the corners of the earth" drops in with a "God save all here!" This is the *Shibboleth* of Ballacroy; the accredited letter of introduction, and, better for the traveller still, a full acquittance for meat, drink, and lodging.

This morning we have had an illiterative arrival—a piper, a pedler, and a priest. Although I place them according to their order of approach, I need scarcely say that the last,

* This extraordinary being lived at the foot of Croagh Patrick, and was the first performer (religious) of his day, in Connaught. He generally resided at the house of a neighbouring gentleman; and when a pilgrim visitor was discouraged by the acclivity of the hill, or the quantity of prayers to be got over, Bobby, *for a consideration,* undertook and executed the task. He was not only a harmless, but, as may be well imagined, a very useful personage; and his death has left a blank which has never yet been filled.

The remains of poor Bobby, at his own request, were transported to the summit of the mountain, and deposited on the apex of Croagh Patrick, where he had so often and so usefully performed. As he was laid where no other body rested, the line intended for Sir John Moore, would be probably more applicable to the hermit:

"They left him *alone* with his glory!"

our respected friend, has given unexpected pleasure. For me, the visit is delightful, for I hope to obtain another lesson in the "gentle art." The Colonel has embraced this "Walton of the wilderness;" a man on whom four bottles would not show, and to whom, in woodcraft and theology, in the commander's opinion, the clerk of Copmanhurst himself was little better than a bungler; and, notwithstanding my kinsman's delinquency in intercepting the despatches, and abstracting the enclosure, he has escaped with a tap or two upon the cheek; for, as Antony declares, "Father Andrew dotes upon *the Master*."

But a shepherd in breathless haste has rushed into the cabin. By expressive signs, and a few words, he has conveyed the intelligence to Mr. Hennessey, that three outlying deer are at this minute in a neighbouring glen. He saw them in a valley, as he crossed the brow above. Nothing short of the landing of a French army, or a smuggler, could occasion such confusion. The chamber of state is invaded, rifles are uncased, shot exchanged for bullets, a basket with refreshments packed: all is hurry and preparation, and in an incalculably short time we are ready for the fray, and in full march for the mountains. Shakspeare, or he is belied, was in his youth a deer fancier, and he would probably describe this busy scene by "loud alarum, *exeunt omnes*."

The day is particularly favourable, the sun shines brilliantly, the sky is without a cloud, and if we even miss the deer, I trust that the prospect from the mountain-top will more than repay our labour in ascending it. The party comprises three guns, and some ten or twelve drivers, with our guide. My kinsman and Hennessey have rifles; I am no marksman with a bullet, and I declined to take one, and therefore must put my trust in honest John Manton. We bend our course directly to the mountain cleugh, where the deer were seen by the peasant; but when we reach the base of the hills, we must diverge to the left, and make a considerable *détour*, and judging from the appearance of the heights to be surmounted, we have work cut out, which, before our return to the hut, will tell what metal we are made of.

Nor is the garrison during our absence left without protectors. The colonel, the priest, the otter-killer, and old John, *there* keep watch and ward. The former twain appear to

have sworn eternal friendship over a three-legged table, and are settled *tête-à-tête* at either side of the cabin window, with all the requisites for fabricating flies displayed before them. Antony is greasing his otter-trap beside the fire. He still indulges the vain hope, that his rheumatism may be cured, and that he will once more revisit the remoter loughs, where otters are abundant, and where many of his happier days were "lang syne" spent. Poor fellow! his hunting is ended, and his trap, like a warrior's sword, must be laid aside, for age has come heavily upon its master. Old John, "the last and trustiest of the four," has assumed his culinary apron, and from the strength and array of his "*matériel*" it is clear, that he calculates little upon the red-deer venison we shall bring home.

A smart walk of some three miles over an undulating surface, of gentle but regular ascent, brought us to the deep and circular lake which lies at the base of Carrig-a-binniogh; it seems the boundary between the hill-country and the moorlands. Here we halted, and held with the peasants a council of war, on the course of operations to be pursued.

The situation of this mountain lough is extremely picturesque; on three sides it is embosomed in the hills, which rise boldly from the water's edge, and for many hundred feet appear to be almost perpendicular. Its depth is considerable, and hence, bright as the day is, the waters have a dark and sombre look. It abounds with trout of moderate size and excellent flavour. They were rising fast at the natural fly, and appeared generally to be herring-sized.

While resting here, preparatory to attempting to ascend the heights, Cooney, the guide, related a very apposite adventure.

Late in the autumn of the preceding year, the peasant had visited the lake with his fishing-rod. The trouts took well, and Cooney had nearly filled his basket, when he was startled by the report of a gun, at no great distance up the hill. While he looked in the direction from whence the shot appeared to have been discharged, a fine full-grown stag crossed the brow above him, tottered downwards for some twenty steps, and then falling into a steep and stony ravine, rolled lifelessly over, until he reached the very spot where the

astonished fisherman was standing. Before his surprise had time to abate, a man, armed with a French gun,* leaped upon the bank over which the deer had fallen, and was joined immediately by a companion, armed also with a fowling-piece. Then, for the first time, they observed the startled angler. The discovery was anything but agreeable; for, after a momentary pause, they rushed down the hill together, and presenting their long guns at Cooney's breast, ordered him to decamp, in terms that admitted of no demur. The angler absconded forthwith; for, as he reasoned fairly enough, "a man who could drive an ounce of lead through a stag's skull, would find little trouble in drilling a Christian." On looking round, he saw the deer-stealers place the carcass on their shoulders, and ascend the heights, over which they quickly disappeared. The feat is almost incredible, and it required an amazing effort of strength and determination to transport a full-grown red-deer over a precipitous mountain, which we, in light marching order, and with no burden but our guns, found a difficult task enough to climb.

From its very base, Carrig-a-binniogh presents a different surface to the moorlands which environ it; heath is no more seen, and in its place the mountain's rugged sides are clothed with lichen and wild grasses. The face of the hill is broken and irregular, and the ascent rendered extremely disagreeable by multitudes of loose stones which, being lightly bedded in the soil, yield to the pressure of the traveller's foot, and of course increase his difficulties.

After the first hundred yards had been gallantly surmounted, we halted by general consent to recover breath. Again we resumed our labour, and, with occasional pauses, plodded on "our weary way." As we ascended, the hill became more precipitous, the grass shorter, and the hands were as much employed as the feet. The halts were now

* When the French, under Humbert, landed at Killala in the autumn of 1798, they brought with them a large quantity of arms and military clothing, to equip the numerous partisans they expected to have found in the country. After the French general was defeated, and the insurrection had been put down, many of the guns which had been distributed among the peasantry were buried, or effectually concealed; and they have been used in poaching and wild-fowl shooting to the present time. The French barrels are said to throw shot much better than those of English muskets. I have never seen their relative merits proven, but imagine that the superiority of the former is owing to their greater length.

more frequent; and each progression towards the summit shorter after every pause. "To climb the trackless mountain all unseen," is very poetical, no doubt, but it is also, I regret to add, amazingly fatiguing, and a task for men of thews and sinews of no ordinary strength. But we were determined and persevered—"*en avant*," was the order of the day; on we progressed, slowly but continuously; the steepest face of the hill was gradually overcome, and a wide waste of moss and shingle lay before us, rising towards a cairn of stones which marks the apex of the mountain. We pressed on with additional energy; the termination of our toil was in view: in a few minutes we gained the top, and a scene, glorious beyond imagination, burst upon us at once, and repaid tenfold the labour we had encountered to obtain it.

We stood upon the very pinnacle of the ridge, two thousand feet above the level of the sea; Clew Bay, that magnificent sheet of water, was extended at our feet, studded with its countless islands: inland, the eye ranged over a space of fifty miles; and towns and villages, beyond number, were sprinkled over a surface covered with grass, and corn, and heath, in beautiful alternation. The sun was shining gloriously, and the variety of colouring presented by this expansive landscape, was splendidly tinted by the vertical rays of light. The yellow corn, the green pasturage, the russet heaths, were traceable to an infinite distance, while smaller objects were marked upon this natural panorama, and churches, towns, and mansions occasionally relieved the prospect. We turned from the interior to the west; there the dark waters of the Atlantic extended, till the eye lost them in the horizon. Northward, lay the Sligo islands; and southward, the Connemara mountains, with the noble islands of Turk and Boffin—nearer objects seemed almost beneath us; Achil was below—Clare Island stretched at our feet—while our own cabin looked like a speck upon the canvas, distinguished only by its spiral wreath of smoke from the hillocks that encircled it. There was an indescribable loneliness around, that gave powerful effect to all we saw. The dreariness of the waste we occupied was grand and imposing: we were far removed from every thing human; we stood above the world, and could exclaim with Byron, "this, *this* is solitude!"

How long we might have gazed on this brilliant spectacle is questionable. Hennessey, less romantic than we, reminded us that it was time to occupy the defile, by which the deer, if found, and driven from the lowlands, would pass within our range. Thus recalled, we looked at the immediate vicinage of the cairn. It was a wilderness of moss and bog, and granite, barren beyond description, and connected with the upper levels of the Alpine ridge, which extended for miles at either side, by a narrow chain of rock, which seemed more like the topping of a parapet than the apex of a line of hills. Indeed, a more desolate region could not be well imagined;—no sign of vegetation appeared, if scathed lichens, and parched and withered flag-grass be excepted. The mountain cattle were rarely seen upon these heights, and the footmarks upon the softer surface were those of the deer and goats. Hennessey discovered the tracks of a herd of the larger species, which, from his acute observations, had evidently crossed the ridge since sunrise, and must, from their numerous traces, have amounted to at least a dozen.

While we still cast a "longing lingering look" at a scene, which, I lament to say, I shall most probably never be permitted to view again—a boy rose from the valley towards the south, and hastened at full speed to join us. His communication was soon made, and, like the shepherd's at the cabin, pantomime rather than speech conveyed its import. His tidings were momentous; the deer had moved from the place in which they had been first discovered, and were now within one thousand yards of the place where we were resting. Hennessey and the *gossoon** advanced in double quick, and where the ridge is steepest between the highlands and the valley, we observed them make a sudden halt, and creep gingerly forward, to what seemed the brow of a precipice. We followed more leisurely, and adopting a similar method of approach, stole silently on, and looked over the chasm.

The precipice we were on forms the extremity of a long but narrow ravine, which gradually rising from the lowlands, divides the basis of Carrig-a-binnoigh and Meelroe. It was a perpendicular rock of fearful height. At either side the valley was flanked by the sides of the opposite hills; and

* *Anglice*, boy.

they sprung up so rugged and precipitous as to be quite impracticable to all but "the wild flock which never needs a fold;" and yet the cleugh below was like a green spot upon a wilderness. To the very bases of the ridges it was covered with verdant grass and blooming heather while, at the upper end, streams from several well-heads united together and formed a sparkling rivulet, which wandered between banks so green and shrubby, as formed a striking contrast to the barren heaths below and the blasted wilderness above.

We put our bats aside, and peeped over. The wave of Hennessey's hand proved the boy's report to be correct, and we were gratified with a sight of those rare and beautiful animals which formed the objects of our expedition. They were the same leash which the peasant had noticed in the lower valley—an old stag, a younger one, and a doe.

The great elevation of the precipice, and the caution with which we approached the verge, permitted us, without alarming them, to view the red-deer leisurely. They appeared to have been as yet undisturbed, for, after cropping the herbage for a little, the younger stag and the hind lay down, while the old hart remained erect, as if he intended to be their sentinel.

The distance of the deer from the ridge was too great to allow the rifle to be used with anything like certainty; and from the exposed nature of the hills at either side, it was impossible to get within point-blank range undiscovered. Hennessey had already formed his plans, and drawing cautiously back from the ridge, he pulled us by the skirts, and beckoned us to retire.

We fell back about a pistol-shot from the cliff, and under a rock, which bore the portentous name of Craignamoina,* held our council of war.

There were two passes, through one of which the deer, when roused and driven from the glen, would most likely retreat. The better of these, as post of honour, was, more politely than prudently, entrusted to me—my kinsman occupied the other; and Hennessey having ensconced us behind rocks which prevented our ambush from being discovered, crossed to the other side of the ridge, and I lost sight of him. Meanwhile the boy had been despatched to apprize the *drivers* that the deer were in the ravine, and to notify the spot where

* *Anglice*, the rock of slaughter.

we were posted, to enable them to arrange their movements according to our plans.

I will not pretend to describe the anxious, nay *agonizing* hour that I passed in this highland ambuscade. The deep stillness of the waste was not broken by even the twittering of a bird. From the place where I lay concealed, I commanded a view of the defile for the distance of some eighty yards, and my eye turned to the path by which I expected the deer to approach, until to gaze longer pained me. My ear was equally engaged; the smallest noise was instantly detected, and the ticking of my watch appeared sharper and louder than usual. As time wore on, my nervousness increased. Suddenly a few pebbles fell—my heart beat faster—but it was a false alarm. Again, I heard a faint sound, as if a light foot pressed upon loose shingle—it was repeated. By Saint Hubert, it is the deer! They have entered the gorge of the pass, and approach the rock that covers me, in a gentle canter!

To sink upon one knee and cock both barrels was a

moment's work. Reckless of danger, the noble animals, in single file, galloped down the narrow pathway. The hart

led the way, followed by the doe, and the old stag brought up the rear. As they passed me at the short distance of twenty paces, I fired at the leader, and, as I thought, with deadly aim; but the ball passed over his back, and splintered the rock beyond him. The report rang over the waste, and the deer's surprise was evinced by the tremendous rush they made to clear the defile before them. I selected the stag for my second essay; eye and finger kept excellent time, as I imagined—I drew the trigger—a miss, by everything unfortunate! The bullet merely struck a tyne from his antler, and, excepting this trifling graze, he went off at a thundering pace, uninjured.

Cursing myself, John Manton, and all the world, I threw my luckless gun upon the ground, and rushed to the summit of a neighbouring rock, from which the heights and valleys beyond the gorge of the pass were seen distinctly. The deer had separated—the hart and doe turned suddenly to the right, and were fired at by my cousin, without effect. The stag went right ahead; and while I still gazed after him, a flash issued from a hollow in the hill, the sharp report of Hennessey's piece succeeded, and the stag sprang full six feet from the ground, and tumbling over and over repeatedly, dropped upon the bent-grass with a rifle-bullet in his heart.

I rushed at headlong speed to the spot where the noble animal lay. The eye was open—the nostril expanded, just as life had left him. Throwing his rifle down, Hennessey pulled out a clasp-knife, passed the blade across the deer's throat, and requesting my assistance, raised the carcass by the haunches, in order to assist its bleeding freely.

Having performed this necessary operation, and obtained the assistance of two of our companions from the valley, whence they had been driving the deer, we proceeded to transport the dead stag to the lowlands. It was no easy task, but we accomplished it quickly; and perceiving some horses grazing at no great distance, we determined to press one for the occasion. A stout pony was most unceremoniously put in requisition, the deer laid across his back, and after emptying flask and basket joyously beside a stream of rock-water, we turned our faces to the cabin, where the news of our success had already arrived.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Deer brought home—Dinner—Gastronomic reflections—Grouse soup—Roasted salmon—Cooking *pour et contre*—Carouse commences—Symptoms of inebriety—Night in the hills—Coffee *al fresco*—Temperance society—A Bacchanalian group—Auld lang syne—Borrowing a congregation—The company dispersed.

WONDERFUL are the inventions of man! The slaughter of an unhappy stag has been made good and sufficient cause for all the idlers of the community assembling at our cabin. They are squatted round the fire like Indians in a wigwam—and old John, no bad authority in such matters, declares in a stage whisper to his master, "that a four-gallon cag will scarcely last the night, there is such a clanjamfry of *coosherers** in the kitchen—the devil speed them, one and all!"

It was twilight when we got home. The deer had arrived before us, and was already hanging up, suspended from the *couples*. A cheerful fire blazed in the room of state, while exhilarating effluvia from the outer chamber told that John's preparations were far advanced. We had scarcely time to make our hurried toilet before the table was covered, and

* This phrase is used in Ireland to designate that useless and eternal tribe, who are there the regular *attachés* of families of ancient lineage. Nurses, fosterers, discharged servants, decayed sportsmen, and idlers of every sex, age, and calling, come under this description.

There was a higher class of nuisance under the title of *poor relations* who formerly wandered over Connaught, and from the interminable ramifications of the old families, there were few houses into which these worthies had not a right of *entrée*. The last one I recollect when a boy, traversed the country upon a white pony, dressed in dingy black, and arrayed in a cocked-hat; a certain number of houses were under annual requisition, and such was the influence of annual custom, that none would venture to refuse this forced hospitality, although the man was latterly a sad bore. Some gentlemen, when their "loving cousin was expected, had his approach observed, and stopped him in the avenue with an excuse that the house was full, and a subsidy of a few guineas. The money was always acceptable—and whoever unluckily happened to be next number on the visiting list, was favoured with one week additional from my "Cousin Mac."

"Mac," with his brigadier wig and white pony, has gone the way of all flesh, and by travestying a line of Sir Walter Scott, one could add,

"The last of all the *bores* was he."

Father Andrew, at the Colonel's especial solicitation, favoured us with a *Latin* grace.

No one merits and relishes a good dinner better than a grouse-shooter. It delights me to see my companion eat like a traveller; and to please me, he should possess sufficient *acumen* to enable him to appreciate the fare. I despise the man who is cursed with a Spartan palate, and who hardly knows the difference between beef and mutton; and yet, in equal ratio, the *gourmand* is my abomination. There is a limit in culinary lore beyond which, as I opine, the sportsman should never travel. Like a soldier, he will sometimes find it serviceable to be able to direct the broiling of a steak and the combination of a stew. To fabricate a curry, or even regulate a hash, may be tolerated; and in a wild country like Ballycroy, or the Scottish highlands, this knowledge will frequently be "worth a Jew's eye;" but everything beyond this in kitchen accomplishments is detestable. With one who composed omelets, and talked scholarly of the *matériel* of a plum-pudding—and I once had the misfortune to fall into a shooting party afflicted with such a personage—I would consort no more upon the heath, than I would shoot with a cook, or draw a cover with a confectioner. And yet, with these antipathies, I recommend the neophyte to make himself in everything as independent as he can. A few practical lessons are worth a world of precept: one week's cooking on the moors will render him for life an adept; and if gun and angle fail him not, he will be able to command a dinner, without owing to the devil the compliment of a bad cook.

Did I wish to elucidate my opinions, I would stake them upon two items in our bills of fare. The soldier compounded the soup—and such soup!—and yet it was the simple extract of a mountain hare, and five broken birds, which had been too much injured to permit their being sent away. Shade of Kitchener! one spoonful of that exquisite *potage* would have made thee abandon half thy theories, and throw thy "cunningest devices" to the winds!

The Priest superintended the fish—an eight-pound-salmon, crimped, split, subdivided, and roasted upon bog-deal skewers before a clear turf-fire. All the sauces that Lazenby ever fabricated, could not produce that soup, or emulate this broil.

Let him, whose jaded palate a club-house cook connot accommodate, try the *cuisinerie* of our cabin. He shall walk to the mountain lake, and on his return, the Colonel will compose a soup, and the Priest supply a salmon: if eating like a ploughman be to him a pleasure—

> "If *these* won't make him,
> The devil take him!"

But lest my theories be mistaken, I must say, that I hold cooking and "creature comforts" as very secondary indeed to sport. If all can be had, so much the better; and when I recommend the tyro to learn the art and mysteries of the broiling iron, it is precisely on the principle that the knowledge how to cook a dinner may, at times, be as necessary for him, as to know how to wash a gun. No man, I presume, will do either, who can manage to have them done by a deputy. But a sportsman, a keen straightforward sportsman, will of necessity be often left dependant upon his own resources, and hence he should be prepared for the contingency. It is the abuse I cry out against. A man who on the mountains counts the minutes until dinner-hour shall come, who is seeking an appetite rather than amusement, and instead of game is dreaming of *gourmanderie*—him I totally reject, and implore to lay aside his gun for ever, and exchange the powder-flask for the pepper-box. The latter he will find more useful, and not half so dangerous.

It was clear, from the very start, that this was to be among the *wettest nights* of the season. The Colonel settled himself for a comfortable carouse; the Priest was not the man to desert his *buon camarado*; and Antony declared that there was good cause for a general jollification, as he properly observed, that "it was not every day that Manus kills a bullock," by which old saw, I presume the defunct deer and ourselves are typified. No wonder, then, that the revel commenced with all the members of the body politic; and whilst the contents of the "four-gallon keg" were invaded in the kitchen, the wine circulated rapidly in the chamber of state. In truth, during my short but chequered life, civil and military, I never saw a party evince an honester disposition *to drink fair*. No coquetry about filling; no remonstrances touching "heeltaps and skylights;"—round went the bottle, until the juice of

the grape appeared too cold a fluid for such mercurial souls and a general call for a more potent liquid was given and obeyed.

Now came "the sweet hour i' the night," and old Care might, if he pleased, have "hanged himself in his own garters." The Priest, whose voice must once have been remarkably fine, and who certainly never impaired it much by "hallooing psalms," sang national melodies, or joined the Colonel and my cousin in glees and catches, which, as Wamba says, were not "ill-sung." "Fast and furious" the mirth proceeded, while, "every pause between," clouds of tobacco rose like a mist-wreath, and overspread the company with a canopy of vapour.

For my own part, every prudential resolution vanished with the first catch; and it was not till a certain unsteadiness of vision discovered that I had reached that felicitous state when no twelve honest men, upon oath, would certify my sobriety, that I mustered courage to retreat. I felt that, had I remained much longer, I was likely to become *hors de combat*; and, lighting a cigar, left the cabin to breathe the fresh air, which long since had been superseded in the banqueting-room by an atmosphere of genuine *cannastre*.

It was a mild, calm, dark night, and such a one feels delicious in the hills. Two or three solitary stars were feebly twinkling in the sky, though, were the truth told, probably there was but *one*. I took the pathway leading to the river, and sat down upon the banks, to "blow my cloud" in solitude. I was not, however, permitted to muse alone; my kinsman immediately joined me, and settling himself upon one of the masses of turf, which the floods tear from the banks of the stream, and leave, when their violence subsides, upon the verge of the river, replenished his *meerschaum*.

"How refreshing," he said, "to exchange that mephitic air within, for this mild but bracing night-breeze! I saw you pass the glass, and I desired John to bring us out some coffee. It is a queer place, too, for a Mocha fancier to indulge in; but this is the charm that binds me to the mountains. In life, locality is everything; it is not the *what* one does, it is the *where*. Venison at a city feast is an every-day concern; and the best haunch in England would not have the *gusto* of the red deer's that hangs from the roof within. Common comfort,

in a wildeaness like this, from the barrenness of all around, receives a zest, which nothing in civilized society can realize, and '*voilà l'exemple.*'"

Lighted by a peasant with a bog-deal torch, that emitted more light than forty candles together, the old man approached us with his tray. Coffee taken in the open air, "in darkness palpable," into which the powerful blaze of the torch which our bare-legged attendant held could but feebly penetrate, associated with the place and company, made an impression on my fancy that will not be readily obliterated.

"Next to modern fanaticism, nothing stirs my choler more," said my kinsman, "than that silly bubble, yclept *the Temperance Society*, To prevent men from occasionally indulging, no matter what their grade in life may be, is perfectly Utopian. The more you inhibit what the world calls pleasure, the more you urge mankind to the pursuit. Hence, in water-drinking, more as in religion, there is the grossest hypocrisy practised; and I would as soon trust a denouncer of wine with the key of my cellar, as allow my cat to have the *entrée* of the dairy. Then, upon the score that health and longevity are interrupted by even a moderate attachment to the bottle, I deny the position altogether; and for my proof I would point out the group within. The otter-killer says that he is eighty —we at the Lodge, from certain data, know him to be at least five years more;—his life has been one of much severity, with constant exposure to heat and cold: and he has, as he admits, been always a free drinker. The Colonel, for thirty years, has been attached to the most dissipated regiments in the service, and excepting that he suffered from gout, which is hereditary in his family, and rheumatism occasioned by a neglected wound, where is there a more vigorous sexagenarian? But the Priest is probably the best example of them all. Exposed to all the annoyances of his profession, brought constantly within the sphere of contagion, called out of bed at midnight, and obliged to brave weather, when, as it has been happily expressed, a man would not reject an enemy's dog, he exercises hospitality freely; and is there a panado-maker among the whole water-drinking gang who could *rough it* with him for a fortnight? But hark! he pitches that manly and melodious voice—he strikes up poor Burns' inimitable lyric, '*Then are we met.*' That matchless song was surely written for such a voice and such a company!"

Under cover of the Priest's melody we approached the window. There sat a party, who might well put the Temperance Society to the blush. For their years, I suspect there was not a healthier, and I will swear not a happier, trio in the King's dominion. It was just the scene a Flemish artist would select to employ his pencil on. For effect, the light was excellent: the candles having been removed to the extremity of the apartment, the bacchanalian group were revealed by the red and mellow blaze of a brilliant wood-fire. Separated by a table provided with every requisite for a deep carouse, sat the soldier and the churchman. The back of the latter was turned to the window, but his amplitude of shoulder and bull-neck at once bespoke the strength for which he was remarkable, while the partial baldness of his head told that he had passed life's meridian. The tall and martial figure opposite contrasted well with the churchman's. Older by some half-score years, he might, like Jack Falstaff, be "some fifty, ay, or, by the mass, threescore!" but his age was green; and notwithstanding the wear and tear that a military life and its occasional excesses had caused, his cheerful countenance and merry eye showed that he loved yet to hear "the chimes at midnight." The otter-killer completed the group: sitting on a low stool, from time to time he regulated and supplied the wood-fire; his silver hair collected in a long cue, seal-skin pouch, singular dress, and venerable air, made him the most striking figure of the party. A little terrier bitch, who never left her master, lay at the old man's feet, while an indulged black setter luxuriated before the blaze, with his intelligent head and pendulous silky ears rested on the Colonel's knee.

"Is not that indeed a picture?" whispered my cousin. "What heads they have? John placed yonder bottle before them as I went out, and two parts of it are gone already. But hush! let us hear the conversation. I think if there be strength in poteen, the Colonel has reached the moralizing point."

"Andrew," said the commander. ("The Colonel," said my kinsman, aside, "is generally *hard screwed* when he calls the priest Andrew.")

"Andrew, fill the glass: the boys are ruminating beside the river; heir young blood is hotter than ours, so we'll stick to the *ingle-side* and the tumbler. There was a day when we

could bring a stag to the ground, and scramble up Carrig-a-binniogh as stoutly as the best of them,—but that day's gone: we have changed for the worse, and so has everything. Andrew, in our youth it was a merry world. But who succeeded old Markham? He was as honest a divine as ever finished a *magnum*. They talked—for virtue has always its enemies—of his smuggling a little, and having a private still in the stable; but it was all hospitality. Andrew, the poteen is sweet, but weak—help it man, for these glasses scarcely hold a thimbleful!—at our age water-drinking won't do.—Not a drop of brandy, you say, inside the Mullet?"*

"Not an anker in the barony!" returned his companion with a heavy sigh. "There was a time when my poor cabin could not be taken short for Nantz and Hollands; but if I can keep a bottle of *the native* now, it is the most. Would you believe it, Colonel? the *revenue people* searched my house a month ago."

The Colonel looked indignant. "Search your house? profane a priest's own dwelling? why, after a while, they'll look into the Lodge. Did you curse the scoundrels from the altar?"

"Not I," said the churchman. "They are all northmen† and foreigners, who would not care a brass button whether I banned or blessed them for a twelvemonth. There is a ruffian of the flock‡ that acts as a spy and guide, and I suspect he sent them."

"Excommunicate him!" exclaimed the commander, with drunken solemnity.

* The grand boundary of the wild peninsula of Erris, separating it from the interior counties. It is used in a general sense to describe the district—as "within or without the *Mullet*."

† *Northmen* is a phrase not only applied to recent settlers from the north of Ireland, but even to families who have been located here for centuries. In point of fact, few of the tribes here are purely aboriginal; for Ennis and Connemara being the *Ultima Thule* of the land, every wanderer for private and political offences fled to these havens of refuge, and in course of time amalgamated with the native proprietors of the soil. Hence to this day, their descendants are not unfrequently taunted with being *novi homines;* and when a delinquency is committed by one of these unhappy hybrids, an aboriginal will probably observe, "Sure, after all, what could be expected from him, considering that his great great-grandfather was *from the North!*"

‡ The flock—a Roman Catholic congregation is so termed in Connaught

"I did that last Candlemas. He brought a girl out of Achil, on *book oath*, and he with his three decent wives in the parish already. I quenched the candles on him, and then he took to the revenue—*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*."

"And how do you and the new minister get on?"

"Poorly enough," answered the Priest. "This reformation work has put the country clean asunder."

"No good will come of it," said the Colonel. "I mind the time in Connaught when no man clearly knew to what religion he belonged; and in one family, the boys would go to church and the girls to mass, or may be, both would join and go to whichever happened to be nearest. When I entered the militia, I recollect, the first time I was ever detached from head-quarters, I went with the company to Portumna. Old Sir Mark Blake, who commanded the regiment, happened to be passing through, and the night before he had had a desperate drink with General Loftus at the Castle. When I left Loughrea, I forgot to ascertain where I should bring the men on Sunday, and I thought this a good opportunity to ask the question. I opened his bedroom-door softly. 'Sir Mark,' says I, 'where shall I march the men?' 'What kind of a day is it?" says he. 'Rather wet,' was my answer. 'It's liker the night that preceded it,' said he. 'Upon my conscience, my lad,' he continued, 'my head's not clear enough at present to recollect the exact position of church and chapel; but take them *to the nearest*.' That is what I call," and the Colonel shook his head gravely, "real Christian feeling."

"Real Christian feeling," said the Priest, with a groan, "is nearly banished from the world. When I went first to Castlebar, to learn Latin from Dan Donovan, my uncle Martin, God be merciful to him! was parish priest, and Jack Benton was the minister. They agreed like sworn brothers, and no one dared say a word against either in the presence of his friend. Where the priest dined, the curate was sure to be also. They lived in true brotherhood; and when one happened to be the worse of liquor, why the other would not leave him for a bishopric. The town was the most peaceable place in Connaught; and how could it be otherwise with such an example? Many a night I went before them with a lantern, when they carried Carney, the fiddler, round the streets, to serenade the ladies. There

they would walk, like humble Christians, with the cripple in the middle, and neither caring a *traneein*, whether popery or protestantism was at the head of the barrow. These were blessed days, Colonel.—I'll thank you for the canister,—that tobacco is excellent, and I'll try another pipeful."

"Och hone!" exclaimed the otter-killer, "isn't it a murder to see the clargy making such fools of themselves now! When I was young, priest and minister were hand-and-glove. It seems to me but yesterday, when Father Patt Joyce, the Lord be good to him! lent Mr. Carson a congregation."

"Eh! what Antony?" said the Colonel. "A congregation appears rather an extraordinary article to borrow."

"Faith," said the otter-killer, "it's true. I was there myself, and I'll tell you the story. It was in the time of Bishop Beresford, that beautiful old man,—many a half-crown he gave me, for I used often to bring game and fish to the palace from the master's father. He was the handsomest gentleman I ever laid my eyes on; and, och hone! it was he that knew how to live like a bishop. He never went a step without four long-tailed black horses to his carriage, and two mounted grooms behind him. His own body-man told me, one time I went with a haunch of red-deer and a bittern to the palace, that never less than twenty sat down in the parlour, and, in troth, there was double that number in the hall, for nobody came or went without being well taken care of.

"Well, it came into old Lord Peter's* head, that he would build a church, and s ttle a colony of *northmen* away in the west. Faith, he managed the one easy enough; but it failed him to do the other, for devil an inch the *northmen* would come; for, says they, "Hell and Connaught's bad enough, but what is either to Connemara?'

"Well, the minister came down, and a nice little man he was, one Mr. Carson. Father Patt Flyn had the parish then, and faith, in course of time they two became as thick as inkle-weavers.

"Everything went on beautiful, for the two clargy lived together. Father Patt Flyn minded his chapel and the flock,

* Grandfather to the present Marquis of Sligo.

and Mr. Carson said prayers of a Sunday too, though sorrow a soul he had to listen to him but the clerk—but sure that was no fault of his.

"Well, I mind it as well as yesterday, for I killed that very morning two otters at Loughnamuckey, and the smallest of them was better to me than a pound note. It was late when I got down from the hills, and I went to Father Patt's as usual, and who should I meet at the door but the priest himself. 'Antony,' says he, '*ceade fealteagh*, have ye anything with you, for the wallets seem full?' 'I have,' says I, 'your reverence;' and I pulls out two pair of graziers,* and a brace of three-pound trouts, fresh from the sea, that I caught that morning in Dhulough. In these days I carried a ferret, besides the trap and fishing-rod, and it went hard, if I missed the otters but I would net rabbits, or kill a dish of trout. 'Upon my conscience,' says the priest, 'ye never were more welcome, Antony. The minister and myself will dine off the trouts and rabbits, for they forgot to kill a sheep for us till an hour ago; and you know, Antony, except the shoulder, there's no part of the mutton could be touched, so I was rather bothered about the dinner.'

"Well, in the evening, I was brought into the parlour, and there were their reverences as *cur coddiogh*† as you please. Father Patt gave me a tumbler of *rael* stiff punch, and the divil a better warrant to make the same was within the province of Connaught. We were just as comfortable as we could be, when a *currier*‡ stops at the door with a letter, which he said was for Mr. Carson. Well, when the minister opens it, he got as pale as a sheet, and I thought he would have fainted. Father Patt crossed himself. 'Arrah, Dick,' says he, 'the Lord stand between you and evil! is there anything wrong?' 'I'm ruined,' says he; 'for some *bad member* has wrote to the bishop, and told him that I have no congregation, because you and I are so intimate, and he's coming down to-morrow, with the *dane*, to see the state of things. Och, hone!' says he, 'I'm fairly ruined.' 'And is that all that's frettin' ye?' says the priest, 'Arrah, dear Dick'—for they called each other be their *cristen* names,—'is this all?

* Young rabbits.

† *Anglice*, comfortable.

‡ *Alias*, courier.

If it's a congregation ye want, ye shall have a decent one to-morrow, and lave that to me;—and now we'll take our drink, and not matter the bishop a fig.'

"Well, next day, sure enough, down comes the bishop, and a great retinue along with him; and there was Mr. Carson ready to receive him. 'I hear,' says the bishop, mighty stately, 'that you have no congregation.' 'In faith, your holiness,' says he, 'you'll be soon able to tell that,'—and in he walks him to the church, and there were sitting threescore well-dressed men and women, and all of them as devout as if they were going to be anointed; for that blessed morning, Father Patt whipped mass over before ye had time to bless yourself, and the clanest of the flock was before the bishop in the church, and ready for his holiness. To see that all behaved properly, Father Patt had hardly put off the vestment, till he slipped on a *cota more*,* and there he sat in a back *sate* like any other of the congregation. I was near the bishop's reverence; he was seated in an arm-chair belonging to the priest.—'Come here, Mr. Carson,' says he; 'some enemy of yours,' said the sweet old gentleman, 'wanted to injure you with me. But I am now fully satisfied.' And turning to the dane, 'By this book!' says he, 'I didn't see a claner congregation this month of Sundays!'"

"*He said no such thing*," exclaimed my kinsman, who, tired with the prolixity of the otter-killer, had interrupted the finale of the tale. "How dare you, Antony, put such uncanonical and ungentlemanly language in the mouth of the *sweet old man?* Here, John, clear the kitchen. Out with the piper, and chuck the *keg* after him. We'll disperse *this congregation*; and they may dance outside if they please, while pipes and poteen stand them. And now ventilate the cabin, open door and window, and sling our hammocks as soon as possible."

Agreeably to this mandate, the kitchen company were ejected with scanty ceremony; the Colonel and the Priest retired to their respective beds with wonderful steadiness: while we took possession of our marquee, which, under existing circumstances, was Paradise itself compared with the cabin, which smoking, drinking, and cooking, had rendered everything but agreeable.

* *Anglice*, a great-coat.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Dancing kept up—Effects of poteen on the company—Ball ends—Rainy night—Morning—Pattigo—A long swim—Breakfast—An incident—Fox-catcher bitten by a wild cat—Ferocity of that animal—Anecdotes of them—House-cats frequently run wild—Destructive to rabbit-warrens—Cat-killing extraordinary—The deer-skin—Snow fatal to the red deer—Anecdote of a hind and fawn—Blistered foot—Simple remedy—My descent by "the mother's side."

For a considerable time after we had retired to our cots, the ball was kept up with unabated spirit, upon a piece of level sward beside the river. The whisky appeared to affect the company differently, and individual propensities were strikingly developed. Some of the boys were particularly amative, and the rude love-making we overheard at times amused us much; others betrayed a pugnacity of spirit which nothing but the master's propinquity repressed. By degrees the company began to separate: the piper, whose notes for the last half-hour had been exceedingly irregular, now evinced unquestionable symptoms of his being "*done up*." Instead of the lightsome and well-sustained jig, strange and dolorous noises issued from the chanter,* and, as one of the fair sex observed, who, by the way, in passing, tumbled over the tent cords,—"Martin was totally *smothered with spirits*, and a body could no more dance to his music, than do *the Patre o'pee* to a *coronach* at a wake."

It was well that this failure in the orchestral department brought the ball to a close, for at midnight the rain began to fall, and towards morning it came down in torrents. We were obliged to rise and slack the tent-cords; but the marquee was a double one, and perfectly water-tight, and, as the cots were slung from upright posts at least a foot from the ground, we suffered no inconvenience from the rain, except the noise it made in rattling on the tense canvas. This, however, we soon became accustomed to, and slept till eight o'clock, as sound as watchmen.

Long before we turned out, the Colonel and Priest were afoot, and we heard a prayer and supplication from the commander to old John, for a cup of strong coffee, while an idler

* The principal or finger-pipe of the set.

was despatched to the next well by the churchman, for a jug of cold spring water. Pattigo, who had rambled up the hills with a basket of fish and scallops, remarked, "that the gentlemen's *coppers*, he guessed, were rather hot this morning, and," as he eyed the empty bottles which were being removed, "to judge from the number of the *marines*, it was little wonder."

From Pattigo's *parlance*, I suspected that he had seen more of the world than usually falls to the lot of an ordinary skipper of a fishing-boat—nor was I wrong. I learned from his master, that for some good conduct, no doubt, he had been accommodated with board and lodging in a king's ship for upwards of two years, and that his sojourn there would have been much longer, had he not managed to abridge the visit, by slipping one dark night over the vessel's side, and swimming to the shore, a distance of two miles. On this Byronian feat, however, the honest navigator seldom plumes himself, and it is only when he is "a bit by the head," that this exploit is mentioned.

We found the household fully occupied in the cabin; John in regulating the chamber of state, which, notwithstanding open doors and windows, still retained the miasma of tobacco-smoke, and Hennessey in skinning and breaking up the deer. If I had been yesterday delighted with his superior execution with the rifle, I was now surprised at the masterly manner in which he dressed and dismembered the venison. He is certainly a clever fellow, and, could I but forget that he has finished a few of "the finest peasantry upon earth," the man would stand as high in my estimation, as he does in his foster brother's, "our loving cousin."

When breakfast was ended, at which, to do them justice, the Colonel and the Priest did their *devoir* most gallantly, and were occupied in debating what should be the order of the morning's amusement, and to fish, or not to fish, appeared the question, an incident such as in this wild and sylvan state of things every day produces, occurred. It was the arrival of a young lad, who brought an otter-skin of unusual size as a present to "the master," and a wounded hand, whereon Antony was required to exercise his leechcraft. He had been bitten by a wild cat, and I had the curiosity to examine the wound. The hand was already in a state of high inflammation; and the ferocity of the creature must indeed have been extra-

ordinary, to judge from the extent of the injuries it had inflicted. The flesh was sadly lacerated, and in two places the bone was completely exposed.

The sufferer, it appeared, was not unknown to Antony, and, from the free-masonry which passed between them, I discovered that he is of the same craft, and the person upon whom the otter-killer's mantle is likely to descend, when he, Antony, shall have gone the way of all flesh. The chief occupation of the wounded man is digging out foxes in the mountains, which he brings afterwards for sale to the interior, and disposes of at a good price to the masters of hounds. This morning he had gone to a cover in the hills, in his usual avocation, when, from some traces he observed beneath a rock, he concluded that an animal was earthed there. Having put a terrier in, his suspicions were confirmed, as the dog came out severely torn, and, assisted by a shepherd-boy, he laid rabbit-nets round the den, commenced digging' and, before he had proceeded far, a cat of immense size bolted. She was breaking through the rabbit-net, when the *chasseur*, with more gallantry than prudence, seized her by the neck. The fierce animal instantly attacked him in turn, and, fastening upon his hands with teeth and talons, held her desperate grasp until the boy, with the edge of the spade, broke her back. They brought the dead beast along with them; it was of a dirty gray colour, double the size of the common house-cat, and its teeth and claws more than proportionately larger.

These animals fortunately are scarce, and generally frequent the neighbourhood of rabbit-warrens, where they prove amazingly destructive. Hennessey, two winters since, discovered a den in a cleft of a rock upon the shore, and adjoining the sand-banks, which are numerously stocked with rabbits. It cost him immense trouble to penetrate to the *form*, where he killed a male and female wild-cat, the latter being large with young. Hennessey's patience and ingenuity were sorely taxed to effect their destruction, having been obliged to resort to gunpowder, and blow up a large portion of the rock, before he could dislodge his dangerous game. In size and colour, they were precisely similar to the animal killed in the mountain by the fox-catcher; and had they been permitted to continue their species, in a very short time the abjacent burrow would have been devastated.

Besides this large and ferocious species, the warrens upon the coast suffer much from the common cat becoming wild, and burrowing in the rabbit-holes. They are sometimes surprised and shot in the sand-banks, or taken in traps; but they are generally too wary to be approached—and hunting only by night, during the day they sleep in their dens, and are rarely met abroad.

Some estimate of their numbers may be formed, from the circumstance of five males having been killed in a herdsman's out-house which joined the warren. They had been attracted there by one of their own species, and the noise having alarmed the peasant, he guessed the cause, and cautiously managed to stop the hole, by which they gained entrance, with a *turf-cleave*. Knowing the value of the capture, he kept guard upon the prisoners till morning, and then despatched information to the Lodge. My cousin, with his followers, promptly repaired to the place, and, surrounding the barn with guns and greyhounds, bolted the wild cats successively, until the whole number were dispatched. This *chasse* was not only novel, but profitable. After the death of their persecutors, the rabbits increased prodigiously; but fears are entertained that these destructive animals are become once more abundant in the sand-banks.

When the dressings were removed, we found that the poor lad had been so much injured, that apprehension of lock-jaw induced us to send him directly to the infirmary. There is a belief, and one more reasonable than many popular opinions in Ballycroy, that a wild cat's bite is particularly venomous. My cousin remembers a case which terminated fatally with a servant of his father's; and the Priest mentioned another of a country girl, who, finding one of these animals in a barn, rashly attempted to secure it: the cat wounded her slightly in the leg, and for six months she was unable to use the limb.

When the unfortunate fox-catcher was leaving us, in return for a trifling donation, he pressed upon me the acceptance of a fine deer-skin which he produced from his wallet. "He had another for the master," he said, "and he would bring it to him, when he returned from the hospital."

"And pray, my friend, how did you get these skins?"

The question puzzled the wounded man. "I found them *dead*, after the great snow last year."

"After a lump of lead," quoth the otter-killer, "had made a fracture in the hide;" and he pointed to the orifice in the skin, where evidently a ball had perforated.

"Alas!" said the Priest, "the snow is always fatal to the red deer. They are obliged to leave the upper range and come down the villages:* and there are, unluckily, too many of the old French guns in the country still, and *then* they are unfortunately busy."

By the by, speaking of the snow, a very curious circumstance occurred, during its long continuance in 1822.

A fine hind, accompanied by a stout fawn, travelled across the lowlands in search of pasturage, which the deep snow had rendered unattainable in the mountains. Pressed by the severity of the weather, she at last established herself in a green field which was within sight of the windows of the Lodge. For four weeks, during which the storm continued, she remained there in safety; for the wild visiters were protected by the commands of "the Master": and from being undisturbed, continued in the place they had first selected.

Thinking that they would be a valuable addition to Lord Sligo's park, my kinsman determined to have them captured, and the following Sunday was appointed for the attempt. This day was selected, because the number of persons collected at the chapel would materially assist the execution of the plan.

The day came, and the whole population of the parish was employed. The place was surrounded by a multitude of people, who gradually reduced their circle, until the deer and fawn were completely enclosed, and a *cordon* of living beings was formed, two deep, around them. The hind had remarked the preparations, and more than once attempted an escape; but, embarrassed by the fawn, her efforts were abortive. She appeared determined to share its fate, and affection was paramount to timidity. At last, when totally surrounded, her courage and address were almost incredible. She eyed the circle attentively, made a sharp peculiar noise, as if to warn her offspring of its danger, then charging the ranks where they appeared weakest, bounded over the heads

* By *a village* a very few houses are denominated, and a stranger would be sadly disappointed if he formed his ideas of their extent on the English scale.

of her opposers, and escaped. The confusion occasioned by this extraordinary proceeding, favoured the deliverance of the fawn, who, profiting by the accident, galloped off unhurt, and, with the dam, succeeded in regaining their native wilds.

The whole of the *dramatis personæ*, with the exception of the otter-killer and myself, have gone off to fish some three or four lakes, situate in a hollow in the mountains, and which are said to be remarkable for the number and flavour of their trouts. I have been prevented by an accident from accompanying the party; and though my wound be "not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door," it still renders me *hors de combat*. I blistered, or rather neglected a blistered heel: and the fag of yesterday has so excoriated the surface, as to make it imperative upon me to lie by for a little. Antony engages to effect a perfect cure by to-morrow; and here I remain *tête-à-tête* with the otter-killer.

The old man proceeded skilfully enough; he lanced the

blisters, and then applied the cuticle which covers a sheep's kidney, and which is very similar in appearance and effect to what we call "gold-beaters' leaf." This application prevented the heel from being frayed by the stocking. To the remainder of the foot he rubbed a hot mixture of tallow and whisky; and his remedy was "the sovereignest thing on earth," for in twelve hours the cure was effected.

While he operated on my infirm foot, he amused me with one of his interminable stories. He says, by the "mother's side," that I and my cousin are descended from a lady called *Rose Roche.* When his leech-craft was ended he retired "to stretch upon the bed."—John was too deeply engaged in culinary affairs to favour me with his company, and having no resource besides, I have been obliged to amuse myself by transcribing the *legend of Rose Roche,* and become thus a chronicler of the otter-killer.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LEGEND OF ROSE ROCHE.

At sixteen Rose Roche was the loveliest maid in Ulster. In infancy she was found exposed at the gate of the Ursulines, and her beauty and destitution recommended her to the charity of the sisterhood. Educated, accordingly, for a conventual life, she had never passed the boundary of the garden-walls, and accident discovered the existence of beauty, which else had faded unseen and unadmired within those cloisters, to which from childhood it had been devoted.

Cormac More, lord of Iveagh, was the patron and protector of the community at Balleek. At primes and vespers a mass was celebrated for his soul's weal. His Easter-offering was ten beeves and five casks of Bordeaux wine; and on the last Christmas vigil he presented six silver candlesticks to the altar of *Our Lady.* No wonder that this powerful chief was held in high honour by the sisterhood of Saint Ursula.

One tempestuous night in October, wearied with hunting, and separated from his followers by darkness and the storm, Cormac More found himself beneath the walls of the convent of Balleek. Approaching the gate, he wound his horn

loudly, and begged for shelter and refreshment. Proud of this opportunity of affording hospitality to so noble and munificent a protector, the wicket was unbarred, the Lord of Iveagh admitted, and received in honourable state by the Lady Superior, and inducted with due form into the parlour of the Ursulines.

There a plentiful repast was speedily prepared, and the tired hunter was ceremoniously seated at the table. His morning's meal had been despatched before the sun had topped *Slieve Gallion*, and a long day's exercise had given him a keen relish for the evening banquet. The Lady Abbess feasted the patron of her house right nobly—he was attended on assiduously by the novices—dish after dish succeeded in luxurious variety, until the chief requested the tables to be drawn, and with knightly courtesy entreated permission to pledge the holy mother of the Ursulines in a deep draught of Rhenish wine.

Then, for the first time, the novice who presented the cup, attracted the good Knight's attention. The folds of her thick veil could not conceal the matchless symmetry of her form; and, as she filled the chalice from the flagon, the exquisite proportions of her hand and arm struck Cormac More with wonder. At this moment her drapery became entangled with the jewelled pommel of the Knight's rapier; a hasty attempt to disengage it was unsuccessful—the veil fell, and disclosed to the enraptured view of the Lord of Iveagh the loveliest features he had ever seen. Covered with blushes, which heightened her surpassing beauty, the novice caught her veil hastily up and retired from the parlour, while the Knight, despite the evident displeasure that the accident had caused the Lady Abbess, gazed after the retiring girl until she disappeared among the cloisters. In vain the proud Superior introduced costlier wines of rare and ancient vintages: in vain she enlarged upon the piety of her order, and enumerated the number of the Ursulines who had been canonized:—the Knight's whole thoughts were engrossed with one lovely object—his courtesy and converse were feeble and constrained, until, piqued by his neglect, the Abbess wished him a fair repose, and retired in full state from the apartment, preceded by a crucifix and taper, and followed by her attendant nuns.

Although the Knight lay upon the Bishop's bed, and

occupied that honoured chamber where none of a less degree than a mitred abbot had hitherto been permitted to repose; no slumber sealed his lids, nor was the beautiful novice for a moment absent from his thoughts. Cormac More had declined many a splendid alliance; the Lord of Offaly proffered him an only sister, with a princely dower; and O'Niall himself courted him for a son-in-law, and promised him the barony of Orier, and Blanche, his fairest daughter. But, till now, Cormac had never loved: the beauteous cup-bearer seemed to him a being of another world; the more he dwelt upon her image, the more his passion was excited; alliances with lords and princes were overlooked, disparity of rank and fortune was forgotten, and, ere the morning sun had lighted the storied window of the Bishop's chamber, the Knight's determination was formed, and matins were scarcely over when he demanded an audience of the Lady Abbess.

Never was there greater surprise than that, with which the holy mother heard Cormac More express his passion for the novice of the Ursulines. Joy sparkled in her eyes as the noble Lord of Iveagh confided the secret of his love, entreated her powerful intercession, and begged for her sanction to his nuptials. As Rose was still unprofessed, there existed no spiritual barrier to her marriage. Flattered by the high honour conferred upon her house by the proudest Baron of the Pale selecting a bride from the holy sisterhood, the Superior willingly acceded to his request; his offers were accepted, and, ere the vesper-bell had tolled, the preliminaries were completed, and the fair novice had consented to become the bride of Cormac More.

But, alas! the wild ardour of the good Knight, and the carnal motives of the Abbess, caused both to neglect consulting another personage, namely, the blessed Ursula herself, in thus disposing of one devoted to her service from the cradle; and the saint felt the oversight. That night the Abbess was tormented with fearful and portentous dreams; the Lord of Iveagh tossed restlessly upon the Bishop's bed; and, if the novice closed an eye, her slumbers were broken with strange and incoherent visions. In vain, next day, the Knight hunted from sunrise to curfew — his hounds were eternally at fault, and his followers appeared besotted or bewitched; the deer, when pressed to the utmost, vanished on the bare moor; and knight, squire, and yeoman

unanimously agreed, that the several parties interested in the chase, were under the immediate influence of the prince of darkness.

Nor did the holy Superior of the Ursulines fare better than the persecuted Knight and his afflicted companions. Everything about the convent went astray, and the culinary preparations for entertaining the Lord of Iveagh were awfully interrupted by accident and forgetfulness. The sister who presided over the pastry, and whose conserves, throughout a long and blameless life, had been pronounced unique and irreproachable, now actually omitted the necessary ingredients; the soup, when uncovered for a second, was invaded with such a discharge of soot, as reduced it, in colour, at least, to an equality with the broth of Sparta. The nun at the organ, instead of a "*jubilate*," struck up a "*nunc dimittis*;" the very bells were "jangled out of tune;" and the Lady Abbess was horrified by a succession of prodigies that, from her novitiate to her promotion, had never before visited the quiet residence of the sisterhood of Saint Ursula.

What were the nocturnal visitations inflicted upon the lovely novice, have not been exactly handed down. One thing alone is certain,—she visited the Lady Abbess with the first dawn, and in her maternal bosom the bride elect deposited the causes of her sorrow.

In this perplexity, the Knight and the Superior held secret counsel in the parlour of the convent, and long and difficult was the conference. The result was, that Cormac More vowed a golden chalice to the offended virgin; and the Abbess, not to be outdone in liberality, agreed to double *aves* and *credos* for a fortnight. But with Rose Roche herself the chief difficulty was found to lie. All measures proposed by the holy mother were inefficacious; and, in this desperate dilemma, it was deemed advisable to add to the number of counsellors, and the Prior of the Dominicans was summoned to the assistance of the conclave.

To that holy man the exigencies of the respective parties were intrusted. The Prior was sorely disturbed with doubts, but after a night's deliberation, during which he discussed a capon single-handed, and fortified his stomach with a second scoup of Rhenish wine, he decided, that the Lord of Iveagh should add a flagon to the chalice; the Abbess should double

her penitentiaries for a month; and Rose Roche undergo a private penance, which he, the Prior, should communicate to the lady alone.

Never had such an alarming predicament a happier termination! The Knight had scarcely laid himself upon the Bishop's bed, until a sweet and refreshing slumber, blessed with the happiest visions, sealed his eyes; the Lady Abbess slept like a watchman; and, since she had first gathered wild-flowers in the convent-garden, never did the fair novice enjoy more delightful dreams!

At last the bridal day arrived. The Lord of Iveagh was attended by a splendid following. The bells rang out a joyous peal, and the *élève* of the Ursulines left the home of her youth, escorted by three hundred horsemen, the consort of the proudest baron of the Pale. No lover could be more gallant than the noble husband of Rose Roche. Fête succeeded fête, and feasting continued in the castle of Cormac More from Michaelmas till Advent.

Months passed away, and honeymoons cannot be expected to last for ever. Cormac More by degrees resumed his hunting, and again involved himself in the endless feuds and warfare of these restless times; and Rose Roche was often deserted for the chase or the field. She still was passionately loved; but in the bosom of a martial baron, other and sterner feelings held a predominance. It is true, that the young bride bore these frequent absences with wonderful resignation; and page and tirewoman confessed in secret, that Dhu Castle was gayer and merrier when Cormac and his stern companions were away.

A year wore on. The Lord of Iveagh was pensive and thoughtful; a cloud would often gather on his brow, and his bearing to his beautiful wife became chilling aud repulsive. It transpired that two circumstances occasioned his anxiety. His lady wore a curious-fashioned coif, which concealed her tresses as effectually as if she never laid aside her night-cap; and the cherished hope of an heir to his ancient line now faded in the heart of Cormac More. Dhu Castle became duller and more gloomy—the fair Baroness was more and more deserted—the chase and banquet were preferred by the moody Knight to soft dalliance in his "lady's bower,"—and any pretext was gladly resorted to,

which offered an excuse for being absent from his joyless home.

Gentlewomen, in these perilous days, acquired and possessed an astonishing portion of philosophy. No baron's lady "in the Pale,"* submitted to a frequent separation from her lord with more laudable submission than Rose Roche. The customary resource of "wives bereaved," appeared any thing but consolatory to the dame. She determined to avoid crying, as being an unchristian waste of beauty—and, instead of useless lamentations, she wisely substituted mirth and minstrelsy.

There was not a more accomplished bard in Ulster than Connor O'Cahan, and for seventy years he had resided with the lords of Iveagh. No tale or tradition connected with this puissant race was unknown to this gifted minstrel: yet, by some strange infirmity of taste, young Rose preferred the light romances of her lord's English page, to all the legendary lore of the grey-haired harper; and listened with more delight to a merry roundelay from Edwin's lute than to the deeds of Cormac's grandfather, as set out in song by Connor O'Cahan. The bard, it is true, was blind, and the page had the blackest eyes imaginable.

This unhappy predilection was not concealed from her lord. His jealousy instantly took fire, and the handsome page was suddenly removed, and none knew whither. The absence of an heir had now become matter for serious complaint: it was whispered among the Baron's followers that there was no cause for hope, and maliciously insinuated, moreover, that the close coif adopted by the dame was worn to conceal some natural deformity. Cormac, a slave to suspicion, and instigated by his rude companions, insisted that the hood should be discarded, or that Rose Roche should retire in disgrace to the convent from whence she came.

On the alternative being proposed, the lady proved posi-

* The Pale was the line of demarcation drawn by the English settlers between their acquired possessions and the remoter districts, which were still permitted to remain with the ancient proprietors. As this boundary was the "debatable land" of Ireland, it was the scene of constant raid and skirmish: and the *locale* of many a wild tradition is placed beside this dangerous border.

tive, and the coif was peremptorily retained. Cormac, irritated by opposition to his commands, was obstinate in his determination, and Rose Roche left the castle of her lord a repudiated wife, and once more returned to the convent of the Ursulines.

From the hour of their separation, the Baron seldom smiled. To part from his wife was a trifle; but unluckily, he had embroiled himself with the church. The Abbess espoused the lady's quarrel fiercely, and *ave* and *credo* were no longer offered up for Cormac More! Notwithstanding past largess, beeves and wine-butts were forgotten; the candlesticks upon the altar no longer elicited a prayer; and his soul's health was no more attended to by the community than the lowest horse-boy's of his train.

Thus matters stood, when one dark evening, returning from the chase, Cormac and his followers were surprised by a band of Catterans, and a fierce and desperate skirmish ensued. The outlaws were defeated, but the Lord of Iveagh was shot clean through the body with a three-foot arrow: and how could he have better luck?

Then it was that the sinful Knight was tortured with remorse and unavailing sorrow. He cursed the evil counsellors who tempted him to insult Saint Ursula and her adopted daughter, and, determining to be reconciled to his wife and the church together, directed his followers to carry him to the abbey of Balleek. His orders were obeyed, and the Lady Abbess consented to admit the dying noble. He was laid before the altar, and his injured wife, forgetting past resentment, was the first to rush from her cell, and minister to his relief. In the fatal emergency, coif and veil were left dehind; her raven tresses fell below her shoulders, and reached to her very waist, and Cormac was convinced too late, that his ill-used consort had the finest hair in Christendom. Alas! those ebon locks had been the admiration of the whole sisterhood; and, for penitential purposes, the Dominican had enjoined their concealment for three years, when he gave spiritual counsel, in their hour of tribulation, to the abbess, the baron, and Rose Roche.

To make atonement for his former unkindness, he willed his rich domains to his beautiful widow. The Prior of the Dominicans indicted the deed, which disposed of his possessions; and the church, of course, was not forgotten. Sur-

rounded by all the emblems of religion, and with a splinter of the true cross in his right hand, the penitent Baron breathed his last. He lay for three days and nights in the chancel, in great state; and was interred on the fourth morning, with all the ceremonies that both Ursulines and Dominicans could bestow.

The days of mourning passed over: Rose Roche exercised her resignation; and Dhu Castle became a different place to what it had been during the latter days of the defunct Baron, and mirth and music were exchanged for the rude revelry of Cormac More. Her hall was filled with guests; at the board she did the honours nobly; and when she visited the green wood, with her gold-belled hawks and gallant retinue, she looked as if she had been ennobled from the Conquest, and in bearing and attire seemed "every inch a queen."

But amid all this splendour and magnificence, poor Rose had her own secret causes of inquietude. Beauty, accompanied by broad lands, could not but induce suitors without number to come forward, and never was woman, not excepting Penelope herself, more vigorously besieged. From past experience, Rose was not ambitious to exchange wealth and liberty for becoming the wife of some doughty baron, who would probably undervalue her charms, just as much as he would over-estimate his own great condescension in giving her his name. A tender recollection of one, long since lost, would cross her mind occasionally; and in her solitary hours the black-eyed page haunted her imagination. Accordingly she eschewed all offers for her hand with excellent discretion. Few were offended, she managed her rejections so prudently: and through the first year of widowhood neither lands nor liberty were lost.

The consort of the wise Ulysses herself could not have held out for ever. Rose was severely pressed; for, finding themselves foiled by her ready wit and good discretion, when they attacked her singly, her lovers, from necessity, agreed to coalesce, and determined that one should be accepted, and the remainder be pledged to support the acquired rights of the fortunate candidate, as report said King Henry had resolved to gift a favourite noble with the person and estates of the beautiful widow.

This agreement of her suitors was politely but decisively

intimated to Rose Roche, and the Prior declared, "by the vestment," that to evade matrimony longer was impossible. "She had," the holy man said, "an ample list to choose from: there were eleven suitors in the neighbourhood, besides the *Big Man of the West*," for so the Thane of Connaught was entitled.

In this extremity, the lady resolved to exercise, at least, the privilege of free choice. The Prior was directed to ingross a bond, by which the respective candidates for her hand bound themselves to grant an uncontrolled right of selection to the widow, and covenanted, moreover, neither to molest, nor permit her to be molested, when her choice was made. The deed was duly executed—the day for her decision was named—and a reasonable time allowed for "the Big Man of the West" to attend and try his fortune.

O'Connor was surprised when the determination of the fair widow was communicated. He had only time for a hurried preparation, as his rivals, from their vicinity to the lady, had never taken the remoter situation of "the Big Man" into their consideration, when they named the day. O'Connor, however, was no sluggard; he collected his "following" with all haste, and every department was complete, when, alas! the chief harper fell sick without a cause, and no other was procurable for a distance of sixty miles. In this dilemma a Saxon youth, who two years since had been shipwrecked beneath the castle walls, was recollected. He could not, it is true, "strike the bold harp," but he had a sweet and mellow voice, and his skill upon the lute was admirable. In wordcraft he was a thorough proficient, and with lance and brand had more than once proved himself a man. O'Connor had no alternative, and the stranger was selected to fill a place that "Cathwold O'Connor of the harp" should have more worthily occupied.

Although the Thane of Connaught and his gallant company pushed forward with all the speed that man and horse could make, from bad roads and flooded rivers, they were unable to reach the heights above Dhu Castle until the sun of the eventful day had set. In vain knight and squire pressed on their jaded steeds—evening fell; all the candidates besides had been in the hall for hours, and, as "the Big Man" had not appeared, according to modern parlance he was voted present by the company, and the banquet was served.

Never with such heavy heart did Rose Roche assume the place of honour. Though her hall was lighted splendidly, and her table crowded with the proudest nobles within "the Pale"—though rich wine flowed, and the most skilful harpers in the province poured forth their lays of love and war—yet one heart was heedless of gaiety and grandeur; and that one was hers on whom every eye was bent, in deep expectancy awaiting her decision.

The curfew rang—and in another hour the happy Lord of Dhu Castle would be proclaimed. As the moments flew, the beautiful widow became paler and more dejected; and breasts which had never quailed amid the roar of battle, now throbbed as nervously as a maiden's, when she listens to the first tale of love. The harps were mute, the revel became less loud, for all were deeply interested in that event which a brief space must determine. At this embarrassing moment, a loud blast was heard at the grand gate, and the seneschal rushed in, to announce the arrival of the Thane of Connaught, attended by a noble following of, at least, one hundred horse.

The sudden and opportune appearance of him of the West, seemed to affect the company variously. His rivals heard the news with mingled feelings of jealousy and alarm, which was in no way abated when the number of his attendants was announced, which exceeded that of their united followings. Rose Roche felt a secret pleasure at his coming; not that her sentiments towards O'Connor were more favourable than to her suitors generally, but his late arrival must necessarily occasion some delay, and postpone, though but for brief space, that dreaded moment when she should surrender a hand, without a heart, to her future lord.

While O'Connor, as the greatest stranger, was placed beside the lady of Dhu Castle, his bard stood behind his master, and his train bestowed themselves where they could best find room. As Rose Roche looked carelessly around to see that the band were fitly accommodated, her eyes met those of the young minstrel:—the blood rushed to her brow; for, excepting those of her own loved page, she never looked upon a pair so black and sparkling as the stranger's.

When the Thane of Connaught had feasted to his heart's content, the Prior of the Dominicans produced the parchment,

to which his rivals had affixed their signatures already. The "Big Man" listened attentively as the monk read it. "'Tis all fair," he said, as he placed his sign manual to the deed, "that lady should choose her lord; and thus I bind myself, faithfully to abide the intents of this parchment." Then turning to Rose Roche, he thus proceeded: "It grieves me, that through accident I have unwittingly occasioned some delay; therefore, in pity to my gallant competitors, I beg you, lady, to terminate their suspense, and declare to this noble company the happy object of your choice.—Nay, blanch not so, fair dame," for the lady became pallid as the white marble of a warrior's tomb: "exercise your own pleasure leisurely; and while I pledge thy matchless beauty in a cup of muscadine, Aylmer, my bard, shall sing a Saxon roundelay." As he spoke, O'Connor signed to the minstrel, who, rising at his lord's bidding, struck with a rapid hand the prelude of a light romance, which, with a tremulous, but powerful voice, he thus gave words to:—

"Lady, farewell!—the fatal hour
Has sped, for thus thy tyrant wills,
When he, who loves thee, leaves this tower,
Deserts gay hall and wood and bower
Of her, for whom his heart's pulse thrills;
And thou art she—Ladye—sweet Ladye."

When the minstrel touched the prelude, Rose Roche became visibly affected; but when the words fell from his lips, a burning blush dyed her cheeks and brow, and her heart throbbed almost to bursting. Alas, it was the very roundelay the poor page had sung beneath her casement on that melancholy night when her defunct lord had expelled him from the castle! She turned hastily round to see who the strange youth might be who thus recalled her absent love in look and voice so forcibly. Blessed Ursula! it was he, the long lost page! The minstrel, as he caught her eyes, suddenly ceased his melody — the lute fell from his nerveless grasp, and, overcome by feelings that could not be controlled, he sank upon the bench behind him. It was, indeed, young Aylmer. The well-remembered features could never be forgotten although the boy had ripened into manhood—the thick down upon the lip had changed to a

dark moustache—and the belt which once held a hunting-blade, supported now a goodly brand.

The strange effect of the melody upon the lady, and the minstrel's sudden indisposition, could not escape remark; a startling suspicion flashed across the minds of the company, and, after a painful silence of some minutes, Hubert de Moore rose from his seat, and bowing to the very table, thus addressed the lady of the castle:

"Wilt thou forgive the humblest but most devoted of thy suitors, if he presume to remind you that the hour has long since passed when your election should have been made? Far be it from me, noble dame, to seem importunate; but suspense is irksome to those that love, and I and my brother nobles pray to you to signify your pleasure, and end uncertainty at once."

While De Moore was speaking, Rose Roche appeared to recover her self-possession wonderfully; her eye brightened, her colour came again, and the compression of her lips proved that she was nerving herself for some determined effort. She rose slowly and gracefully, while a dead silence pervaded the hall; faint and tremulous as the first words were, they were distinctly heard by those remotest from the dais.*

"Noble lords," she said, "I own and thank your courtesy: I ask this holy churchman if I am to exercise free choice in this affair, unshackled with bar, or condition, save my own leasure: and if he whom I shall place here," and she pointed to the vacant seat beside her own, which had been reserved for the successful wooer, "shall be supported in all the rights and properties which he shall obtain through me?"

"All this," said the Prior, "is fairly stipulated in the intents of this scroll."

"Then will I not trespass on your patience, noble lords —*there* stands the object of my choice; and thus do I install him in this seat, as lord and master of Dhu Castle!"

She turned to the astonished minstrel as she spoke, and ere her words were ended, the youth was seated at her side.

A scene of wonder and wild confusion followed—most of the barons protested loudly aganst her choice; angry looks

* The place of honour in a Baronial Hall.

and threatening gestures were directed at the minstrel, and more than one sword was half unsheated. O'Connor seemed thunderstruck—and the lady herself was the most collected of the company.

"How is this, Sir Knights!" she cried. "Is lordly word and written pledge so lightly held among you, that thus ye violate their sanctity? Thane of Connaught," she continued, as she addresssed herself to the "Big Man,"—"thy faith was never questioned, and thy word is held to be sacred as a martyr's vow. When the English King, under pain of confiscation, ordered thee to deliver the stranger up, whom thou hadst resetted—although five hundred marks were upon his head, what was thy answer? 'The lands may go, but plighted faith must stand!' The ink with which you bound yourself to the conditions of yonder bond, is not yet dry upon the parchment, and wilt thou break thy word?"

"It is a trick," cried De Moore.

"The selection rests with ourselves alone," exclaimed Mandeville.

"We will never brook that page or minstrel should hold the lands and castles of Cormac More," said both together: and they laid their hands upon their swords; the attendants followed the example of their lords, and a scene of violence and discord was about immediately to ensue.

O'Connor slowly rose—he waved his hand to command silence, and his wishes were promptly obeyed.

"This is, indeed, an unexpected choice," he said: "Sir Prior, read thy parchment aloud, that all may hear, and read it carefully, line after line, and syllable by syllable: see that a letter be not omitted." The monk obeyed. "The document is a plain one," said "The Big Man," "and by it the lady has good right to choose whom she listeth for her consort.—Lady of Iveagh" he continued, as he turned to the blushing widow, "is this youth the husband of thy choice?"—"He and none besides, so help me saints and angels!" was the solemn answer. "Then, by my father's ashes, and a knight's word that never yet was questioned, thou, Aylmer Mowbray, shalt this night possess thy bride! And why, my lords, chafe you so at this?" for the storm was again about to burst forth: "Is it because the monk was but a sorry lawyer, and the lady

took advantage of a loose parchment, which should have bound her better? Is it that the Lord of Dhu Castle was once a page? What was thy ancestor, De Moore, (I mean not to offend thee,) but usher to the Lord Justice? and thine, Mandeville, but chamber-groom to Strongbow? Aylmer, I love thee too well to envy thee thy good fortune:—thy lute has won the lady—thy lance must keep her lands. Kneel down, minstrel no longer—rise up, my own knight banneret! And now, Lords of the Pale, Henry himself could not confer a nobler dignity; for O'Connor's knight is standard-bearer to the King of Connaught! Does any here gainsay his rank and dignity? The sword that conferred the honour is ready and able to maintain it!" And O'Connor, as he ended, flung belt and rapier on the table.

But none seemed disposed to quarrel with him: and gradually they followed his example, and admitted the lady's right of choice. The mirth and feasting were resumed; and each, after reasoning with himself, finding that the chances of individual success were greatly against him, became reconciled to lose the lady and her lands. Before midnight struck, the Prior performed the marriage ceremony; and while O'Connor bestowed the beauteous bride, De Moore himself attended upon the fortunate minstrel.

Nor did Sir Aylmer Mowbray disappoint his patron's expectation. As his lute was sweetest in the bower, his plume was foremost in the field. He held the possessions he gained by his lady against every claimant; sons and daughters blessed his bed, and transmitted his titles and estates to posterity: and thus, more than one powerful house traces its lineage back to an "*élève*" of the Ursulines and the *black-eyed Page*.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Mountain loughs—Trout—Their varieties—Otter haunt—The upper lake—Goose-fishing—Weather breaks—Prospects of leaving the cabin—Traits of character—Crimes—Abduction—Causes—Murder—Why prevalent—Distillation; its extent and cause—A peasant's ruin.

The fishing party had been successful, and returned late in the evening with two baskets of trout, which, although of

small size, were remarkable for beautiful shape and excellent flavour.

It is a curious fact, that the loughs where the party angled, though situate in the same valley, and divided only by a strip of moorland not above fifty yards across, united by the same rivulet, and in depth and soil at bottom,* to all appearance, precisely similar, should produce fish as different from each other as it is possible for those of the same species to be. In the centre lake, the trout are dull, ill-shapen, and dark-coloured; the head large, the body lank, and, though of double size, compared to their neighbours, are killed with much less opposition. In the adjacent loughs, their hue is golden and pellucid, tinted with spots of a brilliant vermilion. The scales are bright, the head small, the shoulder thick, and from their compact shape, they prove themselves, when hooked, both active and vigorous. At table they are red and firm, and their flavour is particularly fine—while the dark trout are white and flaccid, and have the same insipidity of flavour which distinguishes a spent from a healthy salmon. The red trout seldom exceed a herring-size, and in looking through the contents of the baskets, which amounted to at least twelve dozen, I could only find two fish which weighed above a pound.

The dark trout, however, from their superior size, are more sought after by the mountain fishermen. They rarely are taken of a smaller weight than a pound, and sometimes have been killed, and particularly with a worm, or on a night-line, of a size little inferior to that of a moderate salmon.

The fishing party determined that Antony's account of the otters being very numerous about those lakes, was perfectly correct. Their paths between the waters were much beaten, and the *spraints** of the animal fresh and frequent.

* I never observed the effect of bottom soil upon the quality of fish so strongly marked as in the trout taken in a small lake in the county of Monaghan. The water is a long irregular sheet, of no great depth—one shore bounded by a bog, the other by a dry and gravelly surface. On the bog side, the trout are of the dark and shapeless species peculiar to moory loughs—while the other affords the beautiful and sprightly variety, generally inhabiting rapid and sandy streams. Narrow as the lake is, the fish appear to confine themselves to their respective limits; the *red* trout being never found upon the bog moiety of the lake, nor the *black* where the under surface is hard gravel.

† Traces.

There is a lake still farther up the mountains, and some hundred feet above the level of these loughs, which produces trout not more remarkable for size than for their peculiarity in never rising at a fly, or taking a bait; and yet they are frequently observed by the herdsmen who frequent the valley where the lake is situated, rising over the water, or, to use their own phrase, "tumbling about like dogs." From the known attachment of the lower classes of this country to indulge in "the wild and wonderful," their size or existence might be doubtful, were it not that they run like eels in the latter part of a harvest, and at that season are taken, after a flood, in the pools of the little river, which communicates directly with the lake. These trout have been found to weigh upwards of *twelve* pounds, and are said to be in shape and colour like large gillaroos, and of superior flavour when brought to table.

The otter-killer declares that he fished this lake repeatedly, and while he exhausted all his piscatory skill, he never could induce a trout to rise. He recollects, however, hearing "when a boy," that there was formerly an old man, who resided contiguous to the lake, who caught trout most plentifully near the centre of the water, by floating lines across it, their ends being attached to the legs of geese; but he admits his belief that this was but a popular conceit, and wisely comes to a conclusion, "that there is a sea-horse, or some such devil in the lough, which prevents the fish from taking fly or worm."*

Three days have passed, and the weather has been wet and boisterous. The moors have become soft, and are now very distressing to traverse. The grouse have deserted their customary haunts, are found with difficulty, and, from their wildness, will hardly stand the dogs. Winter is fast approaching, and the time is close at hand when the cabin must be abandoned for the more substantial comforts of the Lodge.

And I shall leave this hut and these hills with sincere regret. Palled with the pleasures of the world, I found here that rude, but real happiness, which for years before I had sought in vain. *Here* I associated with a new order of beings.

* In the neighbourhood of Minola, there is a lake called Carramore, where the trout are said to be equally large, and in refusing baits and flies equally refractory. I have never fished the water, or seen the trout; but they are taken during harvest floods, in a mill-race, which runs directly from the lough; their size is from four to ten pounds.

I compared them with the artificial society I had consorted with, and found among them some traces of natural virtues, which ultra civilization has banished from the rest of mankind. There may be here, no doubt, much ignorance and superstition to be regretted, and false opinions and falser modes of action to be corrected—but even for their vices I can find an apology, and their worst crimes will appear, upon examination, to be either consequent upon moral neglect, or arising from rude and barbarous notions of what appears to them nothing but retributive justice.

The grave offences with which these wild people are principally charged, appear to be abduction and murder; and both are of frequent recurrence. The first, indeed, is so prevalent, that any lady bent upon celibacy had better avoid Ballycroy, and particularly so if she has obtained the reputation of being opulent. This crime, however, is seldom of a dark character, and is generally traceable to local causes, and the very unceremonious mode in which parents conclude matches between their children without consulting the inclinations of the parties most concerned in the affair. Probably the whole matter is arranged between the fathers during an accidental meeting at a fair, or likelier yet, over an *egg-shell** drinking-bout in a poteen-house. The due proportions of cattle and *dry-money*† which are to be given and received are regularly specified; and the youthful couple who are to be united by the silken bond of Hymen are first acquainted with their purposed happiness after the priest has been sent for to solemnize the nuptials. No wonder, therefore, if the lady have another *liaison*, that she intimates her feelings to the fortunate man. He finds no difficulty in enlisting a sufficient number of his faction to "hoist away" the intended bride, and carry her to some distant hill or island. Then a wonderful series of bargain-making commences: upon the lady's side it being insisted that the abductor shall forthwith make her "an honest woman:" while the gallant usually demurs to the "*amende honorable*," until the "consideration" for doing the same is propounded and guaranteed. Now it is that the *priest* engages deeply in the negociation. He assumes the first

* It may be easily imagined that *glass* is a scarce article in Ballycroy. Accordingly, in the still and drinking houses, an egg-shell is used as a substitute.

† "Dry money" is synonymous with "hard cash."

place in the *corps diplomatique*, and becomes prime minister. In the conduct of the affair, no doubt himself is interested; he is anxious to effect hymeneals, for hence arises his principal revenue, and matrimony is the best feather in his wing—and, independent of the nuptial fee, contingent christenings and increased *house-money** are in prospective. But the lover has it all his own way. A week's residence in the mountains has perilled the lady's reputation beyond recovery; as she has gotten *a blast*, her matrimonial market is spoiled, and nothing remains but an amicable arrangement. Terms are accordingly made—the parties become one flesh—the priest is considered for his great and valuable services by "both the houses," and "one raal *rookawn* of a runaway match," is better to *his reverence* than thrice the number of weddings perpetrated by general consent.

This milder class of abduction is unfortunately not the only one; girls having property, or who are likely to possess it, are oftentimes forcibly carried off. Secreted in the mountains, they are not easily recoverable by their friends, and left at the mercy of the ruffian and his confederates, they are at last obliged to become the legal property of the despoiler. As the abductor is generally some idle dissipated blackguard, the fate of the ill-starred being who is united to him under such circumstances for life, is truly lamentable.

The second and worst description of crime, of which this remote district unhappily affords too many instances, is murder. Many circumstances tend to encourage it. The system of clanship, and the imperfect administration of the laws, are chief causes. A strange infatuation prevents these people from surrendering a culprit; and to conceal or abet the escape of a criminal from punishment, is felt to be a sort of moral obligation not to be got over. Hence, the feudal system prevails in Ballycroy of repaying injury by injury! rather than submit the offender to the ordinary course of justice; violences committed by one faction are fearfully returned by the other; and in a country where ardent spirits are easily procured, and where ancient customs, and the end-

* The revenues of the Roman Catholic clergy are derived from certain fees payable for marriages and christenings, with an annual tax of two shillings upon every house in the parish. These, with Christmas and Easter offerings, presents, and legacies. amount, in populous parishes, to a very considerable sum.

less number of holy days enjoined by the Church of Rome bring the parties into frequent collision, it is not wonderful that disastrous consequences ensue. Maddened by whisky, the national pugnacity bursts forth, old injuries are remembered, the worst passions are called into action, and loss of life is too commonly the result.

That any competent moral remedy can be employed to check these barbarisms, is hopeless, while the present destructive system of private distillation is encouraged by the landlord and abetted by the revenue. The landlord is the chief delinquent—for owing to abominable *jobbing*, the monies taken from the public purse, and intended to open a communication between this wild country and the more inhabited districts, have been scandalously malversated, and lavished upon useless works, merely to reward favouritism, or benefit agents and dependents. No serviceable attempts have been made to facilitate the transport of grain from the mountains to those towns from whence it could be sent abroad; and hence, the only markets which could be legitimately and beneficially resorted to by the peasantry, are, from want of means of egress from the highlands, *embargoed* to these hapless people. Left to their own resources, what can this wretched population do? At the mercy of hireling drivers and cold-hearted agents, they are required on a given day to produce the rent—honestly if they can—but to produce it. To convey their miserable grain crop to a distant market, would greatly abate the amount of the sale, by the expence and difficulty attendant upon the carriage. An easier mode of disposing of it is presented. The still is substituted for the market; and hence, three parts of the corn grown in these bogs and hills are converted into whisky.

At first sight, the advantages of private distillation appear immense. The grain will realize nearly three times the price that it would have produced if sold for exportation; but when the demoralization, and waste, and ulterior risk are considered, the imaginary profits are far overbalanced by the certain or contingent losses which attend it.

From the moment that the grain is first *wetted* to the time the spirit has been *doubled*, the ordinary habits of the peasant are interrupted. Night and day, he must be on the alert—and if there were no greater penalty beyond the unbidden visits of every idle blackguard who drops in to taste

the "barley bree," it would be a sufficient punishment for the offence. But this is the smallest tax upon the produce of the still; when the process is complete, much of the produce is expended in drunken hospitality. If, after all these drawbacks, the residue be disposed of in the town, or sold to some itinerant whisky-dealer, the adventure is prosperous; but the chances of detection, seizure, fine, and imprisonment, are so multitudinous, as to render the vending of this pernicious article a ruinous trade. To succeed encourages him to continue in this hazardous manufacture; and then upon him who night and day parches in a still-house, certain drunkenness is entailed, with sooner or later a loss of property, from the casualties incident to the adventure; and hence, more people have been beggared by this demoralizing traffic, than all the misfortunes which bad seasons, bad crops, and worse still, bad landlords could accomplish.

Difficult as the task is found of conveying grain from the highlands, the denizens of the coast possess little advantage from their own locality. Want of harbours renders the voyage hazardous, and the arrival of the grain at market an uncertainty; and many a peasant, from rough seas and contrary winds, has been ruined. One instance of this was mentioned, and it so forcibly exemplifies the misfortune, that I shall transcribe it.

A person of comfortable means, having suffered severe loss from private distillation, determined that he would never "*wet a grain* during his natural life." He shipped his corn accordingly in a *hooker* for Westport, it being the nearest place where a purchaser could be found. Bad weather and contrary winds came on, and during eight days, for so much time was occupied in the passage, the grain was exposed to rain and spray eternally, and when it reached its destination, was found to be so much damaged, as to be rendered unfit for sale. The unlucky owner was eventually obliged to bring it back, and in self-defence to *malt and distil it*. The process was completed, and the spirits safely brought to the town of Castlebar. There it was seized by the Revenue, the proprietor imprisoned for four months, and his cattle and furniture at home *canted* to pay that rent, which the corn, had it been marketable, would have more than realized. By this accumulation of misfortune, the unhappy man was reduced to the greatest misery, and from having been once an opulent land-

holder, he is at this moment a *cottier* upon what was formerly his farm, with nothing to support a wife and seven children, but a limited potato-garden, and occasionally *sixpence a day*, when he is lucky enough to obtain employment at that price.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Day fixed for our departure—Party separate—Last day's shooting—The secret valley—The fishers—Curious incident—Di ner—An alarm—Night-search for the otter-killer—The old man found—His recovery—Narrative of the accident.

THE day for our departure is fixed, and the order for breaking up our bivouac has issued; we leave the cabin to-morrow, and some of us, in course of mortal changes and chances are never fated to visit it again, and "breast the keen air" of these extensive mountains. We have all devoted this, our last day, to separate pursuits. I with my kinsman take to the hills, while the Colonel and the Priest descend the river, thus embracing sports by "fell and flood." Old Antony, encouraged by the report of the fishing-party, has hobbled off at day-break with his trap and terrier, determined, as he expressed it, "to try his fortune once more before he died." A shepherd-boy accompanied him, and when the distance and difficulty of the ground is considered, the old man's courage is surprising, and nothing but that master-passion, which through a long life has been remarkable, could nerve the otter-killer to the enterprise.

Our last day's sport, during its forenoon, was most unpromising. The birds were scarce, unsettled, and "wild as hawks." From the extreme steadiness of the dogs, we sometimes succeeded in surprising them; but generally, the cock took alarm, and gave the signal for escape, and the brood got off with a random shot or two. At last, when almost weary of following birds who appeared determined not to stand a point, accident did for us what neither art nor local experience could achieve.

On a narrow strip of heather, which fringed the banks of a little rivulet, one of our youngest and wildest setters stopped in his career as if he had been shot. The suddenness of his

check, and the steady point he stood at, intimated that the birds were immediately beside him; and while my cousin, who happened to be at a little distance, hurried up, Hennessey observed a splendid pack of fifteen birds stealing off across the bare bog. It was a brood of very unusual number to meet with at this advanced season, when the strongest packs have generally been reduced by gun or vermin. The moor that adjoined the banks on which the grouse were found, was a barren soft surface, without either heath or broken ground to cover our approach; and when we attempted to close up, the cock took wing, and the pack rose instantly and crossed the flats, continuing their flight over a small hill, until we lost them altogether.

We were very doubtful whether we should follow them, as the hill was particularly steep and barren, and the ground beyond it, to judge from appearances, as bare as the exposed moorlands the birds had quitted. At this moment of indecision, Hennessey recollected that there was a little valley beneath the brow where the grouse had left our view; but my kinsman, often as he had been on these hills, had never before been aware of its situation. Hennessey's information determined us to proceed; we accordingly clambered up the ascent, and when we reached the brow of the height, discovered immediately below one of the sweetest glens I ever looked at, stretching between the basis of the hill we occupied and the higher ridge beyond it. It was an admirable retreat for grouse—several rivulets trickled through the hollow, and everywhere it was covered with thick tall heath, in rich blossom, and the cranberries, of which these birds are particularly fond, were growing all around in great abundance. Delighted with our new discovery, we determined to investigate this land of promise closely, and our expectations, though excited by the appearance of this beautiful glen, were amply realized. We found the pack that escaped us in the low grounds, and they paid dearly for the long walk they had given us in the pursuit. The valley produced two other broods; and soon after some hours of capital shooting, we found our game-bags, when we left the glen, increased by twenty-three of the finest birds I ever saw. We might have thinned the packs still more, but my kinsman was anxious to leave this secret valley with a sufficient stock, to render it a sure resource when grouse could not be otherwise obtained. This was indeed a

good wind-up to our highland-shooting: and as we sprang several scattered birds during our return, we decided that this was our best day throughout the season, and worthy of the brightest page of the game-book, in which all our failures and successes were duly and faithfully chronicled since we took to the hills.

A curious incident, supplied us with an excellent *white* fish. The servant who brought the post-bag, when in the act of crossing the river, which, in his route from the Lodge, he was obliged to do repeatedly, most unexpectedly encountered a large otter carrying off a salmon he had just seized. The postman attacked the poacher vigorously, who, dropping his prey, glided off into the deep water at the tail of the ford. The spoil proved to be a fresh salmon not twenty hours from the sea, and consequently in prime condition. The otter showed himself the best artist of the day; for while the Colonel and his companion returned with empty baskets, the little animal managed to secure the finest and freshest salmon in the river.

To give *éclat* to our parting feast, a red-deer haunch had been reserved, and in its roasting, John, as poor Napoleon would say, "covered himself with glory." Dinner passed as such a dinner should pass. The Colonel and the Priest appeared bent upon conviviality. We too prepared for a jovial carouse; and it was generally determined that our parting banquet should be the "merriest, *as* the last."

Evening passed quickly—there was no moon visible till after midnight, and the wind, which had hitherto been unheard, began to make that mournful noise around the cabin, which generally indicates an approaching change of weather. The otter-killer's absence was now, for the first time, remarked, and I observed that my kinsman rose frequently from the table, to look long and anxiously from the window. Another hour passed, and our alarm was fearfully increased, for, aware of the feebleness of the old man, we apprehended that he would be unable to make good his journey; and, if benighted in the moors, the probability was great that he would perish of cold before the morning.

While we remained in painful suspense, each feeling an unwillingness to interrupt the comfort of the evening by expressing fears that haply might only be imaginary, a squall rushed up the river, and showed us that the wind had

chopped round to the westward several points since twilight, At that moment a commotion was heard outside—the pipes ceased—loud and earnest whisperings succeeded—the door opened, and John, with a pale face and hurried voice, told us that the otter-killer was missing, and the boy who had accompanied him in the morning to the lakes, had now returned without being able to give any tidings of old Antony, from whom it appeared that he had separated several hours before.

"Get lights instantly," exclaimed my cousin. "Away all of you! disperse right and left across the bogs. Come, Frank, on with the brogues. I fear our poor otter-killer is but 'a lost priest.' No, Colonel, your services would be useless—" for the commander, forgetting gout and rheumatism, and alive only to the danger of his ancient associate, had prepared to accompany the party.

In a few minutes every effective member of our body-politic was in motion. The scene was uncommon and picturesque. It being pitch-dark as the respective parties dispersed across the moor upon their different routes to the mountain lakes, the stream of torch-light falling upon the figures, as they were revealed and hidden by the inequalities of the ground they traversed, was really imposing. Their wild shouts died gradually as the distance increased; and presently nothing was heard by our party but the rushing of the stream and the moaning of the blast.

Obedient to Hennessey's advice, we followed the river-path, as the likeliest one which the otter-killer would select in his unfortunate attempt to return to the cabin. On either side of the moorland the peasants were extended, and occasionally we caught a glimpse of their fading lights, as they glanced and disappeared among the hillocks. Our own path was so rough and difficult, that the torch could not secure us from many and severe falls; and from the extreme darkness of the night, it was too evident that Antony could never make good his way. We almost despaired of being enabled to render assistance to the unfortunate object of our search.

Suddenly, Hennessey, who led the party, halted. "By heaven!" he exclaimed, "I heard either a fox's *whimper*, or the cry of a dog."

He put his finger to his lips and whistled shrilly, and instantly a long-sustained howl answered to the signal.

"It is *Venney's* cry," said our leader. "God grant that her master be still alive!"

We pushed forward rapidly for several hundred yards in the direction the noise was heard from; and the whining of a dog, broken now and then by a long and piercing howl, continued to guide us. We reached the place, and on turning a rock which elbowed into the river abruptly, found the old man extended on the ground, cold and motionless. The trap was bound across his back, and a large otter lay at some yards distance from the place where he had fallen.

We raised him up, while the faithful terrier frisked about us, and testified sincere delight at the promised recovery of her master. The old man's eyes feebly opened when the torch-light flashed upon his face. This symptom of existing life encouraged us, and, as his extremities were cold and powerless, his master and I rubbed them briskly between our hands, while Hennessey poured some brandy down his throat.

"We want instant help," said my cousin; "jump upon the bank, and see if anybody is near us."

His foster-brother rushed up the brow, and whistled loudly, but the signal was unheard or unheeded. Again he exerted himself, but ineffectually, to make the flanking parties hear him: there was no reply.

"This may be heard," he muttered, and, drawing a pistol from his breast, the loud report was answered by a distant halloo. Next moment lights appeared, and our shouts and whistles directed the torch-bearers to the place.

We disencumbered the dying man of the iron trap, and our attempts to restore suspended animation appeared to be partially successful. But the Priest, who led the party coming to our relief, gave us still better hopes, by ascertaining that the old man's pulse was beating.

From the assistance we received, the unfortunate otter-killer was transported quickly to the cabin. A bed was already heated, and John had abundance of warm water to bathe his chilled limbs. Our unabated efforts were crowned with ultimate success; for before midnight, he had recovered his speech, and was enabled, though with some difficulty, to give us the particulars of his unlucky excursion.

He reached, it appeared, the loughs soon after daylight, and discovered the numerous footmarks which the fishing-party had already observed. One trace he particularly fol-

lowed, and, from the *spraint*, concluded the animal would cross the path again before evening; and after setting his trap, Antony retired to a distance, whence, himself unseen, he could watch the event.

At twilight, as the old man had conjectured, the otter, on his return, crossed the path, and was secured, and the hunter and his terrier made good the capture. Proud of his success, which to the old man seemed a proof that his energies were not yet gone, he foolishly endeavoured to carry this trophy of his skill along with him, instead of leaving it with his trap, for some *gossoon* to bring in the morning to the cabin. He turned his steps homeward; but the trap and the otter, with the soft and harassing ground he had to traverse, speedily exhausted his feeble strength; the light faded away, the wind rose, and before he crossed the swamp, and gained the firm but rugged path beside the river, the darkness rendered it almost impossible for even a young person to have proceeded safely. After feeble and slow efforts to get forward, he stumbled over a stone, his energies were totally exhausted by fatigue, and he was unable to rise again.

His faithful dog couched herself beside her fallen master, and the last sounds that the despairing otter-killer heard, were the long and mournful howls with which Venom mourned over his calamity.

Guided by the torch-light, we carried the rescued sufferer to a place of refuge. Everything that kindness could suggest was done to effect his restoration; and the old man owned it as a consolation, that he was saved from perishing in the desert; and that, in death, he should have those around his bed, who, in life, had possessed his love, fidelity, and veneration.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The otter-killer carried to the lodge—Fishing homewards—Angling closes for the season—Remarks—Feelings on the occasion—Smuggler appears—Landing a cargo—Captain Matthews—The Jane—Cutter stands out to sea—Hooker on a rock—Traveller alarmed—Anecdote of an Englishman.

The illness of the old otter-killer has clouded our moorland excursions at their close, and we leave with melancholy forebodings our mountain bivouac. Antony, at his own

request, was carried to the Lodge to-day; and when the difficulty of the ground, and the frequent crossing of the river is considered, it was an arduous undertaking. The camp-followers arranged a rude litter; and as works of mercy are highly estimated by pious Catholics, there were more volunteers to assist in transporting the dying man than could well find employment.

During our progress down, we had some hours' superior sport with the eagle. Pullgarrow, that inimitable hole, has more than realized what the Colonel and our kinsman have said and sung in its commendation. In Christendom it could not be surpassed, and of this best of pools may be said, that "none but itself can be its parallel."

In the minor streams we killed more red trout this morning than we do generally. Indeed, from the character of this river, I have been puzzled to account for the evident scarcity of this species in a water that appears so especially adapted for them. The clearness of the stream, the gravelly soil it flows over, its pools and rapids, all seem calculated to produce red trout plentifully. But they are not numerous; and as the flies we invariably use are formed for the other species, it is not surprising that we find but few red trout in the baskets.

With this day's fishing our river sports terminate. Rods and lines, and all the *matériel* of the craft, will now be laid in ordinary, and till spring comes round again, other sports must occupy the idle hours. I have learned more—although I acknowledge, with all humility, my unworthiness as an angler—by a few days' practical experience, than I could have almost considered possible; and I have ascertained how inadequate theory is to instruct a neophyte in the art. In angling, however, like other manly exercises, men are constituted by nature to succeed or fail. We know that there are persons who, though born in a *preserve*, could never shoot even tolerably, while others, with less advantages, speedily become adepts. One man can never learn to ride; and another, in a short time, can cross the country like "a winged Mercury." The same rule holds good in angling;—A. in a short period becomes perfect master of the arcana of the gentle science; while B. will thresh a river to eternity, dismissing flies, breaking tops, losing foot-links, and perpetrating every enormity with which a tyro is chargeable.

Yet to a man naturally *handy* and observant, little is required to acquire the art, but a good stream and tolerable attention. He will soon gain more practical information and mechanical science than any book can inculcate. And it will be only when, by practice, he has acquired a knowledge of the science, that he will be able to comprehend what written theories profess to teach.

We had fished the deep hole above the river, and our rods are, for the *last time*, handed to the attendants. And shall I never while my idle hours away beside that beautiful stream in the intervals of unfriendly sunshine, stretched beneath a bank, turning the light pages of a book, or watching in dreamy indolence the rushing of a river? Shall I no more watch the eddying of the pool, with its sparkling surface broken by the bold and glorious spring which marks the salmon rejoicing, like a returned prodigal, in his native river? No, my foot will never press that bank again; nor shall I beside that glassy water enjoy those tranquillizing feelings, which the slave of passion, the creature of society, can neither know nor estimate!

We had scarcely left the river, when a man, who stood upon an eminence that commanded an extensive view seaward, gesticulated with great energy, and made, what appeared to me, some momentous communication in the *mother tongue*.

"It is *the Jane*!" exclaimed my kinsman, as he bounded up the bank to gain the summit of the hillock. I did not comprehend exactly what the affair was which created such powerful emotions among my companions; but when I reached the height, a scene of extreme interest was presented.

Between the Black Rock and the island of Devilawn, a cutter was opening the bay, and standing from the westward under a press of canvass. She carried a spanking breeze in, and, as her course was too points off the wind, her sails drew, and she came up "hand over hand." The approach was evidently expected, for from every nook and inlet row-boats were being launched—the whole population poured forth from the mountain villages—and the coast, as far as the eye could reach, was in marvellous commotion. Nothing could be more beautiful and picturesque than the appearance of the smuggler. The sunshine fell upon her snowy canvass, a pri-

vate signal fluttered from the mast-head, and a union-jack was flying at the peak, while, occasionally, a sheet of broken foam sparkled round her bows, as she held her onward course gallantly,

"And walked the water like a thing of life."

In a few minutes after her having been first discovered, boats were pulling from the shore in all directions, while the cutter closed the land fast. When abreast the Ridge Point, she suddenly rounded-to, handed her gaff top-sail, hauled up the main-tack, and waited for the boats.

"I cannot go on board," said my kinsman, with a heavy sigh, "being, alas! like Master Robert Shallow, 'a poor esquire of this county, and one of the king's justices of the peace;' but though I shall not pay my personal respects, yet will not my old friend Jack Matthews forget me; but you shall board *the Jane*, and witness a bustling business. I'll promise you a hearty welcome from the Skipper—and see, you are just in time, for the *gig* is on the water."

As he spoke, he hailed the boat, which, returning to the beach, took me on board, and then pulled off for the vessel, which, in a quarter of an hour, we reached.

It was, indeed, a bustling scene; a hundred boats were collected round the smuggler, who, to use nautical parlance, had already "broken bulk," and was discharging the cargo with a rapidity, and yet orderly and business-like system, that was surprising.

I was immediately recognized by Captain Matthews, and politely invited to his cabin. Aware of the hurry consequent upon this dangerous traffic, on the plea of his presence being requisite upon deck, I would have declined the honour; but the gallant Captain remarked, with great indifference, "that he left the delivery of his cargo to the agents and purchasers, and could not spend an hour or two more to his satisfaction, than in entertaining, in his own way, the kinsman of his respected friend." And, calling for the steward, he stepped forward to order some refreshments.

While he was thus engaged, I had ample time to satisfy my curiosity, and observe the conduct of this illicit traffic. There appeared no confusion attendant on the delivery of the tobacco to its respective proprietors, who had already engaged certain proportions of the cargo, which they received upon the

production of small tickets, specifying the quantity and description of the goods; the business having been previously arranged on shore, before the arrival of the smuggler, facilitated the dangerous trade.

When I found myself in the cabin with the bold outlaw —for Matthews had been legally denounced for many daring and successful contests with the Revenue—I could not but admire the thorough indifference to possible consequences which this singular personage exhibited. He knew that several men-of-war were at that moment cruising on the station, and that they had been apprised he had sailed from Flushing, and that this coast was the spot selected by the owners to effect the landing—yet he laughed and drank as gaily as I should in a club-house, and despatched the messages which were occasionally brought down with perfect *nonchalance*. He spoke principally of his own exploits; and the scene was admirably in keeping. Around the cabin, muskets, pistols, and blunderbusses, were secured in arm-racks, and cutlasses and tomahawks were suspended from the bulk-heads. His had been a wild career; and though not past the middle-age, his life teemed with "perilous adventure." I was so much amused with his varied narratives of brave attempts and desperate successes, that the second hour slipped away before I rose and took my departure. On regaining the deck, the hurry of the business was over. The contraband cargo had been replaced by stone ballast; for by previous arrangement, each boat brought a quantity of *shingle* from the beach, and hence the smuggler was already in trim, and ready to stand out to sea.

This notorious vessel was considered in size and sailing superior to any of a similar class, and her voyages had been numerous and successful. Her armament was formidable; sixteen heavy carronades were extended along the deck, with two long brass guns of smaller calibre, and every other appurtenance of war was in perfect efficiency. But the most striking object was her ferocious-looking, but magnificent crew; they seemed only formed for "the battle and the breeze;" and well justified their commander's boast, "that he could thrash any cruiser of his own size, and land his cargo in six hours afterwards."

We left the vessel—and, to judge by the kegs and cases stowed away in the gig, my cousin had not been forgotten

in the general distribution. The outlaw stood upon a carronade, and waved his hand as we pulled from the ship's side; and in a short time set his head-sails, and stood off to sea with the ebb tide and a spanking breeze, which carried him out of sight directly.

This was fated to be the last landing of *the Jane*, and the last exploit of her commander; she foundered on her next voyage, and every person on board perished with the vessel.*

We had nearly reached the bar, when we observed a large sailing-boat strike on the tail of Carrig-a-boddagh, and as the tide was falling fast, she was in momentary danger of falling over. Every exertion of the crew to get her off was ineffectual; and on our nearer approach they evinced such unequivocal symptoms of inebriety, as accounted for the disaster. A solitary passenger was on board, who appeared in desperate alarm; and, at his own earnest solicitation, we received him and his personal effects, which were extremely limited, into our boat. The crew remained with the hooker, which they calculated upon floating off the following tide.

I was much struck with the appearance of the stranger. His voice and bearing told that he was not indigenous to the soil: low in stature, delicate in form, with a timid and suspicious bearing, I was greatly puzzled to account for his being a passenger in a Connemara fishing-boat. Although nervous as a woman before we reached the pier, I had tranquillized him so far as to find out generally that he had left the Galway coast, in the expectation of being landed on the shores of Sligo; but that the crew, having boarded the smuggler, managed to get gloriously drunk, and, diverging totally from their course, ran the hooker on a reef, from which they should have been several leagues distant.

The stranger was an Englishman. He met from my kinsman a hospitable reception—and the Colonel and I united our attentions, and in a great degree restored his confidence. Nothing, however, could persuade him that the hooker had not been run designedly upon the rock, and that he and his travelling-bag would have been victimized by what he termed

* *The Jane* went down in a tremendous gale off the north-west coast of Ireland. Her consort, *The Blue-eyed Maid*, witnessed the melancholy event, without being able to render any assistance.

"desperate pirates," but for our seasonable rescue. My cousin smiled. "The conduct of the drunken scoundrels," he said, "was unpardonable; but he doubted whether they harboured those nefarious designs. Strangers were frequently led away by appearances, and it was no uncommon thing for travellers to suffer unnecessary alarm from groundless causes." And he related an anecdote of a gentleman being put in fear and terror, in a neighbouring county, by mistaking a *fish* for a *weapon*.

"Soon after the rebellion of Ninety-eight, an English merchant was necessitated, by urgent business, to visit the kingdom of Connaught. Having provided himself with a servant, who professed an acquaintance with the language of the country, he made his will, and took a place in the Westport mail. He reached the post-town of —— in safety, and from it proceeded to cross that wild and picturesque mountain-chain which bounds the beautiful shores of Lough Corrib.

"It was late in autumn: the weather had been wet, and owing to the difficulty of the bridle-roads, the traveller was benighted some miles' distance from the house that he had calculated upon reaching. Unable to proceed farther, he reluctantly took up his quarters at a *shebeine-house*. It was but a sorry caravansera—but nothing could surpass the apparent kindness of the family. Supper was prepared; the best bed was sheeted, and when the belated stranger had sufficiently refreshed himself, he was conducted to an inner room, where, at his own request, the servant was also accommodated with a pallet.

"Yet, notwithstanding the marked civility of the family, the stranger could not overcome a secret apprehension of impending danger. It was a wild place—a wilder family; he feared that treachery lurked underneath this studied kindness; and, as he tossed upon his restless bed, he listened with painful anxiety to every sound. Midnight came; the outer door was opened cautiously—several men entered the kitchen with stealthy pace—they conversed in their native language, his name was mentioned, and himself was beyond doubt the subject of this nocturnal *conversazione*. Crawling in an agony of apprehension to the pallet where his attendant lay, he awoke the sleeper, intimated his suspicions in a whisper, and

desired him to report faithfully the midnight colloquy in the outer chamber.'

"'What's that they say?' quoth the traveller.

"'They want another pint, for they have not had such a prize for the last twelvemonth.'

"'That's me!' groaned the querist.

"'They have *five pikes* already, and expect more before morning,' continued the valet.

"'Truculent scoundrels!'

"'The largest is intended for yourself!

"'Lord defend me!' ejaculated the stranger.

"'They wonder if you are sleeping.'

"'Cold-blooded monsters; they want to despatch us quietly.'

"'The owner swears that nobody shall enter this room till morning.'

"'Ay, then they will have daylight, and no difficulty.'

"'And now he urges them to go to bed.'

"'Heaven grant they may! for then, escape from this den of murder might be possible.'

"Listening with a beating heart until unequivocal symptoms of deep sleep were heard from the kitchen, the unhappy Englishman, leaving his effects to fortune, crawled through the window half-dressed, and, with a world of trouble and perilous adventure, managed early next morning to reach his original place of destination.

"Never, however, was man more mortified than he, when he related his fearful story. His tale was frequently interrupted by a laugh, which *politesse* vainly endeavoured to control.

"'Zounds!' cried the irritated Englishman, no longer able to conceal his rage, 'is my throat so valueless, that its cutting should merely raise a horse-laugh?'

"'My dear friend,' replied the host, 'you must excuse me—it is so funny, I cannot, for the life of me, be serious. The cause of all your fears lies quietly in the outer hall. Come, you shall judge upon what good grounds you absconded through a window, and skirmished half the night over hill and dale, with but the nether portion of your habiliments.'

"As he spoke he uncovered a large basket, and pointed to

a huge pike of some thirty pounds weight, which was coiled around the bottom.

"'The stormy weather,' continued the host, 'having interrupted our supply of sea-fish, the peasants who alarmed you had been setting night-lines for your especial benefit. The *petka more*,* which you heard devoted to your services in the *shebeine*-house, was not an instrument of destruction, but, as you shall admit at six o'clock, as good a white fish as ever true catholics, like you and I, were doomed wherewithal to mortify the flesh upon a blessed Friday.'"

The stranger smiled.

"I may have wronged my late companions," he said, "but I have of late been under such constant and painful excitement, that I often wonder that reason held her seat. I have this evening not only been delivered from considerable danger, but I have fallen most unexpectedly upon persons and a place which, on this remote coast, and among these wild hills, appear miraculous. Your accents are different from those I have lately listened to: and could I but find courage to tell my story, you would own that I have lately undergone sufficient trials to unnerve a stouter frame than this feeble one of mine."

After some time, the stranger felt the cheering effect of my kinsman's claret, and in a strain which might be termed seriocomic, he thus narrated his story.

MEMOIR OF A GENTLEMAN WHO WOULD NOT DO FOR GALWAY.

"I AM descended from a line of traders, and by birth as genuine a cockney as ever listened to Bow-bells. My mother's nonage was passed in St. Mary Axe, and my father was a dry-salter in Tooley-street. He was third of the same name that there had dwelt and prospered. They were a thrifty and punctilious race; and it was a family boast, that, for seventy years, a bill bearing the acceptance of Daniel Dawkins had never been in the hands of the notary. There is virtue in a good name, 'tis said, and theirs was current for ten thousand.

* The large pike.

"I was an only child, and from the cradle evinced an indolent and dreamy temperature, which was ill adapted to withstand the worry of trade, and all the annoyances entailed on traffic. I hated trouble; hardly knew the difference between pearl-ashes and pearl-barley; could never comprehend tare-and-trett, and had, moreover, literary propensities. How one in whose veins the blood of the Dawkinses circulated, could be so deplorably uncommercial, is a puzzle; but I was, I suppose, 'foredoomed my father's soul to cross,' and an unhappy tutor ruined me beyond recovery.

"My Gamaliel was a Scotch gentleman of unblemished lineage, remarkable for soiled linen and classical research, who had emigrated from a highland valley with an unpronounceable name, to hold a secondary situation in a city academy, where the progeny of Love-lane and Little Britain received the rudiments of polite letters. The extra hours of the gifted Celt were, for the consideration of ten pounds' annual fee, 'to be paid quarterly, and in advance,' devoted to my accomplishments. Never had man more profound contempt for trade and traders than he at whose feet I was indoctrinated. He turned his nose up at the wealthiest grocer in the ward; and was barely civil to a tobacconist who had a villa at Pentonville, and was, moreover, first favourite for an aldermanic gown. Such delinquency could not be overlooked, and for his heretical opinions touching commerce, he was eventually ejected from Tooley-street. But, alas! the mischief was done—the seed was already sown—and, as after-experience proved, none of it had fallen upon the wayside.

"'In brevity I shall emulate the noble Roman,' quoth Jack Falstaff; and so shall I, so far as the autobiography of my youth is concerned. I abominated business—was an admirer of the Corsair and Lallah Rookh—was generally given to inflammatory poetry—wrote fugitive pieces, and vainly endeavoured to get them a corner in the periodicals—quarrelled with my parents—was supported in my rebellion by a romantic aunt—and when my disinheritance was actually in legal train, was saved by my parents quitting this world of care, which they did within one short month, by the agency of a typhus fever and two physicians.

"Thus was I thrown upon the world at two-and-twenty,

with thirty thousand pounds. Need I say, that I abjured business instanter, and that the honoured name of Dawkins disappeared from the list of dry-salters? For some years, none led a more peaceful and literary life; and though this may appear a solecism, nevertheless it is positively true. The rejection of my early *fugitives* had chilled the metrical outbreakings of my imagination. I had almost Cowper's sensibility—the *lethalis arundo*, as my Scotch tutor would term it, was deep within my bosom—I swore I would never lucubrate again; never again perpetrate a stanza; and, like Mr. Daniel O'Connell's, I presume that my vow was duly registered in heaven.

"This sunny portion of my life was, alas! but transitory. Mine, sir, is a tragic tale. I date the origin of my misfortunes on board a Margate steamer, and this melancholy epoch I shudder to recall. Was there no tutelary sprite, no suspicious spinster, to whisper a cautionary advice? No; without a single fear I embarked in the Nereid steamer; and, as the papers stated, 'left the Tower-stairs with a select party, and a band of music, on Friday, the — of June, 182—.'

"I must here observe, that my blue-stocking aunt, who had actually come out in Leadenhall-street with one small and admired volume, called 'Pedrilla, a Tale of Passion,' had been latterly urgent with me to enter into matrimony. 'Something told her,' she would say, 'that the name of Dawkins was not doomed to be forgotten, like that of Wood, and Birch, and Bagster. Men of tarts and turpentine might perish, while—could I but procure a talented companion; could I but unite myself to a congenial soul, God knows what the result would prove!—a gifted progeny might honour me with their paternity; little Popes and diminutives Landons would thus be given to the world, fated to be glorious in their maturity, and lisping in numbers from their very cots.'

"The company on board the Nereid were generally known to me. They were exclusively *Eastern*; and there were beauties from the Minories, and nice men from Bishopsgate Within and Without. I was no swain, and as Antigallican in my dancing as Bob Acres. The old women admitted, that, though a good catch, I had no spirit; the young ones 'admired the money, but disliked the man;' and as I did not

form one of the *coryphées*, who were quadrilling upon the quarter-deck, I was likely enough to be left to meditative solitude.

"But there was another person who appeared to hold no communion with the company. One lady seemed a stranger to the rest. Accident placed me beside her, and thus she became more intimately my *compagnon de voyage*.

"She was certainly a fine-looking woman; her face was comely, but somewhat coarse; her hair and brows black as the raven's plumage, her nose rather too marked for a woman's —but then her waist and legs were unexceptionable. She evidently possessed a sufficiency of self-command; no *mauvaise honte*, no feminine timidity oppressed her. She looked bravely around, as if she would assert a superiority; and accepted my civilities graciously, it is true, but with the air and dignity of a duchess. She was, from the start, no favourite with the company, and there was no inclination evinced by any of her own sex to make approaches to familiarity. The cockney beaus looked upon her as a fine but formidable animal; and to me, unworthy as I was, the honour of being *cavalier serviente*, was conceded without a contest. Indeed, at dinner, my fair friend proved herself too edged a tool for civic wit to touch upon. When, with ultra-elegance, an auctioneer, whose assurance was undeniable, pressed 'the *Hirish* lady to *teest* a roast *fole*,' she obliterated the accomplished appraiser, by brusquely replying, 'that no earthly consideration could induce her to eat *horse-flesh!*'

"And yet to this woman I was irresitibly attracted. I sate beside her on the deck, and I ministered to her coffee-cup; and when the Nereid disembarked her crowd, and a stout, red-whiskered, do-no-good looking gentleman presented himself upon the chain-pier, and claimed his 'gentle cousin,' a pang of agony shot across my breast, and for the first time I felt the curse of jealousy. And yet, God knows, she was not the person from whom 'little Popes' might be expected; her tender pledges would be better qualified for rangers and riflemen than denizens of the world of letters. But marriage is decreed elsewhere, and mine had been already *booked*.

"'What's in a name?' observed somebody. I assert—every thing. Will any body deny that 'Drusilla O'Shaughnessey' was not sufficient to alarm any but a Shannonite? Such was the appellative of the lady, while her honoured

kinsman favoured me with an embossed card, on which was fairly engraven, 'Mr. Marc Antony Burke Bodkin, Ballybroney House.'

"On minor matters I will not dilate. It appeared that Miss Drusilla O'Shaughnessey had come to London, in hopeless search after a legacy she expected in right of her great-uncle, Field-Marshal O'Toole; that the Field-Marshal's effects were undiscoverable; and no available assets could be traced beyond certain old swords and battered snuff-boxes; and consequently Drusilla, who had been an heiress in expectancy, was sadly chagrined. Furthermore, it appeared that Mr. Marc Antony Bodkin formed her escort from Connemara, and, being a 'loose gentleman,'* and a loving cousin, he 'bore her company.'

"If ever the course of love ran smooth, which I sincerely disbelieve, mine was not the one. I shall not attempt a description of the progress of my *affaire du cœur*; for I suspect that I was the wooed one, and that Drusilla had marked me for her own, and Marc Antony aided and abetted. He, good easy gentleman, was formed for Cupid's embassies. He 'could interpret between you and your love,' as Hamlet says; and to one with my sensibilities, his services were worth a Jew's eye. If woman ever possessed the cardinal virtues united, that person was Drusilla. She was what Marc called 'the soul of honour;' yet she had her weak points, and he hinted darkly that myself had found favour in her sight. As a thing of course, I muttered a handsome acknowledgement; a rejoinder was promptly returned, *per* same conveyance, as my father would have said—and before six days I was made the happiest of men, and levanted to Gretna with the lady of my love, and formally attended by that *fidus Achates*, Marc Antony Bodkin.

"What a whirligig world this is! I recollect well the evening before the indissoluble knot was tied, when I strolled into the little garden at Newark. My thoughts were 'big with future bliss,' and my path of life, as I opined, strewed knee-deep with roses of perennial blossom. I heard voices in

* No attempt is made here to insinuate aught against the morality of Miss O'Shaughnessey's protector. "A loose gentleman," in the common *parlance* of the kingdom of Connaught, meaneth simply a gentleman who has nothing to do, and nineteen out of twenty of the aristocracy of that truly independent country may be thus honourably classed.—Ed.

the summer-house,—these were my loved one's and her relative's. To use his own *parlance*, the latter, in the joy of his heart, had taken a sufficiency of wine 'to smother a priest;' and as the conversation was interesting to the parties, and mine was not the stride of a warrior, my approach was not discovered by either. The conclave, however, had terminated, and though but the parting observation reached me, it is too faithfully chronicled on my memory to be forgotten —'*The devil is an ommadawn*, no doubt; but he has money *galore*, and we'll make him do in Galway!' As he spoke they rose, and passed into the house without observing me.

"What the observation of Marc Antony meant, I could not for the life of me comprehend. Part of it was spoken, too, in an unknown tongue. Was *I* the devil? and what was an *ommadawn?* Dark doubts crossed my mind; but vanished, for Drusilla was more gracious than ever, and Marc Antony squeezed my hand at parting, and assured me, as well as he could articulate after six tumblers of hot *Farintosh*, 'that I was a lucky man, and Drusilla a woman in ten thousand.'

"Well, the knot was tied, and but for the *éclat* of the thing, the ceremony might have been as safely solemnized at Margate. On the lady's side, the property was strictly *personal*. Her claim upon the estates of the defunct Field-Marshal was never since established, for the properties of that distinguished commander could never be localized. Marc Antony had been a borrower from the first hour of our intimacy; and on the morning of her marriage, Drusilla, I have reason to believe, was not mistress of ten pounds—but then she was a treasure in herself, and so swore Marc Antony.

"The private history of a honeymoon I leave to be narrated by those who have found that haven of bliss which I had pictured but never realized. If racketing night and day over every quarter of the metropolis, with the thermometer steady at 90; if skirmishing from Kensington to the Haymarket, and thence to Astley's and Vauxhall, with frequent excursions to those suburban hotels infested by high-spirited apprentices, 'and maids who love the moon:'—if this be pleasure, I had no reason to repine. In these affairs 'our loving cousin' was an absolute dictator, and against his decrees there was no appeal. To me, a quiet and nervous gentleman, Marc's arrangements were detestable. What he called life, was death to me—his ideas of pleasure were formed on the *keep-moving*

plan—and to sleep a second night in the same place, would be, according to his theories, an atrocity. I found myself sinking under this excessive happiness; and when I ventured a gentle protest against being whirled off in a thunder-storm from the 'Star and Garter' to the 'Greyhound,' I received a cross fire that silenced me effectually. From that period I submitted without a murmur; my days were numbered; another month like that entitled the honey-one, would consign me to my fathers; the last of the Dawkinses would vanish from among men, and a mural monument in St. Saviour's record my years and virtues. But accident saved my life, though it annihilated my property.

"Years before I led Drusilla to the altar, a Connemara estate, which had belonged to her progenitors, and had been ruined in succession by the respective lords, was utterly demolished by a gentleman whom she termed her 'lamented father.' The property had been in chancery for half a century, and advertised for sale beyond the memory of man; but as it was overloaded with every species of encumbrance, no one in his senses would have accepted the fee-simple as a gift. But my wife had determined that Castle Toole should be redeemed, and rise once more, Phœnix-like, from its embarrassments. It owed, she admitted, more than it was worth, twice told—but then, *sure*, it was the family property. *There*, for four centuries, O'Tooles had died, and O'Shaughnesseys been born; and if she could only persuade me to repurchase it with my wealth, she would be the first lady in the barony. To Marc Antony this project was enchanting. Ballybroney had been roofless for the last twenty years, that being about the period when the last of the "dirty acres," which had once appertained to the mansion, had slipped from the fingers of of the Bodkins; therefore, to establish himself at Castle Toole, would suit my kinsman to a hair. In short, the battery was unmasked; and whether over-persuaded by the eloquence of my wife, the arguments of her cousin, or driven to desperation by a life of pleasure, I consented in due time; and having accompanied my honoured counsellors to Dublin, found no competitor for Castle Toole—proposed for the same—paid a large sum of money, and was declared, by the legal functionaries, a gentleman of estate, and that too in Connemara.

"In my eyes, the value of the purchase was not enhanced by a personal investigation. It had its capabilities, it is true; the house being a ruin, might be repaired; and as the lands were in their primeval state, it was possible to reclaim them. Still, when one looked at a huge dismantled building of that mixed class in architecture between a fortalice and a dwelling-house, with grey-flagged roof, lofty chimneys, embattled parapets, and glassless windows, it was ill-calculated to encourage an English speculator in Irish estates. On every side a boundless expanse of barren moorland was visible, with an insulated portion of green surface on which the castle stood, and a few straggling trees remained from what had once been a noble oak wood. That some savage beauty did exist in the wild highlands, a fine river, and an extensive lake, is certain; but to me, the scenery and the place were dreary and disheartening. In vain, therefore, did my friend Mark Antony dilate upon its advantages. The river boasted the best salmon fishing in the country—What was it to me, who had never angled for a gudgeon? The mountains abounded with grouse—Who but a native could escalade them? The bogs were celebrated for game—And would I devote myself like another Decius, to be engulfed, for all the wild ducks that ever wore a wing? But then *The Blazers* were only a few miles distant, and their favourite fixture was on the estate. Really the proximity of that redoubted body produced a cold perspiration when I heard it. *The Blazers*! the most sanguinary fox-club in Connaught—a gang who would literally devastate the country, if it did not please Heaven to thin their numbers annually by broken necks and accidents from pistol bullets. Yet, with me, the Rubicon was crossed—Castle Toole was mine with all its imperfections, and I determined to exert my philosophy to endure what it was impossible to undo.

"To restore the decayed glories of the mansion, you may well imagine was a work of trouble and expense. It was done, and Drusilla slept again under the roof-tree of her progenitors. Hitherto I had indulged her fancies without murmuring, and some of them were superlatively absurd. I hoped and believed that when the hurry of re-establishing the ruin I had been fool enough to purchase

was over, the worry and confusion of my unhappy life would terminate. While the repairs proceeded, we resided in a small house in a neighbouring village, and were not much annoyed by unwelcome visitors. But no sooner was the castle completed and the apartments reported habitable, than the country for fifty miles round complotted, as I verily believe, to inundate us with their company. A sort of *saturnalia*, called the house-warming, I thought destined to continue for ever; and after having endured a purgatorial state for several weeks, and the tumult and vulgar dissipation had abated, swarms of relations to the third and fourth generation of those that loved us, kept dropping in, in what they termed *the quiet friendly way*, until 'the good house Money-glass'* was outstripped in hospitality by my devoted mansion. Although ten long miles from a post-town, we were never secure from an inroad. Men who bore the most remote affinity to the families of O'Shaughnessey or O'Toole, deserted the corners of the earth to spoliate the larder; and persons who, during the course of their natural lives, had never before touched fishing-rod or fowling-piece, now borrowed them 'for the nonce,' and deemed it a good and sufficient apology for living on me for a fortnight. Pedlars abandoned their accustomed routes; friars diverged a score of miles to take us on 'the mission;' pipers infested the premises; and even deserters honoured me with a passing call, 'for the house had such a name." All and every calculated on that cursed *ceade fealteagh*. An eternal stream of the idle and dissipated filled the house — the kitchen fire, like the flame of Vesta, was never permitted to subside—and a host of locusts devoured my property. I lived and submitted, and yet had the consolation to know that I was the most unpopular being in the province. I was usually described as a 'dry devil, or a '*dark*,† dirty little

* This once celebrated mansion is immortalized in the old ballad, called "Bumper Squire Jones," which chronicles the princely hospitalities of that puissant and hard-headed family. Like "the Kilruddery Foxchase," it was a mighty favourite with the stout old sportsmen in those merry days. More popular airs have caused these popular and soul-stirring lyrics to be disused, and, like those whose feats they recounted, they are now almost forgotten.

† "Dark," in the kingdom of Connaught, is frequently used synonymously with "unsocial."

man;' while upon Drusilla blessings rained, and she was admitted to be 'the best sowl that ever laid leg below mahogany!'

"I was weary of this state. Marc Antony was in regular possession of an apartment, which was duly termed by the servant's 'Mr. Bodkin's room.' Summer passed, and so did autumn and its host of grouse shooters. I foolishly hoped that, considering the locality of Castle Toole, my locusts would banish with the butterflies; but the only difference a rainy day made was, that the visitor who arrived, never dreamed of departing till the morrow, and the numbers by no means abated. Some heavy bills came in, and I seized that opportunity of remonstrating with Drusilla. I told her my health was breaking, my fortune unequal to my expenses; that common prudence required a certain limitation to our irregular hospitality; hinted that, though an occasional visit from Mr. Marc Antony Bodkin would be agreeable, yet that an everlasting abode would rather be a bore. I would have continued, but my lady had listened, she thought, too long already. She fired at the very idea of retrenchment; and as to Mr. Marc Antony Bodkin, we were, it appeared, too much honoured by his society. He, a third cousin of Clanricarde, condescended to take my place, and entertain my company. He rode my horses and drank my wine, neither of which feats, as she opined, nature had designed me for doing in proper person; in short, by Herculean efforts on his part, he enabled me to hold my place among gentlemen. As to the paltry consideration of his residence, what was it? 'God be with the time, when,' as her 'lamented father' said, 'a stranger remained for eighteen months in Castle Toole, and would probably have lived and died there, but that his wife discovered him, and forced the truant to abdicate; and yet,' she added, proudly, 'none could tell whether he was from Wales or Enniskillen; and some believed his name was *Hamerton*, while others asserted it was *Macintosh*. But,' as she concluded, 'when her kinsman Mr. Bodkin was turned out, it was time for her to provide a residence,' and she flung from the room like a Bacchante, making door and window shiver.

"Well, Sir, you may pity or despise me as you will; from that day my wife assumed the absolute mastery, and I calmly

submitted. The house was now a scene of wild and unrestricted extravagance. Tenants ran away, cattle were depreciated, and worse still, claims made upon the property that had never been foreseen, and in nine months I was engaged in as many lawsuits. I must have sunk beneath these calamities, but a domestic event gave a new turn to my hopes. No heir had yet been promised, when happily it was whispered that this blessing was not an impossibility. Day after day confirmed the happy news, till at last it was regularly announced in the 'Connaught Journal,' that Mrs. Dawkins, of Castle Toole, was 'as ladies wish to be who love their lords.'

"Of course, from that moment any contradiction would have been death to my dear Drusilla. She never reigned lady-paramount till now, and her will was absolute. Relatives trooped down in scores, and Mark Antony was doubly cherished. Notwithstanding my nerves thrilled at their arrival, *the Blazers* were honourably feasted; and, at the especial request of Mrs. Dawkins, on that occasion I determined to make a character. I really was half a hero; presided at the head of my own table like its master, gave divers bumper toasts, and sat out the evening, until I was fairly *hors de combat*, and tumbled from the chair. Drunk as I was, I recollected clearly all that passed. As but a couple of bottles a man had been then discussed, my early fall appeared to create a sensation. 'Is it a fit he has?' inquired an under-sized gentleman with an efflorescent nose, who had been pointed out to me as a six-bottle customer. 'Phoo!' replied my loving cousin, 'the man has no more bottom than a chicken. Lift him; he has a good heart, but a weak head, *He'll never do for Galway*! But, come, lads,' and Marc hopped over my body, as I was being taken up by the servants, 'I'll give you that *top-sawyer*, his wife, and long may she wear the breeches!' It was gratifying to find that the toast was generally admired, for the very attendants that 'bore the corpse along,' stopped at the door, and shouted 'hip, hip, hurra!' from the staircase.

"Every day from this period I became more unhappy and contemptible. My blue-stocking aunt, who, for reasons unnecessary to explain, had been since my marriage totally estranged, was now officially informed, that the name of

Dawkins would be continued. She had the true leaven of family affection in her, and my past neglect was pardoned, and the kindest letter returned to my communication. One passage of her epistle ran thus—'Though I felt acutely at your selecting a wife without even consulting one, of whose attachment you must be well convinced, I forgive all, from the personal description you give of your consort. May the heir of our line be like his mother, is my prayer! For, oh, Daniel, my predilection for dark beauty is the same, and my conviction unalterable, that even

——'Genius a dead loss is,
With dark brows and long proboscis.'

"Poor woman! no wonder she thus considered: a sergeant in the Guards, with a countenance of the true Kemble character, had, in early life, almost turned her brain; and Tooley-street was kept in an uproar, until he was fortunately drafted off to join the Duke of York upon the Continent, and there, in due time, rested in the bed of glory.

"It is a lamentable thing for a man of sensibility to wed a woman whose conduct he considers irreconcilable to his ideas of what female delicacy demands—and such was my case. Drusilla not only assumed the mastery within doors, but she extended her sway to the farm and the horses. One day, at the head of a hundred paupers, she was planting trees; the next, with Marc Antony Bodkin, making a radical reform in the stables. On these occasions, arrayed in a man's hat, with her limbs cased in Hessian boots, she looked, as Tom the Devil said, 'blasted knowing.' I occasionally was permitted to attend, as a sort of travelling conveniency to hang her cloak upon; and I never returned without some indignity from strangers, or personal disrespect from herself. It was death to me to hear her addressed in the coarse language of the stable, and allusions made to her altered figure, which appeared too vulgar even for the servants' hall; and when a fellow of forbidding countenance, with a scarlet coat and white unmentionables, whom the rest of the gang distinguished as 'Long Lanty,' crooked up the bottom of her dress with his hunting-whip, exclaiming, 'Bone and sinew, by the holy! what a leg for a boot!' I could have knocked the ruffian down, had I been able, although for the exploit I should be

taxed with my false delicacy, and the usual wind-up, '*It will never do for Galway*!'

"Shy from my cradle, and accustomed to city formality, I was not likely to become at once inhabited to Irish manners. But in Connaught there was a laxity of form—a free-and-easy system of society, that exceeded all belief, and to a distant person like me was intolerable. People on a half-hour's acquaintance called you by your christian name; and men whom you had never even heard of, rode to your door, and told you coolly they 'would stay a fortnight.' Introductions in Connemara, I believe, are reckoned among the works of supererogation. If I took a quiet ride, expecting upon my return to meet none at dinner but my wife and the eternal Marc Antony, I probably found half a score already seated at the table, and might learn the appellatives of perhaps a couple of the gang, by the announcement of 'Mr. Dawkins, Tom the Devil,' 'Mr. Dawkins, Smashall Sweeney.'

"I remember upon the day on which I was so fortunate as to make the acquaintance of the above gentlemen, in the course of the evening they differed about the colour of a racehorse, and, after bandying mutual civilities, concluded by interchanging the lie direct and a full decanter. The latter having grazed my head, induced me to abscond immediately; and when I recorded to my loving helpmate the narrow escape from demolition I had just experienced, instead of tender alarm and connubial sympathy, her countenance betrayed irrepressible disappointment and surprise. 'And have you, Mr. Dawkins, really deserted your company, and that too at a period when two gentlemen had disagreed? Do return immediately. Such inhospitality, I assure you, *will never do for Galway*.' I did return; but I had my revenge, and dearly it cost me, though neither of the rascals were shot upon my lawn. *Smashall* rode off my lady's favourite mare in mistake, and sent her back next morning with a pair of broken knees—and *Tom the Devil* set fire to his bed-curtains the same night, and nothing but a miracle saved the house. Every thing in the apartment, however, was consumed or rendered unserviceable.

"As I became more intimate with my wife's relatives, I found that nothing but the lamp of Aladdin would meet their multifarious demands. Castle Toole, like the cave of Adullam, was the certain refuge of all gentlemen who happened to

be in debt and difficulty. All that came here were, what is called in Connemara, 'upon the borrowing hand;' and when the sum appeared to be too large to be forthcoming in cash, nothing could be more accommodating in their overtures,—They would make my acceptance answer; they would *wish* it at sixty-one days; but *if it obliged me particularly*, they could contrive to extend it to three months. It was, of course, a matter of mere form; it would be regularly provided for; it would, 'upon honour!' If, after all this, I hesitated, I did it on personal responsibility; and sooner than be perforated upon my own lawn, actually suffered myself to be made liable for some hundreds. When I complained bitterly of these spoliations to my wife, I received the usual comfort, 'Dear me, how narrow your ideas are! If my uncle Ulic had asked you for the money, it would have been a different affair. And so, all he wants is the accommodation of your name! Ah! if my 'lamented father' was alive, how would he be astonished! Many a time he and poor Ulic assisted each other. Indeed, the dear old man used to mention an amusing anecdote. They once purchased a pipe of port, paid for it with a two months' bill, and when the time expired, the wine was drunk, and the note protested. They had consumed so much from the wood, that it was not worth while to bottle the remainder. Do, Mr. Dawkins, at once oblige my uncle Ulic. Get rid of these narrow ideas. Believe me, *they will never do for Galway.*'

"There was another thing that added to my miseries, and yet to my honoured helpmate it was a subject of unmeasured pride. It so happened, that the geographical position of my ill-omened estate was nearly on the boundaries of Galway and Mayo—counties no less remarkable for their extent than the truculent disposition of the inhabitants. From time immemorial, my lawn was the chosen *fixture* for determining affairs of honour; and hence, more blood had been shed there than on any similar spot in Christendom. If the civil authorities were so ungentlemanly as to interrupt the combatants, the latter merely crossed the adjacent bridge, and finished the affair to their satisfaction. It is right, however, to say, that the magistracy seldom interfered; and if a functionary was forced out by some mean-spirited relative, though the fears of the Lord Chancellor might deter him from refusing his intervention, he still contrived to miss the road, cast a shoe, be

run away with, or meet some unhappy casualty, that one of the parties might be defunct, and the survivor in a place of safety, before he, the justice, appeared upon the battle-ground. Hence, not a week elapsed but my nerves were tortured by the arrival of a *shooting-party*, and probably further agonized by hearing Mr. Bodkin hallooing to the butler, 'Michael, (*sotto voce*,) *devil speed ye, Michael*! the *mistress* desires ye to keep back dinner till the gentlemen have done, and to present her compliments, and say, that she expects the company of the survivor.'

"All this was horrible to me; in the evening to be suddenly disturbed with pop! pop! and an outcry; or awakened before daylight by my lady's maid opening the curtains with a curtsey, to know 'where the dead men would be *stritched*.' It was, moreover, a desperate tax upon my finances; vagabonds, known and unknown, lay for weeks together in my house, while their broken bones were being reunited—not a month passed but there was some dying man in the state-room—doctors came and went as regularly as the post-boy—and once in each quarter the coroner,* if he had any luck, empanelled a jury in our hall.

"Nor were we less tormented with *the Blazers*. We always had a lame horse or two in the stables; and from the time cub-hunting commenced, till the season ended, of that redoubted community who hazard

——'Neck and spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine,'

we never boasted fewer than a couple on the sick-list. Once, when an inquest was holding in the house, *a Blazer* in the best bed-room, a dying earth-stopper in the gate-house, and four disabled horses, 'at rack and manger,' I insinuated what a nuisance it was to have one's house made a '*morgue*,' and the offices an hospital.—'Do, Mr. Dawkins, have done,' exclaimed my lady—'If you have no humanity, pray conceal it. Believe me, your feelings *will never do for Galway*.'

"But Drusilla had her reward. What though we kept a lazaretto for lame horses, and a general wakehouse for gentlemen of honour who left the world without sufficient

* In Connaught this useful officer is paid by the job, and the number with which he occasionally *debits* the county is surprising.

assets to procure a grave; our lights were not hidden, nor our charities unrecorded. There was not a man shot, or an arm broken, but my lady wife was dragged neck and crop into the columns of the Connaught Journal — as for example:

"'THE LATE CAPTAIN MACNAB.—*Further particulars.*—When the lamented gentleman fell, his second, Mr. Peter Brannick, raised the body in his arms. Life, however, was totally extinct, as the ball had fractured the fifth rib, and passed directly through the pericardium. In its transit, the fatal bullet shattered a portable tobacco-pipe, which the deceased invariably carried in his right waistcoat pocket. The body was immediately removed upon a door to Castle Toole, where every attention to the remains of a gallant soldier was given by the accomplished mistress. Indeed it is but right to say, that this estimable lady superintended in person the laying out of the corpse. At midnight three friars from Ballyhownis, and a number of the resident clergy attended, and a solemn high mass was celebrated in the great hall. The reverend gentlemen employed upon this melancholy occasion, have expressed their deep sense of the urbanity of the lady of the mansion.

"'We understand that, at the especial request of Mrs. Dawkins, the body will remain in state at Castle Toole, until it is removed to its last resting-place, the family burying-ground at Carrick Nab.'—*Connaught Journal.*

"'The friends and relatives of Mr. Cornelius Coolaghan will be delighted to hear that he has been pronounced convalescent by Dr. M'Greal. A mistake has crept into the papers, stating that the accident was occasioned by his grey mare, Miss Magaraghan, falling at a six feet wall. The fact was that the injury occurred in attempting to ride in and out of the pound of Ballymacraken, for a bet of ten pounds. As the village inn was not deemed sufficiently quiet, Mr. C. C. was carried to the hospitable mansion of Castle Toole. It is needless to add, that every care was bestowed upon the sufferer by the elegant proprietress. Indeed, few of the gentler sex so elegantly combine the charms and amiabilities of the beautiful Mrs. Dawkins.'—*Ibid.*

"Well, sir, I submitted to my fate with more than mortal fortitude. I saw that in rashly marrying one in taste, feeling and sentiment so totally my opposite, I had wrecked my

happiness for ever, and that I must submit. My pride would sometimes fire at the slights I suffered from my very underlings, and the cool contempt of those locusts who lived only upon my bounty. I was reduced to utter dependency, and yet I never murmured a remonstrance. Presently, my wife took possession of my banker's book — yet I did not rebel—for my nerves were weak, my spirit humble;—fate made my own conduct punish me, and I had philosophy to bear it patiently. But one thing reconciled me to much misery—it was a darling hope—a cherished fancy—this was left when all besides had fled, and I clung to it with the tenacity of a wretch who seizes the reed to support him while he drowns. That hope, that sole dependence, was in my unborn child; on that being, haply, I might lavish my love;—and when nothing else remained on earth whereon to rest my affections, I turned to a visionary thing, a creature not in existence, as an object on which to fix my heart. You smile; but ah, sirs, remember I had not nerves and feelings like the multitude. I am a poor helpless wretch, unfitted to withstand the villany of mankind, and struggle through a world where the boldest will often blench, and the wisest hold their course with difficulty."

He became deeply agitated, and though, poor fellow, I had laughed heartily at the faithful picture he gave, in the course of his narrative, of all concerned, I could not but respect his griefs. He soon continued—

"At times I felt a misgiving in my bosom, and pangs of jealousy tormented me. I saw much culpable familiarity between my wife and her relative: and for some trifling cause, she and I, for some time past, had not occupied the same apartment. Could she forget herself and me so far? Oh, no, no, she could not! She would not do a being like me, who submitted to her command, and sacrificed every thing to her fancy, so base, so cruel an injury! I never harmed a worm willingly; and surely she would not wrong one so totally her thrall—her worshipper as I?

"I considered that between the parties there existed a near relationship, and national habits and early intimacy might warrant what was certainly indelicate, but still might not be criminal. God help me! At times my brain burned —my senses were almost wandering; and had this state of

torture long continued, I must, ere now, have been the inmate of a madhouse.

"The time of her trial came, and at that awful hour, I am told women like to have their husbands near them, for those they love can sometimes whisper hope, and rouse the drooping courage of the sufferer. But I was specially excluded from the chamber of the patient, although constant messages passed between the lady and her kinsman. The trial ended happily—a boy was born—the servants flocked round me, to offer their rude congratulations; but the nurse cast on me such a look of mingled pity and contempt as almost struck me lifeless. I asked affectionately for my wife—I inquired tenderly for my child. 'It is a fine boy,' said a young, wild, light-hearted creature, the housemaid; 'it has the longest legs I ever saw; and, Holy Mary! its hair is as *red* as Lanty Driscoll's jacket!'—God of Heaven! *red hair*. It was killing—murderous. Then I was the wretch my worst fears had whispered, and a child was born—*but not to me*."

He paused, completely overcome. I felt my eye moisten at the deep though simple pathos of the story-teller. There was a sorrow, an agony, in his melancholy detail, that touched the heart more sensibly than calamities of deeper character and greater men.

After a short pause, he thus continued:

"The day the most eventful of my life, if my wedding one be excepted, at last arrived, and had it been nominated for my undergoing the extreme penalty of the law, it could not have brought more horror with it. I felt the fulness of my degradation. I was a miserable puppet, obliged to pretend a blindness to disgrace, of which my conviction was entire; and automaton as I was considered, and little as my looks or feelings were consulted, the deep melancholy of my face did not escape my conscience-stricken partner. She became pale and agitated, while with affected indifference of manner, she taxed me with rudeness to my company, and more especially to herself. What would the world say, if on this high festival, when the heir of Castle Toole was to be presented to his relatives, I should appear like a monk at a death-wake than a happy parent? 'Lord! Mr. Dawkins, this moping is so unmanly. Here will be the O'Tooles and the O'Shaughnesseys, Blakes and Burkes, Bellews and Bodkins: they will feel it a personal

insult. If you, encourage these humours, I assure you, Mr. Dawkins, *you will never do for Galway.*' Before this jobation ended, carriage-wheels grated on the gravel, and men, women, and children commenced and continued pouring in, as if another deluge had begun, and Castle Toole was an ark of safety.

"While the house was crowded within, the space before it appeared to be in the possession of numerous banditti. The tenants, of course, had flocked hither to do honour to the christening. For their refreshment a beeve was roasted whole, and beer and whisky lavishly distributed. I never saw a scene of waste and drunkenness before, although I had hitherto believed that my residence was the veriest *rack-rent* in the world. In every corner pipers played, women danced, men drank, and swearing and love-making was awful. There, while dinner was being served, I had stolen forth to vent my agony unnoticed. I am not, sirs, gifted with that command of nerve which can exhibit hollow smiles while the bosom is inly bleeding. To affect gaiety so foreign to my heart, I feltwould break it; but the desperate misery that I endured would spur the dullest soul to madness. I viewed the rude revelry with disgust. I was the master of the feast, but the savages barely recognised me. Generally they spoke in their native language; and though I did not exactly comprehend all that they said, I heard enough to assure me of my utter insignificance in their rude estimate of character. Under a gate-pier two old women were sitting; they did not notice me, and continued their discourse.

"'Ally, *astore*, did ye see the child? They say it's the picture of Marc Bodkin.'

"'Whisht, ye divil!' was the rejoinder, as the crone proceeded, with a chuckle; '*it has red hair*, any how: but *Neil an skil a gau maun*,* and ye know best.'

"But the further humiliation of assisting at the ceremony was saved me. In the hurry consequent upon the general confusion, the post-bag was handed to me instead of my lady-wife, who lately had managed all correspondence. Mechanically I opened the bag, and a letter, bearing the well-known direction of my aunt, met my eye. That, under circumstances, it should have reached me, appeared miraculous, and, seizing an opportunity, I examined its

* *Anglice*, 'I have no skill in it.'

contents in private. My kind relation had received my detail of misery, and, in reply, she implored me to abandon the scene of my degradation, and share her fortune, which was more, she said, than sufficient for us both. My heart beat with conflicting emotions—all unworthy as she was, I could not bring myself to abandon Drusilla thus. I actually hesitated, when curiosity prompted me to peruse a letter which was addressed to her, and marked *immediate*. Its contents were these:—

"'Dear Madam,

"'I have by this post received the two writs, as expected. I settled the *Ex.* against Mr. M. A. B., and he may come to town any time till further notice. With respect to those against Mr. Dawkins, it is as well to let things take their course. He is a gentleman of retired habits, and a little confinement, particularly *as he don't hunt*, will be quite immaterial. I received the bullocks, but, as cattle are down, there is still a balance due.

"'A Dublin wine-merchant has just handed me an *Ex.* for £613, and insists upon accompanying me to Castle Toole. I have therefore named *Wednesday*, on which day you will please to have *the doors closed*. As the plaintiff may again be officious, I would recommend his being *ducked*, when returning, and a city bailiff, whom you will know by his having a scorbutic face and yellow waistcoat, should for many reasons be corrected. Pray, however, take care *the boys* do not go too far, as manslaughter, under the late act, is now a transportable felony.

"'The sooner Mr. D. renders to prison the better. Tell your Uncle Ulic I have returned *non est* to his *three last*; but he must not *show*. You can drop me a line by bearer when you wish Mr. D. to be arrested; and after we return *nulla bona* on Wednesday, I will come out and arrange matters generally.

"'Believe me, dear Madam, truly yours,

"'JOHN GRADY, Sub-sheriff, Galway.

"'Mrs. Dawkins, Castle Toole.'

"'P.S. What a blessing it is for poor Mr. Dawkins that he has such a woman of business to manage his affairs! He is a well-meaning man, but *he'll never do for Galway*.

'J. G.'

"Had I been ten times over the tame wretch I was, I could not be insensible to the deep treachery of this worthless woman, who had ruined my property, and would now incarcerate my person. In spite of remonstrances upon its apparent inhospitality, I abandoned the 'impious feast,' and while my absence was neither missed nor regarded, I stole from the accursed spot, and by bribing a wandering stocking-man, was enabled to make my way to the coast, and procure a fishing-boat to place myself beyond the power of arrest. The same bad luck appeared to follow me: the drunkenness of the scoundrels threatened to interrupt my escape, and even place my life in peril. From these mishaps you have delivered me, and by your prompt assistance I shall effect my retreat from a country I must ever recollect with horror. When I reach England, I will seek reparation for my injuries; and though all besides is gone, I shall at least endeavour to liberate myself from the worthless woman who abused a weak and too confiding husband.

"Alas! gentlemen, what a stream of misfortunes will sometimes originate in a trifle. A Margate steamer entailed a life of suffering upon me. My fortune vanished, my wife deceived me—laughed at by my friends, and ridiculed by my enemies — from all these complicated misfortunes, I have learned but one simple fact—Alas! '*That I should never do for Galway*!'"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Morning alarm—Death of the otter-killer—General grief—Night excursion—Herring-fishery—Our reception—Beal fires—The wake—The funeral—Anecdote of a dog—A deserted house.

I SLEPT soundly: my servant found me still a-bed, when he came at his customary hour; as he unclosed the curtains I heard a hum of voices, and appearances of domestic hurry were visible; next moment the well-known *Currakeen*, whose celebrity as a courier is truly remarkable, passed the window at a "killing pace." I found upon inquiry, that the otter-killer was dying, and that "the runner" I had just observed, had been dispatched for Father Andrew.

The ancient retainer of an Irish family generally establishes a bond upon the affections of the wild household, that causes his loss to make a greater sensation, than so humble an event might be supposed to occasion. Antony for half a century had been attached to this family. Three generations have passed since he first settled beneath the roof-tree; and he has been associated with every earlier recollection of the present master. No wonder I found my kinsman in considerable distress. The old man was dying—and youthful scenes, and youthful days, when the stormier passions had not broken "the sunshine of the breast," were now vividly recalled by the approaching dissolution of his ancient and devoted follower.

The summons to the priest was instantly attended,—Father Andrew returned with the messenger, and was immediately closeted with the penitent. Poor Antony's simple life had few dark recollections to harrow his parting hour. His shrift was short and satisfactory; and at his own request, when the rites of the Roman Catholic church had been duly celebrated, my cousin and myself were summoned to his bedside.

The old man was supported by Hennessey, as a difficulty in breathing obliged him to be raised up; and the scene was at once simple and imposing. The early monitor of his youthful fishing-days—the being who had in mountain pastimes been so frequently his companion, possibly recalled softer recollections, and a deep shade of sorrow overspread the countenance of the "stern homicide." The black-eyed girl, who held a teaspoon to his lips, vainly endeavouring to introduce some nourishment, wept over him like a lamenting child. His faithful terrier sat at the bed-foot, and the fixed and melancholy look that the poor animal turned on her dying master, would have half persuaded me that Venom knew she was about to lose him. Dim as his eye was, it lighted as my kinsman's tall figure darkened the entrance of the chamber; and feebly putting forth his hand, he clasped that of his beloved master with affection, and while weakness and imperfect breathing sadly interrupted his "last farewell," we could with some difficulty thus collect his words.

"I'm going, Master Julius, and may the blessing of the Almighty attend ye! Sure I should be thankful, with all

about me to make me easy to the last. I saw your grand father stretched—I sat beside your father when he departed, may the Lord be merciful to both! and I die with yourself and the clargy to comfort my last hour, praises be to Mary, Master Julius, will you listen to a dying man; he that carried ye in his arms, and loved ye better than all the world besides ?—ye'll take my advice. *Marry*, Julius avourneen—the ould name that since the days of Shamul a Croaghah held land and honour—surely you won't let it pass? Mind the old man's last words—and now Heaven bless ye!" And in feeble tones he continued muttering benedictions upon all around him. My cousin was really affected, and the Priest perceiving the increasing feebleness of the otter-killer, requested us to retire. We were obeying, when Antony rallied suddenly and unexpectedly:—"You will mind the dog, for my sake, Master Julius—and ye'll let trap and fishing-rod hang up in the hall, to put ye in mind of old Antony?" These were his last connected words—his strength failed fast; his memory wandered to other times; "he babbled of green fields," he murmured the names of lakes and rivers—and while the affectionate Priest prayed fervently beside his old and innocent companion, the otter-killer rendered his last sigh in the arms of Hennessey and the weeping Alice!

Talk of parade around the couch of fortune, and what a heartless display is it! *I* saw a rich man die; I saw the hollow mockery of hireling attendants and interested friends; but here, that simple unsophisticated being had a sincerity of grief bestowed upon his death-bed, that to wealth and grandeur would be unattainable!

There was a loud and agonizing burst of sorrow when the otter-killer's death was communicated to those in the hall and kitchen, who, during the closing scene, had been with difficulty prevented from crowding the apartment of the sufferer. But this noisy demonstration of regard was speedily checked by old John, who knew that his master would be doubly displeased should any tumultuary wailings render me uncomfortable.

In a short time, order was tolerably established; and with one exception, a quiet and respectful silence supervened A stout, though aged crone, occasionally burst into wild lament,

accompanied by a beating on her breast, which, like the signal to a chorus, elicited a fresh ebullition from the subordinate mourners. John, however, interposed his authority effectually.—"*Badahust, hanamondioul, badahust,* I say! ye may *keinagh* at the funeral, but ye mustn't disturb the master and the company." This jobation restored tranquillity, and in "decent grief" the otter-killer's corpse was duly laid out in its funeral habiliments.

The evening wore on heavily—my kinsman was sensibly affected; his old monitor in the gentle art was gone; and though full in years, and ripe for the tomb, his master felt, that "he could have better spared a better man." There was heart-sinking about our party which I had never marked before. The wine had lost its charm; and while the Colonel and the Priest commenced a game of piquet, my cousin ordered the gig, and proposed that we should pull over to the herring-boats, which in the next estuary, and on the preceding night, had been unusually successful. Accordingly, having lighted our pipes and procured our boat-cloaks, we left the pier-head in the four-oared galley.

The night was unusually dark and warm; not a breath of wind was on the water; the noise of the oars, springing in the coppered rullocks, was heard for a mile off, and the whistle of sandpipers and jack curlews, as they took wing from the beach we skirted, appeared unusually shrill. Other noises gradually broke the stillness of the night—the varied hum of numerous voices chanting the melancholy songs which are the especial favourites of the Irish, began to be heard distinctly—and we soon bore down upon the midnight fishers, directed by sound, not sight.

To approach the fleet was a task of some difficulty. The nets, extended in interminable lines, were so frequent, that much skill was necessary to penetrate this hempen labyrinth. without fouling the back ropes. Warning cries directed our course, and with some delay we threaded the crowded surface, and, guided by buoys and *puckawns,* found ourselves in the very centre of the flottilla.

It was an interesting scene. Momently the boats glided along the back ropes, which were supported at short intervals by corks, and at a greater by inflated dog-skins, and, raising the curtain of network which these suspended, the herrings

were removed from the meshes, and deposited in the boats Some of the nets were particularly fortunate, obliging their proprietors to frequently relieve them of the fish; while others, though apparently stretched within a few yards, and consequently in the immediate run of the herrings, were favoured but with a few stragglers; and the indolent fisherman had to occupy himself with a sorrowful ditty, or in moody silence watched the dark sea "like some dull ghost waiting on Styx for waftage."

Our visit appeared highly satisfactory, for the *ceade fealteagh*, with a lament for "ould Antony," was universal, while every boat tossed herrings on board, until we were obliged to refuse further largess, and these many "trifles of fish" accumulated so rapidly, that we eventually declined receiving further compliments, or we might have loaded the gig gunnel deep.

The darkness of the night increased the scaly brilliancy which the phosphoric properties of these beautiful fish produce. The bottom of the boat, now covered with some thousand herrings, glowed with a living light, which the imagination could not create, and the pencil never imitate. The shades of gold and silvery gems were rich beyond description; and much as I had heard of phosphoric splendour before, every idea I had formed fell infinitely short of its reality.

The same care with which we entered disembarrassed us of the midnight fishing: every boat we passed pressed hard to throw in a "cast of *skuddawns** for the strange gentleman," meaning me; and such was the kindness of these hospitable creatures, that had I been a very Behemoth I should have this night feasted to satiety on their bounty.

The wind, which had been asleep, began now to sigh over the surface, and before we had cleared the outer back-ropes, the sea-breeze came curling "the midnight wave." The tide was flowing fast, and having stepped the mast, we spread our large lug, and the light galley slipped speedily ashore. A fire which I had noticed above the Lodge kindling gradually, fanned by the rising night-breeze, sprang at once into a glorious flame; and through the darkness its intense light

* *Anglice*, Herrings.

must have been for many leagues discernible. I broke my cousin's musing, to ask what it was.

"That, my friend, is one of our ancient customs; that is our *beal-fire*. It is lighted to notify that a death has occurred, and ere long you will see it answered by some of our friends and kindred. Poor old man! none deserved it better, for he would have attended religiously to such observances, had any of my family preceded him to the grave. He lighted my father's beal-fire, and possibly kindled that of my grandsire; old John has probably performed the ceremony for him: thus the kindlier offices are continued, and 'thus runs the word away.'—Who,"—and he stopped, evidently embarrassed at some passing thought—"Who shall say that the ceremonial bestowed upon the wandering otter-killer may not be refused to the last descendant of a line of centuries!"

I would have interrupted these melancholy forebodings, but just then, from the lofty brow of an inland hill which I had frequently observed before, a light appeared, first faintly struggling, but presently reddening to the sight; and two fires in Achil, in a time of incredible briefness, flung their deep glow across the waters, and, as I afterwards remarked, were repeated for miles along the coast and high grounds.

The rapidity with which the beal-fire was replied to, evidently pleased my kinsman's family vanity; and with higher spirits, we watched the lights tremble in the windows of the Lodge, until these *stellæ minores* directed our voyage to its termination.

The Colonel and his companion were waiting for us on the the pier; they insisted on adding to our supper some of the fish which we had brought home—and while this was being done, my cousin and myself entered the wake, to pay our last duties to the departed otter-killer.

To give additional *éclat* to his funeral rites, the corpse had been removed to the barn, which, from its unusual size, was well-fitted to admit the numerous mourners who would attend the ceremony. Upon a rude bier the old man rested, and the trap and fishing-rod were, by a fancy of Hennessey, placed above his head. The barn was filled, but immediate room was made for *the master* and his company. I have seen the corpse when carefully arranged; when the collapsing features were artificially moulded, to imitate a tranquillity that had

been foreign to the last event. But here was a study for a painter. The old man's face was puckered into the same conscious smile with which I have heard him terminate his happiest otter-hunt, or some mountain exploit of my kinsman, which appeared to him equally dear; his long hair, released from the band with which he usually confined it, wantoned in silvery ringlets across his neck and shoulders: all else was in wonted form; only that the number of candles round the bier might have been called extravagant, and the plate of snuff upon the bosom of the corpse was heaped with a munificence that would stamp the obsequies as splendid.

Everybody has heard an Irish wake described, and there is no dissimilarity among a hundred, only that, according to the opulence of the family, and the quantity of funeral refreshments, the mirth and jollity of the *mourners* is invariably proportionate. That the master's ancient retainers should be nobly waked was fully expected by the country, and certainly they were not disappointed. Whisky in quantities passing all understanding, tobacco in all its preparations, were fearfully consumed on this important ceremony; and during the two days and nights which the otter-killer was above ground, the barn, spacious as it was, proved unequal to accommodate the hundreds who flocked from a distance of even twenty miles to have "a last look at ould Antony."

When the evening fell on which the corpse was to be carried to its resting-place, a scene of great novelty and great interest ensued. From the insulated situation of the Lodge, in connexion with the burying-ground, it was necessary that the body should be carried across the estuary by water. At the appointed hour, from every creek and harbour, the peasantry were seen afloat: and when the funeral left the house, more than a hundred boats accompanied that in which the corpse was deposited. My kinsman followed next to the body with all his visitors and servants; and when the opposite strand was reached, he and his foster-brother placed their shoulders under the coffin, and supported it for a short distance along the beach.

This was, I was afterwards informed, the highest honour that could be conferred upon the departed by his master; and even the magnificence of the otter-killer's wake was held inferior to this proud and public testimony of his patron's affections.

One circumstance was remarked which was powerfully indicative of animal affection. The dead man's terrier had remained night and day beside his bier, since the morning of his death. Unnoticed, she crept on board the boat that conveyed the coffin to the churchyard; and when the grave was filled, she was with difficulty carried home by an attendant, but escaping during the night, crossed the estuary by swimming, and again lay down upon the turf, beneath which her beloved master was sleeping. Every care and kindness was bestowed upon her in the Lodge. No one addressed her but as "*poor Venney.*" Notwithstanding, she drooped visibly, and in three weeks after her interment, in death the otter-killer's favourite "bore him company."

When we reached the Lodge, we made a discovery which, possibly with some people, might lead to an opposite conclusion, and either prove the security or insecurity of the country.

Not a living being had remained within the walls, and consequently, for several hours, the house and household goods were abandoned to the mercy of chance and chance travellers. The guardian saint, however, acquitted herself like a gentlewoman. We found every thing in pious order; and had the Lodge been under the especial care of the glorious Santa Barbara herself, watch and ward could not have been more faithfully maintained.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Weather changes—Symptoms of winter—Animal appearances—Night passage of Barnacles—Grey plover—Hints for shooting plover—Wild geese—Swans—Ducks—Burke transported—Evening at the lodge—Feminine employments.

A MONTH had passed: winter comes on with giant strides, and the last lingering recollections of autumn are over. The weather becomes more rainy and tempestuous; and bogs, which we once crossed easily, owing to the continued wet, are now quite impassable. The swell, which during the summer months came in in long and measured undulations, breaks in masses across the bar, and sends a broken and

tumbling sea inside the estuary, so as to render it unsafe to expose any boat of heavy tonnage to its influence. Pattigo seldom ventures from his anchorage, and when last he ventured to pass a night at the pier, he ground away a hawser against the stones, notwithstading every pains were bestowed in renewing its *service*. The springs are usually high; and two nights since, the Lodge and paddocks were completely insulated, and our communications with the mainland carried on by ferriage. The river rises fearfully, and the huge masses of turf left along the strand, prove how violent the mountain torrents must be at this advanced season. The sweet and crystal stream is nowhere seen; and Scott's beautiful lines happily describe the turbid river that has replaced it:—

> "Late, gazing down the steepy linn
> That hems our little garden in,
> Low in its dark and narrow glen,
> You scarce the rivulet might ken,
> So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
> So feebly trill'd the streamlet through;
> Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen,
> Through bush and briar no longer green,
> An angry brook it sweeps the glade,
> Brawls over rock and wild cascade."

But other, and no less certain, tokens harbinger the wild season that has arrived. Yesterday a six-months' puppy, who crept after me across the adjoining paddocks, stopped in a rushy field. Suspecting that he had a hare before him, I passed on to push her from the *form:* I was mistaken—a *wisp* * of snipes, possibly thirty in number, sprang, and scattering in all directions, pitched loosely over the adjoining bogs. To-day I saw a flock of barnacles;† and the

* *Wisp*, in sporting parlance, means a flock of snipes.

† The *barnacle* weighs about five pounds, and measures more than two feet in length, and nearly four and a half in breadth. The bill, from the tip to the corners of the mouth, is scarcely an inch and a half long, black, and crossed with a pale reddish streak on each side; a narrow black line passes from the bill to the eyes, the irides of which are brown; the head is small, and as far as the crown, together with the cheeks and throat, white; the rest of the head and neck, to the breast and shoulders, is black. The upper part of the plumage is prettily marbled or barred with blue, gray, black, and white; the feathers of the back are black, edged with white, and those of the wing coverts and scapulars blue grey

herdsman on the sand-banks apprises us of the first appearance of a *Crowour Keough*.* This is the earliest woodcock announced, but my kinsman has no doubt but *the flight* † has fallen in Achil: and we shall cross in a few days, if the weather answers, and try Slieve More, he says, with excellent success.

I had been some hours in bed, when I was awakened by a quarrelling among the dogs, which I overheard the keeper settling with the whip. I remained, and it is rather an unusual thing with me, a long time awake. An hour passed, all was again in deep repose, and I too was sinking into sleep, when a strange and unaccountable noise roused me. It seemed to be at first faint and distant, but momently increasing, grew louder and more distinct, until it passed to all appearance directly above my head. The sounds were wild and musical—varied in tone beyond any thing I could describe, and continuing, until they gradually became remote and indistinct, and at length totally died away. I was amazingly puzzled, but was obliged to reserve my curiosity to be satisfied in the morning.

My cousin smiled at my inquiry:—"And you heard these strange noises as well as I? This, if you remained here, would be little marvel, as nightly *the Barnacle* cross the Lodge in passing from one estuary to the other. There they sit on yonder point;"—and, taking me to the window, I saw a considerable extent of sand literally black with this migratory tribe: they come here in immense multitudes, but from their

bordered with black near the margins, and edged with white; the quills black, edged a little way from the tips with blue grey; the under parts and tail coverts, white; the thighs are marked with dusky lines or spots, and are black near the knees; the tail is black, and five inches and a half long; the legs and feet are dusky, very thick and short, and have a stumpy appearance.

* Why this title, literally meaning "the blind cock," should be conferred by the peasantry of Ballycroy on a bird so remarkable for the extraordinary quickness of his vision, is a parodox. Such is the known acuteness of the woodcock's vision, that the cover-shooter chooses a masked position, or the *Crowour Keough* would seldom come within range of the gun.

† *Flight* is the term used to describe a flock of woodcocks, as they arrive in this country, in their annual migration from the north of Europe.

coarse and fishy flavour, afford little occupation to the water-shooter.

The land barnacles are less numerous, although they are found in tolerable abundance. During the day I saw two flocks, of one or two hundred pairs, upon the bogs. They are, when sufficiently rested from their journey, sought for with great avidity by the few gunners in this district, and are very delicious when kept a sufficient time after being shot, before the cook transfers them to the spit.

Gray plover must also migrate in thousands hither. Nothing else could account for the immense flocks, that have been seen, and will continue, as I am informed, to arrive. The shores and moors are everywhere crowded with them; and within a hundred yards of the lodge, Hennessey, with two barrels, killed seven couple and a half last evening. The bent-banks are their favourite fixture: and I have never crossed them of late without finding at least one *stand*. These vary in numbers; but I am certain I have seen three hundred of these birds thus congregated.

There is, in shoting plover, a common remark made by sportsmen, that the *second* is always the more productive barrel. The rapidity with which they vary their position when on the ground, seldom admits of a grand combination for a sitting, or rather a running shot. But when on the wing, their mode of flight is most favourable for permitting the shot to tell; and it is by no means unusual to bring down a number. When disturbed, they frequently wheel back directly above the fowler, and offer a tempting mark if he should have a barrel in reserve; and even when too high for the shot to take effect, I have often thrown away a random fire; for the plover, on hearing the report, directly make a sweep downwards on the wing, and I have by this means brought them within range of the second barrel.

When the season advances, the number of geese* that

* The time that wild geese feed in this country is by night, and particularly during moonlight. I have never known them either *netted or decoyed;* and all the shooter has to rely upon is patience and a long barrel. Of all the prizes that a wildfowl-shooter could wish to meet with, a flock of teal is the very first. Independently of their being by far the best birds of the whole Anas tribe, they are so much easier of access, and require such a slight blow, that no matter whether you are prepared for wildfowl, partridges, or snipes, you may, at most times, with very little

visit this wild peninsula is astonishing. For miles I have traced their night feedings along a river bank, where the marshy surface afforded them their favourite sustenance. They are far more wary than the barnacle, and are extremely difficult of access in moderate weather; but chance and storm occasionally favour the sportsman, and in spite of the

caution of these birds, the flock will be surprised, and the patient gunner reap in a lucky moment the reward of many a weary vigil and bootless attempt.

The last and greatest of the wild visiters, are the swan tribe. Their being scarce or plentiful depends much upon the season—and in winters of extreme severity thousands of these birds will be found upon the estuaries and inland lakes. The noise they make is wild and musical, and with *a little*

trouble, contrive to get near them; and this being once done, you have only to shoot straight to be pretty sure of killing.

I have seen teal "duck the flash," though never but once, and then I had rather a slow-shooting-gun.

fancy, my kinsman says, the ear will trace modulations almost extending to infinity. These birds, during severe frosts and snow-storms, are easily surprised and shot; and the skins, when carefully stripped off, will well repay the shooter for his trouble.

To enumerate the varieties of the duck tribe that an inclement winter brings to these shores, would be difficult. I have already noticed the *Pintail*, and the *Golden-eye* upon the estuary. Widgeons come here in immense flocks; and that beautiful bird the teal, the smallest and most delicate of the whole species, is found for the remainder of the season on loughs and rivers in abundance. The Grebe and Tringa tribes furnish numerous and interesting varieties; and an ornithologist, as well as a sportsman, would have here an ample field, could he but set the season at defiance, and pass his winter on this exposed and stormy coast.

But the note of dissolution of our happy party has sounded. The Colonel, having divers premonitory twinges, has named an early day for his departure. To be caught by the gout here, would be a hazardous experiment; and the portmanteau, whose captivity was likely to occasion such desperate results, is again packed and confided to *Andy Bawn*. But the commander's baggage is not to be exposed to a second interruption. The attempt was fatal to Mr. Burke; for, emboldened by the feud which his unadvised aggression created between my kinsman and this modern Cacus, the *Sweenies** seized the opportunity, and the outlaw was arrested in a whisky-house, tried, and escaped by a miracle from being hanged,—but was, alas! consigned to Australasia for the course of his natural life.

To do Mr. Burke justice, he left his native soil with regret. Finding all chance of commuted punishment over, he endeavoured to obtain his liberty by an ingenious plan to strangle the turnkeys, and emancipate all and every victim of judicial tyranny who pleased to accept his freedom. He did, poor man, make an excellent offer to choke a jailer—but fortune frowned upon the attempt; the half-throttled janitor was

* This numerous clan derive their origin from a northman. They are, I know not with what justice, reckoned a treacherous and vindictive tribe, and a feud with them is consequently held to be a dangerous affair.

saved—and the hero of the bridge of Ballyveeny will cross the equator at the public expense.

To-morrow, wind and weather permitting, the commander takes his departure, and to-night will consequently be a high and solemn festival. Would it were over! I cannot, dare not, offer an excuse for cavilling at bumpers, even were they "fathoms deep;" and all the consolation that an aching head will claim to-morrow, will be a saw from old John about "the dog that bit me," and the merciless badinage of that black-eyed coquette who embodies all that Moore idealized in sketching his *Nora Crina.*

How soft the evening twilight falls on the waters of the estuary! the tide kisses the very verge of the greensward, and looks so treacherously calm, as if its storms were for ever ended. Boat after boat hurries down the inlet to shoot their herring-nets for the night; and many an ancient ditty, or ruder tale, will while away the time till morning. Occasionally a struggle between two rival barks ensues—and I remark, the contest invariably takes place before the windows of the Lodge. One very singular one amused me much. A boat rowed by four women challenged, and actually out-pulled another, though propelled by a similar number of the coarser sex.

Indeed, the occupations of the ladies of Ballycroy are not essentially feminine: the roughest and most dangerous employments they share in common with the men. A Mahratta woman, they told me in India, regularly shampoos her husband's horse. Were I of the fair sex, I would rather operate on a quadruped than row a fishing-boat by the day, and cut sea-weed up to the waist in water, with the expectation of being swept from my precarious footing by the first mountainous surge.

CHAPTER XL.

Colonel leaves us—Last visit to Achil—Snipes and woodcocks—Their migration—Solitary snipe—Cock-shooting in Achil—Mountain covers—Cock-shooting: its accidents—Anecdotes—An unlucky companion.

THE Colonel has left us, and we lose in him the best and safest of friends—a true buon camarado. With spirits of youthful buoyancy, a temper unsoured by time, and indifferent to worldly annoyances, years have only mellowed his companionable qualities, while they added deeply to his anecdote and information. Few men of *a certain age* succeed in retaining their places as first favourites with others some quarter of a century their juniors; but the Colonel is an exception: we shall feel a blank in our society; and in this gay and careless spirit lose a dear companion, who seemed to put time at defiance, and forbade gout itself to interrupt his comfort, or "mar his tranquillity."

The last two days have been dry, the wind is favourable, a white frost has been visible this morning, and we are about to pay our parting visit to Achil. We have again sent to our ancient entertainers, the Water Guards, to beg a shelter for the night; for the days have so sensibly shortened, that we shall have enough to do to reach Dugurth at nightfall.

"Merrily, merrily bounds the bark," and an hour landed us at the Ridge Point. Our establishment is on a minor scale to what we sported on our first descent; we have only some two or three *hangers-on*, and have brought but two brace of orderly and antiquated setters.

I have seen much of snipe-shooting* in many parts of

* The common residence of the snipe is in small bogs, or wet grounds, where it is almost constantly digging and nibbling in the soft mud, in search of his food, which consists chiefly of a very small kind of red transparent worm, about an half inch long; it is said also to eat slugs, and the insects and grubs, of various kinds, which breed in great abundance in those slimy stagnant places. In these retreats, when undisturbed, the snipe walks leisurely with its head erect, and at short intervals keeps moving the tail. But in this state of tranquillity it is very rarely to be seen, as it is extremely watchful, and perceives the sportsman or his dog at a great distance, and instantly conceals itself among the variegated withered herbage so similar in appearance to its own plumage, that it is almost impossible to discover it while squatted motionless in its seat: it seldom, however, waits the near approach of any person, particularly in

Ireland, but I could not have imagined that the number of these exquisite birds could be found within the same space,

that one particular marsh which bounds the rabbit-banks produced. Independently of a quantity of detached birds, several

open weather, but commonly springs and takes flight at a distance beyond the reach of the gun. When first disturbed, it utters a kind of feeble whistle, and gently flies against the wind, turning nimbly in a zigzag direction for two or three hundred paces, and sometimes soaring almost out of sight; its note is then something like the bleating of a goat, but is changed to a singular humming or drumming noise, uttered in its descent.

From its vigilance and manner of flying, it is one of the most difficult birds to shoot. Some sportsmen can imitate their cries, and by that means draw them within reach of their shot; others of a less honourable description, prefer the more certain and less laborious method of catching them in the night by a springe, like that which is used for the woodcock.

The snipe is migratory, and is met with in all countries; like the woodcock, it shuns the extremes of heat and cold by keeping upon the bleak moors in summer, and seeking the shelter of the valleys in winter. In severe frosts and storms of snow, driven by extremity of the weather, snipes seek the unfrozen boggy places, runners from springs, or any open streamlet of water, and they are sure to be found, often in considerable numbers in these places, where they sometimes sit till nearly trodden upon before they will take their flight.

Although it is well known that numbers of snipes leave Great Britain in the spring, and return in the autumn, yet it is equally well ascertained

wisps sprang wildly, as they always do; and I have no doubt that this fen had been their temporary resting-place after their autumnal migration from the north. We were the more inclined to this opinion, from finding many of the birds we killed extremely lean; while others, that sprang *singly*, were in admirable condition. Achil is a natural resting-place for migratory birds: and hence I can well believe the accounts given by the islanders, of the immense numbers of woodcocks and snipes which are here found, in their transit from a high latitude to our more genial climate. The same remark is made touching the vernal visit of these strangers to this island. After woodcocks have for days vanished from the inland covers, they have been found in flocks on the Achil and Erris highlands, evidently congregating for their passage, and preparing for the attempt.

It may be easily conceived, that whether the winter stock of snipes and woodcocks be limited or abundant, will mainly depend upon the state of the winds and weather at the period of migration. Hence, when the latter end of October and the succeeding month have continued stormy, with south or south-easterly gales, a lamentable deficiency of game has been invariably observed. That multitudes perish on their passage, or are obliged to change their course, is certain—and the exhausted state in which the small portion of the survivors reach these shores, attests how difficult the task must be to effect a landing, when opposed by contrary winds and stormy weather.

We crossed the bent-banks, occasionally knocking a rabbit over as we went along, and wheeled to the westward to skirt the base of Slieve More. We had not proceeded far, before

that many constantly remain, and breeds in various parts of the country, for their nests and young ones have been so often found as to leave no doubt of this fact. The female makes her nest in the most retired and inaccessible part of the morass, generally upon the stump of an alder or willow; it is composed of withered grass and a few feathers; her eggs, four or five in number, are of an oblong shape, and of a greenish colour, with rusty spots; the young ones run off soon after they are freed from the shell, but they are attended by the parent birds until their bills have acquired a sufficient firmness to enable them to provide for themselves.

The snipe is a very fat bird, but its fat does not cloy, and very rarely disagrees even with the weakest stomach. It is much esteemed as a delicious and well-flavoured dish, and is cooked in the same manner as the woodcock.

an islander, who was herding cows, told us that there was a *crowour keough beg** in the next ravine. We accordingly put a setter in, and were gratified with a steady point in the place the herdsman had intimated. The bird sprang, and was knocked over by my companion, when the little woodcock proved to be a double snipe. These birds are extremely scarce here, and a few couple only are seen during a whole season by persons most conversant in traversing the bogs. There cannot be a doubt but this bird is a distinct species; but for its extreme rarity and solitary habits naturalists are puzzled to account.

We shot, before we began to ascend the hill, a couple of woodcocks lying out upon the moors. They were very shy, never allowing the dogs to come to a set. This is usually the case when these birds are outlying; and I have followed a cock for miles before I got him within fire, teased by his getting up before I could approach, and removing some hundred yards from the gun. Some favourable inequality of surface has at last enabled me to close with my wild quarry, and, notwithstanding the keenness of his eye, got the wary stranger eventually within range of shot.

There grows in the valleys and water-courses which are so frequent in the Achil and Ballycroy hills, that large and shrub-like heather that reaches nearly to the height of brushwood. Here, in the earlier season, the woodcocks repose after their passage, and at times the numbers found in these ravines are stated to be extraordinary. With the first frost or snow they move off to the interior, dropping as they go along in the different covers, until a part of the flight reaches the very centre of the kingdom. We met, during our day's fag, about fifteen couple, out of which eight and a half were brought to bag. To these we added three brace and a half of grouse, and a brace of hares. When with these were united snipes, plovers, and rabbits, it is not too much to say that our bags were most imposing, and produced above fifty head of game. From our kind friends, the Water Guards, we received a hospitable reception; and next morning were run across the bay in their galley, and landed safely upon our own shores.

The cock-shooting, to use my cousin's words, in the west

* A little woodcock.

of Ireland is acknowledged to be very superior; and when *the flight* has been large, and the season is sufficiently severe to drive the birds well to cover, there is not, to a quick eye, more beautiful shooting in the world. Some of the covers are copses of natural wood, situated in the very centre of the mountains. Consequently, when the snow falls, every woodcock for miles around deserts the heath and seeks the nearest shelter. Then will the sportsman be amply repaid for all his labour. From a copse of not more than thirty acres extent, I have seen fifty couple of woodcocks flushed; and as several excellent covers lay in the immediate vicinity, it was no unusual thing for two or three guns to bring home twenty, nay, thirty couple. I have known a party fire a number of shots that appeared incredible; and I have more than once expended my last charge of powder, and left, for want of ammunition, one or more copses untried.

The best cock-shooting cannot be had without a good deal of fag. Like fox-hunting, it is work for hardy spirits; and *non sine pulvere palma,* will apply to both. To reach a mountain-cover, the sportsman must be on the alert two or three hours before daylight, for he has likely some ten Irish miles to ride or drive over, by a rough and dangerous road,

now rendered scarcely discernible from the adjacent bogs, and hardly passable from the snow-drifts. The short day is hard-

ly sufficient for shooting the different woods; and then the same distance must be again traversed, for which the shooter will be a borrower from the night. Then he must reckon on divers delays and sundry accidents; horses will come down, dog-carts capsize, a trace break, or a spring fail; and what has annoyed me more than all together, probably a fog rise so suddenly and densely, as to render the road undistinguishable from the surrounding heaths. But when all this is achieved,—when a cover-party have fairly encircled the table, after the luxury of a complete toilet,—when the fire sparkles, the curtains are drawn, and the wine circulates,—why then, without let the storm blow till it bursts its cheeks—and within, Father Care may hang himself in his own garters.

There are others perils, also, to which the cover-shooter is obnoxious. The eye is sometimes endangered by pressing unguardedly through the copse wood; and I knew one case where the sight was totally lost from a twig springing from a person who was struggling through the underwood and striking the next who followed. The legs also are frequently and severely wounded by the sharp stumps which remain after a thicket has been thinned. But from random shots the chief danger arises; and to prevent accidents occurring, a party, and particularly if it be numerous, should be guarded in selecting their stands and altering their positions. I have been struck a dozen times, but never with any worse effect than receiving a shot or two in my cheek and ear; but many a time I have felt a shower rattle against my fustian jacket, which, however, endured it bravely, as a garment of proof should do.

Some men, from carelessness or stupidity, are really a nuisance to a cover-party; and to others, one would almost ascribe a fatality, and avoid them like an evil genius. In the former case, I have found, after remonstrance failed, and they continued throwing their shot liberally around, without apparently caring one farthing upon whose person it alighted, the best cure was instantly to turn a barrel as nearly in the direction of the report as possible. A well-distributed charge rattling through the brush wood, and falling upon the delinquent, gave, practically, a hint that made him more cautious for the future, and proved more effective than the most powerful jobation. Of the latter class—I mean unlucky companions I shall particularize one. Captain M—— shot with me an

entire season. He was a pretty shot, and an excellent fellow; but I never entered a cover with him that I was not certain to be struck before we returned home. Every precaution to evade his shot was useless. If in a copse of a mile long there was a solitary opening to admit its passage, he was opposite it to a certainty; and my first intimation that such an alley did exist, would be a fall of withered leaves from the bushes above, and most likely a few grains lodging in my hat or jacket. If I moved to avoid a chance of accident, something induced him to make a corresponding change; and at last I became so nervous, that I obliged him momently to call out, that I might ascertain our relative positions, and guard, if possible, against injury.

We once, during a severe frost, shot the beautiful islands in the lake of Castlebar, which belong to the Marquis of Sligo. There were an immense number of cocks in cover, and we had been particularly successful; but the wonder was, I had that day escaped unwounded, and my prayer to "keep lead out of me" had been heard. On our return, my friend was pluming himself on this result. "It was foolish," he said, "to reckon him unlucky. To be sure, some shots of his had been unfortunate, but such would ever be the case." We had now left off shooting, and were within a few fields of the barracks, when a jack snipe sprang from a drain on the road-side, and flying to the top of the field, pitched in the upper ditch. I followed it merely to discharge my barrels—it sprang, and the report of my gun disturbed a hare in the bottom of the field; she moved, and my companion instantly discharged both barrels. From the hardness of the surface, the shot rose; a shower fell upon the protected parts of my person, while two struck me in the lip, and cut me deeply. I was more than one hundred yards from him, yet from the hard frost, the *ricochet* of the shot came as sharply upon me, as if I had been within point-blank distance. After that incident, need I add? much as I loved him, I never pulled a trigger in his company again.

CHAPTER XLI.

Dull evening—Memoir of Hennessey.

We sat down to dinner *tête-à-tete*, and although both myself and my kinsman made an exertion to banish unpleasant reminiscences, the evening was the most sombre that I had yet passed. The happy party who once tenanted our "merrie home," are never to meet again. The otter-killer "sleeps the sleep that knows no breaking"—the Colonel has retired to his winter quarters—the Priest's confessions call him from us for a season—and some secret intelligence which reached the Lodge over night, has caused Hennessey to disappear.

To gratify a strong expression of curiosity on my part respecting the latter, my cousin told me the following particulars of this singular personage:

"If ever man came into the world with the organ of destructiveness surcharged, it was my unhappy foster-brother. He was a lively and daring boy, and being a favourite with my late father, had opportunities of improvement afforded to him, which persons in his sphere seldom can obtain. But Hennessey showed little inclination for literary pursuits, the gun was more adapted to him than the pen—and at fifteen, when but a very indifferent scribe, he was admitted by the whole population to be the best shot of his years that 'ever laid stock to shoulder.' Encouraged by my father's partiality, from this period he led an idle careless life, and rambled over the country, breaking dogs, or amusing himself with the gun and fishing-rod.

"I was at the college when the first of his misfortunes occurred. He had imprudently ventured into a dancing-house, where a number of the *Sweenies* were assembled, with whom he had previously been at feud, and, as might have been anticipated, a quarrel quickly arose. Hennessey, too late, perceived his danger; but with that daring determination for which he has ever been remarkable, when the assault began, he made a sudden dash for the door, and overturning all that opposed him, succeeded in escaping. He was, however, closely pursued. From his uncommon activity, he far outstripped all but one of his enemies. He had nearly reached

the river—but his enemy was close behind. Intending to disable his pursuer, Hennessey picked up a stone, and unfortunately threw it with such fatal precision, that the skull of his opponent was beaten in, and he expired on the spot.

"Well, this was an unfortunate affair, but it was homicide in self-defence. My father accommodated matters with the Sweenies, and my foster-brother was discharged without a prosecution.

"A year passed, but the Sweenies had not forgotten or forgiven the death of their kinsman. Hennessey's rambling habits exposed him to frequent encounters with this clan: and one night, when returning late from the fair of Newport, with two or three companions, he came into unexpected collision with a party of his ancient enemies. A scuffle ensued—in the struggle he wrested a loaded whip from his antagonist, and struck the unhappy wretch so heavily with his own weapon, that after lingering nearly a month, he died from the contusion.

"This second mishap occasioned us a deal of trouble; but Hennessey surrendered, was tried, and acquitted, and we all trusted that his misfortunes were at an end. He abjured the use of spirits, avoided late hours, and such meetings as might expose him to any collision with that clan who had been so unfortunate, and religiously determined to avoid every cause of quarrelling; but fate determined that it should be otherwise.

"Having been invited to a *dragging home*, as the bridegroom was his near relative, Hennessey could not without giving offence decline attending on the happy occasion. He was then a remarkably handsome fellow—and you would vainly now seek in those gaunt and careworn features, the manly beauty which then caused many a rustic heart to beat. The bride's cousin accompanied her; she was remarkably pretty, and was, besides, reported to be the largest heiress in the barony. With such advantages, no wonder 'of lovers she'd plenty,' as the ballad says:—my foster-brother met her, danced with her, drank with her—loved her, and was beloved in turn. Every rival was double-distanced; but she was unfortunately betrothed by her father to a wealthy *Kearne*;* and although I, in person, interposed, and used my power-

* *Anglice*, a rich vulgar clown.

ful influence, the old fellow her father was obstinate in refusing to break off the match.

"Hennessey was no man to see his handsome mistress consigned without her own consent to the arms of a rival. He made the usual arrangements, and I encouraged him to carry her off. The evening came—he left the Lodge in a boat, with six fine young peasants; and crossing the bay, landed by moonlight at a little distance from the village where his inamorata dwelt.

"That very night a multitude of the Malleys had accompanied the accepted suitor to conclude all necessary preliminaries. The cabin of the heiress was crowded, and all within was noisy revelry. Hennessey, with one companion, stole to the back of the house.

"He knew the chamber of the bride elect, for he had more than once 'when all the world were dreaming,' visited his pretty mistress. He looked through the little casement, and, sight of horror! there she was, seated on the side of the bed, and the Kearne's arm around her waist, with all the familiarity of a privileged lover! There, too, was the priest of Inniskea, and divers elders of 'both the houses'—while the remainder of the company, for whose accommodation this grand chamber was insufficient, were indulging in the kitchen or dancing in the barn.

"Since the days of Lochinvar, there never was a more daring suitor than my foster-brother; yet he did not consider it a prudent measure to enter the state apartment ''mong bridesmen, and kinsmen, and clansmen, and all,'—but waited patiently at the window, to see what some lucky chance might do. Nor did he wait in vain. Kathleein turned her pretty eyes on the moonlit casement, and thought, poor girl! how often her young lover had stolen there in secret, and told his tale of passion. A tap, too light for any but the ear of love to detect, arrested her attention, and she saw the indistinct form of a human face outside; and whose could it be but her favoured youth? Seizing an early opportunity, she stole from the apartment; she soon was in her lover's arms; a few words, and a few kisses,—and all was settled:—and while the Kearne, the priest, and the father, were regulating the exact quantities of cattle and plenishing,* that were to dower the hand-

* *Plenishing*, means household furniture, beds, blankets, &c.

some bride, Kathleein was hurrying to the shore with her young and daring suitor.

"An attempt so boldly and so fortunately begun, was, however, doomed to end unhappily. One of the Malleys had discovered the interview, and witnessed the elopement. Having silently observed the route of the fugitives, he apprized the parties within, that their negotiations were likely to become nugatory, and a fierce and vindictive pursuit was instantly commenced. The distance, however, to the beach was short: the companion of the bold abductor had run forward; the bride was won—the boat was launched—the oars were dipping in the water—when, alas! the rush of rapid footsteps were heard, and oaths and threats announced that the fugitives were closely followed. Two or three of the Malleys had far outstripped the rest; but a minute more, and pursuit would have been hopeless. One man had passed the others far, and on the brink of the tide he caught the fair runaway in his arms, while the companions of the gallant were actually pulling her on board. The chase was hard at hand—twenty feet were heard rushing over the loose shingle—not a moment was to be lost, or the bride was gone for ever. Like lightning Hennessey caught up a stretcher from the bottom of the boat, discharged one murderous blow upon the man who held back his beloved mistress, a deep-drawn moan was heard, and the unhappy Kearne, for it was himself, sank upon the beach without life or motion! Off went the boat—off went the lady—and the athletic crew pulled through the sparkling water, little dreaming that their exulting leader was for *the third time* a homicide! Great God! I cannot tell you what I suffered next morning, when the tragical result of an attempt I had myself encouraged was told me. My first care was to look to the safety of my foster-brother and his bride; and until pursuit was over, I had them conveyed by Pattigo in the hooker to Innisboffin. There they remained in safe concealment, and for six months it was not deemed prudent to permit them to return, as the clan of the deceased were numerous and vindictive.

"Time flew. They came back, and for some time remained here unmolested. Kathleein was near her confinement, when one day we received information that the Malleys had procured a warrant with a civil force to execute it, and were determined at every hazard to arrest my foster-brother. I, a

magistrate myself, could not openly protect him; and that evening he left the lodge at night-fall, to shelter himself in the island of Innisbiggle until the threatened danger passed. Kathleein unfortunately accompanied him; although we told her that there was but one poor family on the place, and its difficulty of approach, while favourable to the concealment of her husband, was unsuited to any female situated like her.

"On landing on the island, the solitary family, who generally resided in the single cabin it contained, were absent at the fair of Westport. Hennessey and his wife took possession of the hut, lighted a fire, and made themselves as comfortable as the wretched hovel would admit. Even then he urged her to return to the Lodge—but to leave him in perfect solitude on this desolate place was more than she could determine. Night came, and the weather, which had been squally all day, became worse momently, and at midnight blew a gale. The outlaw and his wife were now shut out from all the world, for a raging sea was roaring round the island, and all communication with the main was interrupted. Whether fear precipitated the dreaded event I know not; but in the middle of the night, while the elemental war was in its fury, symptoms of approaching travail were perceived by poor Kathleein, and the unhappy girl became more and more sensible of the terrible danger that was coming on. God of mercy! what was to be done? It wanted some hours of morning, and even were it light, until the tide fell no mortal could cross that stormy water.

"Poor wretch! with a withered heart, all that he could do to cheer his sinking companion was done; but every hour she became worse, and every moment her pain and danger were increasing. Driven to madness, at the first dawn of morning he rushed madly to the beach, and though the retiring tide rushed between the island and the main with furious violence, he plunged into the boiling eddies, and with great strength and desperate courage made good his passage to the opposite shore.

"To obtain help was of course attended with delay; at last, however, it was accomplished, and the tide fell sufficiently to permit some females to cross the *farset*.* He, the unhappy

* The stand communicating at low water between an island and the main.

husband, far outstripped them: like a deer he bounded over the beach that interposed between the cabin and the sands—he reached it—a groan of exquisite agony was heard from within—next moment he was stooping over his exhausted wife a dead infant was pressed wildly to her bosom: she turned a dying look of love upon his face, and was a corpse within the arms of the ill-starred homicide!

"When the tidings of the melancholy fate of poor Kathleein were carried to the Lodge, I got the hooker under weigh and stood over to the island. My unhappy foster-brother appeared paralysed with sorrow, and incapable of any exertion. We brought him, with the bodies of the young mother and the dead babe, to the house; and the latter were in due season interred with every mark of sympathy and respect.

"For a time I dreaded that the unfortunate homicide would have sunk into hopeless idiocy; but he suddenly appeared to rouse his torpid faculties; he became gloomy and morose—and, deaf to all my remonstrances, to the least of which formerly he would have paid the most marked regard, he wandered over the country and seemed to court an arrest, or rather an attempt at it; for from his desperation, I am inclined to think he would have done some new deed of blood had his enemies ventured to assail him. All I could do to prevent mischief I did. I had the bullets drawn from his fire-arms when he slept; I kept him under constant espionage, and retained him as much about my person as I could possibly contrive. Whether none would grapple with a desperate and well-armed man, or that some feeling for his sufferings softened the rancour of his enemies for a time, I know not, but he passed unmolested through the country; and the most daring of the Sweenies and Malleys left the road when they accidentally met my unhappy foster-brother. Time has gradually softened his distress, and the asperity of his temper has subsided; he has lost the fierce and savage look that lately no stranger could meet without being terror-stricken; and I shall endeavour to get the death of his miserable rival, which decidedly was unpremeditated and accidental, accommodated. Some intelligence has made it advisable for Hennessey to leave the Lodge, although I hardly think any of his enemies would dare to seek him here; but still we cannot be too cautious, and to be placed in the power of his former foeman at this moment, would be to involve his life in imminent peril.

"His misfortunes have given me more distress than any thing that has ever befallen myself personally. His attachment to me is so devoted, that I cannot but have brotherly feelings for this ill-starred fosterer. Although he would follow me to the corners of the earth, if I required, he would rather risk a trial than leave the country, which I have often and earnestly entreated him to do."

I offered here to take Hennessey under my protection to England, but my kinsman shook his head.

"It is a kind intention, Frank, but he would not leave me. I am the last link that binds him to the world, and while life lasts, we must run our wild career in the same couples. Poor Hennessey! there are worse men than he, although misfortune has made him *thrice* a homicide."

It was late: John brought oysters at the customary hour, and soon after we separated for the night.

CHAPTER XLII.

My departure fixed—Coast suited to an ornithologist—Godsend—An ocean waif—My last day—Coursing—Size of hares—Fen-shooting—Kill a bittern—Castle of Doona—Fall of the tower—Netting rabbits—Reflections—Morning—Passage through the Sound—Hennessey—Departure from the kingdom of Connaught.

The day of my departure from this wild retreat, where so many months have happily passed over, is determined: indeed, the season hardly admits a longer sojourn, and circumstances beyond my control require an immediate return to England. My kinsman has made arrangements for passing the genial season of Christmas, and the remainder of the winter, with his relations in the interior; and in the morning fox-hunt and evening dance, the dullest months of gloomy winter will merrily disappear.

For me, were I not encumbered with a fortune, and "all the ills that flesh is heir to" when one is afflicted with independence, this place would suit me admirably. Though these shores be wild, and weather savage, yet every day brings its novelty along with it. The winter fisheries on the coast are magnificent; and birds, known only to a naturalist elsewhere,

are daily presented during the stormy season to the active and intelligent shooter. That wild being, Hennessey, has preserved an infinity of curious specimens; and many a rare production that the ornithologist would prize, is here shot, and disregarded by the peasant who is so fortunate as to possess a gun.

Among the natural advantages which this remote coast possesses, the ocean contributes largely to the stock, and even the tempest does not rage in vain. The prevailing westerly winds drive many a serviceable waif to the shore; and seldom a winter passes, but some valuable wreck or derelict property adds to my kinsman's limited resources. True, these "angel visits" are irregular, and come in questionable shape; but still, be they in form of butter or rum, train-oil or mahogany, they answer "for the nonce," and even a dead body has not been profitless to the finder.

I possibly have thus digressed from having witnessed the triumphant arrival of a huge beam of Dantzic oak and a ship's topmast, which certain retainers of my gentle cousin have towed in. It appears that these "spolia opima" were discovered early in the morning about the centre of the bay, and a boat from both shores approached them nearly at the same time. Both, like true vassals, claimed on behalf of their respective master; and it being impossible, on what an Irishman would very naturally term "debatable land," to settle the question of property, the respective crews fought the thing fairly out, and my kinsman's representatives being men of thews and sinews, after breaking two heads, and chucking one gentleman of "the Capulets" overboard, brought the godsends safely hither. Law there will be, of course. The rival claimant was formerly an attorney, who managed to spoliate an unhappy fool who was litigiously inclined, and of course became owner of the property. He who thus gets them will be most tenacious of ill-acquired rights; and this log and spar will most likely terminate in being made a droit of the Admiralty.

We started on our last chassé—and the *ultima dies* of our sporting wanderings has come. The shortened days and wet moors have made us desert grouse-shooting, and we crossed the estuary to shoot a fen some three miles off, which at this season is thickly tenanted with snipes and waterfowl.

The day was particularly favourable; dark and quiet,* with a gentle breeze. As we had to traverse a hill which bounds the tillage-grounds of several of the opposite villages, we brought the greyhounds with us, to get a run or two while passing this otherwise unprofitable beat. For my own part I had early given up coursing in disgust. The hares were not plenty—difficult to find—and when we did get them a-foot, they either made for the sea-shore, or ran into some morass, where dogs had no chance whatever, and one became weary of seeing them cut themselves on rocks, or flounder in a bog; and latterly I gave up the business as a bad concern. But on this occasion I was agreeably disappointed. The hill afforded a sound and level surface; from its contiguity to the corn-fields, the hares were tolerably numerous, and before we reached the shooting-ground, we had had six excellent courses, and killed four hares.

I never observed a more striking contrast in point of size than these hares exhibited. Two of them were of the smallest mountain class; dark-coloured meagre animals, who certainly made matchless running while they lasted. The others were of the fullest size, and in point of good condition, though neither so large nor so white as Byron's, would have done honour to any hare-park in Great Britain.

The fen we sought was situate in a valley between two gentle slopes, and formed by a deep and sluggish stream which passed through its centre, extended for about four miles, varying its breadth from a few yards to more than a quarter of a mile. The morass was interspersed with shrubs and underwood, and alders of inconsiderable size were occasionally clumped along the borders. Part of the surface was

* Snipes, when plenty, afford very excellent sport, it being allowed to be the pleasantest, on account of the quick succession of shots; this is also the best shooting for practice, seldom failing to make indifferent shots most excellent ones. There is no shooting that presents such a variety of shots, scarcely any two being alike. These birds usually fly against the wind, therefore every snipe-shooter should walk down it, as by that means the bird, if he rises before him, will fly back, and coming round him, describe a kind of circle, or at least his flight, for a certain distance, will not lengthen the shot, allowing him a certain time to cover the bird, and take good aim; for if he gets up before him, and should by chance go down the wind or from him, it is then the most difficult shot. It will be proper in this case to let the bird get a little distance from him, as then he will fly steadier, and the slightest grain will fetch him to the ground.

too unsound to admit its being traversed by the lightest foot, but generally it was broken into tammocks, which a bold and practised shooter might pass with little difficulty. We took opposite sides, and consequently few birds sprang without affording one or the other of the guns a fair shot. The number of snipes that flushed in this fen went far beyond my expectation, though considerably excited; and besides, we met at least fifteen couple of that sweet little duck the Teal. We followed the morass to its extremity, and then returned—and our beat homewards was pleasanter, and, so far as the game-bags went, more profitable than the first range.

Out of seventy head, we reckoned one woodcock and a brace of old *stagers* that we found among the heathy banks bordering the fen. We shot six couple of teal; and, with one exception, the remainder of the count were snipes, of which at least a fourth were jacks. In the most impassable section of the morass, old York pointed with more than customary steadiness; and, "it might be fancy," actually looked round with peculiar expression, as if he would intimate that no common customer was before him! I got within twenty yards and encouraged the old setter to go in; but he turned his grizzled and intelligent eyes to mine, and wagged his tail as if he would have said, "Lord! you don't know what I have here." A tuft of earth flung by one of the aides-de-camp, obliged the skulker to get up, and to our general surprise a fine bittern arose. I knocked him over, but though he came down with a broken wing and wounded leg, he kept the old dog at bay until my companion floundered through the swamp and secured him. On this exploit I plumed myself, for bitterns are here extremely scarce, and in Ballycroy they are seldom heard or found.

On our return home we passed the old castle of Doona, once supposed to have been honoured by the residence of Mrs. Grace O'Malley, who, if fame tells truth, was neither a rigid moralist nor over-particular in her ideas of "meum and tuum." Some wild traditions are handed down of her exploits; and her celebrated visit to that English vixen Elizabeth, is fairly on record. The castle of Doona was, till a few years since, in excellent preservation, and its masonry was likely to have puzzled Father Time himself; but Irish ingenuity achieved in a few hours what as many centuries had hitherto failed in effecting.

A rich and hospitable farmer,* whose name will be long remembered in this remote spot, had erected a comfortable dwelling immediately adjoining the courtyard wall of the ancient fortress; and against the tower itself was piled in wealthy profusion a huge supply of winter fuel. It was a night of high solemnity, for his first-born son was christened. No wonder then that all within the house were drunk as lords. Turf was wanted, and one of *the boys* was despatched for a cleaveful—but though Patt could clear a fair, and "bear as much beating as a bull," he was no man to venture into the old tower in the dark, "and it haunted." Accordingly to have fair play "if the ghost gripped him," he provided himself with a brand of burning bog-deal. No goblin assailed him, and he filled his basket and returned unharmed to the company, but unfortunately forgot the light behind him. The result may be anticipated. The turf caught fire, and from the intense heat of such a mass of fuel, the castle-walls were rent from top to bottom, and one side fell before morning with a crash like thunder. Nor was the calamity confined to fallen tower and lost fuel. Alas! several kegs and ankers of contraband spirits were buried beneath the walls, and the huge masses of masonry that came down, burst the concealed casks of Cognac and Schiedam.

We found the warrener netting rabbits in the sand-banks. They were intended for sale in the interior, and many dozens were already taken. Formerly the skins were valuable, and a well-stocked burrow was a valuable appendage to a country gentleman; but of late these furs have fallen so considerably in value, that the warren does not produce a tithe of what it did "when Boney, the Lord speed him! was uppermost." Indeed, many a hearty lament is made in Ballycroy for poor Napoleon, and his name is ever associated with times of past prosperity.

I cannot describe the melancholy reflections which crowded over my mind, as I squibbed off my barrels on the beach, while the boat was crossing the channel to carry us over the estuary. It was for *the last time*, and with that thought, all the happy events I spent by "flood and fell" passed over my

* John Conway.

memory in "shadowy review." The jovial commander, the burly priest, my merry cousin, the stern homicide, the ancient butler, and the defunct otter-killer, all were before me. I trod in fancy the banks of Pullgarrow, or couched among the rocks of our highland ambuscade; I saw the startled pack spring from the purple heather, while the red deer,

> Like crested leader proud and high,
> Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky;
> A moment gaz'd adown the dale,
> A moment snuff'd the tainted gale—

and vanished in the rocky pass of Meeltramoe. My imaginary wanderings continued till we landed at the pier, and with a deep sigh I hastened to my chamber, to make, for the last time, my toilet after a day of sylvan exercise.

Morning—the last morning has arrived, and all is bustle and packing up. Travers, though a cold-blooded Englishman who scarcely can tell a grouse from a game-cock, seems to feel regret at leaving this hospitable cabin—old John is sensibly affected—and Alice's black eyes are dim with weeping. For once she kissed me without coquetry, and as she received my farewell present, invoked the Lord to bless me with such unaffected ardour as proved that her fervent benison came warmly from the heart.

Over the parting with this rude but affectionate family I shall hurry. My cousin accompanied me to Westport, and we left the lodge after an early dinner, in full expectation of reaching that town for supper, though the distance is some ten or twelve leagues, and by an intricate passage with very difficult and perplexing tides. As if fortune wished to offer me a parting compliment, the wind blew from the north-west, and there was as much of it as we could well carry our full sails to. We entered the Bull's Mouth at three-quarter tide, and brought plenty of water over the sands, and in an hour cleared the Sound, and rushing through the boiling currents of Bearnaglee, found ourselves in Clew Bay. The wind blew fresh and steadily, and at nine o'clock we were moored along the quay of Westport.

One incident occurred: at a rocky point which ran from the

Achil side into the Sound, and there narrowed the channel considerably, we observed a human being couched on a stone among the sea-weed. The deep water passed within an oar's length of the spot, and as the boat flew like a falcon past the point, the man rose and hailed us. We hove the hooker to. It was Hennessey—and nothing could dissuade him, notwithstanding the risk was considerable, from coming on board to give me a parting escort.

Early next morning I found, myself in his majesty's mail, and with many a sincere adieu, bade farewell to my kind cousin and his wild but warm-hearted followers.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Moral and physical condition of the west, past and present.

Here I am, safely over the Shannon: a laudable improvement in the mode and rate of travelling of the Westport mail facilitates one's intercourse with the kingdom of Connaught; and in course of time I have little doubt but Erris will be as approachable as Upper Canada, or any of the remoter provinces.

After my rambling observations upon men and manners, you must permit me, like the last lawyer in a cause, to condense the evidence, and make a general wind-up.

With regard to the moral condition of the West, I cannot conscientiously assert that any great improvement will be traced for the last half-century. The two great classes, the gentry and peasantry, have undergone a mighty revolution in conduct, manners, and modes of thinking; and yet one will look in vain for commensurate advantages. It is admitted that the former body have changed their generic character altogether. We have the old school stigmatized now for its aristocratic tyranny and petty assumption; and many a modern squire blesses God that he is not as others were who preceded him. And yet our fathers were, I verily believe, wiser in their generation, and better fitted for their own times, than we. True, these days were little better than barbarous. Denis Browne, and Dick Martin, and

Bowes Daly, and many a far-famed name of minor note, were then in all their glory, and they lived, it must be acknowledged in very curious times. In those days, the qualifications of a representative were determined by wager of battle, and a rival for senatorial fame was probably requested by the old member to provide his coffin, before he addressed the county. Doctors rode on horseback over the country in cauliflower wigs and cocked hats; and if they differed about a dose or decoction, referred the dispute to mortal arbitrement. In these happy times, a client would shoot his counsellor if he lost a cause—the suitor sought his mistress at pistol-point—and there was but one universal panacea for every known evil, one grand remedy for all injuries and insults.

It was then, indeed, a bustling world. Men fought often, drank deep, and played high; ran in debt, as a matter of course; scattered fairs and markets at their good pleasure; put tenants in the stocks *ad libitum*; and cared no more for the liberty of the subject than they did for the king's writ. Yet where they merry times. Under all these desperate oppressions, the tenants throve and the peasantry were comfortable. Every village could point out its rich man—every cabin had food sufficient for its occupants. When the rent was required it was ready; and though a man was sometimes in the guard-house, his cow was rarely in the pound. *Tempora mutantur!* Who dare now infringe upon the liberty of the subject? "Who put my man i' the stocks?" would be hallooed from Dingle to Cape Clear. Doubtless, civil rights are now most scrupulously protected; but I suspect that food is abridged in about the same proportion that freedom is extended.

There was one class of persons who, in these old-world times, were conspicuously troublesome, who have since then fortunately disappeared. These were a nominal description of gentry, the proprietors of little properties called *fodeeins*, who continued the names and barbarisms of their progenitors. Without industry, without education, they arrogated a certain place in society, and idly imitated the wealthier in their vices. Poverty and distress were natural results, and desperate means were used to keep up appearances. The wretched serfs, whom they called their tenants, were ground

to powder, till, happily for society, the *fodeeins* passed into other hands, and the name and place ceased to be remembered. The ivied walls, and numerous and slender chimneys one sees in passing through this country, will, in nine out of ten cases, point a moral of this sort.

In times like those of forty years ago, this extinct tribe were from the peculiar temper and formation of society, occasionally a sad nuisance. The lord of a *fodeein*, like Captain Mac Turk, was "precisely that sort of person who is ready to fight with any one; whom no one can find an apology for declining to fight with; in fighting with whom considerable danger is incurred; and, lastly, through fighting with whom no *éclat* or credit could redound to the antagonist." Hence, generally, the larger proprietors saw this class sink by degrees, without an attempt to uphold them, and the *fodeein*, to the great joy of the unhappy devils who farmed it, was appended by general consent to the next estate.

Many examples of dangerous and illegal authority, as usurped and exercised by the aristocracy within the last half-century, are on record, that would appear mere romance to a stranger. One of the Fitzgerald family was probably more remarkable than any person of his times. He was the terror of the upper classes—and to such as arrogated the privileges of the aristocracy, without, as he opined, a prescriptive right, he was the very devil. If a man aspired to become a duellist, or even joined the hounds, without being the proper *caste*, George Robert would flog him from the field without ceremony. He actually for years maintained an armed banditti, imprisoned his own father, took off persons who were obnoxious—and when he was hanged—and fortunately for society this eventually occurred—it required a grand cavalry and artillery movement from Athlone to effect it.

Denis Browne was an autocrat of another description; a useful blundering bear, who did all as religiously in the king's name as ever Mussulman in that of the prophet. He did much good and some mischief—imprisoned and transported as he pleased; and the peasantry to this day will tell you, that he could hang any one whom he disliked. Yetboth these men were favourites with their tenantry,

and under them their dependents prospered and waxed wealthy.

Sometimes the memoir of an individual will give a more graphic picture of the age wherein he flourished than a more elaborate detail; and in the strange eventful histories of these two singular men, the leading characters of their times will be best portrayed.

No persons were more dissimilar—none were bitterer enemies—none in every point, personal and physical, were more essentially opposite. In one point alone there was a parallel—both were tyrants in disposition, and both would possess power, and no matter at what price.

George Robert Fitzgerald was middle-sized, and slightly but actively formed; his features were regular, his address elegant, and his manners formed in the best style of the French school. In vain the physiognomist would seek in his handsome countenance for some trace of that fierce and turbulent disposition which marked his short and miserable career. No one when he pleased it, could delight society more; and with the fair sex he was proverbially successful. It is said that gallantry, however, was not his forte, and that he seldom used his persuasive powers with women, but for objects ultimately pecuniary or ambitious.

Added to his external advantages, he was an educated man; and that he possessed no mean literary talent, may be inferred from his celebrated "Apology," which is neatly and spiritedly written.

His courage was undoubted. In Paris and London he was noted as a duellist; and in Mayo, his personal encounters are still remembered. His duel with Doctor Martin, his encounter with Cæsar French, the most notorious fire-eaters of the day, placed him foremost in that class. He was, moreover, a dead shot, and reported to be one of the ablest swordsmen in the kingdom. As a sportsman he was justly celebrated. He was an elegant horseman, and his desperate riding was the theme of fox-hunters for many a year. No park-wall or flooded river stopped him—and to this day, leaps that he surmounted, and points where he crossed the Turlough river, are pointed out by the peasantry.

The dark act which clouded his memory, and his unhappy fate, are generally known; and considering the other traits of his strange and mingling character, the apology offered

by his friends on the score of occasional insanity, is not improbable. One circumstance would strengthen this conclusion. He was interred by night, and with so much privacy, in the old churchyard of Turlough, that the place where his remains lay was for a time uncertain. Accident in some degree revealed it. In the confusion attendant upon his hurried sepulture, it is said that a ring was forgotten and left upon the finger. Afterwards, in opening the ground, this relic was discovered; and what more satisfactorily proved it was that the skull was distinctly fractured; and it was a matter well known, that Fitzgerald had been dangerously wounded by a pistol-bullet in the head, in one of his numerous and sanguinary duels on the continent.

Denis Browne, when a young man, is said to have been extremely handsome: but early in life he became corpulent and engrossed in other pursuits, gradually careless and slovenly in his person, and neglected any means to restrain his constitutional obesity. To strong natural abilities, he united decision of character and mental energy. He started in dangerous times; several influential families disputed political power with him—he had a fierce and dangerous aristocracy to overcome—men cold to every argument "but the last and worst one," the pistol. Hence in the very outset of his voyage, his vessel all but foundered. It was his first contest for the county, and he was opposed by the late Lord Clanmorris. The Bingham party was bold and powerful, and after a protracted contest, matters looked gloomily enough, and the Brownes were likely to be defeated.

"In this dilemma," to use his own words, "I have applied to Counsellor ——, my legal adviser. I told him how badly things were, and inquired what was to be done?

"'My dear Dennis,' said he, with a grave and serious movement of his full-bottomed wig, 'the thing admits but one remedy, and that lies in a nut-shell. You are one-and-twenty years old, and you have never yet been on the sod—why that one fact would lose you your election —you must fight—my dear boy,'

"'Fight! to be sure I will, when I'm insulted.'

'Of course you would, and so would any body: but you must fight, and that too this very evening.'

"'Impossible! how could it be managed?'

"'How! arrah whihst, Denis!—maybe ye think I have nothing but law in my head; you must knock down Bingham!'

"'Knock down a man who never offended me—with whom I have no dispute?'

"'And what does this matter? The blow will settle that difficulty. But as you are particular, can't ye say some friend of his affronted one of yours—some devil you never heard of will answer—and as John Bingham is a reasonable man, he'd not lose time in asking idle questions.'

"Accordingly, I followed this excellent advice, struck Bingham on the steps of the court-house, was called out in half an hour, fought in the barrack-yard, was there wounded, and won my election."

From that period Denis Browne rose rapidly into power. His able brother, the late Marquis of Sligo, supported him with all his influence and talent. Denis overcame every obstacle, distanced every competitor, and at last was absolute in authority, dictator for twenty years, and ruled the county during that period with a rod of iron.

No one was warmer in his friendship or more virulent in his antipathies. These feelings blinded his better judgment, and many of his greatest mistakes arose from an anxiety to aggrandize a favourite or annoy an enemy. He unfortunately outlived his power, and that circumstance embittered his latter years. He had not resolution to quit public life while he might have retired with *éclat;* he saw his influence expire, and his power partitioned insensibly among men with whom, but a few years before, his will was law.

In private life Denis Browne was cheerful and hospitable. Full of anecdote, an excellent story-teller, one who had mixed largely with the world and knew mankind intimately, he was an amusing and instructive companion. Young and lively society he delighted in; and though, from increased corpulency, and all "the ills that flesh is heir to," life was latterly a burden, the mind was vigorous to the last—and the death-bed of Denis Browne was marked with a firmness and philosophy that was in perfect keeping with the energy and determination of his life.

Another order of things has succeeded. Men talk now

with horror of acts of oppression and arbitrary power, which then every country justice committed; but after all, the times have changed for the worse—and the outcry about invaded rights and an enslaved population, was, after all, mere verbiage, "signifying nothing."

The last fading gleam of western prosperity was during the power of Napoleon, and with his dynasty it vanished. The terrible change from war to peace; the bursting of the banking bubbles, which supplied for that time an imaginary capital; over-population and high rents, have ruined this wild district, and reduced its peasantry, with few exceptions, to abject wretchedness and want.

Is there for this any remedy? Cannot modern landlords, acting on what they call enlightened principles, remove the causes of distress, and restore the peasantry to that scale of comfort they enjoyed under the rude and tyrannical *régime* of their fathers? *They cannot.* They will talk "*scholarly*" of tithes and local taxation, and vainly attribute the insolvency of their tenants to these and such like causes; this is *vox et præterea nihil*—an unreal and fanciful conceit. The true cause of the misery of the western population is over-population and excessive rents; and before the peasantry could be tolerably comfortable, the lands must, on the average, be lowered at least *one third.* Even then, at present prices, the occupant will be hardly able to manage to pay the rent and live.

But can the landlords do this? Can they afford to equalize their rental to the times, and throw a third portion from their nominal income overboard? *They cannot.* The majority of the owners of western estates, from family burdens and national unthriftiness, are heavily and hopelessly encumbered; and a reduction on such scale as would be necessary to ensure their tenants' comforts, would completely pauperize themselves. Hence, to keep off the evil day, every pretext but the true one will be assigned for local wretchedness—and every reason but the right one offered to the starving tenant, to persuade him that ruinous rents will never occasion want and poverty.

In personal appearance, the western peasantry are very inferior to those of the other divisions of the kingdom.

Generally, they are undersized and by no means so good-looking as their southern neighbours—and I would say, in other points they are equally deficient. To overcome their early lounging gait and slovenly habits, is found by military men a troublesome task; and while the Tipperary man speedily passes through the hands of the drill-sergeant, the Mayo peasant requires a long and patient ordeal, before a martial carriage can be acquired, and he be perfectly *set-up* as a soldier. These defects once conquered, none are better calculated for the profession. Hardy, active, patient in wet and cold, and accustomed to indifferent and irregular food, he is admirably adapted to endure the privations and fatigue incident to a soldier's life on active service—and in dash and daring, no regiments in the service hold a prouder place than those which appertain to the kingdom of Connaught.

It is said that the physical appearanee of the Irish peasantry deteriorates as the northern and western sea-coasts are approached; and, certainly, on the latter the population are very inferior to that of the adjacent counties. Even the inhabitants of different baronies in the same county, as their locality advances inland, will be found to differ materially; and in an extensive cattle-fair, the islander will be as easily distinguished from the borderer, whether he be on the Galway or Roscommon frontier, as from the stock-master of Leinster, or the jobber *from the North*.

Indeed, fifty years back, the communication between the islands and the interior was so difficult and unfrequent, that the respective occupants looked on each other as very strangers. Naturally, slowly as civilization crept westward, the islands and remoter coasts, from local causes, were last visited, and many curious circumstances to this day would prove it. In this age of machinery, when the minutest matters are produced by its agencies, and the lowest occupations of human labour are transacted by powers unknown to our fathers, there are extensive tracts upon the western portions of the island, where even a mill has never been erected, and where the corn is prepared for distillation or food by the same rude methods used by barbarous nations one thousand years ago. Trituration between two stones, by the hand labour of an individual, is the means employed to reduce the corn into meal; and the use of that ancient

hand-mill the *querne*, is still general throughout Ballicroy and the islands on the coast.

The inhabitants of this district are extremely hospitable to passing travellers, but by no means fond of encouraging strangers to sojourn permanently among them. This latter inherent prejudice may arise from *clannish* feelings, or ancient recollections of how much their ancestors were spoliated by former settlers, who by artifice and the strong hand managed to possess the better portions of the country. They are also absurdly curious, and will press their questions with American pertinacity, until, if possible, the name, rank, and occasion of his visit, is fully and faithfully detailed by the persecuted traveller.

The credulity of these wild people is amazing, and their avidity for news, if possible, exceeded by the profound reliance they place in the truth of the intelligence. Hence, the most absurd versions of passing events circulate over the district—and reports prevail, by turns, of a ridiculous or mischievous tendency, generally according to the mental temperament of the story-teller.

It formerly was not uncommon for people in the islands to live and die without ever having seen a town. Of course, they were a simple and unsophisticated race—and their natural mistakes, if they did by accident come in collision with other beings, were the source of many an inland jest. One very old story is told, in which an Achil man is the hero; and as to its truth, old Antony would as soon have doubted the existence of the holy trout in Kilgeever,* as have questioned its authenticity.

An islander was once obliged to go into the town of Castlebar upon business; and among other marvellous things which there met his sight, he was particularly struck with the appearance of an earthen jar in a shop-window. He inquired what this unknown article might be, and was informed that it was a mare's egg, which, if placed beside the fire during the winter, would infallibly produce a foal the ensuing spring. The price was moderate, and the Achil man determined to possess the treasure, and thus become master of a horse. Having effected the purchase,

* A sacred well in the west, tenanted by a trout of surpassing sanctity.

he set out on his way rejoicing—and before evening fell, came within view of his own home, and sat down upon a heathy bank to rest himself. He placed his recent acquisition beside him— but alas! from its spherical form, it rolled down the hill, and, striking against a rock at the bottom, was shivered by the blow. A hare which had couched beneath the stone, startled at the crash, sprang from her form, and went off at speed. The unhappy Achil man gazed, in an agony of despair, after what he believed the emancipated quadruped—and then exclaimed with a bitter groan, "*Mona mon diaoul*! What a horse he would have been!—Lord! if he was but two years old! *the Devil himself would not catch him.*"

Now, the most curious part of this story is, that although a standing joke upon Achil simplicity for a century, it is to be found *verbatim* in a German jest-book, with this only difference, that a *gourd* is there substituted for a *jar*.

In alluding to the strange employments of the female peasantry, I noticed those coarse and laborious exercises which elsewhere are confined to the lords of the creation. That the appearance of the fair inhabitants of the western highlands should harmonize with their rude avocations, might be expected; and hence the female peasantry, in personal advantages, are very inferior indeed to those of the interior. The constant exposure to sun and storm injures the complexion, and gives them an old and faded look; and the habit of dispensing with shoes renders the feet large and misshapen. Among the *Coryphées* who frequented our mountain balls, there was but one girl who might be termed decidedly handsome. Her face was uncommonly intelligent—I never saw so dark an eye, and her teeth were white as ivory. But there was a natural ease in all she did—whether she brought a pitcher from the spring, or danced a merry strathspey, every movement was graceful. Even her simple toilet evinced instinctive taste, though no corset was required to regulate a form moulded by the hand of Nature, and her magnificent hair boasted no arrangement beyond the simple cincture of a ribbon—

> But seldom was a snood amid
> Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
> Whose glossy black to shame might bring
> The plumage of a raven's wing.

And yet I have seen that young beauty bending beneath a basket of potatoes which would have overloaded me—and, on one occasion, carry a strapping fellow across the river, who was coming on some state affair to the cabin, which, as he conceived, required him to appear in the presence with dry legs.

On the score of propriety of conduct, I would assign the female peasantry of this district a high place. When the habits of the country are considered, one would be inclined to suspect that excessive drinking, and the frequent scenes of noctural festivities which wakes and dances present, would naturally lead to much immorality. This, however, is not the case:—broken vows will no doubt occasionally require the interference of the magistrate or the priest; but generally the lover makes the only reparation in his power, and the deceived females and deserted children are seldom seen in Erris.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Hunting—Men—Horses and hounds—Game—Conclusion.

If ever a district were designed by Nature for field sports, a person, from even a cursory glance upon the map, would point to Mayo. Its great extent of mountain surface, interspersed with bogs and morasses—its numerous and expansive waters—and its large tracts of downs and feeding-grounds, render it available for every purpose of the sportsman; and few species of game indigenous to Britain, in their peculiar seasons, will here be sought in vain.

As a hunting country, *the plains* have been justly chronicled—and the adjacent counties of Galway and Roscommon yield to none in the empire. The extensive sheep-farms afford superior galloping-ground—and the fences, though few and far between, from their size and character, require a powerful horse and dashing rider. Hence, in the annals of fox-hunting, the bipeds and quadrupeds of Connaught are held in due estimation; and it has been stated, without contradiction, that in their *own country* no men or horses can compete with them.

During the last century, the West of Ireland was cele-

brated for its breed of horses. They were of that class denominated "the old Irish hunter,"—a strong, well-boned, and enduring animal, that without any pretension to extraordinary speed, was sufficiently fast for fox-hounds, an excellent weight-carrier, and, better still, able to live with any dogs and in any country. As *fencers*, this breed was unequalled; and for a crack hunter to carry ten or eleven stone over *six feet six* of solid masonry, was no extraordinary event;—*seven* feet has been achieved repeatedly—and there are still, I have no doubt, many horses in the province capable of performing the latter feat. But, alas! this noted class of hunters is now comparatively rare—a higher-blooded, and, as all admit, an inferior caste has been substituted—the racing hunter fills the stables that formerly were occupied by the old Roscommon weight-carrier—and in a few years this celebrated and valuable animal will be seldom seen. The number of English thorough-bred horses introduced within the last thirty years into the Connaught racing studs, gradually introduced a slight and unserviceable hybrid—and, too late, gentlemen discovered the error of endeavouring to procure a cross, which should combine increased speed with those durable qualities that alone can enable a horse, under reasonable weight, to live with fast hounds in a country where they can go for miles without a check, and where the leaps are always severe, and occasionally tremendous.

Of the riders, it may be observed that, much as Connaught has been celebrated for desperate horsemanship, no charge of degeneracy will lie against the present race. To the curious in break-neck fencing, I would recommend a sojourn with a Connaught club—or if that should be inconvenient, a visit to the steeple-chases on *the plains* or at Knockcroghery would be sufficient—he will there see *six feet walls* especially built "for the nonce," under the inspection of conscious stewards, who would give nothing but honest measure, taken at racing speed, and that too in the middle of a bunch of gentlemen, who would ride over an adopted child;—or let him join a drag after a champaign lunch at Lord C.'s;—let him do this, and then form his estimate of Connaught horsemanship.

A mistake prevails in England, as to the supposed inferiority in value of the horses commonly employed by the Western

sportsmen. I have seen a field out, when, of twelve horses, ten would probably average at one hundred guineas each; and the remaining two (brothers, Jerry and Lancet) were reported to have cost the noble owner five hundred guineas apiece. When the dangers of a stone-wall country and the desperate riding of the men are considered, these are indeed sporting prices. And yet accidents of a serious character are not frequent; every horse that has been ridden to hounds is generally blemished more or less; but it is astonishing in such a country and with such riders, how long some noble hunters have lasted.

The hounds, with few exceptions, are inferior. They are seldom properly kennelled, or regularly hunted. Masters of hounds in the West seem careless to all considerations beyond having a pack that can *go high* and keep tolerably well together. In sizing aud draughting dogs* they are by no means particular, and hence the *ensemble* of many a kennel is materially injured. In home management and field turn-out, they are infinitely behind their English brethren:—the packs are carelessly hunted—the kennel servants badly appointed—and I have met men upon the plains able to take a horse over any thing that hand and heart could carry him, who to a stranger would appear, from "the wildness of their attire," to be desperate apprentices levanting with their master's property.

And yet, after this eulogy upon the splendid horsemanship of the Western gentlemen, it may appear singular that I add, few of them ride well to hounds. An impatience in the field, and the anxiety to be foremost where all are forward, interferes constantly with the dogs, and causes a pressure upon the

* The same remark may be made respecting the setters and pointers in general use among the Connaught sportsmen. Many admirable dogs will be met occasionally; but there appears to be little pains taken in matching the females; and in the same kennel you will find an intermixture of different and discordant stocks. Not unfrequently I have seen a man shooting to setters, pointers, and droppers, on the same heath, and hunting all indiscriminately.

As to greyhounds, they are in little request excepting in the mountain districts—and those principally kept are of the rough and wiry species, or the small smooth breed, which from their lightness are best adapted for the soft bogs which form the coursing-grounds.

pack, very unfavourable to good hunting. Riding rather *a the field* than to the hounds, is the prevailing error. Fences are crossed which would be better evaded—horses unnecessarily distressed; and I have seen a man actually go out of his way to take a regular *rasper*, when he had a *gap* within thirty yards.

Game in Mayo would be much more abundant than it is were it not sadly thinned by irregular shooters, and an infinity of vermin. To prevent the spoliations of the former would be a difficult task—as, from the quantity of wild fowl that every winter brings to the Western shores, a number of *guerilla* sportsmen are employed or countenanced by the resident gentry; to whom it is too strong a temptation, when lying for ducks, or stealing upon plovers, to discover a pack or covey grouped upon the snow, and yet have sufficient philosophy to keep the finger from the trigger. The vermin, however, are the main cause of the scarcity of game, and no means are taken to destroy these marauders. From the eagle to the sparrow-hawk, every variety abounds in the woods and mountains, and every species of kite and crow that an ornithologist would admire, and a sportsman abominate, infests the Western counties.

Of fallow deer, there is a large stock in the parks throughout the province—and buck-hunting has of late seasons been getting into fashion on *the plains*. I have already, in speaking of the red-deer, lamented the prospect of their extinction. That event I look upon as fast approaching—and I am convinced that nothing can avert this national calamity but a vigorous determination of the mountain proprietors to extend protection to those limited herds which are still found, though in lessened numbers, upon the Alpine heights bordering on Burrishoole and Tyrawley.

Foxes are tolerably abundant in the hunting districts, and mischievously so in the mountains and islands. From the latter any quantity could be procured, and there is no place in Britain where covers could be so easily formed, and stocked with less trouble and expense. I have seen healthy foxes for days hawked over the country before a purchaser could be found, and at last disposed of for a few shillings. I once

bought a fine dog-fox for half-a-crown, and, had I not become his owner, I verily believe the captor must have turned him out upon the street.

Hares are in most places tolerably plentiful; in point of numbers differing according to local situation and the relative protection afforded to them. In the moors, the mountain hares are scarce; but, from the quantity of winged and four-footed vermin, it is surprising that so many are occasionally seen.

Rabbits abound in the West of Ireland. On the coast, the immense sand-banks are for miles perforated with their burrows—and, notwithstanding that they are unmercifully abandoned to cur-dogs, cats, and vermin, their numbers continue unabated. In the woods and coppices bush rabbits are numerous, and cover-shooters, when beating for woodcocks, will have their amusement diversified by many a running shot.

Other wild animals, in every variety, may be met with in parts of Connaught. Badgers and wild cats, martins and weasels will be found in their customary haunts; while on the coast and estuaries, the lakes and inland waters, seals and otters are plentiful in the extreme.

Of winged game, pheasants and partridges excepted, I have already spoken. With regard to the first, they are scarce, and, it would appear, difficult to rear in this moist and stormy climate. I speak only of the places contiguous to the coast, where the experiment has been tried; for inland, where they have been duly attended to, and the English system adopted, they have thriven amazingly. As to partridges, they are generally scarce, and in Erris and Ballycroy almost unknown. In the wheat counties, and especially in certain parts of Galway, I believe they are tolerably abundant—but by comparison with the quantity a sportsman meets in an English beat, the best partridge-shooting procurable in Connaught will be very indifferent indeed.

My task is ended—I have chronicled "the short but simple annals" of a sporting summer, passed in a remote and unfrequented corner of the earth, and protracted until "winter and rough weather" forbade a longer stay. Into these solitudes I carried prejudices as unfair as they were unfavourable

—I came prepared to dislike a people who, unhappily for themselves, are little known and less regarded. I found my estimate of their character false, for kindnesses were returned tenfold, and the native outbreakings of Milesian hospitality met me at every step. What though the mountaineer had nothing but his potato-basket to offer—it was freely open to my hand. Did I wander from the road? his loy* was left in the furrow, and he ran miles to put me in the right path. If it rained and I sheltered in a cabin, the hearth was swept, the driest log placed upon the fire, and the bed-covering taken off to keep my saddle from the shower. If possible, my wishes were anticipated—and labour was unheeded when my pleasure or comfort could be attained.

One incident I must mention, for it marks the character of this simple and devoted peasantry. It was the hottest of the dog-days, and we had toiled over a barren moor, and missed some packs that we were aware were in that neighbourhood. A hill of most discouraging altitude was before us—and as its face was difficult beyond description, I hesitated to attempt it. But beyond it was a land of promise—a valley where wonders might be expected—and *malgré* fatigue, I *did* muster courage for the ascent. I gave my gun to a young peasant who acted as my henchman, and, as he was already loaded heavily, I observed him stagger more than once before we gained the summit. Throughout the day he never left my side—when the river was forded, he led the way—and yet I observed that he was unusually flushed, and at times sighed heavily. When we reached the cabin, he tottered to a seat, and the next moment became insensible. Then, and not till then, the truth was disclosed: he had been attacked with measles on the preceding night; but rather than surrender his post to another, he actually, and under the fever of the disease, worked for twelve hours beneath a burning sun. Old Antony, by some simple means, brought the eruption plentifully to the skin, and in another week my gallant henchman was at my side, without any apparent trace of lassitude.

I have left these mountains, and never shall I enjoy the

* *Loy*, a narrow spade.

unalloyed excitement—the calm luxurious solitude, which I found among their wastes. What has refinement to offer me in exchange? Will the over-stocked preserve replace the moorland *chase*, with its glorious ridge of purple highlands—its silver lake, and sparkling river—my wild followers—my tried friends—and the dear cabin and its snowy tent, peeping from the dark expanse of heather, like a white sea-bird from the lap of ocean? Alas! nothing will compensate for these—or give me an equivalent for the joyous intercourse with kindred spirits, which I realized and left in *the wilds of Ballycroy*.

THE END.

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THE SMUGGLER.

CHAPTER I.

It is wonderful what improvements have taken place in clocks and watches during the last half-century; how accurately the escapements are constructed, how delicately the springs are formed, how easily the wheels move, and what good time they keep. After all, society is but a clock: a very complicated piece of mechanism; and it, too, has undergone, in many countries, the same improvements that have taken place in the little ticking machines that we put in our pockets, or those greater indicators of our progress towards eternity that we hang upon our walls. From the wooden clock, with its weight and catgut, to the exquisite chronometer which varies only by a second or two in the course of the year, what a vast advance! and between even a period which many still living can remember, and that in which I now write, what a change has taken place in the machinery and organization of the land in which we dwell!

In the times which I am about to depict, though feudal ages were gone, though no proud barons ruled the country round from castle and stronghold, though the tumultuous times of the great rebellion had also passed away, and men in buff and bandolier no longer preached, or fought, or robbed, or tyrannised, under the name of law and liberty; though the times of the second Charles, and the second James, William and Mary, and good Queen Anne, falling collars, and hats and plumes, and floating wigs, and broad-tailed coats, were all gone, bundled away into the great lumber-room of the past; still, dear reader, there was a good deal of the wooden clock about the mechanism of society.

One of the parts in which rudeness of construction and coarseness of material were most apparent, was, in the customs system of the country, and in the impediments which it met

with. The escapement was anything but fine. Now a days we do things delicately. If we wish to cheat the government, we forge Exchequer bills, or bribe landing-waiters and supervisors, or courteously insinuate to a superior officer that a thousand pounds is not too great a mark of gratitude for enabling us to pocket twenty thousand at the expense of the Customs. If we wish to cheat the public, there is chalk for our milk, grains of paradise for our beer, sago and old rags for our sugar, lime for our linen, and devils' dust to cover our backs. Chemistry and electricity, steam and galvanism, all lend their excellent aid to the cheat, the swindler, and the thief; and if a man is inclined to keep himself within respectable limits, and deceive himself and others at the same time, with perfect good faith and due decorum, are there not homœopathy, hydropathy, and mesmerism?

In the days I speak of, it was not so. There was a grander roughness and daringness about both our rogues and our theorists. None but a small villain would consent to be a swindler. We had more robbers than cheats; and if a man chose to be an impostor, it was with all the dignity and decision of a Psalmanazor, or a bottle conjuror. Gunpowder and lead were the only chemical agents employed; a bludgeon was the animal magnetism most in vogue, and your senses and your person were attacked and knocked down upon the open road without having the heels of either delicately tripped up by some one you did not see.

Still this difference was more apparent in the system of smuggling than in anything else, and the whole plan, particulars, course of action and results were so completely opposed to anything that is, or can be in the present day; the scenes, the characters, the very localities have so totally changed, that it may be necessary to pause a moment before we go on to tell our tale, in order to give some sort of description of the state of the country bordering on the sea-coast, at the period to which I allude.

Scarcely any one of the maritime counties was, in those days, without its gang of smugglers; for if France was not opposite, Holland was not far off; and if brandy was not the object, nor silk, nor wine, yet tea and cinnamon, and hollands, and various East India goods, were things duly estimated by the British public, especially when they could be obtained

without the payment of Custom-house dues. But besides the inducements to smuggling, which the high price that those dues imposed upon certain articles, held out, it must be remembered that various other commodities were totally prohibited, and as an inevitable consequence, were desired and sought for more than any others. The nature of both man and woman, from the time of Adam and Eve down to the present day, has always been fond of forbidden fruit; and it mattered not a pin whether the goods were really better or worse, so that they were prohibited, men would risk their necks to get them. The system of prevention also was very inefficient, and a few scattered Custom-house officers, aided by a cruiser here or there upon the coast, had an excellent opportunity of getting their throats cut or their heads broken, or of making a decent livelihood by conniving at the transactions they were sent down to stop, as the peculiar temperament of each individual might render such operations pleasant to him. Thus, to use one of the smugglers' own expressions, a *roaring* trade in contraband goods was going on along the whole British coast, with very little let or hindrance.

As there are land-sharks and water-sharks, so were there then (and so are there now) land-smugglers and water-smugglers. The latter brought the objects of their commerce either from foreign countries or from foreign vessels, and landed them on the coast; and a bold, daring, reckless body of men they were; the former, in gangs, consisting frequently of many hundreds, generally well mounted and armed, conveyed the commodities so landed into the interior, and distributed them to others, who retailed them as occasion required. Nor were these gentry one whit less fearless, enterprising, and lawless, than their brethren of the sea.

We have not yet done, however, with all the ramifications of this vast and magnificent league, for it extended itself, in the districts where it existed, to almost every class of society. Each tradesman smuggled or dealt in smuggled goods; each public-house was supported by smugglers, and gave them in return every facility possible; each country gentleman on the coast dabbled a little in the interesting traffic; almost every magistrate shared in the proceeds or partook of the commodities. Scarcely a house but had its place of concealment, which would accommodate either kegs or bales, or human beings, as

the case might be; and many streets in sea-port towns had private passages from one house to another, so that the gentleman inquired for by the officers at No. 1, was often walking quietly out of No. 20, while they were searching for him in vain. The back of one street had always excellent means of communication with the front of another, and the gardens gave exit to the country with as little delay as possible.

Of all counties, however, the most favoured by nature and by art for the very pleasant and exciting sport of smuggling, was the county of Kent; its geographical position, its local features, its variety of coast, all afforded it the greatest advantages, and the daring character of the natives on the shores of the Channel was sure to turn those advantages to the purposes in question. Sussex, indeed, was not without its share of facilities, nor did the Sussex men fail to improve them; but they were so much farther off from the opposite coast, that the commerce, which we may well call the regular trade, was at Hastings, Rye, and Winchelsea, in no degree to be compared to that which was carried on from the North Foreland to Romney Hoy.

At one time the fine level of "The Marsh," a dark night, and a fair wind, afforded a delightful opportunity for landing a cargo, and carrying it rapidly into the interior; at another time, Sandwich Flats and Pevensey Bay presented a harbour of refuge, and a place of repose to kegs innumerable and bales of great value; at another period, the cliffs round Folkestone and near the South Foreland saw spirits travelling up by paths which seemed inaccessible to mortal foot; and at another, the wild and broken ground at the back of Sandgate was traversed by long trains of horses, escorting or carrying every description of contraband articles.

The interior of the country was not less favourable to the traffic than the coast: large masses of wood, numerous gentlemen's parks, hills and dales tossed about in wild confusion; roads, such as nothing but horses could travel, or men on foot, often constructed with felled trees or broad stones laid side by side; wide tracts of ground, partly copse and partly moor, called in that county "minnisses," and a long extent of the Weald of Kent, through which no highway existed, and where such a thing as coach or carriage was never seen, offered the land smugglers opportunities of carrying on their transactions

with the degree of secrecy and safety which no other county afforded. Their numbers, too, were so great, their boldness and violence so notorious, their powers of injuring or annoying so various, that even those who took no part in their operations were glad to connive at their proceedings, and at times to aid in concealing their persons or their goods. Not a park, not a wood, not a barn, did not at some period afford them a refuge when pursued, or become a depository for their commodities, and many a man, on visiting his stable or his cart-shed early in the morning, found it tenanted by anything but horses or waggons. The churchyards were frequently crowded at night by other spirits than those of the dead, and not even the church was exempted from such visitations.

None of the people of the county took notice of, or opposed these proceedings; the peasantry laughed at, or aided, and very often got a good day's work, or, at all events, a jug of genuine hollands from the friendly smugglers; the clerk and the sexton willingly aided and abetted, and opened the door of vault, or vestry, or church, for the reception of the passing goods; the clergyman shut his eyes if he saw tubs or stone jars in his way; and it is remarkable what good brandy punch was generally to be found at the house of the village pastor. The magistrates of the county, when called upon to aid in pursuit of the smugglers, looked grave, and swore in constables very slowly, despatched servants on horseback to see what was going on, and ordered the steward or the butler to "*send the sheep to the wood*," an intimation that was not lost upon those for whom it was intended. The magistrates and officers of seaport towns were in general so deeply implicated in the trade themselves, that smuggling had a fairer chance than the law in any case that came before them, and never was a more hopeless enterprise undertaken, in ordinary circumstances, than that of convicting a smuggler, unless captured in flagrant delict.

Were it only our object to depict the habits and manners of these worthy people, we might take any given part of the seaward side of Kent that we chose for particular description, for it was all the same. No railroads had penetrated through the country then, no coast blockade was established, even martello towers were unknown; and in the general confederacy or understanding which existed throughout the whole of the county,

the officers found it nearly a useless task to attempt to execute their duty. Nevertheless, as it is a tale I have to tell, not a picture to paint, I may as well dwell for a few minutes upon the scene of the principal adventures about to be related. A long range of hills, varying greatly in height and steepness, runs nearly down the centre of the county of Kent, throwing out spurs or buttresses in different directions, and sometimes leaving broad and beautiful valleys between. The origin or base, if we may so call it, of this range, is the great Surrey chain of hills; not that it is perfectly connected with that chain, for in many places a separation is found, through which the Medway, the Stour, and several smaller rivers wind onward to the Thames or to the sea; but still the general connexion is sufficiently marked, and from Dover and Folkestone, by Chart, Lenham, Maidstone, and Westerhan, on the one side, and Barham, Harbledown, and Rochester, on the other, the road runs generally over a long line of elevated ground, only dipping down here and there to visit some town or city of importance, which has nested itself in one of the lateral valleys, or strayed out into the plain.

On the northern side of the county, a considerable extent of flat ground extends along the bank and estuary of the Thames from Greenwich to Sandwich and Deal. On the southern side, a still wider extent lies between the high land and the borders of Sussex. This plain or valley, as perhaps it may be called, terminates at the sea by the renowned flat of Romney Marsh. Farther up, somewhat narrowing as it goes, it takes the name of the Weald of Kent, comprising some very rich land and a number of small villages, with one or two towns of no very great importance. This Weald of Kent, is bordered all along by the southern side of the hilly range we have mentioned; but strange to say although a very level piece of ground was to be had through this district, the high road perversely pursued its way up and down the hills, by Lenham and Charing, till it thought fit to descend to Ashford, and thence once more make its way to Folkestone. Thus a great part of the Weald of Kent was totally untravelled; and at one village of considerable size, which now hears almost hourly the panting and screaming steam-engine whirled by, along its iron course, I have myself seen the whole population of the place turn out to behold the wonderful phenomenon of a coach-and-four, the

first that was ever beheld in the place. Close to the sea the hills are bare enough; but at no great distance inland, they become rich in wood, and the Weald, whether arable or pasture, or hop-garden or orchard, is so divided into small fields by numerous hedgerows of fine trees, and so diversified by patches of wood-land, that, seen at a little distance up the hill —not high enough to view it like a map—it assumes, in the leafy season, almost the look of a forest partially cleared.

Along the southern edge, then, of the hills we have mentioned, and in the plainer valley that stretches away from their feet, amongst the woods, and hedgerows, and villages, and parks which embellish that district, keeping generally in Kent, but sometimes trespassing a little upon the fair county of Sussex, lies the scene of the tale which is to follow, at a period when the high calling, or vocation, of smuggling was in its most palmy days. But ere I proceed to conduct the reader into the actual locality where the principal events here recorded really took place, I must pause for an instant in the capital, to introduce him to one or two travelling companions.

CHAPTER II.

It was in the grey of the morning, and very grey, indeed, the morning was, with much more black than white in the air, much more of night still remaining in the sky than of day appearing in the east; when, from the old Golden Cross, Charing Cross, or rather from the low and narrow archway which, at that time, gave exit from its yard into the open street, exactly opposite the statue of King Charles, issued forth a vehicle which had not long lost the name of diligence, and assumed that of stage-coach. Do not let the reader delude himself into the belief that it was like the stage-coach of his own recollections in any other respect than in having four wheels, and two doors, and windows. Let not fancy conjure up before him flat sides of a bright claret colour, and a neat boot as smooth and shining as a looking-glass, four bays, or browns, or greys, three parts blood, and a coachman the pink of all propriety. Nothing of the kind was there. The vehicle was large and roomy, capable of containing within, at least, six travellers of large size. It was hung in a somewhat

straggling manner upon its almost upright springs, and was elevated far above any necessary pitch. The top was decorated with round iron rails on either side; and multitudinous were the packages collected upon the space so enclosed; while a large cage-like instrument behind contained one or two travellers, and a quantity of parcels. The colour of the sides was yellow; but the numerous inscriptions which they bore in white characters left little of the ground-work to be seen; for the name of every place at which the coach stopped, was there written for the convenience of travellers who might desire to visit any town upon the road; so that each side seemed more like a leaf out of a topographical dictionary of the county of Kent than anything else. Underneath the carriage was a large wicker basket, or cradle, also filled with trunk-mails, and various other contrivances for holding the goods and chattels of passengers; and the appearance of the whole was as lumbering and heavy as that of a hippopotamus. The coachman mounted on the box was a very different looking animal even from our friend Mr. Weller, though the inimitable portrait of that gentleman is now, alas, but a record of an extinct creature! However, as we have little to do with the driver of the coach, I shall not pause to give a long account of his dress or appearance, and, only noticing that the horses before him formed as rough and shambling a team of nags as ever were seen, shall proceed to speak of the travellers who occupied the interior of the vehicle.

Although, as we have seen, the coach would have conveniently contained six, it was now only tenanted by three persons. The first, who had entered at the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, was a tall, thin, elderly gentleman, dressed with scrupulous care and neatness. His linen and his neckcloth were as white as snow, his shoes, his silk stockings, his coat, his waistcoat, and his breeches as black as jet; his hat was in the form of a Banbury cake; the buckles in his shoes and at his knees, were large and resplendent; and a gold-headed cane was in his hand. To keep him from the cold, he had provided himself with a garment which would either serve for a cloak or a coat, as he might find agreeable, being extensive enough for the former, and having sleeves to enable it to answer the purpose of the latter. His hair and eyebrows were as white as driven snow, but his eyes were still keen,

quick, and lively. His colour was high, his teeth were remarkably fine, and the expression of his countenance was both intelligent and benevolent, though there was a certain degree of quickness in the turn of the eyes, which, together with a sudden contraction of the brow when anything annoyed him, and a mobility of the lips, seemed to betoken a rather hasty and irascible spirit.

He had not been in the coach more than a minute and a-half, but was beginning to look at a huge watch, which he drew from his fob, and to "pish" at the coachman for being a minute behind his time, when he was joined by two other travellers of a very different appearance and age from himself. The one who entered first was a well made, powerful man, who might be either six-and-twenty or two-and-thirty. He could not well be younger than the first of those two terms, for he had all the breadth and vigorous proportions of fully-developed manhood. He could not be well older than the latter, for not a trace of passing years, no wrinkle, no furrow, no greyness of hair, no loss of any youthful grace was apparent. Although covered by a large rough coat, then commonly called a wrap-rascal, of the coarsest materials and the rudest form, there was something in his demeanour and his look which at once denoted the gentleman. His hat, too, his gloves, and his boots, which were the only other parts of his dress that the loose coat we have mentioned suffered to be seen, were all not only good, but of the best quality. Though his complexion was dark, and his skin bronzed almost to a mahogany colour by exposure to sun and wind, the features were all fine and regular, and the expression high toned, but somewhat grave, and even sad. He seated himself quietly in the corner of the coach, with his back to the horses; and folding his arms upon his broad chest, gazed out of the window with an abstracted look, though his eyes were turned towards a man with a lantern, who was handing something up to the coachman. Thus the old gentleman on the opposite side had a full view of his countenance; and seemed, by the gaze which he fixed upon it, to study it attentively.

The second of the two gentlemen I have mentioned entered immediately after the first, and was about the same age, but broader in make, and not quite so tall. He was dressed in the height of the mode of that day; and though not in uniform,

bore about him several traces of military costume, which were, indeed, occasionally affected by the dapper shopmen of that period, when they rode up Rotten Row or walked the Mall, but which harmonized so well with his whole appearance and demeanour, as to leave no doubt of their being justly assumed. His features were not particularly good, but far from ugly, his complexion fair, his hair strong and curly; and he would have passed for a rather handsome man, than otherwise, had not a deep scar, as if from a sabre wound, traversed his right cheek and part of his upper lip. His aspect was gay, lively, and good-humoured, and yet there were some strong lines of thought about his brow, with a slightly sarcastic turn of the muscles round the corner of his mouth and nostrils. On entering, he seated himself opposite the second traveller, but without speaking to him, so that the old gentleman who first tenanted the coach could not tell whether they came together or not; and the moment after they had entered, the door was closed, the clerk of the inn looked at the way-bill, the coachman bestowed two or three strokes of his heavy whip on the flanks of his dull cattle, and the lumbering machine moved heavily out, and rolled away towards Westminster Bridge.

The lights which were under the archway had enabled the travellers to see each other's faces, but when once they had got into the street, the thickness of the air, and the greyness of the dawn, rendered everything indistinct, except the few scattered globe lamps which still remained blinking at the sides of the pavement. The old gentleman sunk back in his corner, wrapped his cloak about him for a nap, and was soon in the land of forgetfulness. His slumbers did not continue very long, however; and when he woke up at the Loompit Hill, he found the sky all rosy with the beams of the rising sun, the country air light and cheerful, and his two companions talking together in familiar tones. After rousing himself, and putting down the window, he passed about five minutes either in contemplating the hedges by the road-side, all glittering in the morning dew, or in considering the faces of his two fellow-travellers, and making up his mind as to their characters and qualities. At the end of that time, as they had now ceased speaking, he said—

"A beautiful day, gentlemen. I was sure it would be so when we set out."

The darker and the graver traveller made no reply, but the other smiled good-humouredly, and inquired—

"May I ask by what you judged; for to me the morning seemed to promise anything but fine weather?"

"Two things, two things, my dear sir," answered the gentleman in black. "An old proverb and a bad almanack."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the other. "I should have thought it a very good almanack if it told me to a certainty what sort of weather it would be."

"Ay, but how did it tell me?" rejoined the elderly traveller, leaning his hand upon the gold head of his cane. "It declared we should have torrents of rain. Now, sir, the world is composed of a great mass of fools with a small portion of sensible men, who, like a little quantity of yeast in a large quantity of dough, makes the dumpling not quite so bad as it might be. Of all the fools that I ever met with, however, the worst are scientific fools, for they apply themselves to tell all the other fools in the world that of which they themselves know nothing, or at all events very little, which is worse. I have examined carefully, in the course of a long life, how to deal with these gentry, and I find that if you believe the exact reverse of any information they give you, you will be right nine hundred and ninety-seven times out of a thousand. I made a regular calculation of it some years ago: and although at first sight it would seem that the chances are equal, that these men should be right or wrong, I found the result as I have stated, and have acted upon it ever since in perfect security. If they trusted to mere guess work, the chances might, perhaps, be equal, but they make such laborious endeavours to lead themselves wrong, and so studiously avoid everything that could lead them right, that the proportion is vastly against them."

"If such be their course of proceeding, the result will be naturally as you say," answered the gentleman to whom he spoke; "but I should think that, as the variations of the weather must proceed from natural causes constantly recurring, observation and calculation might arrive at some certainty regarding them."

"Hold the sea in the hollow of your hand," cried the old gentleman, impatiently; "make the finite contain the infinite; put twenty thousand gallons into a pint pot, and when you

have done all that, then calculate the causes that produce rain to-day and wind to-morrow, or sunshine one day and clouds the next. Men say the same cause acting under the same circumstances will always produce the same effect, good; I grant that, merely for the sake of argument. But I contend that the same effect may be produced by a thousand causes or more. A man knocks you down; you fall: that's the effect produced by one cause; but a fit of apoplexy may make you fall exactly in the same way. Then apply the cause at the other end if you like, and trip your foot over a stone, or over some bunches of long grass that mischievous boys have tied across the path: down you come, just as if a quarrelsome companion had tapped you on the head. No, no, sir; the only way of ascertaining what the weather will be from one hour to another is by a barometer. That's not very sure, and the best I know of is a cow's tail, or a piece of dried sea-weed. But these men of science, they do nothing but go out mare's-nesting from morning till night, and a precious number of horses' eggs they have found!"

Thus commenced a conversation which lasted for some time, and in which the younger traveller seemed to find some amusement, plainly perceiving, what the reader has already discovered, that his elderly companion was an oddity. The other tenant of the coach made no observation, but remained with his arms folded on his chest, sometimes looking out of the window, sometimes gazing down at his own knee in deep thought. About ten miles from town, the coach passed some led horses, with the grooms who were conducting them; and, as is natural for young men, both the old gentleman's fellow-travellers put their heads to the window, and examined the animals with a scrutinizing eye.

"Fine creatures, fine creatures, horses!" said the gentleman in black.

"Those are very fine ones," answered the graver of the two young men; "I think I never saw better points about any beast than that black charger."

"Ay, sir; you are a judge of horse-flesh, I suppose?" rejoined the old gentleman; "but I was speaking of horses in the abstract. They are noble creatures indeed; and as matters have fallen out in this world, I can't help thinking that there is a very bad arrangement, and that those at the top of the

tree should be a good way down. If all creatures had their rights, man would not be the cock of the walk, as he is now; a feeble, vain, self-sufficient, sensual monkey, who has no farther advantages over other apes than being able to speak and cook his dinner."

"May I ask," inquired the livelier of the two young men, "what is the gentlemanly beast you would put over his head?"

"A great many, a great many," replied the other. "Dogs, horses, elephants, certainly; I think elephants at the top. I am not sure how I would class lions and tigers, who decidedly have one advantage over man, that of being stronger and nobler beasts of prey. He is only at the head of the tribe Simia, and should be described by naturalists as the largest, cunningest, and most gluttonous of baboons."

The gay traveller laughed aloud; and even his grave companion smiled, saying, drily, "On my life, I believe there's some truth in it!"

"Truth, sir!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "It's as true as we are living. How dare man compare himself to a dog? An animal with greater sagacity, stronger affections, infinitely more honour and honesty, a longer memory, and a truer heart. I would not be a man if I could be a dog, I can assure you."

"Many a man leads the life of a dog," said the gay traveller. "I'm sure I have, for the last five or six years."

"If you have led as honest a life, sir," rejoined the old man, "you may be very proud of it."

What the other would have answered cannot be told, for at that moment the coach stopped to change horses, which was an operation, in those days, occupying about a quarter of an hour, and the whole party got out and went into the little inn to obtain some breakfast; for between London and Folkestone, which was to be the ultimate resting-place of the vehicle, two hours and a half, upon the whole, were consumed with breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. Thus any party of travellers proceeding together throughout the entire journey, had a much better opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with each other than many a man has before marriage with the wife he takes to his bosom.

Though the conversation of the old gentleman was, as the reader has perceived, somewhat morose and misanthropical, he showed himself very polite and courteous at the breakfast table;

made the tea, carved the ham, and asked every man if he took cream and sugar. What wonderful things little attentions are; how they smooth down our asperities and soften us to one another! The two younger gentlemen had looked upon their elderly companion merely as that curious compound which we have before mentioned, an oddity; and which, like a pinch of strong snuff, stimulates us without being very pleasant; but now they began to think him a very nice old gentleman; and even the graver of the pair conversed with him almost cheerfully for the short space of time their meal occupied. When they had finished, and paid the score, the whole party walked out together to the front of the house, where they found a poor beggar-woman with a child in her arms. Each gave her something, but the elderly man stopped to inquire farther, and the others walked up and down for a few minutes, till the coachman, who was making himself comfortable by the absorption of his breakfast, and the horses who were undergoing the opposite process in the application of their harness, at length made their appearance. The two younger gentlemen turned their eyes from time to time, as they walked, to their elderly friend, who seemed to be scolding the poor woman most vehemently. His keen black eyes sparkled, his brow contracted, he spoke with great volubility, and demonstrated somewhat largely with the forefinger of his right hand. What were their internal comments upon this conduct did not appear, but both were a good deal surprised to see him, in the end, put his hand into his breeches pocket, draw forth a piece of money; it was not silver, for it was yellow, and it was not copper, for it was too bright, and slip it quietly into the poor woman's palm. He next gave a quiet, almost a timid glance around, to see if any one were looking, and then stepped rapidly into the coach, as if he were ashamed of what he had done. During all this proceeding he had taken no notice of his two companions, nor at all listened to what they were talking of; but as they entered the vehicle, while the horses were being put to, the one said to the other, "I think you had better do so, a great deal. It is as well to have the *carte du pays* before one commences operations."

"Well," replied the other, "you take the lead, Edward. The wound is still painful, though it is an old one."

What they were talking of their companion could not tell;

but it excited, in some degree, his curiosity; and the manners of his two companions had, to say the truth, pleased him, though he was one of those men who, with very benevolent feelings at the bottom, are but little inclined to acknowledge that they are well pleased with any thing or with any body. For a moment or two all parties were silent; but the elderly gentleman was the first to begin, saying in a more placable and complimentary tone than he was in general accustomed to use, "I hope I am to have the pleasure of your society, gentlemen to the end of my journey."

"I rather think we shall be your companions as far as you go," replied the gayer of the two young men, "for we are wending down to the far, wild parts of Kent; and it is probable you will not go beyond Folkestone, unless, indeed, you are about to cross the seas."

"Not I," exclaimed the old gentleman: "I have crossed the seas enough in my day, and never intend to set my foot out of my own country again, till four stout fellows carry me to the churchyard. No, no; you'll journey beyond me, a long way, for I am only going to a little place called Harbourne, some distance on the Sussex side of Folkestone; a place quite out of the world, with no bigger a town near it than Cranbrook, and where we see the face of a human creature above the rank of a farmer, or a smuggler, about once in the year, always excepting the parson of the parish."

"Then you turn off from Maidstone?" said the graver traveller, looking stedfastly in his face.

"No, I don't," replied the other. "Never, my dear sir, come to conclusions where you don't know the premises. I go, on the contrary, to Ashford, where I intend to sleep. I am there to be joined by a worthy brother of mine, and then we return together to Cranbrook. You are quite right, indeed, that my best and straightest road would be, as you say, from Maidstone; but we can't always take the straightest road in this world, though young men think they can, and old men only learn too late that they cannot."

"I have good reason to know the fact," said the gayer of his two fellow-travellers; "I myself am going to the very same part of the country you mention, but have to proceed still farther out of my way; for I must visit Hythe and Folkestone first."

"Indeed, indeed!" exclaimed their elderly friend. "Do you know any body in that part of Kent? Have you ever been there before?"

"Never," replied the other; "nor have I ever seen the persons I am going to see. What sort of a country is it?"

"Bless the young man's life!" exclaimed the gentleman in black, "does he expect me to give him a long picturesque description of St. Augustine's Lathe? If you wish to know my opinion of it, it is as wild and desolate a part of the world as the backwoods of America, and the people little better than American savages. You'll find plenty of trees, a few villages, some farm-houses, one or two gentlemen's seats—they had better have called them stools—a stream or two, a number of hills and things of that kind; and your humble servant, who would be very happy to see you, if you are not a smuggler, and are coming to that part of the country."

"I shall not fail to pay my respects to you," replied the gentleman to whom he spoke; "but I must first know who I am to inquire for."

"Pay your respect where it is due, my dear sir," rejoined the other. "You can't tell a whit whether I deserve any respect or not. You'll find all that out by-and-bye. As to what I am called, I could give you half a dozen names. Some people call me the Bear, some people the Nabob, some the Misanthrope; but my real name—that which I am known by at the post-office—is Mr. Zachary Croyland, brother of the man who has Harbourne House: a younger brother too, by God's blessing, and a great blessing it is."

"It is lucky when every man is pleased with his situation," answered his young acquaintance. "Most elder brothers thank God for making them such, and I have often had cause to do the same."

"It's the greatest misfortune that can happen to a man," exclaimed the old gentleman, eagerly. "What are elder brothers, but people who are placed by fate in the most desperate and difficult circumstances. Spoilt and indulged in their infancy, taught to be vain and idle and conceited from the cradle, deprived of every inducement to the exertion of the mind, corrupted by having always their own way, sheltered from all the friendly buffets of the world, and left, like a pond in a gravel pit, to stagnate or evaporate without stirring.

Nine times out of ten, from mere inanition, they fall into every sort of vice; forget that they have duties as well as privileges, think that the slice of the world that has been given to them is entirely at their own pleasure and disposal, spend their fortunes, encumber their estates, bully their wives and their servants, indulge their eldest son till he is just such a piece of unkneaded dough as themselves, kick out their younger sons into the world without a farthing, and break their daughters' hearts by forcing them to marry men they hate. That's what elder brothers are made for; and to be one, I say again, is the greatest curse that can fall upon a man. But come, now I have told you my name, tell me yours. That's but a fair exchange you know, and no robbery, and I hate going on calling people 'sir' for ever."

"Quite a just demand," replied the gentleman whom he addressed, "and you shall immediately have the whole particulars. My name is Digby, a poor major in his majesty's — regiment of dragoons, to whom the two serious misfortunes have happened of being born an eldest son, and having a baronetcy thrust upon him."

"Couldn't be worse; couldn't be worse!" replied the old gentleman, laughing. "And so you are Sir Edward Digby! Oh, yes! I can tell you you are expected, and have been so these three weeks. The whole matter's laid out for you in every house in the country. You are to marry every unmarried woman in the hundred. The young men expect you to do nothing but hunt foxes, course hares, and shoot partridges from morning to night; and the old men have made up their minds that you shall drink port, claret, or madeira, as the case may be, from night till morning. I pity you; upon my life, I pity you! What between love, and wine, and field sports, you'll have a miserable time of it. Take care how you speak a single word to any single woman. Don't even smile upon Aunt Barbara, or she'll make you a low curtsey, and say, 'You must ask my brother about the settlement, my dear Edward.' Ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed a long, merry, hearty peal, that made the rumbling vehicle echo again. Then putting the gold-headed cane to his lips, he turned a sly glance upon the other traveller, who was only moved to a very faint smile by all the old gentleman's merriment, asking, "Does this gentleman come with you? Are you to be made

a martyr of too, sir? Are you to be set running after foxes all day, like a tiger on horseback, and to have sheep's eyes cast at you all the evening, like a man in the pillory pelted with eggs? Are you bound to imbibe a butt of claret in three weeks? Poor young men! poor young men! My bowels of compassion yearn towards you."

"I shall fortunately escape all such perils," replied he whom he had last addressed; "I have no invitation to that part of the country."

"Come, then, I'll give you one," said the old gentleman; "if you like to come and stay a few days with an old bachelor, who will neither make you drunk nor make you foolish, I shall be glad to see you."

"I am not very likely to get drunk," answered the other, "as an old wound compels me to be a water drinker. Foolish enough I may be, and may have been; but I am sure that evil would not be increased by frequenting your society, my dear sir."

"I don't know; I don't know, young gentleman," said Mr. Croyland; "every man has his follies, and I amongst the rest as goodly a bag-full as one could well desire. But you have not given me an answer; shall I see you? Will you come with your friend, and take up your abode at a single man's house, while Sir Edward goes and charms the ladies?"

"I cannot come with him, I am afraid," replied the young gentleman, "for I must remain with the regiment some time; but I will willingly accept your invitation, and join him in a week or two."

"Oh! you're in the same regiment, are you?" asked Mr. Croyland; "it's not a whole regiment of elder sons, I hope?"

"Oh, no!" answered the other; "I have the still greater misfortune of being an only son; and the greater one still, of being an orphan."

"And may I know your style and denomination?" said Mr. Croyland.

"Oh! Osborn, Osborn!" cried Sir Edward Digby, before his friend could speak. "Captain Osborn of the —— dragoons."

"I will put that down in my note-book," rejoined the old gentleman. "The best friend I ever had was named Osborn. He couldn't be your father, though, for he had no children,

poor fellow! and was never married, which was the only blessing Heaven ever granted him, except a good heart and a well regulated mind. His sister married my old schoolfellow, Layton; but that's a bad story, and a sad story, though now it's an old story, too."

"Indeed!" said Sir Edward Digby; "I'm fond of old stories if they are good ones."

"But I told you this was a bad one, Sir Ned," rejoined the old gentleman sharply; "and as my brother behaved very ill to poor Layton, the less we say of it the better. The truth is," he continued, for he was one of those who always refuse to tell a story and tell it after all, "Layton was rector of a living which was in my brother's gift. He was only to hold it, however, till my youngest nephew was of age to take it; but when the boy died—as they both did sooner or later—Layton held the living on, and thought it was his own, till one day there came a quarrel between him and my brother, and then Robert brought forward his letter promising to resign when called upon, and drove him out. I wasn't here, then; but I have heard all about it since, and a bad affair it was. It should not have happened if I had been here, for Bob has a shrewd eye to the nabob's money, as well he may, seeing that he's—but that's no business of mine. If he chooses to dribble through his fortune, Heaven knows how, I've nothing to do with it! The two poor girls will suffer."

"What, your brother has two fair daughters then, has he?" demanded Sir Edward Digby. "I suppose it is under the artillery of their glances I am first to pass; for, doubtless, you know I am going to your brother's."

"Oh, yes, I know; I know all about it!" replied Mr. Croyland. "They tell me everything as in duty bound; that's to say, everything they don't wish to conceal. But I'm consulted like an oracle upon all things unimportant; for he that was kicked out with a sixpence into the wide world, has grown a wonderful great man since the sixpence has multiplied itself. As to your having to pass under the artillery of the girls' glances, however, you must take care of yourself; for you might stand a less dangerous fire, I can tell you, even in a field of battle. But I'll give you one warning for your safeguard. You may make love to little Zara as long as you like; think of the fools calling her Zara! Though she'll play

a pretty game of picquet with you, you may chance to win it; but you must not dangle after Edith, or you will burn your fingers. She'll not have you, if you were twenty baronets, and twenty majors of dragoons into the bargain. She has got some of the fancies of the old uncle about her, and is determined to die an old maid, I can see."

"Oh, the difficulty of the enterprise would only be a soldier's reason for undertaking it!" said Sir Edward Digby.

"It won't do; it won't do;" answered Mr. Croyland, laughing; "you may think yourself very captivating, very conquering, quite a look-and-die man, as all you people in red jackets fancy yourselves, but it will be all lost labour with Edith, I can tell you."

"You excite all the martial ardour in my soul," exclaimed Digby, with a gay smile; "and if she be not forty, hump-backed, or one-eyed, by the fates you shall see what you shall see."

"Forty!" cried Mr. Croyland; "why she's but two-and-twenty, man! A great deal straighter than that crouching wench in white marble they call the 'Venus de Medici,' and with a pair of eyes, that, on my life, I think would have made me forswear celibacy, if I had found such looking at me, any time before I reached fifty!"

"Do you hear that, Osborn?" cried Sir Edward Digby. "Here's a fine field for an adventurous spirit. I shall have the start of you, my friend; and in the wilds of Kent, what may not be done in ten days or a fortnight?"

His companion only answered by a melancholy smile; and the conversation went on between the old gentleman and the young baronet till they reached the small town of Lenham, where they stopped again to dine. There, however, Mr. Croyland drew Sir Edward Digby aside, and inquired in a low tone, "Is your friend in love? He looks mighty melancholy."

"I believe he is," replied Digby. "Love's the only thing that can make a man melancholy; and when one comes to consider all the attractions of a squaw of the Chippeway Indians, it is no wonder that my friend is in such a hopeless case."

The old gentleman poked him with his finger, and shook his head, with a laugh, saying—"You are a wag, young gen-

tleman, you are a wag; but it would be a great deal more reasonable, let me tell you, to fall in love with a Chippeway squaw, in her feathers and wampum, than with one of these made-up madams, all paint and satin, and tawdry bits of embroidery. In the one case you might know something of what your love is like; in the other, I defy you to know anything about her; and, nine times out of ten, what a man marries is little better than a bale of tow and whalebone, covered over with the excrement of a silkworm. Man's a strange animal; and one of the strangest of all his proceedings is, that of covering up his own natural skin with all manner of contrivances derived from every bird, beast, fish, and vegetable, that happens to come in his way. If he wants warmth, he goes and robs a sheep of its great coat; he beats the unfortunate grass of the field, till he leaves nothing but shreds, to make himself a shirt; he skins a beaver, to cover his head; and, if he wants to be exceedingly fine, he pulls the tail of an ostrich, and sticks the feather in his hat. He's the universal mountebank, depend upon it, playing his antics for the amusement of creation, and leaving nothing half so ridiculous as himself."

Thus saying, he turned round again, and joined Captain Osborn, in whom, perhaps, he took a greater interest than even in his livelier companion. It might be that the associations called up by the name were pleasant to him, or it might be that there was something in his face that interested him, for certainly that face was one which seemed to become each moment more handsome as one grew familiar with it.

When, after dinner, they re-entered the vehicle, and rolled away once more along the high road, Captain Osborn took a greater share in the conversation than he had previously done; and remarking that Mr. Croyland had put, as a condition, upon his invitation to Sir Edward, that he should not be a smuggler, he went on to observe, "You seem to have a great objection to those gentry, my dear sir; and yet I understand your county is full of them."

"Full of them!" exclaimed Mr. Croyland; "it is running over with them. They drop down into Sussex, out into Essex, over into Surrey; the vermin are more numerous than rats in an old barn. Not that, when a fellow is poor, and wants money, and can get it by no other means, not that I think

very hard of him when he takes to a life of risk and adventure, where his neck is not worth sixpence, and his gain is bought by the sweat of his brow. But your gentleman smuggler is my abomination; your fellow that risks little but an exchequer process, and gains ten times what the others do, without their labour or their danger. Give me your bold, brave fellow, who declares war and fights it out. There's some spirit in him."

"Gentlemen smugglers!" said Osborn; "that seems to me to be a strange sort of anomaly. I was not aware that there were such things."

"Pooh! the country is full of them," cried Mr. Croyland. "It is not here that the peasant treads upon the kybe of the peer; but the smuggler treads upon the country gentlemen. Many a merchant who never made a hundred pounds by fair trade, makes thousands and hundreds of thousands by cheating the Customs. There is not a man in this part of the country who does not dabble in the traffic more or less. I've no doubt all my brandied cherries are steeped in stuff that never paid duty; and if you don't smuggle yourself, your servants do it for you. But I'll tell you all about it," and he proceeded to give them a true and faithful exposition of the state of the county, agreeing in all respects with that which has been furnished to the reader in the first chapter of this tale.

His statement and the varied conversation which arose from different parts of it, occupied the time fully, till the coach, as it was growing dark, rolled into Ashford. There Mr. Croyland quitted his two companions, shaking them each by the hand with right good will; and they pursued their onward course to Hythe and Folkestone, without any farther incident worthy of notice.

CHAPTER III.

At Hythe, to make use of a very extraordinary though not uncommon expression, the coach stopped to sup; not that the coach itself ate anything, for, on the contrary, it disgorged that which it had already taken in; but the travellers who descended from it were furnished with supper, although the distance to Folkestone might very well have justified them in going on to the end of their journey without any other pabulum than that

which they had already received. But two or three things are to be taken into consideration. The distance from London to Folkestone is now seventy-one miles. It was longer in those days by several more, besides having the disadvantage of running up and down over innumerable hills, all of which were a great deal more steep than they are in the present day. The journey which the travellers accomplished, was generally considered a feat both of difficulty and danger, and the coach which performed that feat in one day, was supposed to deserve right well the name which it had assumed, of "The Phenomenon." Before it began to run, seventy-one miles in seventeen hours was considered an impracticable journey for anything but a man on horseback, and when first the coach appeared upon the road, the towns-people and villagers turned out in multitudes, with admiration and wonder, not unmixed with dread, to see the rapid rate at which it went: very nearly six miles an hour! The old diligence, which had preceded it, had slept one night, and sometimes two, upon the road; and, in its first vain struggles with its more rapid successor, it had actually once or twice made the journey in two-and-twenty hours. To beat off this pertinacious rival, the proprietor of the stage had been obliged to propitiate the inn-keepers of various important towns, by dividing his favours amongst them; and thus the traveller was forced to wait nearly one hour at Hythe, during which he might sup if he liked, although he was only about five miles from Folkestone.

The supper room of the inn was vacant when the two officers of dragoons entered, but the table, covered with its neat white cloth, and all the preparations for a substantial meal, together with a bright fire sparkling in the grate, rendered its aspect cheerful and reviving after a long and tedious journey, such as that which had just been accomplished. Sir Edward Digby looked round well pleased, turned his back to the fire, spoke to the landlord and his maid about supper, and seemed disposed to enjoy himself during the period of his stay. He ordered, too, a pint of claret, which he was well aware was likely to be procured in great perfection upon the coast of Kent. The landlord in consequence conceived a high respect for him, and very much undervalued all the qualities of his companion, who, seating himself at the table, leaned his head upon his

hand, and fell into deep thought, without giving orders for anything. The host, with his attendant star, disappeared from the room to procure the requisites for the travellers' meal, and Sir Edward Digby immediately took advantage of their absence to say, "Come, come, my dear Colonel, shake this off. I think all that we have lately heard should have tended to revive hope and to give comfort. During all the six years that we have been more like brothers than friends, I have never seen you so much cast down as now, when you are taking the field under the most favourable circumstances, with name, station, reputation, fortune, and with the best reason to believe those true whom you had been taught to suppose false."

"I cannot tell, Digby," replied his companion; "we shall hear more ere long, and doubt is always well nigh as painful as the worst certainty. Besides, I am returning to the scenes of my early youth; scenes stored, it is true, with many a sweet and happy memory, but full also of painful recollections. Those memories themselves are but as an inscription on a tomb, where hopes and pleasures, the bright dreams of youth, the ardent aspirations of first true love, the sweet endearments of a happy home, the treasured caresses of the best of mothers, the counsels, the kindness, the unvarying tenderness of the noblest and highest-minded of fathers, all lie buried. There may be a pleasure in visiting that tomb, but it is a melancholy one; and when I think that it was for me, that it was on my account, my father suffered persecution and wrong, till a powerful mind, and a vigorous frame gave way, there is a bitterness mingled with all my remembrances of these scenes, from which I would fain clear my heart. I will do so, too, but it will require some solitary thought, some renewed familiarity with all the objects round, to take off the sharpness of the first effect. You go on to Folkestone, and see that all is right there, I will remain here and wait for the rest. As soon as you have ascertained that everything is prepared to act in case we are called upon—which I hope may not be the case, as I do not like the service—you may betake yourself to Harbourne House, making me a report as you pass. When I have so distributed the men that we can rapidly concentrate a sufficient number upon any spot where they may be required, I will come on after you to our good old friend's dwelling.

There you can see me, and let me know what is taking place."

"I think you had better not let him know who you really are," replied Sir Edward Digby; "at least till we have seen how the land lies."

"I do not know; I will think of it," answered the other gentleman, whom for the present we shall continue to call Osborn, though the learned reader has already discovered that such was not his true name. "It is evident," he continued, "that old Mr. Croyland does not remember me, although I saw him frequently when he was in England for a short time, some six or seven years before he finally quitted India. However, though I feel I am much changed, it is probable that many persons will recognise me whenever I appear in the neighbourhood of Cranbrook, and he might take it ill, that he, who was so good and true a friend both to my uncle and my father, should be left in ignorance. Perhaps it would be better to confide in him fully, and make him aware of all my views and purposes."

"Under the seal of confession, then," said his friend; "for he is evidently a very talkative old gentleman. Did you remark how he once or twice declared he would not tell a story, that it was no business of his, and then went on to tell it directly."

"True, such was always his habit," answered Osborne; "and his oddities have got somewhat exaggerated during the last twelve years; but he's as true and faithful as ever man was, and nothing would induce him to betray a secret confided to him."

"You know best," replied the other; but the entrance of the landlord with the claret, and the maid with the supper, broke off the conversation, and there was no opportunity of renewing it till it was announced that the horses were to, and the coach was ready. The two friends then took leave of each other, both coachman and host being somewhat surprised to find that one of the travellers was about to remain behind.

When, however, a portmanteau, a sword-case, and a large trunk, or mail as it was then called, had been handed out of the egregious boot, Osborn walked into the inn once more, and called the landlord to him. "I shall, most likely," he said, "take up my quarters with you for some days, so you will be

good enough to have a bed-room prepared for me. You must also let me have a room, however small, where I can read and write, and receive any persons who may come to see me, for I have a good deal of business to transact."

"Oh, yes, sir! I understand," replied the host, with a knowing elevation of one eye-brow and a depression of the other, "Quite snug and private. You shall have a room at the back of the house with two doors, so that they can come in by the one, and go out through the other, and nobody know anything about it."

"I rather suspect you mistake," answered the guest, with a smile; "and for fear you should say anything under an error, that you might be sorry for afterwards, let me tell you at once that I am an officer of dragoons, and that the business I speak of is merely regimental business."

The host's face grew amazingly blank; for a smuggler in a large way was, in his estimation, a much more valuable and important guest than an officer in the army, even had he been commander-in-chief of the forces; but Osborn proceeded to relieve his mind from some of its anxieties by saying: "You will understand that I am neither a spy nor an informer, my good friend, but merely come here to execute whatever orders I may receive from government as a military man. I tell you who I am at once, that you may, as far as possible, keep from my sight any of those little transactions which I am informed are constantly taking place on this coast. I shall not, of course, step over the line of my duty, which is purely military, to report anything I see; but still I should not like that any man should say I was cognizant of proceedings contrary to the interests of the government. This hint, however, I doubt not, will be enough."

"Sir, you are a gentleman," said the host; "and as a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse, I shall take care you have no annoyance. You must wait a little for your bed-room though, for we did not know you were going to stay; but we will loose no time getting it ready. Can I do anything else to serve you, sir?"

"I think not," replied Osborn. "But one thing will be necessary. I expect five horses down to-morrow, and there must be found stabling for them, and accommodation for the servants."

The landlord, who was greatly consoled by these latter

proofs of his guest's opulence and importance, was proceeding to assure him that all manner of conveniences, both for horse and man, were to be found at his inn, when the door of the room opened, and a third person was added to the party within. The moment the eye of the traveller by the coach fell upon him, his face lighted up with a well pleased smile, and he exclaimed, "Ah, my good friend, is that you? I little expected to find you in this part of Kent. What brought you hither after our long voyage?"

"The same that brought you," answered the other: "old memories and loved associations."

But before we proceed to notice what was Osborn's reply, we must, though very unwilling to give long descriptions either of personal appearance or of dress, pause to notice briefly those of the stranger who had just entered.

He had originally been a tall man, and probably a powerful one, but he now stooped considerably, and was extremely thin. His face had no colour in it, and even the lips were pale, but yet the hue was not cadaverous, or even what could be called sickly. The features were generally small and fine, except the eyes, which were large and bright, with a sort of brilliant but unsafe fire in them, and that peculiar searching and intense gaze when speaking to any one, which is common to people of strong imaginations, who try to convey to others more than they actually say. His forehead, too, was high and grand, but wrinkled over with the furrows of thought and care; and on the right side was a deep indentation, with a gash across it, as if the skull had been driven in by a blow. His hair, which was long and thin, was milk-white, and though his teeth were fine, yet the wrinkles of his skin, the peculiar roughness of the ear, and the shrivelled hand, all bore testimony of an advanced age. Yet, perhaps, he might be younger than he looked, for the light in that eager eye plainly spoke one of those quick, anxious, ever labouring spirits which wear the frame by the internal emotions, infinitely more rapidly and more destructively than any of the external events and circumstances of life. One thing was very peculiar about him, at least in this country, for on another continent such a peculiarity might have called for no attention. On either cheek, beginning just behind the external corner of the eye, and proceeding in a graceful wave all along the cheek bone, turning

round like an acanthus leaf, at the other extremity upon the cheek itself, was a long line of very minute blue spots, with another, and another, and another beneath it, till the whole assumed the appearance of a rather broad arabesque painted in blue upon his face. His dress in other respects (if this tattooing might be called a part of his dress) though coarse in texture, was good. The whole, too, was black, except where the white turned-down collar of his shirt appeared between his coat and his pale brownish skin. His shoes were large and heavy, like those used by the countrymen in that part of the county, and in them he wore a pair of silver buckles, not very large, but which in their peculiar form and ornaments, gave signs of considerable antiquity. Though bent, as we have said, thin and pale, he seemed active and energetic. All his motions were quick and eager, and he grasped the hand which Osborn extended to him, with a warmth and enthusiasm very different from the ordinary expression of common friendship.

"You mistake," said the young gentleman, in answer to his last observation. "It was not old memories and loved associations which brought me here at all, Mr. Warde. It was an order from the commander-in-chief. Had I not received it, I should not have visited this place for years, if ever!"

"Yes, yes, you would," replied the old man; "you could not help yourself; it was written in the book of your fate; it was not to be avoided. You were drawn here by an irresistible impulse to undergo what you have to undergo, to perform that which is assigned you, and to do and suffer all those things which are written on high."

"I wonder to hear *you* speaking in terms so like those of a fatalist," answered Osborn; "you whom I have always heard so strenuously assert man's responsibility for all his actions, and scoff at the idea of his excusing himself on the plea of his predestination."

"True, true," answered the old man, whom he called Warde, "predestination affords no excuse for aught that is wrong; for though it be an inscrutable mystery how those three great facts are to be reconciled, yet certain it is that Omniscience cannot be ignorant of that which will take place, any more than of that which has taken place; that every thing which God foreknows, must take place, and has been pre-determined by his

will, and that yet, as every man must feel within himself, his own actions depend upon his volition, and if they be evil he alone is to blame. The end is to come, Osborn; the end is to come when all will be revealed, and doubt not that it will be for God's glory. I often think," he continued in a less emphatic tone, "that man with his free will is like a child with a plaything. We see the babe about to dash it against the wall in mere wantonness, we know that he will injure it, perhaps break it to pieces, perhaps hurt himself with it in a degree; we could prevent it, yet we do not, thinking perhaps that it will be a lesson; one of those the accumulation of which makes experience, if not wisdom. At all events the punishment falls upon him; and, if duly warned, he has no right to blame us for that which his own will did, though we saw what he would do, and could have prevented him from doing so. We are all spoilt children, Osborn, and remain so to the end, though God gives us warning enough: but here comes my homely meal."

At the same moment, the landlord brought in a dish of vegetables, some milk and some pottage, which he placed upon the table, giving a shrewd look to the young officer, but saying to his companion, "There, I have brought what you ordered, sir; but I cannot help thinking you had better take a bit of meat. You had nothing but the same stuff this morning, and no dinner that I know of."

"Man, I never eat anything that has drawn the breath of life," replied Warde. "The first of our race brought death into the world and was permitted to inflict it upon others, for the satisfaction of his own appetites; but it was a permission, and not an injunction: except for sacrifice. I will not be one of the tyrants of the whole creation; I will have no more of the tiger in my nature than is inseparable from it; and as to gorging myself some five or six times a day with unnecessary food, am I a swine, do you think, to eat when I am not hungry, for the sole purpose of devouring? No, no; the simplest food, and that only for necessity, is best for man's body and his mind. We all grow too rank and superfluous."

Thus saying, he approached the table, said a short grace over that which was set before him, and then sitting down, ate till he was satisfied, without exchanging a word with any one during the time that he was thus engaged. It occupied less than five minutes, however, to take all that he required,

and then starting up suddenly, he thanked God for what he had given him, took up his hat and turned towards the door.

"I am going out, Osborn," he said, "for my evening walk. Will you come with me?"

"Willingly for half an hour," answered the young officer, and, telling the landlord as he passed that he would be back by the time that his room was ready, he accompanied his eccentric acquaintance out into the streets of Hythe, and thence through some narrow walks and lanes, to the sea-shore.

CHAPTER IV.

The sky was clear and bright; the moonlight was sleeping in dream-like splendour upon the water, and the small waves, thrown up by the tide more than the wind, came rippling along the beach like a flood of diamonds. All was still and silent in the sky and upon the earth; and the soft rustle of the waters upon the shore seemed but to say "Hush!" as if nature feared that any louder sound should interrupt her calm repose. To the west, stretched out the faint low line of coast towards Dungeness, and to the east appeared the high cliffs near Folkestone and Dover, grey and solemn; while the open heaven above looked down with its tiny stars and lustrous moon upon the wide extended sea, glittering in the silver veil cast over her sleeping bosom from on high.

Such was the scene presented to the eyes of the two wanderers when they reached the beach, a little way on the Sandgate side of Hythe, and both paused to gaze upon it for several minutes in profound silence.

"This is indeed a night to walk forth upon the sands," said the young officer at length. "It seems to me, that of all the many scenes from which man can derive both instruction and comfort, in the difficulties and troubles of life, there is none so elevating, so strengthening, as that presented by the sea shore on a moonlight night. To behold that mighty element, so full of destructive and of beneficial power, lying tranquilly within the bound which God affixed to it, and to remember the words, 'Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stopped,' affords so grand an illustration of his might, so fine a proof of the truth of his promises, that

the heart must be hard indeed, and the mind dull, not to receive confirmation of faith, and encouragement in hope."

"More, far more, may man receive," replied his companion, "if he be but willing; but that gross and corrupt insect refuses all instruction, and though the whole universe holds out blessings, still chooses the curse. Where is there a scene whence man may not receive benefit? What spot upon the whole earth has not something to speak to his heart, if he would but listen? In his own busy passions, however, and in his own fierce contentions, in his sordid creeping after gain, in his trickery and his knavery, even in his loves and pleasures, man turns a deaf ear to the great voice speaking to him; and the only scene of all this earth which cannot benefit the eye that looks upon it, is that in which human beings are the chief actors. There all is foulness, or pitifulness, or vice; and one, to live in happiness, and to take the moral of all nature to his heart, should live alone with nature. I will find me out such a place, where I can absent myself entirely, and contemplate nought but the works of God without the presence of man, for I am sick to death of all that I have seen of him and his, especially in what is called a civilized state."

"You have often threatened to do so, Warde," answered the young officer, "but yet methinks, though you rail at him, you love man too much to quit his abodes entirely. I have seen you kind and considerate to savages of the most horrible class; to men whose daily practice it is to torture with the most unheard-of cruelty the prisoners whom they take in battle; and will you have less regard for other fellow-creatures, because they are what you call civilized?"

"The savage is at least sincere," replied his companion. "The want of sincerity is the great and crowning vice of all this portion of the globe. Cruel the wild hunters may be, but are they more cruel than the people here? Which is the worst torment, a few hours' agony at the stake, singing the war-song, all ended by a blow of a hatchet, or long years of mental torture, when every scorn and contumely, every bitter injustice, every cruel bereavement that man can inflict or suffer, is piled upon your head, till the load becomes intolerable. Then, too, it is done in a smooth and smiling guise. The civilized fiend looks softly upon you while he wounds you to the heart; makes a pretext of law, and justice, and equity;

would have you fancy him a soft good man, while there is no act of malevolence and iniquity that he does not practise. The savage is true, at all events. The man who fractured my skull with a blow of his tomahawk, made no pretence of friendship or of right. He did it boldly, as an act customary with his people, and would have led me to the stake and danced with joy to see me suffering, had I not been rescued. He was sincere at least: but how would the Englishman have served me? He would have wrung my heart with pangs insupportable, and all the time have talked of his great grief to afflict me, of the necessity of the case, of justice being on his side, and of a thousand other vain and idle pretexts, but aggravating the act by mocking me with a show of generosity."

"I fear my excellent friend that you have at some time suffered sadly from man's baseness," said Osborn; "but yet I think you are wrong to let the memory thereof affect you thus. I, too, have suffered, and perhaps shall have to suffer more; but yet I would not part with the best blessings God has given to man, as you have done, for any other good."

"What have I parted with that I could keep?" asked the other, sharply: "what blessings? I know of none?"

"Trust—confidence," replied his young companion. "I know you will say that they have been taken from you; that you have not thrown them away, that you have been robbed of them. But have you not parted with them too easily? Have you not yielded at once, without a struggle to retain what I still call the best blessings of God? There are many villains in the world; I know it but too well; there are many knaves. There are still more cold and selfish egotists, who, without committing actual crimes or injuring others, do good to none; but there are also many true and upright hearts, many just, noble, and generous men; and were it a delusion to think so, I would try to retain it still."

"And suffer for it in the hour of need, in the moment of the deepest confidence," answered Warde. "If you must have confidence, place it in the humble and the low, in the rudest and least civilized; ay, in the very outcasts of society; rather than in the polished and the courtly, the great and high. I would rather trust my life, or my purse, to the honour of the common robber, and to his generosity, than to the very gentlemanly man of fashion and high station. Now,

if, as you say, you have not come down hither for old associations, you must be sent to hunt down honester men than those who sent you; men who break boldly through an unjust and barbarous system, which denies to our land the goods of another, and who, knowing that the very knaves who devised that system, did it but to enrich themselves, stop with a strong hand a part of the plunder on the way; or, rather, insist at the peril of their lives, on man's inherent right to trade with his neighbours, and frustrate the roguish devices of those who would forbid to our land the use of that produced by another."

Osborn smiled at his companion's defence of smuggling, but replied, "I can conceive a thousand reasons, my good friend, why the trade in certain things should be totally prohibited, and a high duty for the interests of the state be placed on others. But I am not going to argue with you on all our institutions; merely this I will say, that when we entrust to certain men the power of making laws, we are bound to obey those laws when they are made; and it were but candid and just to suppose that those who had made them after long deliberation, did so for the general good of the whole."

"For their own villanous ends," answered Warde; "for their own selfish interests. The good of the whole! What is it in the eyes of any of these lawgivers but the good of a party?"

"But do you not think," asked the young officer, "that we ourselves, who are not lawgivers, judge their actions but too often under the influence of the very motives we attribute to them? Has party no share in our own bosoms? Has selfishness, have views of our own interests, in opposition either to the interests of others or of the general weal, no part in the judgment that we form? Each man carps at that which suits him not and strives to change it, without the slightest care whether, in so doing, he be not bringing ruin on the heads of thousands. But as to what you said just now of my being sent hither to hunt down the smuggler, such is not the case. I am sent to lend my aid to the civil power when called upon to do so, but nothing more; and we all know that the civil power has proved quite ineffective in stopping a system which began by violation of a fiscal law, and has gone on to outrages the most brutal and the most daring. I shall not step beyond

the line of my duty, my good friend; and I will admit that many of these very misguided men themselves, who are carrying on an illegal traffic in this daring manner, fancy themselves justified by such arguments as you have just now used; nay, more, I do believe that there are some men amongst them of high and noble feelings, who never dream they are dishonest in breaking a law that they dislike. But if we break one law thus, why should we keep any? Why not add robbery and murder if it suits us?"

"Ay, there *are* high minded and noble men amongst them," answered Warde, not seeming to heed the latter part of what his companion said, "and there stands one of them. He has evil in him doubtless, for he is a man and an Englishman; but I have found none here who has less, and many who have more. Yet were that man taken in pursuing his occupation, they would imprison, exile, perhaps hang him, while a multitude of knaves in gilded coats would be suffered to go on committing every sin, and almost every crime, unpunished: a good man, an excellent man, and yet a smuggler."

The young officer knew it was in vain to reason with him, for in the frequent intercourse they had held together, he had perceived that, with many generous and noble feelings, with a pure heart, and almost ascetic severity of life, there was a certain perversity in the course of Mr. Warde's thoughts which rendered it impossible to turn them from the direction which they naturally took. It seemed as if, by long habit, they had channelled for themselves so deep a bed that they could never be diverted thence, and, consequently, without replying at first, he merely turned his eyes in the direction which the other pointed out, trying to catch sight of the person of whom he spoke. They were now on the low sandy shore which runs along between the town of Hythe and the beautiful little watering-place of Sandgate. But it must be recollected that, at the time I speak of, the latter place displayed no ornamental villas, no gardens full of flowers, almost touching on the sea, and consisted merely of a few fishermen's, or rather smugglers' huts, with one little public house, and a low-browed shop, filled with all the necessities that the inhabitants might require. Thus nothing like the mass of buildings which the watering place now can boast, lay between them and the Folkestone cliffs; and the whole line of the coast, except at one point,

where the roof of a house intercepted the view, was open before Osborn's eyes; yet neither upon the shore itself, nor upon the green upland, which was broken by rocks and bushes, and covered by thick dry grass, could he perceive anything resembling a human form. A minute after, however, he thought he saw something move against the rugged back-ground, and the next moment, the head and shoulders of a man rising over the edge of the hill caught his eyes, and as his companion walked forward in silence, he inquired:—

"Have you known him long, or is this one of your sudden judgments, my good friend?"

"I knew him when he was a boy and a lad," answered Wardé; "I know him now that he is a man, so it is no sudden judgment. Come, let us speak with him, Osborn;" and he advanced rapidly by a narrow path up the side of the slope.

Osborn paused a single instant, and then followed, saying, "Be upon your guard, Warde, and remember how I am circumstanced. Neither commit me, nor let him commit himself."

"No, no, fear not," answered his friend, "I am no smuggler, young man;" and he strode on before, without pausing for further consultation. As they climbed the hill, the figure of the man of whom they had been speaking became more and more distinct, while walking up and down upon a flat space at the top of the first step or wave of ground; he seemed to take no notice of their approach. When they came nearer still he paused, as if waiting for their coming; and the moon shining full upon him, displayed his powerful form, standing in an attitude of easy grace, with the arms folded on the chest, and the head slightly bent forward. He was not above the middle height, but broad in the shoulders and long in the arm; robust and strong; every muscle was round and swelling, and yet not heavy; for there was the appearance of great lightness and activity in his whole figure, strangely combined with that of vigour and power. His head was small, and well set upon his shoulders; and the very position in which he stood, the firm planting of his feet on the ground, the motionless crossing of his arm upon his breast, all seemed to argue to the mind of Osborn, and he was one not unaccustomed to judge of character by external signs, a strong and determined spirit, well fitted for the rough and adventurous life which he had undertaken.

"Good night, Harding!" said Mr. Warde, as they came up to the spot where he stood. "What a beautiful evening it is!"

"Good night, sir!" answered the man, in a civil tone, and with a voice of considerable melody. "It is indeed a beautiful evening, though sometimes I like to see the cloudy sky, too."

"And yet I dare say you enjoy a walk by the bright sea, in the calm moonlight as much as I do," rejoined Mr. Warde.

"Ay, that I do, sir," replied the smuggler. "That's what brought me out to-night, for there's nothing else doing; but I should not rest quiet, I suppose, in my bed, if I did not take my stroll along the downs or somewhere, and look over the sea, while she lies panting in the moonbeams. She's a pretty creature, and I love her dearly. I wonder how people can live inland."

"Oh! there are beautiful scenes enough inland," said Osborn, joining in the conversation; "both wild and grand, and calm and peaceful."

"I know there are, sir, I know there are," answered the smuggler, gazing at him attentively, "and if ever I were to live away from the beach, I should say, give me the wild and grand, for I have seen many a beautiful place inland, especially in Wales; but still it always seems to me as if there was something wanting when the sea is not there. I suppose it is natural for an Englishman."

"Perhaps it is," rejoined Osborn, "for certainly when Nature rolled the ocean around us, she intended us for a maritime people. But to return to what you were saying: if I could choose my own abode, it should be amongst the calm and peaceful scenes, of which the eye never tires, and amongst which the mind rests in repose."

"Ay, if it is repose one is seeking," replied the smuggler, with a laugh, "well and good. Then a pleasant little valley, with trees and a running stream, and a neat little church, and the parsonage, may do well enough. But I dare say you and I, sir, have led very different lives, and so have got different likings. I have always been accustomed to the storm and the gale, to a somewhat adventurous life, and to have that great wide sea before my eyes for ever. You, I dare say, have been going on quietly and peacefully all your days, perhaps in London, or in some great town, knowing nothing of hardships or of dangers, so that is the reason you love quiet places."

"Quite the reverse!" answered Osborn, with a smile; "mine has been nothing but a life of peril and danger, and activity, as far as it hitherto has gone. From the time I was eighteen till now, the battle and the skirmish, the march and the retreat, with often the hard ground for my bed, as frequently the sky for my covering, and at best a thin piece of canvass to keep off the blast, have been my lot, but it is that very fact that makes me long for some repose, and love scenes that give the picture of it to the imagination, if not the reality to the heart. I should suppose that few men who have passed their time thus, and known from youth to manhood nothing but strife and hourly peril, do not, sooner or later, desire such tranquillity."

"I don't know, sir," said the smuggler; "it may be so, and the time may come with me; but yet, I think, habits one is bred to get such a hold of the heart that we can't do without them. I often fancy I should like a month's quiet, too; but then, I know, before the month was out I should long to be on the sea again."

"Man is a discontented creature," said Warde; "not even the bounty of God can satisfy him. I do not believe that he would even rest in heaven, were he not wearied of change by the events of this life. Well may they say it is a state of trial."

"I hope I shall go to heaven, too," rejoined the smuggler; "but I should like a few trips first; and I dare say, when I grow an old man, and stiff and rusty, I shall be well contented to take my walk here in the sunshine, and talk of days that are gone; but, at present, when one has life and strength, I could no more sit and get cankered in idleness than I could turn miller. This world's not a place to be still in; and I say, Blow wind, and push off the boat."

"But one may have activity enough without constant excitement and peril," answered Osborn.

"I don't know that there would be half the pleasure in it," replied the smuggler, laughing, "that we strive for, that we love. Everything must have its price, and cheap got is little valued. But who is this coming?" he continued, turning sharply round before either of his companions heard a sound.

The next moment, however, steps running up the face of the bank were distinguished, and in another minute a boy of twelve or thirteen, dressed in a sailor's jacket, came hurrying

up to the smuggler, and pulled his sleeve, saying, in a low voice, "Come hither, come hither; I want to speak to you."

The man took a step apart, and, bending down his head, listened to something which the boy whispered in his ear. "I will come, I will come directly," he said, at length, when the lad was done. "Run on and tell him, little Starlight; for I must get home first for a minute. Good night, gentlemen," he continued, turning to Mr. Warde and his companion, "I must go away for a longer walk;" and without further adieu, he began to descend the bank, leaving the two friends to take their way back to Hythe, conversing, as they went, much in the same strain as that in which they had indulged while coming thither, differing on almost every topic, but yet with some undefinable link of sympathy between them, which nevertheless owed its origin, in the old man's breast, to very different feelings from those which were experienced by his younger companion.

CHAPTER V.

There was an old house, built in a style which acquired the mint-mark of fashion of about the reign of George the First, and was considered by those of the English, or opposite party, to be peculiarly well qualified for the habitation of Hanover rats. It stood at a little distance from the then small hamlet of Harbourne, and was plunged into one of the southern apertures of the wood of that name, having its gardens and pleasure-grounds around it, with a terrace and a lawn stretching out to the verge of a small parish road, which passed at the distance of somewhat less than a quarter of a mile from the windows. It was all of red brick, and looked square and formal enough, with the two wings projecting like the a-kimbo arms of some untamed virago, straight and resolute as a redoubt. The numerous windows, however, with very tolerable spaces between them; the numerous chimneys, with every sort of form and angle; the numerous doors, of every shape and size, and the square precision of the whole, bespoke it a very capacious building, and the inside justified fully the idea which the mind of a traveller naturally formed from the outside. It was, in truth, a roomy, and in some cases a very convenient

abode; but it was laid out upon a particular plan, which it may not be amiss to write down, for the practical instruction of the reader unlearned in such edifices.

In the centre of the ground-floor was a large hall of a cruciform shape, each of the limbs being about fifteen feet wide. The two shorter arms of the cross stretched from side to side of the building in its width; the two longer from end to end of its length. The southern termination of the shorter arms was the great hall-door; the northern arm, which formed the passage between the various ranges of offices, extended to a door at the back, opening into a court-yard surrounded by coach-houses, stables, cow-sheds, pig-sties, and hen-roosts. But the offices, and the passage between them, were shut off from the main hall and the rest of the mansion by double doors; and the square of fifteen feet in the centre of the hall was, to the extent of about two-thirds of the whole, occupied by a large, low-stepped, broad-ballustraded oaken staircase. The eastern and western limbs of the cross afforded the means of communicating with various rooms, such as library, dining-room, drawing-room, music-room, magistrate's-room, gentleman's-room, and billiard-room, with one or two others to which no name had been applied. Many of these rooms had doors which led into the one adjacent; but this was not invariably the case, for from the main corridor branched off several little passages, separating in some instances one chamber from the other, and leading out upon the terrace by the smaller doors which we have noticed above. What was the use of these passages and doors nobody was ever able to divine, and it remains a mystery to the present day, which I shall not attempt to solve by venturing any hypothesis upon so recondite a subject. The second floor above was laid out much in the same way as the one below, except that one of the limbs of the cross was wanting, the space over the great door being appropriated to a very tolerable bed-room. From this floor to the other descended two or three staircases, the principal one being the great open flight of steps which I have already mentioned; and the second, or next in importance, being a stone staircase, which reached the ground between the double doors that shut out the main hall from the offices.

Having thus given some idea of the interior of the building, I will only pause to notice that, at the period I speak of, it

had one very great defect: it was very much out of repair; not, indeed, of that sort of substantial repair which is necessary to comfort, but of that pleasant repair which is agreeable to the eye. It was well and solidly built, and was quite wind and water tight; but although the builders of the day in which it was erected were, as every one knows, peculiarly neat in their brick-work, yet Time would have his way even with their constructions, and he had maliciously chiselled out the pointing from between the sharp, well-cut bricks, scraped away the mortar from the stone copings, and cracked and blistered the painting of the wood-work. This labour of his had not only given a venerable, but also a somewhat dilapidated appearance to the mansion; and some green mould, with which he had taken the pains to dabble all the white parts of the edifice, did not decrease the look of decay.

Sweeping round from the parish road that we have mentioned was a branch, leading by the side of the lawn and a gentle ascent, up to the terrace and to the great door, and carriages on arriving passed along the whole front of the house by the western angle before they reached the court-yard behind. But from that court-yard there were various other means of exit. One to the kitchen garden, one to two or three other courts, and one into the wood which came within fifty yards of the enclosure; for, to use the ordinary romance phrase, Harbourne House was literally "bosomed in a wood." The windows, however, and the front, commanded a fine view of a rich and undulating country, plentifully garnished with trees, but still, for a considerable distance, exposed to the eye, from the elevated ground upon which the mansion was placed. A little hamlet was seen at the distance of about two miles in front; I rather suspect it was Kenchill, and to the eastward the house looked over the valley towards the high ground by Woodchurch and Woodchurch Beacon, catching a blue line which probably was Romney Marsh. Between, Woodchurch, however, and itself, was seen standing out, straight and upright, a very trim-looking white dwelling, flanked by some pleasant groves, and to the west were seen one or two gentlemen's seats scattered about over the face of the country. Behind, nothing of course was to be seen but tree-tops, except from the window of one of the attics, whence the housemaid could descry Biddenden Windmill and the top of Biddenden

Church. Harbourne Wood was, indeed, at that time, very extensive, joining on to the large piece of woodland, from which it is now separated, and stretching out as far as that place with an unpleasant name, called Gallows Green. The whole of this space, and a considerable portion of the cultivated ground around, was within the manor of the master of the mansion, Sir Robert Croyland, of Harbourne, the elder brother of that Mr. Zachary Croyland, whom we have seen travelling down into Kent with two companions in the newly-established stage-coach.

About four days after that memorable journey, a traveller on horseback, followed by a servant leading another horse, and with a portmanteau behind him, rode up the little parish road we have mentioned, took the turning which led to the terrace, and drew in his bridle at the great door of Harbourne House. I would describe him again, but I have already given the reader so correct and accurate a picture of Sir Edward Digby, that he cannot make any mistake. The only change which had taken place in his appearance, since he set out from London, was produced by his being now dressed in a full military costume; but nevertheless the eyes of a fair lady, who was in the drawing-room, and had a full view of the terrace, conveyed to her mind, as she saw him ride up, the impression that he was a very handsome man indeed. In two minutes more, which were occupied by the opening of the door and sundry directions given by the young baronet to his servant, Sir Edward Digby was ushered into the drawing-room, and advanced with a frank, free, military air, though unacquainted with any of the persons it contained. As his arrival about that hour was expected, the whole family of Harbourne House was assembled to receive him; and before we proceed farther, we may as well give some account of the different persons of whom the little circle was composed.

The first whom Sir Edward's eyes fell upon was the master of the mansion, who had risen, and was coming forward to welcome his guest. Sir Robert Croyland, however, was so different a person from his brother, in every point, that the young officer could hardly believe that he had the baronet before him. He was a large, heavy-looking man, with good features and expressive eyes, but sallow in complexion, and though somewhat corpulent, having that look of loose, flabby

obesity, which is generally an indication of bad health. His dress, though scrupulously clean and in the best fashion of the time, fitted him ill, being too large even for his large person; and the setting of the diamond ring which he wore upon his hand was scarcely more yellow than the hand itself. On his face he bore a look of habitual thought and care, approaching moroseness, which even the smile he assumed on Sir Edward's appearance could not altogether dissipate. In his tone, however, he was courtly and kind, though perhaps a little pompous. He expressed his delight at seeing his old friend's son in Harbourne House, shook him warmly by the hand, and then led him ceremoniously forward to introduce him to his sister, Mrs. Barbara Croyland, and his two daughters.

The former lady might very well have had applied to her Fielding's inimitable description of the old maid. Her appearance was very similar, her station and occupation much the same; but nevertheless, in all essential points, Mrs. Barbara Croyland was a very different person from the sister of Squire Allworthy. She was a kind-hearted soul as ever existed; gentle in her nature, anxious to do the very best for everybody, a little given to policy for the purpose of accomplishing that end, and consequently, nine times out of ten, making folks very uncomfortable in order to make them comfortable, and doing all manner of mischief for the purpose of setting things right. No woman ever had a more perfect abnegation of self than Mrs. Barbara Croyland, in all things of great importance. She had twice missed a very good opportunity of marriage, by making up a match between one who was quite ready to be her own lover, and one of her female friends for whom he cared very little. She had lent the whole of her own private fortune, except a small annuity, which by some chance had been settled upon her, to her brother Sir Robert, without taking any security whatsoever for principal or interest; and she was always ready when there was anything in her purse to give it away to the worthy or unworthy; rather, indeed, preferring the latter, from a conviction that they were more likely to be destitute of friends than those who had some claim upon society.

Nevertheless Mrs. Barbara Croyland was not altogether without that small sort of selfishness which is usually termed vanity. She was occasionally a little affronted and indignant

with her friends, when they disapproved of her spoiling their whole plans with the intention of facilitating them. She knew that her design was good; and she thought it very ungrateful in the world to be angry when her good designs produced the most opposite results to those which she intended. She was fully convinced, too, that circumstances were perversely against her; and yet for her life she could not refrain from trying to make those circumstances bend to her purpose, notwithstanding all the raps on the knuckles she received; and she had still some scheme going on, which, though continually disappointed, rose up Hydra-like, with a new head springing out as soon as the other was cut off. As it was at her suggestion, and in favour of certain plans which she kept deep in the recesses of her own bosom, that Sir Robert Croyland had claimed acquaintance with Sir Edward Digby on the strength of an old friendship with his father, and had invited him down to Harbourne House immediately on the return of his regiment to England, it may well be supposed that Miss Barbara received him with her most gracious smiles, which, to say the truth, though the face was wrinkled with age, and the complexion not very good, were exceedingly sweet and benignant, springing from a natural kindness of heart, which, if guided by a sounder discretion, would have rendered her one of the most amiable persons on the earth.

After a few words of simple courtesy on both parts, Sir Edward turned to the other two persons who were in the room, where he found metal more attractive—at least, for the eyes. The first to whom he was introduced was a young lady, who seemed to be about one-and-twenty years of age, though she had in fact just attained another year; and though Sir Robert somewhat hurried him on to the next, who was younger, the keen eye of the young officer marked enough to make him aware that, if so cold and so little disposed to look on a lover as her uncle had represented, she might well become a very dangerous neighbour to a man with a heart not well guarded against the power of beauty. Her hair, eyes, and eye-lashes were almost black, and her complexion of a clear brown, with the rose blushing faintly in the cheek; but the eyes were of a deep blue. The whole form of the head, the fall of the hair, the bend of the neck from the shoulders, were all exquisitely symmetrical and classical, and nothing could be

more lovely than the line of the brow and the chiselled cutting of the nose. The upper lip, small and delicately drawn, the under lip full and slightly apart, showing the pearl-like teeth beneath; the turn of the ear, and the graceful line in the throat, might all have served as models for the sculptor or the painter; for the colouring was as rich and beautiful as the form; and when she rose and stood to receive him, with the small hand leaning gently on the arm of the chair, he thought he had never seen anything more graceful than the figure, or more harmonious than its calm dignity, with the lofty gravity of her countenance. If there was a defect in the face, it was perhaps that the chin was a little too prominent, but yet it suited well with the whole countenance and with its expression, giving it decision without harshness, and a look of firmness, which the bright smile that fluttered for a moment round the lips, deprived of everything that was not gentle and kind. There was soul, there was thought, there was feeling, in the whole look; and Digby would fain have paused to see those features animated in conversation. But her father led him on, after a single word of introduction, to present him to his younger daughter, who, with some points of resemblance, offered a strange contrast to her sister. She, too, was very handsome, and apparently about two years younger; but hers was the style of beauty which, though it deserves a better name, is generally termed pretty. All the features were good, and the hair exceedingly beautiful; but the face was not so oval, the nose perhaps a little too short, and the lips too sparkling with smiles to impress the mind, at first sight, so much as the countenance of the other. She seemed all happiness; and in looking to the expression and at her bright blue eyes, as they looked out through the black lashes, like violets from a clump of dark leaves, it was scarcely possible to fancy that she had ever known a touch of care or sorrow, or that one of the anxieties of life had ever even brushed her lightly with its wing. She seemed the flower just opening to the morning sunshine; the fruit, before the bloom had been washed away by one shower. Her figure, too, was full of young grace; her movements were all quicker, more wild and free than her sister's; and as she rose to receive Sir Edward Digby, it was more with the air of an old friend than a new acquaintance. Indeed, she was the first of the family who

had seen him, for hers were the eyes which had watched his approach from the window, so that she felt as if she knew him better than any of them.

There was something very winning in the frank and cordial greeting with which she met him, and in an instant it had established a sort of communication between them which would have taken hours, perhaps days, to bring about with her sister. As Sir Edward Digby did not come there to fall in love, he would fain have resisted such influences, even at the beginning; and perhaps the words of old Mr. Croyland had somewhat put him upon his guard. But it was of no use being upon his guard; for, fortify himself as strongly as he would, Zara went through all his defences in an instant; and, seeming to take it for granted that they were to be great friends, and that there was not the slightest obstacle whatever to their being perfectly familiar in a lady-like and gentleman-like manner, of course they were so in five minutes, though he was a soldier who had seen some service, and she an inexperienced girl just out of her teens. But all women have a sort of experience of their own; or, if experience be not the right name, an intuition in matters where the other sex is concerned, which supplies to them very rapidly a great part of that which long converse with the world bestows on men. Too true that it does not always act as a safeguard to their own hearts; true that it does not always guide them right in their own actions; but still it does not fail to teach them the best means of winning where they wish to win; and if they do not succeed, it is far more frequently that the cards which they hold are not good, than that they play the game unskilfully.

Whether Sir Robert Croyland had or had not any forethought in his invitation of Sir Edward Digby, and, like a prudent father, judged that it would be quite as well his youngest daughter should marry a wealthy baronet, he was too wise to let anything like design appear; and though he suffered the young officer to pursue his conversation with Zara for two or three minutes longer than he had done with her sister, he soon interposed, by taking the first opportunity of telling his guest the names of those whom he had invited to meet him that day at dinner.

"We shall have but a small party," he said, in a somewhat

apologetic tone, "for several of our friends are absent just now; but I have asked my good and eccentric brother Zachary to meet you to-day, Sir Edward; and also my excellent neighbour, Mr. Radford, of Radford Hall; a very superior man indeed under the surface, though the manner may be a little rough. His son, too, I trust will join us;" and he glanced his eye towards Edith, whose face grew somewhat paler than it had been before. Sir Robert instantly withdrew his gaze; but the look of both father and daughter had not been lost upon Digby; and he replied:—

"I have the pleasure of knowing your brother already, Sir Robert. We were fellow-travellers as far as Ashford, four or five days ago. I hope he is well?"

"Oh! quite well, quite well," answered the baronet, "but as odd as ever; nay odder, I think, for his expedition to London. That which seems to polish and soften other men, but renders him rougher and more extraordinary. But he was always very odd; very odd, indeed, even as a boy."

"Ay, but he was always kind-hearted, brother Robert," observed Miss Barbara; "and though he may be a little odd, he has been in odd places, you know: India and the like; and besides, it does not do to talk of his oddity, as you are doing always, for if he heard of it he might leave all his money away."

"He is only odd, I think," said Edith Croyland, "by being kinder and better than other men."

Sir Edward Digby turned towards her with a warm smile, replying: "So it struck me, Miss Croyland. He is so good and right-minded himself, that he is at times a little out of patience with the faults and follies of others; at least, such was my impression, from all I saw of him."

"It was a just one," answered the young lady; "and I am sure, Sir Edward, the more you see of him the more you will be inclined to overlook the oddities for the sake of the finer qualities."

It seemed to Sir Edward Digby that the commendations of Sir Robert Croyland's brother did not seem the most grateful of all possible sounds to the ears of the baronet, who immediately after announced that he would have the pleasure of conducting his young guest to his apartments, adding that they were early people in the country, their usual dinner-hour

being four o'clock, though he found that the fashionable people of London were now in the habit of dining at half-past four. Sir Edward accordingly followed him up the great oaken staircase to a very handsome and comfortable room, with a dressing-room at the side, in which he found his servant already busily employed in disburdening his bags and portmanteau of their contents.

Sir Robert paused for a moment, to see that his guest had everything which he might require, and then left him. The young baronet did not proceed immediately to the business of the toilet, but seated himself before the window of the bedroom, and gazed out with a thoughtful expression, while his servant continued his operations in the next room. From time to time the man looked in as if he had something to say, but his master continued in a reverie, of which it may be as well to take some notice. His first thought was, "I must lay out the plan of my campaign; but I must take care not to get my wing of the army defeated while the main body is moving up to give battle. On my life, I'm a great deal too good-natured to put myself in such a dangerous position for a friend. The artillery that the old gentleman spoke of is much more formidable than I expected. My worthy colonel did not use so much of love's glowing colours in his painting as I supposed; but after all, there's no danger; I am proof against all such shots, and I fancy I must use little Zara for the purpose of getting at her sister's secrets. There can be no harm in making a little love to her: the least little bit possible. It will do my pretty coquette no harm, and me none either. It may be well to know how the land lies, however; and I dare say that fellow of mine has made some discoveries already; but the surest way to get nothing out of him is to ask him, and so I must let him take his own way."

His thoughts then turned to another branch of the same subject; and he went on pondering rather than thinking for some minutes more. There is a state of mind which can scarcely be called thought; for thought is rapid and progressive, like the flight of a bird, whether it be in the gyrations of the swallow, or the straight-forward course of the rook; but in the mode or condition of which I speak, the mind seems rather to hover over a particular object, like the hawk eyeing carefully that which is beneath it: and this state can no more be

called thought than the hovering of the hawk can be called flight. Such was the occupation of Sir Edward Digby, as I have said, for several minutes, and then he went on to his conclusions. "She loves him still," he said to himself; "of that I feel sure. She is true to him still, and steadfast in her truth. Whatever may have been said or done has not been hers, and that is a great point gained; for now, with station, rank, distinction, and competence at least, he presents himself in a very different position from any which he could assume before; and unless on account of some unaccountable prejudice, the old gentleman can have no objection. Oh, yes, she loves him still, I feel very sure! The calm gravity of that beautiful face has only been written there so early by some deep and unchanged feeling. We never see the sparkling brightness of youth so shadowed but by some powerful and ever-present memory, which, like the deep bass notes of a fine instrument, gives a solemn tone even to the liveliest music of life. She can smile, but the brow is still grave: there is something underneath it; and we must find out exactly what that is. Yet I cannot doubt; I am sure of it. Here, Somers! are not those things ready yet? I shall be too late for dinner."

"Oh, no, sir!" replied the man, coming in, and putting up the back of his hand to his head, in military fashion. "Your honour won't be too late. The great bell rings always half-an-hour before, then Mr. Radford is always a quarter of an hour behind his time."

"I wonder who Mr. Radford is!" said Sir Edward Digby, as if speaking to himself. "He seems a very important person in the county."

"I can tell you, sir," said the man; "he is or was the richest person in the neighbourhood, and has got Sir Robert quite under his thumb, they say. He was a merchant, or a shopkeeper, the butler told me, in Hythe. But there was more money came in than ever went through his counting-house, and what between trading one way or another, he got together a great deal of riches, bought this place here in the neighbourhood, and set up for a gentleman. His son is to be married to Miss Croyland, they say; but the servants think that she hates him, and fancy that he would himself rather have her sister."

The latter part of this speech was that which interested Sir

Edward Digby the most; but he knew that there was a certain sort of perversity about his servant, which made him less willing to answer a distinct question than to volunteer any information; and therefore he fixed upon another point, inquiring, "What do you mean, Somers, by saying that he is, or was, the richest man in the country?"

"Why, sir, that is as it may be," answered the man; "but one thing is certain, Miss Croyland has three times refused to marry this young Radford, notwithstanding all her father could say; and as for the young gentleman himself, why he's no gentleman at all: going about with all the bad characters in the county, and carrying on his father's old trade, like a highwayman. It has not quite answered so well though, for they say old Radford lost fully fifty thousand pounds by his last venture, which was run ashore somewhere about Romney Hoy. The boats were sunk, part of the goods seized, and the rest sent to the bottom. You may be sure he's a dare-devil, however, for whenever the servants speak of him, they sink their voice to a whisper, as if the fiend were at their elbow."

Sir Edward Digby was very well inclined to hear more; but while the man was speaking, the bell he had mentioned, rang, and the young baronet, who had a certain regard for his own personal appearance, hastened to dress and to descend to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER VI.

It is sometimes expedient, in telling a tale of this kind, to introduce the different personages quietly to the reader one after the other, and to suffer him to become familiar with them separately, before they are all brought to act together, that he may have a clear and definite notion of their various characters, dispositions, and peculiarities, and be enabled to judge at once of the motives by which they are actuated, when we recite the deeds that they perform.

Having twice or thrice mentioned one of the prominent persons in this history, without having brought him visibly upon the scene (as, in the natural course of events, I must very soon do), I shall now follow the plan above-mentioned; and, in order to give the reader a distinct notion of Mr. Rad-

ford, his character, and proceedings, will beg those who have gone on with me thus far, to step back with me to the same night on which Mr. Warde and his young friend met the smuggler in his evening walk along the heights.

Not very far from the town of Hythe, nor very far from the village of Sandgate, are still to be found the ruins of an ancient castle, which, by various deeds that have been performed within its walls, has acquired a name in English history. The foundation of the building is beyond our records; and tradition, always fond of the marvellous, carries back the period when the first stone was laid to the times of the Roman invaders of Great Britain. Others supposed that it was erected by the Saxons, but, as it now stands, it presents no trace of the handiwork of either of those two races of barbarians, and is simply one of those strongholds constructed by the Normans, or their close descendants, either to keep their hold of a conquered country, or to resist the power both of tyrannical monarchs and dangerous neighbours. Various parts of the building are undoubtedly attributable to the reign of Henry II.; and if any portion be of an earlier date, of which I have some doubts, it is but small; but a considerable part is, I believe, of a still later epoch, and in some places may be traced the architecture common in the reign of Edward III. and of his grandson. The space enclosed within the outer walls is very extensive, and numerous detached buildings, chapels, halls, and apparently a priory, are still to be found built against those walls themselves, so that it is probable that the castle in remote days gave shelter to some religious body, which is rendered still more likely from the fact of Saltwood Castle and its manor having formerly appertained to the church and see of Canterbury.

Many a remarkable scene has undoubtedly passed in the courts and halls of that now ruined building, and it is even probable that there the dark and dreadful deed, which, though probably not of his contriving, embittered the latter life of the second Henry, was planned and determined by the murderers of Thomas à-Becket. With such deeds, however, and those ancient times, we have nothing here to do; and at the period to which this tale refers, the castle, though in a much more perfect state than at present, was already in ruins. The park which formerly surrounded it had been long thrown open and

divided into fields; but still the character which its formation had given to the neighbouring scenery had not passed away; and the rich extent of old pasture, the scattered woods and clumps of trees, the brawling brook, here and there diverted from its natural course for ornament or convenience, all bespoke the former destination of the ground, for near a mile around on every side, when magnificent Archbishop Courtenay held the castle of Saltwood as his favourite place of residence.

Though, as I have said, grey ruin had possession of the building, yet the strength of its construction had enabled it in many parts to resist the attacks of time; and the great keep, with its two lofty gate-towers and wide-spreading hall, was then but very little decayed. Nevertheless, at that period no one tenanted the castle of Saltwood but an old man and his son, who cultivated a small portion of ground in the neighbourhood; and their dwelling was confined to three rooms in the keep, though they occupied several others by their implements of husbandry, occasionally diversified with sacks of grain, stores of carrots and turnips, and other articles of agricultural produce. Thus, every night, for a short time, lights were to be seen in Saltwood Castle, but all the buildings except the keep were utterly neglected, and falling rapidly into a state of complete dilapidation.

It was towards this building, on the night I speak of, that the smuggler took his way, about a quarter of an hour after having suddenly broken off his conversation with Mr. Warde and the young officer. He walked on with a quick, bold, careless step, apparently without much thought or consideration of the interview to which he was summoned. He paused, indeed, more than once, and looked around him; but it was merely to gaze at the beauty of the scenery, for which he had a great natural taste. It is no slight mistake to suppose that the constant intercourse with, and opportunity of enjoying the beauties of nature, diminish in any degree the pleasures that we thence derive. The direct contrary is the case. Every other delight, everything that man has contrived or found for himself, palls upon the taste by frequent fruition; but not so with those sources of pleasure which are given us by God himself; and the purer and freer they are from man's invention, the more permanent are they in their capability of bestowing happiness, the more extensive seems their quality of satisfying

the ever-increasing desires of the spirit within us. Were it not so, the ardent attachment which is felt by those who have been born and brought up in the midst of fine and magnificent scenery to the place of their nativity, could not exist; and it will always be found that, other things being equal, those who live most amongst the beauties of nature are those who most appreciate them.

Many a beautiful prospect presented itself to the smuggler, as he walked on by the light of the moon. At one place, the woods swept round him and concealed the rest of the country from his eyes; but then the moonbeams poured through the branches, or streamed along the path, and every now and then, between the old trunks and gnarled roots, he caught a sight of the deeper parts of the woodland, sleeping in the pale rays. At another, issuing forth upon the side of the hill, the leafy wilderness lay beneath his feet, with the broad round summit of some piece of high ground, rising dark and flat above; and at some distance further he suddenly turned the angle of the valley, and had the tall grey ruin of Saltwood full before him, with the lines of the trees and meadows sweeping down into the dell, and the bright sky, lustrous with the moonlight, extended broad and unclouded behind. Shortly after, he came to the little stream, rushing in miniature cascades between its hollow banks, and murmuring with a soft and musical voice amongst the roots of the shrubs, which here and there hid it from the beams.

He paused but a moment or two, however, at any of these things, and then walked on again, till at length he climbed the road leading up to the castle, and passed through the archway of the gate. Of the history of the place he knew nothing, but from vague traditions heard in his boyhood; and yet, when he stood amongst those old grey walls, with the high towers rising before him, and the greensward covering the decay of centuries beneath his feet, he could not help feeling a vague impression of melancholy, not unmingled with awe, fall upon him. In the presence of ancient things, the link between all mortality seems most strongly felt. We perceive our association with the dead more strongly. The character and habits of thought of the person, of course, render it a more distinct or obscure perception, but still we all have it. With some, it is as I have before called it, an impression that we must share

the same decay, meet the same fate, fall into the same tomb as those who have raised or produced the things that we behold; for every work of man is but a tombstone, if it be read aright. But with others, an audible voice speaks from the grey ruin and the ancient church, from the dilapidated houses where our fathers dwelt or worshipped, and says to every one amongst the living, "As they were, who built us, so must you be. They enjoyed, and hoped, and feared, and suffered. So do you. Where are they gone, with all their thoughts? Where will you go, think you ever so highly? All down, down, to the same dust, whither we too are tending. We have seen these things for ages past, and we shall see more."

I mean not to say that such was exactly the aspect under which those ruins presented themselves to the eye of the man who now visited them. The voice that spoke was not so clear, but yet it was clear enough to make him feel thoughtful if not sad; and he paused to gaze up at the high keep, as the moon shone out upon the old stone-work, showing every loophole and casement. He was not without imagination, in a homely way, and following the train of thought which the sight of the castle at that hour suggested, he said to himself, "I dare say many a pretty girl has looked out of that window to talk to her lover by the moonlight; and they have grown old, and died like other folks."

How long he would have gone on in this musing mood I cannot tell, but just at that moment the boy who had come down to the beach to call him, appeared from the old doorway of the chapel, and pointing to one of the towers in the wall, whispered—"He's up there, waiting for you."

"Well, then, you run home, young Starlight," replied the smuggler. "I'll be after you in a minute, for he can't have much to say, I should think. Off with you! and no listening, or I'll break your head, youngster."

The boy laughed, and ran away through the gate; and his companion turned towards the angle which he had pointed out. Approaching the wall, he entered what might have been a door, or perhaps a window, looking in upon the court, and communicating with one of those passages which led from tower to tower, with stairs every here and there leading to the battlements. He was obliged to bow his head as he passed; but after climbing a somewhat steep ascent, where

the broken steps were half covered with rubbish, he emerged upon the top of the wall, where many a sentinel had kept his weary watch in times long past. At a little distance in advance, standing in the pale moonlight, was a tall, gaunt figure, leaning against a fragment of one of the neighbouring towers; and Harding did not pause to look at the splendour of the view below, though it might well, with its world of wood and meadow, bounded by the glistening sea, have attracted eyes less fond of such scenes than his; but on he walked, straight towards the person before him, who, on his part, hurried forward to meet him, whenever the sound of his step broke upon the ear.

"Good night, Harding!" said Mr. Radford, in a low but still harsh tone; "what a time you have been. It will be one o'clock or more before I get back."

"Past two," answered the smuggler, bluntly; "but I came as soon as I could. It is not much more than half an hour since I got your message."

"That stupid boy has been playing the fool, then," replied the other; "I sent him——"

"Oh, he's not stupid!" interrupted the smuggler; "and he's not given to play the fool either. More likely to play the rogue. But what's the business now, sir? There's no doing anything on such nights as these."

"I know that, I know that," rejoined Radford. "But this will soon change. The moon will be dwindled down to a cheese-paring before many days are over, and the barometer is falling. It is necessary that we should make all our arrangements beforehand, Harding, and have everything ready. We must have no more such jobs as the last two."

"I had nothing to do with them," rejoined the smuggler. "You chose your own people, and they failed. I do not mean to say it was their fault, for I don't think it was. They lost as much, for them, as you did; and they did their best, I dare say; but still that is nothing to me. I've undertaken to land the cargo, and I will do it, if I live. If I die, there's nothing to be said, you know; but I don't say I'll ever undertake another of the sort. It does not answer, Mr. Radford. It makes a man think too much, to know that other people have got so much money staked on such a venture."

"Ay, but that is the very cause why every one should

exert himself," answered his companion. "I lost fifty thousand pounds by the last affair, twenty by the other; but I tell you, Harding, I have more than both upon this, and if this fail——"

He paused, and did not finish the sentence; but he set his teeth hard, and seemed to draw his breath with difficulty.

"That's a bad plan," said the smuggler; "a bad plan, in all ways. You wish to make up all at one run; and so you double the venture; but you should know by this time, that one out of four pays very well, and we have seldom failed to do one out of two or three; but the more money people get the more greedy they are of it; so that because you put three times as much as enough on one freight, you must needs put five times on the other, and ten times on the third, risking a greater loss every time for a greater gain. I'll have to do with no more of these things. I'm contented with little, and don't like such great speculations."

"Oh! if you are afraid," cried Mr. Radford, "you can give it up. I dare say we can find some one else to land the goods."

"As to being afraid, that I am not," answered Harding; "and having undertaken the run, I'll do it. I'm not half so much afraid as you are, for I've not near so much to lose; only my life or liberty and three hundred pounds. But still, Mr. Radford, I do not like to think that if anything goes wrong you'll be so much hurt; and it makes a man feel queer. If I have a few hundreds in a boat, and nothing to lose but myself and a dozen of tubs, I go about it as gay as a lark and as cool and quiet as a dog-fish; but if anything were to go wrong now, why it would be—"

"Ruin—utter ruin!" said Mr. Radford.

"I dare say it would," rejoined the smuggler; "but, nevertheless, your coming down here every other day, and sending for me, does no good, and a great deal of harm. It only teazes me, and sets me always thinking about it, when the best way is not to think at all, but just to do the thing and get it over. Besides, you'll have people noticing your being so often down here, and you'll make them suspect something is going on."

"But it is necessary, my good fellow," answered the other, "that we should settle all our plans. I must have people ready, and horses and help, in case of need."

"Ay, that you must," replied the smuggler, thoughtfully. "I think you said the cargo was light goods."

"Almost all India," said Radford, in return. "Shawls and painted silks, and other things of great value but small bulk. There are a few bales of lace, too; but the whole will require well nigh a hundred horses to carry it, so that we must have a strong muster."

"Ay, and men who fight, too," rejoined Harding. "You know there are dragoons down at Folkestone?"

"No! when did they come?" exclaimed Radford, eagerly. "That's a bad job, that's a bad job! Perhaps they suspect already. Perhaps some of those fellows from the other side have given information, and these soldiers are sent down in consequence; I shouldn't wonder, I shouldn't wonder."

"Pooh, nonsense, Mr. Radford!" replied Harding; "you are always so suspicious. Some day or another you'll suspect me."

"I suspect everybody," cried Radford, vehemently, "and I have good cause. I have known men do such things, for a pitiful gain, as would hang them, if there were any just punishment for treachery."

Harding laughed, but he did not explain the cause of his merriment, though probably he thought that Mr. Radford himself would do many a thing for a small gain, which would not lightly touch his soul's salvation. He soon proceeded, however, to reply, in a grave tone. "That's a bad plan, Mr. Radford. No man is ever well served by those whom he suspects. He had better never have anything to do with a person he doubts; so, if you doubt me, I'm quite willing to give the business up, for I don't half like it."

"Oh, no!" said Radford, in a smooth and coaxing tone, "I did not mean you, Harding; I know you too well for as honest a fellow as ever lived; but I do doubt those fellows on the other side, and I strongly suspect they peached about the other two affairs. Besides, you said something about dragoons, and we have not had any of that sort of vermin here for a year or more."

"You frighten yourself about nothing," answered Harding. "There is but a troop of them yet, though they say more are expected. But what good are dragoons? I have run many a cargo under their very noses, and hope I shall live to run

many another. As to stopping this traffic, they are no more good than so many old women!"

"But you must get it all over before the rest come," replied Mr. Radford, in an argumentative manner, taking hold of the lappel of his companion's jacket; "there's no use of running more risk than needful. And you must remember that we have a long way to carry the goods after they are landed. Then is the most dangerous time."

"I don't know that," said Harding; "but, however, you must provide for that, and must also look out for *hides** for the things. I won't have any of them down with me; and when I have landed them safely, though I don't mind giving a help to bring them a little way inland, I won't be answerable for anything more."

"No, no; that's all settled," answered his companion; "and the hides are all ready, too. Some can come into my stable, others can be carried up to the willow cave. Then there's Sir Robert's great barn."

"Will Sir Robert consent?" asked Harding, in a doubtful tone. "He would never have anything to do with these matters himself, and was always devilish hard upon us. I remember he sent my father to gaol ten years ago, when I was a youngster."

"He must consent," replied Radford, sternly; "he dare as soon refuse me as cut off his right hand. I tell you, Harding, I have got him in a vice, and one turn of the lever will make him cry for mercy when I like. But no more of him. I shall use his barn as if it were my own; and it is in the middle of the wood, you know, so that it's out of sight. But even if it were not for that, we've got many another place. Thank heaven, there are no want of hides in this county!"

"Ay, but the worst of dry goods, and things of that kind," rejoined the smuggler, "is that they spoil with a little wet, so that one can't sink them in a cut or a canal till they are wanted, as one can do with tubs. Who do you intend to send down for them? That's one thing I must know."

"Oh! whoever comes, my son will be with them," answered Mr. Radford. "As to who the others will be, I can-

* It may be as well to explain to the uninitiated reader, that the secret places where smugglers conceal their goods after landing, are known by the name of "hides."

not tell yet. The Ramleys, certainly, amongst the rest. They are always ready, and will either fight or run, as it may be needed."

"I don't much like them," replied Harding; "they are a bad set. I wish they were hanged, or out of the country; for, as you say, they will either fight, or run, or peach, or anything else that suits them: one just as soon as another."

"Oh! no fear of that; no fear of that!" exclaimed Mr. Radford, in a confident tone, which seemed somewhat strange to the ears of his companion, after the suspicions he had heard him so lately express; but the other instantly added, in explanation, "I shall take care that they have no means of peaching, for I will tell them nothing about it till they are setting off with fifty or sixty others."

"That's the best way, and the only way with such fellows as those," answered Harding; "but if you tell nobody, you'll find it a hard job to get them all together."

"Only let the day be fixed," said Mr. Radford; "and I'll have all ready, never fear."

"That must be your affair," replied Harding; "I'm ready whenever you like. Give me a dark night and a fair wind, and my part of the job is soon done."

"About this day week, I should think," said Mr. Radford. "The moon will be nearly out by that time."

"Not much more than half," replied the smuggler; "and as we have got to go far, for the ship, you say, will not stand in, we had better have the whole night to ourselves. Even a bit of a moon is a bad companion on such a trip; especially where there is so much money risked. No, I think you had better give me three days more: then there will be wellnigh nothing left of her, and she won't rise till three or four. We can see what the weather's like, too, about that time; and I can come up and let you know; but if you'll take my advice, Mr. Radford, you'll not be coming down here any more till it's all over at least. There's no good of it, and it may do mischief."

"Well, now it's all settled, I shall not need to do so," rejoined the other; "but I really don't see, Harding, why you should so much wish me to stay away."

"I'll tell you why, Mr. Radford," said Harding, putting his hands into the pockets of his jacket, "and that very easily.

Although you have become a great gentleman, and live at a fine place inland, people haven't forgot when you kept a house and a counting-house too, in Hythe, and all that used to go on in those days; and though you are a magistrate, and go out hunting and shooting, and all that, the good folks about have little doubt that you have a hankering after the old trade yet, only that you do your business on a larger scale than you did then. It's but the other day, when I was in at South's, the grocer's, to talk to him about some stuff he wanted, I heard two men say one to the other, as they saw you pass, 'Ay, there goes old Radford. I wonder what he's down here for!' 'As great an old smuggler as ever lived,' said the other; 'and a pretty penny he's made of it. He's still at it, they say; and I dare say he's down here now upon some such concern.' So you see, sir, people talk about it, and that's the reason why I say that the less you are here the better."

"Perhaps it is; perhaps it is," answered Mr. Radford, quickly; "and as we've now settled all we can settle, till you come up, I'll take myself home. Good night, Harding; good night!"

"Good night, sir!" answered Harding, with something like a smile upon his lip; and finding their way down again to the court below, they parted.

"I don't like that fellow at all," said Mr. Radford to himself, as he walked away upon the road to Hythe, where he had left his horse; "he's more than half inclined to be uncivil. I'll have nothing more to do with him after this is over."

Harding took his way across the fields towards Sandgate, and perhaps his thoughts were not much more complimentary to his companion than Mr. Radford's had been to him; but in the mean time, while each followed his separate course homeward, we must remain for a short space in the green, moonlight court of Saltwood Castle. All remained still and silent for about three minutes; but then the ivy, which at that time had gathered thickly round the old walls, might be seen to move in the neighbourhood of a small aperture in one of the ruined flanking towers of the outer wall, to which it had at one time probably served as a window, though all traces of its original form were now lost. The tower was close to the spot where Mr. Radford and his companion had been standing;

and although the aperture we have mentioned looked towards the court, joining on to a projecting wall in great part overthrown, there was a loop-hole on the other side, flanking the very parapet on which they had carried on their conversation.

After the ivy had moved for a moment, as I have said, something like a human head was thrust out, looking cautiously round the court. The next minute a broad pair of shoulders appeared, and then the whole form of a tall and powerful man, who, after pausing for an instant on the top of the broken wall, used its fragments as a means of descent to the ground below. Just as he reached the level of the court, one of the loose stones which he had displaced as he came down, rolled after him and fell at his side; and, with a sudden start at the first sound, he laid his hand on the butt of a large horse-pistol stuck in a belt round his waist. As soon as he perceived what it was that had alarmed him, he took his hand from the weapon again, and walked out into the moonlight; and thence, after pacing quietly up and down for two or three minutes, to give time for the two other visitors of the castle to get to a distance, he sauntered slowly out through the gate. He then turned under the walls towards the little wood which at that time occupied a part of the valley, opposite to which he stood gazing for about five minutes. When he judged all safe, he gave a whistle, upon which the form of a boy instantly started out from the trees, and came running across the meadow towards him.

"Have you heard all, Mr. Mowle?" asked the boy in a whisper, as soon as he was near.

"All that they said, little Starlight," replied the other. "They didn't say enough; but yet it will do, and you are a clever little fellow. But come along," he added, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, "you shall have what I promised you, and half-a-crown more; and if you go on, and tell me all you find out, you shall be well paid."

Thus saying, he walked on with the boy towards Hythe, and the scenery round Saltwood resumed its silent solitude again.

CHAPTER VII.

To a very hungry man it matters not much what is put upon the table so that it be eatable, but with the intellectual appetite the case is different, and every one is anxious to know who is to be his companion, or what is to be in his book. Now Sir Edward Digby was somewhat of an epicure in human character, and he always felt as great a curiosity to enjoy any new personage brought before him, as the more ordinary epicure desires to taste a new dish. He was equally refined, too, in regard to the taste of his intellectual food. He liked a good deal of flavour, but not too much; a *soupcon* of something, he did not well know what, in a man's demeanour gave it great zest, as a *soupcon* of two or three condiments so blended in a *salmi* as to defy analysis must have charmed Vatel; and, to say the truth, the little he had seen or heard of the house in which he now was, together with his knowledge of some of its antecedents, had awakened a great desire for a farther taste of its quality.

When he went down stairs, then, and opened the dining-room door, his eye naturally ran round in search of the new guests. Only two, however, had arrived, in the first of whom he recognised Mr. Zachary Croyland. The other was a venerable looking old man in black, whom he could not conceive to be Mr. Radford, from the previous account which he had heard of that respectable gentleman's character. It turned out, however, that the person before him, who had been omitted by Sir Robert Croyland in the enumeration of his expected visitors, was the clergyman of the neighbouring village; and being merely a plain, good man, of very excellent sense, but neither rich, noble, nor thrifty, was nobody in the opinion of the baronet.

As soon as Sir Edward Digby appeared, Mr. Zachary Croyland, with his back tall, straight, and stiff as a poker, advanced towards him and shook him cordially by the hand. "Welcome, welcome, my young friend," he said; "you've kept your word, I see, and that's a good sign of any man, especially when he knows that there's neither pleasure, profit, nor popularity to be gained by so doing; and I'm sure there's

none of either to be had in this remote corner of the world. You have some object, of course, in coming among us, for every man has an object, but what it is I can't divine."

"A very great object, indeed, my dear sir," replied the young officer with a smile; "I wish to cultivate the acquaintance of an old friend of my father's, your brother here, who was kind enough to invite me."

"A very unprofitable sort of plant to cultivate," answered Mr. Croyland, in a voice quite loud enough to be heard by the whole room. "It won't pay tillage, I should think; but you know your own affairs best. Here, Edith, my love, I must make you better acquainted with my young fellow-traveller. Doubtless, he is perfectly competent to talk as much nonsense to you as any other young man about town, and has imported, for the express benefit of the young ladies in the country, all the sweet things and pretty speeches last in vogue. But he can, in his saner moments, and if you just let him know that you are not quite a fool, bestow upon you some small portion of common sense, which he has picked up, Heaven knows how! He couldn't have it by descent, for he is an eldest son, and that portion of the family property is always reserved for the younger children."

Mrs. Barbara Croyland, who found that her brother Zachary was riding his horse somewhat hard, moved across the room, with the superfluity of whalebone which she had in her stays crackling at every step, as if expressly to attract attention, and, laying her hand on Mr. Croyland's arm, she whispered, "Now do, brother, be a little civil and kind. There's no use of hurting people's feelings; and if Robert has'nt as much sense as you, there's no use you should be always telling him so."

"Pish! nonsense!" cried Mr. Croyland, "hold your tongue, Bab. You're a good soul as ever lived, but a great fool into the bargain. So don't meddle. I should think you had burnt your fingers enough with it by this time."

"And I'm sure you're a good soul, too, if you would but let people know it," replied Mrs. Barbara, anxious to soften and keep down all the little oddities and asperities of her family circle in the eyes of Sir Edward Digby.

But she only showed them the more by so doing; for Mr. Croyland was not to be caught by honey, and, besides, the character which she in her simplicity thought fit to attribute

to him, was the very last upon the face of the earth which he coveted. Every man has his vanity, and it is an imp that takes an infinite variety of different forms, frequently the most hideous and the most absurd. Now Mr. Croyland's vanity lay in his oddity and acerbity. There was nothing on earth which he considered so foolish as good-nature, and he was heartily ashamed of the large portion with which Heaven had endowed him.

"I a good soul!" he exclaimed. "Let me tell you, Bab, you are very much mistaken in that, as in every other thing you say or do. I am nothing more nor less than a very cross, ill-tempered old man; and you know it quite well, if you wouldn't be a hypocrite."

"Well, I do believe you are," said the lady, with her own particular vanity mortified into a state of irritation, "and the only way is to let you alone."

While this conversation had been passing between brother and sister, Sir Edward Digby, taking advantage of the position in which they stood, and which masked his own operations from the rest of the party, bent down to speak a few words to Edith, who, whatever they were, looked up with a smile, faint and thoughtful indeed, but still expressing as much cheerfulness as her countenance ever showed. The topic which he spoke upon might be common-place, but what he said was said with grace, and had a degree of originality in it, mingled with courtliness and propriety of expression, which at once awakened attention and repaid it. It was not strong beer, it was not strong spirit; but it was like some delicate kind of wine, which has more power than the fineness of the flavour suffers to be apparent at the first taste.

Their conversation was not long, however; for by the time that the young gentleman and lady had exchanged a few sentences, and Mr. Croyland had finished his discussion with his sister, the name of Mr. Radford was announced; and Sir Edward Digby turned quickly round to examine the appearance of the new comer. As he did so, however, his eye fell for a moment upon the countenance of Edith Croyland, and he thought he remarked an expression of anxiety not unmingled with pain, till the door closed after admitting a single figure, when a look of relief brightened her face, and she gave a glance across the room to her sister. The younger girl instantly rose,

and while her father was busy receiving Mr. Radford with somewhat profuse attention, she gracefully crossed the room, and seating herself by Edith, laid her hand upon her sister's, whispering something to her with a kindly look.

Sir Edward Digby marked it all, and liked it; for there is something in the bottom of man's heart which has always a sympathy with affection; but he, nevertheless did not fail to take a complete survey of the personage who entered, and whom I must now present to the reader, somewhat more distinctly than I could do by the moonlight. Mr. Richard Radford was a tall, thin, but large-boned man, with dark eyes and overhanging shaggy brows, a hook nose, considerably depressed towards the point, a mouth somewhat wide, and teeth very fine for his age, though somewhat straggling and shark-like. His hair was very thick, and apparently coarse; his arms long and powerful, and his legs, notwithstanding the meagerness of his body, furnished with very respectable calves. On the whole, he was a striking but not a prepossessing person; and there was a look of keenness and cupidity, we might almost say voracity, in his eye, with a bend in the brow, which would have given the observer an idea of great quickness of intellect and decision of character, if it had not been for a certain degree of weakness about the partly opened mouth, which seemed to be in opposition to the latter characteristic. He was dressed in the height of the mode, with large buckles in his shoes and smaller ones at his knees, a light dress-sword hanging not ungracefully by his side, and a profusion of lace and embroidery about his apparel.

Mr. Radford replied to the courtesies of Sir Robert Croyland with perfect self-possession—one might almost call it self-sufficiency—but with no grace and some stiffness. He was then introduced, in form, to Sir Edward Digby, bowing low, if that could be called a bow, which was merely an inclination of the rigid spine, from a perpendicular position to an angle of forty-five with the horizon. The young officer's demeanour formed a very striking contrast with that of his new acquaintance, not much in favour of the latter; but he showed that, as Mr. Croyland had predicated of him, he was quite prepared to say a great many courteous nothings in a very civil and obliging tone. Mr. Radford declared himself delighted at the honour of making his acquaintance, and Sir Edward pronounced

himself charmed at the opportunity of meeting him. Mr. Radford hoped that he was going to honour their poor place for a considerable length of time, and Sir Edward felt sure that the beauty of such scenery, and the delights of such society, would be the cause of much pain to him when he was compelled to tear himself away.

A low but merry laugh from behind them, caused both the gentlemen to turn their heads; and they found the sparkling eyes of Zara Croyland fixed upon them. She instantly dropped her eye-lids, however, and coloured a little, at being detected. It was evident enough that she had been weighing the compliments she heard, and estimating them at their right value, which made Mr. Radford look somewhat angry, but elicited nothing from Sir Edward Digby but a gay glance at the beautiful little culprit, which she caught, even through the thick lashes of her downcast eyes, and which served to reassure her.

Sir Robert Croyland himself was displeased; but Zara was in a degree a spoiled child, and had established for herself a privilege of doing what she liked, unscolded. To turn the conversation, therefore, Sir Robert, in a tone of great regard, inquired particularly after his young friend, Richard, and said, he hoped that they were to have the pleasure of seeing him.

"I trust so, I trust so, Sir Robert," replied Mr. Radford; "but you know I am totally unacquainted with his movements. He had gone away upon some business, the servants told me; and I waited as long as I could for him; but I did not choose to keep your dinner, Sir Robert; and if he does not choose to come in time, the young dog must go without. Pray do not stop a moment for him."

"Business!" muttered Mr. Croyland; "either cheating the king's revenue, or making love to a milkmaid, I'll answer for him;" but the remark passed unnoticed, for Sir Robert Croyland, who was always anxious to drown his brother's somewhat too pertinent observations, without giving the nabob any offence, was loudly pressing Mr. Radford to let them wait for half-an-hour, in order to give time for the young gentleman's arrival.

His father, however, would not hear of such a proceeding; and the bell was rung, and dinner ordered. It was placed upon the table with great expedition; and the party moved towards the dining-room. Mr. Radford handed in the baronet's

sister, who was, to say the truth, an enigma to him; for he himself could form no conception of her good-nature, simplicity, and kindness, and consequently thought that all the mischief she occasionally caused, must originate in well-concealed spite, which gave him a great reverence for her character. Sir Edward Digby, notwithstanding a hint from Sir Robert to take in his youngest daughter, advanced to Miss Croyland, and secured her, as he thought, for himself; while the brother of the master of the house followed with the fair Zara, leaving the clergyman and Sir Robert to come together. By a manœuvre on the part of Edith, however, favoured by her father, but nearly frustrated by the busy spirit of her aunt, Miss Croyland got placed between Sir Robert and the clergyman, while the youngest daughter of the house was seated by Sir Edward Digby, leaving a chair vacant between herself and her worthy parent for young Radford, when he should arrive.

All this being arranged, to the satisfaction of everybody but Sir Edward Digby, grace was said, after a not very decent hint from Sir Robert Croyland, that it ought not to be too long, and the dinner commenced with the usual attack upon soup and fish. It must not be supposed, however, because we have ventured to say that the arrangement was not to the satisfaction of Sir Edward Digby, that the young baronet was at all disinclined to enjoy his pretty little friend's society nearer than the opposite side of the table. Nor must it be imagined that his sage reflections, in regard to keeping himself out of danger, had at all made a coward of the gallant soldier. The truth is, he had a strong desire to study Edith Croyland, not on account of any benefit which that study could be of to himself, but with other motives and views, which, upon the whole, were very laudable. He wished to see into her mind, and by those slight indications which were all he could expect her to display, but which, nevertheless, to a keen observer, often tell a history better than a whole volume of details, to ascertain some facts in regard to which he took a considerable interest. Being somewhat eager in his way, and not knowing how long he might find it either convenient or safe to remain in his present quarters, he had determined to commence the campaign as soon as possible; but, frustrated in his first attack, he determined to change his plan of operations, and besiege the fair Zara as one of the enemy's out-

works. He accordingly laughed and talked with her upon almost every subject in the world during the first part of dinner, skilfully leading her up to the pursuits of her sister and herself in the country, in order to obtain a clear knowledge of their habits and course of proceeding, that he might take advantage of it at an after-period, for purposes of his own.

The art of conversation, when properly regarded, forms a regular system of tactics in which, notwithstanding the various manœuvres of your adversary, and the desultory fire kept up by indifferent persons around, you still endeavour to carry the line of advance in the direction that you wish, and to frustrate every effort to turn it towards any point that may not be agreeable to you, rallying it here, giving it a bend there; presenting a sharp angle at one place, an obtuse one at another; and raising from time to time a barrier or a breastwork for the purpose of preventing the adverse force from turning your flank and getting into your rear.

But the mischief was, in the present instance, that Sir Edward Digby's breastworks were too low for such an active opponent as Zara Croyland. They might have appeared a formidable obstacle in the way of a scientific opponent; but with all the rash valour of youth, which is so frequently successful where practice and experience fail, she walked straight up, and jumped over them, taking one line after another, till Sir Edward Digby found that she had nearly got into the heart of his camp. It was all so easy and natural, however, so gay and cheerful, that he could not feel mortified even at his own want of success; and though five times she darted away from the subject, and began to talk of other things, he still renewed it, expatiating upon the pleasures of a country life, and upon how much more rational, as well as agreeable it was, when compared to the amusements and whirl of the town.

Mr. Zachary Croyland, indeed, cut across them often, listening to what they said, and sometimes smiling significantly at Sir Edward Digby, or at other times replying himself to what either of the two thought fit to discourse upon. Thus, then, when the young baronet was descanting sagely of the pleasures of the country, as compared with those of the town, good Mr. Croyland laughed merrily, saying, "You will soon have enough of it, Sir Edward; or else you are only deceiving

that poor foolish girl; for what have you to do with the country? You, who have lived the best part of your life in cities, and amongst their denizens. I dare say, if the truth were told now, you would give a guinea to be walking up the Mall, instead of sitting down here in this old, crumbling, crazy house, speaking courteous nonsense to a pretty little milk-maid."

"Indeed, my dear sir, you are very much mistaken," replied Sir Edward, gravely. "You judge all men by yourself; and because you are fond of cities, and the busy haunts of men, you think I must be so too."

"I fond of cities and the busy haunts of men!" cried Mr. Croyland, in a tone of high indignation; but a laugh that ran round the table, and in which even the worthy clergyman joined, showed the old gentleman that he had been taken in by Sir Edward's quietly-spoken jest; and at the same time his brother exclaimed, still laughing, "He hit you fairly there, Zachary. He has found out the full extent of your love for your fellow-creatures already."

"Well, I forgive him, I forgive him!" said Mr. Croyland, with more good humour than might have been expected. "I had forgotten that I had told him, four or five days ago, my hatred for all cities, and especially for that great mound of greedy emmets, which, unfortunately, is the capital of this country. I declare I never go into that vast den of iniquity, and mingle with the stream of wretched-looking things that call themselves human, which all its doors are hourly vomiting forth, but they put me in mind of the white ants in India, just the same squalid-looking, active, and voracious vermin as themselves, running over everything that obstructs them, intruding themselves everywhere, destroying everything that comes in their way, and acting as an incessant torment to every one within reach. Certainly, the white ants are the less venomous of the two races, and somewhat prettier to look at; but still there's a wonderful resemblance."

"I don't at all approve of your calling me a milkmaid, uncle," said Zara, shaking her small delicate finger at Mr. Croyland, across the table. "It's very wrong and ungrateful of you. See if ever I milk your cow for you again!"

"Then I'll milk it myself, my dear," replied Mr. Croyland, with a good-humoured smile at his fair niece.

"You cannot, you cannot!" cried Zara. "Fancy, Sir Edward, what a picture it made when one day I went over to my uncle's, and found him with a frightful-looking black man, in a turban, whom he brought over from heaven knows where, trying to milk a cow he had just bought, and neither of them able to manage it. My uncle was kneeling upon his cocked hat, amongst the long grass, looking, as he acknowledges, like a kangaroo; the cow had got one of her feet in the pail, kicking most violently; and the black man with a white turban round his head, was upon both his knees before her, beseeching her, in some heathen language, to be quiet. It was the finest sight I ever saw, and would have made a beautiful picture of the 'Worship of the Cow,' which is, as I am told, customary in the country where both the gentlemen came from."

"Zara, my dear; Zara!" cried Mrs. Barbara, who was frightened to death lest her niece should deprive herself of all share in Mr. Croydon's fortune. "You really should not tell such a story of your uncle."

But the worthy gentleman himself was laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks. "Its quite true; its quite true!" he exclaimed, "and she did milk the cow, though we couldn't. The ill-tempered devil was as quiet as a lamb with her, though she is so vicious with every male thing, that I have actually been obliged to have a woman in the cottage within a hundred yards of the house, for the express purpose of milking her."

"That's what you should have done at first," said Mr. Radford, putting down the fork with which he had been diligently devouring a large plateful of fish. "Instead of having nothing but men about you, you should have had none but your coachman and footman, and all the rest women."

"Ay, and married my cook-maid," replied Mr. Croyland, sarcastically.

Sir Robert Croyland looked down into his plate with a quivering lip and a heavy brow, as if he did not well know whether to laugh or be angry. The clergyman smiled, Mr. Radford looked furious, but said nothing, and Mrs. Barbara exclaimed, "Oh! brother, you should not say such things; and besides, there are many cook-maids who are very nice, pretty, respectable people."

"Well, sister, I'll think of it," said Mr. Croyland, drily,

but with a good deal of fun twinkling in the corners of his eyes.

It was too much for the light heart of Zara Croyland; and holding down her head she laughed outright, although she knew that Mr. Radford had placed himself in the predicament of which her uncle spoke, though he had been relieved of the immediate consequence for some years.

What would have been the result is difficult to say; for Mr. Radford was waxing wroth; but at that moment the door was flung hastily open, and a young gentleman entered, of some three or four-and-twenty years of age, bearing a strong resemblance to Mr. Radford, though undoubtedly of a much more pleasant and graceful appearance. He was well dressed, and his coat, lined with white silk of the finest texture, was cast negligently back from his chest, with an air of carelessness which was to be traced in all the rest of his apparel. Everything he wore was as good as it could be, and everything became him; for he was well formed, and his movements were free and even graceful; but everything seemed to have been thrown on in a hurry, and his hair floated wild and straggling round his brow, as if neither comb nor brush had touched it for many hours. It might have been supposed that this sort of disarray proceeded from haste when he found himself too late and his father gone; but there was an expression of reckless indifference about his face which led Sir Edward Digby to imagine that this apparent negligence was the habitual characteristic of his mind, rather than the effect of any accidental circumstance. His air was quite self-possessed, though hurried; and a flashing glance of his eye round the table, resting for a moment longer on Sir Edward Digby than on any one else, seemed directed to ascertain whether the party assembled was one that pleased him, before he chose to sit down to the board with them. He made no apology to Sir Robert Croyland for being too late, but shook hands with him in return for the very cordial welcome he met with, and then seated himself in the vacant chair, nodding to Miss Croyland familiarly, and receiving a cold inclination of the head in return. One of the servants inquired if he would take soup and fish; but he replied abruptly, "No; bring me fish. No soup; I hate such messes."

In the mean time, by one of those odd turns which some-

times take place in conversation, Mr. Croyland, the clergyman, and Mr. Radford himself were once more talking together; the latter having apparently overcome his indignation at the nabob's tart rejoinder, in the hope and expectation of saying something still more biting to him in return. Like many a brave general, however, he had not justly appreciated the power of his adversary as compared with his own strength. Mr. Croyland, soured at an early period of life, had acquired by long practice and experience a habit of repartee when his prejudices or his opinions (and they are very different things) were assailed, which was overpowering. A large fund of natural kindness and good humour formed a curious substratum for the acerbity which had accumulated above it, and his love of a joke would often show itself in a hearty peal of laughter, even at his own expense, when the attack upon him was made in a good spirit, by one for whom he had any affection or esteem. But if he despised or disliked his assailant, as was the case with Mr. Radford, the bitterest possible retort was sure to be given in the fewest possible words.

In order to lead away from the obnoxious subject, the clergyman returned to Mr. Croyland's hatred of London, saying, not very advisedly perhaps, just as young Mr. Radford entered, "I cannot imagine, my dear sir, why you have such an animosity to our magnificent capital, and to all that it contains, especially when we all know you to be as beneficent to individuals as you are severe upon the species collectively."

"My dear Cruden, you'll only make a mess of it," replied Mr. Croyland. "The reason why I do sometimes befriend a poor scoundrel whom I happen to know, is because it is less pleasant for me to see a rascal suffer than to do what's just by him. I have no will and no power to punish all the villany I see, otherwise my arm would be tired enough of flogging in this county of Kent. But I do not understand why I should be called upon to like a great agglomeration of blackguards in a city, when I can have the same diluted in the country. Here we have about a hundred scoundrels to the square mile; in London we have a hundred to the square yard."

"Don't you think, sir, that they may be but the worse scoundrels in the country because they are fewer?" demanded Mr. Radford.

"I am beginning to fancy so," answered Mr. Croyland,

drily, "but I suppose in London the number makes up for the want of intensity."

"Well, it's a very fine city," rejoined Mr. Radford; "the emporium of the world, the nurse of arts and sciences, the birth-place and the theatre of all that is great and majestic in the efforts of human intellect."

"And equally of all that is base and vile," answered his opponent; "it is the place to which all smuggled goods naturally tend, Radford. Every uncustomed spirit, every prohibited ware, physical and intellectual, there finds its mart; and the chief art that is practised is to cheat as cleverly as may be; the chief science learned, is how to defraud without being detected. We are improving in the country daily, daily; but we have not reached the skill of London yet. Men make large fortunes in the country in a few years by merely cheating the customs; but in London they make large fortunes in a few months by cheating everybody."

"So they do in India," replied Mr. Radford, who thought he had hit the tender place.

"True, true!" cried Mr. Croyland; "and then we go and set up for country gentlemen, and cheat still. What rogues we are, Radford! eh? I see you know the world. It is very well for me to say I made all my money by curing men, not by robbing them. Never you believe it, my good friend. It is not in human nature, is it? No, no, tell that to the marines. No man ever made a fortune but by plunder, that's a certain fact."

The course of Sir Robert Croyland's dinner-party seemed to promise very unpleasantly at this juncture; but Sir Edward Digby, though somewhat amused, was not himself fond of sharp words, and had some compassion upon the ladies at the table. He therefore stepped in, and, without seeming to have noticed that there was anything passing between Mr. Radford and the brother of his host except the most delicate courtesies, he contrived, by some well-directed questions in regard to India, to give Mr. Croyland an inducement to deviate from the sarcastic into the expatiative; and having set him cantering upon one of his hobbies, he left him to finish his excursion, and returned to a conversation which had been going on between him and the fair Zara, in somewhat of a low tone, though not so low as to show any mutual design of keeping it

from the ears of those around. Young Radford had in the mean time been making up for the loss of time occasioned by his absence at the commencement of dinner, and he seemed undoubtedly to have a prodigious appetite. Not a word had passed from father to son, or son to father; and a stranger might have supposed them in no degree related to each other. Indeed, the young gentleman had hitherto spoken to nobody but the servant; and while his mouth was employed in eating, his quick, large eyes were directed to every face round the table in succession, making several more tours than the first investigating glance, which I have already mentioned, and every time stopping longer at the countenance of Sir Edward Digby than anywhere else. He now, however, seemed inclined to take part in that officer's conversation with the youngest Miss Croyland, and did not appear quite pleased to find her attention so completely engrossed by a stranger. To Edith he vouchsafed not a single word; but hearing the fair lady next to him reply to something which Sir Edward Digby had said, "Oh! we go out once or twice almost every day; sometimes on horseback, but more frequently to take a walk," he exclaimed, "Do you, indeed, Miss Zara? Why, I never meet you, and I am always running about the country. How is that, I wonder?"

Zara smiled, and replied, with an arch look, "Because fortune befriends us, I suppose, Mr. Radford;" but then, well knowing that he was not one likely to take a jest in good part, she added, "we don't go out to meet anybody, and therefore always take those paths where we are least likely to do so."

Still young Radford did not seem half to like her reply; but, nevertheless, he went on in the same tone, continually interrupting her conversation with Sir Edward Digby, and endeavouring, after a fashion not at all uncommon, to make himself agreeable by preventing people from following the course they are inclined to pursue. The young baronet rather humoured him than otherwise, for he wished to see as deeply as possible into his character. He asked him to drink wine with him; he spoke to him once or twice without being called upon to do so; and he was somewhat amused to see that the fair Zara was a good deal annoyed at the encouragement he gave to her companion on the left to join in their conversation.

He was soon satisfied, however, in regard to the young

man's mind and character. Richard Radford had evidently received what is called a good education, which is, in fact, no education at all. He had been taught a great many things; he knew a good deal; but that which really and truly constitutes education was totally wanting. He had not learned how to make use of that which he had acquired, either for his own benefit or for that of society. He had been instructed, not educated, and there is the greatest possible difference between the two. He was shrewd enough, but selfish and conceited to a high degree, with a sufficient portion of pride to be offensive, with sufficient vanity to be irritable, with all the wilfulness of a spoiled child, and with that confusion of ideas in regard to plain right and wrong, which is always consequent upon the want of moral training and over-indulgence in youth. To judge from his own conversation, the whole end and aim of his life seemed to be excitement; he spoke of field sports with pleasure; but the degree of satisfaction which he derived from each, appeared to be always in proportion to the danger, the activity, and the fierceness. Hunting he liked better than shooting, shooting than fishing, which latter he declared was only tolerable because there was nothing else to be done in the spring of the year. But upon the pleasures of the chase he would dilate largely, and he told several anecdotes of staking a magnificent horse here, and breaking the back of another there, till poor Zara turned somewhat pale, and begged him to desist from such themes.

"I cannot think how men can be so barbarous," she said. "Their whole pleasure seems to consist in torturing poor animals or killing them."

Young Radford laughed. "What were they made for?" he asked.

"To be used by man, I think; not to be tortured by him," the young lady replied.

"No torture at all," said her companion on the left. "The horse takes as much pleasure in running after the hounds as I do, and if he breaks his back, or I break my neck, it's our own fault. We have nobody to thank for it but ourselves. The very chance of killing oneself gives additional pleasure; and, when one pushes a horse at a leap, the best fun of the whole is the thought whether he will be able by any possibility to clear it or not. If it were not for hunting, and one or two

other things of the sort, there would be nothing left for an English gentleman, but to go to Italy and put himself at the head of a party of banditti. That must be glorious work!"

"Don't you think, Mr. Radford," asked Sir Edward Digby, "that active service in the army might offer equal excitement, and a more honourable field?"

"Oh, dear no!" cried the young man. "A life of slavery compared with a life of freedom; to be drilled and commanded, and made a mere machine of, and sent about relieving guards and pickets, and doing everything that one is told like a school-boy! I would not go into the army for the world. I'm sure if I did I should shoot my commanding officer within a month!"

"Then I would advise you not," answered the young baronet, "for after the shooting there would be another step to be taken which would not be quite so pleasant."

"Oh! you mean the hanging," cried young Radford, laughing; "but I would take care they should never hang me; for I could shoot myself as easily as I could shoot him; and I have a great dislike to strangulation. It's one of the few sorts of death that would not please me."

"Come, come, Richard!" said Sir Robert Croyland, in a nervous and displeased tone; "let us talk of some other subject. You will frighten the ladies from table before the cloth is off."

"It is very odd," said young Radford, in a low voice, to Sir Edward Digby, without making any reply to the master of the house; "it is very odd, how frightened old men are at the very name of death, when at the best they can have but two or three years to live."

The young officer did not reply, but turned the conversation to other things; and the wine having been liberally supplied, operated as it usually does, at the point where its use stops short of excess, in "making glad the heart of man," and the conclusion of the dinner was much more cheerful and placable than the commencement.

The ladies retired within a few minutes after the desert was set upon the table; and it soon became evident to Sir Edward Digby, that the process of deep drinking, so disgracefully common in England at that time, was about to commence. He was by no means incapable of bearing as potent libations as most men; for occasionally, in those days, it was scarcely

possible to escape excess without giving mortal offence to your entertainer; but it was by no means either his habit or his inclination so to indulge, and for this evening especially he was anxious to escape. He looked, therefore, across the table to Mr. Croyland for relief; and that gentleman, clearly understanding what he meant, gave him a slight nod, and finished his first glass of wine after dinner. The bottles passed round again, and Mr. Croyland took his second glass; but after that he rose without calling much attention, a proceeding which was habitual with him. When, however, Sir Edward Digby followed his example, there was a general outcry. Every one declared it was too bad, and Sir Robert said, in a somewhat mortified tone, that he feared his wine was not so good as that to which his guest had been accustomed.

"It is only too good, my dear sir," replied the young baronet, determined to cut the matter short, at once and for ever. "So good, indeed, that I have been induced to take two more glasses than I usually indulge in, and I consequently feel somewhat heated and uncomfortable. I shall go and refresh myself by a walk through your woods."

Several more efforts were made to induce him to stay, but he was resolute in his course; and Mr. Croyland also came to his aid, exclaiming, "Pooh, nonsense, Robert! let every man do as he likes. Have not I heard you, a thousand times, call your house Liberty Hall? A pretty sort of liberty, indeed, if a man must get beastly drunk because you choose to do so!"

"I do not intend to do any such thing, brother," replied Sir Robert, somewhat sharply; and in the meanwhile, during this discussion, Sir Edward Digby made his escape from the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

On entering the drawing-room, towards which Sir Edward Digby immediately turned his steps, he found it tenanted alone by Mrs. Barbara Croyland, who sat in the window with her back towards the door, knitting most diligently, with something pinned to her knee. As it was quite beyond the good lady's conception that anybody would ever think of quitting the dining-room so early but her younger brother, no sooner

did she hear a step than, jumping at conclusions as she usually did, she exclaimed aloud, "Isn't he a nice young man, brother Zachary? I think it will do quite well, if that—"

Sir Edward Digby would have given a great deal to hear the conclusion of the sentence; but his honour was as bright as his sword, and he never took advantage of a mistake. "It is not your brother, Mrs. Croyland," he said; and then Mrs. Barbara starting up with a face like scarlet, tearing her gown at the same time by the tug she gave to the pin which attached her work to her knee, he added, with the most benevolent intentions, "I think he might have been made a very nice young man, if he had been properly treated in his youth. But I should imagine he was very wild and headstrong now."

Mrs. Barbara stared at him with a face full of wonder and confusion; for her own mind was so completely impressed with the subject on which she had begun to speak, that she by no means comprehended the turn that he intended to give it, but thought that he also was talking of himself, and not of young Radford. How it would have ended no mere mortal can tell; for when once Mrs. Barbara got into a scrape, she floundered most awfully. Luckily, however, her brother was close enough behind Sir Edward Digby to hear all that passed, and he entered the room while the consternation was still fresh upon his worthy sister's countenance.

After gazing at her for a moment, with a look of sour merriment, Mr. Croyland exclaimed, "There! hold your tongue, Bab; you can't get your fish out of the kettle without burning your fingers! Now, my young friend," he continued, taking Sir Edward Digby by the arm, and drawing him aside, "if you choose to be a great fool, and run the risk of falling in love with a pretty girl, whom my sister Barbara has determined you shall marry, whether you like it or not, and who herself, dear little soul, has no intention in the world but of playing you like a fish till you are caught, and then laughing at you, you will find the two girls walking in the wood behind the house, as they do every day. But if you don't like such amusement, you can stay here with me and Bab, and be instructed by her in the art and mystery of setting everything to wrongs with the very best intentions in the world."

"Thank you, my dear sir," replied Sir Edward, smiling, "I think I should prefer the fresh air; and, as to the dangers

against which you warn me, I have no fears. The game of coquetry can be played by two."

"Ay, but woe to him who loses!" said Mr. Croyland, in a more serious tone. "But go along with you; go along! You are a rash young man; and if you will court your fate, you must."

The young baronet accordingly walked away, leaving Mrs. Barbara to recover from her confusion as she best might, and Mr. Croyland to scold her at his leisure, which Sir Edward did not in the slightest degree doubt he would do. It was a beautiful summer's afternoon in the end of August, the very last day of the month, the hour about a quarter to six, so that the sun had nearly to run a twelfth part of his course before the time of his setting. It was warm and cheerful, too, but with a freshness in the air, and a certain golden glow over the sky, which told that it was evening. Not wishing exactly to pass before the dining-room windows, Sir Edward endeavoured to find his way out into the wood behind the house by the stable and farm yards; but he soon found himself in a labyrinth from which it was difficult to extricate himself, and in the end was obliged to have recourse to a stout country lad, who was walking up towards the mansion, with a large pail of milk tugging at his hand, and bending in the opposite direction to balance the load. Right willingly, however, the youth set down the pail; and, leaving it to the tender mercies of some pigs, who were walking about in the yard, and did not fail to inquire into the nature of its contents, he proceeded to show the way through the flower and kitchen gardens, by a small door in the wall, to a path which led out at once amongst the trees.

Now, Sir Edward Digby had not the slightest idea of which way the two young ladies had gone; and it was by no means improbable that, if he were left without pilotage in going and returning, he might lose his way in the wood, which, as I have said, was very extensive. But all true lovers are fond of losing their way; and as he had his sword by his side, he had not the slightest objection to that characteristic of an Amadis, having in reality a good deal of the knight-errant about him, and rather liking a little adventure, if it did not go too far. His adventures, indeed, were not destined that night to be very remarkable; for, following the

path about a couple of hundred yards, he was led directly into a good, broad, sandy road, in which he thought it would be impossible to go astray. A few clouds that passed over the sky from time to time cast their fitful and fanciful shadows upon the way; the trees waved on either hand; and, with a small border of green turf, the yellow path pursued its course through the wood, forming a fine but pleasant contrast in colour with the verdure of all the other things around. As he went on, too, the sky overhead, and the shades amongst the trees, began to assume a rosy hue as the day declined farther and farther; and the busy little squirrels, as numerous as mice, were seen running here and there up the trees and along the branches, with their bright black eyes staring at the stranger with a saucy activity very little mingled with fear. The young baronet was fond of such scenes, and fond of the somewhat grave musing which they very naturally inspire; and he therefore went on, alternately pondering and admiring, and very well contented with his walk, whether he met with his fair friends or not. Sir Edward, indeed, would not allow himself to fancy that he was by any means very anxious for Zara's company, or Miss Croyland's either; for he was not in the slightest hurry either to fall in love or to acknowledge it to himself even if he were. With regard to Edith, indeed, he felt himself in no possible danger; for had he continued to think her, as he had done at first, more beautiful than her sister, which by this time he did not, he was still guarded in her case by feelings, which, to a man of his character, were as a triple shield of brass, or anything a great deal stronger.

He walked on, however, and he walked on; not, indeed, with a very slow pace, but with none of the eager hurry of youth after beauty; till at length, when he had proceeded for about half an hour, he saw cultivated fields and hedgerows at the end of the road he was pursuing, and soon after came to the open country, without meeting with the slightest trace of Sir Robert Croyland's daughters.

On the right hand, as he issued out of the wood, there was a small but very neat and picturesque cottage, with its little kitchen-garden and its flower-garden, its wild roses, and its vine.

"I have certainly missed them," said Sir Edward Digby to himself, "and I ought to make the best use of my time, for it

won't do to stay here too long. Perhaps they may have gone into the cottage. Girls like these often seek an object in their walk, and visit this poor person or that:" and thus thinking, he advanced to the little gate, went into the garden, and knocked with his knuckles at the door of the house. A woman's voice bade him come in; and, doing so, he found a room, small in size, but corresponding in neatness and cleanliness with the outside of the place. It was tenanted by three persons: a middle-aged woman, dressed as a widow, with a fine and placid countenance, who was advancing towards the door as he entered; a very lovely girl of eighteen or nineteen, who bore a strong resemblance to the widow; and a stout, powerful, good-looking man, of about thirty, well dressed, though without any attempt at the appearance of a station above the middle class, with a clean, fine, checked shirt, having the collar cast back, and a black silk handkerchief tied lightly in what is usually termed a sailor's knot. The two latter persons were sitting very close together, and the girl was smiling gaily at something her companion had just said.

"Two lovers!" thought the young baronet; but, as that was no business of his, he went on to inquire of the good woman of the house if she had seen some young ladies pass that way; and having named them, he added, to escape scandal, "I am staying at the house, and am afraid, if I do not meet with them, I shall not easily find my way back."

"They were here a minute ago, sir," replied the widow, "and they went round to the east. They will take the Halden road back, I suppose. If you make haste, you will catch them easily."

"But which is the Halden road, my good lady?" asked Sir Edward Digby; and she, turning to the man who was sitting by her daughter, said, "I wish you would show the gentleman, Mr. Harding."

The man rose cheerfully enough, considering the circumstances, and led the young baronet with a rapid step, by a footpath that wound round the edge of the wood, to another broad road about three hundred yards distant from that by which the young officer had come. Then, pointing with his hand, he said: "There they are, going as slow as a Dutch butter-tub. You can't miss them, or the road either, for it leads straight on."

Sir Edward Digby thanked him, and walked forward. A few rapid steps brought him close to the two ladies, who, though they looked upon every part of the wood as more or less their home, and consequently felt no fear, turned at the sound of a footfall so near; and the younger of the two smiled gaily when she saw who it was.

"What! Sir Edward Digby!" she exclaimed. "In the name of all that is marvellous, how did you escape from the dining-room? Why, you will be accused of shirking the bottle, cowardice, milksopism, and crimes and misdemeanours enough to forfeit your commission!"

She spoke gaily; but Sir Edward Digby thought that the gaiety was not exactly sterling; for when first she turned, her face had been nearly as grave as her sister's. He answered, however, in the same tone: "I must plead guilty to all such misdemeanours; but if they are to be rewarded by such pleasure as that of a walk with you, I fear I shall often commit them."

"You must not pay us courtly compliments, Sir Edward," said Miss Croyland, "for we poor country people do not understand them. I hope, however, you left the party peaceable; for it promised to be quite the contrary at one time, and my uncle and Mr. Radford never agree."

"Oh! quite peaceable, I can assure you," replied Digby. "I retreated under cover of your uncle's movements. Perhaps, otherwise, I might not have got away so easily. He it was who told me where I should find you."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Miss Croyland, in a tone of surprise; and then, casting down her eyes, she fell into thought. Her sister, however, carried on the conversation in her stead, saying: "Well, you are the first soldier, Sir Edward, I ever saw, who left the table before night."

"They must have been soldiers who had seen little service, I should think," replied the young officer; "for a man called upon often for active exertion, soon finds the necessity of keeping any brains he has got as clear as possible, in case they should be needed. In many countries where I have been, too, we could get no wine to drink, even if we wanted it. Such was the case in Canada, and in some parts of Germany."

"Have you served in Canada?" demanded Miss Croyland, suddenly, raising her eyes to his face with a look of deep interest.

"Through almost the whole of the war," replied Sir Edward Digby, quietly, without noticing, even by a glance, the change of expression which his words had produced. He then paused for a moment, as if waiting for some other question; but both Miss Croyland and her sister remained perfectly silent, and the former turned somewhat pale.

As he saw that neither of his two fair companions were likely to carry the conversation a step further, the young officer proceeded, in a quiet and even light tone: "This part of the country," he continued, "is always connected in my mind with Canada; and, indeed, I was glad to accept your father's invitation at once, when he was kind enough to ask me to his house; for, in addition to the pleasure of making his personal acquaintance, I longed to see scenes which I had often heard mentioned with all the deep affection and delight which only can be felt by a fine mind for the spot in which our brighter years are passed."

The younger girl looked to her sister, but Edith Croyland was deadly pale, and said nothing; and Zara inquired in a tone to which she too evidently laboured to give the gay character of her usual demeanour, "Indeed, Sir Edward! May I ask who gave you such a flattering account of our poor country? He must have been a very foolish and prejudiced person: at least, so I fear you must think, now you have seen it."

"No, no! oh, no!" cried Digby, earnestly, "anything but that. I had that account from a person so high-minded, so noble, so full of every generous quality of heart, and every fine quality of mind, that I was quite sure, ere I came here, I should find the people whom he mentioned, and the scenes which he described, all that he had stated, and I have not been disappointed, Miss Croyland."

"But you have not named him, Sir Edward," said Zara; "you are very tantalizing. Perhaps we may know him, and be sure we shall love him for his patriotism."

"He was an officer in the regiment to which I then belonged," answered the young baronet, "and my dearest friend. His name was Layton; a most distinguished man, who had already gained such a reputation, that, had his rank in the army admitted it, none could have been more desired to take the command of the forces when Wolfe fell on the heights of Abraham. He was too young, however, and had too little

interest to obtain that position. Miss Croyland, you seem ill. Let me give you my arm."

Edith bowed her head quietly, and leaned upon her sister, but answered not a word; and Zara gave a glance to Sir Edward Digby which he read aright. It was a meaning, a sort of relying and imploring look, as if she would have said, "I beseech you, say no more, she cannot bear it." And the young officer abruptly turned the conversation, observing, "The day has been very hot, Miss Croyland. You have walked far and over-fatigued yourself."

"It is nothing, it is nothing," answered Edith, with a deep-drawn breath; "it will be past in a moment, Sir Edward. I am frequently thus."

"Too frequently," murmured Zara, gazing at her sister; and Sir Edward Digby replied, "I am sure if such be the case, you should consult some physician."

Zara shook her head, with a melancholy smile, while her sister walked on, leaning upon her arm in silence, with her eyes bent towards the ground, as if in deep thought. "I fear that no physician would do her good," said the younger lady, in a low voice, "the evil is now confirmed."

"Nay," replied Digby, gazing at her, "I think I know one who could cure her entirely."

His look said more than his words; and Zara fixed her eyes upon his face for an instant with an inquiring glance. The expression then suddenly changed to one of bright intelligence, and she answered, "I will make you give me his name to-morrow, Sir Edward. Not now; not now! I shall forget it."

Sir Edward Digby was not slow in taking a hint, and he consequently made no attempt to bring the conversation back to the subject which had so much affected Miss Croyland; but lest a dead silence should too plainly mark that he saw into the cause of the faintness which had come over her, he went on talking to her sister; and Zara soon resumed, at least to all appearance, her own light spirits again. But Digby had seen her under a different aspect, which was known to few besides her sister; and to say the truth, though he had thought her sparkling frankness very charming, yet the deeper and tenderer feelings which she had displayed towards Edith were still more to his taste.

"She is not the light coquette her uncle represents her," he thought, as they walked on: "there is a true and feeling heart beneath; one whose affections, if strongly excited and then disappointed, might make her as sad and cheerless as this other poor girl."

He had not much time to indulge either in such meditations or in conversation with his fair companion; for, when they were within about a mile of the house, old Mr. Croyland was seen advancing towards them with his usual brisk air and quick pace.

"Well, young people, well," he said, coming forward, "I bring the soberness of age to temper the lightness of youth."

"Oh! we are all very sober, uncle," replied Zara. "It is only those who stay in the house drinking wine who are otherwise."

"I have not been drinking wine, saucy girl," answered Mr. Croyland; "but come, Edith, I want to speak with you; and, as the road is too narrow for four, we'll pair off, as the rascals who ruin the country in the House of Commons term it. Troop on, Miss Zara. There's a gallant cavalier who will give you his arm, doubtless, if you will ask it."

"Indeed I shall do no such thing," replied the fair lady, walking on; and, while Edith and her uncle came slowly after, Sir Edward Digby and the youngest Miss Croyland proceeded on their way, remaining silent for some minutes, though each, to say the truth, was busily thinking how the conversation which had been interrupted might best be renewed. It was Zara who spoke first, however, looking suddenly up in her companion's face with one of her bright and sparkling smiles, and saying, "It is a strange house, is it not, Sir Edward, and we are a strange family?"

"Nay, I do not see that," replied the young officer. "With every new person whose acquaintance we make, we are like a traveller for the first time in a foreign country, and must learn the secrets of the land before we can find our way rightly."

"Oh! secrets enough here," cried Zara. "Every one has a secret but myself. I have none, thank God! My good father is full of them. Edith, you see, has hers. My uncle is loaded with one even now, and eager to disburden himself; but my aunt's are the most curious of all, for they are ever-

lasting; and not only that, but although most profound, they are sure to be known in five minutes to the whole world. Try to conceal them how she may, they are sure to drop out before the day is over; and, whatever good schemes she may have against any one, no defence is needed, for they are sure to frustrate themselves. What are you laughing at, Sir Edward? Has she begun upon you already?"

"Nay, not exactly upon me," answered Sir Edward Digby. "She certainly did let drop some words which showed me she had some scheme in her head, though whom it referred to I am at a loss to divine."

"Nay, nay, now you are not frank," cried the young lady. "Tell me this moment, if you would have me hold you good knight and true! Was it me or Edith that it was all about? Nay, do not shake your head, my good friend, for I will know, depend upon it; and if you do not tell me, I will ask my aunt myself—"

"Nay, for Heaven's sake, do not!" exclaimed Sir Edward. "You must not make your aunt think that I am a tell-tale."

"Oh, I know, I know!" exclaimed the fair girl, clapping her hands eagerly, "I can divine it all in a minute. She has been telling you what an excellent good girl Zara Croyland is, and what an admirable wife she would make, especially for any man moving in the highest society, and hinting, moreover, that she is fond of military men, and, in short, that Sir Edward Digby could not do better. I know it all, I know it all, as well as if I had heard it! But now, my dear sir," she continued, in a graver tone, "put all such nonsense out of your head, if you would have us such good friends as I think we may be. Leave my dear aunt's schemes to unravel and defeat themselves, or only think of them as a matter of amusement, and do not for a moment believe that Zara Croyland has either any share in them, or any design of captivating you or any other man whatsoever; for I tell you fairly, and at once, that I never intend, that nothing would induce me—no, not if my own dearest happiness depended upon it, to marry, and leave poor Edith to endure all that she may be called upon to undergo. I will talk to you more about her another time; for I think that you already know something beyond what you have said to-day; but we are too near the house now, and I will only add, that I have spoken frankly to Sir Edward Digby

because I believe from all I have seen, and all I have heard, that he is incapable of misunderstanding such conduct."

"You do me justice, Miss Croyland," replied the young officer, much gratified; "but you have spoken under a wrong impression in regard to your aunt. I did not interrupt you, for what you said was too pleasing, too interesting not to induce me to let you go on; but I can assure you that what I said was perfectly true, and that though some words which your aunt dropped accidentally, showed me that she had some scheme on foot, she said nothing to indicate what it was."

"Well, never mind it," answered the young lady. "We now understand each other, I trust, and, after this, I do not think you will easily mistake me, though, if what I suppose is true, I may have to do a great many extraordinary things with you, Sir Edward; seek your society when you may not be very willing to grant it, consult you, rely upon you, confide in you in a way that few women would do, except with a brother or an acknowledged lover, which I beg you to understand, you are on no account to be; and I, on my part, will promise that I will not misunderstand you either, nor take anything you do at my request for one very dear to me," (and she gave a glance over her shoulder towards her sister who was some way behind,) "as anything but a sign of your having a kind and generous heart. So now that's all settled."

"There is one thing, Miss Croyland," replied Digby, gravely, "that you will find very difficult to do, though you say you will try it: namely to seek my society when I am unwilling to give it."

"Nay, nay I will have no such speeches," cried Zara Croyland, "or I have done with you! I never could put any trust in a man who said civil things to me."

"What, not if he sincerely thought them?" demanded her companion.

"Then I would rather he continued to think them without speaking them," answered the young lady. "If you did but know, Sir Edward, how sickened and disgusted a poor girl in the country soon gets with flattery that means nothing, from men who insult her understanding by thinking that she can be pleased with such trash, you would excuse me for being rude and uncivilized enough to wish never to hear a smooth word from any man whom I am inclined to respect.

"Very well," answered the young baronet, laughing, "to please you I will be as brutal as possible, and if you like it, scold you as sharply as your uncle, if you say or do anything that I disapprove of."

"Do, do!" cried Zara; "I love him and esteem him, though he does not understand me in the least; and I would rather a great deal have his conversation, sharp and snappish as it seems to be, than all the honey or milk and water of any of the smart young men in the neighbourhood. But here we are at the house; and only one word more as a warning, and one word as a question; first, do not let any of my good aunt's schemes embarrass you in anything you have to do or say. Walk straight through them as if they did not exist. Take your own course, without, in the least degree, attending to what she says for or against."

"And what is the question?" demanded Sir Edward, as they were now mounting the steps to the terrace.

"Simply this," replied the fair lady, are you not acquainted with more of Edith's history than the people here are aware of?"

"I am," answered Digby; "and to see more of her, to speak with her for a few minutes in private, if possible, was the great object of my coming hither."

"Thanks, thanks!" said Zara, giving him a bright and grateful smile. "Be guided by me, and you shall have the opportunity. But I must speak with you first myself, that you may know all. I suppose you are an early riser?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Sir Edward; but he added no more; for at that moment they were overtaken by Edith and Mr. Croyland, and the whole party entered the house together.

CHAPTER IX.

There is a strange similarity; I had nearly called it an affinity, between the climate of any country and the general character of its population; and there is a still stronger and more commonly remarked resemblance between the changes of the weather and the usual course of human life. From the atmosphere around us, and from the alterations which affect it, poets and moralists both, have borrowed a large store of

figures; and the words, clouds, and sunshine, light breezes, and terrible storms, are terms as often used to express the variations in man's condition, as to convey the ideas to which they were originally applied. But it is the affinity between the climate and the people of which I wish to speak. The sunny lightness of the air of France, the burning heat of Italy and Spain, the cold dullness of the skies of Holland, contrast as strongly with the climate in which we live, as the characters of the several nations amongst themselves; and the fiercer tempests of the south, the more foggy and heavy atmosphere of the north, may well be taken as some compensation for the continual mutability of the weather in our own most changeable air. The differences are not so great here as in other lands. We escape, in general, the tornado and the hurricane, we know little of the burning heat of summer, or the intense cold of winter, as they are experienced in other parts of the world; but at all events, the changes are much more frequent; and we seldom have either a long lapse of sunny days, or a long continued season of frost, without interruption. So it is, too, with the people. Moveable and fluctuating as they always are, seeking novelty, disgusted even with all that is good as soon as they discover that it is old, our laws, our institutions, our very manners are continually undergoing some change, though rarely, very rarely indeed, is it brought about violently and without due preparation. Sometimes it will occur, indeed, both morally and physically, that a great and sudden alteration takes place, and a rash and vehement proceeding will disturb the whole country, and seem to shake the very foundations of society. In the atmosphere, too, clouds and storms will gather in a few hours, and darken the whole heaven.

The latter was the case during the first night of Sir Edward Digby's stay at Harbourne House. The evening preceding, as well as the day, had been warm and sunshiny; but about nine o'clock the wind suddenly chopped round to the southward, and when Sir Edward woke on the following morning, as he usually did, about six, he found a strong breeze blowing and rattling the casements of the room, and the whole atmosphere loaded with a heavy sea-mist filled with saline particles, borne over Romney Marsh to the higher country, in which the house was placed.

"A pleasant day for partridge-shooting," he thought, as he

rose from his bed; "what variations there are in this climate!" But, nevertheless, he opened the window and looked out, when, somewhat to his surprise, he saw fifteen or sixteen horses moving along the road, heavily laden, with a number of men on horseback following, and eight or ten on foot driving the weary beasts along. They were going leisurely enough; there was no affectation of haste or concealment; but yet all that the young officer had heard of the county and of the habits of its denizens, led him naturally to suppose that he had a gang of smugglers before him, escorting from the coast some contraband goods lately landed.

He had soon a more unpleasant proof of the lawless state of that part of England; for as he continued to lean out of the window, saying to himself, "Well, it is no business of mine," he saw two or three of the men pause; and a moment after, a voice shouted, "Take that, old Croyland, for sending me to jail last April."

The wind bore the sounds to his ear, and made the words distinct; and scarcely had they been spoken, when a flash broke through the misty air, followed by a loud report, and a ball whizzed through the window, just above his head, breaking one of the panes of glass, and lodging in the cornice at the other side of the room.

"Very pleasant!" said Sir Edward Digby to himself; but he was a somewhat rash young man, and he did not move an inch, thinking, "the vagabonds shall not have to say they frightened me."

They showed no inclination to repeat the shot, however, but rode on at a somewhat accelerated pace; and as soon as they were out of sight, Digby withdrew from the window and began to dress himself. He had not given his servant, the night before, any orders to call him at a particular hour; but he knew that the man would not be later than half-past six; and before he appeared, the young officer was nearly dressed.

"Here, Somers," said his master, "put my gun together, and have everything ready if I should like to go out to shoot. After that, I've a commission for you; something quite in your own way, which I know you will execute capitally."

"Quite ready, sir," said the man, putting up his hand to his head. "Always ready to obey orders."

"We want intelligence of the enemy, Somers," continued

his master. "Get me every information you can obtain regarding young Mr. Radford, where he goes, what he does, and all about him."

"Past, present, or to come, sir?" demanded the man.

"All three," answered his master. "Everything you can learn about him, in short; birth, parentage, and education."

"I shall soon have to add his last dying speech and confession, I think, sir," said the man; "but you shall have it all before night; from the loose gossip of the post-office down to the full, true, and particular account of his father's own butler. But bless my soul, there's a hole through the window, sir!"

"Nothing but a musket-ball, Somers," answered his master, carelessly. "You've seen such a thing before, I fancy?"

"Yes, sir, but not often in a gentleman's bed-room," replied the man. "Who could send it in here, I wonder?"

"Some smugglers, I suppose they were," replied Sir Edward, "who took me for Sir Robert Croyland, as I was leaning out of the window, and gave me a ball as they passed. I never saw a worse shot in my life; for I was put up like a target, and it went a foot and a half above my head. Give me those boots, Somers;" and having drawn them on, Sir Edward Digby descended to the drawing-room, while his servant commented upon his coolness by saying: "Well, he's a devilish fine young fellow that master of mine, and ought to make a capital general some of these days!"

In the drawing-room, Sir Edward Digby found nobody but a pretty country girl in a mob-cap sweeping out the dust; and leaving her to perform her functions undisturbed by his presence, he sauntered through a door which he had seen open the night before, exposing part of the interior of a library. That room was quite vacant, and as the young officer concluded that between it and the drawing-room must lie the scene of his morning's operations, he entertained himself with taking down different books, looking into them for a moment or two, reading a page here and a page there, and then putting them up again. He was in no mood, to say the truth, either for serious study or light reading. Gay would not have amused him: Locke would have driven him mad.

He knew not well how it was, but his heart beat when he heard a step in the neighbouring room. It was nothing but the housemaid, as he was soon convinced, by her letting the

dust-pan drop and making a terrible clatter. He asked himself what his heart could be about, to go on in such a way, simply because he was waiting, in the not very vague expectation of seeing a young lady, with whom he had to talk of some business, in which neither of them were personally concerned.

"It must be the uncertainty of whether she will come or not," he thought; "or else the secrecy of the thing;" and yet he had often before had to wait with still more secrecy and still more uncertainty, on very dangerous and important occasions, without feeling any such agitation of his usually calm nerves. She was a very pretty girl it was true, with all the fresh graces of youth about her, light and sunshine in her eyes, health and happiness on her cheeks and lips, and—

"La grace encore plus belle que la beaute"

in every movement. But then, they perfectly understood each other; there was no harm, there was no risk, there was no reason why they should not meet.

Did they perfectly understand each other? Did they perfectly understand themselves? It is a very difficult question to answer: but one thing is very certain, that, of all things upon this earth, the must gullible is the human heart; and when it thinks it understands itself best, it is almost always sure to prove a greater fool than ever.

Sir Edward Digby did not altogether like his own thoughts; and therefore, after waiting for a quarter of an hour, he walked out into one of the little passages which we have already mentioned, running from the central corridor towards a door or window in the front, between the library and what was called the music-room. He had not been there a minute when a step, very different from that of the housemaid, was heard in the neighbouring room; and, as the officer was turning thither, he met the younger Miss Croyland coming out, with a bonnet, or hat, as it was then called, hanging on her arm by the ribbons.

She held out her hand frankly towards him, saying, in a low tone, "You must think this all very strange, Sir Edward, and perhaps very improper. I have been taxing myself about it all night; but yet I was resolved I would not lose the opportunity, trusting to your generosity to justify me, when you hear all."

"It requires no generosity, my dear Miss Croyland," replied the young baronet. "I am already aware of so much, and see the kind and deep interest you take in your sister so clearly, that I fully understand and appreciate your motives."

"Thank you, thank you!" replied Zara, warmly; "that sets my mind at rest. But come out upon the terrace. There, seen by all the world, I shall not feel as if I were plotting;" and she unlocked the glass door at the end of the passage. Sir Edward Digby followed close upon her steps; and when once fairly on the esplanade before the house, and far enough from open doors and windows not to be overheard, they commenced their walk backwards and forwards.

It was quite natural that both should be silent for a few moments; for where there is much to say, and little time to say it in, people are apt to waste the precious present, or at least a part, in considering how it may best be said. At length the lady raised her eyes to her companion's face, with a smile more melancholy and embarrassed than usually found place upon her sweet lips, asking, "How shall I begin, Sir Edward? Have you nothing to tell me?"

"I have merely to ask questions," replied Digby; "yet, perhaps that may be the best commencement. I am aware, my dear Miss Croyland, that your sister has loved, and has been as deeply beloved as woman ever was by man. I know the whole tale; but what I seek now to learn is this: does she or does she not retain the affection of her early youth? Do former days and former feelings dwell in her heart as still existing things; or are they but as sad memories of a passion passed away, darkening instead of lighting the present; or perhaps as a tie which she would fain shake off, and which keeps her from a brighter fate hereafter?"

He spoke solemnly, earnestly, with his whole manner changed; and Zara gazed in his face eagerly and inquiringly as he went on, her face glowing, but her look becoming less sad, till it beamed with a warm and relieved smile at the close. "I was right, and she was wrong," she said, at length, as if speaking to herself. "But to answer your question, Sir Edward Digby," she continued, gravely. "You little know woman's heart, or you would not put it; I mean the heart of a true and unspoiled woman, a woman worthy of the name. When she loves, she loves for ever; and it is only when death

or unworthiness takes from her him she loves, that love becomes a memory. You cannot yet judge of Edith, and therefore I forgive you for asking such a thing; but she is all that is noble, and good, and bright; and Heaven pardon me! if I almost doubt she was meant for happiness below, she seems so fitted for a higher state."

The tears rose in her eyes as she spoke; but Sir Edward feared interruption, and went on, asking somewhat abruptly, perhaps, "What made you say, just now, that you were right and she was wrong?"

"Because she thought that he was dead, and that you came to announce it to her," Zara replied. "You spoke of him in the past; you always said, 'he was;' you said not a word of the present."

"Because I knew not what were her present feelings," answered Digby. "She has never written; she has never answered one letter. All his have been returned in cold silence to his agents, addressed in her own hand. And then her father wrote to—"

"Stay, stay!" cried Zara, putting her hand to her head; "addressed in her own hand? It must have been a forgery! Yet, no; perhaps not. She wrote to him twice; once just after he went, and once in answer to a message. The last letter I gave to the gardener myself, and bade him post it. That, too, was addressed to his agent's house. Can they have stopped the letters and used the covers?"

"It is probable," answered Digby, thoughtfully. "Did she receive none from him?"

"None, none," replied Zara, decidedly. "All that she has ever heard of him was conveyed in that one message; but she doubted not, Sir Edward. She knew him, it seems, better than he knew her."

"Neither did he doubt her," rejoined her companion, "till circumstance after circumstance occurred to shake his confidence. Her own father wrote to him—now three years ago—to say that she was engaged, by her own consent, to this young Radford, and to beg that he would trouble her peace no more by fruitless letters."

"Oh, heaven!" cried Zara, "did my father say that?"

"He did," replied Sir Edward, "and more; everything that poor Layton has heard since his return has confirmed the tale.

He inquired—too curiously for his own peace—first, whether she was yet married, next, whether she was really engaged; and every one gave but one account."

"How busy they have been!" said Zara, thoughtfully. "Whoever said it, it is false, Sir Edward; and he should not have doubted her more than she doubted him."

"She, you admit, had one message," answered Digby; "he had none; and yet he had a lingering hope; trust would not altogether be crushed out. Can you tell me the tenor of the letters which she sent?"

"Nay, I did not read them," replied his fair companion; "but she told me that it was the same story still: that she could not violate her duty to her parent; but that she should ever consider herself pledged and plighted to him beyond recall, by what had passed between them."

"Then there is light at last," said Digby, with a smile; "but what is this story of young Radford? Is he, or is he not, her lover? He seemed to pay her little attention; more, indeed, to yourself."

The gay girl laughed. "I will tell you all about it," she answered. "Richard Radford is not her lover, He cares as little about her as about the Queen of England, or anybody he has never seen; and, as you say, he would perhaps pay me the compliment of selecting me rather than Edith, if there was not a very cogent objection: Edith has forty thousand pounds settled upon herself by my mother's brother, who was her godfather; I have nothing, or next to nothing—some three or four thousand pounds, I believe; but I really don't know. However, this fortune of my poor sister's is old Radford's object; and he and my father have settled it between them, that the son of the one should marry the daughter of the other. What possesses my father, I cannot divine; for he must condemn old Radford, and despise the young one; but certain it is that he has pressed Edith, nearly to cruelty, to give her hand to a man she scorns and hates, and presses her still. It would be worse than it is, I fear, were it not for young Radford himself, who is not half so eager as his father, and does not wish to hurry matters on. I may have some small share in the business," she continued, laughing again, but colouring at the same time; "for, to tell the truth, Sir Edward, having nothing else to do, and wishing to relieve poor Edith as much

as possible, I have perhaps foolishly, perhaps even wrongly, drawn this wretched young man away from her whenever I had an opportunity. I do not think it was coquetry, as my uncle calls it; nay, I am sure it was not, for I abhor him as much as any one; but I thought that as there was no chance of my ever being driven to marry him, I could bear the infliction of his conversation better than my poor sister."

"The motive was a kind one, at all events," replied Sir Edward Digby; "but then I may firmly believe that there is no chance whatever of Miss Croyland giving her hand to Richard Radford?"

"None, none whatever," answered his fair companion. But at that point of their conversation one of the windows above was thrown up, and the voice of Mrs. Barbara was heard exclaiming: "Zara, my love, put on your hat; you will catch cold if you walk in that way with your hat on your arm, in such a cold, misty morning!"

Miss Croyland looked up, nodding to her aunt; and doing as she was told, like a very good girl as she was. But the next instant she said, in a low tone, "Good Heaven! there is his face at the window! My unlucky aunt has roused him by calling to me; and we shall not be long without him."

"Who do you mean?" asked the young officer, turning his eyes towards the house, and seeing no one.

"Young Radford," answered Zara. "Did you not know that they had to carry him to bed last night, unable to stand? So my maid told me; and I saw his face just now at the window, next to my aunt's. We shall have little time, Sir Edward, for he is as intrusive as he is disagreeable; so tell me at once what I am to think regarding poor Harry Layton. Does he still love Edith? Is he in a situation to enable him to seek her, without affording great, and what they would consider reasonable causes of objection?"

"He loves her as deeply and devotedly as ever," replied Sir Edward Digby; "and all I have to tell him will but, if possible, increase that love. Then as to his situation, he is now a superior officer in the army, highly distinguished, commanding one of our best regiments, and sharing largely in the late great distribution of prize-money. There is no position that can be filled by a military man to which he has not a right to aspire; and, moreover, he has already received,

from the gratitude of his king and his country, the high honour—"

But he was not allowed to finish his sentence; for Mrs. Barbara Croyland, who was most unfortunately matutinal in her habits, now came out with a shawl for her fair niece, and was uncomfortably civil to Sir Edward Digby; inquiring how he had slept, whether he had been warm enough, whether he liked two pillows or one, and a great many other questions, which lasted till young Radford made his appearance at the door, and then, with a pale face and sullen brow, came out and joined the party on the terrace.

"Well," said Mrs. Barbara; now that she had done as much mischief as possible, "I'll just go in and make breakfast, as Edith must set out early, and Mr. Radford wants to get home to shoot."

"Edith set off early?" exclaimed Zara; "why, where is she going, my dear aunt?"

"Oh! I have just been settling it all with your papa, my love," replied Mrs. Barbara. "I thought she was looking ill yesterday, and so I talked to your uncle last night. He said he would be very glad to have her with him for a few days; but as he expects a Captain Osborn before the end of the week, she must come at once; and Sir Robert says she can have the carriage after breakfast, but it must be back by one."

Zara cast down her eyes, and the whole party, as if by common consent, took their way back to the house. As they passed in, however, and proceeded towards the dining-room, where the table was laid for breakfast, Zara found a moment to say to Sir Edward Digby, in a low tone; "Was ever anything so unfortunate! I will try to stop it if I can."

"Not so unfortunate as it seems," whispered the young baronet, "let it take its course. I will explain hereafter."

"Whispering! whispering!" said young Radford, in a rude tone, and with a sneer curling his lip.

Zara's cheek grew crimson; but Digby turned upon him sharply, demanding, "What is that to you, sir? Pray make no observations upon my conduct, for depend upon it I shall not tolerate any insolence."

At that moment, however, Sir Robert Croyland appeared; and whatever might have been Richard Radford's intended reply, it was suspended upon his lips.

CHAPTER X.

Before I proceed farther with the events of that morning, I must return for a time to the evening which preceded it. It was a dark and somewhat dreary night, when Mr. Radford, leaving his son stupidly drunk at Sir Robert Croyland's, proceeded to the hall door to mount his horse; and as he pulled his large riding-boots over his shoes and stockings, and looked out, he regretted that he had not ordered his carriage. "Who would have thought," he said, "that such a fine day would have ended in such a dull evening?"

"It often happens, my dear Radford," replied Sir Robert Croyland, who stood beside him, "that everything looks fair and prosperous for a time; then suddenly the wind shifts, and a gloomy night succeeds."

Mr. Radford was not well pleased with the homily. It touched upon that which was a sore subject with him at that moment; for, to say the truth, he was labouring under no light apprehensions regarding the result of certain speculations of his. He had lately lost a large sum in one of these wild adventures; far more than was agreeable to a man of his money-getting turn of mind; and though he was sanguine enough, from long success, to embark, like a determined gambler, a still larger amount in the same course, yet the first shadow of reverse which had fallen upon him, brought home and applied to his own situation the very commonplace words of Sir Robert Croyland; and he began to fancy that the bright day of his prosperty might be indeed over, and a dark and gloomy night about to succeed.

As we have said, therefore, he did not at all like the baronet's homily; and as often happens with men of his disposition, he felt displeased with the person whose words alarmed him. Murmuring something, therefore, about its being "a devilish ordinary circumstance indeed," he strode to the door, scarcely wishing the baronet good night, and mounted a powerful horse, which was held ready for him. He then rode forward, followed by two servants on horseback, proceeding slowly at first, but getting into a quicker pace when

he came upon the parish road, and trotting on hard along the edge of Harbourne Wood. He had drunk as much wine as his son; but his hard and well-seasoned head was quite insensible to the effects of strong beverages, and he went on revolving all probable contingencies, somewhat sullen and out of humour with all that had passed during the afternoon, and taking a very unpromising view of everybody and everything.

"I've a notion," he thought, "that old scoundrel Croyland is playing fast and loose about his daughter's marriage with my son. He shall repent it if he do; and if Dick does not make the girl pay for all her airs and coldness when he's get her, he's no son of mine. He seems as great a fool as she is, though, and makes love to her sister without a penny, never saying a word to a girl who has forty thousand pounds. The thing shall soon be settled one way or another, however. I'll have a conference with Sir Robert on Friday, and bring him to book. I'll not be trifled with any longer. Here we have been kept more than four years waiting till the girl chooses to make up her mind, and I'll not stop any longer. It shall be yes or no, at once."

He was still busy with such thoughts when he reached the angle of Harbourne Wood, and a loud voice exclaimed, "Hi! Mr. Radford!"

"Who the devil are you?" exclaimed that worthy gentleman, pulling in his horse, and at the same time putting his hand upon one of the holsters, which every one at that time carried at his saddle-bow.

"Harding, sir," answered the voice; "Jack Harding, and I want to speak a word with you."

At the same time the man walked forward; and Mr. Radford immediately dismounting, gave his horse to the servants, and told them to lead him quietly on till they came to Tiffenden. Then pausing till the sound of the hoofs become somewhat faint, he asked, with a certain degree of alarm, "Well, Harding, what's the matter? What has brought you up in such a hurry to-night?"

"No great hurry, sir," answered the smuggler; "I came up about four o'clock; and finding that you were dining at Sir Robert's, I thought I would look out for you as you went home, having something to tell you. I got an inkling last night, that, some how or another, the people down at Hythe

have some suspicion that you are going to try something, and I doubt that boy very much."

"Indeed! indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Radford, evidently under great apprehension. "What have they found out, Harding?"

"Why, not much, I believe," replied the smuggler; "but merely that there's something in the wind, and that you have a hand in it."

"That's bad enough; that's bad enough," repeated Mr. Radford. "We must put it off, Harding. We must delay it, till this has blown by."

"No, I think not, sir," answered the smuggler. "It seems to me, on the contrary, that we ought to hurry it; and I'll tell you why. You see, the wind changed about five, and if I'm not very much mistaken, we shall have a cloudy sky and dirty weather for the next week at least. That's one thing: but then another is this, the Ramleys are going to make a run this very night. Now, I know that the whole affair is blown; and though they may get the goods ashore they won't carry them far. I told them so, just to be friendly; but they wouldn't listen, and you know their rash way. Bill Ramley answered, they would run the goods in broad daylight, if they liked; that there was not an officer in all Kent who would dare to stop them. Now, I know that they will be caught to-morrow morning, somewhere up about your place. I rather think, too, your son has a hand in the venture; and if I were you I would do nothing to make people believe that it wasn't my own affair altogether. Let them think what they please; and then they are not so likely to be on the look-out."

"I see; I see," cried Mr. Radford. "If they catch these fellows, and think that this is my venture, they will never suspect another. "It's a good scheme. We had better set about it to-morrow night."

"I don't know," answered Harding. "That cannot well be done, I should think. First, you must get orders over to the vessel to stand out to sea; then you must get all your people together, and one half of them are busy upon this other scheme: the Ramleys and young Chittenden, and him they call the major, and all their parties. You must see what comes of that first; for one half of them may be locked up before to-morrow night."

"That's unfortunate, indeed!" said Mr. Radford, thoughtfully.

"One must take a little ill luck with plenty of good luck," observed Harding; "and it's fortunate enough for you that these wild fellows will carry through this mad scheme, when they know they are found out before they start. Besides, I'm not sure that it is not best to wait till the night after, or, may be, the night after that. Then the news will have spread that the goods have been either run and hid away, or seized by the officers. In either case, if you manage well, they will think that it is your venture; and the fellows on the coast will be off their guard, especially Mowle, who's the sharpest of them all."

"Oh! I'll go down to-morrow and talk to Mowle myself," replied Mr. Radford. "It will be well worth my while to give him a hundred guineas to wink a bit."

"Don't try it, don't try it!" exclaimed Harding, quickly. "It will do no good, and a great deal of harm. In the first place, you can do nothing with Mowle. He never took a penny in his life."

"Oh! every man has his price," rejoined Mr. Radford, whose opinion of human nature, as the reader may have perceived, was not particularly high. "It's only because he wants to be bid up to. Mr. Mowle thinks himself above five or ten pounds; but the chink of a hundred guineas is a very pleasant sound."

"He's as honest a fellow as ever lived," answered Harding, "and I tell you plainly, Mr. Radford, that if you offered him ten times the sum, he wouldn't take it. You would only show him that this venture is not your grand one, without doing yourself the least good. He's a fair, open enemy, and lets every one know that, as long as he's a riding-officer here, he will do all he can against us."

"Then he must be knocked on the head," said Mr. Radford, in a calm and deliberate tone; "and it shall be done, too, if he meddles with my affairs."

"It will not be I who do it," replied Harding, "unless we come hand to hand together. Then, every man must take care of himself; but I should be very sorry, notwithstanding; for he's a straightforward, bold fellow, as brave as a lion, and with a good heart into the bargain. I wonder such an honest man ever went into such a rascally service,"

The last observation of our friend Harding may perhaps sound strangely to the reader's ears; but some allowance must be made for professional prejudices, and it is by no means too much to say that the smugglers of those days, and even of a much later period, looked upon their own calling as highly honest, honourable, and respectable; regarding the customs as a most fraudulent and abominable institution, and all connected with it more or less in the light of a band of swindlers and knaves, leagued together for the purpose of preventing honest men from pursuing their avocations in peace. Such were the feelings which induced Harding to wonder that so good a man as Mowle could have anything to do with the prevention of smuggling; for he was so thoroughly convinced he was in the right himself, that he could not conceive how any one could see the case in any other point of view.

"Ay," answered Mr. Radford, "that is a wonder, if he is such a good sort of man; but that I doubt. However, as you say it would not do to put one's self in his power, I'll have him looked after, and in the meanwhile, let us talk of the rest of the business. You say the night after to-morrow, or the night after that? I must know, however, for the men must be down. How are we to arrange that?"

"Why, I'll see what the weather is like," was Harding's reply. "Then I can easily send up to let you know; or, what will be better still, if you can gather the men together the day after to-morrow, in the different villages not far off the coast, and I should find it the right sort of night, and get out to sea, they shall see a light on the top of Tolsford Hill, as soon as I am near in shore again. That will serve to guide them and puzzle the officers. Then let them gather, and come down towards Dimchurch, where they will find somebody from me to guide them."

"They shall gather first at Saltwood," said Mr. Radford, "and then march down to Dimchurch. But how are we to manage about the ship?"

"Why, you must send an order," answered Harding, "for both days, and let your skipper know that if he does not see us the first, he will see us the second."

"You had better take it down with you at once," replied Mr. Radford, "and get it off early to-morrow. If you'll just come up to my house, I'll write it for you in a minute."

"Ay, but I'm not going home to-night," said the smuggler; "I can have a bed at Mrs. Clare's; and I'm going to sleep there, so you can send it over when you like in the morning, and I'll get it off in time."

"I wish you would not go hanging about after that girl, when we've got such serious business in hand," exclaimed Mr. Radford, in a sharp tone; but the next moment he added, with a sudden change of voice, "It doesn't signify to-night, however. There will be time enough; and they say you are going to marry her, Harding. Is that true?"

"I should say that's my business," replied Harding, bluntly, "but that I look upon it as an honour, Mr. Radford, that she's going to marry me; for a better girl does not live in the land, and I've known her a long while now, so I'm never likely to think otherwise."

"Ay, I've known her a long time too," answered Mr. Radford, "ever since her poor father was shot, and before; and a very good girl I believe she is. But now that you are over here, you may as well wait and hear what comes of these goods. Couldn't you just ride over to the Ramleys to-morrow morning: there you'll hear all about it."

Harding laughed, but replied the next moment, in a grave tone, "I don't like the Ramley's, sir, and don't want to have more to do with them than I can help. I shall hear all about it soon enough, without going there."

"But I shan't," answered Mr. Radford.

"Then you had better send your son, sir," rejoined Harding. "He's oftener there than I am, a great deal. Well, the matter is all settled, then. Either the night after to-morrow, or the night after that, if the men keep a good look-out, they'll see a light on Tolsford Hill. Then they must gather as fast as possible at Saltwood, and come on with anybody they may find there. Good night, Mr. Radford!"

"Good night, Harding; good night!" said Mr. Radford, walking on; and the other turning his steps back towards Harbourne, made his way, by the first road on the right, to the cottage where we have seen him in the earlier part of the day.

It was a pleasant aspect that the cottage presented when he went in, which he did without any of the ceremonies of knocking at the door or ringing the bell; for he was sure of a

welcome. There was but one candle lighted on the table, for the dwellers in the place were poor; but the room was small, and that one was quite sufficient to show the white walls and the neat shelves covered with crockery, and with one or two small prints in black frames. Besides, there was the fire-place, with a bright and cheerful, but not large fire; for though, in the month of September, English nights are frequently cold and sometimes frosty, the weather had been as yet tolerably mild. Nevertheless, the log of fir at the top blazed high, and crackled amidst the white and red embers below, and the flickering flame, as it rose and fell, caused the shadows to fall more vaguely or distinctly upon the walls, with a fanciful uncertainty of outline, that had something cheerful, yet mysterious in it.

The widow was bending over the fire, with her face turned away, and her figure in the shadow. The daughter was busily working with her needle, but her eyes were soon raised, and they were very beautiful eyes, as Harding entered. A smile, too, was upon her lips; and though even tears may be lovely, and a sad look awaken deep and tender emotions, yet the smile of affection on a face we love is the brightest aspect of that bright thing the human countenance. It is what the sunshine is to the landscape, which may be fair in the rain or sublime in the storm, but can never harmonize so fully with the innate longing for happiness which is in the breast of every one, as when lighted up with the rays that call all its excellence and all its powers into life and being.

Harding sat down beside the girl, and took her hand in his, saying, "Well, Kate, this day three weeks, then, remember?"

"My mother says so," answered the girl, with a cheek somewhat glowing; "and then, you know, John, you are to give it up altogether. No more danger; no more secrets?"

"Oh! as for danger," answered Harding, laughing, "I did not say that, love. I don't know what life would be worth without danger. Every man is in danger all day long; and I suppose that we are only given life just to feel the pleasure of it by the chance of losing it. But no dangers but the common ones, Kate. I'll give up the trade, as you have made me promise; and I shall have enough by that time to buy out the whole vessel in which I've got shares, and what between that and the boats, we shall do very well, You put

me in mind, with your fears, of a song that wicked boy, little Starlight, used to sing. I learned it from hearing him: a more mischievous little dog does not live; but he has got a sweet pipe."

"Sing it, John; sing it!" cried Kate; "I love to hear you sing, for it seems as if you sing what you are thinking."

"No, I won't sing it," answered Harding, "for it is a sad sort of song, and that won't do when I am so happy."

"Oh, I like sad songs!" said the girl; "they please me far more than all the merry ones."

"Oh, pray sing it, Harding!" urged the widow; "I am very fond of a song that makes me cry."

"This won't do that," replied the smuggler; "but it is sadder than some that do, I always think. However, I'll sing it, if you like;" and in a fine, mellow, base voice, to a very simple air, with a flattened third coming in every now and then, like the note of a wintry bird, he went on:—

SONG.

"Life's like a boat,
Rowing—rowing
Over a bright sea,
On the waves to float,
Flowing—flowing
Away from her lea.

"Up goes the sheet!
Sailing—sailing,
To catch the rising breeze,
While the winds fleet,
Wailing—wailing,
Sigh o'er the seas.

"She darts through the waves,
Gaily—gaily,
Scattering the foam.
Beneath her, open graves,
Daily—daily,
The blithest to entomb.

"Who heeds the deep,
Yawning—yawning
For its destined prey,
When from night's dark sleep,
Dawning—dawning,
Wakens the bright day?

"Away, o'er the tide!
Fearless—fearless
Of all that lies beneath;
Let the waves still hide,
Cheerless—cheerless,
All their stores of death.

"Stray where we may,
Roaming—roaming
Either far or near,
Death is on the way,
Coming—coming:
Who's the fool to fear?"

The widow did weep, however, not at the rude song, though the voice that sung it was fine, and perfect in the melody, but at the remembrances which it awakened; remembrances on which she loved to dwell, although they were so sad.

"Ay, Harding," she said, "it's very true what your song

says. Whatever way one goes, death is near enough; and I don't know that it's a bit nearer on the sea than anywhere else."

"Not a whit," replied Harding; "God's hand is upon the sea as well as upon the land, Mrs. Clare; and if it is His will that we go, why we go; and if it is His will that we stay, he doesn't want strength to protect us."

"No, indeed," answered Mrs. Clare; "and it's that which comforts me, for I think that what is God's will must be good. I'm sure, when my poor husband went out in the morning, six years ago come the tenth of October next, as well and as hearty as a man could be, I never thought to see him brought home a corpse, and I left a lone widow with my poor girl, and not knowing where to look for any help. But God raised me up friends where I least expected them."

"Why you had every right to expect that Sir Robert would be kind to you, Mrs. Clare," rejoined Harding, "when your husband had been in his service for sixteen or seventeen years."

"No, indeed, I hadn't," said the widow; "for Sir Robert was always, we thought, a rough, hard master, grumbling continually, till my poor man could hardly bear it; for he was a free-spoken man, as I dare say you remember, Mr. Harding, and would say his mind to any one, gentle or simple."

"He was as good a soul as ever lived," answered Harding; "a little rash and passionate, but none the worse for that."

"Ay, but it was that which set the head keeper against him," answered the widow, "and he set Sir Robert, making out that Edward was always careless and insolent; but he did his duty as well as any man, and knowing that, he didn't like to be found fault with. However, I don't blame Sir Robert; for since my poor man's death he has found out what he was worth, and very kind he has been to me, to be sure. The cottage, and the garden, and the good bit of ground at the back, and twelve shilllings a week into the bargain, have we had from him ever since."

"Ay, and I am sure nothing can be kinder than the two young ladies," said Kate; "they are always giving me something; and Miss Edith taught me all I know. I should have been sadly ignorant if it had not been for her; and a deal of trouble I gave her."

"God bless her!" cried Harding, heartily. "She's a nice young lady, I believe, though I never saw her but twice, and then she looked very sad."

"Ay, she has cause enough, poor thing!" said Mrs. Clare. "Though I remember her as blithe as the morning lark; a great deal gayer than Miss Zara, gay as she may be."

"Ay, I know; they crossed her love," answered Harding; "and that's enough to make one sad. Though I never heard the rights of the story."

"Oh, it was bad enough to break her heart, poor thing!" replied Mrs. Clare. "You remember young Layton, the rector's son; a fine, handsome, bold lad as ever lived, and as good as he was handsome. Well, he was quite brought up with these young ladies, you know; always up at the hall, and Miss Edith always down at the rectory; and one would have thought Sir Robert blind or foolish, not to fancy that two such young things would fall in love with each other; and so they did, to be sure. Many's the time I've seen them down here, in this very cottage, laughing and talking, and as fond as a pair of doves; for Sir Robert used to let them do just whatever they liked, and many a time used to send young Harry Layton to take care of Miss Croyland, when she was going out to walk any distance; so, very naturally, they promised themselves to each other; and one day, when he was twenty and she just sixteen, they got a prayer-book at the rectory, and read over the marriage ceremony together, and took all the vows down upon their bended knees. I remember it quite well, for I was down at the rectory that very day helping the housekeeper; and just as they had done old Mr. Layton came in, and found them somewhat confused, and the book open between them. He would know what it was all about, and they told him the truth. So then he was in a terrible taking; and he got Miss Croyland under his arm and went away up to Sir Robert directly, and told him the whole story without a minute's delay. Every one thought it would end in being a match; for though Sir Robert was very angry, and insisted that Harry Layton should be sent to his regiment immediately—for he was then just home for a bit, on leave—he did not show how angry he was at first, but very soon after he turned Mr. Layton out of the living, and made him pay I don't know what for dilapidations; so that he was arrested

and put in prison, which broke his heart, poor man, and he died!"

Harding gave Sir Robert Croyland a hearty oath, and Mrs. Clare proceeded to tell her tale, saying: "I did not give much heed to the matter then; for it was just at that time that my husband was killed, and I could think of nothing else; but when I came to hear of what was going on, I found that Sir Robert had promised his daughter to this young Radford—"

"As nasty a vermin as ever lived," said Harding.

"Well, she won't have him, I'm sure," continued the widow, "for it has been hanging off and on for these six years. People at first said it was because they were too young. But I know that she has always refused, and declared that nothing should ever drive her to marry him, or any one else: for the law might say what it liked, but her own heart and her own conscience told her that she was Harry Layton's wife, and could not be any other man's, as long as he was living. Susan, her maid, heard her say so to Sir Robert himself; but he still keeps teasing her about it, and tells everybody she's engaged to young Radford."

"He'll go to the devil," said Harding; "and I'll go to bed, Mrs. Clare, for I must be up early to-morrow, to get a good many things to rights. God bless you, Kate, my love! I dare say I shall see you before I go; for I must measure the dear little finger!" And giving her a hearty kiss, Harding took a candle, and retired to the snug room that had been prepared for him.

CHAPTER XI.

We must change the scene for a while, not only to another part of the county of Kent, but to very different people from the worthy widow Clare and the little party assembled at her cottage. We must pass over the events of the night also, and of the following morning up to the hour of nine, proposing shortly to return to Harbourne House, and trace the course of those assembled there. The dwelling into which we must now introduce the reader, was a large, old-fashioned Kentish farm-house, not many miles on the Sussex side of Ashford. It was built, as many of these farm-houses still are, in the

form of a cross, presenting four limbs of strongly constructed masonry, two stories high, with latticed windows divided into three partitions, separated by rather neatly cut divisions of stone. Externally it had a strong Harry-the-Eighth look about it, and probably had been erected in his day, or in that of one of his immediate successors, as the residence of some of the smaller gentry of the time.

At the period I speak of, it was tenanted by a family notorious for their daring and licentious life, and still renowned in county tradition for many a fierce and lawless act. Nevertheless, the head of the house, now waxing somewhat in years, carried on, not only ostensibly but really, the peaceable occupation of a Kentish farmer. He had his cows and his cattle, and his sheep and his pigs; he grew wheat and barley, and oats and turnips; had a small portion of hop-ground, and brewed his own beer. But this trade of farming was only a small part of his employment, though, to say the truth, he had given himself up more to it since his bodily powers had declined, and he was no longer able to bear the fatigue and exertion which the great strength of his early years had looked upon as sport. The branch of his business which he was most fond of was now principally entrusted to his two sons; and two strong, handsome daughters, which made the number of his family amount to four, occasionally aided their brothers, dressed in men's clothes, and mounted upon powerful horses, which they managed as well as any grooms in the county.

The reader must not think that, in this description, we are exercising indiscreetly our licence for dealing in fiction. We are painting a true picture of the family of which we speak, as they lived and acted some eighty or eighty-five years ago.

The wife of the farmer had been dead ten or twelve years; and her children had done just what they liked ever since; but it must be admitted, that, even if she had lived to superintend their education, we have no reason to conclude their conduct would have been very different from what it was. We have merely said that they had done as they pleased ever since her death, because during her life she had made them do as she pleased, and beat them, or, as she herself termed it, "basted" them heartily, if they did not. She was quite capable of doing so, too, to her own perfect satisfaction, for probably few arms in all Kent were furnished with more sinewy muscles or

a stouter fist than hers could boast. It was only upon minor points of difference, however, that she and her children ever quarrelled; for of their general course of conduct she approved most highly; and no one was more ready to receive packets of lace, tea, or other goods, under her fostering care, or more apt and skilful in stopping a tub of spirits from "talking," or of puzzling a custom-house officer when force was not at hand to resist him.

She was naturally of so strong a constitution, and so well built a frame, that it is wonderful she died at all; but having caught cold one night, poor thing! it is supposed, in setting fire to a neighbouring farm-house, the inmates of which were suspected of having informed against her husband; her very strength and vigour gave a tendency to inflammation, which speedily reduced her very low. A surgeon, who visited the house in fear and trembling, bled her largely, and forbade the use of all that class of liquids which she was accustomed to imbibe in considerable quantities; and for three or four days the fear of death made her follow his injunctions. But at the end of that period, when the crisis of the disease was imminent, finding herself no better, and very weak, she declared that the doctor was a fool, and ought to have his head broken, and directed the maid to bring her the big green bottle out of the corner cupboard. To this she applied more than once, and then beginning to get a little riotous, she sent for her family to witness how soon she had cured herself. Sitting up in her bed, with a yellow dressing-gown over her shoulders, and a gay cap overshadowing her burning face, she sung them a song in praise of good liquor; somewhat panting for breath, it must be owned; and then declaring that she was "devilish thirsty," which was probably accurate to the letter, she poured out a large glassfull from the big green bottle, which happened to be her bed-fellow for the time, and raised it to her lips. Half the contents went down her throat; but, how it happened I do not know, the rest was spilt upon the bed-clothes, and good Mrs. Ramley fell back in a dose, from which nobody could rouse her. Before two hours were over she slept a still sounder sleep, which required the undertaker to provide against its permanence.

The bereaved widower comforted himself after a time. We will not say how many hours it required to effect that process.

He was not a drunken man himself, for the passive participle of the verb to "drink" was not often actually applicable to his condition. Nevertheless, there was a great consumption of hollands in the house during the next week; and, if it was a wet funeral that followed, it was not with water, salt or fresh.

There are compensations for all things; and if Ramley had lost his wife, and his children a mother, they all lost also a great number of very good beatings, for sad to say, he who could thrash all the country round, submitted very often to be thrashed by his better half, or at all events underwent the process of either having his head made closely acquainted with a candlestick, or rendered the means of breaking a platter. After that period the two boys grew up into as fine, tall, handsome, dissolute blackguards as one could wish to look upon; and for the two girls, no term can perhaps be found in the classical authors of our language; but the vernacular supplies an epithet particularly applicable, which we must venture to use. They were two *strapping wenches*, nearly as tall as their brothers, full, rounded, and well-formed in person, fine and straight cut in features, with large black shining eyes, a well-turned foot and ancle, and, as was generally supposed, the invincible arm of their mother.

We are not here going to investigate or dwell upon the individual morality of the two young ladies. It is generally said to have been better in some respects than either their ordinary habits, their education, or their language would have led one to expect; and perhaps being very full of the stronger passions, the softer ones had no great dominion over them.

There, however, they sat at breakfast on the morning of which we have spoken, in the kitchen of the farm-house, with their father seated at the head of the table. He was still a great tall, raw-boned man, with a somewhat ogreish expression of countenance, and hair more white than grey. But there were four other men at the table besides himself, two being servants of the farm, and two acknowledged lovers of the young ladies, very bold fellows as may well be supposed; for to marry a she lion or a demoiselle bear would have been a light undertaking compared to wedding one of the Miss Ramleys. They seemed to be upon very intimate terms with those fair personages, however, and perhaps possessed as much of their affection as could possibly be obtained; but still the

love-making seemed rather of a feline character, for the caresses, which were pretty prodigal, were mingled with, we must not say interrupted by, a great deal of grumbling and growling, some scratching, and more than one pat upon the side of the head, which did not come with the gentleness of the western wind. The fare upon the table consisted neither of tea, coffee, cocoa, nor any other kind of weak beverage, but of beef and strong beer: a diet very harmonious with the appearance of the persons who partook thereof. It was seasoned occasionally with roars of laughter, gay and not very delicate jests, various pieces of fun, which on more than one occasion went to the very verge of an angry encounter, together with a good many blasphemous oaths, and those testimonies of affection which I have before spoken of as liberally bestowed by the young ladies upon their lovers in the shape of cuffs and scratches. The principal topic of conversation seemed to be some adventure which was even then going forward, and in which the sons of the house were taking a part. No fear, no anxiety, however, was expressed by any one, though they wondered that Jim and Ned had not yet returned.

"If they don't come soon they won't get much beef, Tom, if you swallow it at that rate," said the youngest Miss Ramley to her sweetheart; "you've eaten two pounds already, I'm sure."

The young gentleman declared that it was all for love of her, but that he hadn't eaten half so much as she had; whereupon the damsel became wroth, and appealed to her father, who, for his part, vowed that, between them both, they had eaten and swilled enough to fill the big hog-trough. The dispute might have run high, for Miss Ramley was not inclined to submit to such observations, even from her father; but just as she was beginning in good set terms, which she had learnt from himself, to condemn her parent's eyes, the old man started up, exclaiming, "Hark! there's a shot out there!"

"To be sure," answered one of the lovers. "It's the first of September, and all the people are out shooting."

Even while he was speaking, however, several more shots were heard, apparently too many to proceed from sportsmen in search of game, and the next moment the sound of horses' feet could be heard running quick upon the road, and then turning into the yard which lay before the house.

"There they are! there they are!" cried half a dozen voices; and, all rushing out at the front door, they found the two young men with several companions, and four led horses, heavily laden. Jim the elder brother, with the assistance of one of those who accompanied him, was busily engaged in shutting the two great wooden gates which had been raised by old Ramley some time before, nobody could tell why, in place of a five-barred gate, which, with the tall stone wall, formerly shut out the yard from the road. The other brother. Edward, or Ned Ramley, as he was called, stood by the side of his horse, holding his head down over a puddle, and, for a moment, no one could make out what he was about. On his sister Jane approaching him, however, she perceived a drop of blood falling every second into the dirty water below, and exclaimed, "How hast thou broken thy noddle, Ned?"

"There, let me alone, Jinny" cried the young man, shaking off the hand she had laid upon his arm, "or I shall bloody my toggery. One of those fellows has nearly cracked my skull, that's all; and he'd have done it, too, if he had but been a bit nearer. This brute shied just as I was firing my pistol at him, or he'd never have got within arm's length. It's nothing: it's but a scratch. Get the goods away, for they'll be after us quick enough. They are chasing the major and his people, and that's the way we got off."

One of the usual stories of the day was then told by the rest: of how a cargo had been run the night before, and got safe up into the country; how, when they thought all danger over, they had passed before old Bob Croyland's windows, and how Jim had given him a shot as he stood at one of them; and then they went on to say that, whether it was the noise of the gun, or that the old man had sent out to call the officers upon them, they could not tell; but about three miles further on, they saw a largish party of horse upon their right. Flight had then become the order of the day; but finding that they could not effect it in one body, they were just upon the point of separating, Ned Ramley declared, when two of the riding officers overtook them, supported by a number of dragoons. Some firing took place without much damage, and, dividing into three bodies, the smugglers scampered off, the Ramleys and their friends taking their way towards their own house, and the others in different directions. The former might have

escaped unpursued, it would seem, had not the younger brother, Ned, determined to give one of the dragoons a shot before he went: thus bringing on the encounter in which he had received the wound on his head.

While all this was being told to the father, the two girls, their lovers, the farm-servants, and several of the men, hurried the smuggled goods into the house, and raising a trap in the floor of the kitchen—contrived in such a manner that four whole boards moved up at once on the western side of the room—stowed the different articles away in places of concealment below, so well arranged that even if the trap was discovered, the officers would find nothing but a vacant space, unless they examined the walls very closely.

The horses were then all led to the stable; and Edward Ramley, having in some degree stopped the bleeding of his wound, moved into the house, with most of the other men. Old Ramley and the two farm-servants, however, remained without, occupying themselves in loading a cart with manure, till the sound of horses galloping down was heard, and somebody shook the gates violently, calling loudly to those within to open "in the king's name."

The farmer instantly mounted upon the cart, and looked over the wall; but the party before the gates consisted only of five or six dragoons, of whom he demanded, in a bold tone, "Who the devil be you, that I should open for you? Go away, go away, and leave a quiet man at peace!"

"If you don't open the gates, we'll break them down," said one of the men.

"Do, if you dare," answered old Ramley, boldly; "and if you do, I'll shoot the best of you dead. Bring me my gun, Tom. Where's your warrant, young man? You are not an officer, and you've got none with you, so I shan't let any boiled lobsters enter my yard, I can tell you."

By this time he was provided with the weapon he had sent for; and one of his men, similarly armed, had got into the cart beside him. The appearance of resistance was rather ominous, and the dragoons were well aware that if they did succeed in forcing an entrance, and blood were spilt, the whole responsibility would rest upon themselves if no smuggled goods should be found, as they had neither warrant nor any officer of the customs with them.

After a short consultation, then, he who had spoken before, called to old Ramley, saying, "We'll soon bring a warrant. Then look to yourself;" and, thus speaking, he rode off with his party. Old Ramley only laughed, however, and turned back into the house, where he made the party merry at the expense of the dragoons. All the men who had been out upon the expedition were now seated at the table, dividing the beef and bread amongst them, and taking hearty draughts from the tankard. Not the least zealous in this occupation was Edward Ramley, who seemed to consider the deep gash upon his brow as a mere scratch not worth talking about. He laughed and jested with the rest; and when they had demolished all that the board displayed, he turned to his father, saying, not in the most reverent tone, "Come, old fellow, after bringing our venture home safe, I think you ought to send round the true stuff: we've had beer enough. Let's have some of the Dutchman."

"That you shall, Neddy, my boy," answered the farmer, "only I wish you had shot that rascal you fired at. However, one can't always have a steady aim, especially with a fidgetty brute like that you ride;" and away he went to bring the hollands, which soon circulated very freely amongst the party, producing, in its course, various degrees of mirth and joviality, which speedily deviated into song. Some of the ditties that were sung were good, and some of them very bad; but almost all were coarse, and the one that was least so was the following:—

SONG.

"It's wonderful, it's wonderful, is famous London town,
With its alleys
And its valleys,
And its houses up and down;
But I would give fair London town, its court, and all its people,
For the little town of Biddenden, with the moon above the steeple.

"It's wonderful, it's wonderful, to see what pretty faces
In London streets
A person meets
In very funny places;
But I wouldn't give for all the eyes in London town one sees,
A pair, that by the moonlight, looks out beneath the trees.

"It's wonderful, in London town, how soon a man may hold,
By art and sleight,
Or main or might,
A pretty sum of gold;
Yet give me but a pistol, and one rich squire or two,
A moonlight night, a yellow chaise, and the high road will do."

This was not the last song that was sung; but that which followed was interrupted by one of the pseudo-labourers coming in from the yard, to say that there was a hard knocking at the gate.

"I think it is Mr. Radford's voice," added the man, "but I'm not sure; and I did not like to get up into the cart to look."

"Run up stairs to the window, Jinny!" cried old Ramley, "and you'll soon see."

His daughter did, on this occasion, as she was bid, and soon called down from above, "It's old Radford, sure enough; but he's got two men with him!"

"It's all right, if he's there," said Jim Ramley; and the gates were opened in a minute, to give that excellent gentleman admission.

Now, Mr. Radford, it must be remembered, was a magistrate for the county of Kent; but his presence created neither alarm nor confusion in the house of the Ramleys; and when he entered, leaving his men in the court for a minute, he said, with a laugh, holding the father of that hopeful family by the arm, "I've come to search, and to stop the others. Where are the goods?"

"Safe enough," answered the farmer. "No fear, no fear!"

"But can we look under the trap?" asked Mr. Radford, who seemed as well acquainted with the secrets of the place as the owner thereof.

"Ay, ay!" replied the old man. "Don't leave 'em too long; that's all."

"I'll go down myself," said Radford; "they've got scent of it, or I wouldn't find it out."

"All right, all right!" rejoined the other, in a low voice; and the magistrate, raising his tone, exclaimed, "Here, Clinch and Adams; you two fools, why don't you come in? They say there is nothing here; but we must search. We must not take any man's word; not to say that I doubt yours, Mr. Ramley; but it is necessary, you know."

"Oh! do what you like, sir," replied the farmer. "I don't care."

A very respectable search was then commenced, and pursued from room to room; one of the men who accompanied Mr. Radford, and who was an officer of the Customs, giving old Ramley a significant wink with his right eye as he passed, at which the other grinned. Indeed, had the whole matter not been very well understood between the great majority of both parties, it would have been no very pleasant or secure task for any three men in England to enter the kitchen of that farm-house on such an errand. At length, however, Mr. Radford and his companions returned to the kitchen, and the magistrate thought fit to walk somewhat out of his way towards the left-hand side of the room, when suddenly stopping, he exclaimed, in a grave tone, "Hollo! Ramley, what's here? These boards seem loose!"

"To be sure they are," answered the farmer; "that's the way to the beer cellar. There's nothing in it, upon my honour!"

"But we must look, Ramley, you know," said Mr. Radford. "Come, open it, whatever it is!"

"Oh! with all my heart," replied the man; "but you'll perhaps break your head. That's your fault, not mine, however," and advancing to the side of the room, he took a crooked bit of iron from his pocket, not unlike that used for pulling stones out of a horse's hoofs, and insinuating it between the skirting-board and the floor, soon raised the trap-door of which we have spoken before.

A vault of about nine feet deep was now exposed, with the top of a ladder leading into it; and Mr. Radford ordered the men who were with him to go down first. The one who had given old Ramley the wink in passing, descended without ceremony; but the other, who was also an officer, hesitated for a moment.

"Go down, go down, Clinch!" said Mr. Radford. "You *would* have a search, and so you shall do it thoroughly."

The man obeyed, and the magistrate paused a moment to speak with the smuggling farmer, saying, in a low voice, "I don't mind their knowing I'm your friend, Ramley. Let them think about that as they like. Indeed, I'd rather that they did see we understand each other; so give me a hint if they go too far; I'll bear it out."

Thus saying, he descended into the cellar, and old Ramley stood gazing down upon the three from above, with his gaunt figure bending over the trap-door. At the end of a minute or two he called down, "There, that ought to do, I'm sure! We can't be kept bothering here all day!"

Something was said in a low tone by one of the men below; but then the voice of Mr. Radford was heard exclaiming, "No, no; that will do! We've had enough of it! Go up, I say! There's no use of irritating people by unreasonable suspicions, Mr. Clinch. Is it not quite enough, Adams? Are you satisfied?"

"Oh! quite, sir," answered the other officer; "there's nothing but bare walls and an empty beer barrel."

The next moment the party began to re-appear from the trap, the officer Clinch coming up first, with a grave look, and Mr. Radford and the other following, with a smile upon their faces.

"There, all is clear enough," said Mr. Radford; "so you, gentlemen, can go and pursue your search elsewhere. I must remain here to wait for my son, whom I sent for to join me with the servants, as you know; not that I feared any resistance from you, Mr. Ramley; but smuggling is so sadly prevalent now-a-days, that one must be on one's guard, you know."

A horse laugh burst from the whole party round the table; and in the midst of it the two officers retired into the yard, where, mounting their horses, they opened the gates and rode away.

As soon as they were gone, Mr. Radford shook old Ramley familiarly by the hand, exclaiming, "This is the luckiest thing in the world, my good fellow! If I can but get them to accuse me of conniving at this job, it will be a piece of good fortune which does not often happen to a man."

Ramley, as well he might, looked a little confounded; but Mr. Radford drew him aside, and spoke to him for a quarter of an hour, in a voice raised hardly above a whisper. Numerous laughs, and nods, and signs of mutual understanding passed between them; and the conversation ended by Mr. Radford saying, aloud, "I wonder what can keep Dick so long; he ought to have been here before now! I sent over to him at eight, and it is now past eleven."

CHAPTER XII.

We will now, by the reader's good leave, return for a short time to Harbourne House, where the party sat down to breakfast, at the inconveniently early hour of eight. I will not take it upon myself to say that it might not be a quarter of an hour later, for almost everything is after its time on this globe, and Harbourne House did not differ in this respect from all the rest of the world. From the face of young Radford, towards the countenance of Sir Edward Digby, shot some very furious glances as they took their places at the breakfast-table; but those looks gradually sunk down into a dull and sullen frown, as they met with no return. Sir Edward Digby, indeed, seemed to have forgotten the words which had passed between them as soon as they had been uttered; and he laughed, and talked, and conversed with every one as gaily as if nothing had happened. Edith was some ten minutes behind the rest at the meal, and seemed even more depressed than the night before; but Zara had reserved a place for her at her own side; and taking the first opportunity, while the rest of the party were busily talking together, she whispered a few words in her ear. Sir Edward Digby saw her face brighten in a moment, and her eyes turn quickly towards himself; but he took no notice; and an interval of silence occurring the next moment, the conversation between the two sisters was interrupted.

During breakfast a servant brought in a note and laid it on the side-board, and after the meal was over, Miss Croyland retired to her own room to make ready for her departure. Zara was about to follow; but good Mrs. Barbara, who had heard some sharp words pass between the two gentlemen, and had remarked the angry looks of young Radford, was determined that they should not quarrel without the presence of ladies, and consequently called her youngest niece back, saying, in a whisper, "Stay here, my dear. I have a particular reason why I want you not to go."

"I will be back in a moment, my dear aunt," replied Zara; but the worthy old lady would not suffer her to depart; and

the butler entering at that moment, called the attention of Richard Radford to the note which had been brought in some half an hour before, and which was, in fact, a sudden summons from his father.

The contents seemed to give him no great satisfaction; and, turning to the servant, he said, "Well, tell them to saddle my horse, and bring him round;" and as he spoke, he directed a frowning look towards the young baronet, as if he could scarcely refrain from showing his anger till a fitting opportunity occurred for expressing it.

Digby, however, continued talking lightly with Zara Croyland, in the window, till the horse had been brought round, and the young man had taken leave of the rest of the party. Then sauntering slowly out of the room, he passed through the hall door, to the side of Richard Radford's horse, just as the latter was mounting.

"Mr. Radford," he said, in a low tone, "you were pleased to make an impertinent observation upon my conduct, which led me to tell you what I think of yours. We were interrupted; but I dare say you must wish for further conversation with me. You can have it when and where you please."

"At three o'clock this afternoon, in the road straight from the back of the house," replied young Radford, in a low, determined tone, touching the hilt of his sword.

Sir Edward Digby nodded, and then turning on his heel, walked coolly into the house.

"I am sure, Sir Edward," cried Mrs. Barbara, as soon as she saw him, while Zara fixed her eyes somewhat anxiously upon his countenance, "I am sure you and Mr. Radford have been quarrelling."

"Oh, no! my dear madam," replied Sir Edward Digby; "nothing of the kind, I can assure you. Our words were very ordinary words, and perfectly civil upon my word. We had no time to quarrel."

"My dear Sir Edward," said Sir Robert Croyland, "you must excuse me for saying it, I must have no such things here; I am a magistrate for this county, and bound by my oath to keep the peace. My sister tells me that high words passed between you and my young friend Radford before breakfast?"

"They were very few, Sir Robert," answered Digby, in a

careless tone; "he thought fit to make an observation upon my saying a few words to your daughter, here, in a low tone, which I conceive every gentleman has a right to do to a fair lady. I told him I thought his conduct insolent; and that was all that passed. I believe the youth has got a bad headache from too much of your good wine, Sir Robert; therefore, I forgive him. I dare say, he'll be sorry enough for what he said before the day is over, and if he is not, I cannot help it."

"Well, well, if that's all, it is no great matter!" replied the master of the house; "but here comes round the carriage; run and call Edith, Zara."

Before the young lady could quit the room, however, her sister appeared, and the only moment they obtained for private conference was at the door of the carriage, after Edith had got in, and while her father was giving some directions to the coachman. No great information could be given or received, indeed, for Sir Robert returned to the side of the vehicle immediately, bade his daughter good-bye, and the carriage rolled away.

As soon as it was gone, Sir Edward Digby proposed, with the permission of Sir Robert Croyland, to go out to shoot; for he did not wish to subject himself to any further cross-examination by the ladies of the family, and he read many inquiries in fair Zara's eyes, which he feared might be difficult to answer. Retiring, then, to put on a more fitting costume, while gamekeepers and dogs were summoned to attend him, he took the opportunity of writing a short letter, which he delivered to his servant to post, giving him, at the same time, brief directions to meet him near the cottage of good Mrs. Clare, about half-past two, with the sword which the young officer usually wore when not on military service. Those orders were spoken in so ordinary and commonplace a tone that none but a very shrewd fellow would have discovered that anything was going forward different from the usual occurrences of the day; but Somers *was* a very shrewd fellow, and in a few minutes, judging from what he had observed while waiting on his master during dinner on the preceding day, he settled the whole matter entirely to his own satisfaction, thinking, according to the phraseology of those times, "Sir Edward will pink him, and a good thing too; but it will spoil sport here, I've a notion."

As he descended to the hall, in order to join the keepers and their four-footed coadjutors, the young baronet encountered Mrs. Barbara and her neice; and he perceived Zara's eyes instantly glance to his sword-belt, from which he had taken care to remove a weapon that could only be inconvenient to him in the sport he was about to pursue. She was not so easily to be deceived as her father; but yet the absence of the weapon usually employed in those days, as the most efficacious for killing a fellow-creature, put her mind at ease, at least for the present; and, although she determined to watch the proceedings of the young baronet during the two or three following days, as far, at least, as propriety would permit, she took no further notice at the moment, being very anxious to prevent her good aunt from interfering more than necessary in the affairs of Sir Edward Digby.

Mrs. Barbara, indeed, was by no means well pleased that Sir Edward was going to deprive her schemes of the full benefit which might have accrued from his passing the whole of that day unoccupied, with Zara, at Harbourne House, and hinted significantly that she trusted if he did not find good sport he would return early, as her niece was very fond of a ride over the hills, only that she had no companion.

The poor girl coloured warmly, and the more so as Sir Edward could not refrain from a smile.

"I trust, then, I shall have the pleasure of being your companion to-morrow, Miss Croyland," he said, turning to the young lady. "Why should we not ride over, and see your excellent uncle and your sister? I must certainly pay my respects to him; and if I may have the honour of escorting you, it will give double pleasure to my ride."

Zara Croyland was well aware that many a matter, which if treated seriously may become annoying, if not dangerous, can be carried lightly off by a gay and dashing jest: "Oh! with all my heart," she said; "only remember, Sir Edward, we must have plenty of servants with us, or else all the people in the country will say that you and I are going to be married; and as I never intend that such a saying should be verified, it will be as well to nip the pretty little blossom of gossip in the bud."

"It shall be all exactly as you please," replied the young officer, with a low bow and a meaning smile; but at the very

same moment Mrs. Barbara thought fit to reprove her niece, wondering how she could talk so sillily; and Sir Edward took his leave, receiving his host's excuses, as he passed through the hall, for not accompanying him on his shooting expedition.

"The truth is, my dear sir," said Sir Robert Croyland, "that I am now too old and too heavy for such sports."

"You were kind enough to tell me this is Liberty Hall," replied the young baronet, "and you shall see, my dear sir, that I take you at your word, both in regard to your game and your wine, being resolved, with your good permission, and for my own health, to kill your birds and spare your bottles."

"Certainly, certainly," answered the master of the mansion, "you shall do exactly as you like;" and with this license, Sir Edward set out shooting, with tolerable success, till towards two o'clock, when, quite contrary to the advice and opinion of the gamekeepers, who declared that the dogs would have the wind with them in that direction, and that as the day was now hot, the birds would not lie a minute, he directed his course towards the back of Harbourne Wood, finding, it must be confessed, but very little sport. There, apparently fatigued and disgusted with walking for a mile or two without a shot, he gave his gun to one of the men, and bade him take it back to the house, saying he would follow speedily. As soon as he had seen them depart, he tracked round the edge of the wood towards Mrs. Clare's cottage, exactly opposite to which he found his trusty servant provided as he had directed.

Sir Edward then took the sword and fixed it in his belt, saying, "Now, Somers, you may go!"

"Certainly, sir," replied the man, touching his hat with a look of hesitation; but he added, a minute after, "you had better let me know where it's to be, sir, in case—"

"Well," rejoined Sir Edward Digby, with a smile, "you are an old soldier and no meddler, Somers; so that I will tell you, 'in case,' that the place is in a straight line between this and Harbourne House. So now, face about to the right, and go back by the other road."

The man touched his hat again, and walked quickly away, while the young officer turned his steps up the road which he had followed the preceding evening in pursuit of the two Miss

Croylands. It was a good broad open way, in which there was plenty of fencing room, and he thought to himself as he walked on, "I shall not be sorry to punish this young vagabond a little. I must see what sort of skill he has, and if possible wound him without hurting him much. If one could keep him to his bed for a fortnight, we should have the field more clear for our own campaign; but these things must always be a chance."

Thus meditating, and looking at his watch to see how much time he had to spare, Major Sir Edward Digby walked on till he came within sight of the garden wall and some of the outbuildings of Harbourne House. The reader, if he has paid attention, will remember that the road did not go straight to the back of the house itself: a smaller path, which led to the left, conducting thither; but as the gardens extended for nearly a quarter of a mile on that side, it followed the course of the wall to the left to join the parish road which ran in front of the mansion, leaving the green court, as it was called, or lawn, and the terrace on the right hand.

As there was no other road in that direction, Sir Edward Digby felt sure that he must be on the ground appointed, but yet, as is the case in all moments of expectation, the time seemed so long, that when he saw the brick-work he took out his watch again, and found there were still five minutes to spare. He accordingly turned upon his steps, walking slowly back for about a quarter of a mile, and then returned, looking sharply out for his opponent, but seeing no one. He was now sure that the time must be past; but, resolved to afford young Radford every opportunity, he said to himself: "Watches may differ, and something may have detained him. I will give him a full half hour, and then if he does not come I shall understand the matter."

As soon, then, as he saw the walls once more, he wheeled round and re-trod his steps, then looked at his watch, and found that it was a quarter past three. "Too bad!" he said, "too bad! The fellow can't be coward, too, as well as blackguard. One turn more, and then I've done with him." But as he advanced on his way towards the house, he suddenly perceived the flutter of female garments before him, and saying to himself, "This is awkward!" he gazed round for some path, in order to get out of the way for a moment, but could

perceive none. The next instant, coming round a shrub which started forward a little before the rest of the trees, he saw the younger Miss Croyland advancing with a quick step, and, he could not help thinking, with a somewhat agitated air. Her colour was heightened, her eyes eagerly looking on; but, as soon as she saw him, she slackened her pace, and came forward in a more deliberate manner.

"Oh! Sir Edward," she said, in a calm, sweet tone, "I am glad to see you. You have finished your shooting early, it seems."

"Why, the sport was beginning to slacken," answered Sir Edward Digby. "I had not had a shot for the last half hour, and so thought it best to give it up."

"Well then, you shall take a walk with me," cried Zara, gaily. "I am just going down to a poor friend of ours called Widow Clare, and you shall come too."

"What! notwithstanding all your sage and prudent apprehensions in regard to what people might say if we were seen alone together!" exclaimed Sir Edward Digby, with a smile.

"Oh! I don't mind that," answered Zara. "Great occasions, you know, Sir Edward, require decisive measures; and I assuredly want an escort through this terrible forest, to protect me from all the giants and enchanters it may contain."

Sir Edward Digby looked at his watch again, and saw that it wanted but two minutes to the half hour.

"Oh!" said Zara, affecting a look of pique, "if you have some important appointment, Sir Edward, it is another affair: only tell me if it be so?"

Sir Edward Digby took her hand in his: "I will tell you, dear lady," he replied, "if you will first tell me one thing, truly and sincerely: What brought you here?"

Zara trembled and coloured; for with the question put in so direct a shape, the agitation, which she had previously overcome, mastered her in turn, and she answered, "Don't, don't, or I shall cry."

"Well, then, tell me at least if I had anything to do with it?" asked the young baronet.

"Yes, you had!" replied Zara; "I can't tell a falsehood. But now, Sir Edward, don't, as most of you men would do, suppose that it's from any very tender interest in you that I did this foolish thing. It was because I thought—I thought,

if you were going to do what I imagined, it would be the very worst thing in the world for poor Edith."

"I shall only suppose that you are all that is kind and good," answered Digby, perhaps a little piqued at the indifference which she so studiously assumed; "and even if I thought, Miss Croyland, that you did take some interest in my poor self, depend upon it, I should not be inclined to go one step farther in the way of vanity than you yourself could wish. I am not altogether a coxcomb. But now tell me how you were led to suspect anything?"

"Promise me first," said Zara, "that this affair shall not take place. Indeed, indeed, Sir Edward, it must not, on every account!"

"There is not the slightest chance of any such thing," replied Sir Edward Digby. "You need not be under the slightest alarm."

"What! you do not mean to say," she exclaimed, with her cheeks glowing and her eyes raised to his face, "that you did not come here to fight him?"

"Not exactly," answered Sir Edward Digby, laughing; "but what I do mean to say, my dear young lady, is, that our friend is half an hour behind his time, and I am not disposed to give him another opportunity of keeping me waiting."

"And if he had been in time," cried Zara, clasping her hands together and casting down her eyes, "I should have been too late."

"But tell me," persisted Sir Edward Digby, "how you heard all this. Has my servant, Somers, been indiscreet?"

"No, no," replied Zara: "no, I can assure you! I saw you go out in your shooting dress, and without a sword. Then I thought it was all over, especially as you had the gamekeepers with you; but some time ago I found that your servant had gone out, carrying a sword under his arm, and had come straight up this road. That made me uneasy. When the gamekeepers came back without you, I was more uneasy still; but I could not get away from my aunt for a few minutes. When I could, however, I got my hat and cloak, and hurried away, knowing that you would not venture to fight in the presence of a woman. As I went out, all my worst fears were confirmed by seeing your servant come back without the sword; and then, not very well knowing, indeed,

what I was to say or do, I hurried on as fast as possible. Now you have the whole story, and you must come away from this place."

"Very willingly," answered the young officer; adding, with a smile; "which way shall we go, Miss Croyland? To Widow Clare's?"

"No, no!" answered Zara, blushing again. "Do not tease me. You do not know how soon, when a woman is agitated, she is made to weep. My father is out, indeed," she added, in a gayer tone, "so that I should have time to bathe my eyes before dinner, which will be half an hour later than usual; but I should not like my aunt to tell him that I have been taking a crying walk with Sir Edward Digby."

"Heaven forbid that I should ever give you cause for a tear!" answered the young baronet; and then, with a vague impression that he was doing something very like making love, he added, "but let us return to the house, or perhaps we may have your aunt seeking us."

"The most likely thing in the world," replied Zara; and taking their way back, they passed through the gardens, and entered the house by one of the side doors.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was a custom of those days, I believe, not altogether done away with in the present times, for magistrates to assemble in petty sessions, or to meet at other times for the dispatch of any extraordinary business, in tavern, public-house, or inn: "a custom more honoured in the breach than the observance," except where no other place of assembly can be found. It thus happened that, on the day of which we have been speaking, some half-dozen gentlemen, all justices of the peace for the county of Kent, were gathered together in a good-sized room of the inn, at the little town of ———. There was a table drawn across the room, at which was placed the magistrates' clerk, with sundry sheets of paper before him, several printed forms, and two books, one big and the other little. The magistrates themselves, however, were not seated in due state and dignity, but, on the contrary, were in general standing about and talking together; some looking out of the win-

dow into the street, some leaning with their backs against the table and the tails of their coats turned over their hands, while one occupied an arm-chair placed sideways at the board, with one knee thrown over the other: a favourite position which he could not have assumed had he sat with his face to the table.

The latter was Sir Robert Croyland, who had been sent for in haste by his brother justices, to take part in their proceedings relative to a daring act of smuggling which had just been perpetrated. Sir Robert would willingly have avoided giving his assistance upon this occasion; but the summons had been so urgent that he could not refuse going; and he was now not a little angry to find that there were more than sufficient justices present to make a quorum, and to transact all the necessary business. Some one, however, it would seem, had, as usual in all county arrangements, been very busy in pressing for as full an attendance as possible; and those who knew the characters of the gentlemen assembled might have perceived that the great majority of them were not very well qualified to sit as judges upon a case of this nature, as almost every one was under suspicion of leaning towards the side of the smugglers, most of them having at some time engaged more or less in the traffic which they were called upon to stop.

Sir Robert Croyland was the least objectionable in this point of view; for he had always borne a very high name for impartiality in such matters, and had never had anything personally to do with the illicit traffic itself. It is probable, therefore, that he was sent for to give a mere show of justice to the proceedings, for Mr. Radford was expected to be there; and it was a common observation of the county gentlemen, that the latter could now lead Sir Robert as he liked. Mr. Radford, indeed, had not yet arrived, though two messengers had been despatched to summon him; the answer still being that he had gone over towards Ashford. Sir Robert, therefore, sat in the midst, not harmonizing much in feeling with the rest, and looking anxiously for his friend's appearance, in order to obtain some hint as to how he was to act.

At length, a considerable noise was heard in the streets below, and a sort of constable door-keeper presented himself, to inform the magistrates that the officers and dragoons had arrived, bringing in several prisoners. An immediate bustle took place, the worshipful gentlemen beginning to seat them-

selves, and one of them—as it is technically termed—moving Sir Robert into the chair. In order to show that this was really as well as metaphysically done, Sir Robert Croyland rose, sat down again, and wheeled himself round to the table. A signal was then given to the constable; and a rush of several persons from without was made into the temporary justice-room, which was at once nearly filled with custom-house officers, soldiers, smugglers, and the curious of the village.

Amongst the latter portion of the auditory—at least so he supposed at first—Sir Robert Croyland perceived his young friend, Richard Radford; and he was in the act of beckoning him to come up to the table, in order to inquire where his father was, and how soon he would return, when one of the officers of the customs suddenly thrust the young gentleman out of the way, exclaiming, "Stand farther back! What are you pushing forward for? Your turn will come soon enough, I warrant."

Sir Robert Croyland was confounded, and for a moment or two he sat silent in perplexity and surprise. Not that he ever entertained a doubt of old Mr. Radford still nourishing all the propensities of his youth; nor that he was not well aware they had formed part of the inheritance of his son; but there were certain considerations of some weight which made Sir Robert feel that it would have been better for him to be in any other spot of the habitable globe than that where he was at the moment. Recovering himself, however, after a brief pause of anxious indecision, he made a sign to the constable door-keeper, and whispered to him, as soon as the man reached his side, to inquire into the cause of Mr. Richard Radford's being there. The man was shrewd and quick, and while half the magistrates were speaking across the table to half the officers and some of the dragoons, he went and returned to and from the other side of the room, and then whispered to the baronet, "For smuggling, sir; caught abetting the others; his name marked upon some of the goods."

Sir Robert Croyland was not naturally a brilliant man. Though hasty in temper in his early days, he had always been somewhat obtuse in intellect; but this was a case of emergency; and there is no greater sharpener of the wits than necessity. In an instant, he had formed his plan to gain time, which was his great object at that moment; and, taking out his watch,

he laid it on the table, exclaiming aloud, "Gentlemen! gentlemen! a little regularity, if you please. My time is precious. I have an important engagement this afternoon, and I—"

But his whole scheme had nearly been frustrated by the impetuosity of young Radford himself, who at once pushed through officers and soldiers, saying, "And so have I, Sir Robert, a very important engagement this afternoon. I claim to be heard as speedily as possible."

Sir Robert, however, was determined to carry his point, and to avoid having aught to do with the case of his young friend, even at the risk of giving him offence and annoyance. "Stand back, sir!" he said. "In this court, there is no friendship or favour. You will have attention in turn, but not before. Mr. Mowle, bring forward the prisoners one after the other, as near as possible, in the order of—the order of—of their capture," he added, at length, after hesitating for a moment to consider whether it was or was not probable that young Radford had been amongst those last taken; "and let all the others be removed, under guard, into the next room."

"Won't that make it a long affair, Sir Robert?" asked Mr. Runnington, a neighbouring squire.

"Oh dear, no!" replied the chairman; "by regularity we shall save time. Do as you are directed, Mowle."

Young Radford showed a strong disposition to resist, or, at least, to protest against this arrangement; but the officer to whom the baronet had spoken, treated the prisoner with very little reverence; and he, with the rest of the gang, was removed from the room, with the exception of three, one of whom, with a smart cockade in his hat, such as was worn at that time by military men in undress, swaggered up to the table with a bold air, as if he were about to address the magistrates."

"Ah, major, is that you?" asked a gentlemen on Sir Robert's right, known in the country by the name of Squire Jollyboat, though his family being originally French, his real appellation was Jollivet.

"Oh yes, squire!" answered the prisoner, in a gay, indifferent tone, "here I am. It is long since I have had the pleasure of seeing your worship. I think you were not on the bench the last time I was committed, or I should have fared better."

"I don't know that, major," replied the gentleman; "on the former occasion I gave you a month, I think."

"Ay, but the blackguards that time gave me two," rejoined the major.

"Because it was the second offence," said Squire Jollyboat.

"The second! Lord bless you, sir!" answered the major, with a look of cool contempt; and turning round with a wink to his two companions, they all three laughed joyously, as if it were the finest joke in the world.

It might not be very interesting to the reader were we to give in detail the depositions of the various witnesses upon a common case of smuggling in the last century, or to repeat all the various arguments which were bandied backwards and forwards between the magistrates, upon the true interpretation of the law, as expressed in the 9th George II. cap. 35. It was very evident, indeed, to the officers of customs, to the serjeant of dragoons, and even to the prisoners themselves, that the worthy justices were disposed to take as favourable a view of smuggling transactions as possible. But the law was very clear; the case was not less so; Mowle, the principal riding officer, was a straightforward, determined, and shrewd man; and although Sir Robert Croyland, simply with a view of protracting the investigation till Mr. Radford should arrive, started many questions which he left to the other magistrates to settle, yet in about half an hour the charge of smuggling, with riot, and armed resistance to the custom-house officers, was clearly made out against the major and his two companions; and as the act left no discretion in such a case, the resistance raising the act to felony, all three were committed for trial, and the officers bound over to prosecute.

The men were then taken away, laughing and jesting; and Sir Robert Croyland looked with anxiety for the appearance of the next party; but two other men were now introduced without Richard Radford; and the worthy baronet was released for the time. The case brought forward against these prisoners differed from that against those who preceded them, inasmuch as no resistance was charged. They had simply been found aiding and abetting in the carriage of the smuggled goods, and had fled when they found themselves pursued by the officers, though not fast enough to avoid capture. The facts were speedily proved, and, indeed, much more rapidly

than suited the views of Sir Robert Croyland. He therefore raised the question, when the decision of the magistrates was about to be pronounced, whether this was the first or the second offence, affecting some remembrance of the face of one of the men. The officers, also, either really did recollect, or pretended to do so, that the person of whom he spoke had been convicted before; but the man himself positively denied it, and defied them to bring forward any proof. A long discussion thus commenced, and before it was terminated the baronet was relieved by the appearance of Mr. Radford himself, who entered booted and spurred, and covered with dust, as if just returned from a long ride.

Shaking hands with his brother magistrates, and especially with Sir Robert Croyland, he was about to seat himself at the end of that table, when the baronet rose, saying: "Here, Radford, you had better take my place, as I must positively get home directly, having important business to transact."

"No, no, Sir Robert," replied that respectable magistrate, "we cannot spare you in this case, nor can I take that place. My son, I hear, is charged with taking part in this affair; and some sharp words have been passing between myself and that scoundrel of a fellow called Clinch, the officer, who applied to me for aid in searching the Ramleys' house. When I agreed to go with him, and found out a very snug place for hiding, he was half afraid to go down; and yet, since then, he has thought fit to insinuate that I had something to do with the run, and did not conduct the search fairly."

The magistrates looked round to each other and smiled; and Radford himself laughed heartily, very much as if he was acting a part in a farce, without any hope or expectation of passing off his zeal in the affair, upon his fellow magistrates, as genuine. Mowle, the officer, at the same time turned round, and spoke a few words to two men who had followed Mr. Radford into the room, one of whom shrugged his shoulders with a laugh, and said nothing, and the other replied eagerly, but in a low tone.

Sir Robert Croyland, however, urged the necessity of his going, put his watch in his pocket, and buttoned up his coat. But Mr. Radford, assuming a graver air and a very peculiar tone, replied: "No, no, Sir Robert; you must stay, indeed.

We shall want you. Your known impartiality will give weight to our decisions, whatever they may be."

The baronet sat down again, but evidently with so much unwillingness, that his brethren marvelled not a little at this fresh instance of the influence which Mr. Radford exerted over his mind.

"Who is the next prisoner, Mr. Mowle?" demanded Sir Robert Croyland, as soon as he had resumed his seat.

"Mr. Richard Radford, I suppose, sir," said Mowle; "but these two men are not disposed of."

"Well, then," said Mr. Jollivet, who was very well inclined to commence a career of lenity, "as no proof has been given that this is the second offence, I think we must send them both for a month. That seems to me the utmost we can do."

The other magistrates concurred in this decision, and the prisoners were ordered to be removed; but ere they went, the one against whom the officers had most seriously pressed their charge, turned round towards the bench, exclaiming, in a gay tone: "Thank you, Squire Jollyboat. Your worship shall have a chest of tea for this before I'm out a fortnight."

A roar of laughter ran round the magistrates, for such matters were as indecently carried on in those days, on almost all occasions, as they sometimes are now; and in a moment or two after, young Radford was brought in, with a dark scowl upon his brow.

"How is this, Dick?" cried his father. "Have you been dabbling in a run, and suffered yourself to be caught?"

"Let these vagabonds make their accusation, and bring their witnesses," replied the young man, sullenly, "and then I'll speak for myself."

"Well, your worships," said Mowle, coming forward, "the facts are simply these: I have long had information that goods were to be run about this time, and that Mr. Radford had some share in the matter. Last night, a large quantity of goods were landed in the Marsh, though I had been told it was to be near about Sandgate, or between that and Hythe, and was consequently on the look-out there. As soon as I got intimation, however, that the run had been effected, I got together as many men as I could, sent for a party of dragoons from Folkestone, and, knowing pretty well which way they would take, came across by Aldington, Broadoak and Kings-

north, and then away by Singleton Green, towards Four-Elms, where, just under the hill, we came upon those two men who have just been convicted, and two others, who got off. We captured these two, and three horse-loads they had with them, for their beasts were tired, and they had lagged behind. There were two or three chests of tea, and a good many other things, and all of them were marked, just like honest bales of goods, "Richard Radford, Esquire, Junior." As we found, however, that the great party was on before, we pursued them as far as Rouse-end, where we overtook them all; but there they scattered, some galloping off towards Gouldwell, as if they were going to the Ramleys: some towards Usher-house, and some by the wood towards Etchden. Four or five of the dragoons pushed after those running for Gouldwell, and I and the rest stuck to the main body, which went away towards the wood, and who showed fight. There was a good deal of firing amongst the trees, but not much damage done, except to my horse, who was shot in the shoulder. But just as we were chasing them out of the wood, up came Mr. Richard Radford, who was seen for a minute speaking to one of the men who were running, and riding along beside him for some way. He then turned, and came up to us, and tried to stop us as we were galloping after them, asking what the devil we were about, and giving us a great deal of bad language. I didn't mind him, but rode on, knowing we could take him at any time; but Mr. Birchett, the other chief officer, who had captured the major a minute or two before, got angry, and caught him by the collar, charging him to surrender, when he instantly drew his sword, and threatened to run him through. One of the dragoons, however, knocked it out of his hand, and then he was taken. This affray in the middle of the road enabled the greater part of the rest to get off; and we only captured two more horses and one man."

Several of the other officers, and the dragoons, corroborated Mowle's testimony; and the magistrates, but especially Sir Robert Croyland, began to look exceedingly grave. Mr. Radford, however, only laughed, turning to his son, and asking, "Well, Dick, what have you to say to all this?"

Richard Radford, however, merely tossed up his head, and threw back his shoulders, without reply, till Sir Robert Croyland addressed him, saying, "I hope, Mr. Radford, you can

clear yourself of this charge, for you ought to know that armed resistance to the king's officers is a transportable offence."

"I will speak to the magistrates," replied young Radford, "when I can speak freely, without all these people about me. As to the goods they mention, marked with my name, I know nothing about them."

"Do you wish to speak with the magistrates alone?" demanded old Mr. Radford.

"I must strongly object to any such proceeding," exclaimed Mowle.

"Pray, sir, meddle with what concerns you," said old Radford, turning upon him fiercely, "and do not pretend to dictate here. You gentlemen are greatly inclined to forget your place. I think that the room had better be cleared of all but the prisoner, Sir Robert."

The baronet bowed his head; Squire Jollivet concurred in the same opinion; and, though one or two of the others hesitated, they were ultimately overruled, and the room was cleared of all persons but the magistrates and the culprit.

Scarcely was this done, when, with a bold free air, and contemptuous smile, young Radford advanced to the side of the table, and laid his left hand firmly upon it; then, looking round from one to another, he said, "I will ask you a question, worshipful gentlemen. Is there any one of you, here present, who has never, at any time, had anything to do with a smuggling affair? Can you swear it upon your oaths? Can you, sir? Can you? Can you?"

The magistrates to whom he addressed himself, looked marvellously rueful, and replied not; and at last, turning to his father, he said, "Can you, sir? though I, methinks, need hardly ask the question."

"No, by Jove, Dick, I can't!" replied his father, laughing. "I wish to heaven you wouldn't put such awful interrogatories; for I believe, for that manner, we are all in the same boat."

"Then I refuse," said young Radford, "to be judged by you. Settle the matter as you like. Get out of the scrape as you can; but don't venture to convict a man when you are more guilty than he is himself. If you do, I may tell a few tales that may not be satisfactory to any of you."

It had been remarked, that, in putting his questions, the

young gentleman had entirely passed Sir Robert Croyland; and Mr. Jollivet whispered to the gentleman next him, "I think we had better leave him and Sir Robert to settle it, for I believe the baronet is quite clear of the scrape."

But Mr. Radford had overheard, and he exclaimed, "No, no; I think the matter is quite clear how we must proceed. There's not the slightest proof given that he knew anything about these goods being marked with his name, or that it was done by his authority. He was not with the men either who were carrying the goods, and they were going quite away from his own dwelling. He happened to come there accidentally, just when the fray was going on. That I can prove, for I sent him a note this morning, telling him to join me at Ashford as fast as possible."

"I saw it delivered myself," said Sir Robert Croyland.

"To be sure," rejoined Mr. Radford; "and then, as to his talking to the smugglers when he did come up, I dare say he was telling them to surrender, or not to resist the law. Wasn't it so, Dick?"

"Not a bit of it," answered Richard Radford, boldly. "I told them to be off as fast as they could. But I did tell them not to fire any more. That's true enough."

"Ay, to be sure," cried Mr. Radford. "He was trying to persuade them not to resist legitimate authority."

Almost all the magistrates burst into a fit of laughter; but, no way disconcerted, worthy Mr. Radford went on saying, "While he was doing this up comes this fellow, Birchett, and seizes him by the collar; and, I dare say, he abused him into the bargain."

"He said I was a d—d smuggling blackguard myself," said young Radford.

"Well, then, gentlemen, is it at all wonderful that he drew his sword?" demanded his respectable father. "Is every gentleman in the county to be ridden over, rough-shod, by these officers and their dragoons, and called 'd—d smuggling blackguards,' when they are actually engaged in persuading the smugglers not to fire? I promise you, my son shall bring an action against that fellow, Birchett, for an assault. It seems to me that the case is quite clear."

"It is, at all events, rendered doubtful," said Sir Robert Croyland, "by what has been suggested. I think the officers

had better now be recalled; and, by your permission, I will put a few question to them."

In a few minutes the room was, once more, nearly filled, and the baronet addressed Mowle, in a grave tone, saying, "A very different view of this case has been afforded us, Mr. Mowle, from that which you gave just now. It is distinctly proved, and I myself can in some degree testify to the fact, that Mr. Radford was on the spot accidentally, having been sent for by his father to join him at Ashford—"

"At the Ramleys', I suppose you mean, sir," observed Mowle, drily.

"No, sir; at Ashford," rejoined Mr. Radford; and Sir Robert Croyland proceeded to say:—

"The young gentleman also asserts that he was persuading the smugglers to submit to lawful authority, or, at all events, not to fire upon you. Was there any more firing after he came up?"

"No; there was not," answered Mowle. "They all galloped off as hard as they could."

"Corroborative proof of his statement," observed Sir Robert, solemnly. "The only question, therefore, remaining, seems to be, as to whether Mr. Radford, junior, had really anything to do with the placing of his name upon the goods. Now, one strong reason for supposing such not to be the case is, that they were not found near his house, or going towards it, but the contrary."

"Why, he's as much at home in the Ramleys' house as at his own," said a voice from behind; but Sir Robert took no notice, and proceeded to inquire, "Have you proof, Mr. Mowle, that he authorized any one to mark these goods with his name?"

Mr. Radford smiled, and Mowle, the officer, looked a little puzzled. At length, however, he answered: "No, I can't say we have, Sir Robert; but one thing is very certain: it is not quite customary to ask for such proof in this stage of the business, and in the cases of inferior men."

"I am sorry to hear it," replied Sir Robert Croyland, in a dignified and sententious tone, "for it is quite necessary that in all cases the evidence should be clear and satisfactory to justify the magistrates in committing any man to prison, even for trial. In this instance nothing is proved, and not even a fair cause for suspicion made out. Mr. Radford was there acci-

dentally, the goods were going in a different direction from his house, he was seized, we think, upon insufficient grounds, while endeavouring to dissuade the smugglers from resisting the king's officers and troops; and though we may judge his opposition imprudent, it was not wholly unjustifiable. The prisoner is therefore discharged."

"The goods were going to the Ramleys," said the man, Clinch, who now, emboldened by the presence of several other officers, spoke loud and decidedly. "Here are two or three of the dragoons who can swear that they followed a party of the smugglers nearly to the house, and had the gates shut in their face when they came up; and I cant't help saying, that the search of the house by Mr. Radford was not conducted as it ought to have been. The two officers were left without, while he went in to speak with old Ramley, and there were a dozen of men, or more in the kitchen."

"Pooh! nonsense, fellow!" cried Mr. Radford, interrupting him with a laugh; "I did it for your own security."

"And then," continued Clinch, "when we had gone down into the concealed cellar below, which was as clear a *hide* for smuggled goods as ever was seen, he would not let me carry out the search, though I found that two places at the sides were hollow, and only covered with boards."

"Why, you vagabond, you were afraid of going down at all!" said Mr. Radford. "Where is Adams? He can bear witness of it."

"Clinch didn't seem to like it much, it must be confessed," said Adams, without coming forward; "but then the place was so full of men, it was enough to frighten one."

"I wasn't frightened," rejoined Mr. Radford.

"Because it was clear enough that you and the Ramleys understood each other," answered Clinch, boldly.

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense!" said Squire Jollivet. "You must not talk such stuff here, Mr. Clinch. But, however that may be, the prisoner is discharged; and now, as I think we have no more business before us, we may all go home; for it's nearly five o'clock, and I, for one, want my dinner."

"Ay, it is nearly five o'clock," said young Radford, who had been standing with his eyes cast down and his brow knit; "and you do not know what you have all done, keeping me here in this way."

He added an oath, and then flung out of the room, passing through the crowd of officers and others, in his way towards the door, without waiting for his father, who had risen with the rest of the magistrates, and was preparing to depart.

Sir Robert Croyland and Mr. Radford descended the stairs of the inn together; and at the bottom Mr. Radford shook the baronet heartily by the hand, saying, loud enough to be heard by everybody, "That was admirably well done, Sir Robert! Many thanks; many thanks."

"None to me, my dear sir," answered Sir Robert Croyland. "It was but simple justice;" and he turned away to mount his horse.

"Very pretty justice, indeed!" said Mowle, in a low voice, to the sergeant of dragoons; "but I can't help fancying there's something more under this than meets the eye. Mr. Radford isn't a gentleman who usually laughs at these matters so lightly. But if he thinks to cheat me, perhaps he may find himself mistaken."

In the mean time the baronet hastened homewards, putting his horse into a quick pace, and taking the nearest roads through the woods, which were then somewhat thickly scattered over that part of Kent. He had no servant with him; and when at about two miles from his own house, he passed through a wild and desolate part of the country, near what is now called Chequer Tree, he looked on before and around him on every side, somewhat anxiously, as if he did not much admire the aspect of the place. He pushed on, however, entered the wood, and rode rapidly down into a deep dell, which may still be seen in that neighbourhood, though its wild and gloomy character is now almost altogether lost. At that time, tall trees grew up round it on either hand, leaving, in the hollow, a little patch of about half an acre, filled with long grass and some stunted willows, while the head of a stream bubbling up in their shade, poured on its clear waters through a fringe of sedges and rushes towards some larger river.

The sun had yet an hour or two to run before his setting; but it was only at noon of a summer's day that his rays ever penetrated into that gloomy and secluded spot; and towards the evening it had a chilly and desolate aspect, which made one feel as if it were a place debarred for ever of the bright light of day. The green tints of spring, or the warmer brown

of autumn, seemed to make no difference, for the shades were always blue, dull and heavy, mingling with the thin filmy mist that rose up from the plashy ground on either side of the road.

A faint sort of shudder came over Sir Robert Croyland, probably from the damp air; and he urged his horse rapidly down the hill without any consideration for the beast's knees. He was spurring on towards the other side, as if eager to get out of it, when a voice was heard from amongst the trees, exclaiming, in a sad and melancholy tone. "Robert Croyland! Robert Croyland! what look you for here?"

The baronet turned on his saddle with a look of terror and anguish; but, instead of stopping, he dug his spurs into the horse's sides, and galloped up the opposite slope. As if irresistibly impelled to look at that which he dreaded, he gazed round twice as he ascended, and each time beheld, standing in the middle of the road, the same figure, wrapped in a large dark cloak, which he had seen when first the voice caught his ear. Each time he averted his eyes in an instant, and spurred on more furiously than ever. His accelerated pace soon carried him to the top of the hill, where he could see over the trees; and in about a quarter of an hour he reached Halden, when he began to check his horse, and reasoned with himself on his own sensations. There was a great struggle in his mind; but ere he arrived at Harbourne House he had gained sufficient mastery over himself to say, "What a strange thing imagination is!"

CHAPTER XIV.

What a varying thing is the stream of life! How it sparkles and glitters! Now it bounds along its pebbly bed, sometimes in sunshine, and sometimes in shade; sometimes sporting round all things, as if its essence were merriment and brightness; sometimes flowing solemnly on, as if it were derived from Lethe itself. Now it runs like a liquid diamond along the meadow; now it plunges in fume and fury over the rock; now it is clear and limpid, as youth and innocence can make it; now it is heavy and turbid, with the varying streams of

thought and memory that are ever flowing into it, each bringing its store of dullness and pollution as it tends towards the end. Its voice, too, varies as it goes; now it sings lightly as it dances on; now it roars amidst the obstacles that oppose its way; and now it has no tone but the dull low murmur of exhausted energy.

Such is the stream of life! yet, perhaps, few of us would wish to change our portion of it for the calm regularity of a canal, even if one could be constructed without locks and floodgates upon it, to hold in the pent-up waters of the heart till they are ready to burst through the banks.

Life was in its sparkling aspect with Zara Croyland and Sir Edward Digby, when they set out on horseback for the house of old Mr. Croyland, cantering easily along the roads of that part of the country, which, in the days I speak of, were soft and somewhat sandy. Two servants followed behind at a discreet distance; and lightly passing over hill and dale, with all the loveliness of a very bright portion of our fair land stretched out around them, the young lady and her companion drew in, through the eyes, fresh sensations of happiness from all the lovely things of nature. The yellow woods warmed their hearts; the blue heaven raised their thoughts; the soft air refreshed and cheered all their feelings; and when a passing cloud swept over the sky, it only gave that slight shadowy tone to the mind, which wakens within us the deep, innate, and elevating movements of the spirit, that seem to connect the aspect of God's visible creation with a higher and a purer state of being. Each had some spring of happiness in the heart fresh opened; for, to the fair girl who went bounding along through that gay world, the thought that she was conveying to a dear sister tidings of hope, was in itself a joy; and to her companion a new subject of contemplation was presenting itself, in the very being who accompanied him on the way: a subject quite untouched and novel, and, to a man of his character and disposition, a most interesting one.

Sir Edward Digby had mingled much with the world; he had seen many scenes of different kinds; he had visited various countries, the most opposite to each other; he had frequented courts, and camps, and cities; and he had known and seen a good deal of woman, and of woman's heart; but he had never yet met any one like Zara Croyland. The woman of fashion

and of rank, in all the few modifications of character that her circumstances admit, for rank and fashion are sadly like the famous bed of the robber of Attica, on which all men are cut down or stretched out to a certain size, was well known to him, and looked upon much in the light of an exotic plant, kept in an artificial state of existence, with many beauties and excellences, perhaps, mingling with many deformities and faults, but still weakened and deprived of individuality by long drilling in a round of conventionalities. He had seen, too, the wild Indian, in the midst of her native woods, and might have sometimes admired the free grace and wild energy of uncultivated and unperverted nature; but he was not very fond of barbarism, and though he might admit the existence of fine qualities, even in a savage, yet he had not been filled with any great enthusiasm in favour of Indian life from what he had seen in Canada. The truth is, he had never been a very dissolute, or, as it is termed, a very gay man: he was not sated and surfeited with the vices of civilization, and consequently was not inclined to seek for new excitement in the very opposite extreme of primeval rudeness.

Most of the gradations between the two, he had seen at different periods and in different lands; but yet in her who now rode along beside him, there was something different from any. It was not a want, but a combination of the qualities he had remarked in others. There was the polish and the cultivation of high class and finished training, with a slight touch of the wildness and the originality of the fresh unsophisticated heart. There was the grace of education and the grace of nature; and there seemed to be high natural powers of intellect, uncurbed by artificial rules, but supplied with materials by instruction.

All this was apparent; but the question with him was, as to the heart beneath, and its emotions. He gazed upon her as they went on, when she was not looking that way, he watched her countenance, the habitual expression of features, and the varying expression which every emotion produced. Her face seemed like a bright looking-glass, which a breath will dim and a touch will brighten; but there is so much deceit in the world, and every man who has mingled with that world must have seen so much of it, and every man, also, has within himself such internal and convincing proofs of our

human nature's fondness for seeming, that we are all inclined, except in very early youth, to doubt the first impression, to inquire beyond the external appearance, and to inquire if the heart of the fruit corresponds with the beauty of the outside.

He asked himself what was she really? What was true, and what was false, in that bright and sparkling creature? Whether was the gaiety or the sadness the real character of the mind within? or whether the frequent variation from the one to the other, ay, and from energy to lightness, from softness to firmness, from gentleness to vigour, were not all the indications of a character as various as the moods which it assumed?

Sir Edward Digby was resolved not to fall in love, which is the most dangerous resolution that a man can take; for it is seldom, if ever, taken, except in a case of great necessity: one of those hasty outworks thrown up against a powerful enemy, which are generally taken in a moment and the cannon therein turned against ourselves.

Nevertheless, he had resolved, as I have said, not to fall in love; and he fancied that, strengthened by that resolution, he was quite secure. It must not be understood, indeed, that Sir Edward Digby never contemplated marriage. On the contrary, he thought of it as a remote evil that was likely to fall upon him some day, by an inevitable necessity. It seemed a sort of duty, indeed, to transmit his name, and honours, and wealth, to another generation; and as duties are not always very pleasant things, he, from time to time, looked forward to the execution of his, in this respect, in a calm, philosophical, determined manner. Thirty-five, he thought, would be a good time to marry; and when he did so, he had quite made up his mind to do it with the utmost deliberation and coolness. It should be quite a *mariage de raison.* He would take it as a dose of physic, a disagreeable thing, to be done when necessary, but not a minute before; and in the mean time, to fall in love was quite out of the question.

No, he was examining, and investigating, and contemplating Zara Croyland's character, merely as a matter of interesting speculation; and a very dangerous speculation it was, Sir Edward Digby! I don't know which was most perilous: that, or your resolution.

It is very strange he never recollected, that in no other case

in his whole career had he found it either necessary to take such a resolution, or pleasant to enter into such a speculation. If he had, perhaps he might have begun to tremble for himself. Nor did he take into the calculation the very important fact that Zara Croyland was both beautiful and pretty; two very different things, reader, as you will find, if you examine. A person may be very pretty without being the least beautiful, or very beautiful without being in the least pretty; but when those two qualities are both combined, and when, in one girl, the beauty of features and of form that excites admiration, is joined with that prettiness of expression, and colouring, and arrangement, that awakens tenderness and wins affection, Lord have mercy upon the man who rides along with her through fair scenes, under a bright sky!

Digby did not at all find out that he was in the most dangerous situation in the world; or, if some fancy ever came upon him, that he was not quite safe, it was but as one of those vague impressions of peril that float for a single instant over the mind when we are engaged in any very bold and exciting undertaking, and pass away again as fast.

Far from guarding himself at all, Sir Edward Digby went on in his unconsciousness, laying himself more and more open to the enemy. In pursuit of his scheme of investigation, he proceeded as they rode along, to try the mind of his fair companion in a thousand different ways; and every instant he brought forth some new and dangerous quality. He found that, in the comparative solitude in which she lived, she had had time for study as well as thought, and had acquired far more, and far more varied stores of information, than was common with the young women of her day. It was not alone that she could read and spell, which a great many could not in those times, but she had read a number of different works upon a number of different subjects; knew as much of other lands, and of the habits of other people, as books could give, and was tastefully proficient in the arts that brighten life, even where their cultivation is not its object.

Thus her conversation had always something new about it. The very images that suggested themselves to her mind were derived from such numerous sources, that it kept the fancy on the stretch to follow her in her flights, and made their whole talk a sort of playful chase, like that of one bird after another

in the air. Now she borrowed a comparison for something sensible to the eye from the sweet music that charms the ear; now she found out links of association between the singing of the birds and some of the fine paintings that she had seen or heard of; now combined a bright scene, or a peculiar moment of happiness, with the sweet odours of the flowers or the murmur of the stream. With everything in nature and art she sported, apparently unconscious; and often, too, in speaking of the emotions of the heart or the thoughts of the mind, she would, with a bright flash of imagination, cast lights upon those dark and hidden things from objects in the external world, or from the common events of life.

Eagerly Digby led her on, pleased, excited, entertained himself; but in so doing he produced an effect which he had not calculated upon. He made a change in her feelings towards himself. She had thought him a very agreeable man from the first; she had seen that he was a gentleman by habit, and divined that he was so by nature; but now she began to think that he was a very high-toned and noble-minded man, that he was one worthy of high station and of all happiness, she did not say of affection, nor let the image of love pass distinctly before her eyes. There might be a rosy cloud in the far sky wherein the god was veiled; but she did not see him, or was it that she would not? Perhaps it was so; for woman's heart is often as perverse and blind, in these matters, as man's. But one thing is clear, no two people can thus pour forth the streams of congenial thought and feeling, to flow on mingling together in sweet communion, for any great length of time, without a change of their sensations towards each other; and, unless the breast be well guarded by passion for another, it is not alone that mind with mind is blended, but heart with heart.

Though the distance was considerable, that is to say, some three or four miles, and they made it more than twice as long by turning up towards the hills, to catch a fine view of the wooded world below, on whose beauty Zara expatiated eloquently; and though they talked of a thousand different subjects, which I have not paused to mention here, lest the detail should seem all too tedious, yet their ride passed away briefly, like a dream. At length, coming through some green lanes, overhung by young saplings and a crowd of brambles

and other hedge-row shrubs, no longer, alas, in flower, they caught sight of the chimneys of a house a little way further on, and Zara said, with a sigh, "There is my uncle's house."

Sir Edward asked himself, "Why does she sigh?" and as he did so, felt inclined to sigh, too; for the ride had seemed too short, and had now become as a pleasant thing passed away. But then he thought, "We shall enjoy it once again as we return;" and he took advantage of their slackened pace to say, "As I know you are anxious to speak with your sister, Miss Croyland, I will contrive to occupy your uncle for a time, if we find him at home. I fear I shall not be able to obtain an opportunity of talking with her myself on the subjects that so deeply interest her, as at one time I hoped to do; but I am quite sure, from what I see of you, that I may depend upon what you tell me, and act accordingly."

As if by mutual consent, they had avoided, during their expedition of that morning, the subject which was, perhaps, most in the thoughts of each; but now Zara checked her horse to a slow walk, and replied, after a moment's thought, "I should think, if you desire it, you could easily obtain a few minutes' conversation with her at my uncle's. I only don't know whether it may agitate her too much or not. Perhaps you had better let me speak with her first, and then, if she wishes it, she will easily find the means. You may trust to me, indeed, Sir Edward, in Edith's case, though I do not always say exactly what I mean about myself. Not that I have done otherwise with you; for, indeed, I have neither had time nor occasion; but with the people that occasionally come to the house, sometimes it is necessary, and sometimes I am tempted, out of pure perversity, to make them think me very different from what I am. It is not always with those that I hate or despise either, but sometimes with people that I like and esteem very much. Now, I dare say poor Harry Layton has given you a very sad account of me?"

"No, indeed," answered Sir Edward Digby, "you do him wrong; I have not the least objection to tell you exactly what he said."

"Oh! do, do!" cried Zara; "I should like to hear very much, for I am afraid I used to tease him terribly."

"He said," replied Digby, "that when last he saw you,

you were a gay, kind-hearted girl of fourteen, and that he was sure, if I spoke to you about him, you would tell me all that I wanted to know with truth and candour."

"That was kind of him," said Zara, with some emotion, "that was very kind. I am glad he knows me; and yet that very candour, Sir Edward, some people call affectation, and some impudence. I am afraid that those who know much of the world never judge rightly of those who know little of it. Sincerity is a commodity so very rare, I am told, in the best society, that those who meet with it never believe that they have got the genuine article."

"I know a good deal of the world," replied the young baronet, "but yet, my dear Miss Croyland, I do not think that I have judged you wrongly;" and he fell into thought.

The next moment they turned up to the house of old Mr. Croyland; and while the servants were holding the horses, and Zara, with the aid of Sir Edward Digby, dismounting at the door, they saw, to her horror and consternation, a large yellow coach coming down the hill towards the house, and which she instantly recognised as her father's family vehicle.

"My aunt, my aunt, upon my life!" exclaimed Zara, with a rueful shake of the head. "I must speak one word with Edith before she comes; so forgive me, Sir Edward," and she darted into the house, asking a black servant, in a shawl turban and a long white gown, where Miss Croyland was to be found.

"She out in de garden, pretty missy," replied the man; and Zara ran on through the vestibule before her. Unfortunately, vestibules will have doors communicating with them, which, I have often remarked, have an unhappy propensity to open when any one is anxious to pass by them quietly. It was so in the present instance. Roused from a reverie by the ringing of the bell, and the sound of voices without, Mr. Croyland issued forth just at the moment when Zara's light foot was carrying her across to the garden, and catching her by the arm, he detained her, asking, "What brought you here, saucy girl, and whither are you running so fast?"

Now Zara, though she was not good Mr. Zachary's favourite, had a very just appreciation of her uncle's character, and knew that the simple truth was less dangerous with him than with nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of a thousand

in civilized society. She, therefore, replied at once, "Don't stop me, uncle; there's a good man! I came to speak a few words to Edith, and wish to speak them before my aunt arrives."

"What! plot and counterplot, I will warrant!" exclaimed Mr. Croyland, freeing her arm. "Well, get you gone, you graceless monkey! Ha! who have we here? Why, my young friend, the half-bottle man! Are you one of the plotters too, Sir Edward?"

"Oh! I am a complete master in the art of domestic strategy, I assure you," answered the young officer, "and I propose, having heard what Miss Croyland has just said, that we take up a position across these glass doors, in order to favour her operations. We can then impede the advance of Miss Barbara's corps, by throwing forward the light-infantry of small-talk, assure her that it is a most beautiful day, tell her that the view from the hill is lovely, and that the slight yellowness of September gives a fine warmth to the green foliage, with various other pieces of information which she does not desire, till the manœuvres in our rear are complete."

"Ah! you are a sad knave," replied Mr. Zachary Croyland, laughing, "and, I see, are quite ready to aid the young in bamboozling the old."

But, alas, the best schemed campaign is subject to accidental impediments in execution, which will often deprive it of success! Almost as Mr. Croyland spoke, the carriage rolled up; and not small was the horror of the master of the house, to see riding behind it, on a tall grey horse, no other than young Richard Radford. Sir Edward Digby, though less horrified, was not well pleased; but it was Mr. Croyland who spoke, and that in rather a sharp and angry tone, stepping forward, at the same time, over the threshold of his door: "Mr. Radford," he said; "Mr. Radford, I am surprised to see you! You must very well know, that although I tolerate, and am obliged to tolerate, a great many people whom I don't approve, at my brother's house, your society is not that which I particularly desire."

Young Radford's eyes flashed, but, for once in his life, he exercised some command over himself. "I came here at your sister's suggestion, sir," he said.

"Oh! Barbara, Barbara! barbarous Barbara!" exclaimed Mr. Zachary Croyland, shaking his head at his sister, who was

stepping out of the carriage. "The devil himself never invented an instrument better fitted to torment the whole human race, than a woman with the best intentions in the world."

"Why, my dear brother," said Mrs. Barbara, with the look of a martyr, "you know quite well that Robert wishes Mr. Radford to have the opportunity of paying his addresses to Edith, and so I proposed ——"

"He shan't have the opportunity here, by Vishnoo!" cried the old gentleman.

"To say the truth," said Mr. Radford, interposing, "such was not my object in coming hither to-day. I wished to have the honour of saying a few words to a gentleman I see standing behind you, sir, which was also the motive of my going over to Harbourne House. Otherwise, well knowing your prejudices, I should not have troubled you; for, I can assure you, that *your* company is not particularly agreeable to *me*."

"If mine is what you want, sir," replied Sir Edward Digby, stepping forward and passing Mr. Croyland, "it is very easily obtained; but as it seems you are not a welcome guest here, perhaps we had better walk along the lane together."

"A less distance than that will do," answered Richard Radford, throwing the bridle of his horse to one of the servants, and taking two or three steps away from the house.

"Oh! Zachary, my dear brother, do interfere!" exclaimed Mrs. Barbara. "I forgot they had quarrelled yesterday morning, and unfortunately let out that Sir Edward was here. There will be a duel if you don't stop them."

"Not I," cried Mr. Croyland, rubbing his hands; "it's a pleasure to see two fools cut each other's throats. I'd lay any wager, if I ever did such a thing as lay wagers at all, that Digby pricks him through the midriff. There's a nice little spot at the end of the garden quite fit for such exercises."

Mr. Zachary Croyland was merely playing upon his sister's apprehensions, as the best sort of punishment he could inflict for the mischief she had brought about; but he never had the slightest idea that Sir Edward Digby and young Radford would come to anything like extreme measures in his sister's presence, knowing the one to be a gentleman, and mistakenly believing the other to be a coward. The conversation of the two who had walked away was not of long duration: nor, for a time, did it appear very vehement. Mr. Radford said some-

thing, and the young baronet replied; Mr. Radford rejoined, and Digby answered the rejoinder. Then some new observation was made by the other, which seemed to cause Sir Edward to look round to the house, and, seeing Mr. Croyland and his sister still on the step, to make a sign for young Radford to follow to a greater distance. The latter, however, planted the heel of his boot tight in the gravel, as if to give emphasis to what he said, and uttered a sentence in a louder tone, and with a look so fierce, meaning, and contemptuous, that Mr. Croyland saw the matter was getting serious, and stepped forward to interfere.

In an instant, however, Sir Edward Digby, apparently provoked beyond bearing, raised the heavy horsewhip which he had in his hand, and laid it three or four times, with great rapidity, over Mr. Radford's shoulders. The young man instantly dropped his own whip, drew his sword, and made a fierce lunge at the young officer's breast. The motion was so rapid, and the thrust so well aimed, that Digby had barely time to put it aside with his riding-whip, receiving a wound in his left shoulder as he did so. But the next moment his sword was also out of the sheath, and, after three sharp passes, young Radford's blade was flying over the neighbouring hedge, and a blow in the face from the hilt of Sir Edward Digby's weapon brought him with his knee to the ground.

The whole of this scene passed as quick as lightning; and I have not thought fit to interrupt the narration for the purpose of recording, in order, the four, several, piercing shrieks with which Mrs. Barbara Croyland accompanied each act of the drama. The first, however, was loud enough to call Zara from the garden, even before she had found her sister; and she came up to her aunt's side just at the moment that young Radford was disarmed, and then struck in the face by his opponent.

Slightly heated, Sir Edward gazed at him with his weapon in his hand; and the young lady clasping her hands, exclaimed aloud: "Hold, Sir Edward! Sir Edward, for Heaven's sake!"

Sir Edward Digby turned round with a faint smile, thrust his sword back into the sheath, and without bestowing another word on his adversary, walked slowly back to the door of the house, and apologized to Mrs. Barbara for what had occurred, saying, "I beg you ten thousand pardons, my dear madam,

for treating you to such a sight as this; but I can assure you it is not of my seeking. That person, who failed to keep an appointment with me yesterday, thought fit just now to call me coward twice; and as he would not walk to a little distance, I had no resource but to horsewhip him where I stood."

"Pity you didn't run him through the liver!" observed Mr. Croyland.

While these few words were passing, young Radford rose slowly, paused for an instant to gaze upon the ground, and then gnawing his lip, approached his horse's side. There is perhaps, no passion of the human heart more dire, more terrible than impotent revenge, or more uncontrollable in its effect upon the human countenance. The face of Richard Radford, handsome as it was in many respects, was at the moment when he put his foot into the stirrup and swung himself up to the saddle, perfectly frightful, from the fiend-like expression of rage and disappointment that it bore. He felt that he was powerless, for a time at least; that he had met an adversary greatly superior to himself, both in skill and strength; and that he had suffered not only defeat but disgrace, before the eyes of a number of persons whom his own headstrong fury had made spectators of a scene so painful to himself. Reining his horse angrily back to clear him of the carriage, he shook his fist at Sir Edward Digby, exclaiming, "Sooner or later, I will have revenge!" Then, striking the beast's flank with his spurs, he turned and galloped away.

Digby had, as we have seen, addressed his apologies to Mrs. Barbara Croyland; but after hearing, with a calm smile, his vanquished opponent's empty threat, he looked round to the fair companion of his morning's ride, and saw her standing beside her uncle, with her cheek very pale and her eyes cast down to the ground.

"Do not be alarmed, Miss Croyland," he said, bending down his head, and speaking in a low and gentle tone. "This affair can have no other results. It is all over now."

Zara raised her eyes to his face, but, as she did so, turned more pale than before; and pointing to his arm, where the cloth of his coat was cut through, and the blood flowing down over his sleeve and dropping from the ruffle round his wrist, she exclaimed, "You are hurt, Sir Edward. Good Heaven! he has wounded you!"

"A scratch; a scratch," said Digby; "a mere nothing. A pocket-handkerchief tied round it will soon remedy all the mischief he has done, though not all he intended."

"Oh! come in; come in, and have it examined!" cried Zara, eagerly.

The rest of the party gathered round, joined, just at that moment, by Edith from the garden; and Mr. Croyland, tearing the coat wider open, looked at the wound with more experienced eyes, saying, "Ah! a flesh wound! but in rather an awkward place. 'Not as wide as a church-door, nor as deep as a draw-well,' as our friend has it; but if it had been an inch and a half to the right, it would have divided the subclavian artery, and then, my dear sir, 'it would have done.' This will get well soon. But come, Sir Neddy, let us into the house; and I will do for you what I haven't done for ten or twelve years: *id est*, dress your wound myself; and mind, you must not drink any wine to-night."

The whole party began to move into the house, Sir Edward Digby keeping as near the two Miss Croylands as possible, and laying out a little plan in his head for begging the assistance of Mrs. Barbara while his wound was dressed, and sending the two young ladies out of the room to hold their conference together. He was, however, destined to be frustrated here also. To Zara Croyland it had been a day of unusual excitement; she had enjoyed, she had been moved, she had been agitated and terrified, and she was still under much greater alarm than perhaps was needful, both regarding Sir Edward Digby's wound and the threat which young Radford had uttered. She felt her head giddy and her heart flutter as if oppressed; but she walked on steadily enough for four or five steps, while her aunt, Mrs. Barbara, was explaining to Edith, in her own particular way, all that had occurred. But just when the old lady was saying: "Then, whipping out his sword in an instant, he thurst at Sir Edward's breast, and I thought to a certainty he was run through;" Zara sunk slowly down, caught by her sister as she fell, and the hue of death spread over her face.

"Fainted!" cried Mr. Croyland. "I wish to Heaven, Bab, you would hold your tongue! I will tell Edith about it afterwards. What's the use of bringing it all up again before the girl's mind, when the thing's done and over? There, let her

lie where she is; the recumbent position is the right thing. Bring a cushion out of the drawing-room, Edith, my love, and ask Baba for the hartshorn drops. We'll soon get her better; and then the best thing you can do, Bab, is to put her into the carriage, take her home again, and hold your tongue to my brother about this foolish affair: if anything can hold a woman's tongue. I'll plaster up the man's arm, and then, like many another piece of damaged goods, he'll be all right, on the outside at least."

Mrs. Barbara Croyland followed devoutly one part of her brother's injunctions. As soon as Zara was sufficiently recovered, she hurried her to the carriage, without leaving her alone with Edith for one moment; and Sir Edward Digby, having had his wound skilfully dressed by Mr. Zachary Croyland's own hands, thanked the old gentleman heartily for his care and kindness, mounted his horse, and rode back to Harbourne House.

CHAPTER XV.

We must now return to the town of Hythe, and to the little room in the little inn, which that famous borough boasted as its principal hostelry, at the period of our tale. It was about eleven o'clock at night, perhaps a few minutes earlier; and in that room was seated a gentleman, whom we have left for a long time, though not without interest in himself and his concerns. But, as in this wayfaring world we are often destined for weeks, months, ay, and long years, to quit those whom we love best, and to work for their good in distant scenes, with many a thought given to them, but few means of communication; so, in every picture of human life which comprises more than one character, must we frequently leave those in whom we are most interested, while we are tracing out the various remote cords and pulleys of fate, by which the fabric of their destiny is ultimately reared.

The gentleman, then, who had been introduced to Mr. Croyland as Captain Osborn, was seated at a table, writing. A number of papers, consisting of letters, accounts, and several printed forms, unfilled up, were strewed upon the table around,

which was moreover encumbered by a heavy sword and belt, a large pair of thick buckskin gloves, and a brace of heavy silver-mounted pistols. He looked pale and somewhat anxious; but nevertheless he went on, with his fine head bent, and the light falling from above upon his beautifully cut classical features: sometimes putting down a name, and adding a sum in figures opposite; sometimes, when he came to the bottom of the page, running up the column with rapidity and ease, and then inscribing the sum total at the bottom.

It was, perhaps, rather an unromantic occupation that the young officer was employed in; for it was evident that he was making up, with steady perseverance, some rather lengthy accounts; and all his thoughts seemed occupied with pounds, shillings, and pence. It was not so, indeed, though he wished it to be so; but, if the truth must be spoken, his mind often wandered afar; and his brain seemed to have got into that state of excitement, which caused sounds and circumstances that would at any other time have passed without notice, to trouble him and disturb his ideas on the present occasion.

There had been a card and punch club in one of the neighbouring rooms. The gentlemen had assembled at half-past six or seven, had hung up their wigs upon pegs provided for the purpose, and had made a great deal of noise in coming in and arranging themselves. There was then the brewing of the punch, the lighting of the pipes, and the laughing and jesting to which those important events generally give rise, at the meetings of persons of some importance in a country town; and then the cards were produced, and a great deal of laughing and talking, as usual, succeeded, in regard to the preliminaries, and also respecting the course of the game.

There had been no slight noise, also, in the lower regions of the inn, much speaking, and apparently some merriment; and, from all these things put together, to say nothing of every now and then, the pleasures of a comic song, given by one of the parties above or below, the young officer had been considerably disturbed, and had been angry with himself for being so. His thoughts, too, would wander, whether he liked it or not.

"Digby must have seen her," he said to himself, "unless she be absent; but surely he must have found some opportunity of speaking with herself or her sister by this time. I

wonder I have not heard from him. He promised to write as soon as he had any information, and he is not a man to forget. Well, it is of no use to think of it;" and he went on: "five and six are eleven, and four are fifteen, and six are twenty-one."

At this interesting point of his calculation, a dragoon, who was stationed at the door, put his head into the room, and said, "Mr. Mowle, sir, wants to speak to you."

"Let him come in," answered the officer; and, laying down his pen, he looked up with a smile. "Well, Mr. Mowle!" he continued, "what news do you bring? Have you been successful?"

"No very good news, and but very little success, sir," answered the officer of customs, taking a seat to which the other pointed. "We have captured some of their goods, and taken six of the men, but the greater part of the cargo, and the greatest villain of them all, have been got off."

"Ay, how happened that?" asked the gentleman to whom he spoke. "I gave you all the men you required; and I should certainly have thought you were strong enough."

"Oh! yes, sir; that was not what we lacked," answered Mowle, in a somewhat bitter tone; "but I'll tell you what we did want: honest magistrates, and good information. Knowing the way they were likely to take, I cut straight across the country by Aldington, Kings-north, and Singleton Green, towards Four Elms—"

"It would have been better, I think, to have gone on by Westhawk," said the young officer; "for though the road is rather hilly, you would by that means have cut them off both from Singleton, Chart Magna, and Gouldwell, towards which places, I think you said, they were tending."

"Yes, sir," replied the officer of customs, "but we found, on the road, that we were rather late in the day, and that our only chance was by hard riding. We came up with four of them, however, who had lagged behind, about Four Elms. Two of these we got, and all their goods; and, from the information they gave, we galloped on as hard as we could to Rousend."

"Did you take the road, or across the country?" demanded the young officer.

"Birchett would take the road," answered Mowle.

"He was wrong; he was quite wrong," replied the other. "If you had passed by New Street, then straight over the fields and meadows, up to the mill, you would have had them in a trap. They could not have reached Chart, or New Purchase, or Gouldwell, or Etchden, without your catching them; and if they had fallen back, they must have come upon the men I stationed at Bethersden, with whom was Adams, the officer."

"Why, you seem to know the country, sir," said his companion, with some surprise, "as if you had lived in it all your days."

"I do know it very well," answered the officer of dragoons; "and you must be well aware that what I say is right. It was the shortest way, too, and presents no impediments but a couple of fences and a ditch."

"All very true, sir," answered Mowle, "and so I told Birchett; but Adams had gone off for another officer, and he is of very little use to us himself. There's no trusting him, sir. However, we came up with them at Rousend; but there, after a little bit of a tussle, they separated;" and he went on to give his account of the affray with the smugglers, nearly in the same words which he had employed when speaking to the magistrates, some six or seven hours before. His hearer listened with grave attention; but when Mowle came to mention the appearance of Richard Radford and his capture, the young officer's eyes flashed, and his brow knit; and as the man went on to describe the self-evident juggle which had been played, to enable the youth to evade the reach of justice, he rose from the table, and walked once or twice hastily up and down the room. Then, seating himself again, to all appearance as calm as before, he said, "This is too bad, Mr. Mowle, and shall be reported."

"Ay, sir; but you have not heard the worst," answered Mowle. "These worthy justices thought fit to send the five men whom they had committed off to gaol in a waggon, with three or four constables to guard them, and of course you know what took place."

"Oh! they were all rescued, of course;" replied the officer.

"Before they got to Headcorn," said Mowle. "But the whole affair was arranged by Mr. Radford; for these fellows say themselves, that it is better to work for him at half price

than for any one else, because he always stands by his own, and will see no harm come to them. If this is to go on, sir, you and I may as well leave the county."

"It shall not go on," answered the officer; "but we must have a little patience, my good friend. Long impunity makes a man rash. This worthy Mr. Radford seems to have become so already; otherwise, he would never have risked carrying so large a venture across the country in open day."

"I don't think that, in this, he was rash at all, sir," answered Mowle, lowering his tone, and speaking in a whisper; "and if you will listen for a moment, I'll tell you why, My belief is, that the whole of this matter is but a lure to take us off the right scent; and I have several reasons for thinking so. In the first place, the run was but a trifling affair, as far as I can learn, not worth five hundred pounds. I know that what we have got is not worth a hundred, and it has cost me as good a horse as I ever rode in my life. Now from all I hear, the cargo that Mr. Radford expects is the most valuable that ever was run from Dungeness Point to the North Foreland. So, if my information is correct, and I am sure it is——"

"Who did you get it from?" demanded the officer, "if the question is a fair one."

"Some such questions might not be," answered Mowle; "but I don't mind answering this, colonel. I got it from Mr. Radford himself. Ay, sir, you may well look surprised; but I heard him with my own ears say that it was worth at least seventy thousand pounds. So you see my information is pretty good. Now, knowing this, as soon as I found out what value was in this lot, I said to myself, this is some little spec of young Radford's own. But when I came to consider the matter, I found that must be a mistake too; for the old man helped the Ramleys out of their scrape so impudently, and took such pains to let it be well understood that he had an interest in the affair, that I felt sure there was some motive at the bottom, sir. In all these things, he has shown himself, from a boy, as cautious as he is daring, and that's the way he has made such a power of money. He's not a man to appear too much in a thing, even for his son's sake, if he has not some purpose to answer; and, depend upon it, I'm right when I say that this run was nothing but a trap, or a blind, as they call it, to make us think, in case we've got any information of

the great venture, that the thing is all over. Why did they choose the day, when they might have done it all at night? Why did Mr. Radford go on laughing with the magistrates, as if it was a good joke? No, no, sir; the case is clear enough: they are going to strike the great stroke sooner than we supposed; and this is but a trifle."

"But may you not have made some mistake in regard to Mr. Radford's words?" demanded the young officer. "I should think it little likely that so prudent a man as you represent him to be, would run so great a risk for such a purpose."

"I made no mistake," answered Mowle; "I heard the words clear enough; and besides, I've another proof. The man who is to run the goods for him had nothing to do with this affair. I've got sharp eyes upon him; and though he was away from home the other night he was not at sea. That I've discovered. He was up in the county, not far from Mr. Radford's own place, and most likely saw him, though that I can't find out. However, sir, I shall hear more very soon. Whenever it is to be done we shall have sharp work of it, and must have plenty of men."

"My orders are to assist you to the best of my power," said the young officer, "and to give you what men you may require; but as I have been obliged to quarter them in different places, you had better give me as speedy information of what force you are likely to demand, and on what point you wish them to assemble, as you can."

"Those are puzzling questions, colonel," replied Mowle. "I do not think the attempt will be made to-night; for their own people must be all knocked up, and they cannot bring down enough to carry as well as run: at least, I think not. But it will probably be made to-morrow, if they fancy they have lulled us; and that fancy I shall take care to indulge, by keeping a sharp look-out, without seeming to look out at all. As to the point, that is what I cannot tell. Harding will start from the beach here, but where he will land is another affair; and the troops are as likely to be wanted twenty miles down the coast, or twenty miles up, as anywhere else. I wish you would give me a general order for the dragoons to assist me wherever I may want them."

"That is given already, Mr. Mowle," answered the officer; "such are the commands we have received; and even the non-

commissioned officers are instructed, on the very first requisition made by a chief officer of customs, to turn out and aid in the execution of the law. Wherever any of the regiment are quartered, you will find them ready to assist."

"Ay, but they are so scattered, sir," rejoined Mowle, "that it may be difficult to get them together in a hurry."

"Not in the least," replied Osborn; "they are so disposed that I can, at a very short notice, collect a sufficient force at any point, to deal with the largest body of smugglers that ever assembled."

"You may, perhaps, sir, but I cannot," answered the custom-house officer; "and what I wish is, that you would give them a general order to march to any place where I require them, and to act as I shall direct."

"Nay, Mr. Mowle," said the other, shaking his head, "that, I am afraid, cannot be. I have no instructions to such effect; and though the military power is sent here to assist the civil, it is not put under the command of the civil. I do not conceal from you that I do not like the service; but that shall only be a motive with me for executing my duty the more vigorously; and you have but to give me intimation of where you wish a force collected, and it shall be done in the shortest possible time."

Mowle did not seem quite satisfied with this answer; and after musing for a few minutes, he replied, "But suppose I do not know myself; suppose it should be fifteen or twenty miles from Hythe, and I myself, on the spot, how am I to get the requisition sent to you, and how are you to move your men to the place where I may want them: perhaps, farther still?"

"As to my moving my men, you must leave that to me," answered the young officer; "and as to your obtaining the information, and communicating it, I might reply, that *you* must look to that; but as I sincerely believe you to be a most vigilant and active person, who will leave no means unemployed to obtain intelligence, I will only point out, in the first place, that our best efforts sometimes fail, but that we may always rest at ease when we have used our best; and, in the second, I will suggest to you one or two means of ensuring success. Wherever you may happen to find that the landing of these goods is intended, or wherever you may be when it is

effected, you will find within a circle of three miles, several parties of dragoons, who, on the first call, will render you every aid. With them, upon the system I have laid down for them, you will be able to keep your adversaries in check, delay their operations, and follow them up. Your first step, however, should be, to send off a trooper to me with all speed, charging him, if verbally, with as short and plain a message as possible: first, stating the point where the 'run,' as you call it, has been effected; and secondly, in what direction, to the best of your judgment, the enemy, that is to say, the smugglers, are marching. If you do that, and are right in your conjecture, they shall not go far without being attacked. If you are wrong, as any man may be, in regard to their line of retreat, they shall not be long unpursued. But as to putting the military under the command of the customs, as I said before, I have no orders to that effect, and do not think that any such will ever be issued. In the next place, in order to obtain the most speedy information yourself, and to ensure that I shall be prepared, I would suggest that you direct each officer on the coast, if a landing should be effected in his district, first, to call for the aid of the nearest military party, and then to light a beacon on the next high ground. As soon as the first beacon is lighted, let the next officer on the side of Hythe, light one also, and, at the same time, with any force he can collect, proceed towards the first. Easy means may be found to transmit intelligence of the route of the smugglers to the bodies coming up; and, in a case like the present, I shall not scruple to take the command myself, at any point where I may be assured formidable resistance is likely to be offered."

"Well, sir, I think the plan of the beacons is a good one," answered Mowle, "and it would be still better if there were any of the coast officers on whom we could depend, but a more rascally set of mercenary knaves does not exist. Not one of them who would not sell the whole of the king's revenue for a twenty pound or so; and, however clear are the orders they receive, they find means to mistake them. But I will go and write the whole down, and have it copied out for each station, so that if they do not choose to understand, it must be their own fault. I am afraid, however, that all this preparation will put our friends upon their guard, and that they will delay their run till they can draw us off somewhere else."

"There is some reason for that apprehension," replied the young officer, thoughtfully. "You imagine, then, that it is likely to take place to-morrow night, if we keep quiet?"

"I have little doubt of it," replied Mowle; "or if not, the night after. But I think it will be to-morrow. Yes; they won't lose the opportunity, if they fancy we are slack; and then the superintendent chose to fall sick to-day, so that the whole rests with me, which will give me enough to do, as they are well aware."

"Well, then," replied the gentleman to whom he spoke, "leave the business of the beacons to me. I will give orders that they be lighted at every post as soon as application is made for assistance. You will know what it means when you see one; and, in the mean time, keep quite quiet, affect a certain degree of indifference, but not too much, and speak of having partly spoiled Mr. Radford's venture. Do you think he will be present himself?"

"Oh, not he! not he!" answered Mowle. "He is too cunning for that, by a hundred miles. In any little affair like this of to-day, he might not, perhaps, be afraid of showing himself, to answer a purpose; but in a more serious piece of business, where his brother justices could not contrive to shelter him, and where government would certainly interfere, he will keep as quiet and still as if he had nought to do with it. But I will have him, nevertheless, before long, and then all his ill-gotten wealth shall go, even if we do not contrive to transport him."

"How will you manage that?" asked the young officer; "if he abstains from taking any active part, you will have no proof, unless, indeed, one of those he employs should give evidence against him, or inform beforehand for the sake of the reward."

"They won't do that," said Mowle, thoughtfully, "they won't do that. I do not know how it is, sir," he continued, after a moment's pause, "but the difference between the establishment of the customs and the smugglers is a very strange one; and I'll tell you what it is: there is not one of these fellows who run goods upon the coast, or carry them inland, who will, for any sum that can be offered, inform against their employers or their comrades; and there's scarce a custom-house officer in all Kent, that, for five shillings, would not betray his

brother or sell his country. The riding officers are somewhat better than the rest; but these fellows at the ports think no more of taking a bribe to shut their eyes than of drinking a glass of rum. Now you may attempt to bribe a smuggler for ever, not that I ever tried, for I don't like to ask men to sell their own souls, but Birchett has often. I cannot well make out the cause of this difference, but certainly there is such a spirit amongst the smugglers that they won't do a dishonest thing, except in their own way, for any sum. There are the Ramleys, even, the greatest blackguards in Europe, smugglers, thieves, and cut-throats, but they won't betray each other. There is no crime they won't commit but that, and that they would sooner die than do; while we have a great many men amongst us, come of respectable parents, well brought up, well educated, who take money every day to cheat their employers."

"I rather suspect that it is the difference of consequences in the two cases," answered Osborne, "which makes men view the same act in a different way. A custom-house officer who betrays his trust, thinks that he only brings a little loss upon a government which can well spare it; he is not a bit the less a rogue for that, for honesty makes no such distinctions; but the smuggler who betrays his comrade or employer, must be well aware that he is not only ruining him in purse, but bringing on him corporeal punishment."

"Ay, sir, but there's a spirit in the thing," said Mowle, shaking his head; "the very country people in general love the smugglers, and help them whenever they can. There's not a cottage that will not hide them or their goods; scarce a gentleman in the county who, if he finds all the horses out of his stable in the morning, does not take it quietly, without asking any more questions; scarce a magistrate who does not give the fellows notice as soon as he knows the officers are after them. The country folks, indeed, do not like them so well as they did, but they'll soon make it up."

"A strange state, certainly," said the officer of dragoons; "but what has become of the horses you mention, when they are thus found absent?"

"Gone to carry goods, to be sure," answered Mowle. "But one thing is very clear, all the country is in the smuggler's favour, and I cannot help thinking that the people do not like

the custom's dues; that they don't see the good of them, and are resolved to put them down."

"Ignorant people, and indeed, all people, do not like taxation of any kind," replied Osborn; "and every class objects to that tax which presses on itself, without the slightest regard either for the necessity of distributing the burdens of the country equally, or any of the apparently minute but really important considerations upon which the apportionment has been formed. However, Mr. Mowle, we have only to do our duty according to our position; you to gain all the information that you can, I to aid you to the best of my ability, in carrying the law into effect."

"From the smugglers themselves, little is the information I can get, sir," answered Mowle, returning to the subject from which their conversation had deviated; "and often I am obliged to have recourse to means I am ashamed of. The principal intelligence I receive is from a boy who offered himself one day—the little devil's imp—and certainly, by his cunning, and by not much caring myself what risks I run, I have got some very valuable tidings. But the little vagabond would betray me, or any one else, to-morrow. He is the grandson of an old hag who lives at a little hut just by Saltwood, who puts him up to it all; and if ever there was an old demon in the world she is one. She is always brewing mischief, and chuckling over it all the time, as if it were her sport to see men tear each other to pieces, and to make innocent girls as bad as she was herself, and as her own daughter was too: the mother of this boy. The girl was killed by a chance shot one day, in a riot between the smugglers and the custom's people; and the old woman always says it was a smuggler's shot. Oh! I could tell you such stories of that old witch."

The stories of Mr. Mowle, however, were cut short by the entrance of a servant carrying a letter, which the young officer took and opened with a look of eager anxiety. The contents were brief; but they seemed important, for various were the changes which came over his fine countenance while he read them. The predominant expression, however, was joy, though there was a look of thoughtful consideration, perhaps, in a degree, of embarrassment, too, on his face; and as he laid the letter down on the table, and beat the paper with his fingers,

gazing up into vacancy, Mowle, judging that his presence was not desired, rose to retire.

"Stay a moment, Mr. Mowle; stay a moment," said Osborn. "This letter requires some consideration. It contains a call to a part of Kent some fifteen or sixteen miles distant; but as it is upon private business, I must not let that interfere with my public duty. You say that this enterprise of Mr. Radford's is likely to be put in execution to-morrow night."

"I cannot be sure, colonel," answered the officer; "but I think there is every chance of it."

"Then I must return before nightfall to-morrow," replied the gentleman, with a sigh.

"Your presence will be very necessary, sir," said the custom-house officer. "There is not one of your officers who seem up to the business, except Major Digby and yourself. All the rest are such fine gentlemen that one can't get on with them."

"Let me consider for a moment," rejoined the other; but Mowle went on in the same strain, saying, "Then, sir, if you were to be absent all to-morrow, I might get very important information, and not be able to give it to you, nor arrange anything with you either."

Osborn still meditated with a grave brow for some time. "I will write," he said, at length. "It will be better: it will be only just and honourable. I will write instead of going to-morrow, Mr. Mowle; and if this affair should not take place to-morrow night, as you suppose, I will make such arrangements for the following day, on which I must go over to Woodchurch, as will enable you to communicate with me without delay, should you have any message to send. At all events, I will return to Hythe before night. Now, good evening;" and while Mowle made his bow and retired, the young officer turned to the letter again, and read it over with glistening eyes.

CHAPTER XVI.

I WONDER if the reader ever wandered from Saltwood Castle back to the good old town of Hythe, on a fine summer's day, with a fair companion, as full of thought and mind as grace and beauty, and with a dear child just at the age when all the world is fresh and lovely, and then missed his way, and strayed, far from the track, towards Sandgate, till dinner was kept waiting at the inn, and the party who would not plod on foot, were all tired and wondering at their friend's delay! I wonder if the reader ever did all this. I have; and a very pleasant thing it is to do. Yes, all of it, reader. For, surely, to go from waving wood to green field, and from green field to hill-side and wood again, and to trace along the brook which we know must lead to the sea-shore, with one companion of high soul, who can answer thought for thought, and another in life's early morning, who can bring back before your eyes the picture of young enjoyment: ay, and to know that those you love most dearly and esteem most highly, are looking for your coming, with a little anxiety, not even approaching the bounds of apprehension, is all very pleasant indeed.

You, dear and excellent lady, who were one of my companions on the way, may perhaps recollect a little cottage, near the spot where we sprung a solitary partridge, whither I went to inquire the shortest road to Hythe. That cottage was standing there at the period of which I now write; and at the bottom of that hill, amongst the wood, and close by the little stream, nearly where the foot-bridge now carries the traveller over dry shod, was another hut, half concealed by the trees, and covered over with well nigh as much moss and houseleek as actual thatch.

It has been long swept away, as well as its tenants; and certainly a wretched and ill-constructed place it was. Would to Heaven that all such were gone from our rich and productive land, and that every labourer, in a country which owes so much to the industry of her children, had a dwelling better

fitted to a human being! But, alas! many such still exist; and it is not always, as it was in this case, that vice is the companion of misery. This is no book of idle twaddle, to represent all the wealthy as cold, hard, and vicious, and the poor all good, forbearing, and laborious; for evil is pretty equally distributed through all classes; though, God knows! the rich, with all their opportunities, ought to show a smaller proportion of wickedness, and the poor might perhaps be expected, from their temptations, to be worse than they are! Still it is hard to think that many as honest a man as ever lived, ay, and as industrious a man, too, returns, after his hard day's toil, to find his wife and children well nigh in starvation, in such a place as I am about to describe, and none to help them.

The hut, for it did not deserve the name of cottage, was but of one floor, which was formed of beaten clay, but a little elevated above the surrounding soil. It contained two rooms. The one opened into what had been a garden before it, running down nearly to the brook-side; and the other communicated with the first, but had a door which gave exit into the wood behind. Windows the hut had two, one on either side; but neither contained more than two complete pains of glass. The spaces, where glass had once been, were now filled up in a strange variety of ways. Here was a piece of board nailed in; there a coarse piece of cloth kept out the wind; another broken pane was filled up with paper; and another, were some fragments of the original substance remained, was stopped with an old stocking stuffed with straw. In the garden, as it was still called, appeared a few cabbages and onions, with more cabbage-stalks than either, and a small patch of miserable potatoes. But weeds were the most plentiful of all, and chickweed and groundsel enough appeared there to have supplied a whole forest of singing birds. It had been once fenced in, that miserable garden; but the wood had been pulled down and burned for firing by its present tenants, or others as wretched in circumstances as themselves; and nought remained but a strong post here and there, with sometimes a many-coloured rag of coarse cotton fluttering upon some long, rusty nail, which had snatched a shred from passing poverty. Three or four stunted gooseberry bushes, however, marked out the limit on one side; a path ran in front between the garden and

the brook; and on the other side there was a constant petty warfare between the farmer and the inhabitant of the hovel as to the possession of the border-land; and like a great and small state contending, the more powerful always gained some advantage in despite of right, but lost perhaps as much by the spiteful incursions of the foe, as if he had yielded the contested territory.

On the night of which I speak, the same on which Mowle visited the commanding officer of the dragoons at Hythe, the cottage itself, the garden, and all the squalid-looking things about the place, were hidden in the deep darkness which had again fallen over the earth as soon as night had fallen. The morning, it may be remembered, was the same on which Sir Edward Digby had been fired at by the smugglers, had been somewhat cold and foggy; but about eleven, the day had brightened, and the evening had been sultry. No sooner, however, did the sun reach the horizon than mists begun to rise, and before seven o'clock the whole sky was under cloud and the air filled with fog. He must have been well acquainted with every step of the country who could find his way from town to town. Nevertheless, any one who approached Galley Ray's cottage, as it was called, would, at the distance of at least a hundred yards, have perceived something to lead him on; for a light, red as that of a baleful meteor, was streaming through the two glazed squares of the window into the misty air, making them look like the eyes of some wild animal in a dark forest.

We must pause here, however, for a moment, to explain to the reader who Galley Ray was, and how she acquired the first of her two appellations, which certainly was not that which she had received at her baptism. Galley Ray, then, was the old woman of whom Mr. Mowle had given that favourable account, which may be seen in the last chapter; and, to say the truth, he had but done her justice. Her name was originally Gillian Ray; but, amongst a number of corrupt associates, with whom her early life was spent, the first of the two appellations was speedily transformed to Gilly or Gill. Some time afterwards, when youth began to wane, and whatever youthful graces she possessed were deviating into the virago qualities of the middle age, while watching one night the approach of a party of smugglers, with whom she had some intimacy, she perceived

three or four custom-house officers coming down to launch a galley which they had upon the beach for the purpose of cutting off the free-traders. But Gilly Ray instantly sprang in, and with the boat-hook set them all at defiance, till they threatened to launch her into the sea, boat and all.

It is true, she was reported to have been drunk at the time; but her daring saved the smugglers, and conveyed her for two months to jail, whence, as may be supposed, she returned not much improved in her morals. One of those whom she had befriended in the time of need, bestowed on her the name of Galley, by an easy transition from her original prænomen, and it remained by her to the last day of her life.

The reader has doubtless remarked, that amongst the lawless and the rash, there is a certain fondness for figures of speech, and that tropes and metaphors, simile and synecdoche, are far more prevalent amongst them than amongst the more orderly classes of society. Whether it is or not, that they wish to get rid of a precise apprehension of their own acts, I cannot say, but certain it is, that they do indulge in such flowers of rhetoric, and sometimes, in the midst of humour, quaintness, and even absurdity, reach the point of wit, and at times soar into the sublime. Galley Ray had, as we have seen, one daughter, whose fate has been related; and that daughter left one son, who, after his reputed father, one Mark Nightingale, was baptized Nightingale Ray. His mother, and after her death, his grandmother, used to call him Little Nighty and Little Night; but following their fanciful habits, the smugglers, who used to frequent the house, found out an association between "Night Ray" and the beams of the bright and mystical orbs that shine upon us from afar; and some one gave him the name of Little Starlight, which remained with him, as that of Galley had adhered to his grandmother.

The cottage or hut of the latter, then beamed with an unwonted blaze upon the night I have spoken of, till long after the hour when Mowle had left the inn where his conference with the young officer had taken place. But let not the reader suppose that this illumination proceeded from any great expense of wax or oil. Only one small tallow candle, stuck into a long-necked, square-sided Dutch bottle, spread its rays through the interior of the hovel, and that was a luxury; but in the fire-place blazed an immense pile of mingled wood and

drift-coal, and over it hung a large hissing pot, as huge and capacious as that of the witches in Macbeth, or of the no less famous Meg Merrilies. Galley Ray, however, was a very different person in appearance from the heroine of "Guy Mannering," and we must endeavour to call up her image as she stood by the fire-side, watching the cauldron and a kettle which stood close to it.

The red and fitful light flashed upon no tall, gaunt form, and lighted up no wild and commanding features. There was nothing at all poetical in her aspect: it was such as may be seen every day in the haunts of misery and vice. Originally of the middle height, though once strong and upright, she had somewhat sunk down under the hand of Time, and was now rather short than otherwise. About fifty she had grown fat and heavy; but fifteen years more had robbed her flesh of firmness and her skin of its plumped out smoothness; and though she had not yet reached the period when emaciation accompanies decrepitude, her muscles were loose and hanging, her face withered and sallow. Her hair, once as black as jet, was now quite grey, not silver; but with the white greatly predominating over the black. Yet, strange to say, her eyes were still clear and bright, though small, and somewhat red round the lids; and, stranger still, her front teeth were white as ivory, offering a strange contrast to the wrinkled and yellow skin. Her look was keen; but there was that sort of habitual jocularity about it, which in people of her caste is often partly assumed, as an ever ready excuse for evading a close question, or covering a dangerous suggestion by a jest, and partly natural, or at least springing from a fearful kind of philosophy, gained by the exhaustion of all sorts of criminal pleasures, which leaves behind, too surely, the impression that everything is but a mockery on earth. Those who have adopted that philosophy never give a thought beyond this world. Her figure was somewhat bowed, and over her shoulders she had the fragments of a coarse woollen shawl, from beneath which appeared, as she stirred the pot, her sharp yellow elbows and long arms. On her head she wore a cap, which had remained there, night and day, for months; and, thurst back from her forehead, which was low and heavy, appeared the dishevelled grey hair, while beneath the thick and beetling brows came the keen eyes, and a nose somewhat aquiline and depressed at the point.

Near her, on the opposite side of the hearth, was the boy whom the reader has already seen, and who has been called Little Starlight; and, even at that late hour, for it was near midnight, he seemed as brisk and active as ever. Night and day, indeed, appeared to him the same; for he had none of the habits of childhood. The setting sun brought no drowsiness to his eyelids: mid-day often found him sleeping after a night of watchfulness and activity. The whole course of his existence and his thoughts had been tainted: there was nothing of youth either in his mind or his ways. The old beldam called him, and thought him, the shrewdest boy that ever lived; but, in truth, she had left him no longer a boy, in aught but size and looks. Often, indeed generally, he would assume the tone of his years, for he found it served his purpose best; but he only laughed at those who thought him a child, and prided himself on the cunning of the artifice.

There might be, it is true, some lingering of the faults of youth, but that was all. He was greedy and voracious, loved sweet things as well as strong drink, and could not always curb the truant and erratic spirit of childhood; but still, even in his wanderings there was a purpose, and often a malevolence. He would go to see what one person was about; he would stay away because another wanted him. It may be asked, was this natural wickedness: was his heart so formed originally? Oh! no, reader; never believe such things. There are certainly infinite varieties of human character; and I admit that the mind of man is not the blank sheet of paper on which we can write what we please, as has been vainly represented. Or, if it be, the experience of every man must have shown him, that that paper is of every different kind and quality; some that will retain the finest line: some that will scarce receive the broadest trace. But still education has immense power for good or evil. By education I do not mean teaching. I mean that great and wonderful process by which, commencing at the earliest period of infancy, ay, at the mother's breast, the raw material of the mind is manufactured into all the varieties that we see. I mean the sum of every line with which the paper is written as it passes from hand to hand. That is education; and most careful should we be that, at an early period, nought should be written but good, for every word once impressed is well nigh indelible.

Now what education had that poor boy received? The people of the neighbouring village would have said a very good one; for there was what is called a charity school in the neighbourhood, where he had been taught to read and write, and cast accounts. But this was *teaching*, not *education*. Oh, fatal mistake! When will Englishmen learn to discriminate between the two? His education had been at home, in that miserable hut, by that wretched woman, by her companions in vice and crime! What had all the *teaching* he had received at the school done for him, but placed weapons in the hand of wickedness? Had education formed any part of the system of the school where he was instructed; had he been taught how best to use the gifts that were imparted; had he been inured to regulate the mind that was stored; had he been habituated to draw just conclusions from all he read, instead of merely being taught to read, that would have been in some degree education, and it might have corrected, to a certain point, the darker schooling he received at home. Well might the great philosopher, who in some things most grossly misused the knowledge he himself possessed, pronounce that "Knowledge is power;" but, alas! he forgot to add, that it is power *for good or evil!* That poor child had been taught that which to him might have been either a blessing or a bane; but all his real education had been for evil; and there he stood, corrupted to the heart's core.

"I say, Mother Ray," he exclaimed, "that smells cursed nice; can't you give us a drop before the coves come?"

"No, no, you young devil," replied the old woman with a grin; "one can't tell when they'll show their mugs at the door, and it wouldn't do for them to find you gobbling up their stuff. But bring me that big porringer, and we'll put by enough for you and me. I've nimmed one-half of the yellow-boy they sent, so we'll have a quart of moonshine to-morrow to help it down."

"I could get it very well down without," answered Little Starlight, bringing her a large earthen pot with a cracked cover, into which she ladled out about half a gallon of the soup.

"There, take and put that far under the bed in t'other room," said the old woman, adding several expletives of so peculiar and unpleasant a character, that I must omit them; and, indeed, trusting to the reader's imagination, I shall beg

leave to soften, as far as possible, the terms of both the boy and his grandmother for the future, merely premising, that when conversing alone together, hardly a sentence escaped their lips without an oath or a blasphemy."

Little Starlight soon received the pot from the hands of his worthy ancestress, and conveyed it into the other room, where he stayed so long that she called him to come forth, in what, to ordinary ears, would have seemed the most abusive language, but which, on her lips, was merely the tone of endearment. He had waited, indeed, to cool the soup, in order to steal a portion of the stolen food; but finding that he should be detected if he remained longer, he ventured to put his finger in to taste it. The result was that he scalded his hand, but he was sufficiently Spartan to utter no cry or indication of pain; and he escaped all inquiry, for the moment after he had returned, the door burst violently open, and some ten or twelve men came pouring in, nearly filling the little room.

Various were their garbs, and strangely different from each other were they in demeanour as well as dress. Some were clad in smock-frocks, and some in sailors' jackets; some looked like respectable tradesmen, some were clothed in a sort of fanciful costume of their own, smacking a little of the brigand; and one appeared in the ordinary riding-dress of a gentleman of that period; but all were well armed, without much concealment of the pistols, which they carried about them in addition to the sword that was not uncommonly borne by more than one class in England at that time. They were all young men except one or two, and three of the number bore evident marks of some recent affray. One had a broad strip of plaster all the way down his forehead, another had his upper lip terribly cut, and a third, the gentleman, as I am bound to call him, as he assumed the title of major, had a patch over his eye, from beneath which appeared several rings of various colours, which showed that the aforesaid patch was not merely a means of disguise.

They were all quite familiar with Galley Ray and her grandson; some slapped her on the shoulder; some pulled her ear; some abused her horribly in jocular tones; and all called upon her eagerly to set their supper before them, vowing that they had come twenty miles since seven o'clock that night, and were as hungry as fox-hunters.

To each and all Galley Ray had something to say in their own particular way. To some she was civil and coaxing, addressed them as "gentlemen," and to others slang and abusive, though quite in good humour, calling them, "you blackguards," and "you varmint," with sundry other delectable epithets, which I shall forbear to transcribe.

To give value to her entertainment, she of course started every objection and difficulty in the world against receiving them, asking how, in the name of the fiend, they could expect her to take in so many? where she was to get porringers or plates for them all? and hoping heartily that such a troop weren't going to stay above half-an-hour.

"Till to-morrow night, Galley, my chicken," replied the major. "Come, don't make a fuss. It must be so, and you shall be well paid. We shall stay in here to-night; and to-morrow we shall take to cover in the wood; but young Radford will come down some time in the day, and then you must send up Little Starlight to us to let me know."

The matter of the supper was soon arranged to their contentment. Some had tea-cups, and some saucers; some had earthern pans, some wooden platters. Two were honoured with china plates; and the large pot being taken off the fire, and set on the ground in the midst of them, each helped himself, and went on with his meal. A grand brewing of smuggled spirits and water then commenced; and a number of horn cups were handed round, not enough, indeed, for all the guests; but each vessel was made to serve two or three; and the first silence of hunger being over, a wild, rambling, and desultory conversation ensued, to which both Galley Ray and her grandson lent an attentive ear.

The major said something to the man with the cut upon his brow, to which the other replied, by condemning his own soul, in energetic terms, if he did not blow Harding's brains out, if it were true. "But I don't believe it," he continued. "He's no friend of mine; but he's not such a blackguard as to peach."

"So I think; but Dick Radford says he is sure he did," answered the major; "Dick fancies that he's jealous of not having had yesterday's job, too, and that's why he spoiled it. We know he was up about that part of the country, on the pretence of his seeing his Dolly; but Radford says he went to

inform, and that he'll wring his liver out, as soon as this job of his father's is over.

A torrent of blasphemies poured forth by almost every person present followed, and they all called down the most horrid condemnation on their own heads, if they did not each lend a hand to punish the informer. In the midst of this storm of big words, Galley Ray put her mouth to the major's ear, saying, "I could tell young Radford how he could ring his heart out, and that's better than his liver. There's no use of trying to kill him, for he doesn't care two straws about that. Sharp steel and round lead are what he looks for every day. But I could show you how to plague him worse."

"Why, you old brute," replied the major, "you're a friend of his! But you may tell him if you like. We have all sworn it, and we'll do it; only hold your tongue till after to-morrow night, or I'll cure your bacon for you."

"I'm no friend of his," cried Galley Ray. "The infernal devil, wasn't it he that shot my girl, Meg? Ay, ay, I know he says he didn't, and that he didn't fire a pistol that day, but kept all to the cutlash; but he did, I'm sure, and a-purpose, too; for didn't he turn-to that morning, and abuse her like the very dirt under his feet, because she came, a little in liquor, down to his boat-side? Ay, I'll have my revenge. I've been looking for it long, but now it's a-coming, it's a-coming very fast; and afore I've done with him, I'll wring him out like a wet cloth, till he's not got one pleasure left in his whole carcass, nor one thing to look to, for as long as he may live! Ay, ay, he thinks an old woman nothing; but he shall see, he shall see;" and the beldame wagged her frightful head backwards and forwards with a look of well-contented malice, that made it more horrible than ever.

"What an old devil!" cried the major, glancing round the table with a look of mock surprise; and then they all burst into a roar of laughter which shook the miserable hovel in which they sat.

"Come, granny, give us some more lush, and leave off preaching," cried Ned Ramley, the man with the cut upon his brow. "You can tell it all to Dick Radford, to-morrow; for he's fond of cutting up people's hearts."

"But how is it; how is it?" asked the major. "I should like to hear.

"Ay, but you shan't hear all," answered Galley Ray. "Let Dick do his part, and I'll do mine, so we'll both have our revenge; but I know one thing, if I were a gentleman, and wanted a twist at Jack Harding, I'd get his Kate away from him. She's a light-hearted lass, and would listen to a gentleman, I dare say; but, however, I'll have her away some way, and then kick her out into Folkestone streets, to get her bread like many a better woman than herself."

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Ned Ramley, "that's all stuff. Harding is going to marry her, and she knows better than to play the fool."

"Ay," answered the old woman, with a look of spite, "I shouldn't wonder if Harding spoiled this job for old Radford, too."

"Not he!" cried Ramley, "he would pinch himself there, old tiger; for his own pay depends upon it."

"Ay, upon landing the stuff safely," answered the old woman, with a grin, "but not upon getting it clear up into the Weald. He may have both, Neddy, my dear; he may have both pays; first for landing and then for peaching. Play booty for ever! that's the way to make money; and who knows but you may get another crack of your own pretty skull, or have your brains sent flying out, like the inside of an egg against the pillory."

"By the fiend, he had better not!" said Ned Ramley, "for there will be some of us left, at all events, to pay him."

"Come, speak out, old woman," cried another of the men; "have you or your imp there got any inkling that the custom-house blackguards have nosed the job? If we find they have, and you don't tell, I'll send you into as much thick loam as will cover you well, I can tell you;" and he added a horrible oath to give force to his words.

"Not they, as yet," answered the beldam, "of that I am quite sure; for as soon as the guinea and the message came, I went down to buy the beef, and mutton, and the onions; and there I saw Mowle talking to Gurney the grocer, and heard him say that he had spoiled Mr. Radford's venture this morning, for one turn at least; and after that, I sent down Little Nighty there, to watch him and his cronies; and they all seemed very jolly, he said, when he came back half an hour ago, and crowing like so many young cocks, as if they had done a mighty deal. Didn't they, my dear?"

"Ay, that they did, granny," replied the boy, with a look of simplicity; "and when I went to the tap of the Dragon to get twopenn'orth, I heard the landlord say that Mowle was up with the dragoon colonel, telling him all about the fine morning's work they had made."

"Devilish fine, indeed!" cried Ned Ramley. "Why they did not get one quarter of the things; and if we can save a third, that's enough to pay very well, I can tell them."

"No, no! they know nothing as yet," continued the old woman, with a sapient shake of the head; "I can't say what they may hear before to-morrow night; but, if they do hear anything, I know where it will come from, that's all. People may be blind if they like; but I'm not, that's one thing."

"No, no! you see sharp enough, Galley Ray," answered the major. "But hark, is not that the sound of a horse coming down?"

All the men started up; and some one exclaimed, "I shouldn't wonder if it were Mowle himself. He's always spying about."

"If it is, I'll blow his brains out," said Ned Ramley, motioning to the rest to make their way into the room behind.

"Ay, you had best, I think, Neddy," said Galley Ray, in a quiet, considerate tone, answering his rash threat as coolly as if she had been speaking of the catching of a trout. "You'll have him here all snug, and may never get such another chance. 'Dead men tell no tales,' Neddy. But, get back; 'tis a horse, sure enough! You can take your own time, if you go in there."

The young man retreated; and bending down her lips to the boy's ear, the old witch inquired in a whisper, "Is t'other door locked, and the window fast?"

"Yes," said the boy, in the same tone; "and the key hid in the sacking."

"Then if there are enough to take 'em," murmured Gally Ray to herself; "take 'em they shall! If there's no one but Mowle, he must go: that's clear. Stretch out that bit o' sail, boy, to catch the blood."

But before the boy could obey her whisper, the door of the hut was thrown open; and instead of Mowle there appeared the figure of Richard Radford.

"Here, Little Starlight!" he cried, "hold my horse. Why, where are all the men? Have they not come?"

The old woman arranged her face in an instant into the sweetest smile it was capable of assuming, and replied instantly, "Oh! dear, yes: bless your beautiful face, Mr. Radford, but we didn't expect you to-night, and thought it was some of the custom-house blackguards when we heard the horse. Here, Neddy! Major! It's only Mr. Radford."

Ere she had uttered the call, the men, hearing a well-known voice, were entering the room again; and young Radford shook hands with several of them familiarly, congratulating the late prisoners on their escape.

"I found I couldn't come to-morrow morning," he said, "and so I rode down to-night. It's all settled for to-morrow, and by this time Harding's at sea. He'll keep over on the other side till the sun is low; and we must be ready for work by ten, though I don't think he'll get close in before midnight."

"Are you quite sure of Harding, Mr. Radford?" asked the major. "I thought you had doubts of him about this other venture."

"Ay, and so I have still," answered Richard Radford, a dark scowl coming over his face, "but we must get this job over first. My father says he will have no words about it till this is all clear, and after that I may do as I like. Then, major, then——"

He did not finish the sentence, but those who heard him knew very well what he meant; and the major inquired, "But is he quite safe in this business? The old woman thinks not."

Young Radford mused with a heavy brow for a minute or two, and then replied, after a sudden start, "But it's no use now; he's at sea by this time, and we can't mend it. Have you heard anything certain of him, Galley Ray?"

"No, nothing quite for certain, my beauty," said the old woman; "but one thing I know, he was seen there upon the cliffs with two strange men, a-talking away at a great rate, and that was the very night he saw your father, too; but that dear little cunning devil, my boy, Nighty, he's the shrewdest lad that ever lived, found it all out."

"What did he find out?" demanded young Radford, sharply.

"Why, who the one was, he could never be sure," answered the beldam, "a nasty-looking, ugly brute, all tattooed in the face, like a wild Indian; but the other was the colonel of dragoons, that's certain, so Nighty says, he is the shrewdest boy that——"

Richard Radford and his companions gazed at each other with very meaning and very ill-satisfied looks; but the former at length said, "Well, we shall see, we shall see; and if he does, he shall rue it. In the mean time, major, what we must do is, to have force enough to set them, dragoons and all, at defiance. My father has got already a hundred men, and I'll beat up for more to-morrow. I can get fifty or sixty out of Sussex. We'll all be down with you, early. The soldiers are scattered about in little parties, so they can never have very many together; and the devil's in it if we can't beat a handful of them."

"Give us a hundred men," said Ned Ramley, "and we'll beat the whole regiment of them."

"Why, there are not to be found twenty of them together in any one place," answered young Radford, "except at Folkestone, and we shan't have the run within fifteen or sixteen miles of that, so we shall easily do for them; and I should like to give those rascals a licking."

"Then, what's to be done with Harding?" asked Ned Ramley.

"Leave him to me, leave him to me, Ned," replied the young gentleman; "I'll find a way of settling accounts with him."

"Why the old woman was talking something about it," said the major. "Come, speak up, old brute! What is it you've got to say?"

"Oh! I'll tell him quietly when he's a going," answered Galley Ray. "It's no business of yours, major."

"She hates him like poison," said the major, in a whisper to young Radford, "so that you must not believe all she says about him."

The young man gave a gloomy smile, and then, after a few words more, unceremoniously turned the old woman out of her own hovel, telling her he would come and speak to her in a moment. As soon as the hut was clear of her presence, he proceeded to make all his final arrangements with the lawless set who were gathered together within.

"I thought that Harding was not to set off till to-morrow morning," said one of the more staid-looking of the party at length; "I wonder your father lets him make such changes, Mr. Radford; it looks suspicious, to my thinking."

"No, no; it was by my father's own orders," said young Radford; "there's nothing wrong in that. I saw the note sent this evening; so that's all right. By some contrivance of his own, Harding is to give notice to one of the people on Tolsford Hill when he is well in land and all is safe; and then we shall see a fire lighted on the top, which is to be our signal to gather down on the beach. It's all right in that respect, at least."

"I'm glad to hear it," answered the other; "and now, as all is settled, had you not better take a glass of grog before you go?"

"No, no," replied the young man, "I'll keep my head cool for to-morrow; for I've got a job to do in the morning that may want a clear eye and a steady hand."

"Well, then, good luck to you!" said Ned Ramley, laughing; and with this benediction, the young gentleman opened the cottage door.

He found Galley Ray holding his horse alone; and as soon as she saw him, she said, "I have sent the boy away, Mr. Radford, because I wanted to have a chat with you for a minute, all alone, about that blackguard, Harding;" and sinking her voice to a whisper, she proceeded for several minutes, detailing her own diabolical notions, of how young Radford might best revenge himself on Harding, with a coaxing manner, and sweet tone, which contrasted strangely and horribly, both with the words which she occasionally used, and the general course of her suggestions. Young Radford sometimes laughed, with a harsh sort of bitter unpleasant merriment, and sometimes asked questions, but more frequently remained listening attentively to what she said.

Thus passed some ten minutes, at the end of which time, he exclaimed, with an oath, "I'll do it!" and then mounting his horse, he rode away slowly and cautiously, on account of the thick fog and narrow and stony road.

No sooner was he gone, than Little Starlight crept out from between the cottage and a pile of dried furze-bushes, which had been cast down on the left of the hut, at once affording

fuel to the inhabitants, and keeping out the wind from a large crack in the wall, which penetrated through and through, into the room where young Radford had been conversing with the smugglers.

"Did you hear them, my kiddy?" asked the old woman, as soon as the boy approached her.

"Every word, Mother Ray," answered Little Starlight. "But, get in, get in, or they will be thinking something; and I'll tell you all to-morrow."

The old woman saw the propriety of his suggestion; and, both entering the hovel, the door was shut. With it, I may close a scene upon which I have been obliged to pause longer than I could have wished.

CHAPTER XVII.

The man who follows a wolf goes straight on after him till he rides him down; but, in chasing a fox, it is always expedient and fair to take across the easiest country for your horse or for yourself, to angle a field, to make for a slope when the neighbouring bank is too high, to avoid a clay fallow, or to skirt a shaking moss. Very frequently, however, one beholds an inexperienced sportsman (who does not well know the country he is riding, and sees the field broken up into several parties, each taking its own course after the hounds) pause for several minutes, not knowing which to follow. Such is often the case with the romance writer also, when the broken nature of the country over which his course lies, separates his characters, and he cannot proceed with all of them at once.

Now, at the present moment, I would fain follow the smugglers to the end of their adventure; but, in so doing, dear reader, I should (to borrow a shred of the figure I have just used) get before my hounds; or, in other words, I should too greatly violate that strict chronological order which is necessary in an important history like the present. I must, therefore, return, by the reader's good leave, to the house of Mr. Zachary Croyland, almost immediately after Sir Edward Digby had ridden away, on the day following young Radford's recently related interview with the smugglers, at which day, with a

sad violation of the chronological order I have mentioned above, I had already arrived, as the reader must remember, in chapter fourteen.

Mr. Croyland then stood in the little drawing-room, fitted up according to his own peculiar notions, where Sir Edward's wound had been dressed, and Edith, his niece, sat at no great distance on one of the low ottomans, for which he had an oriental predilection. She was a little excited, both by all that she had witnessed and all that she had not; and her bright and beautiful eyes were raised to her uncle's face, as she inquired, "How did all this happen? You said you would tell me when they were gone."

Mr. Croyland gazed at her with that sort of parental tenderness which he had long nourished in his heart towards her; and certainly, as she sat there, leaning lightly upon her arm, and with the sunshine falling upon her beautiful form, her left hand resting upon her knee, and one small beautiful foot extended beyond her gown, he could not help thinking her the loveliest creature he had ever beheld in his life, and asking himself: "Is such a being as that, so full of grace in person, and excellence in mind, to be consigned to a rude, brutal bully, like the man who has just met with deserved chastisement at my door?"

He had just begun to answer her question, thinking how he might best do so without inflicting more pain upon her than necessary, when the black servant I have mentioned entered the drawing-room, saying, "A man want to speak to you, master."

"A man!" cried Mr. Croyland, impatiently. "What man? I don't want any man! I've had enough of men for one morning, surely, with those two fools fighting just opposite my house! What sort of a man is it?"

"Very odd man, indeed, master," answered the Hindoo. "Got great blue pattern on him's face. Strange looking man. Think him half mad," and he made a deferential bow, as if submitting his judgment to that of his master.

"Well, I like odd men," exclaimed Mr. Croyland. "I like strange men better than any others. I'm not sure I do not like them a *leetle* mad; not too much, not too much, you know, Edith, my dear! Not dangerous; just mad enough to be pleasant, but not furious or obstreperous. Where have you put him?"

"In de library, master," replied the man; "and he begin taking down the books directly."

"High time I should go and see who is so studiously inclined," said Mr. Croyland; "or he may not only take down the books, but take them away. That would'nt do, you know, Edith, my dear, that wouldn't do. Without my niece and my books, what would become of me? I don't intend to lose either the one or the other. So that you are never to marry, my love; mind that, you are never to marry!"

Edith smiled faintly, very faintly indeed; but for the world she would not have made her uncle feel that he had touched upon a tender point. "I do not think I ever shall, my dear uncle," she answered; and saying, "That's a good girl!" the old gentleman hurried out of the room to see his unknown visitor.

Edith remained for some time where she was, in deep and even painful thoughts. All that she had learnt from her sister, since Zara's explanation with Sir Edward Digby, amounted but to this: that he whom she had so deeply loved, whom she still loved so deeply, was yet living. Nothing more had reached her; and, though hope, the fast clinger to the last wreck of probability, yet whispered that he might love her still, that she might not be forgotten, that she might not be abandoned, yet fear and despondency far predominated, and their hoarse tones nearly drowned the feeble whisper of a voice which once had been loud and gay in her heart.

After meditating, then, for some minutes, she rose and left the drawing-room, passing, on her way to the stairs, the door of the library to which her uncle had previously gone. She heard him talking loud as she went along; but the sounds were gay, cheerful, and anything but angry; and another voice was answering, in mellower tones, somewhat melancholy, indeed, but still not sad. Going rapidly by, this was all she distinguished; but after she reached her own room, which was nearly above the library, the murmur of the voices still rose up for more than an hour, and at length Mr. Croyland and his guest came out, and walked through the vestibule to the door.

"God bless you, Harry; God bless you!" said Mr. Croyland, with an appearance of warmth and affection which Edith had seldom known him to display towards any one; "if you won't stay, I can't help it. But mind your promise; mind your pro-

mise! In three or four days, you know;" and with another cordial farewell, they parted.

When the stranger was gone, however, Mr. Croyland remained standing in the vestibule for several minutes, gazing down upon the floor-cloth, and murmuring to himself various broken sentences, from time to time. "Who'd have thought it," he said; "thirty years come Lady-day next, since we saw each other! But this isn't quite right of the boy: I will scold him; I will frighten him, too. He shouldn't deceive; nobody should deceive: it's not right. But after all, in love and war, every stratagem is fair, they say; and I'll work for him, that I will. Here, Edith, my love," he continued, calling up the stairs, for he had heard his niece's light foot above, "come, and take a walk with me, my dear: it will do us both good."

Edith came down in a moment, with a hat (or bonnet) in her hand; and although Mr. Croyland affected, on most occasions, to be by no means communicative, yet there was in his whole manner, and in the expression of his face, quite sufficient to indicate to his niece, that he was labouring under the pressure of a secret, which was not a very sad or dark one.

"There, my dear!" he exclaimed, "I said just now that I would not have you marry; but I shall take off the restriction. I will not prohibit the banns, only in case you should wish to marry some one I don't approve. But I've got a husband for you; I've got a husband for you, better than all the Radfords that ever were christened; though, by the way, I doubt whether these fellows ever were christened at all: a set of unbelieving, half-barbarous sceptics. I do not think, upon my conscience, that old Radford believes in anything but the existence of his own individuality."

"But who is the husband you have got for me?" demanded Edith, forcing herself to assume a look of gaiety which was not natural to her. "I hope he's young, handsome, rich, and agreeable."

"All, all!" cried Mr. Croyland. "Those are absolute requisites in a lady's estimation, I know. Never was such a set of grasping monkeys as you women. Youth, beauty, riches, and a courtly air; you must have them all, or you are dissatisfied; and the ugliest, plainest, poorest woman in all Europe, thinks that she has every right to a phœnix for her

companion; an angel: a demi-god. But you shall see; you shall see; and in the true spirit of a fond parent, if you do not see with my eyes, hear with my ears, and understand with my understanding; why, I'll disinherit you. But who the mischief is this, now?" he continued, looking out at the door; "another man on horseback, upon my life, as if we had not had enough of them already. Never, since I have been in this county of Kent, has my poor, quiet, peaceable door been besieged in this manner before."

"It's only a servant with a note, my dear uncle," said Edith.

"Ah! something more on your account," cried Mr. Croyland. "It's all because you are here. Baba, Baba! see what that fellow wants! It's not your promised husband, my dear, so you need not eye him so curiously."

"Oh! no," answered Edith, smiling. "I took it for granted that my promised husband, as you call him, was to be this same odd, strange-looking gentleman, who has been with you for the last hour."

"Pooh, no!" cried Mr. Croyland; "and yet, my lady, I can tell you, you could not do better in some respects, for he's a very good man, a very excellent man indeed, and has the advantage of being a *leetle* mad, as I said before: that is, he's wise enough not to care what fools think of him. That's what is called being mad now-a-days. Who is it from, Baba?"

"Didn't say, master," answered the Indian, who had just handed him a note. "He wait an answer."

"Oh! very well," answered Mr. Croyland. "He may get a shorter one than he expects. I've no time to be answering notes. People in England spend one-half of their lives in writing notes that mean nothing, and the other half in sealing them. Why can't the fools send a message?"

While he had been thus speaking, the worthy old gentleman had been adjusting the spectacles to his nose, and walking with his usual brisk step to the window in the passage, against which he planted his back, so that the light might fall over his shoulder upon the paper; but as he read, a great change came over his countenance.

"Ah! that's right! that's well! that's honest!" he said: "I see what he means, but I'll let him speak out himself. Walk into the garden, Edith, my love, till I answer this man's

note. Baba, bid the fellow wait for a moment;" and stepping into the library, Mr. Croyland sought for a pen that would write, and then scrawled, in a very rude and crooked hand, which soon made the paper look like an ancient Greek manuscript, a few lines, to the beauty of which he added the effect of bad blotting-paper. Then folding his note up, he sealed and addressed it, first reading carefully over again the epistle which he had just received, and with which it may be as well to make the reader acquainted, though I shall abstain from looking into Mr. Croyland's answer till it reaches its destination. The letter which the servant had brought was to the following effect:—

"The gentleman who had the pleasure of travelling with Mr. Croyland from London, and who was introduced to him by the name of Captain Osborn, was about to avail himself of Mr. Croyland's invitation, when some circumstances came to his knowledge, which seem to render it expedient that he should have a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Croyland before he visits his house. He is at present at Woodchurch, and will remain there till two o'clock, if it is convenient for Mr. Croyland to see him at that place to-day. If not, he will return to Woodchurch to-morrow, towards one, and will wait for Mr. Croyland till any hour he shall appoint."

"There! give that to the gentleman's servant," said Mr. Croyland; and then depositing his spectacles safely in their case, he walked out into the garden to seek Edith.

The servant, in the mean while, went at a rapid pace, over pleasant hill and dale, till he reached the village of Woodchurch, and stopped at a little public-house, before the door of which stood three dragoons, with their horses' bridles over their arms. As speedily as possible, the man entered the house, and walked up stairs, where he found his master talking to a man, covered with dust from the road.

"Mr. Mowle should have given me farther information," the young officer said, looking at a paper in his hand. "I could have made my combinations here as well as at Hythe."

"He sent me off in a great hurry, sir," answered the man; "but I'll tell him what you say."

"Stay, stay!" said the officer, holding out his hand to his

servant for the note which he had brought. "I will tell you more in a minute," and breaking open the seal, he read Mr. Croyland's epistle, which was to the following effect:—

"Mr. Croyland presents his compliments to Captain Osborn, and has had the honour of receiving his letter, although he cannot conceive why Captain Osborn should wish to speak with him at Woodchurch, when he could so easily speak with him in his own house; yet Mr. Croyland is Captain Osborn's very humble servant, and will do as he bids him. As it is now past one o'clock, as it would take half-an-hour to get Mr. Croyland's carriage ready, and an hour to reach Woodchurch; and as it is some years since Mr. Croyland has got upon the back of anything but an ass or a hobby-horse, having moreover no asses at hand with the proper proportion of legs, though many deficient in number, it is impossible for him to reach Woodchurch by the time stated to-day. He will be over at that place, however, by two o'clock to-morrow, and hopes that Captain Osborn will be able to return with him, and spend a few days in an old bachelor's house."

The young officer's face was grave as he read the first part of the letter, but it relaxed into a smile towards the end. He then gave, perhaps, ten seconds to thought; after which, rousing himself abruptly, he turned to the dusty messenger from Hythe, and fixing a somewhat searching glance upon the man's face, he said, "Tell Mr. Mowle that I will be over with him directly, and as the troops, it seems, will be required on the side of Folkestone, he must have everything prepared on his part, for we shall have no time to spare."

The man bowed with a stolid look, and withdrew; and after he had left the room, the officer remained silent for a moment or two, looking out of the window till he saw him mount his horse and depart. Then, descending in haste to the inn door, he gave various orders to the dragoons who were there waiting. To one they were, "Ride off to Folkestone as fast as you can go, and tell Captain Irby to march immediately with his troop to Bilsington, which place he must reach before two o'clock in the morning." To another: "You gallop off to Appledore, and bid the sergeant there bring his party down to Brenzet Corner in the Marsh, and put himself under the

orders of Cornet Joyce." To the third: "You, Wood, be off to Ashford, and tell Lieutenant Green to bring down all his men as far as Bromley Green, taking up the party at Kingsnorth. Let him be there by three; and remember, these are private orders. Not a word to any one."

The men sprang into the saddles as soon as the last words were spoken, and rode away in different directions; and, after bidding his servant bring round his horse, the young officer remained standing at the door of the inn, with his tall form erect, his arms crossed upon his chest, and his eyes gazing towards Harbourne House. He was in the midst of the scenes where his early days had been spent. Every object around him was familiar to his eye: not a hill, not a wood, not a church steeple or a farm-house, but had its association with some of those bright things which leave a lustre in the evening sky of life, even when the day-star of existence has set. There were the pleasant hours of childhood, the sports of boyhood, the dreams of youth, the love of early manhood. The light that memory cast upon the whole might not be so strong and powerful, might not present them in so real and definite a form, as in the full day of enjoyment; but there is a great difference between that light of memory, when it brightens a period of life that may yet renew the joys which have passed away for a time, and when it shines upon pleasures gone for ever. In the latter case it is but as the moonlight: a reflected beam, without the warmth of fruition or the brilliancy of hope; but in the former it is as the glow of the descending sun, which sheds a purple lustre through the vista of the past, and gives a promise of returning joy even as it sinks away. He stood, then, amongst the scene of his early years, with hope refreshed, though still with the remembrance of sorrows tempering the warmth of expectation, perhaps shading the present. It wanted, indeed, but some small circumstance, by bearing afar, like some light wind, the cloud of thought, to give to all around the bright hues of other days, and that was soon afforded. He had not remained there above two or three minutes when the landlord of the public-house came out, and stood directly before him.

"Oh! I forgot your bill, my good fellow," said the young officer. "What is my score?"

"No, sir, it is not that," answered the man, "but I think

you have forgotten me. I could not let you go, however, without just asking you to shake hands with me, though you are a great gentleman now, and I am much what I was."

The young officer gazed at him for a moment, and let his eye run over the stout limbs and portly person of the landlord, till at length he said, in a doubtful tone, "Surely, you cannot be young Miles, the son of my father's clerk?"

"Ay, sir, just the same," replied the host; "but young and old, we change, just as women do their names when they marry. Not that six or seven years have made me old either; but I was six and twenty when you went away, and as thin as a whipping post; now I'm two and thirty and as fat as a porker. That makes a wonderful difference, sir. But I'm glad you don't forget old times."

"Forget them, Miles!" said the young officer, holding out his hand to him; "Oh! no; they are too deeply written in my heart ever to be blotted out! I thought I was too much changed myself for any one to remember me, but those who were most dear to me. What between the effects of time and labour, sorrow and war, I hardly fancied that any one in Kent would know me. But you are changed for the better, I for the worse. Yet I am very glad to see you, Miles; and I shall see you again to-morrow, for I am coming back here towards two o'clock. In the mean time, you need not say you have seen me, for I do not wish it to be known that I am here, till I have learned a little of what reception I am likely to have."

"Oh! I understand, sir; I understand," replied the landlord; "and if you should want to know how the land lies, I can always tell you; for you see, I have the parish-clerks' club, which meets here once a week; and then all the news of the country comes out; and besides, many a one of them comes in here at other times, to have a gossip with old Rafe Miles's son, so that I hear everything that goes on in the county almost as soon as it is done; and right glad shall I be to tell you anything you want to know, just for old times' sake, when you used to go shooting snipes by the brooks, and I used to come after for the sport; that is to say, anything about your own people, not about the smugglers, you know, for they say you are sent here to put them down; and I should not like to peach, even to you. I heard that some great

gentleman had come down—a Sir Harry Somebody. But I little thought it was you, till I saw you just now standing looking so melancholy towards Harbourne, and thinking, I dare say, of the old house at Tiffenden.

"Indeed I was," answered the young officer, with a sigh. "But as to the smugglers, my good friend, I want no information. I am sent down with my regiment merely to aid the civil power, which seems totally incompetent to stop the daring outrages that are every day committed. If this were suffered to go on, all law, not only regarding the revenue, but even that affecting the protection of life and property, would soon be at an end."

"That it would, sir," answered the landlord; "and it's well nigh at an end already, for that matter."

"Well," continued the officer, "though the service is not an agreeable one, and I think, considering all things, might have been entrusted to another person, yet I have but to obey; and consequently, being here, am ready whenever called upon to support the officers, either of justice or the revenue, both by arms and by advice. But I have no other duty to perform, and indeed would rather not have any information regarding the proceedings of these misguided men, except through the proper channels. If I had the absolute command of the district, with orders to put down smuggling therein, it might be a different matter; but I have not."

"Ay, I thought there was a mistake about it," replied Miles; "but here is your horse, sir; I shall see you to-morrow, then?"

"Certainly," answered the officer; and having paid his score, he mounted and rode away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The colonel of the dragoon regiment rode into Hythe coolly and calmly, followed by his servant; for though, to say the truth, he had pushed his horse very fast for some part of the way, he judged it expedient not to cause any bustle in the town by an appearance of haste and excitement. It was customary in those days for officers in the army in active service, even when not on actual duty, to appear in their regimental uniform; but this practice the gentleman in question had dispensed with since he left London, on many motives, both public and personal; and though he wore the cockade, at that time the sign and symbol of a military man, or of one who affected that position, yet he generally appeared in plain clothes, except when any large body of the troops were gathered together.

At the door of the inn where he had fixed his head-quarters, and in the passage leading from it into the house, were a number of private soldiers and a sergeant; and amongst them appeared Mr. Mowle, the custom-house officer, waiting the arrival of the commander of the dragoons. As the latter dismounted, Mowle advanced to his side, saying something in a low voice. The young officer looked at the sky, which was still glowing bright with the sun, which had about an hour and a-half to run ere it reached the horizon.

"In an hour, Mr. Mowle," replied the officer; "there will be time enough. Make all your own arrangements in the mean while."

"But, sir, if you have to send to Folkestone?" said Mowle. "You misunderstood me, I think."

"No, no," anwered the colonel, "I did not. You misunderstood me. Come back in an hour. If you show haste or anxiety you will put the enemy on his guard."

After having said these few words in a low tone, he entered the house, gave some orders to the soldiers, several of whom sauntered away slowly to their quarters, as if the business of

the day were over; and then, proceeding to his own room, he rang the bell and ordered dinner.

"I thought there was a bit of a bustle, sir?" said the landlord, inquiringly, as he put the first dish upon the table.

"Oh dear, no!" replied the colonel. "Did you mean about these men who have escaped?"

"I didn't know about what, colonel," answered the landlord, "but seeing Mr. Mowle waiting for you—"

"You thought it must be about them," added the officer; "but you are mistaken, my good friend. There is no bustle at all. The men will, doubtless, soon be taken, one after the other, by the constables. At all events, that is an affair with which I can have nothing to do."

The landlord immediately retreated, loaded with intelligence, and informed two men who were sipping rum-and-water in the tap-room, that Mowle had come to ask the colonel to help in apprehending "the major," and others who had been rescued, and that the colonel would have nothing to do with it.

The men finished their grog much more rapidly than they had begun it, and then walked out of the house, probably to convey the tidings elsewhere. Now, the town of Hythe is composed, as every one knows, of one large and principal street, nearly at the bottom of the hill, with several back streets, or perhaps lanes we might call them, running parallel to the first, and a great number of shorter ones running up and down the hill, and connecting the principal thoroughfare with those behind it. Many, nay, I might say most, of the houses in the main street had, at the time I speak of, a back as well as a front entrance. They might sometimes have even more than one, for there were trades carried on in Hythe, as the reader has been made aware, which occasionally required rapid and secret modes of exit. Nor was the house in which the young commander of dragoons resided without its conveniences in this respect; but it so happened that Mowle, the officer, was well acquainted with all its different passages and contrivances, and, consequently, he took advantage, on his return at the end of an hour, of one of the small lanes which led him by a back way into the inn. Then ascending a narrow staircase without disturbing anybody, he made his way to the room he sought, where he found the colonel of the regiment quietly writing some letters after his brief meal was over.

"Well, Mr. Mowle," said the young officer, folding up and sealing the note he had just concluded, "now let me hear what you have discovered, and where you wish the troops to be."

"I am afraid, sir, we have lost time," answered Mowle; "for I can't tell at what time the landing will take place."

"Not before midnight," replied his companion; "there is no vessel in sight, and with the wind at this quarter they can't be very quick in their movements."

"Why, probably not before midnight, sir," answered Mowle; "but there are not above fifty of your men within ten miles round, and if you've to send for them to Folkestone and Ashford, and out almost to Staplehurst, they will have no time to make ready and march, and the fellows will be off into the Weald before we can catch them."

The young officer smiled. "Then you think fifty men will not be enough?" he asked.

"Not half enough," answered Mowle, beginning to set down his companion as a person of very little intellect or energy. "Why, from what I hear, there will be some two or three hundred of these fellows down, to carry the goods after they are run, and every one of them equal to a dragoon, at any time."

"Well, we shall see!" said the young officer, coolly. "You are sure that Dymchurch is the place?"

"Why, somewhere thereabouts, sir; and that's a long way off," answered Mowle; "so if you have any arrangements to make, you had better make them."

"They are all made," replied the colonel; "but tell me, Mr. Mowle, does it not frequently take place that, when smugglers are pursued in the marsh, they throw their goods into the cuts and canals and creeks by which it is intersected?"

"To be sure they do, sir," exclaimed the officer; "and they'll do that to a certainty, if we can't prevent them landing; and if we attack them in the Marsh——"

"To prevent them landing," said the gentleman, "seems to me impossible in the present state of affairs; and I do not know whether it would be expedient, even if we could. Your object is to seize the goods, both for your own benefit and that of the state, and to take as many prisoners as possible. Now, from what you told me yesterday, I find that you have no force at sea, except a few miserable boats ——"

"I sent off for the revenue cruiser this morning, sir," answered Mowle.

"But she is not come," rejoined the officer; "and, consequently, must be thrown out of our combinations. If we assemble a large force at any point of the coast, the smugglers on shore will have warning. They may easily find means of giving notice of the fact to their comrades at sea: the landing may be effected at a different point from that now proposed, and the goods carried clean off before we can reach them. It seems to me, therefore, better for you to let the landing take place quietly. As soon as it has taken place, the beacons will be lighted by my orders; the very fact of a signal they don't understand will throw the smugglers into some confusion; and they will hurry out of the Marsh as fast as possible ——"

"But suppose they separate, and all take different roads?" said Mowle.

"Then all, or almost all, the different parties will be met with and stopped," replied the officer.

"But your men cannot act without a requisition from the customs, sir," answered Mowle; "and they are so devilish cautious of committing themselves ——"

"But I am not," rejoined the colonel; "and every party along the whole line has notice that the firing of the beacons is to be taken as a signal that due requisition has been made, and has orders also to stop any body of men carrying goods that they may meet with. But I do not think that these smugglers will separate at all, Mr. Mowle. Their only chance of safety must seem to them, not knowing how perfectly prepared we are, to lie in their numbers and their union. While acting together, their numbers, it appears from your account, would be sufficient to force any one post opposed to them, according to the arrangements which they have every reason to believe still exist; and they will not throw away that chance. It is, therefore, my belief that they will make their way out of the Marsh in one body. After that, leave them to me. I will take the responsibility upon myself."

"Very well, colonel; very well!" said Mowle; "if you are ready without my knowing anything about it, all the better. Only the fellow I sent you brought back word something about Folkestone."

"That was merely because I did not like the man's look," replied the young officer, "and thought you would understand that a message sent you in so public a manner, upon a business which required secrecy, must not be read in its direct sense."

"Oh! I see, colonel, I see," cried the officer of customs; "it was stupid enough not to understand. All my people are ready, however, and if we could but discover the hour the run is to be made, we should have a pretty sure game of it."

"Cannot the same person who gave you so much intelligence, give you that also?" asked his companion.

"Why, no; either the imp can't or he won't," said Mowle. "I had to pay him ten pounds for what tidings I got, for the little wretch is as cunning as Satan."

"Are you sure the intelligence was correct?" demanded the officer of dragoons.

"Oh! yes, sir," replied Mowle. "His tidings have always been quite right; and, besides, I've the means of testing this myself, for he told me where they are to meet, at least a large party of them, before going down to the shore. I've a very great mind to disguise myself, and creep in among them."

"A very hazardous experiment, I should think," said the colonel, "and I do not see any object worth the risk."

"Why, the object would be to get information of the hour," answered Mowle. "If we could learn that some time before, we could have everything ready, and have them watched all through the Marsh."

"Well, you must use your own judgment in that particular," answered the young officer; "but I tell you I am quite prepared myself, and such a large body, as you have mentioned, cannot cross a considerable extent of country without attracting attention."

"Well, I'll see, sir, I'll see," answered Mowle; "but had I not better send off two or three officers towards Dymchurch, to give your men notice as soon as the goods are landed?"

"Undoubtedly," answered the colonel. "There's a party at New Romney, and a party at Burmarsh. They both have their orders, and, as soon as they have intimation, will act upon them. I would have enough men present, if I were you, to watch the coast well, but with strict orders to do nothing to create alarm."

Some minor arrangements were then entered into, of no

great importance to the tale, and Mowle took his leave, after having promised to give the colonel the very first intimation he received of the further proceedings of the smugglers.

The completion of his own arrangements took the custom-house officer half an hour more, and at the end of that time he returned to his own dwelling, and sat down for a while, to think over the next step. He felt a strong inclination to visit the meeting-place of the smugglers in person. He was, as we have shown, a man of a daring and adventurous disposition, strong in nerve, firm in heart, and with, perhaps, too anxious a sense of duty. Indeed, he was rather inclined to be rash than otherwise, from the apprehension of having anything like fear attributed to him in the execution of the service he had undertaken; but still he could not shut his eyes to the fact that the scheme he meditated was full of peril to himself. The men amongst whom he proposed to venture were lawless, sanguinary, and unscrupulous; and, if discovered, he had every reason to believe that his life would be sacrificed by them without the slightest hesitation or remorse. He was their most persevering enemy; he had spared them on no occasion; and although he had dealt fairly by them, yet many of those who were likely to be present, had suffered severe punishment at his instigation and by his means. He hesitated a little, and called to mind what the colonel had said regarding the hazard of the act, and the want of sufficient object; but then, suddenly starting up, he looked forward with a frowning brow, exclaiming, "Why, hang it, I'm not afraid! I'll go, whatever befalls me. It's my duty not to leave any chance for information untried. That young fellow is mighty cool about the business; and if these men get off, it shall not be any fault of mine."

Thus saying, he lighted a candle, and went into an adjoining room, where, from a large commode, filled with a strange medley of different dresses and implements, he chose out a waggoner's frock, a large pair of leathern leggings, or gaiters, and a straw hat, such as was very commonly used at that time amongst the peasantry of England. After gazing at them for a moment or two, and turning them over once or twice, he put them on, and then, with a pair of sharp scissors, cut away, in a rough and unceremonious fashion, a considerable quantity of his black hair, which was generally left rough and

floating. High up over his neck, and round his chin, he tied a large blue handkerchief, and when thus completely accoutred, gave himself a glance in the glass, saying, "I don't think I should know myself."

He seemed considerably re-assured at finding himself so completely disguised; and then looking at his watch, and perceiving that the hour named for the meeting was approaching, he put a brace of pistols in his breast, where they could be easily reached through the opening in front of the smock-frock.

He had already reached the door, when something seemed to strike him; and saying to himself, "Well, there's no knowing what may happen! Its better to prepare against anything," he turned back to his sitting-room, and wrote down on a sheet of paper:—

"Sir—I am gone up to see what they are about. If I should not be back by eleven, you may be sure they have caught me, and then you must do your best with Birchett and the others. If I get off, I'll call in as I come back, and let you know.

"Sir, your very obedient servant,

"WILLIAM MOWLE."

As soon as this was done, he folded the note up, addressed and sealed it; and then, blowing the light out, he called an old female servant who had lived in his house for many years, and whom he now directed to carry the epistle to the colonel of dragoons who was up at the inn, adding that she was to deliver it with her own hand.

The old woman took it at once; and knowing well how usual it was for the custom-house officers to disguise their persons in various ways, she took no notice of the strange change in Mr. Mowle's appearance, though it was so complete that it could not well escape her eyes, even in the darkness which reigned throughout the house.

This having been all arranged, and the maid on her way to convey the letter, Mowle himself walked slowly forward through the long narrow lanes at the back of the town, and along the path up towards Saltwood. It was dusk when he set out, but not yet quite dark; and as he went he met two people of the

town whom he knew well, but who only replied to the awkward nod of the head which he gave them by saying, "Good night, my man," and walked on, evidently unconscious that they were passing an acquaintance.

As he advanced, however, the night grew darker and more dark; and a fog began to rise, though not so thick as that of the night before. Mowle muttered to himself, as he observed it creeping up the hill from the side of the valley, "Ay, this is what the blackguards calculated upon, and they are always sure to be right about the weather; but it will serve my turn as well as theirs;" and on he went in the direction of the castle, keeping the regular road by the side of the hill, and eschewing especially the dwelling of Galley Ray and her grandson.

Born in that part of the country, and perfectly well prepared, both to find his way about every part of the ruins, and to speak the dialect of the county in its broadest accent, if he should be questioned, the darkness was all that he could desire; and it was with pleasure that he found the obscurity so deep that even he could not see the large stones which at that time lay in the road, causing him to stumble more than once as he approached the castle. He was in some hope, indeed, of reaching the ruins before the smugglers began to assemble, and of finding a place of concealment whence he could overhear their sayings and doings; but in this expectation he discovered, as he approached the walls, that he should be disappointed; for in the open road between the castle and the village, he found a number of horses tied, and two men watching. He trudged on past them, however, with a slow step and a slouching gait; and when one of the men called out, "Is that you, Jack?" he answered, "Ay, ay!" without stopping.

At the gate of the court he heard a good many voices talking within; and, it must be acknowledged, that although as brave a man as ever lived, he was not without a strong sense of the dangers of his situation. But he suffered it not to master him in the least; and advancing resolutely, he soon got the faint outline of several groups of men, amounting in the whole to about thirty, assembled on the green between the walls and the keep. Walking resolutely up to one of these little knots, he looked boldly amongst the persons it comprised, as if seeking for somebody. Their faces could scarcely be dis-

tinguished; but the voices of one or two who were talking together, showed him that the group was a hazardous one, as it contained several of the most notorious smugglers of the neighbourhood, who had but too good cause to be well acquainted with his person and his tongue. He went on, consequently, to the next little party, which he soon judged, from the conversation he overheard, to be principally composed of strangers. One man spoke of how they did those things in Sussex, and told of how he had aided to haul up, Heaven knows how many bales of goods, over the bare face of the cliff between Hastings and Winchelsea. Judging, therefore, that he was here in security, the officer attached himself to this group, and, after a while, ventured to ask, "Do you know what's to be the hour, about?"

The man he spoke to answered "No!" adding that they could not tell anything "till the gentleman came." This, however, commenced a conversation, and Mowle was speedily identified with that group, which, consisting entirely of strangers, as he had supposed, did not mingle much with the rest. Every one present was armed; and he found that though some had come on foot like himself, the greater part had journeyed on horseback. He had a good opportunity also of learning that, notwithstanding every effort made by the government, the system of smuggling was carried on along the coast to a much greater extent than even he himself had been aware of. Many of his brother officers were spoken of in high terms of commendation, which did not sound very satisfactory to his ears; and many a hint for his future operations he gained from the gossip of those who surrounded him.

Still time wore on, and he began to be a little uneasy lest he should be detained longer than the hour which he had specified in his note to the colonel of dragoons. But at length, towards ten o'clock, the quick tramping of a number of horses were heard, and several voices speaking, and a minute after, five or six and twenty men entered the grass court, and came up hastily to the rest.

"Now, are you all ready?" cried a voice which Mowle instantly recognised as that of young Radford.

"Yes, we've been waiting these two hours," answered one of those in the group which the officer had first approached; "but you'll never have enough here, sir."

"Never you mind that," rejoined Richard Radford, "there are eighty more at Lympne, and a good number down at Dymchurch already, with plenty of horses. Come, muster, muster, and let us be off, for the landing will begin at one, and we have a good long way to go. Remember, every one," he continued, raising his voice, "that the way is by Butter's Bridge, and then down and along the shore. If any one takes the road by Burmarsh he will fall in with the dragoons. Troop off, my men, troop off. You Ned, and you major, see that the court is quite cleared; we must have none lagging behind."

This precaution did not at all disconcert our good friend Mowle, for he judged that he should very easily find the means of detaching himself from the rest at the nearest point to Hythe; and accordingly he walked on with the party he had joined, till they arrived at the spot where he had seen the horses tied. There, however, the greater part mounted, and the others joined a different body, which Mowle was well aware was not quite so safe; for acting as the chief thereof, and looking very sharply after his party too, was no other than our friend the major. Mowle now took good care to keep silence: a prudent step which was enjoined upon them all by Mr. Radford and some others, who seemed to have the direction of the affair. But notwithstanding every care, the tread of so many men and so many horses made a considerable noise, and just as they were passing a small cottage, not a quarter of a mile from Saltwood, the good dame within opened the door to see what such a bustle could be about. As she did so, the light from the interior fell full upon Mowle's face, and the eyes of the major, turned towards the door at the same moment, rested upon him for an instant, and were then withdrawn. It were vain to say that the worthy officer felt quite as comfortable at that moment as if he had been in his own house; but when no notice was taken, he comforted himself with the thought that his disguise had served him well, and trudged on with the rest, without showing any hesitation or surprise. About half a mile farther lay the turning which he proposed to take to reach Hythe; and he contrived to get over to the left side of the party, in order to drop off in that direction unperceived. When he was within ten steps of it, however, and was congratulating himself that the party, having scattered a little, gave him greater facilities for executing his

scheme, an arm was familiarly thrust through his own, and a pair of lips close to his ear, said in a low but very distinct tone, "I know you, and if you attempt to get off you are a dead man! Continue with the party, and you are safe. When the goods are landed and gone, you shall go; but the least suspicious movement before, shall bring twenty bullets into your head. You did me a good turn yesterday morning before the justices, in not raking up old offences, and I am willing to do you a good turn now; but this is all I can do for you."

Mowle turned round, well knowing the voice, nodded his head, and walked on with the rest in the direction of Lympne.

CHAPTER XIX.

Towards half-past ten o'clock at night, the inn at Hythe was somewhat quieter than it had been on the evening before. This was not a punch club night; there was no public dinner going forward; a great many accustomed guests were absent, and the house was left nearly vacant of all visitors, except the young commandant of the dragoons, his two or three servants, and three stout-looking old soldiers, who had come in about ten, and taken possession of the tap-room, in their full uniform, scaring away, as it would seem, a sharp-looking man, who had been previously drinking there in solitude, only cheered by the occasional visits and brief conversation of the landlord. The officer himself was up stairs in his room, with a soldier at his door, as usual, and was supposed by all the household to be busy writing; but, in the meanwhile, there was a great deal of bustle in the stables; and about a quarter before eleven, the ostler came in and informed the landlord that they were saddling three of the colonel's horses, and his two grooms' horses.

"Saddling three!" cried the host; "why, he cannot ride three horses at once, anyhow; and where can he be going to ride to-night? I must run and see if I can pump it out of the fellows;" and away he walked to the stables, where he found the men, two grooms and two helpers busily engaged in the occupation which the hostler had stated.

"Ah," said the landlord, "so there's something going on to-night?"

"Not that I know of," answered the head groom. "Tie down that holster, Bill. The thongs are loose, don't you see?"

"Oh! but there must be something in the wind," rejoined the landlord; "the colonel wouldn't ride out so late else."

"Lord bless you!" replied the man, "little you know of his ways. Why, sometimes he'll have us all up at two or three in the morning, just to visit a post of perhaps twenty men. He's a smart officer, I can tell you; and no one must be caught napping in his regiment, that's certain."

"But you have saddled three horses for him!" said the landlord, returning to his axiom; "and he can't ride three at once, anyhow."

"Ay, but who can tell which he may like to ride?" rejoined the groom; "we shan't know anything about that till he comes into the stable, most likely."

"And where is he going to, to-night?" asked the landlord.

"We can't tell that he's going anywhere," answered the man; "but if he does, I should suppose it would be to Folkestone. The major is away on leave, you know; and it is just as likely as not, that he'll go over to see that all's right there."

The worthy host was not altogether satisfied with the information he received; but as he clearly saw that he should get no more, he retired, and went into the tap, to try the dragoons, without being more successful in that quarter than he had been in the stables.

In the mean time, his guest up stairs had finished his letters; had dressed himself in uniform; armed himself, and laid three brace of pistols, charged, upon the table, for the holsters of his saddles; and then taking a large map of the county, he leaned over it, tracing the different roads, which at that time intersected the Weald of Kent. Two or three times he took out his watch; and as the hour of eleven drew near, he began to feel considerable alarm for the fate of poor Mowle.

"If they discover him, they will murder him, to a certainty,"

he thought; "and I believe a more honest fellow does not live. It was a rash and foolish undertaking. The measures I have adopted could not fail. Hark! there is the clock striking. We must lose no more time. We may save him yet, or at all events avenge him." He then called the soldier from the door, and sent off a messenger to the house of the second officer of customs, named Birchett, who came up in a few minutes.

"Mr. Birchett," said the colonel, "I fear our friend Mowle has got himself into a scrape;" and he proceeded to detail as many of the circumstances as were necessary to enable the other to comprehend the situation of affairs; and ended by asking, "Are you prepared to act in Mr. Mowle's absence?"

"Oh! yes, sir," answered Birchett. "Mowle did not tell me the business; but he said, I must have my horse saddled. He was always a close fellow, and kept all the intelligence to himself."

"In this case it was absolutely necessary," replied the colonel; "but without any long explanations, I think you had better ride down towards Dymchurch at once, with all the men you can trust, keeping as sharp a look-out as you can on the coast, and sending me information the moment you receive intelligence that the run has been effected. Do not attempt to attack the smugglers without sufficient force; but despatch two men by different roads, to intimate the fact to me at Aldington Knowle, where I shall be found throughout the night."

"Ay, sir," answered the officer, "but suppose the fellows take along by Burmarsh, and so up to Hardy Pool. They will pass you, and be off into the country before anything can be done."

"They will be stopped at Burmarsh," replied the colonel; "orders have been given to barricade the road at nightfall, and to defend the hamlet against any one coming from the sea. I shall establish another post at Lympne as I go. Leave all that to me."

"But you must have a requisition, sir, or I suppose you are not authorised to act," said the officer. "I will get one for you in a minute."

"I have one," answered the colonel, laying his hand on the papers before him; "but even were it not so, I should act on my own responsibility. This is no ordinary case, Mr. Birchett.

All you have to do is to ride off towards Dymchurch as fast as you can, to give me notice that the smugglers have landed their goods as soon as you find that such is the case, and to add any information that you can gain respecting the course they have taken. Remember, not to attack them unless you find that you have sufficient force, but follow and keep them in sight as far as you can."

"It's such a devilish foggy night, sir," said Birchett.

"It will be clearer inland," replied the young officer; "and we shall catch them at day-break. We can only fail from want of good information; so see that I have the most speedy intelligence. But stay, lest anything should go wrong, or be misunderstood with regard to the beacons, you may as well, if you have men to spare, send off as you pass, after the run has been effected, to the different posts at Brenzet, at Snave, at Ham Street, with merely these words: 'The goods are landed. The smugglers are at such a place.' The parties will act upon the orders they have already received. Now away, and lose no time!"

The riding-officer hurried off, and the colonel of the regiment descended to the court-yard. In three minutes more the sound of a trumpet was heard in the streets of Hythe, and in less than ten, a party of about thirty dragoons were marching out of the town towards Lympne. A halt for about five minutes was made at the latter place, and the small party of soldiers was diminished to about half its number. Information, too, was there received, from one of the cottagers, of a large body of men (magnified in his account into three or four hundred) having gone down into the marshes about half an hour before; but the commanding officer made no observation in reply, and having given the orders he thought necessary, rode on towards Aldington. The fog was thick on all the low ground, but cleared away a good deal upon the more elevated spots; and as they were rising one of the hills, the serjeant who was with the party exclaimed, "There is something very red up there, sir! It looks as if there were a beacon lighted up, if we could see it for the fog."

The young officer halted for a moment, looked round, and then rode on till he reached the summit of the hill, whence a great light, clearly proceeding from a beacon, was discovered to the north-east.

"That must be near Postling," he said. "We have no party there. It must be some signal of their own." And as he rode on, he thought, "It is not impossible that poor Mowle's rashness may have put these men on their guard, and thus thwarted the whole scheme. That is clearly some warning to their boats."

But ere a quarter of an hour more had passed, he saw the probability of still more disastrous effects, resulting from the lighting of the beacon on Tolsford Hill; for another flame shot up, casting a red glare through the haze from the side of Burmarsh, and then another and another, till the dim air seemed all tinged with flame.

"An unlucky error," he said to himself. "Serjeant Jackson should have known that we have no party in that quarter; and the beacons were only to be lighted, from the first, towards Hythe. It is very strange how the clearest orders are sometimes misunderstood."

He rode on, however, at a quick pace, till he reached Aldington Knowle, and had found the highest ground in the neighbourhood, whence, after pausing for a minute or two to examine the country, as marked out by the various fires, he despatched three of the dragoons in different directions, with orders to the parties in the villages round to disregard the lights they saw, and not to act upon the orders previously given, till they received intimation that the smugglers were on the march.

It was now about midnight, and during nearly two hours the young officer remained stationed upon the hill without any one approaching, or any sound breaking the stillness of the night but the stamping of the horses of his little force and the occasional clang of the soldiers' arms. At the end of that period, the tramp of horse coming along the road at a quick pace from the side of Hythe, was heard by the party on the more elevated ground at a little distance from the highway. There was a tightening of the bridle and a movement of the heel amongst the men, to bring their chargers into a more regular line; but not a word was said, and the colonel remained in front, with his arms crossed upon his chest and his rein thrown down, while what appeared from the sound to be a considerable body of cavalry, passed before him. He could not see them, it is true, from the darkness of the night; but

his ear recognised in a moment the jingling of the dragoons' arms, and he concluded rightly, that the party consisted of the company which he had ordered from Folkestone down to Bilsington. As soon as they had gone on, he detached a man to the next cross-road on the same side, with orders, if he perceived any body of men coming across from the side of the Marsh, to ride forward at once to the officer in command at Bilsington, and direct him to move to the north, keeping the Priory Wood on the right, till he reached the cross-roads at the corner, and wait there for further orders. The beacons had by this time burnt out; and all remained dark and still for about half an hour more, when the quick galloping of a horse was heard coming from the side of the Marsh. A pause took place as soon as the animal reached the high road, as if the rider had halted to look for some one he had expected; and, dashing down instantly through the gate of the field, which had been opened by the dragoons to gain the highest point of ground, the young officer exclaimed, "Who goes there?"

"Ah, colonel, is that you?" cried the voice of Birchett. "They are coming up as fast as they can come, and will pass either by Bilsington or Bonnington. There's a precious lot of them: I never saw such a number gathered before. Mowle's gone, poor fellow, to a certainty; for we've seen nothing of him down there."

"Nor I either," answered the young officer, with a sigh. "I hope you have left men to watch them, Mr. Birchett."

"Oh! yes, sir," replied the officer. "I thought it better to come up myself than trust to any other. But I left Clinch and the rest there, and sent off, as you told me, to all your posts."

"You are sure they will come by Bilsington or Bonnington, and not strike off by Kitsbridge, towards Ham Street or Warehorn?" demanded the young officer.

"If they do, they'll have to turn all the way back," answered Birchett; "for I saw them to the crossing of the roads, and then came across by Sherlock's Bridges and the horse-road to Hurst."

"And are you quite sure," continued the colonel, "that your messengers will reach the parties at Brenzet or Snave?"

"Quite, sir," answered the custom-house officer; "for I

did not send them off till the blackguards had passed, and the country behind was clear."

"That was judicious; and we have them," rejoined the young officer. "I trust they may take by Bonnington; but it will be necessary to ascertain the fact. You shall go down, Mr. Birchett, yourself, with some of the troopers, and reconnoitre. Go as cautiously as possible; and if you see or hear them passing, fall back quietly. If they do not appear in reasonable time, send me intelligence. You can calculate the distances better than I can."

"I believe they will go by Bonnington," said the customs officer; "for it's much shorter, and I think they must know of your party at Bilsington; though, to be sure, they could easily force that, for it is but a serjeant's guard."

"You are mistaken," answered the colonel. "Captain Irby is there with his troop; and, together with the parties moving up, on a line with the smugglers from the Marsh, he will have a hundred and fifty men, either in Bilsington, or three miles in his rear. Nevertheless, we must give him help, in case they take that road; so you had better ride down at once, Mr. Birchett."

And ordering three of the privates to accompany the custom-house officer, with renewed injunctions to caution and silence, he resumed his position on the hill, and waited in expectation of the result.

CHAPTER XX.

The cottages round Dymchurch, and the neighbourhood of the Gut, as it is called, showed many a cheerful light about eleven o'clock, on the night of which we have just been speaking; and, as the evening had been cold and damp, it seemed natural enough that the two officers of customs, stationed in the place, or at least they chose to think so, that the poor people should have a fire to keep them warm. If they had judged it expedient to go forth, instead of remaining in the house appropriated to them, they might indeed have discovered a fragrant odour of good Hollands, and every now and then a strong smell of

brandy, issuing from any hovel door that happened to open as they passed. But the two officers did not judge it expedient to go forth; for it was late, they were warm and comfortable where they were, a good bowl of punch stood before them, and one of them, as he ladled out the exhilarating liquor to the other, remarked, with philosophical sagacity, "It's such a foggy night; who the deuce could see anything on the water even if they went to look for it?"

The other laughed with a meaning wink of his eye, and perfectly agreed in the justice of his companion's observation. "Well, we must go out, Jim, about twelve," he said, "just to let old Mowle see that we are looking about; but you can go down to High Nook, and I can pretend I heard something suspicious in the Marsh, farther up. Otherwise, we shall be broke, to a certainty."

"I don't care if I am broke," answered the other. "I've got all that I want now, and can set up a shop."

"Well, I should like to hold on a little longer," replied his more prudent companion; "and besides, if they found us out, they might do worse than discharge us."

"But how the deuce should they find us out?" asked the other. "Nobody saw me speak to the old gentleman; and nobody saw you. I didn't; nor did you see me. So we can say nothing, and nobody else can say anything; I shan't budge."

"Well, I shall!" said the other. "'Tis but a walk; and you know quite well, Jim, that if we keep to the westward, it's all safe."

It was evident to the last speaker that his comrade had drunk quite enough punch; but still they went on till the bowl was finished; and then, the one going out, the other did not choose to remain, but issued forth also, cursing and growling as he went. The murmur of a good many voices to the eastward of Dymchurch saluted their ears the moment they quitted the house; but that sound only induced them to hasten their steps in the opposite direction.

The noise which produced this effect upon the officers had also been heard by another person, who was keeping his solitary watch on the low shore, three or four hundred yards from the village, and to him it was a pleasant sound. He had been on the look-out there for nearly two hours; and no sight had

he seen, nor sound had he heard, but the water coming up as the tide made, and every now and then driving him further back to avoid the ripple of the wave. Two or three minutes after a step could be distinguished; and some one gave a whistle.

The watcher whistled in return; and the next instant he was joined by another person, somewhat taller than himself, who inquired, "Have you heard anything of them yet?"

"No, sir," answered the man, in a respectful tone. "Everything has been as still and as sleepy as an old woman's cat."

"Then what the devil's the meaning of these fires all over the country?" asked young Radford; for he it was who had come down.

"Fires, sir?" said the man. "Why they were to light one upon Tolsford Hill, when Harding sent up the rockets; but I have heard of none but that, and have seen none at all."

"Why, they are blazing all over the country," cried young Radford, "from Tolsford to Dungeness. If it's any of our people that have done it they must be mad."

"Well, if they have lighted the one at Tolsford," answered the man, "we shall soon have Tom Hazlewood down to tell us more; for he was to set off and gallop as fast as possible, whenever he saw anything."

Young Radford made no reply, but stood musing in silence for two or three minutes; and then starting, he exclaimed, "Hark! wasn't that a cheer from the sea?"

"I did'nt hear it," answered the man; "but I thought I heard some one riding."

Young Radford listened; but all seemed still for a moment, till, coming upon harder ground, a horse's feet sounded distinctly.

"Tom Hazlewood, I think," cried Radford. "Run up, and see, Bill!"

"He'll come straight down here, sir," replied the man; "he knows where to find me." And almost as he spoke, a man on horseback galloped up, saying, "They must be well in shore now."

"Who the devil lighted all those fires?" exclaimed young Radford. "Why they will alarm the whole country!"

"I don't know, sir," answered the man on horseback. "I

lighted the one at Tolsford, but I've nothing to do with the others, and don't know who lighted them."

"Then you saw the rockets?" demanded the young gentleman.

"Quite clear, sir," replied Hazelwood; "I got upon the highest point that I could find, and kept looking out over the sea, thinking I should see nothing; for though it was quite clear up so high, and the stars shining as bright as possible, yet all underneath was like a great white cloud rolled about; but suddenly, as I was looking over this way, I saw something like a star shoot up from the cloud and burst into a thousand bright sparks, making quite a blaze all round it; and then came another, and then another. So, being quite sure that it was Jack Harding at sea, I ran down as hard as I could to where I had left Peter by the pile of wood and the two old barrels, and taking the candle out of his lantern, thurst it in. As soon as it was in a blaze, I got on my horse and galloped down; for he could not be more than two or three miles out when I saw the rockets."

"Then he must be close in now," answered Richard Radford; "and we had better get all the men down, and spread out."

"There will be time enough, sir, I should think," observed the man on foot, "for he'll get the big boats in, as near as he can, before he loads the little ones."

"I will fire a pistol, to let him know where we are," answered young Radford; and drawing one from his belt, he had cocked it, when the man on foot stopped him, saying, "There are two officers in Dymchurch, you know, sir, and they may send off for troops."

"Pooh, nonsense!" replied Richard Radford, firing the pistol in the air; "do you think we would have left them there, if we were not sure of them?"

In somewhat less than a minute, a distinct cheer was heard from the sea; and at the sound of the pistol, a crowd of men and horses, which in the mist and darkness seemed innumerable, began to gather down upon the shore, as near to the water's edge as they could come. A great many lanterns were produced, and a strange and curious sight it was to see the number of wild-looking faces which appeared by that dim, uncertain light.

"Ned Ramley!" cried young Radford.

"Here I am, sir," answered a voice close at hand.

"Where's the major?"

"Major! major!" shouted Ramley.

"Coming," answered a voice at some distance. "Stand by him, and do as I told you!"

"What's the matter?" demanded Richard Radford, as the major came up.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" replied the other; "only a man I found lurking about. He says he's willing to help; but I thought it best to set a watch upon him, as I don't know him."

"That was right," said the young gentleman. "But, hark! there are the oars!" And the sound of the regular sweep, and the shifting beat of the oar against the rowlocks, was distinctly heard by all present. Some of the men waded down into the water, there being very little sea running, and soon, through the mist, six boats of a tolerable size could be seen pulling hard towards the land. In another moment, amidst various cries and directions, they touched the shore. Several men jumped out of each into the water, and a number of the party which had come down to meet them, running in, caught hold of the ropes that were thrown out of the boats, and with marvellous rapidity they were drawn up till they were high and dry.

"Ah, Harding, is that you?" said young Radford, addressing the smuggler, who had been steering the largest boat. "This is capitally managed. You are even earlier than I expected, and we shall get far into the country before daylight."

"We were obliged to use the sweeps, sir," said Harding, bluntly; "but don't let's talk. Get the things out, and load the horses; for we shall have to make two more trips back to the luggers before they are all cleared."

Everything was now bustle and activity; a number of bales and packages were taken out of the boats and placed upon the horses in one way or another, not always the most convenient to the poor animals; and as soon as Harding had made Mr. Radford count the number of the articles landed, the boats were launched off again to some larger vessels, which it seems were lying out at a little distance, though indiscernible in the fog.

Harding himself remained ashore; and turning to one or two of those about him, he asked, "What was all that red blaze I saw half over the country?"

"None of us can tell," answered young Radford. "The moment the fire at Tolsford was lighted, a dozen more were flaming up, all along to Dungeness."

"That's devilish strange!" said Harding. "It does not look well. How many men have you got with you, Mr. Radford?"

"Why, well nigh upon two hundred," answered Ned Ramley, for his comrade.

"Ah, then you'll do!" answered Harding, with a laugh; "but still you won't be the worse for some more. So I and some of the lads will see you safe across the Marsh. The customs have got nothing at sea about here; so the boats will be safe enough."

"Thank you, Harding; thank you, Jack;" said several of the voices. "Once out of the Marsh, with all these ditches and things, and we shall do very well. How far are the luggers off?"

"Not a hundred fathom," answered Harding. "I would have run them ashore if there had been any capstan here to have drawn them up. But they won't be a minute, so have everything ready. Move off those horses that are loaded, a bit, my lads, and bring up the others."

Harding's minute, however, extended to nearly ten, and then the boats were again perceived approaching, and the same process was followed as before. The third trip was then made with equal success and ease. Not the slightest difficulty occurred, not the slightest obstruction was offered; the number of packages was declared to be complete, the horses were all loaded, and the party began to move off in a long line, across the Marsh, like a caravan threading the mazes of the desert.

Leaving a few men with the boats that were ashore, Harding and the rest of the seamen, with Mr. Radford, and several of his party, brought up the rear of the smugglers, talking over the events which had taken place, and the course of their farther proceedings. All seemed friendly and good-humoured; but there is such a thing as seeming, even amongst smugglers, and if Harding could have seen the real feelings of

some of his companions towards him, it is very probable that he would not have given himself the trouble to accompany them on the way.

"I will pay you the money when I get to Bonnington," said young Radford, addressing his companion. "I can't very well get at it till I dismount."

"Oh! there's no matter for that, sir," replied the smuggler. "Your father can pay me some other time. But what are you going to Bonnington for? I should have thought your best way would have been by Bilsington, and so straight into the Weald. Then you would have had the woods round about you the greater part of the way; or I don't know that I might not have gone farther down still, and so by Orleston."

"There's a party of dragoons at Bilsington," said young Radford, "and another at Ham Street."

"Ay, that alters the case," answered the smuggler; "but they are all so scattered about and so few, I should think they could do you no great harm. However, it will be best for you to go by Bonnington, if you are sure there are no troops there."

"If there are, we must fight: that's all," answered young Radford; and so ended the conversation for the time. One of those pauses of deep silence succeeded, which, by the accidental exhaustion of topics and the recurrence of the mind to the thoughts suggested by what has just passed, so frequently intervene in the conversation even of great numbers, whether occupied with light or serious subjects. How often do we find, amidst the gayest or the busiest assembly, a sudden stillness pervade the whole, and the ear may detect a pin fall. In the midst of the silence, however, Harding laid his hand upon young Radford's bridle, saying in a low voice, "Hark! do you not hear the galloping of horses to the east there?"

The young man, on the first impulse, put his hand to his holster; but then withdrew it, and listened. "I think I do," he answered; "but now it has stopped."

"You are watched, I suspect," said Harding; "they did not seem many, however, and may be afraid to attack you. If I were you, I would put the men into a quicker pace; for these fellows may gather as they go. If you had got such things with you as you could throw into the cuts, it would

not much matter, for you could fight it out here, as well as elsewhere; but, if I understood your father rightly, these goods would all be spoiled, and so the sooner you are out of the Marsh the better. Then you will be safe enough, if you are prudent. You may have to risk a shot or two; but that does not much matter."

"And what do you call prudent, Harding?" asked young Radford, in a wonderfully calm tone, considering his vehement temperament, and the excitement of the adventure in which he was engaged; "how would you have me act when I do get out of the Marsh?"

"Why, that seems clear enough," replied the smuggler. "I would send all the goods and the men on foot, first, keeping along the straight road between the woods; and then, with all those who have got horses, I would hang behind a quarter of a mile or so, till the others had time to get on and disperse to the different hides, which ought to be done as soon as possible. Let a number drop off here, and a number there; one set to the Willow Cave close by Woodchurch Hill, another to the old Priory in the wood, and so on, you still keeping behind, and facing about upon the road, if you are pursued. If you do that, you are sure to secure the goods, or by far the greater part of them."

The advice was so good, as far as young Radford knew of the condition of the country, and the usual plan of operations which had hitherto been pursued by the customs in their pursuits of the smugglers, that he could offer no reasonable argument against it; but when prejudice has taken possession of a man's mind, it is a busy and skilful framer of suspicions; and he thought within his own breast, though he did not speak his intentions aloud, "No! Hang me if I leave the goods till I see them safe housed. This fellow may want to ruin us, by separating us into small parties."

The rest of the party had by this time resumed their conversation, and both Radford and Harding well knew that it would be vain to attempt to keep them quiet, for they were a rash and careless set, inclined to do everything with dash and swagger; and although in the presence of actual and apparent danger, they could be induced to preserve some degree of order and discipline, and to show some obedience to their leaders, yet as soon as the peril had passed away, or was no

longer immediately before their eyes, they were like schoolboys in the master's absence, and careless of the consequences which they did not see. Twice Harding said, in a low voice, "I hear them again to the east, there!" and twice young Radford urged his men to a quicker pace; but many of them had come far, horses and men were tired, every one considered that as the goods were safely landed, and no opposition shown, the battle was more than half won; and all forgot the warning of the day before, as man ever forgets the chastisements which are inflicted by Heaven for his good, and falls the next day into the very same errors, for the reproof of which they were sent.

"Now," said Harding, as they approached the spot where the Marsh road opened upon the highway to Bonnington, "spread some of your men out on the right and left, Mr. Radford, to keep you clear in case the enemy wish to make an attack. Your people can easily close in, and follow quickly, as soon as the rest have passed."

"If they do make an attack," thought young Radford, "your head shall be the first I send a ball through;" but the advice was too judicious to be neglected, and he accordingly gave orders to Ned Ramley and the major, with ten men each, to go one or two hundred yards on the road towards Bilsington on the one hand, and Hurst on the other, and see that all was safe. A little confusion ensued, as was but natural in so badly disciplined a body; and in the mean while the laden horses advanced along the road straight into the heart of the country, while Richard Radford, with the greater part of his mounted men, paused to support either of his parties in case of attack. He said something in a low voice regarding the money to Harding, who replied abruptly, "There, never mind about that; only look out, and get off as quickly as you can. You are safe enough now, I think; so good night."

Thus saying, he turned, and with the six or eight stout fellows who accompanied him, trod his way back into the Marsh. What passed through young Radford's brain at that moment it may be needless to dwell upon; but Harding escaped a peril that he little dreamed of, solely by the risk of ruin to the whole scheme, which a brawl at that spot and moment must have entailed.

The men who had been detached to the right advanced

along the road to the distance specified, proceeding slowly in the fog, and looking eagerly out before. "Look out," said Ned Ramley, at length, to one of his companions, taking a pistol from his belt at the same time, "I see men on horse-back there, I think."

"Only trees in the fog," answered the other.

"Hush!" cried Ramley, sharply; but the other men were talking carelessly, and whether it was the sound of retreating horses or not that he heard, he could not discover. After going on about three hundred yards, Ned Ramley turned, saying, "We had better go back now, and give warning, for I am very sure those were men I saw."

The other differed with him on that point; and, on rejoining Richard Radford, they found the major and his party just come back from the Bilsington road, but with one man short. "That fellow," said the major, "has taken himself off. I was sure he was a spy, so we had better go on as fast as possible. We shall have plenty of time before he can raise men enough to follow."

"There are others to the east, there," replied Ned Ramley. "I saw two or three, and there is no time to be lost, I say, or we shall have the whole country upon us. If I were you, Mr. Radford, I'd disperse in as small numbers as possible whenever we get to the Chequer-tree; and then, if we lose a few of the things, we shall keep the greater part, unless, indeed, you are minded to stand it out, and have a fight upon the Green. We are enough to beat them all, I should think."

"Ay, Ned, that is the gallant way," answered Richard Radford; "but we must first see what is on before. We must not lose the goods or risk them, otherwise nothing would please me better than to drub these dragoons; but in case it should be dark still when they come near us, if they do at all, we'll have a blow or two before we have done, I trust. However, let us forward now, for we must keep up well with the rest."

The party moved on at a quick pace, and soon overtook the train of loaded horses, and men on foot, which had gone on before. Many a time a glance was given along the road behind, and many a time an attentive ear was turned listening for the sound of coming horse, but all was still and silent; and winding on through the thick woods, which at that time overspread

all the country in the vicinity of their course, and covered their line of advance right and left, they began to lose the sense of danger, and to suppose that the sounds which had been heard, and the forms which had been seen, were but mere creations of the fancy.

About two miles from the border of Romney Marsh, the mist grew lighter, fading gradually away as the sea air mingled with the clearer atmosphere of the country. At times a star or two might be seen above; and though at that hour the moon gave no light, yet there was a certain degree of brightening in the sky which made some think they had miscalculated the hour, and that it was nearer the dawn than they imagined, while others contended that it was produced merely by the clearing away of the fog. At length, however, they heard a distant clock strike four. They were now at a spot where three or four roads branch off in different directions, at a distance of not more than half-a-mile from Chequer-tree, having a wide extent of rough, uncultivated land, called Aldington Freight, on their right, and part of the Priory Wood on their left; and it yet wanted somewhat more than an hour to the actual rising of the sun. A consultation was then held; and, notwithstanding some differences of opinion, it was resolved to take the road by Stonecross Green, where they thought they could get information from some friendly cottagers, and thence through Gilbert's Wood towards Shaddoxhurst. At that point, they calculated that they could safely separate in order to convey the goods to the several *hides*, or places of concealment, which had been chosen beforehand.

At Stonecross Green they paused again, and knocked hard at a cottage door, till they brought forth the sleepy tenant from his bed. But the intelligence gained from him was by no means satisfactory; he spoke of a large party of dragoons at Kingsnorth, and mentioned reports which had reached him of a small body having shown itself, at Bromley Green late on the preceding night; and it was consequently resolved, after much debate, to turn off before entering Gilbert's Wood, and, in some degree retreading their steps towards the Marsh, to make for Woodchurch Beacon, and thence to Redbrook Street. The distance was thus rendered greater, and both men and horses were weary; but the line of road proposed lay amidst a wild and thinly inhabited part of the country, where

few hamlets or villages offered any quarters for the dragoons. They calculated, too, that having turned the dragoons who were quartered at Bilsington, they should thus pass between them and those at Kingsnorth and Bromley Green; and Richard Radford, himself, was well aware that there were no soldiers, when he left that part of the country, in the neighbourhood of High Halden or Berthersden. This seemed, therefore, the only road that was actually open before them; and it was accordingly taken, after a general distribution of spirits amongst the men, and of hay and water to the horses. Still their progress was slow, for the ground became hilly in that neighbourhood, and by the time they arrived at an elevated spot, near Woodchurch Beacon, whence they could see over a wide extent of country round, the grey light of the dawn was spreading rapidly through the sky, showing all the varied objects of the fair and beautiful land through which they wandered.

But it is now necessary to turn to another personage in our history, of whose fate, for some time, we have had no account.

CHAPTER XXI.

We left our friend, Mr. Mowle, in no very pleasant situation; for although the generosity of the major, in neither divulging the discovery he had made, to the rest of the smugglers, nor blowing the brains of the intruder out upon the spot, was, perhaps, much more than could be expected from a man in his situation and of his habits, yet it afforded no guarantee whatsoever to the unfortunate custom-house officer, that his life would not be sacrificed on the very first danger or alarm. He also knew, that if such an accident were to happen again, as that which had at first displayed his features to one of those into whose nocturnal councils he had intruded, nothing on earth could save him; for amongst the gang by whom he was surrounded, were a number of men who had sworn to shed his blood on the very first opportunity.

He walked along, therefore, as the reader may well conceive, with the feeling of a knife continually at his throat; and a long and weary march it seemed to him, as, proceeding by tor-

tuous ways and zig-zag paths, the smugglers descended into Romney Marsh, and advanced rapidly towards Dymchurch. Mowle was, perhaps, as brave and daring a man as any that ever existed; but still the sensation of impending death can never be very pleasant to a person in strong health, and well contented with the earth on which he is placed; and Mowle felt all the disagreeable points in his situation, exactly as any other man would do. It would not be just to him, however, were we not to state, that many other considerations crossed his mind, besides that of his own personal safety. The first of these was his duty to the department of government which he served; and many a plan suggested itself for making his escape here or there, in which he regarded the apprehension of the smugglers, and the seizure of the goods that they were going to escort into the country, fully as much as his own life.

His friend the major, however, took means to frustrate all such plans, and seemed equally careful to prevent Mr. Mowle from effecting his object, and to guard against his being discovered by the other smugglers. At every turn and corner, at the crossing of every stream or cut, the major was by his side; and yet once or twice he whispered a caution to him to keep out of the way of the lights, more especially as they approached Dymchurch. When they came near the shore, and a number of men with lanterns issued forth to aid them from the various cottages in the vicinity, he told Mowle to keep back with one party, consisting of hands brought out of Sussex, who were stationed in the rear with a troop of the horses. But at the same time Mowle heard his compassionate friend direct two of the men to keep a sharp eye upon him, as he was a stranger of whom the leaders were not quite sure, adding an injunction to blow his brains out at once, if he made the slightest movement without orders. In the bustle and confusion which ensued, during the landing of the smuggled goods and the loading of the horses, Mowle once or twice encouraged a hope that something would favour his escape. But the two men strictly obeyed the orders they had received, remained close to his side during more than an hour and a half, which was consumed upon the beach, and never left him till he was rejoined by the major, who told him to march on with the rest.

"What's to come of this?" thought Mowle, as he proceeded, "and what can the fellow intend to do with me? If he drags

me along with them till daylight, one half of them will know me; and then the game's up: and yet he can't mean me harm either. Well, I may have an opportunity of repaying him some day."

When the party arrived at Bonnington, however, and, as we have already stated, two small bodies were sent off to the right and left, to reconnoitre the ground on either side, Mowle was one of those selected by the major to accompany him on the side of Bilsington. But after having gone to the prescribed distance, without discovering anything to create suspicion, the worthy field-officer gave the order to return; and contriving to disentangle Mowle from the rest, he whispered in his ear, "Off with you as fast as you can, and take back by the Marsh, for if you give the least information, or bring the soldiers upon us, be you sure that some of us will find means to cut your throat. Get on; get on fast!" he continued aloud, to the other men. "We've no time to lose;" and Mowle, taking advantage of the hurry and confusion of the moment, ran off towards Bilsington as fast as his legs could carry him.

"He's off!" cried one of the men. "Shall I give him a shot?"

"No, no," answered the major; "it will only make more row. He's more frightened than treacherous, I believe. I don't think he'll peach."

Thus saying, he rejoined the main body of the smugglers, as we have seen; and Mowle hurried on his way without pause, running till he was quite out of breath. Now, the major, in his parting speech to Mowle, though a shrewd man, had miscalculated his course, and mistaken the person with whom he had to deal. Had he put it to the custom-house officer, as a matter of honour and generosity, not to inform against the person who had saved his life, poor Mowle would have been in a situation of great perplexity; but the threat which had been used relieved him of half the difficulty. Not that he did not feel a repugnance to the task which duty pointed out; not that he did not ask himself, as soon as he had a moment to think of anything, "What ought I to do? How ought I to act?" But still the answer was, that his duty and his oath required him immediately to take steps for the pursuit and capture of the smugglers; and when he thought of the menace he said to himself: "No, no; if I don't do what I ought, these fellows will only say that I was afraid."

Having settled the matter in his own mind, he proceeded to execute his purpose with all speed, and hurried on towards Bilsington, where he knew there was a small party of dragoons, proposing to send off messengers immediately to the colonel of the regiment and to all the different posts around. It was pitch dark, so that he did not perceive the first houses of the hamlet till he was within a few yards of them; and all seemed still and quiet in the place. But after having passed the lane leading to the church, Mowle heard the stamping of some horses' feet, and the next instant a voice exclaimed, "Stand! Who goes there?"

"A friend!" answered Mowle. "Where's the sergeant?"

"Here am I," replied another voice. "Who are you?"

"My name is Mowle," rejoined our friend, "the chief officer of customs at Hythe."

"Oh! come along, Mr. Mowle; you are just the man we want," said the sergeant, advancing a step or two. "Captain Irby is up here, and would be glad to speak with you."

Mowle followed in silence, having, indeed, some occasion to set his thoughts in order, and to recover his breath. About sixty or seventy yards farther on, a scene broke upon him which somewhat surprised him; for, instead of a dozen dragoons, at the most, he perceived, on turning the corner of the next cottage, a body, at least, of seventy or eighty men, as well as he could calculate, standing each beside his horse, whose breath was seen mingling with the thick fog, by the light of a single lantern held close to the wall of the house which concealed the party from the Bonnington road. Round that lantern were congregated three or four figures, beside that of the man who held it; and, fronting the approach was a young gentleman,* dressed in the usual costume of a dragoon officer of that period. Before him stood another, apparently a private of the regiment; and the light shone full upon the faces of both, showing a cold, thoughtful and inquiring look upon the

* It will be seen that I have represented all my officers as young men, even up to the very colonel of the regiment; but it must be remembered that, in those days, promotion in the service was regulated in a very different manner from the present system. I remember a droll story of a visitor at a nobleman's house, inquiring of the butler what was the cause of an obstreperous roaring he heard up stairs, when the servant replied, "Oh! sir, it is nothing but the little general crying for his pap."

countenance of the young officer, and anxious haste upon that of the inferior soldier.

"Here is Mr. Mowle, the chief officer, captain," said the sergeant, as they advanced.

"Ha, that is fortunate!" replied Captain Irby. "Now we shall get at the facts, I suppose. Well, Mr. Mowle, what news?"

"Why, sir, the cargo is landed," exclaimed Mowle, eagerly; "and the smugglers passed by Bonnington, up towards Chequer-tree, not twenty minutes ago."

"So this man says," rejoined Captain Irby, not the least in the world in haste. "Have you any fresh orders from the colonel?"

"No, sir; he said all his orders were given when last I saw him," replied the officer of customs; "but if you move up quick towards Chequer-tree, you are sure to overtake them."

"How long is it since you saw Sir Henry?" demanded Captain Irby, without appearing to notice Mowle's suggestion.

"Oh! several hours ago," answered the custom-house agent, somewhat provoked at the young officer's coolness. "I have been kept prisoner by the smugglers since ten o'clock; but that is nothing to the purpose, sir. If you would catch the smugglers, you have nothing for it but to move to Chequer-tree after them; and that is what I require you to do."

"I have my orders," answered the captain of the troop, with a smile at the impetuous tone of the custom-house officer; "and if you bring me none later, those I shall obey, Mr. Mowle."

"Well, sir, you take the responsibility upon yourself, then," said Mowle; "I have expressed my opinion, and what I require at your hands."

"The responsibility will rest where it ought," replied Captain Irby, "on the shoulders of him whom I am bound to obey. For your opinion I am obliged to you, but it cannot be followed; and as to what you require, I am under superior authority, which supersedes your requisition."

He then said a word or two to one of the men beside him, who immediately proceeded to the body of men behind; but all that Mowle could hear was "Snave" and "Brenzet," re-

peated once or twice, with some mention of Woodchurch and the road by Red Brooke Street. The order was then given to mount, and march; and Mowle remarked that four troopers rode off at a quick pace before the rest.

"Now, Mr. Mowle, we shall want you with us, if you please," said Captain Irby, in a civil tone. "Where is your horse?"

"Horse! I have got none;" answered the officer of customs, a good deal piqued; "did I not say that I have been a prisoner with the smugglers for the last five hours? and as to my going with you, sir, I see no use I can be of, if you do not choose to do what I require, or follow my advice."

"Oh, the greatest, the greatest!" replied the young officer, without losing his temper for an instant; "and as to a horse, we will soon supply you."

An order was immediately given; and in three minutes the horse of a dragoon officer, fully caparisoned, was led up to Mowle's side, who, after a moment's hesitation, mounted, and rode on with the troop. It must not be denied that he was anything but satisfied, not alone because he thought that he was not treated with sufficient deference; although, having for years been accustomed to be obeyed implicitly by the small parties of dragoons which had been previously sent down to aid the customs, it did seem to him very strange that his opinions should go for nought; but also because he feared that the public service would suffer, and that the obstinacy, as he called it, of the young officer, would enable the smugglers to escape. Still more was his anxiety and indignation raised, when he perceived the slow pace at which the young officer proceeded, and that instead of taking the road which he had pointed out, the party kept the Priory Wood on the right hand, bearing away from Chequer-tree, to which he had assured himself that Richard Radford and his party were tending.

He saw that many precautions were taken, however, which, attributing them at first to a design of guarding against surprise, he thought quite unnecessary. Two dragoons were thrown forward at a considerable distance before the head of the troop; a single private followed about twenty yards behind them; two more succeeded, and then another, and last came Captain Irby himself, keeping Mr. Mowle by his side. From

time to time a word was passed down from those who led the advance, not shouted; but spoken in a tone only loud enough to be heard by the trooper immediately behind; and this word, for a considerable way, was merely "All clear!"

At length, just at the end of the Priory Wood, where a path, coming from the east, branched off towards Aldington Freight, and two roads went away to the north and west, the order to halt was given, to the surprise and consternation of Mr. Mowle, who conceived that the escape of the smugglers must be an inevitable result. At length a new word was passed from the head of the line, which was, "On before." But still the captain of the troop gave no command to march, and the soldiers sat idle on their horses for a quarter of an hour longer. Mowle calculated that it must now be at least half past four or five o'clock. He thought he perceived the approach of day; and though, in discontented silence, he ventured to say no more, he would have given all he had in the world to have had the command of the troop for a couple of hours.

His suspense and anxiety were brought to an end at length; for just as he was assured, by the greyness of the sky, that they sun would soon rise, a trooper came dashing down the right-hand path at full speed, and Captain Irby spurred on to meet him. What passed between them Mowle could not hear; but the message was soon delivered, the soldier rode back to the east, by the way he came, and the order to march was immediately given. Instead, however, of taking the road to Stonecross, the troop directed its course to the west, but at a somewhat quicker pace than before. Still a word was passed back from the head of the line; and, after a short time, the troop was put into a quick trot, Captain Irby sometimes endeavouring to lead his companion into general conversation upon any indifferent subject, but not once alluding to the expedition on which they were engaged. Poor Mowle was too anxious to talk much. He did not at all comprehend the plan upon which the young officer was acting; but yet he began to see that there was some plan in operation, and he repeated to himself more than once, "There must be something in it, that's clear; but he might as well tell me what it is, I think."

At length he turned frankly round to his companion, and

said, "I see you are going upon some scheme, captain. I wish to Heaven you would tell me what it is; for you can't imagine how anxious I am about this affair."

"My good friend," replied Captain Irby, "I know no more of the matter than you do; so I can tell you nothing about it. I am acting under orders; and the only difference between you and I is, that you, not being accustomed to do so, are always puzzling yourself to know what it all means, while I, being well drilled to such things, do not trouble my head about it, but do as I am told, quite sure that it will all go right."

"Heaven send it!" answered Mowle; "but here it is broad daylight, and we seem to be going farther and farther from our object every minute."

As if in answer to his last observation, the word was again passed down from the front, "On before!" and Captain Irby immediately halted his troop for about five minutes. At the end of that time, the march was resumed, and shortly after the whole body issued out upon the side of one of the hills, a few miles from Woodchurch.

The sun was now just risen; the east was glowing with all the hues of early day; the mist was dispersed or left behind in the neighbourhood of the Marsh; and a magnificent scene, all filled with golden light, spread out beneath the eyes of the custom-house officer. But he had other objects to contemplate much more interesting to him than the beauties of the landscape. About three-quarters of a mile in advance, and in the low ground to the north-west of the hill on which he stood, appeared a dark, confused mass of men and horses, apparently directing their course towards Tiffenden; and Mowle's practised eye instantly perceived that they were the smugglers. At first sight he thought, "They may escape us yet:" but following the direction in which Captain Irby's glance was turned, he saw, further on, in the open fields towards High Halden, a considerable body of horse, whose regular line at once showed them to be a party of the military. Then turning towards the little place on his left, called Cuckoo Point, he perceived, at the distance of about a mile, another troop of dragoons, who must have marched, he thought, from Brenzet and Appledore.

The smugglers seemed to become aware, nearly at the same

moment, of the presence of the troops on the side of High Halden; for they were observed to halt, to pause for a minute or two, then re-tread their steps for a short distance, and take their way over the side of the hill, as if tending towards Plurenden or Little Ingham.

"You should cut them off, sir; you should cut them off!" cried Mowle, addressing Captain Irby; "or, by Jove, they'll be over the hill above Brook Street, and then we shall never catch them, amongst all the woods and copses up there! They'll escape, to a certainty!"

"I think not, if I know my man," answered Captain Irby, coolly; "and, at all events, Mr. Mowle, I must obey my orders. But there he comes over the hill; so that matter's settled. Now let them get out if they can. You have heard of a rat-trap, Mr. Mowle?"

Mowle turned his eyes in the direction of an opposite hill, about three-quarters of a mile distant from the spot where he himself stood, and there, coming up at a rapid pace, appeared an officer in a plain grey cloak, with two or three others in full regimentals, round him, while a larger body of cavalry than any he had yet seen, met his eyes, following their commander about fifty yards behind, and gradually crowning the summit of the rise, where they halted. The smugglers could not be at more than half a mile's distance from this party, and the moment that it appeared, the troops from the side of High Halden and from Cuckoo Point began to advance at a quick trot, while Captain Irby descended into the lower ground more slowly, watching, with a small glass that he carried in his hand, the motions of all the other bodies, when the view was not cut off by the hedge-rows and copses, as his position altered. Mowle kept his eyes upon the body of smugglers, and upon the dragoons on the opposite hill, and he soon perceived a trooper ride down from the latter group to the former, as if bearing them some message.

The next instant there was a flash or two, as if the smugglers had fired upon the soldier sent to them; and then, retreating slowly towards a large white house, with some gardens and shrubberies and various out-buildings around it, they manifested a design of occupying the grounds with the intention of there resisting the attack of the cavalry. A trooper instantly galloped down, at full speed, towards Cap-

tain Irby, making him a sign with his hand as he came near; and the troop with whom Mowle had advanced instantly received the command to charge, while the other, from the hill, came dashing down with headlong speed towards the confused multitude below.

The smugglers were too late in their manœuvre. Embarrassed with a large quantity of goods and a number of men on foot; they had not time to reach the shelter of the garden walls, before the party of dragoons from the hill was amongst them. But still they resisted with fierce determination, formed with some degree of order, gave the troopers a sharp discharge of fire-arms as they came near, and fought hand to hand with them, even after being broken by their charge.

The greater distance which Captain Irby had to advance, prevented his troop from reaching the scene of strife for a minute or two after the others; but their arrival spread panic and confusion amongst the adverse party; and after a brief and unsuccessful struggle, in the course of which, one of the dragoons was killed, and a considerable number wounded, nothing was thought of amongst young Radford's band, but how to escape in the presence of such a force. The goods were abandoned; all those men who had horses were seen galloping over the country in different directions; and if any fugitive paused, it was but to turn and fire a shot at one of the dragoons in pursuit. Almost every one of the men on foot was taken ere half an hour was over; and a number of those on horseback were caught and brought back, some desperately wounded. Several were left dead, or dying, on the spot where the first encounter had taken place; and amongst the former, Mowle, with feelings of deep regret, almost approaching remorse, beheld, as he rode up towards the colonel of the regiment, the body of his friend, the major, shot through the head by a pistol-ball. Men of the custom-house officer's character, however, soon console themselves for such things; and Mowle, as he rode on, thought to himself, "After all, it's just as well! He would only have been hanged; so he's had an easier death."

The young officer in the command of the regiment of dragoons was seated on horseback, upon the top of a little knoll, with some six or seven persons immediately around him, while two groups of soldiers, dismounted, and guarding a

number of prisoners, appeared a little in advance. Amongst those nearest to the colonel, Mowle remarked his companion, Birchett, who was pointing, with a discharged pistol, across the country, and saying, "There he goes, sir, there he goes! I'll swear that is he, on the strong grey horse. I fired at him; I'm sure I must have hit him."

"No, you didn't, sir," answered a sergeant of dragoons, who was busily tying a handkerchief round his own wounded arm. "Your shot went through his hat."

The young officer fixed his eyes keenly upon the road leading to Harbourne, where a man, on horseback, was seen galloping away, at full speed, with four or five of the soldiers in pursuit.

"Away after him, Sergeant Miles," he said; "take straight across the country, with six men of Captain Irby's troop. They are fresher. If you make haste you will cut him off at the corner of the wood; or if he takes the road through it, in order to avoid you, leave a couple of men at Tiffenden corner, and go round by the path to the left. The distance will be shorter for you, and you will stop him at Mrs. Clare's cottage; a hundred guineas to any one who brings him in."

His orders were immediately obeyed; and, without noticing Mowle, or any one else, the colonel continued to gaze after the little party of dragoons, as, dashing on at the utmost speed of their horses, they crossed an open part of the ground in front, keeping to the right hand of the fugitive, and threatening to cut him off from the north side of the country, towards which he was decidedly tending. Whether, if he had been able to proceed at the same rate at which he was then going, they would have been successful in their efforts or not, is difficult to say; for his horse, though tired, was very powerful, and chosen expressly for its fleetness. But in a flight and pursuit like that, the slightest accident will throw the advantage on the one side or the other; and unfortunately for the fugitive, his horse stumbled, and came upon its knees. It was up again in a moment, and went on, though somewhat more slowly; and the young officer observed in a low tone, "They will have him. It is of the utmost importance that he should be taken. Ah! Mr. Mowle, is that you? Why, we have given you up for these many hours. We have been successful, you see; and yet, but half successful either, if their

leader gets away. You are sure of the person, Mr. Birchett?"

"Perfectly, sir," answered the officer of customs. "I was as near to him, at one time, as I am now to you; and Mr. Mowle here, too, will tell you I know him well."

"Who: young Radford?" asked Mowle. "Oh! yes, that we all do; and besides, I can tell you that is he on the grey horse, for I was along with him the greater part of last night." And Mowle proceeded to relate succinctly all that had occured to him from ten o'clock on the preceding evening.

The young officer, in the mean while, continued to follow the soldiers with his eyes, commenting, by a brief word or two, on the various turns taken by the pursuit.

"He is cut off," he said, in a tone of satisfaction; "the troops, from Halden, will stop him there. He is turning to the left, as if he would make for Tenderden. Captain Irby, be so good as to detach a corporal, with as many men as you can spare, to cut him off by Gallows Green, on the left hand road, there. Bid them use all speed. Now he's for Harbourne again! He'll try to get through the wood; but Miles will be before him."

He then applied himself to examine the state of his own men and the prisoners, and paid every humane attention to both, doing the best that he could for their wounds, in the absence of surgical assistance, and ordering carts to be procured from the neighbouring farms, to carry those most severely injured into the village of Woodchurch. The smuggled goods he consigned to the charge of the custom-house officers, giving them, however, a strong escort, at their express desire; although, he justly observed, that there was but little chance of any attempt being made by the smugglers to recover what they had lost.

"I shall now, Mr. Mowle," he continued, "proceed to Woodchurch, and remain there for a time, to see what other prisoners are brought in, and make any farther arrangements that may be necessary; but I shall be in Hythe, in all probability, before night. The custody of the prisoners I shall take upon myself for the present, as the civil power is evidently not capable of guarding them."

"Well, sir, you have made a glorious day's work of it,"

answered Mowle, "that I must say; and I'm sure if you like to establish your quarters for the morning at Mr. Croyland's there, on just before, he will make you heartily welcome, for he hates smugglers as much as any one."

The young officer shook his head, saying, "No, I will go to Woodchurch."

But he gazed earnestly at the house for several minutes, before he turned his horse towards the village; and then, leaving the minor arrangements to be made by the inferior officers, he rode slowly and silently away.

CHAPTER XXII.

We must turn, dear reader, to other persons and to other scenes, but still keep to that eventful day when the smugglers, who had almost fancied themselves lords of Kent, first met severe discomfiture at the hands of those sent to suppress their illicit traffic. Many small parties had before been defeated, it is true; many a cargo of great value, insufficiently protected, had been seized. Such, indeed, had been the case with the preceding adventure of Richard Radford; and such had been, several times, the result of overweening confidence; but the free-traders of Kent had still, more frequently, been successful in their resistance of the law; and they had never dreamed that in great numbers, and with every precaution and care to boot, they could be hemmed in and overpowered, in a country with every step of which they were well acquainted. They had now, however, been defeated, as I have said, for the first time, in a complete and conclusive manner, after every precaution had been taken, and when every opportunity had been afforded them of trying their strength with the dragoons, as they had often boastfully expressed a wish to do.

But we must now leave them and turn to the interior of the house near which the strife took place. Nay, more, we must enter a fair lady's chamber, and watch her as she lies, during the night of which we have already given so many scenes, looking for a while into her waking thoughts and slumbering dreams; for that night passed in a strange mingling of sleepless fancies and of drowsy visions.

Far be it from me to encourage weak and morbid sensibilities, or to represent life as a dream of sickly feelings, or a stage for the action of ill-regulated passions; it is a place of duty and of action, of obedience to the rule of the one great guide, of endeavour, and, alas, of trial! But still human beings are not mere machines; there is still something within this frame-work of dust and ashes, besides, and very different from, the bones and muscles, the veins and nerves, of which it is composed; and Heaven forbid that it should not be so! There are still loves and affections, sympathies and regards, associations and memories, and all the linked sweetness of that strange harmonious whole, where the spirit and the matter, the soul and the body, blended in mysterious union, act on each other, and reciprocate, by every sense and every perception, new sources of pain or of delight. The forms and conventionalities of society, the habits of the age in which we live, the force of education, habit, example, may, in very many cases, check the outward show of feeling, and in some, perhaps, wear down to nothing the reality. But still how many a bitter heart-ache lies concealed beneath the polished brow and smiling lip; how many a bright aspiration, how many a tender hope, how many a passionate throb, hides itself from the eyes of others, from the foreigners of the heart, under an aspect of gay merriment or of cold indifference. The silver services of the world are all, believe me, but of plated goods, and the brightest ornaments that deck the table or adorn the saloon but of silver gilt.

Could we, as angels are supposed to do, stand by the bedside of many a fair girl who has been laughing through an evening of apparent merriment, and look through the fair bosom into the heart beneath, see all the feelings that thrill therein, or trace even the visions that chequer slumber, what should we behold? Alas! how strange a contrast to the beaming looks and gladsome smiles which have marked the course of the day. How often would be seen the bitter repining; the weary sickness of the heart; the calm, stern grief; the desolation; the despair; forming a black and gloomy background to the bright seeming of the hours of light. How often, in the dream, should we behold "the lost, the loved, the dead: too many, yet how few," rise up before memory in those moments, when not only the shackles and the handcuffs of the mind, imposed by the tyrant uses of society, are cast off,

but also when the softer bands are loosened, which the waking spirit places upon unavailing regrets and aspirations all in vain; in those hours, when memory, and imagination, and feeling are awake, and when judgment, and reason, and resolution are all buried in slumber.

Can it be well for us thus to check the expression of all the deeper feelings of the heart, to shut out all external sympathies, to lock within the prison of the heart its brightest treasures like the miser's gold, and only to give up to them the hours of solitude and of slumber? I know not; and the question, perhaps, is a difficult one to solve: but such, however, are the general rules of society, and to its rules we are slaves and bondsmen.

It was to her own chamber that Edith Croyland usually carried her griefs and memories; and even in the house of her uncle, though she was aware how deeply he loved her, she could not, or she would not, venture to speak of her sensations as they really arose.

On the eventful day of young Radford's quarrel with Sir Edward Digby, Edith retired at the sober hour at which the whole household of Mr. Croyland usually sought repose; but there, for a considerable time, she meditated as she had often meditated before, on the brief intelligence she had received on the preceding day. "He is living," she said to herself; "he is in England, and yet he seeks me not! But my sister says he loves me still! It is strange; it is very strange! He must have greatly changed. So eager, so impetuous as he used to be, to become timid, cautious, reserved: never to write; never to send. And yet why should I blame him? What has he not met with from mine, if not from me? What has his love brought upon himself and his? The ruin of his father, a parent's suffering and death, the destruction of his own best prospects, a life of toil and danger, and expulsion from the scenes in which his bright and early days were spent! Why should I wonder that he does not come back to a spot where every object must be hateful to him? Why should I wonder that he does not seek me, whose image can never be separated from all that is painful and distressing to him in memory? Poor Henry! Oh! that I could cheer him, and wipe away the dark and gloomy recollections of the past."

Such were some of her thoughts ere she lay down to rest;

and they pursued her still, long after she had sought her pillow, keeping her waking for some hours. At length, not long before daybreak, sleep took possession of her brain; but it was not untroubled sleep. Wild and whirling images for some time supplied the place of thought; but they were all vague and confused, and undefined for a considerable length of time after sleep had closed her eyes, and she forgot them as soon as she awoke. But at length a vision of more tangible form presented itself, which remained impressed upon her memory. In it, the events of the day mingled with those both of the former and the latter years, undoubtedly in strange and disorderly shape, but still bearing a sufficient resemblance to reality to show whence they were derived. The form of young Radford, bleeding and wounded, seemed before her eyes; and with one hand clasped tightly round her wrist, he seemed to drag her down into a grave prepared for himself. Then she saw Sir Edward Digby with a naked sword in his hand, striving in vain to cut off the arm that held her, the keen blade passing through and through the limb of the phantom without dissevering it from the body, or relaxing its hold upon herself. Then the figure of her father stood before her, clad in a long mourning cloak, and she heard his voice crying, in a dark and solemn tone, "Down, down, both of you, to the grave that you have dug for me!" The next instant the scene was crowded with figures, both on horseback and on foot. Many a countenance which she had seen and known at different times was amongst them; and all seemed urging her on down into the gulf before her; till suddenly appeared, at the head of a bright and glittering troop, he whom she had so long and deeply loved, as if advancing at full speed to her rescue. She called loudly to him, she stretched out her hand towards him, and onward he came through the throng till he nearly reached her. Then in an instant her father interposed again and pushed him back. All became a scene of disarray and confusion, as if a general battle had been taking place around her. Swords were drawn, shots were fired, wounds were given and received; there were cries of agony and loud words of command, till at length, in the midst, her lover reached her; his arms were cast round her; she was pressed to his bosom; and with a start, and mingled feelings of joy and terror, Edith's dream came to an end.

Daylight was pouring into her room through the tall window; but yet she could hardly persuade herself that she was not dreaming still; for many of the sounds which had transmitted such strange impressions to her mind, still rang in her ears. She heard shots and galloping horse, and the loud word of command; and after pausing for an instant or two, she sprang up, cast something over her, and ran to the window.

It was a bright and beautiful morning; and the room which she occupied looked over Mr. Croyland's garden wall to the country beyond. But underneath that garden wall was presented a scene such as Edith had never before witnessed. Before her eyes, mingled in strange confusion with a group of men who, from their appearance, she judged to be smugglers, were a number of the royal dragoons; and, though pistols were discharged on both sides, and even long guns on the part of the smugglers, the use of fire-arms was too limited to produce sufficient smoke to obscure the view. Swords were out, and used vehemently; and on running her eye over the mass before her, she saw a figure that strongly brought back her thoughts to former days. Directing the operations of the troops, seldom using the sword which he carried in his own hand, yet mingling in the thickest of the fray, appeared a tall and powerful young man, mounted on a splendid charger, but only covered with a plain grey cloak.

The features she could scarcely discern; but there was something in the form and in the bearing, that made Edith's heart beat vehemently, and caused her to raise her voice to Heaven in murmured prayer. The shots were flying thick: one of them struck the sun-dial in the garden, and knocked a fragment off; but still she could not withdraw herself from the window; and with eager and anxious eyes she continued to watch the fight, till another body of dragoons swept up, and the smugglers, apparently struck with panic, abandoned resistance, and were soon seen flying in every direction over the ground.

One man, mounted on a strong grey horse, passed close beneath the garden wall; and in him Edith instantly recognised young Richard Radford. That sight made her draw back again for a moment from the window, lest he should recognise her; but the next instant she looked out again, and then beheld the officer whom she had seen commanding the

dragoons, stretching out his hand and arm in the direction which the fugitive had taken, as if giving orders for his pursuit. She watched him with feelings indescribable, and saw him more than once turn his eyes towards the house where she was, and gaze on it long and thoughtfully.

"Can he know whose dwelling this is?" she asked herself; "can he know who is in it, and yet ride away?" But so it was. After he had remained on the ground for about half an hour, she saw him depart, turning his horse's head slowly towards Woodchurch; and Edith withdrew from the window, and wept.

Her eyes were dry, however, and her manner calm, when she went down to breakfast; and she heard unmoved, from her uncle, the details of the skirmish which had taken place between the smugglers and the military.

"This must be a tremendous blow to them," said Mr. Croyland; "the goods are reported to be of immense value, and the whole of them are stated to have been run by that old infernal villain, Radford. I am glad that this has happened, trebly—*felix ter et amplius*, my dear Edith: first, that a trade which enriches scoundrels to the detriment of the fair and lawful merchant, has received nearly its death-blow; secondly, that these audacious vagabonds, who fancied they had all the world at their command, and that they could do as they pleased in Kent, have been taught how impotent they are against a powerful hand and a clear head; and, thirdly, that the most audacious vagabond of them all, who has amassed a large fortune by defiance of the law, and by a system which embodies cheatery with robbery—I mean robbery of the revenue with cheatery of the lawful merchant—has been the person to suffer. I have heard a great deal of forcing nations to abate their customs dues, by smuggling in despite of them; but depend upon it, whoever advocates such a system is—I will not say, either a rogue or a fool, as some rash and intemperate persons might say—but a man with very queer notions of morals, my dear. I dare say, the fellows' firing awoke you, my love. You look pale, as if you had been disturbed."

Edith replied, simply, that she had been roused by the noise, but did not enter into any particulars, though she saw, or fancied she saw, an inquiring look upon her uncle's face as he spoke.

During the morning many were the reports and anecdotes

brought in by the servants, regarding the encounter which had taken place so close to the house; and all agreed that never had so terrible a disaster befallen the smugglers. Their bands were quite broken up, it was said, their principal leaders taken or killed, and the amount of the smuggled goods which, with the usual exaggeration of rumour, was raised to three or four hundred thousand pounds, was universally reported to be the loss of Mr. Radford. His son had been seen by many in command of the party of contraband traders; and it was clear that he had fled to conceal himself, in fear of the very serious consequences which were likely to ensue.

Mr. Croyland rubbed his hands: "I will mark this day in the calendar with a white stone!" he said. "Seldom, my dear Edith, very seldom, do so many fortunate circumstances happen together; a party of atrocious vagabonds discomfited and punished as they deserve; the most audacious rogue of the whole stripped of his ill-gotten wealth; and a young ruffian, who has long bullied and abused the whole county, driven from that society in which he never had any business. This young officer, this Captain Osborn, must be a very clever, as well as a very gallant fellow."

"Captain Osborn!" murmured Edith; "were they commanded by Captain Osborn?"

"Yes, my dear," answered the old gentleman; "I saw him myself over the garden wall. I know him, my love; I have been introduced to him. Didn't you hear me say, he is coming to spend a few days with me?"

Edith made no reply; but somewhat to her surprise, she heard her uncle, shortly after, order his carriage to be at the door at half-past twelve. He gave his fair niece no invitation to accompany him; and Edith prepared to amuse herself, during his absence, as best she might. She calculated, indeed, upon that which, to a well-regulated mind, is almost always either a relief or a pleasure, though too often a sad one: the spending of an hour or two in solitary thought. But all human calculations are vain; and so were those of poor Edith Croyland. For the present, however, we must leave her to her fate, and follow her good uncle on his expedition to Woodchurch, whither, as doubtless the reader has anticipated, his steps, or rather those of his coach-horses, were turned, just as the hands of the clock in the vestibule pointed to a quarter to one.

CHAPTER XXIII.

During the whole forenoon of the 3rd of September, the little village of Woodchurch presented a busy and bustling, though, in truth, it could not be called a gay scene. The smart dresses of the dragoons, the number of men and horses, the soldiers riding quickly along the road from time to time, the occasional sound of the trumpet, the groups of villagers and gaping children, all had an animating effect; but there was, mingled with the other sights which the place presented, quite a sufficient portion of human misery, in various forms, to sadden any but a very unfeeling heart. For some time after the affray was over, every ten minutes was seen to roll in one of the small, narrow carts of the country, half filled with straw, and bearing a wounded man, or at most, two. In the same manner, several corpses, also, were carried in; and the number of at least fifty prisoners, in separate detachments, with hanging hands and pinioned arms, were marched slowly through the street to the houses which had been marked out as affording the greatest security.

The good people of Woodchurch laughed and talked freely with the dragoons, made many inquiries concerning the events of the skirmish, and gave every assistance to the wounded soldiers; but it was remarked with surprise, by several of the officers, that they showed no great sympathy with the smugglers, either prisoners or wounded; gazed upon the parties who were brought in with an unfriendly air, and turning round to each other, commented, in low tones, with very little appearance of compassion.

"Ay, that's one of the Ramleys' gang," said the stout blacksmith of the place, to his friend and neighbour, the wheelwright, as some ten or twelve men passed before them with their wrists tied.

"And that fellow in the smart green coat is another," rejoined the wheelwright; "he's the man who, I dare say,

ham-stringed my mare, because I wouldn't let them have her for the last run."

"That's Tom Angel," observed the blacksmith; "he's to be married to Jinny Ramley, they say."

"He'll be married to a halter first, I've a notion," answered the wheelwright; "and then instead of an angel he'll make a devil! He's one of the worst of them, bad as they all are. A pretty gaol delivery we shall have at the next 'sizes!"

"A good county delivery, too," replied the blacksmith; "as men have been killed, it's felony, that's clear: so hemp will be dear, Mr. Slatterly."

By the above conversation the feelings of the people of Woodchurch towards the smugglers, at that particular time, may be easily divined; but the reader must not suppose that they were influenced alone by the very common tendency of men's nature to side with the winning party; for such was not altogether the case, though, perhaps, they would not have ventured to show their dislike to the smugglers so strongly, had they been more successful. As long as the worthy gentlemen, who had now met with so severe a reverse, had contented themselves with merely running contraband articles; even as long as they had done nothing more than take a man's horse for their own purposes, without his leave, or use his premises, whether he liked it or not, as a place of concealment for their smuggled goods, they were not only indifferent, but even friendly; for man has always a sufficient portion of the adventurer at his heart to have a fellow feeling for all his brethren engaged in rash and perilous enterprises. But the smugglers had grown insolent and domineering from long success; they had not only felt themselves lords of the county, but had made others feel it often in an insinuating, and often in a cruel and brutal manner. Crimes of a very serious character had been lately committed by the Ramleys and others, which, though not traced home by sufficient evidence to satisfy the law, were fixed upon them by the general voice of the people; and the threats of terrible vengeance which they sometimes uttered against all who opposed them, and the boastful tone in which they indulged, when speaking of their most criminal exploits, probably gained them credit for much more wickedness than they really committed.

Thus their credit with the country people was certainly on

the decline when they met with the disaster which has been lately recorded; and their defeat and dispersion was held by the inhabitants of Woodchurch as an augury of better times, when their women would be able to pass from village to village, even after dusk, in safety and free from insult, and their cattle might be left out in the fields all night, without being injured, either by wantonness, or in lawless uses. It will be understood that in thus speaking, I allude alone to the land smugglers, a race altogether different from their fellow labourers of the sea, whom the people looked upon with a much more favourable eye, and who, though rash and daring men enough, were generally a good-humoured, free-hearted body, spending the money that they had gained at the peril of their lives or their freedom, with a liberal hand and in a kindly spirit.

Almost every inhabitant of Woodchurch had some cause of complaint against the Ramleys' gang; and, to say the truth, Mr. Radford himself was by no means popular in the county. A selfish and a cunning man is almost always speedily found out by the lower classes, even when he makes an effort to conceal it. But Mr. Radford took no such trouble, for he gloried in his acuteness, and if he had chosen a motto, it probably would have been "Every man for himself." His selfishness, too, took several of the most offensive forms. He was ostentatious, he was haughty, and on the strength of riches acquired, every one knew how, he looked upon himself as a very great man, and treated all the inferior classes, except those of whom he had need, to use their own expression, "as dirt under his feet." All the villagers, therefore, were well satisfied to think that he had met with a check at last; and many of the good folks of Woodchurch speculated upon the probability of two or three, out of so great a number of prisoners, giving such evidence as would bring that worthy gentleman within the gripe of the law.

Such were the feelings of the people of that place, as well as those of many a neighbouring village; and the scene presented by the captive and wounded smugglers, as they were led along, was viewed with indifference by some, and with pleasure by others. Two or three of the women, indeed, bestowed kindly attention upon the wounded men, moved by that beautiful compassion which is rarely if ever wanting in a female heart; but the male part of the population took little

share, if any, in such things, and were quite willing to aid the soldiers in securing the prisoners, till they could be marched off to prison.

The first excitement had subsided before noon, but still, from time to time some little bustle took place: a prisoner was caught and brought in, and carried to the public-house where the colonel had established himself; an orderly galloped through the street; messengers came and went; and four or five soldiers, with their horses ready saddled, remained before the door of the inn, ready, at a moment's notice, for any event. The commanding officer did not appear at all beyond the doors of his temporary abode, but continued writing, giving orders, examining the prisoners, and those who brought them, in the same room which he had entered when first he arrived. As few of the people of the place had seen him, a good deal of curiosity was excited by his quietness and reserve. It was whispered amongst the women that he was the handsomest man ever seen; and the men said he was a very fine fellow, and ought to be made a general of. The barmaid communicated to her intimate friends, that when he took off his cloak, she had seen a star upon the breast of his coat; and that her master seemed to know more of him, if he liked to tell; but the landlord was as silent as a mouse.

These circumstances, however, kept up a little crowd before the entrance of the inn, consisting of persons anxious to behold the hero of the day; and just at the hour of two, the carriage of Mr. Croyland rolled in, through the people, at the usual slow and deliberate pace to which that gentleman accustomed his carriage horses.

The large heavy door of the large heavy vehicle was opened by the two servants who accompanied it; and out stepped Mr. Croyland, with his back as straight and stiff as a poker, and his gold-headed cane in his hand. The landlord, at the sight of an equipage which he well knew, came out in haste, bowing low, and welcoming Mr. Croyland in the hearty good old style. The nabob himself unbent a little to his friend of the inn, and after asking him how he did, and bestowing a word or two on the state of the weather, proceeded to say: "And now, Miles, I wish to speak a word or two with Captain Osborn, who is in your house, I believe."

"No, Mr. Croyland," replied the landlord, looking at the

visitor with some surprise; "the captain is not here. He is down at Nelly South's, and his name's not Osborn either, but Irby."

"Then who the deuce have you got here, with all these soldiers about the door?" demanded Mr. Croyland.

"The colonel of the regiment, sir," answered Miles; "there has only been one captain here all day; and that's Captain Irby."

"Not right of the lad; not right of the lad!" exclaimed Mr. Croyland, rather testily; "no one should keep a man waiting, especially an old man, and, more especially still, a cross old man. But I'll come in and stop a bit; for I want to see the young gentleman. Where the devil did he go to, I wonder, after the skirmish? Halloo! you sir, corporal. Pray, sir, what's your officer's name?"

The man put up his hand in military fashion, and, with a strong Hibernian accent, demanded, "Is it the colonel you are inquiring about, sir? Why, then, his name is Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Layton, Knight of the Bath: and mighty cold weather it was, too, when he got the bath; so I didn't envy him his ducking."

"Oh, ho!" said Mr. Croyland, putting his finger sagaciously to the side of his nose; "be so good as to send up that card to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Layton, Knight of the Bath, and tell him that the gentleman whose appellation it bears is here, inquiring for one Captain Osborn whom he once saw."

The corporal took the card himself to the top of the stairs, and delivered the message, with as much precision as his intellect could muster, to some person who seemed to be waiting on the outside of a door above. "Why, you fool!" cried a voice, immediately, "I told you, if Mr. Croyland came, to show him up. Sir Henry will see him." And immediately a servant, in plain clothes, descended to perform his function himself.

"Very grand!" murmured Mr. Croyland, as he followed.

The door above was immediately thrown open, and his name announced; but, walking slowly, he had not entered the room before the young officer, who has more than once been before the reader's eyes, was half across the floor to meet him. He was now dressed in full uniform; and certainly a finer or more commanding-looking man had seldom, if ever,

met Mr. Croyland's view. Advancing with a frank and pleasant smile, he led him to the arm-chair which he had just occupied, it was the only one in the room, and, after thanking him for his visit, turned to the servant, and bade him shut the door.

"I am in some surprise, and in some doubt, Sir Henry," said Mr. Croyland, with his sharp eyes twinkling a little. "I came here to see one Captain Osborn, and I find a gentleman very like him in truth, but certainly a much smarter looking person, whom I am told is Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Layton, Knight of the Bath, &c. &c. &c.; and yet he seems to look upon old Zachary Croyland as a friend, too."

"He does, from his heart, I can assure you, Mr. Croyland," replied the young officer; "and I trust you will ever permit him to do so. But if it becomes us to deceive no man, it becomes us still more not to deceive a friend; and on that account it was I asked your presence here, to explain to you one or two circumstances which I thought it but just you should know, before I ventured to present myself at your house."

"Pray speak, Sir Henry," replied Mr. Croyland; "I am all ears."

The young officer paused for a moment, and a shadow came over his brow, as if something painful passed through his mind; but then, with a slight motion of his hand, as if he would have waved away unpleasant thoughts, he said, "I must first tell you, my dear sir, that I am the son of the Reverend Henry Layton, whom you once knew, and the nephew of that Charles Osborn, with whom you were also intimately acquainted."

"The dearest friend I ever had in the world," replied Mr. Croyland, blowing his nose violently.

"Then I trust you will extend the same friendship to his nephew," said the colonel.

"I don't know, I don't know," answered Mr. Croyland; "that must depend upon circumstances. I'm a very crabbed, tiresome old fellow, Sir Henry; and my friendships are not very sudden ones. But I have patted your head many a time when you were a child, and that's something. Then you are very like your father, and a little like your uncle, that's something more; so we may get on, I think. But what have you

got to say more? and what in the name of fortune made you call yourself Captain Osborn to an old friend of your family like myself?"

"I did not do so, if you recollect," replied the young officer. "It was my friend Digby who gave me that name; and you must pardon me, if, on many accounts, I yielded to the trick; for I was coming down here on a difficult service, one that I am not accustomed to, and do not like; and I was very desirous of seeing a little of the country, and of learning something of the habits of the persons with whom I had to deal, before I was called upon to act."

"And devilish well you did act when you set about it," cried Mr. Croyland. "I watched you this morning over the wall, and wondered a little that you did not come on to my house at once."

"It is upon that subject that I must now speak," said Sir Henry Layton, taking a grave tone, "and I must touch upon many painful subjects in the past. Just when I was about to write to you, Mr. Croyland, to say that I would come, in accordance with your kind invitation, I learned that your niece, Miss Croyland, is staying at your house. Now, I know not whether you have been informed, that long ago—"

"Oh! yes, I know all about that," answered Mr. Croyland, quickly. "There was a great deal of love and courting, and all that sort of boy and girl's stuff."

"It must be man and woman's stuff now, Mr. Croyland," replied the young officer; "for I must tell you fairly and at once, I love her as deeply, as truly as ever. Years have made no difference; other scenes have made no change. The same as I went, in every thought and feeling, I have returned; and I can never think of her without emotion, which I can never speak to her without expressing."

"Indeed, indeed!" said Mr. Croyland, apparently in some surprise. "That does make some difference."

"That is what I feared," continued Sir Henry Layton. "Your brother disapproved of our engagement. In consequence of it he behaved to my father in a way on which I will not dwell. You would not have behaved in such a way, I know; and although I should think any means justifiable, to see your niece when in her father's mansion, to tell her how deeply I love her still, and to ask her to sacrifice fortune and everything

to share a soldier's fate, yet I did not think it would be right or honourable, to come into the house of a friend under a feigned name, and seek his niece, for seek her I should wherever I found her, when he might share the same views as his brother, or at all events think himself bound to support them. In short, Mr. Croyland, I knew that when you were aware of my real name and of my real feelings, it would make a difference, and a great one."

"Not the difference you think, Harry," replied the old gentleman, holding out his hand to him; "but quite the reverse. I'll tell you what, young man, I think you a devilish fine, high-spirited, honourable fellow, and the only one I ever saw whom I should like to marry my Edith. So don't say a word more about it. Come and dine with me to-day, as soon as you've got all this job over. You shall see her; you shall talk to her; you shall make all your arrangements together; and if there's a post-chaise in the country, I'll put you in and shut the door with my own hands. My brother is an old fool, and worse than an old fool, too: something very like an old rogue; at least, so he behaved to your father, and not much better to his own child; but I don't care a straw about him, and never did; and I never intend to humour one of his whims."

Sir Henry Layton pressed the old gentleman's hand in his with much emotion, for the prospect seemed brightening to him, and the dark clouds which had so long overshadowed his course appeared to be breaking away. He had been hitherto like a traveller on a strong and spirited horse, steadfastly pursuing his course, and making his way onward with vigour and determination, but with a dark and threatening sky overhead, and not even a gleam of hope to lead him on. Distinction, honours, competence, command, he had obtained by his own talents and his own energies; he was looked up to by those below him, by his equals, even by many of his superiors. The eyes of all who knew him turned towards him as to one who was destined to be a leading man in his day. Everything seemed fair and smiling around him, and no eye could see the cloud that overshadowed him but his own. But what to him were honours, or wealth, or the world's applause, if the love of his early years were to remain blighted for ever? And in the tented field, the city, or the court, the shadow had still remained upon his

heart's best feelings, not checking his energies, but saddening all his enjoyments. How often is it in the world that we thus see the bright, the admired, the powerful, the prosperous, with the grave hue of painful thoughts upon the brow, the never unmingled smile, the lapses of gloomy meditation, and ask ourselves, "What is the secret sorrow in the midst of all this success? what is the fountain of darkness that turns the stream of sunshine grey? what the canker-worm that preys upon so bright a flower?" Deep, deep in the recesses of the heart, it lies gnawing in silence, but never ceasing and never satisfied. Now, however, there was a light in the heavens for him; and whether it was as one of those rays that sometimes break through a storm, and then pass away, no more to be seen till the day dies in darkness, or whether it was the first glad harbinger of a serene evening after a stormy morning, the conclusion of this tale must show.

"I'll tell you something, my dear boy," continued Mr. Croyland, forgetting that he was speaking to the colonel of a dragoon regiment, and going back at a leap to early days. "Your father was my old school-fellow and dear companion; your uncle was the best friend I ever had, and the founder of my fortune, for to his interest I owe my first appointment to India, ay, and to his generosity, the greater part of my outfit and my passage. To them I am indebted for everything, to my brother for nothing; and I look upon you as a relation much more than upon him, so I have no very affectionate motives for countenancing or assisting him in doing what is not right. I'll tell you something more, too, Harry; I was sure that you would do what is honourable and right, not because you have got a good name in the world, for I am always doubtful of the world's good names; and, besides, I never heard the name of Sir Harry Layton till this blessed day, but because you were the son of one honest man, and the nephew of another, and a good, wild, frank boy too. So I was quite sure you would not come to my house under a false name, when my niece was in it, without, at all events, letting me into the secret; and you have justified my confidence, young man."

"I would not have done such a thing for the world," replied the young officer; "but may I ask then, my dear Mr. Croyland, if you recognised me in the stage-coach, for it must be eighteen or nineteen years since you saw me."

"Don't call me Mr. Croyland," said the old gentleman, abruptly; "call me Zachary, or Nabob, or Misanthrope, or Bear, or anything but that. As to your question, I say, no. I did not recognise you the least in the world. I saw in your face something like the faces of old friends, and I liked it on that account. But as for the rest of the matter, there's a little secret, my boy; a little bit of a puzzle. By one way or another, it matters not what, I had found out that Captain Osborn was my old friend Layton's son; but till I came here to-day, I had no notion that he was colonel of the regiment, and a Knight of the Bath to-boot, as your corporal fellow took care to inform me. I thought you had been going under a false name, perhaps, all this time, and fancied I should find Captain Osborn quite well known in the regiment. I had a shrewd notion, too, that you had sent for me to tell the secret; but I was determined to let you explain yourself without helping you at all, for I'm a great deal fonder of men's actions than their words, Harry."

"Is it fair to ask, who told you who I was?" asked Sir Henry Layton. "My friend Digby has some—"

"No, no," cried Mr. Croyland; "it wan't that good, rash, rattle-pate, coxcomb of a fellow, who is only fit to be caged with little Zara; and then they may live together very well, like two monkeys in a show-box. No, he had nothing to do with it, though he has been busy enough since he came here; shooting partridges, and fighting young Radfords, and all that sort of thing."

"Fighting young Radfords!" exclaimed Sir Henry Layton, suddenly grasping the sheath of his sword with his right hand. "He should not have done that, at least, without letting me know."

"Why, he knew nothing about it himself," replied Mr. Croyland, "till the minute it took place. The young vagabond followed him to my house; so I civilly told my brother's pet that I didn't want to see him; and he walked away with your friend Digby just across the lawn in front of the house, when, after a few minutes of pleasant conversation, the baronet applies a horsewhip, with considerable unction and perseverance, to the shoulders of Richard Radford, Esquire, junior; upon which out comes the pinking-irons, and in the course of the scuffle, Sir Edward receives a little hole in the shoulder, and

Mr. Radford is disarmed and brought upon his knee, with a very unpleasant and ungentleman-like bump upon his forehead, bestowed, with hearty good-will, by the hilt of Master Digby's sword. Well, when he had got him there, instead of quietly poking a hole through him, as any man of common sense would have done, your friend let's him get up again, and ride away, just as a man might be supposed to pinch a cobra that had bit him, by the tail, and then say, 'Walk off, my friend.' However, so stands the matter; and young Radford rode away, vowing all sorts of vengeance. He'll have it, too, if he can get it, for he's as spiteful as a baboon; so I hope you've caught him, as he was with these smuggling vagabonds, that's certain."

Sir Henry Layton shook his head. "He has escaped, I am sorry to say," he replied. "How, I cannot divine; for I took means to catch him that I thought were infallible. All the roads through Harbourne Wood were guarded, but yet in that wood all trace of him was lost. He left his horse in the midst of it, and must have escaped by some of the by-paths."

"He's concealed in my brother's house, for a hundred guineas!" cried Mr. Croyland. "Robert's bewitched to a certainty; for nothing else but witchcraft could make a man take an owl for a cock pheasant. Oh! yes; there he is, snug in Harbourne House, depend upon it, feeding upon venison and turbot, and with a magnum of claret and two bottles of port to keep him comfortable: a drunken, beastly, vicious brute! A cross between a wolf and a swine, and not without a touch of the fox either, though the first figure is the best; for his father was the wolf, and his mother the sow, if all tales be true."

"He cannot be in Harbourne House, I should think," replied the colonel, "for my dragoons searched it, it seems; violating the laws a little, for they had no competent authority with them; and besides he would not have put himself within Digby's reach, I imagine."

"Then he's up in a tree, roosting in the day, like a bird of prey," rejoined Mr. Croyland, in his quick way. "It's very unlucky he has escaped, very unlucky indeed."

"At all events," answered the young officer, "thus much have we gained, my dear friend: he dare not show himself in this county for years. He was seen, by competent witnesses, at the head of these smugglers, taking an active part with them in resistance to lawful authority. Blood has been shed,

lives have been sacrificed, and a felony has been committed; so that if he is wise, and can manage it, he will get out of England. If he fail of escaping, or venture to show himself, he will grace the gallows, depend upon it."

"Heaven be praised!" cried Mr. Croyland. "Give me the first tidings, when it is to happen, Harry, that I may order four horses, and hire a window. I would not have him hanged without my seeing it for a hundred pounds."

Sir Henry Layton smiled faintly, saying, "Those are sad sights, my dear sir, and we have too many of them in this county; but you have not told me, from whom you received intimation that Captain Osborn and Henry Osborn Layton were the same person."

"That's a secret, that's a secret, Hal," answered Mr. Croyland. "So now tell me when you'll come. You'll be over to-night, I suppose, or have time and wisdom tamed the eagerness of love?"

"Oh no! my dear sir," answered Layton; "but I have still some business to settle here, and have promised to be in Hythe to-night. Before I go, however, I will ride over for an hour or two, for, till I have seen that dear girl again, and have heard her feelings and her wishes from her own lips, my thoughts will be all in confusion. I shall be calmer and more reasonable afterwards."

"Much need!" answered Mr. Croyland. "But now I must leave you. I shan't say a word about it all, till you come; for preparing people's mind is all nonsense. It is only drawing them out upon the rack of expectation, which leaves them bruised and crushed, with no power to resist whatever is to come afterwards. But don't be long, Harry, for remember that delays are dangerous."

Layton promised to set out as soon as one of his messengers, whom he expected every instant, had returned; and going down with Mr. Croyland to the door of his carriage, he bade him adieu, and watched him as he drove away, gratifying the eyes of the people of Woodchurch with a view of his fine person, as he stood uncovered at the door. In the mean time, Mr. Croyland took his way slowly back towards his own dwelling.

What had happened there during his absence, we shall see presently.

CHAPTER XXIV.

All things have their several stages; and, without a knowledge of the preceding one it is impossible to judge accurately of any event which is the immediate subject of our contemplation. The life of every one, the history of the whole world that we inhabit, is but a regular drama with its scenes and acts, each depending for its interest upon that which preceded. I therefore judge it necessary, before going on to detail the events which took place in Mr. Croyland's house during his absence, to visit the dwelling of his brother, and give some account of that which produced them. On the same eventful morning, then, of which we have spoken so much already, the inhabitants of Harbourne House slept quietly during the little engagement between the smugglers and the dragoons, unaware that things of great importance to their little circle were passing at no great distance. I have mentioned the inhabitants of Harbourne House; but perhaps it would have been more proper to have said the master, his family, and his guest; for a number of the servants were up; the windows were opened; and the wind, setting from Woodchurch, brought the sound of fire-arms thence. The movement of the troops from the side of High Halden was also remarked by one of the housemaids and a footman, as the young lady was leaning out of one of the windows with the young gentleman by her side. In a minute or two after they perceived, galloping across the country, two or three parties of men on horseback, as if in flight and pursuit. Most of these took to the right or left, and were soon lost to the sight; but at length one solitary horseman came on at a furious speed towards Harbourne House, with a small party of dragoons following him direct at a couple of hundred yards' distance, while two or three of the soldiery were seen scattered away to the right, and a somewhat larger body appeared moving down at a quick pace to the left, as if to cut the fugitive off at Gallows Green.

The horse of the single rider seemed tired and dirty; and he was himself without a hat; but nevertheless, they pushed on with such rapidity, that a few seconds from the time when they were first seen, brought steed and horseman into the little parish road which I have mentioned as running in front of the house, and passing round the grounds into the wood. As the fugitive drew near, the maid exclaimed, with a sort of a half scream, "Why, Lord ha' mercy, Matthew, it's young Mr. Radford!"

"To be sure it is," answered the footman; "didn't you see that before, Betsy? There's a number of the dragoons after him too. He's been up to some of his tricks, I'll warrant."

"Well, I hope he won't come in here, at all events," rejoined the maid, "for I shouldn't like it, if we were to have any fighting in the house."

"I shall go and shut the hall door," said the footman, drily: Richard Radford not having ingratiated himself as much with the servants as he had done with their master. But this precaution was rendered unnecessary; for the young man showed no inclination to enter the house, but passing along the road with the rapidity of an arrow, was soon lost in the wood, without even looking up towards the house of Sir Robert Croyland. Several of the dragoons followed him quickly; but two of them planted themselves at the corner of the road, and remained there immoveable.

The maid then observed, that she thought it high time the gentlefolks should be called; and she proceeded to execute her laudable purpose, taking care that tidings of what she had seen concerning Mr. Radford should be communicated to Sir Robert Croyland, to Zara, and to the servant of Sir Edward Digby, who again carried the intelligence to his master. The whole house was soon afoot; and Sir Robert was just out of his room in his dressing-gown, when three of the soldiers entered the mansion, expressing their determination to search it, and declaring their conviction that the smuggler whom they had been pursuing had taken refuge there.

In vain Sir Robert Croyland remonstrated, and inquired if they had a warrant; in vain the servants assured the dragoons that no person had entered during the morning. The serjeant who was at their head, persisted in asserting that the fugitive

must have come in there, just when he was hid from his pursuers by the trees, assigning as a reason for this belief, that they had found his horse turned loose not a hundred yards from the house. They accordingly proceeded to execute their intention, meeting with no farther impediment till they reached the room of Sir Edward Digby, who, though he did not choose to interfere, not being on duty himself, warned the serjeant that he must be careful of what he was doing, as it appeared that he had neither magistrate, warrant, nor custom-house officer with him.

The serjeant, however, who was a bold and resolute fellow, and moreover a little heated and excited by the pursuit, took the responsibility upon himself, saying that he was fully authorised by Mr. Birchett to follow, search for, and apprehend one Richard Radford, and that he had the colonel's orders, too. Certainly not a nook or corner of Harbourne House did he leave unexamined before he retired, grumbling and wondering at his want of success.

Previous to his going, Sir Edward Digby charged him with a message to the colonel, which proved as great an enigma to the soldier as the escape of Richard Radford. "Tell him," said the young baronet, "that I am ready to come down if he wants me; but that if he does not, I think I am quite as well where I am."

The breakfast passed in that sort of hurried and desultory conversation which such a dish of gossip, as now poured in from all quarters, usually produces, when served up at the morning meal. Sir Robert Croyland, indeed, looked ill at ease, laughed and jested in an unnatural and strained tone upon smugglers and smuggling, and questioned every servant that came in for further tidings. The reports that he thus received were as full of falsehood and exaggeration as all such reports generally are. The property captured was said to be immense. Two or three hundred smugglers were mentioned as having been taken, and a whole legion of them killed. Some had made confession, and clearly proved that the whole property was Mr. Radford's; and some had fought to the last, and killed an incredible number of the soldiers. To believe the butler, who received his information from the hind, who had his from the shepherd, the man called the major, before he died, had absolutely breakfasted on dragoons, as if they had been

prawns; but all agreed that never had such a large body of contraband traders been assembled before, or suffered such a disastrous defeat, in any of their expeditions.

Sir Edward Digby gathered from the whole account, that his friend had been fully successful, that the smugglers had fought fiercely, that blood had been shed, and that Richard Radford, after having taken an active part in the affray, was now a fugitive, and, as the young baronet fancied, never to appear upon the stage again. But still Sir Robert Croyland did not seem by any means so well pleased as might have been wished; and a dark and thoughtful cloud would frequently come over his heavy brow, while a slight twitching of his lip seemed to indicate that anxiety had as great a share in his feelings as mortification.

Mrs. Barbara Croyland amused herself, as usual, by doing her best to tease every one around her, and by saying the most malapropos things in the world. She spoke with great commiseration of "the poor smugglers:" every particle of her pity was bestowed upon them. She talked of the soldiers as if they had been the most fierce and sanguinary monsters in Europe, who had attacked, unprovoked, a party of poor men that were doing them no harm; till Zara's glowing cheek recalled to her mind, that these very blood-thirsty dragoons were Sir Edward Digby's companions and friends; and then she made the compliment more pointed by apologizing to the young baronet, and assuring him that she did not think for a moment he would commit such acts. Her artillery was next turned against her brother; and, in a pleasant tone of raillery, she joked him upon the subject of young Mr. Radford, and of the search the soldiers had made, looking with a meaning smile at Zara, and saying, "She dared say, Sir Robert could tell where he was, if he liked."

The baronet declared, sharply and truly, that he knew nothing about the young man; but Mrs. Barbara shook her head and nodded, and looked knowing, adding various agreeable insinuations of the same kind as before, all in the best humour possible, till Sir Robert Croyland was put quite out of temper, and would have retorted violently, had he not known that to do so always rendered the matter ten times worse. Even poor Zara did not altogether escape; but, as we are hurrying on to important events, we must pass over her share of infliction.

The conclusion of Mrs. Barbara's field-day was perhaps the most signal achievement of all. Breakfast had come to an end, though the meal had been somewhat protracted; and the party were just lingering out a few minutes before they rose, still talking on the subject of the skirmish of that morning, when the good lady thought fit to remark: "Well, we may guess for ever; but we shall soon know more about it; for I dare say we shall have Mr. Radford over here before an hour is gone, and he must know if the goods were his."

This seemed to startle, nay, to alarm Sir Robert Croyland. He looked round with a sharp, quick turn of his head, and then rose at once, saying, "Well, whether he comes or not, I must go out and see about a good many things. Would you like to take a ride, Sir Edward Digby, or what will you do?"

"Why, I think I must stay here for the present," replied the young baronet; "I may have a summons unexpectedly, and ought not to be absent."

"Well, you will excuse me, I know," answered his entertainer. "I must leave my sister and Zara to amuse you for an hour or two, till I return."

Thus saying, and evidently in a great bustle, Sir Robert Croyland quitted the room and ordered his horse. But just as the three whom he had left in the breakfast-room were sauntering quietly towards the library—Sir Edward Digby calculating by the way how he might best get rid of Mrs. Barbara, in order to enjoy the fair Zara's company undisturbed—they came upon the baronet at the moment when he was encountered by one of his servants bringing him some unpleasant intelligence. "Please, Sir Robert," said the man, with a knowing wink of the eye, "all the horses are out."

"Out!" cried the baronet, with a look of fury and consternation. "What do you mean by out, fellow?"

"Why, they were taken out of the stable last night, sir," replied the man. "I dare say you know where they went; and they have not come back again yet."

"Pray, have mine been taken also?" demanded Sir Edward Digby, very well understanding what sort of an expedition Sir Robert Croyland's horses had gone upon.

"Oh! dear, no, sir," answered the man; "your servant keeps the key of that stable himself, sir."

The young baronet instantly offered his host the use of one of his steeds, which was gratefully accepted by Sir Robert Croyland, who, however, thought fit to enter into an exculpation of himself, somewhat tedious withal, assuring his guest that the horses had been taken without his approbation or consent, and that he had no knowledge whatsoever of the transaction in which they were engaged.

Sir Edward Digby professed himself quite convinced that such was the case, and in order to relieve his host from the embarrassment which he seemed to feel, explained that he was already aware that the Kentish smugglers were in the habit of borrowing horses without the owner's consent.

In our complicated state of society, however, everything hinges upon trifles. We have made the watch so fine, that a grain of dust stops the whole movement; and the best arranged plans are thrown out by the negligence, the absence, or the folly of a servant, a friend, or a messenger. Sir Edward Digby's groom could not be found for more than a quarter of an hour: when he was, at length, brought to light, the horse had to be saddled. An hour had now nearly elapsed since the master of the house had given orders for his own horse to be brought round immediately; he was evidently uneasy at the delay, peevish, restless, uncomfortable; and in the end, he said he would mount at the back door, as it was the nearest and the most convenient. He even waited in the vestibule; but suddenly he turned, walked through the double doors leading to the stable-yard, and said he heard the horse coming up.

Mrs. Barbara Croyland had, in the mean time, amused herself and her niece in the library, with the door open; and sometimes she worked a paroquet, in green, red, and white silk embroidery, a favourite occupation for ladies in her juvenile days, and sometimes she gazed out of the window, or listened to the conversation of her brother and his guest in the vestibule. At the very moment, however, when Sir Robert was making his exit by the doors between the principal part of the house and the offices, Mrs. Barbara called loudly after him, "Brother Robert! brother Robert! Here is Mr. Radford coming."

The baronet turned a deaf ear, and shut the door. He would have locked it, too, if the evasion would not have then been too palpable. But Mrs. Barbara was resolved that he

should know that Mr. Radford was coming; and up she started, casting down half-a-dozen cards of silk. Zara tried to stop her; for she knew her father, and all the signs and indications of his humours; but her efforts were in vain. Mrs. Barbara dashed past her, rushed through both doors, leaving them open behind her, and caught her brother's arms just as the horse which he had thought fit to hear approach a little before it really did so, was led up slowly from the stables to the back door of the mansion.

"Robert, here is Mr. Radford!" said Mrs. Barbara, aloud. "I know you would like to see him."

The baronet turned his head, and saw his worthy friend, through the open doors, just entering the vestibule. To the horror and surprise of his sister, he uttered a low but bitter curse, adding, in tones quite distinct enough to reach her ear. "Woman, you have ruined me!"

"Good gracious!" cried Mrs. Barbara; "why, I thought—"

"Hush! silence!" said Sir Robert Croyland, in a menacing tone; "not another word, on your life;" and turning, he met Mr. Radford with the utmost suavity, but with a certain degree of restraint which he had not time to banish entirely from his manner.

"Ah, Mr. Radford!" he exclaimed, shaking him, too, heartily by the hand; "I was just going out to inquire about some things of importance;" and he gazed at him with a look which he intended to be very significant of the inquiries he had proposed to institute. But his glance was hesitating and ill-assured; and Mr. Radford replied, with the coolest and most self-possessed air possible, and with a firm, fixed gaze upon the baronet's countenance.

"Indeed, Sir Robert!" he said; "perhaps I can satisfy you upon some points; but, at all events, I must speak with you for a few minutes before you go. Good morning, Sir Edward Digby; have you had any sport in the field? I will not detain you a quarter of an hour, my good friend. We had better go into your room."

He led the way thither as he spoke, and Sir Robert Croyland followed with a slow and faltering step. He knew Richard Radford; he knew what that calm and self-possessed manner meant. He was aware of the significance of courteous expressions and amicable terms from the man who called him

his good friend; and if there was a being upon earth, on whose head Sir Robert Croyland would have wished to stamp as on a viper's, it was the placid benign personage who preceded him.

They entered the room in which the baronet usually sat in a morning to transact his business with his steward, and to arrange his affairs; and Sir Robert carefully shut the door behind him, trying, during the one moment that his back was turned upon his unwelcome guest, to compose his agitated features into the expression of haughty and self-sufficient tranquillity which they usually wore.

"Sit down, Radford," he said; "pray sit down, if it be but for ten minutes," and he pointed to the arm-chair on the other side of the table.

Mr. Radford sat down, and leaned his head upon his hand, looking in the baronet's face with a scrutinizing gaze. If Sir Robert Croyland understood him well, he also understood Sir Robert Croyland, heart and mind, every corporeal fibre, every mental peculiarity. He saw clearly that his companion was terrified; he divined that he wished to avoid him; and the satisfaction that he felt at having caught him just as he was going out, at having frustrated his hope of escape, had a pleasant malice in it, which compensated for a part of all that he had suffered during that morning, as report after report reached him of the utter annihilation of his hopes of immense gain, the loss of a ruinous sum of money, and the danger and narrow escape of his son. He had not slept a wink during the whole of the preceeding night; and he had passed the hours in a state of nervous anxiety which would have totally unmanned many a strong-minded man when his first fears were realized. But Mr. Radford's mind was of a peculiar construction: apprehension he might feel, but never by any chance, discouragement. All his pain was in anticipation, not in endurance. The moment a blow was struck, it was over; his thoughts turned to new resources; and, in reconstructing schemes which had been overthrown, in framing new ones, or pursuing old ones which had slumbered, he instantly found comfort for the past. Thus he seemed as fresh, as resolute, as unabashed by fortune's late frowns, as ever; but there was a rankling bitterness, an eager, wolf-like energy in his heart, which sprung both from angry disappointment and from the desperate aspect

of his present fortune; and such feelings naturally communicated some portion of their acerbity to the expression of his countenance, which no effort could totally banish.

He gazed upon Sir Robert Croyland, then, with a keen and inquiring look, not altogether untinged with that sort of pity which amounts to scorn; and, after a momentary pause, he said, "Well, Croyland, you have heard all, I suppose!"

"No, not all; not all, Radford," answered the baronet, hesitating; "I was going out to inquire?"

"I can save you the trouble, then," replied Mr. Radford, drily. "I am ruined. That is to say, in the two last ventures I have lost considerably more than a hundred thousand pounds."

Sir Robert Croyland waved his head sadly, saying, "Terrible, terrible! But what can be done?"

"Oh! several things," answered Mr. Radford, "and that is what I have come to speak to you about, because the first must rest with you, my excellent good friend."

"But where is your son, poor fellow?" asked the baronet, eager to avoid, as long as possible, the point to which their conversation was tending. "They tell me he was well nigh taken; and, after there has been blood shed, that would have been destruction. Do you know they came and searched this house for him?"

"No, I had not heard of that, Croyland," replied Mr. Radford; "but he is near enough, well enough, and safe enough to marry your fair daughter."

"Ay, yes," answered Sir Robert; "that must be thought of, and—"

"Oh dear, no!" cried the other, interrupting him; "it has been thought of enough already, Croyland: too much, perhaps; now, it must be done."

"Well, I will go over to Edith at once," said the baronet, "and I will urge her, by every inducement. I will tell her, that it is her duty, that it is my will, and that she must and shall obey."

Mr. Radford rose slowly off his seat, crossed over the rug to the place where Sir Robert Croyland was placed; and, leaning his hand upon the arm of the other's chair, he bent down his head, saying in a low but very clear voice, and perfectly distinct words, "Tell her, her father's life depends upon it!"

Sir Robert Croyland shrank from him, as if an asp had approached his cheek, and he turned deadly pale. "No, Radford; no," he replied, in a faltering and deprecatory tone; "you cannot mean such a horrible thing. I will do all that I can to make her yield, I will, indeed; I will insist, I will—"

"Sir Robert Croyland," said Mr. Radford, sternly and slowly. "I will have no more trifling. I have indulged you too long, Your daughter must be my son's wife before he quits this country, which must be the case for a time, till we can get this affair wiped out by our parliamentary influence. Her fortune must be his; she must be his wife, I say, before four days are over. Now, my good friend," he continued, falling back, in a degree, into his usual manner, which had generally a touch of sarcastic bitterness in it when addressing his present companion; "what means you may please to adopt to arrive at this desirable result I cannot tell; but as the young lady has shown an aversion to the match, not very flattering to my son—"

"Is it not his own fault?" cried Sir Robert Croyland, roused to some degree of indignation and resistance; "has he ever, by word or deed, sought to remove that reluctance? Has he wooed her as woman always requires to be wooed? Has he not rather shown a preference to her sister; paid her all attention, courted, admired her?"

"Pity you suffered it, Sir Robert," answered Radford; "but permit me, in your courtesy, to go on with what I was saying. As the young lady has shown this unfortunate reluctance, I anticipate no effect from your proposed use of parental authority. I believe your requests and your commands will be equally unavailing; and, therefore, I say, tell her, her father's life depends upon it; for I will have no more trifling, Sir Robert; no more delay, no more hesitation. It must be settled at once, this very day. Before midnight, I must hear that she consents, or—your understand; and consent she will, if you but employ the right means. She may show herself obstinate, undutiful, careless of your wishes and commands; but I do not think that she would like to be the one to tie a halter round her father's neck, or to bring what I think you gentlemen of heraldry and coat-armour call a cross-patonce into the family-bearing; ha, ha, ha! Do you, Sir Robert?"

The unhappy gentleman to whom he spoke covered his eyes

with his hand; but, from beneath, his features could be seen working with the agitation of various emotions, in which rage, impotent though it might be, was not without its share. Suddenly, however, a gleam of hope seemed to shoot across his mind; he withdrew his hand, he looked up with some light in his eyes. "A thought has struck me, Radford," he said; "Zara, we have talked of Zara; why not substitute her for Edith? Listen to me; listen to me. You have not heard all."

Mr. Radford shook his head. "It cannot be done," he replied; "it is quite out of the question."

"Nay, but hear!" exclaimed the baronet; "not so much out of the question as you think. Look at the whole circumstances, Radford. The great obstacle with Edith, is that unfortunate engagement with young Layton. She looks upon herself as his wife; she has told me so a thousand times, and I doubt even the effect of the terrible course which you urge upon me so cruelly."

Mr. Radford's brow had grown exceedingly dark at the very mention of the name of Layton, but he said nothing, and, as if to keep down the feelings that were swelling in his heart, set his teeth hard in his under lip. Sir Robert Croyland saw all these marks of anger, but went on: "Now, the case is different with Zara. Your son has sought her, and evidently admires her, and she has shown herself by no means unfavourable towards him. Besides, I can do with her what I like. There is no such obstacle in her case, and I could bend her to my will with a word. Yes, but hear me out. I know what you would say: she has no fortune; all the land that I can dispose of is mortgaged to the full, the rest goes to my brother, if he survives me. True; all very true! But, Radford, listen! If I can induce my brother to give Zara the same fortune which Edith possesses, if this night I can bring it you under his own hand that she shall have fifty thousand pounds? You shake your head; you doubt that he will do it; but I can tell you that he would willingly give it to save Edith from your son. I am ready to pledge you my word that you shall have that engagement, under his own hand, this very night, or that Edith shall become your son's wife within four days. Let us cast aside all idle circumlocution. It is Edith's fortune for your son that you require. You can care nothing personally

which of the two he marries. As for him, he evidently prefers Zara. She is also well inclined to him. I can, I am sure I can, offer you the same fortune with her. Why should you object?"

Mr. Radford had resumed his seat, and with his arms folded on his chest, and his head bent, had remained in a listening posture. But nothing that he heard seemed to produce any change in his countenance; and when Sir Robert Croyland had concluded, he rose again, took a step towards him, and replied, through his shut teeth: "You are mistaken, Sir Robert Croyland; it is not fortune alone I seek. It is revenge! There, ask me no questions: I have told you my determination. Your daughter Edith shall be my son's wife within four days, or Maidstone jail, trial, and execution, shall be your lot. The haughty family of Croyland shall bear the stain of felony upon them to the last generation; and your daughter shall know, for if you do not tell her, I will, that it is her obstinacy which sends her father to the gallows. No more trifling: no more nonsense! Act, sir, as you think fit; but remember, that the words, once passed my lips, can never be recalled; that the secret I have kept buried for so many years, shall to-morrow morning be published to the whole world, if to-night you do not bring me your daughter's consent to what I demand. I am using no vain threats, Sir Robert Croyland," he continued, resuming a somewhat softened tone, "and I do not urge you to this without some degree of regret. You have been very kind and friendly; you have done me good service on several occasions; and it will be with great regret that I become the instrument of your destruction. But still every man has a conscience of some kind. Even I am occasionally troubled with qualms; and I frequently reproach myself for concealing what I am bound to reveal. It is a pity this marriage was not concluded long ago, for then, connected with you by the closest ties, I should have felt myself more justified in holding my tongue. Now, however, it is absolutely necessary that your daughter Edith should become my son's wife. I have pointed out the means which I think will soonest bring it to bear; and if you do not use them, you must abide the consequences. But mark me: no attempt at delay, no prevarication, no hesitation! A clear, positive, distinct answer this night by twelve o'clock, or you are lost!"

Sir Robert Croyland had leaned his arms upon the table, and pressed his eyes upon his arms. His whole frame shook with emotion, and the softer, and seemingly more kindly words of the man before him, were even bitterer to him than the harsher and the fiercer. Though he did not see his face, he knew that there was far more sarcasm than tenderness in them. He had been his slave, his tool for years: his tool through the basest and most unmanly of human passions, fear; and he felt not only that he was despised, but that at that moment Radford was revelling in contempt. He could have got up and stabbed him where he stood, for he was naturally a passionate and violent man. But fear had still the dominion; and after a bitter struggle with himself, he conquered his anger, and gave himself up to the thought of meeting the circumstances in which he was placed as best he might. He was silent for several moments, however, after Mr. Radford had ceased speaking; and then, looking up with an anxious eye and quivering lip, he said: "But how is it possible, Radford, that the marriage should take place in four days? The banns could not be published; and even if you got a license, your son could not appear at church within the prescribed hours without running a fatal risk."

"We will have a special license, my good friend," answered Mr. Radford, with a contemptuous smile. "Do not trouble yourself about that. You will have quite enough to do with your daughter, I should imagine, without annoying yourself with other things. As to my son, I will manage his part of the affair; and he can marry your daughter in your drawing-room, or mine, at an hour when there will be no eager eyes abroad. Money can do all things; and a special license is not so very expensive but that I can afford it, still. My drawing-room will be best; for then we shall be all secure."

"But, Radford! Radford!" said Sir Robert Croyland, "if I do—if I bring Edith at the time appointed, if she become your son's wife, will you give me up that paper, that fatal deposition?"

"Oh! yes, assuredly," replied Mr. Radford, with an insulting smile; "I can hand it over to you as part of the marriage settlement. You need not be the least afraid! and now, I think I must go; for I have business to settle as well as you."

"Stay, stay a moment, Radford," said the baronet, rising and coming nearer to him. "You spoke of revenge just now. What is it that you mean?"

"I told you to ask no questions," answered the other, sharply.

"But at least tell me, if it is on me or mine that you seek revenge!" exclaimed Sir Robert Croyland. "I am unconscious of ever having injured or offended you in any way."

"Oh! dear, no," replied Mr. Radford. "You have nothing to do with it; no, nor your daughter either, though she deserves a little punishment for her ill-treatment to my son. No, but there is one on whom I will have revenge, deep and bitter revenge, too. But that is my affair, and I do not choose to say more. You have heard my resolutions; and you know me well enough to be sure that I will keep my word. So now go to your daughter, and manage the matter as you judge best; but if you will take my advice, you will simply ask her consent, and make her fully aware that her father's life depends upon it; and now, good-bye, my dear friend. Good luck attend you on your errand; for I would a great deal rather not have any hand in bringing you where destiny seems inclined to lead you very soon."

Thus saying, he turned and quitted the room; and Sir Robert Croyland remained musing for several minutes, his thoughts first resting upon the last part of their conversation. "Revenge!" he said; "he must mean my brother; and it will be bitter enough to him to see Edith married to this youth. Bitter enough to me, too; but it must be done, it must be done!"

He pressed his hand upon his heart, and then went out to mount his horse; but pausing in the vestibule, he told the butler to bring him a glass of brandy. The man hastened to obey, for his master's face was as pale as death, and he thought that Sir Robert was going to faint. But when the baronet had swallowed the stimulating liquor, he walked to the back door with a quick and tolerably steady step, mounted, and rode away alone.

Before I follow him, though anxious to do so as quickly as possible, I must say a few words in regard to Mr. Radford's course. After he had reached the parish road I have mentioned, on which one or two dragoons were still visible, slowly

patrolling round Harbourne Wood, the man who had exercised so terrible an influence upon poor Sir Robert Croyland turned his horse's head upon the path which led straight through the trees towards the cottage of Widow Clare. His face was still dark and cloudy; and trusting to the care and sure-footedness of his beast, he went on with a loose rein and his eyes bent down towards his saddle-bow, evidently immersed in deep thought. When he had got about two-thirds across the wood, he started and turned round his head; for there was the sound of a horse's feet behind, and he instantly perceived a dragoon following him, and apparently keeping him in sight. Mr. Radford rode on, however, till he came out not far from the gate of Mrs. Clare's garden, when he saw another soldier riding slowly round the wood. With a careless air, however, and as if he scarcely perceived these circumstances, he dismounted, buckled the rein of his bridle slowly over the palings of the garden, and went into the cottage, closing the door after him. He found the widow and her daughter busily employed with the needle, making somewhat smarter clothes than those they wore on ordinary occasions. It was poor Kate's bridal finery.

Mrs. Clare instantly rose, and dropped a low curtsey to Mr. Radford, who had of late years frequently visited her cottage, and occasionally contributed a little to her comfort in a kindly and judicious manner. Sometimes he had sent her down a load of wood, to keep the house warm; sometimes he had given her a large roll of woollen cloth, a new gown for her daughter or herself, or a little present of money. But Mr. Radford had his object: he always had.

"Well, Mrs. Clare," said Mr. Radford, in as easy and quiet a tone as if nothing had happened to agitate his mind or derange his plans; "so, my pretty little friend, Kate, is going to be married to worthy Jack Harding, I find."

Kate blushed and held down her head, and Mrs. Clare assented with a faint smile.

"There has been a bad business of it this morning, though," said Mr. Radford, looking in Mrs. Clare's face; "I dare say you've heard all about it, over there, in the valley by Woodchurch and Redbrook Street."

Mrs. Clare looked alarmed, and Kate forgot her timidity, and exclaimed, "Oh! is he safe."

"Oh! yes, my dear," answered Mr. Radford, in a kindly tone, "you need not alarm yourself. He was not in it at all. I don't say he had no share in running the goods, for that is pretty well known, I believe, and he did his part of the work well; but the poor fellows who were bringing up the things, by some folly, or mistake, I do not know which, got in amongst the dragoons, were attacked, and nearly cut to pieces."

"Ay, then, that is what the soldiers are hanging about here for," said Mrs. Clare.

"It's a sad affair for me, indeed!" continued Mr. Radford, thoughtfully.

"I am truly sorry to hear that, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Clare; "for you have been always very kind to me."

"Well, my good lady," replied her visitor, "perhaps you may now be able to do me a kindness in return," said Mr. Radford. "To tell you the truth, my son was in this affray. He made his escape when he found that they could not hold their ground, and it is for him that the soldiers are now looking; at least, I suspect so. Perhaps you may be able to give a little help, if he should be concealed about here?"

"That I will," said Widow Clare, "if it cost me one of my hands!"

"Oh! there will be no danger," answered Mr. Radford; "I only wish you, in case he should be lying where I think he is, to take care that he has food till he can get away. It might be better for Kate here to go rather than yourself; or one could do it at one time, and the other at another. With a basket on her arm, and a few eggs at the top, Kate could trip across the wood as if she were going to Harbourne House. You could boil the eggs hard, you know, and put some bread and other things underneath. Then, at the place where I suppose he is, she could quietly put down the basket and walk on."

"But you must tell me where he is, sir," answered Mrs. Clare.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Radford; "that is to say, I can tell you where I think he is. Then, when she gets near it, she can look round to see if there's any one watching, and if she sees no one, can say aloud, 'Do you want anything?' If he's there he'll answer; and should he send any message to me, one of you must bring it up. I shan't forget to repay you for your trouble."

"Oh! dear, sir, it isn't for that," said Mrs. Clare. "Kate and I will both be very glad, indeed, to show our gratitude for your kindness. It is seldom poor people have the opportunity; and I am sure, after good Sir Robert Croyland, we owe more to you than to any body."

"Sir Robert has been kind to you, I believe, Mrs. Clare!" replied Mr. Radford, with a peculiar expression of countenance. "Well he may be! He has not always been so kind to you and yours."

"Pray, sir, do not speak a word against Sir Robert," answered the widow; "though he sometimes used to speak rather cross and angrily in former times, yet since my poor husband's death nothing could be more kind than he has been. I owe him everything, sir."

"Ay, it's all very well, Mrs. Clare," replied Mr. Radford, shaking his head with a doubtful smile; "it's all very well! However, I do not intend to say a word against Sir Robert Croyland. He's my very good friend, you know; and it's all very well. Now, let us talk about the place where you or Kate are to go; but, above all things, remember that you must not utter a word about it to any one, either now or hereafter, for it might be the ruin of us all if you did."

"Oh, no! not for the world, sir!" answered Mrs. Clare. "I know such places are not to be talked about; and nobody shall ever hear anything about it from us."

"Well, then," continued Mr. Radford, "you know the way up to Harbourne House, through the gardens. There's the little path to the right; and then, half way up that, there's one to the left, which brings you to the back of the stables. It goes between two sandy banks, you may recollect; and there's a little pond with a willow growing over it, and some bushes at the back of the willow. Well, just behind these bushes there is a deep hole in the bank, high enough to let a man stand upright in it, when he gets a little way down. It would make a famous *hide* if there were a better horse-path up to it, and sometimes it has been used for small things such as a man can carry on his back. Now, from what I have heard, my boy Richard must be in there; for his horse was found, it seems, not above two or three hundred yards from the house, broken-knee'd and knocked-up. If any one should follow you as you go, and make inquiries, you must say that

you are going to the house; for there is a door there in the wall of the stable-yard, though that path is seldom, if ever, used now; but, if there be nobody by, you can just set down the basket by the stump of the willow, and ask if he wants anything more. If he doesn't answer, speak again, and try at all events to find out whether he's there or not, so that I may hear."

"Oh! I know the place, quite well," said Mrs. Clare. "My poor husband used to get gravel there. But when do you think I had better go, sir? For if the dragoons are still lingering about, a thousand to one but they follow me, and, more likely still, may follow Kate; so I shall go myself to-night, at all events."

"You had better wait till it is duskish," answered Mr. Radford; "and then they'll soon lose sight of you amongst the trees, for they can't go up there on horseback; and if they stop to dismount you can easily get out of their way. Let me have any message you may get from Richard; and don't forget, either, if Harding comes up here, to tell him I want to speak with him very much. He'll be sorry enough for this affair when he hears of it, for the loss is dreadful!"

"I'm sure he will, sir," said Kate Clare; "for he was talking about something that he had to do, and said it would half kill him, if he did not get it done safely."

"Ay, he's a very good fellow," answered Mr. Radford, "and you shall have a wedding-gown from me, Kate. Look out of the window, there's a good girl, and see if any of those dragoons are about."

Kate did as he bade her, and replied in the negative; and Mr. Radford, after giving a few more directions, mounted his horse and rode away, muttering as he went—"Ay, Master Harding, I have a strong suspicion of you; and I will soon satisfy myself. They must have had good information, which none could give but you, I think; so look to yourself, my friend. No man ever injured me yet who had not cause to repent it."

Mr. Radford forgot that he no longer possessed such extensive means of injuring others as he had formerly done; but the bitter will was as strong as ever.

CHAPTER XXV.

The house of Mr. Zachary Croyland was not so large or ostentatious in appearance as that of his brother; but, nevertheless, it was a very roomy and comfortable house; and as he was naturally a man of fine taste, though somewhat singular in his likings and dislikings, as well in matters of art as in his friendships, and vehement in favour of particular schools, and in abhorence of others, his dwelling was fitted up with all that could refresh the eye or improve the mind. A very extensive and well-chosen library covered the walls of one room, in which were also several choice pieces of sculpture; and his drawing-room was ornamented with a valuable collection of small pictures, into which not one single Dutch piece was admitted. He was accustomed to say, when any connoisseur objected to the total exclusion of a very fine school, "Don't mention it, don't mention it; I hate it in all its branches and all its styles. I have pictures for my own satisfaction, not because they are worth a thousand pounds a-piece. I hate to see men represented as like beasts as possible; or to refresh my eyes with swamps and canals; or, in the climate of England, which is dull enough in all conscience, to exhilarate myself with the view of a frozen pond and fields, as flat as a plate, covered with snow, while half-a-dozen boors, in red night-caps and red noses, are skating away in ten pairs of breeches, looking, in point of shape, exactly like hogs set upon their hind legs. It's all very true, the artist may have shown very great talent; but that only shows him to be the greater fool for wasting his talent upon such subjects."

His collection, therefore, consisted almost entirely of the Italian schools, with a few Flemish, a few English, and one or two exquisite Spanish pictures. He had two good Murillos and a Velasquez, one or two fine Vandykes, and four sketches by Rubens of larger pictures. But he had numerous landscapes, and several very beautiful small paintings of the Bolognese

school; though that on which he prided himself the most, was an exquisite Correggio.

It was in this room that he left his niece Edith when he set out for Woodchurch; and, as she sat, with her arm fallen somewhat listlessly over the back of the low sofa, the light coming in from the window strong upon her left cheek, and the rest in shade, with her rich colouring and her fine features, the high-toned expression of soul upon her brow, and the wonderful grace of her whole form and attitude, she would have made a fine study for any of those dead artists whose works lived around her.

She heard the wheels of the carriage roll away; but she gave no thought to the question of whither her uncle had gone, or why he took her not with him, as he usually did. She was glad of it, in fact; and people seldom reason upon that with which they are well pleased. Her whole mind was directed to her own situation, and to the feelings which the few words of conversation she had had with her sister had aroused. She thought of him she loved, with the intense, eager longing to behold him once more, but once, if so it must be, which perhaps only a woman's heart can fully know. To be near him, to hear him speak, to trace the features she had loved, to mark the traces of Time's hand, and the lines that care and anxiety, and disappointment and regret, she knew must be busily working, oh! what a boon it would be! Then her mind ran on, led by the light hand of Hope, along the narrow bridge of association, to ask herself, if it would be such delight to see him and to hear him speak, what would it be to soothe, to comfort, to give him back to joy and peace?

The dream was too bright to last, and it soon faded. He was near her, and yet he did not come; he was in the same land, in the same district; he had gazed up to the house where she dwelt; if he had asked whose it was, the familiar name, the name once so dear, must have sounded in his ear; and yet he did not come. A few minutes of time, a few steps of his horse, would have brought him to where she was; but he had turned away, and Edith's eyes filled with tears.

She rose and wiped them off, saying, "I will think of something else;" and she went up and gazed at a picture. It was a Salvator Rosa; a fine painting, though not by one of the finest masters. There was a rocky scene in front, with trees

waving in the wind of a fierce storm, while two travellers stood beneath a bank, and a writhing beech tree, scarcely seeming to find shelter even there from the large grey streams of rain that swept across the foreground. But, withal, in the distance were seen some majestic old towers and columns, with a gleam of golden light upon the edge of the sky; and Hope, never wearying of her kindly offices, whispered to Edith's heart, "In life, as in that picture, there may be sunshine behind the storm."

Poor Edith was right willing to listen; and she gave herself up to the gentle guide. "Perhaps," she thought, "his duty might not admit of his coming, or perhaps he might not know how he would be received. My father's anger would be sure to follow such a step. He might think that insult, injury, would be added. He might imagine even that I am changed," and she shook her head, sadly. "Yet why should he not," she continued, "if I sit here and think so of him? Who can tell what people may have said? Who can tell even what falsehoods may have been spread? Perhaps he's even now thinking of me. Perhaps he has come into this part of the country to make inquiries, to see with his own eyes, to satisfy himself. Oh! it must be so: it must be so!" she cried, giving herself up again to the bright dream. "Ay, and this Sir Edward Digby, too, he is his dear friend, his companion; may he not have sent him down to investigate and judge? I thought it strange at the time, that this young officer should write to inquire after my father's family, and then instantly accept an invitation; and I marked how he gazed at that wretched young man and his unworthy father. Perhaps he will tell Zara more, and I shall hear when I return. Perhaps he has told her more already. Indeed, it is very probable, for they had a long ride together yesterday;" and poor Edith began to feel as anxious to go back to her father's house as she had been glad to quit it, Yet she saw no way how this could be accomplished, before the period allotted for her stay was at an end; and she determined to have recourse to a little simple art, and ask Mr. Croyland to take her over to Harbourne on the following morning, with the ostensible purpose of looking for some article of apparel left behind, but, in truth, to obtain a few minutes' conversation with her sister.

There are times in the life of almost every one, at least, of

every one of feeling and intellect, when it seems as if we could meditate for ever: when, without motion or change, the spirit within the earthly tabernacle could pause and ponder over deep subjects of contemplation for hour after hour, with the doors and windows of the senses shut, and without any communication with external things. The matter before us may be any of the strange and perplexing relations of man's mysterious being; or it may be some obscure circumstance of our own fate; some period of uncertainty and expectation; some of those Egyptian darknesses which from time to time come over the future, and which we gaze on half in terror, half in hope, discovering nothing, yet speculating still. The latter was the case at that moment with Edith Croyland; and, as she revolved every separate point of her situation, it seemed as if fresh wells of thought sprung up to flow on interminably.

She had continued thus during more than half an hour after her uncle's departure, when she heard a horse stop before the door of the house, and her heart beat, though she knew not wherefore. Her lover might have come at length, indeed; but if that dream crossed her mind it was soon swept away; for the next instant she heard her father's voice, first inquiring for herself, and then asking, in a lower tone, if his brother was within. If Edith had felt hope before, she now felt apprehension; for during several years no private conversation had taken place between her father and herself without bringing with it grief and anxiety, harsh words spoken, and answers painful for a child to give.

It seldom happens that fear does not go beyond reality, but such was not the case in the present instance; for Edith Croyland had to undergo far more than she expected. Her father entered the room where she sat, with a slow step and a stern and determined look. His face was very pale, too; his lips themselves seemed bloodless, and the terrible emotions which were in his heart showed themselves upon his countenance by many an intelligible but indescribable sign. As soon as Edith saw him, she thought, "He has heard of Henry's return to this country. It is that which has brought him;" and she nerved her heart for a new struggle; but still she could scarcely prevent her limbs from shaking, as she rose and advanced to meet her parent.

Sir Robert Croyland drew her to him, and kissed her

tenderly enough; for, in truth, he loved her very dearly: and then he led her back to the sofa, and seated himself beside her.

"How low these abominable contrivances are," he said; "I do wish that Zachary would have some sofas that people can sit upon with comfort, instead of these beastly things, only fit for a Turkish harem, or a dog-kennel."

Edith made no reply: for she waited in dread of what was to follow, and could not speak of trifles. But her father presently went on, saying: "So, my brother is out, and not likely to return for an hour or two! Well, I am glad of it, Edith, for I came over to speak with you on matters of much moment."

Still Edith was silent; for she durst not trust her voice with any reply. She feared that her courage would give way at the first words, and that she should burst into tears, when she felt sure that all the resolution she could command would be required to bear her safely through. She trusted, indeed, that, as she had often found before, her spirit would rise with the occasion, and that she should find powers of resistance within her in the time of need, though she shrunk from the contemplation of what was to come.

"I have delayed long, Edith," continued Sir Robert Croyland, after a pause, "to press you upon a subject in regard to which it is now absolutely necessary you should come to a decision; too long, indeed; but I have been actuated by a regard for your feelings, and you owe me something for my forbearance. There can now, however, be no further delay. You will easily understand that I mean your marriage with Richard Radford."

Edith raised her eyes to her father's face, and, after a strong effort, replied, "My decision, my dear father, has, as you know, been long made. I cannot, and I will not, marry him; nothing on earth shall ever induce me!"

"Do not say that, Edith," answered Sir Robert Croyland, with a bitter smile; "for I could utter words, which, if I know you rightly, would make you glad and eager to give him your hand, even though you broke your heart in so doing. But before I speak those things which will plant a wound in your bosom for life, that nothing can heal or assuage, I will try every other means. I request you, I entreat you, I command you, to marry him! By every duty that you owe me, by all

the affection that a child ought to feel for a father, I beseech you to do so, if you would save me from destruction and despair!"

"I cannot! I cannot!" said Edith, clasping her hands. "Oh! why should you drive me to such painful disobedience? In the first place, can I promise to love a man whom I hate, to honour and obey one whom I despise, and whose commands can never be for good? But still more, my father; you must hear me out, for you force me to speak; you force me to tear open old wounds, to go back to times long past, and to recur to things bitter to you and to me. I cannot marry him, as I told you once before; for I hold myself to be the wife of another."

"Folly and nonsense!" cried Sir Robert Croyland, angrily; "you are neither his wife, nor he your husband. What! the wife of a man who has never sought you for years; who has cast you off, abandoned you, made no inquiry for you? The marriage was a farce. You read a ceremony which you had no right to read, you took vows which you had no power to take. The law of the land pronounces all such engagements mere pieces of empty foolery!"

"But the law of God," replied Edith, "tells us to keep vows that we have once made. To those vows, I called God to witness with a true and sincere heart; and with the same heart, and the same feelings, I will keep them! I did wrong, my father, I know I did wrong, and Henry did wrong too; but by what we have done we must abide; and I dare not, I cannot, be the wife of another."

"But, I tell you, you shall!" exclaimed her father, vehemently. "I will compel you to be so; I will over-rule this obstinate folly, and make you obedient, whether you choose it or not."

"Nay, nay; not so!" cried Edith. "You could not do, you would not attempt, so cruel a thing!"

"I will, so help me heaven!" exclaimed Sir Robert Croyland.

"Then, thank heaven," answered his daughter, in a low but solemn voice, "it is impossible! In this country, there is no clergyman who would perform the ceremony contrary to my expressed dissent. If I break the vows that I have taken, it must be my own voluntary act; for there is not any force that can compel me so to do; and I call heaven to witness, that

even if you were to drag me to the altar, I would say, No, to the last!"

"Rash, mad, unfeeling girl!" cried her father, starting up, and gazing upon her with a look in which rage, and disappointment, and perplexity were all mingled.

He stood before her for a moment in silence, and then strode vehemently backwards and forwards in the room, with his right hand contracting and expanding, as if grasping at something. "It must be done!" he said, at length, pressing his hand upon his brow; "it must be done!" and then he recommenced his silent walk, with the shadows of many emotions coming over his countenance.

When he returned to Edith's side again, the manner and the aspect of Sir Robert Croyland were both changed. There was an expression of deep sorrow upon his countenance, of much agitation, but considerable tenderness; and, to his daughter's surprise, he took her hand in his, and pressed it affectionately.

"Edith," he said, after a short interval of silence, "I have commanded, I have insisted, I have threatened, but all in vain. Yet, in so doing, I have had in view to spare you even greater pain than could be occasioned by a father's sternness. My very love for you, my child, made me seem wanting in love. But now I must inflict the greater pain. You require, it seems, inducements stronger than obedience to a father's earnest commands, and you shall have them, however terrible for me to speak and you to hear. I will tell you all, and leave you to judge."

Edith gazed at him in surprise and terror. "Oh! do not, do not, sir!" she said; "do not try to break my heart, and put my duty to you in opposition to the fulfilment of a most sacred vow, in opposition to all the dictates of my own heart and my own conscience."

"Edith it must be done," replied Sir Robert Croyland. "I have urged you to a marriage with young Richard Radford. I now tell you solemnly that your father's life depends upon it."

Edith clasped her hands wildly together, and gazed for a moment in his face, without a word, almost stupified with horror. But Sir Robert Croyland had deceived her, or attempted to deceive her, on the very same subject they were

now discussing, more than once already. She knew it; and of course she doubted; for those who have been once false are never fully believed, those who have been once deceived are always suspicious of those who have deceived them, even when they speak the truth. As thought and reflection came back after the first shock, Edith found much cause to doubt: she could not see how such a thing was possible, how her refusal of Richard Radford could affect her father's life; and she replied, after a time, in a hesitating tone, "How can that be? I do not understand it. I do not see how—"

"I will tell you," replied Sir Robert Croyland, in a low and particularly quiet voice, which had something fearful in it to his daughter's ear. "It is a long story, Edith, but you must hear it all, my child. You shall be your father's confidant, his only one. You shall share the secret, dreadful as it is, which has embittered his whole existence, rendered his days terrible, his nights sleepless, his bed a couch of fire."

Edith trembled in every limb; and Sir Robert, rising, crossed over and opened the door of the drawing-room, to see that there were none of the servants near it. Then closing it again, he returned to her side, and proceeded, holding her hand in his: "You must have remarked," he said, "and perhaps often wondered, my dear child, that Mr. Radford, a man greatly below myself in station, whose manners are repulsive and disagreeable, whose practices I condemn and reprobate, whose notions and principles I abhor, has exercised over me for many years an influence which no other person possesses; that he has induced me to do many things which my better sense and better feelings disapproved; that he has even led me to consent that my best-loved daughter should become the wife of his son, and to urge her to be so at the expense of all her feelings. You have seen all this, Edith, and wondered. Is it not so?"

"I have, indeed," murmured Edith. "I have been by no means able to account for it."

"Such will not be the case much longer, Edith," replied Sir Robert Croyland. "I am making my confession, my dear child, and you shall hear all. I must recur, too, to the story of young Layton. You know well that I liked and esteemed him; and although I was offended, as I justly might be, at his conduct towards yourself, and thought fit to show that I

disapproved, yet at first, and from the first, I determined, if I saw the attachment continue and prove real and sincere, to sacrifice all feelings of pride, and all considerations of fortune, and when you were of a fit age, to confirm the idle ceremony which had passed between you, by a real and lawful marriage."

"Oh! that was kind and generous of you, my dear father. What could make you change so suddenly and fatally? You must have seen that the attachment was true and lasting; you must have known that Henry was in every way calculated to make your daughter happy."

"You shall hear, Edith; you shall hear," replied her father. "Very shortly after the event of which I have spoken, another occurred, of a dark and terrible character, only known to myself and one other. I was somewhat irritable at that time. My views and prospects with regard to yourself were crossed; and although I had taken the resolution I have mentioned, vexation and disappointment had their effect upon my mind. Always passionate, I gave way more to my passion than I had ever done before; and the result was a fatal and terrible one. You may remember poor Clare, the gamekeeper. He had offended me on the Monday morning; and I had used violent and angry language towards him before his companions, threatening to punish him in a way he did not expect. On the following day, we went out again to shoot; he and I alone together; and, on our way back, we passed through a little wood, which lies ——"

"Oh, stop; stop!" cried Edith, covering her eyes with her hands. "Do not tell me any more!"

Her father was not displeased to see her emotion, for it answered his purpose. Yet, it must not be supposed that the peculiar tone and manner which he assumed, so different from anything that had been seen in his demeanour for years, was affected as a means to an end. Such was not the case. Sir Robert Croyland was now true, in manner and in words, though it was the first time that he had been entirely so for many years. There had been a terrible struggle before he could make up his mind to speak; but yet, when he did begin, it was a relief to him to unburthen the overloaded breast, even to his own child. It softened him; it made his heart expand; it took the chain off long-imprisoned feelings, and gave a better spirit room to make its presence felt. He did

not forget his object, indeed. To save himself from a death of horror, from accusation, from disgrace, was still his end; but the means by which he proposed to seek it were gentler. He even wavered in his resolution: he fancied that he could summon fortitude to leave the decision to Edith herself, and that if that decision were against him, would dare and bear the worst. But still he was pleased to see her moved; for he thought that she could never hear the whole tale, and learn his situation fully, without rushing forward to extricate him; and he went on—"Nay, Edith, now the statement has been begun, it must be concluded," he said. "You would hear, and you must hear all. You know the wood I speak of, I dare say; a little to the left of Chequer-tree?"

"Oh! yes," murmured Edith, "where poor Clare was found."

The baronet nodded his head. "It was there, indeed," he said. "We went down to see if there were any snipes or wild fowl in the bottom. It is a deep and gloomy-looking dell, with a pond of water and some rushes in the hollow, and a little brook running through it, having tall trees all around, and no road but one narrow path crossing it. As we came down, I thought I saw the form of a man move amongst the trees, and I fancied that some one was poaching there. I told Clare to go round the pond and see, while I watched the road. He did not seem inclined to go, saying, that he had not remarked anybody, but that the people round about said the place was haunted. I had been angry with him the whole morning, and a good deal out of humour with many things; so I told him to go round instantly, and not make me any answer. The man did so, in a somewhat slow and sullen humour, I thought, and returned sooner than I fancied he ought to do, saying that he could see no trace of any one. I was now very angry, for I fancied he neglected his duty. I told him that he was a liar; that I had perceived some one, whom he might have perceived as well, and that my firm belief was he was in alliance with the poachers, and deserved to be immediately discharged. 'Well, Sir Robert,' he said, 'in regard to discharging me, that is soon settled. I will not stay another day in your service after I have a legal right to go. As to being a liar, I am none; and as to being in league with the poachers, if you say so, you yourself lie!' Such were his

words, or words to that effect. I got furious at his insolence, though perhaps, Edith, perhaps I provoked it myself; at least, I have thought so since. However, madly giving way to rage, I took my gun by the barrel to knock him down. A struggle ensued; for he caught hold of the weapon in my hand; and how I know not, but the gun went off, and Clare fell back upon the turf. What would I not have done then to recall every hasty word I had spoken! But it was in vain. I stooped over him; I spoke to him; I told him how sorry I was for what had happened. But he made no answer, and pressed his hand upon his right side, where the charge had entered. I was mad with despair and remorse. I knew not where to go, or what to do. The man was evidently dying, for his face had grown pale and sharp; and after trying to make him speak, and beseeching him to answer one word, I set off running as fast as I could towards the nearest village for assistance. As I was going, I saw a man on horseback riding sharply down towards the very place. He was at some distance from me; but I easily recognised Mr. Radford, and knew that he must pass by the spot where the wounded man lay. I comforted myself with thinking that Clare would get aid without my committing myself; and I crept in amongst the trees at the edge of the wood, to make sure that Mr. Radford saw him, and to watch their proceedings. Quietly and stealthily finding my way through the bushes, I came near; and then I saw that Radford was kneeling by Clare's side with an inkhorn in his hand, which, with his old tradesman-like habits, he used always at that time to carry about him. He was writing busily; and I could hear Clare speak, but could not distinguish what he said. The state of my mind, at that moment, I cannot describe. It was more like madness than anything else. Vain and foolish is it, for any man, or any body of men, to argue what would be their conduct in trying situations which they have never been placed in. It is worse than folly for them to say what would naturally be another man's conduct in any circumstances; for no man can tell another's character, or understand fully all the fine shades of feeling or emotion that may influence him. The tale I am telling you now, Edith, is true: too true, in all respects. I was very wrong, certainly; but I was not guilty of the man's murder. I never intended to fire: I never tried to fire; and

yet, perhaps, I acted afterwards as if I had been guilty, or at all events in a way that was well calculated to make people believe I was so. But I was mad at the time, mad with agitation and grief; and every man, I believe, in moments of deep emotion is mad, more or less. However, I crept out of the wood again, and hastened on, determined to leave the man to the care of Mr. Radford, but with all my thoughts wild and confused, and no definite line of conduct laid out for myself. Before I had gone a mile, I began to think what a folly I had committed, that I should have joined Radford at once; that I should have been present to hear what the man said, and to give every assistance in my power, although it might be ineffectual, in order to staunch the blood and save his life. As soon as these reflections arose, I determined, though late, to do what I should have done at first; and, turning my steps, I walked back at a quick pace. Ere I got half way to the top of the hill which looks down upon the wood, I saw Radford coming out again on horseback; but I went on, and met him. As soon as he beheld me he checked his horse, which was going at a rapid rate, and when I came near, dismounted to speak with me. We were then little more than common acquaintances, and I had sometimes dealt hardly with him in his different transactions; but he spoke in a friendly tone, saying, "This is a sad business, Sir Robert; but if you will take my advice you will go home as quickly as you can, and say nothing to any one till you see me. I will be with you in an hour or so. At present I must ride up to Middle Quarter, and get down men to carry home the body. With a feeling I cannot express, I asked if he were dead then. He nodded his head significantly; and when I was going to put further questions, he grasped my hand, saying, 'Go home, Sir Robert; go home. I shall say nothing about the matter to any one, till I see you, except that I found him dying in the wood. His gun was discharged,' he continued, 'so there is no proof that he did not do it himself!' Little did I know what a fiend he was into whose power I was putting myself."

"Oh, heaven!" cried Edith, who had been listening with her head bent down till her whole face was nearly concealed, "I see it all, now! I see it all!"

"No, dear child," replied Sir Robert Croyland, in a voice sad and solemn, but wonderfully calm, "you cannot see it all;

no, nor one thousandth part of what I have suffered. Even the next dreadful three hours—for he was fully that time ere he came to Harbourne—were full of horror, inconceivable to any one but to him who endured them. At length, he made his appearance: calm, grave, self-possessed, with nought of his somewhat rude and blustering manner, and announced, with an affectation of feeling to the family, that poor Clare, my keeper, had been found dying with a wound in his side."

"I recollect the day, well!" said Edith, shuddering.

"Do you not remember, then," said Sir Robert Croyland, "that he and I went into my writing-room: that awful room, which well deserves the old prison name of the room of torture! We were closeted there for nearly two hours, and all he said I cannot repeat. His tone, however, was the most friendly in the world. He professed the greatest interest in me and in my situation; and he told me that he had come to see me before he said a word to any one, because he wished to take my opinion as to how he was to proceed. It was necessary, he said, that I should know the facts, for, unfortunately they placed me in a very dangerous situation, which he was most anxious to free me from; and then he went on to tell me, that when he had come up, poor Clare was perfectly sensible, and had his speech distinctly. 'As a magistrate,' he continued, 'I thought it right immediately to take his dying deposition, for I saw that he had not many minutes to live. Here it is,' he said, showing his pocket-book; 'and, as I luckily always have pen and ink with me, I knelt down, and wrote his words from his own lips. He had strength enough to sign the paper; and as you may see, there is the mark of blood from his own hand, which he had been pressing on his side.' I would fain have taken the paper, but he would not let me, saying, that he was bound to keep it; and then he went on, and read the contents. In it the unfortunate man charged me most wrongfully with having shot him in a fit of passion; and, moreover, he said that he had been sure, beforehand, that I would do it, as I had threatened him on the preceding day, and there were plenty of people who could prove it."

"Oh! how dreadful!" cried Edith.

"It was false, as I have a soul to be saved!" cried Sir Robert Croyland. "But Mr. Radford then went on, and,

shrugging his shoulders, said, that he was placed in a very delicate and painful situation, and that he did not really know how to act with regard to the deposition. 'Put it in the fire!' I exclaimed, 'put it in the fire!' But he said, 'No; every man must consider himself in these things, Sir Robert. I have my own character and reputation to think of—my own duty. I risk a great deal, you must recollect, by concealing a thing of this kind. I do not know that I don't put my own life in danger; for this is clear and conclusive evidence against you, and you know what it is to be accessory in a case of murder!' I then told him my own story, Edith; and he said, that made some difference, indeed. He was sure I would tell him the truth; but yet he must consider himself in the matter; and he added hints which I could not mistake, that his evidence was to be bought off. I offered anything he pleased to name, and the result was such as you may guess. He exacted that I should mortgage my estate, as far as it could be mortgaged, and make over the proceeds to him, and that I should promise to give your hand to his son. I promised anything, my child; for not only life or death, but honour or disgrace, were in the balance. If he had asked my life, I would have held my throat to the knife a thousand times sooner than have made such sacrifices. But to die the death of a felon, Edith—to be hanged—to writhe in the face of a grinning and execrating multitude—to have my name handed down in the annals of crime as the man who had been executed for the murder of his own servant, I could not bear that, my child; and I promised anything! He kept the paper, he said, as a security; and, at first, it was to be given to me to do with it as I liked, when the money coming from the mortgage was secretly made over to him; but then, he said, that he had lost one great hold, and must keep it till the marriage was completed: for by this time the coroner's inquest was over, and he had withheld the deposition, merely testifying that he had found the man at the point of death in the wood, and had gone as fast as possible for assistance. The jury consisted of his tenants and mine, and they were easily satisfied; but the fiend who had me in his power was more greedy; and, by the very exercise of his influence, he seemed to learn to enjoy it. Day after day, month after month, he took a pleasure in making me do things that were abhorrent to me.

It changed my nature and my character. He forced me to wink at frauds that I detested, and every year he pressed for the completion of your marriage with his son. Your coldness, your dislike, your refusal would, long ere this, have driven him into fury, I believe, if Richard Radford had been eager for your hand himself. But now, Edith, now, my child, he will hear of no more delay. He is ruined in fortune, disappointed in his expectations, and rendered fierce as a hungry beast by some events that have taken place this morning. He has just now been over at Harbourne, and used threats which I know, too well, he will execute. He it was, himself, who told me to inform you, that if you did not consent, your father's life would be the sacrifice!"

"Oh, heaven!" cried Edith, covering her eyes with her hands, "at least, give me time to think. Surely, his word cannot have such power: a base, notorious criminal himself; one who every day violates the law, who scoffs at his own oaths, and holds truth and honour but as names, surely his word will be nothing against Sir Robert Croyland's?"

"His word is nothing, would be nothing," replied her father, earnestly; "but that deposition, Edith! It is that which is my destruction. Remember, that the words of a dying man, with eternity and judgment close before his eyes, are held by the law more powerful than any other kind of evidence; and, besides, there are those still living, who heard the rash threat I used. Suspicion once pointed at me, a thousand corroborative circumstances would come forth to prove that the tale I told of parting with the dead man, some time before, was false, and that very fact would condemn me. Cast away all such hopes, Edith; cast away all such expectations. They are vain! vain! Look the truth full in the face, my child. This man has your father's life entirely and totally in his power, and ask yourself, if you will doom me to death."

"Oh! give me time; give me time!" cried Edith, wringing her hands. "Let me but think over it till to-morrow, or next day."

"Not an hour ago," replied Sir Robert Croyland, "he swore, by everything he holds sacred, that if before twelve to-night, he did not receive your consent—"

"Stay, stay!" cried Edith, eagerly, placing her hand upon her brow. "Let me think; let me think. It is but money

that he wants; it is but the pitiful wealth my uncle left me. Let him take it, my father!" she continued, laying her hand upon Sir Robert's arm, and gazing brightly in his face, as if the light of hope had suddenly been renewed. "Let him take it all, every farthing. I would sooner work as a hired servant in the fields for my daily bread, with the only comfort of innocence and peace, than break my vows, and marry that bad man. I will sign a promise this instant that he shall have all."

Sir Robert Croyland threw his arms round her, and looked up to heaven, as if imploring succour for them both. "My sweet child! My dear child!" he said, with the tears streaming down his cheeks. "But I cannot leave you even this generous hope. This man has other designs. I offered—I promised to give Zara to his son, and to ensure to her, with my brother's help, a fortune equal to your own. But he would not hear of it. He has other views, my Edith. You must know all; you must see all as it really is. He will keep his word this very night! If before twelve he do not receive your consent, the intimation of the fatal knowledge he possesses will be sent to those who will not fail to track it through every step, as the bloodhound follows his prey. He is a desperate man, Edith, and will keep his word, bringing down ruin upon our heads, even if it overwhelm himself also."

Edith Croyland paused without reply for several minutes, her beautiful face remaining pale, with the exception of one glowing spot in the centre of her cheek. Her eyes were fixed upon the ground, and her lips moved, but without speech. She was arguing in her own mind the case between hope and despair; and the terrible array of circumstances on every side bewildered her. Delay was her only refuge; and looking up in her father's face, she said, "But why is he so hasty? Why cannot he wait a few hours longer? I will fix a time when my answer shall be given; it shall be shortly, very shortly: this time to-morrow. Surely, surely, in so terrible a case, I may be allowed a few hours to think; a short, a very short period, to decide!"

"He will admit of no more than I have said," answered Sir Robert Croyland: "it is as vain to entreat him as to ask the hangman to delay his fatal work. He is hard as iron;

without feeling, without heart. His reasons, too, are specious, my dear child. His son, it seems, has taken part this morning in a smuggling affray with the troops; blood has been shed, some of the soldiers have been killed, all who have had a share therein are guilty of felony; and it has become necessary that the young man should be hurried out of the country without delay. To him such a flight is nothing: he has no family to blacken with the record of crime, he has no honourable name to stain, his means are all prepared; his flight is easy, his escape secure; but his father insists that you shall be his bride before he goes, or he gives your father up, not to justice, but to the law; which in pretending to administer justice, but too often commits the very crime it seems to punish. Four short days are all that he allows, and then you are to be that youth's bride."

"What! the bride of a felon!" cried Edith, her spirit rising for a moment, "of one stained with every vice and every crime; to vow falsely that I will love him whom I must ever hate; to break all my promises to one I must ever love; to deceive, prove false and forsworn to the noble and the true, and give myself to the base, the lawless, and the abhorred! Oh, my father, my father! is it possible that you can ask such a thing?"

The fate of Sir Robert Croyland and his daughter hung in the balance. One harsh command, one unkind word, with justice and truth on her side, and feebleness and wrong on his, might have armed her to resist; but the old man's heart was melted. The struggle that he witnessed in his child was, for a moment—remark, only for a moment—more terrible than that within his own breast. There was something in the innocence and truth, something in the higher attributes of the passions called into action in her breast, something in the ennobling nature of the conflicting feelings of her heart: the filial tenderness, the adherence to her engagements, the abhorrence of the bad, the love of the good, the truth, the honour, and the piety, all striving one with the other, that for a time made the mean passion of fear seem small and insignificant. "I do not ask you, my child," he said, "I do not urge you; I ask, I urge you no more! The worst bitterness is past. I have told my own child the tale of my sorrows, my folly, my weakness, and my danger. I have inflicted the worst upon you, Edith,

and on myself; and I leave it to your own heart to decide. After your generous, your noble offer, to sacrifice your property and leave yourself nothing for my sake, it were cruel; it were, indeed, base, to urge you farther. To avoid this dreadful disclosure, to shelter you and myself from such horrible details, I have often been stern, and harsh, and menacing. Forgive me, Edith, but it is past! You now know what is on the die; and it is your own hand casts it. Your father's life, the honour of your family, the high name we have ever borne, these are to be lost and won. But I urge it, I ask it not. You only must and can decide."

Edith, who had risen, stood before him, pale as ashes, with her hands clasped so tight that the blood retreated from her fingers, where they pressed against each other, leaving them as white as those of the dead: her eyes fixed, straining, but sightless, upon the ground. All that she saw, all that she knew, all that she felt, was the dreadful alternative of fates before her. It was more than her frame could bear, it was more than almost any heart could endure. To condemn a father to death, to bring the everlasting regret into her heart, to wander, as if accurst, over the earth, with a parent's blood crying out for vengeance! It was a terrible thought, indeed. Then again, she remembered the vows that she had taken, the impossibility of performing those that were asked of her, the sacrifice of the innocent to the guilty, the perjury that she must commit, the dark and dreadful future before her, the self-reproach that stood on either hand to follow her through life! She felt as if her heart was bursting; and the next moment, all the blood seemed to fly from it, and leave it cold and motionless. She strove to speak, her voice was choked; but then, again, she made an effort, and a few words broke forth, convulsively: "To save you, my father, I would do anything," she cried. "I *will* do anything, but—"

She could not finish; her sight failed her; her heart seemed crushed; her head swam; the colour left her lips; and she fell prone at her father's feet, without one effort to save herself.

Sir Robert Croyland's first proceeding was, to raise her and lay her on the sofa; but before he called any one, he gazed at her a moment or two in silence. "She has fainted," he said. "Poor child! Poor girl!" But then came another thought:

"She said she would do anything," he murmured; "her words were, 'I will.' It is surely a consent."

He forgot, he heeded not, he would not heed, that she had added, "but—"

"Yes, it was a consent," he repeated; "it must have been a consent. I will hasten to tell him. If we can but gain a few days, it is something. Who can say what a few days may bring? At all events, it is a relief. It will obtain the delay she wished; I will tell him. It must have been a consent;" and calling the servants and Edith's own maid to attend upon her, he hastened out of the house, fearful of waiting till her senses returned, lest other words should snatch from him the interpretation he chose to put upon those which had gone before. In an instant, however, he returned, went into the library, and wrote down on a scrap of paper:—

"Thanks, dearest Edith, thanks! I go in haste to tell Mr. Radford the promise you have given."

Then hurrying out again, he put the paper, which he had folded up, into the hands of the groom who held his horse. "That for Miss Croyland," he said, "when she has quite recovered; but not before;" and, mounting with speed, he rode away as fast as he could go.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was two o'clock when Sir Robert Croyland left his daughter; and Edith, with the aid of her maid, soon recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen. At first she hardly knew where she was, or what had taken place. All seemed strange to her, for she had never fainted before; and though she had more than once seen her sister in the state in which she herself had just been, yet she did not apply what she had witnessed in others to explain her own sensations.

When she could rise from the sofa, where her father had laid her, and thought and recollection returned, Edith's first inquiry was for Sir Robert, and the servant's answer that he had been gone a quarter of an hour, was at first a relief. But Edith sat and pondered for a while, applying herself to call to

mind all the last words which had been spoken. As she did so, a fear came over her, a fear that her meaning might have been mistaken. "No!" she murmured, at length, "no! I said, *but;* he must have heard it. I cannot break those vows; I dare not; I would do anything to save him; oh, yes! doom myself to wretchedness for life; but I cannot, unless Henry gives me back my promise. Poor Henry! what right have I to make him suffer too? Yet does he suffer? But a father's life, a father's life! That must not be the sacrifice! Leave me, Caroline, I am better now!" she continued aloud; "it is very foolish to faint in this way. It never happened to me before."

"Oh dear! Miss Edith, it happens to every one now and then," said the maid, who had been in her service long; "and I am sure all Sir Robert said to you to day was enough to make you."

"Good heaven!" cried Edith; in alarm, "did you hear?"

"I could not help hearing a part, Miss Edith," answered the maid; "for in that little room, where I sit to be out of the way of all the black fellows, one hears very plain what is said here. There was once a door, I believe, and it is only just covered over."

For a moment, Edith sat mute in consternation; but at length demanded, "What did you hear? Tell me all, Caroline, every word, if you would ever have me regard you more."

"Oh! it was not much, miss," replied the maid; "I heard Sir Robert twice say, his life depended on it, and I suppose he meant on you marrying young Mr. Radford. Then he seemed to tell you a long story; but I did not hear the whole of that; for I did not try, I can assure you, Miss Edith; and then I heard you say, 'To save you, my father, I would do anything, I *will* do anything, but—' and then you stopped in the middle, because I suppose you fainted."

Edith put her hands before her eyes and thought, or tried to think, for her ideas were still in sad confusion. "Leave me now, Caroline," she said; "but remember, I expect that no part of any conversation you have overheard between me and my father, will ever be repeated."

"Oh! dear no, Miss Edith," replied the woman, "I would not on any account;" and she left the room.

We all know of what value are ordinary promises of secrecy,

even in the best society, as it is called. Nine times out of ten, there is one dear friend to whom everything is revealed; and that dear friend has others; and at each remove, the bond of secrecy is weaker and more weak, till the whole world is made a hearer of the tale. Now Edith's maid was a very discreet person; and when she promised not to reveal what she had heard, she only proposed to herself to tell it to one person in the world. Nor was that person her lover, or her friend, or her fellow-servant; nor was she moved by the spirit of gossip, but really and truly by a love for her young lady, which was great, and by a desire to serve her. Thus, she thought, as soon as she had shut the door, "I will tell it to Miss Zara, though; for it is but right that she should know how they are driving her sister to marry a man she hates, as well she may. Miss Zara is active and quick, and may find some means of helping her."

The maid had not been gone a minute when she returned with the short note which Sir Robert Croyland had left, and as she handed it to her young mistress, she watched her countenance eagerly. But Edith took it, read it, and gazed upon the paper without a word.

"Pray, Miss Edith," said the maid, "are you likely to want me soon; for I wish to go up to the village for something?"

"No, Caroline, no," answered Edith, with an absent air; "I shall not want you." And she remained standing with the paper in her hand, and her eyes fixed upon it.

The powers by which volition acts upon the mind, and in what volition really consists, are mysteries which have never yet, that I have seen, been explained. Yet certain it is, that there is something within us which, when the intellectual faculties seem, under the pressure of circumstances, to lose their functions, can, by a great effort compel them to return to their duty, rally them, and array them, as it were, against the enemy by whom they have been routed. Edith Croyland made the effort, and succeeded. She had been taken by surprise, and overcome; but now she collected all the forces of her mind, and prepared to fight the battle over again. In a few minutes she became calm, and applied herself to consider fully her own situation. There were filial duty and tenderness on one side, love and a strong vow on the other. "He has gone to tell Mr. Radford that I have consented," was her first

distinct thought, "but his having mistaken me must not make me give that consent when it is wrong. Were it myself alone, I would sacrifice all for him; I could but die; a few hours of misery are not much to bear: I have borne many. But I am bound. Good God! what an alternative!"

But I will not follow her thoughts: they can easily be conceived. She was left alone, with no one to counsel, with no one to aid her. The fatal secret she possessed was a bar to asking advice from any one. Buried in her own bosom, the causes of her conduct, the motives upon which she acted, must ever be secret, whatever course she pursued. Agony was on either hand. She had to choose between two terrible alternatives: on the one hand a breach of all her engagements, a few years, a few weeks, perhaps, of misery, and an early death, for such she knew must be her fate: and, on the other, a life, with love certainly to cheer it, but poisoned by the remembrance that she had sacrificed her father. Yet Edith now thought firmly, weighed, considered all.

She could come to no determination. Between two such gulfs, she shrank trembling from either.

The clock in the hall, with its clear, sharp bell, struck three; and the moment after, the quick sound of horse's feet was heard. "Can it be my father?" she thought. "No! he has not had time, unless he has doubted;" but while she asked herself the question, the horses stopped at the door, the bell rang, and she went on to say to herself: 'Perhaps it is Zara. That would be a comfort, indeed, though I cannot tell her; I must not tell her all."

The old Hindoo opened the door, saying, "Missy, a gentleman want to see you: very fine gentleman."

Edith could not speak; but she bowed her head, and the servant, receiving that token as assent, turned to some one behind him and said, "Walk in, sir."

For a moment or two Edith did not raise her eyes, and her lips moved. She heard a step in the room that made her heart flutter; she heard the door shut, but yet for an instant she remained with her head bent, and her hands clasped together. Then she looked up. Standing before her, and gazing intently upon her, was a tall handsome man, dressed in the splendid uniform of the dragoons of that time, and with a star upon his left breast: a decoration worn by persons who

had the right to do so more frequently in those days than at the present time. But it was to the face that Edith's eyes were turned: to the countenance well known and deeply loved. Changed though it was, grave where it had been gay, pale where it had been florid, sterner in the lines, once so full of gentle youth, still all the features were there, and the expression, too, though saddened, was the same.

He gazed on her with a look full of tenderness and love; and their eyes met. On both of them the feelings of other years seemed to rush with overpowering force. The interval which had since occurred, for a moment, was annihilated; the heart went back with the rapid wing of memory to the hours of joy that were gone, and Layton opened wide his arms, exclaiming, "Edith! Edith!"

She could not resist. She had no power to struggle. Love, stronger than herself, was master; and, starting up, she cast herself upon his bosom, and there wept.

"Dear, dear girl!" he said, "then you love me still; then Digby's assurance is true; then you have not forgotten poor Harry Layton; then his persevering hope, his long endurance, his unwavering love, his efforts, his success, have not been all in vain! Dear, dear Edith! This hour repays me for all, for all. Dangers and adversities, and wounds, and anguish of body and of mind, and sleepless nights, and days of bitter thought, I would endure them all. All? ay, tenfold all, for this one hour!" and he pressed her closer and closer to his heart.

"Nay, Harry; nay," cried Edith, still clinging to him; "but hear me, hear me, or if you speak such words of tenderness you will break my heart, or drive me mad."

"Good heaven!" exclaimed Layton, unclasping his arms, "what is it that you say? Edith, my Edith; my own, my vowed, my bride! But now you seemed to share the joy you gave: to love, as you are loved; and now ——"

"I do love you: oh! I do love you!" cried Edith, vehemently; "add not a doubt of that to all I suffer. Ever, ever have I loved you, without change, without thought of change. But yet, but yet—: I may have fancied that you have forgotten me; I may have thought it strange that you did not write; that my letters remained unanswered; but still I loved, still I have been true to you."

"I did write, my Edith. I received no letters," said Layton, sadly; "we have both been wronged, my dear girl. My letters were returned in a cover directed in your own hand: but that trick I understand: that I see through. Oh! do not let any one deceive you again, beloved girl! You have been my chief, I might say my *only* thought; for the memory of you has mingled with every other idea, and made the whole your own. In the camp and in the field, I have endured and fought for Edith: in the council and in the court, I have struggled and striven for her; she has been the end and object of every effort, the ruling power of my whole mind. And now, Edith; now your soldier has returned to you. He has won every step towards the crowning reward of his endeavours; he has risen to competence, to command, to some honour in the service of his country; and he can proudly say to her he loves: Cast from you the fortune for which men dared to think I sought you; come to your lover, come to your husband, as dowerless as he was when they parted us; and let all the world see and know, that it was your love, not your wealth, I coveted: this dear hand, that dear heart, not base gold, that I desired. Oh! Edith, in heaven's name, cast me not now headlong down from the height of hope and joy to which you have raised me, for fear a heart and spirit, too long depressed, should never find strength to rise again."

Edith staggered back and sank down upon the sofa, covering her eyes, and only murmuring, "'I do love you, Harry, beyond life itself. Oh! that I were dead! Oh! that I were dead!"

There was a terrible struggle in Henry Layton's bosom. He could not understand the agitation that he witnessed. Had it borne anything like the character of joy, even of surprise, all would have been clear; but it was evidently very different. It was joy overborne by sorrow. It was evidently a struggle of love with some influence, perhaps not stronger, yet terrible in its effect. He was a man of quick decision and strong resolution: qualities not always combined; and he overcame himself in a moment. He saw that he was loved, still deeply, truly loved; and that was a great point. He saw that Edith was grieved to the soul; he saw that he himself could not feel more intensely the anguish she inflicted than she did; that she was wringing her own heart while she was wringing his, and

felt a double pang; and that was a strong motive for calmness, if not for fortitude. Her last words, "I wish I were dead!" restored him fully to himself; and following her to the sofa, he seated himself beside her, gently took her hand in his, and pressed his lips upon it.

"Edith," he said; "my own dear Edith, let us be calm! Thank you, my beloved, for one moment of happiness, the first I have known for years; and now let us talk, as quietly as may be, of anything that may have arisen which should justly cause Henry Layton's return to make Edith Croyland wish herself dead. Your uncle will not be long ere he arrives; I left him on the road; and it is by his full consent that I am here."

"Oh, no! Harry, no!" said Edith, turning at first to his comment on her words: "it is not your return that makes me wish myself dead; but it is, that circumstances, dark and terrible circumstances, which were only made known to me an hour before your arrival, have turned all the joy, the pure, the almost unmixed joy, that I should have felt at seeing you again, into a well of bitterness. It is that I cannot, that I dare not explain to you those circumstances; that you will think me wrong, unkind, fickle, perhaps; perhaps even mad, in whatsoever way I may act."

"But surely you can say something, dear Edith," said her lover; "you can give some hint of the cause of all I see. You tell me in one breath that you love me still, yet wish you were dead; and show evidently that my coming has been painful to you."

"No, no, Harry," she answered, mournfully, "do not say so. Painful to me? oh no! It would be the purest joy that ever I yet knew, were it not that— But why did you not come earlier, Harry? Why, when your horse stood upon that hill, did you not turn his head hither? Would that you had, would that you had! My fate would have been already decided. Now it is all clouds and darkness. I knew you instantly. I could see no feature; I could but trace a figure on horseback, wrapped in a large cloak; but the instinct of love told me who it was. Oh! why did you not come then?"

"Because it would have been dishonest, Edith," answered Layton, gravely. "Your uncle had been my father's friend, my uncle's friend. In a kindly manner he invited me here

some time ago, as a perfect stranger, under the name of Captain Osborn. You were not here then; and I thought I could not in honour come under his roof, when I found you were here, without telling him who I really was. He appointed this day to meet me at Woodchurch at two; and I dared not venture, after all that has passed between your family and mine, to seek you in his dwelling, ere I had seen and explained myself to him. I knew you were here: I gazed up at these windows with a yearning of the heart that nearly overcame my resolution."

"I saw you gaze, Harry," answered Edith; "and I say still, would that you had come! Yet you were right. It might have saved me much misery; but you were right. And now listen to the fate that is before me; to the choice I have to make, as far as I can explain it, and yet what words can I use? But it must be done. I must not leave anything unperformed that can prevent poor Edith Croyland from becoming an object of hatred and contempt in Henry Layton's eyes. Little as I can do to defend myself, I must do it."

She paused, gazed up on high for a moment, and then laid her hand upon his.

"Henry I do love you," she said. "Nay, more, I am yours, plighted to you by bonds I cannot and I dare not break; vows, I mean, the most solemn, as well as the ties of long affection. Yet, if I wed you, I am miserable for life. Self-reproach, eternal self-reproach, the most terrible of all things; to which no other mental or corporeal pain can ever reach, would prey upon my heart for ever, and bear me down into the grave. Peace, rest, I should have none. A voice would be for ever howling in my ear a name that would poison sleep, and make each waking moment an hour of agony. I can tell you no more on this side of the question; but so it is. It seems fated that I should bring misery one way or another upon him who is dearest to me."

"I cannot comprehend," exclaimed Layton, in surprise. "Your father has heard, I suppose, that I am here, and has menaced you with his curse?"

"Oh, no!" answered Edith; "far from it. He was here but now; he spoke of you, Henry, as you deserve. He told me how he had loved you and esteemed you in your young days; how, though angry at first at our rash engagement, he

would have consented in the end; but, there was a fatal 'but,' Henry, an impediment not to be surmounted. I must not tell you what it is; I cannot, I dare not explain. But listen to what he said besides. You have heard one part of the choice, hear the other: it is to wed a man whom I abhor, despise, contemn; whose very look is fearful to me; to ask you to give me back the vows I plighted, in order, in order—" and she spoke very low, "that I may sacrifice myself for my father; that I may linger out a few weeks of wretchedness, and then sink into the grave, which is now my only hope."

"And do you ask me, Edith," inquired Layton, in a sad and solemn tone. "Do you, Edith Croyland, really and truly ask me to give you back those vows? Speak, beloved, speak; for my heart is well-nigh bursting."

He paused, and she was silent; covering her eyes with her hands, while her bosom heaved, as if she were struggling for breath. "No, no, no, Harry!" she cried at length, as if the effort were vain; "I cannot, I cannot! Oh, Harry, Harry! I wish that I were dead!" and, casting her arms round his neck, she wept upon his breast again.

Henry Layton drew her closer to him with his left arm round her waist; but pressed his right hand on his brow, and gazed on vacancy. Both remained without speaking for a time; but at length he said, in a voice more calm than might have been expected, "Let us consider this matter, Edith. You have been terrified by some means; a tale has been told you which has agitated and alarmed you; which has overcome your resolution, that now has endured more than six years, and doubtless that tale has been well devised. Are you sure that it is true? Forgive this doubt in regard to one who is dear and near to you; but when such deceits have been practised, as those which we know have been used to delude us, I must be suspicious. Are you sure that it is true, I say?"

"Too true, too true," answered Edith, shaking her head, mournfully; "that tale explains all, too, even those deceits you mention. No, no, it is but too true; it could not be feigned; besides, I remember so many things, all tending to the same. It is true, I cannot doubt it."

Sir Henry Layton paused, and twice began to speak, but twice stopped, as if the words he was about to utter, cost him

a terrible struggle to speak. At length he said, "And the man, Edith, the man they wish you to marry, who is he?"

"Ever the same," answered Edith, bending down her head, and her cheek, which had been as pale as death, glowing like crimson, "the same Richard Radford."

"What! a felon!" exclaimed Layton, turning round, with his brows bent; "a felon, after whom my soldiers and the officers of justice are now hunting through the country! Sir Robert Croyland must be mad! But I tell you, Edith, that man shall never stand within a church again, till it be the chapel of the gaol. Let him make his peace with heaven; for if he be caught, and caught he shall be, there is no mercy for him on earth. But surely there must be some mistake. You cannot have understood your father rightly, or he cannot know——"

"Oh! yes, yes!" replied Edith; "he knows all; and it is the same. Ay, and within four days, too, that he may take me with him in his flight."

"Ere four days be over," answered her lover, sternly, "he shall no more think of bridals."

"And what will become of my father, then!" said Edith, gazing steadily down upon the ground. "It is I, I that shall have done it. Alas, alas! which way shall I turn?"

There was something more than sorrow in her countenance, there was anguish, almost agony; and Sir Henry Layton was much moved. "Turn to me, Edith," he said, "turn to him who loves you better than life; and there is no sacrifice that he will not make for you, but his honour. Tell me, have you made any promise? Have you given your father your consent?"

"No," answered Edith, eagerly; "no, I have not. He took my words as consent, though, ere they were half finished the horror and pain of all I heard overcame me, and I fainted. But I did not consent, Harry, I could not consent without your permission. Oh! Harry, aid and support me!"

"Listen to me, my beloved," replied Layton; "wealth, got by any means, is this man's object. I gather from what you say, that your father has some cause to dread him. Give up to him this much coveted fortune, let him take it; ay, and share Henry Layton's little wealth. I desire nothing but yourself."

"Alas, Henry, it is all in vain!" answered Edith; "I have

offered it; I knew your noble, generous heart. I knew that wealth would make no difference to him I loved, and offered to resign everything. My father, even before he came hither, offered him my sister; offered to make her the sacrifice, as she is bound by no promises, and to give her an equal portion; but it was all refused."

"Then there is some other object," said her lover; "some object that may, perhaps, tend even to more misery than you dream of, Edith. Believe me, my beloved, oh! believe me, did I but see how I could deliver you, were I sure that any act of mine would give you peace, no sacrifice on my part would seem too great. At present, however, I see nothing clearly, all is darkness and shadow around. I know not, that if I give you back your promise, and free you from your vow, that I shall not be contributing to make you wretched. How, then, am I to act? You are sure, dear one, that you have not consented?"

"Quite sure," answered Edith; "and it so happened, that there was one who heard my words as well as my father. He, indeed, took them as consent, and hurried away to Mr. Radford, without giving me time to recover and say more. Read that, Harry," and she put the note her father had left into his hands.

"It is fortunate you were heard by another," replied Layton. "Hark! there is your uncle's carriage coming. Four days, did he say; four days? Well, then, dear Edith, will you trust in me? Will you leave your fate in the hands of one who will do anything on earth for your happiness? and will you never doubt, though you may be kept in suspense, that I will so act as to deliver you, if I can, without bringing ruin on your father."

"It is worse than ruin," answered Edith, with the tears rolling down her cheeks, "it is death. But I will trust to you, Henry; I will trust implicitly. But tell me how to act, tell me what I am to do."

"Leave this matter as it is," answered her lover, hearing Mr. Croyland's carriage stop at the door; "your father has snatched too eagerly at your words. Perhaps he has done so to gain time: but, at all events, the fault is his, not yours. If he speaks to you on the subject, you must tell the truth, and say you did not consent, but in everything else be passive;

let him do with you what he will: take you to the altar, if he so pleases; but there must be the final struggle, Edith. There you must boldly and aloud refuse to wed a man you cannot love. There let the memory of your vows to me be ever present with you. It may seem cruel; but I exact it for your own sake. In the mean time, take means to let me know everything that happens, be it small or great; cast off all reserve towards Digby; tell him all, everything that takes place; tell your sister, too, or any one who can bear me the tidings. I shall be nearer than you think."

"Oh! heaven, how will this end," cried Edith, putting her hand in his; "God help me, Harry, God help me!"

"He will, dear girl," answered Layton; "I feel sure he will. But remember what I have said. Fail not to tell Digby, or Zara, or any one who can bear the tidings to me, everything that occurs, every word that is spoken, every step that is taken. Think nothing too trifling. But there is your uncle's voice in the passage. Can you not inform him of that which you think yourself bound not to tell me? I mean the particulars of your father's situation."

"No; oh, no!" replied Edith; "I dare tell no one, especially not my uncle. Though kind, and generous, and benevolent, yet he is hasty, and he might ruin all. Dared I tell any one on earth, Henry, it would be you; and if I loved you before, oh! how I must love you now, when instead of the anger, or even heat, which I expected you to display, you have shown yourself ready to sacrifice all for one who is hardly worthy of you."

Layton pressed her to his bosom, and replied, "Real love is unselfish, Edith. I tell you, dearest, that I die if I lose you; yet, Edith Croyland shall never do what is wrong for Henry Layton's sake. If in the past we did commit an error, if I should not have engaged you by vows without your parent's consent, though God knows that error has been bitterly visited on my head! I am still ready to make atonement to the best of my power; but I will not consent that you should be causelessly made miserable, or sacrifice yourself and me, without benefit to any one. Trust to me, Edith; trust to me."

"I will, I will!" answered Edith Croyland; "who can I trust to else?"

Mr. Croyland was considerate; and knowing that Sir Henry Layton was with his neice, for his young friend had passed him on the road, he paused for a moment in the vestibule, giving various orders and directions, in order to afford them a few minutes more of private conversation. When he went in, he was surprised to find Edith's face full of deep grief, and her eyes wet with tears, and still more when Layton, after kissing her fair cheek, advanced towards him, saying, "I must go, my dear friend, nor can I accept you kind invitation to stay here to-night. But I am about to show myself a bold man, and ask you to give me almost the privilege of a son; that is, of coming and going, for the four or five next days, at my own will, and without question."

"What's all this? What's all this?" cried Mr. Croyland; "a lovers' quarrel? Ha! Edith? Ha! Harry?"

"Oh! no," answered Edith, giving her uncle her hand; "there never can be a quarrel between me and Henry Layton."

"Well, then, what is it all?" exclaimed Mr. Croyland, turning from one to the other. "Mystery, mystery! I hate mystery, Harry Layton. However, you shall have your privilege; the doors shall be open. Come; go: do what you like. But if you are not a great fool, you will order over a post-chaise and four this very night, put her in, and be off for Gretna Green. I'll give you my parental benediction."

"I am afraid, my dear sir," answered Layton, "that cannot be. Edith has told me various things since I saw her, which require to be dealt with in a different way. I trust, that, in whatever I do, my conduct will be such as to give you satisfaction; and whether the result be fortunate or otherwise, I shall never, till the last hour of life, forget the kindness you have shown me. And now, my dear sir, adieu for the present, for I have much to do this night."

Thus saying, he shook the old gentleman's hand, and departed with a heavy heart and anxious mind. During his onward ride, his heart did not become lighter; his mind was only more burdened with cares. As long as he was in Edith's presence he had borne up and struggled against all that he felt; for he saw that she was already overwhelmed with grief, and he feared to add to it; but now his thoughts were all confusion. With incomplete information, in circumstances the most difficult, anxious to save her he loved, even at any sacri-

fice on his part, yet seeing no distinct means of acting in any direction without danger to her, he looked around him in vain for any resource, or, if he formed a plan one moment, he rejected it the next. He knew Edith's perfect truth, he knew the quiet firmness and power of her mind too well to doubt one tittle of that which she had stated; and though at first sight he thought the proofs he possessed of Mr. Radford's participation in the late smuggling transaction were quite sufficient to justify that person's immediate arrest, and proposed that it should take place immediately, yet the next moment he recollected what might be the result to Sir Robert Croyland, and hesitated how to act. Then, again, he turned his eyes to the circumstances in which Edith's father was placed, and asked himself, what could be the mystery which so terribly overshadowed him? Edith had said that his life was at stake; and Layton tortured his imagination in vain to find some explanation of such a fact.

"Can he have been deceiving her?" he asked himself more than once. But then, again, he answered, "No; it must be true! He can have no ordinary motive in urging her to such a step; his whole character, his whole views are against it. Haughty and ostentatious, there must be some overpowering cause to make him seek to wed his daughter to a low ruffian, the son of an upstart, who owed his former wealth to fraud, and who is now, if all tales be true, nearly bankrupt; to wed Edith, a being of grace, of beauty, and of excellence, to a villain like this, a felon and a fugitive, and to send her forth into the wide world, to share the wanderings of a man she hates! The love of life must be a strange thing in some men. One would have thought that a thousand lives were nothing to such a sacrifice. Yet the tale must be true; this old man must have Sir Robert's life in his power. But how: how? that is the question. Perhaps Digby can discover something. At all events, I must see him without delay."

In such thoughts, Sir Henry Layton rode on fast to Woodchurch, accomplishing in twenty minutes that which took good Mr. Croyland, with his pampered horses, more than an hour to perform; and springing from his charger at the door of the inn, he was preparing to go up and write to Sir Edward Digby, when Captain Irby, on the one hand, and his own servant on the other, applied for attention.

"Mr. Warde is up stairs, sir," said the servant; "he has been waiting about half an hour."

But Layton turned to the officer, asking, "What is it, Captain Irby?"

"Two or three of the men, sir, who have been taken," replied Captain Irby, "have expressed a wish to make a statement. One of them is badly wounded, too; but I did not know how to act till you arrived, as we had no magistrate here."

"Was it quite voluntary?" demanded the young officer; "no inducements held out: no questions asked?"

"Quite voluntary, sir," answered the other. "They sent to ask for you; and when I went, in your absence, they told me what it was they desired; but I refused to take the deposition till you arrived, for fear of getting myself into a scrape."

"It must be taken," replied the colonel. "Of whatever value it may be judged hereafter, we must not refuse it when offered. I will come to them in a moment, Irby;" and entering the house, but without going up stairs, he wrote a few lines, in the bar, to Sir Edward Digby, requesting to see him without delay. Then, calling his servant, he said, "Tell Mr. Warde I will be with him in a few minutes; after which, mount your horse, and carry this note over to Harbourne House, to Sir Edward Digby. Give it into his own hand; but remember, it is my wish that you should not mention my name there at all. Do you know the place?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man; and, leaving him to fulfil his errand, the colonel returned to the door of the house to accompany Captain Irby.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We must now return for a time to Harbourne House, where, after Sir Robert Croyland's departure, his guest had endeavoured in vain, during the whole morning, to obtain a few minutes' private conversation with the baronet's youngest daughter. Now, it was not in the least degree, that Mrs. Barbara's notions of propriety interfered to prevent the two young people from being alone together; for, on the contrary,

Mrs. Barbara was a very lenient and gentle-minded person, and thought it quite right that any two human beings, who were likely to fall in love with each other, should have every opportunity of doing so to their hearts' content. But it so happened, from a sort of fatality which hung over all her plans, that whenever she interfered with anything, which, indeed, she always did with everything she could lay her hands upon, the result was sure to be directly the contrary to that which she intended. It might be, indeed, that she did not always manage matters quite judiciously; that she acted without considering all the circumstances of the case; and undoubtedly it would have been quite as well if she had not acted at all when she was not asked.

In the present instance, when she had remained in the drawing-room with her niece and Sir Edward for near half an hour after her brother had departed, it just struck her that they might wish to be alone together; for she had made up her mind by this time that the young officer's visit was to end in a love affair; and, as the very best means of accomplishing the desired object, instead of going to speak with the housekeeper, or to give orders to the dairy-maid, or to talk to the steward, as any other prudent, respectable, and well-arranged aunt would have done, she said to her niece, as if a sudden thought had occurred to her, "I don't think Sir Edward Digby has ever seen the library. Zara, my dear, you had better show it to him. There are some very curious books there, and the manuscript in vellum, with all the king's' heads painted."

Zara felt that it was rather a coarse piece of work which her aunt had just turned out of hand; and being a little too much susceptible of ridicule, she did not like to have anything to do with it, although to say the truth, she was very anxious herself for the few minutes that Mrs. Barbara was inclined to give her.

"Oh! I dare say, my dear aunt," she replied, "Sir Edward Digby does not care anything about old books. I don't believe they have been opened for these fifty years."

"The greater the treasure, Miss Croyland," answered the young officer. "I can assure you nothing delights me more than an old library; so I think I shall go and find it out myself, if you are not disposed to show it to me."

Zara Croyland remembered, with a smile, that Sir Edward Digby had met with no great difficulty in finding it out for himself on a previous occasion. She rose, however, with her colour a little heightened; for his invitation was a very palpable one, and she did not know what conclusions her aunt might be pleased to draw, or to insinuate to others; and, leading the way towards the library, she opened the door, expecting to find the room untenanted. There, however, before her eyes, standing opposite to a book-case, with a large folio volume of divinity in his hand, stood the clergyman of the parish; and he instantly turned round his head, with spectacles on nose, and advanced to pay his respects to Miss Croyland and Sir Edward Digby. Now, the clergyman was a very worthy man; but he had one of those peculiarities, which, if peculiarities were systematically classed, would be referred to the bore genus. He was frequently unaware of when people had had enough of him; and consequently on the present occasion, after he had informed Zara, that finding her father was out, he had taken the liberty of walking into the library to look at a book he wanted, he put back that book, and attacked Sir Edward Digby, *totis viribus*, upon the state of the weather, the state of the country, and the state of the smugglers. The latter topic, as it was the predominant one in every man's mind at that moment, and in that part of the country, occupied him rather longer than a sermon, though his parishioners occasionally thought his sermons quite sufficiently extensive for any sleep-resisting powers of the human frame to withstand; and then, when Sir Edward and Zara, forgetting, in the interest which they seemed to take in his discourse, that they had come into the library to look at the books, walked out upon the terrace, he walked out with them; and as they turned up and down, he turned up and down also, for full an hour.

Zara could almost have cried in the end; but, as out of the basest refuse of our stable-yards grow the finest flowers of our gardens, so good is ever springing up from evil; and in the end the worthy clergyman gave his two companions the first distinct account which they had received of the dispersion of Mr. Radford's band of smugglers, and of the eager pursuit of young Radford which was taking place through the country. Thus passed the morning, with one event or other, of little

consequence, presenting obstacles to any free communication between two people who were almost as desirous of some private conversation as if they had been lovers.

A little before three o'clock, however, Zara Croyland, who had been looking out of the window, suddenly quitted the drawing-room; and Sir Edward Digby, who maintained his post, was left to entertain Mrs. Barbara, which he did to the best of his abilities. He was still in full career, a little enjoying, to say sooth, some of the good lady's minor absurdities, when Zara re-entered the room with a quick step, and a somewhat eager look. Her fair cheek was flushed too; and her face had in it that sort of determined expression which often betrays that there has been a struggle in the mind, as to some step about to be taken, and that victory has not been achieved without an effort.

"Sir Edward Digby," she said, in a clear and distinct tone, "I want to speak with you for a few moments, if you please."

Mrs. Barbara looked shocked, and internally wondered that Zara could not have made some little excuse for engaging Sir Edward in private conversation.

"She might have asked him to go and see a flower, or offered to play him a tune on the harpsichord, or taken him to look at the dove-cot, or anything," thought Mrs. Barbara.

The young officer, however, instantly started up, and accompanied his fair inviter towards the library, to which she led the way with a hurried and eager step.

"Let us come in here!" she said, opening the door; but the moment she was within, she sank into a chair and clasped her hands together.

Sir Edward Digby shut the door, and then advanced towards her, a great deal surprised and somewhat alarmed by the agitation he saw her display. She did not speak for a moment, as if completely overpowered, and feeling for her more deeply than he himself knew, her companion took her hand and tried to soothe her, saying, "Be calm; be calm, my dear Miss Croyland! You know you can trust in me; and if I can aid you in any way, command me."

"I know not what to do, or what to say," cried Zara: "but I am sure, Sir Edward, you will find excuses for me; and therefore I will make none; though I may perhaps seem

somewhat bold in dealing thus with one whom I have only known a few days."

"There are circumstances which sometimes make a few days equal to many years," replied Sir Edward Digby. "It is so, my dear young lady, with you and I. Therefore, without fear or hesitation, tell me what it is that agitates you, and how I can serve you. I am not fond of making professions; but if it be in human power, it shall be done."

"I know not whether it can be done or not," said Zara; "but if not, there is nothing but ruin and desolation for two people whom we both love. You saw my father set out this morning. Did you remark the course he took? It was over to my uncle's, for I watched him from the window. He passed back again some time ago, but then struck off towards Mr. Radford's. All that made me uneasy; but just now, I saw Edith's maid coming up towards the house, and eager for tidings, I hurried away. Good Heavens, what tidings she has borne me!"

"They must be evil ones, I see," answered Digby; "but I trust not such as to preclude all chance of remedying what may have gone wrong. When two or three people act togegether zealously, dear lady, there are very few things they cannot accomplish."

"Yes, but how to explain!" exclaimed Zara; "yet I must be short; for otherwise my aunt will be in upon us. Now, Sir Edward Digby," she continued, after thinking for a moment, "I know you are a man of honour; I am sure you are; and I ask you to pledge me that honour, that you will never reveal to any one what I am going to tell you; for I know not whether I am about to do right or wrong; whether, in trying to save one, I may not be bringing down ruin upon others. Do you give me your honour?"

"Most assuredly!" answered her companion. "I will never repeat a word that you say, unless with your permission, on my honour!"

"Well, then," replied Zara, in a faint voice, "Mr. Radford has my father's life in his power. How, I know not: how I cannot tell. But so it is; and such are the tidings that Caroline has just brought us. Mr. Radford's conference with him this morning was not for nothing. Immediately after, he went over to Edith; he told her some tale which the girl did not

distinctly hear; but, it seems, some paper which Mr. Radford possesses was spoken of, and the sum of the whole matter was, that my poor, sweet sister was told, if she did not consent, within four days, to marry that hateful young man, she would sacrifice her father's life. He left her fainting, and has ridden over to bear her consent to Mr. Radford."

"But, did she consent?" exclaimed Sir Edward Digby, in surprise and consternation. "Did she really yield?"

"No; no!" answered Zara, "she did not. The girl said she heard her words, and they were not in truth a consent. But my father chose to take them as such, and left her even before she recovered."

I have already shown the effect of the same account upon Sir Henry Layton, with all the questions which it suggested to his mind; and the impression produced upon his friend, as a man of sense and a man of the world, were so similar, that it may be needless to give any detailed statement of his first observations or inquiries. Zara soon satisfied him, however, that the tale her father had told, was not a mere device to frighten Edith into a compliance with his wishes; and then came the question, "What was to be done?"

"It is, in truth, a most painful situation in which your sister is placed," said Digby, after some consideration; "but think you that this man, this Radford, cannot be bought off? Money must be to him, if he be as totally ruined as people say, the first consideration; and I know Layton so well, that I can venture to promise nothing of that kind shall stand in the way, if we can but free your sister from the terrible choice put before her."

Zara shook her head sadly, saying, "No; that hope is vain! The girl tells me," she added, with a faint smile, which was quickly succeeded by a blush, "that she heard my father say he had offered me, poor me! to Richard Radford, with the same fortune as Edith, but had been refused."

"And would you have consented?" demanded Sir Edward Digby, in a more eager tone than he had yet used.

"Nay," replied Zara, "that has nought to do with the present question. Suffice it, that this proves that gold is not his only object."

"Nay, but answer me," persevered her companion; "would you have consented? It may have much to do with the

question yet." He fixed his eyes gravely upon her face, and took the fair, small hand, that lay upon the arm of the chair, in his. It was something very like making love, and Zara felt a strange sensation at her heart; but she turned away her face, and answered, with a very pale cheek, "I would die for my father, Sir Edward; but I could not wed Richard Radford."

Sir Edward raised her hand to his lips, and pressed them on it. "I thought so," he said; "I thought so! And now, heart, and mind, and hand, and spirit, to save your sister, Zara! I have hunted many a fox in my day, and I don't think the old one of Radford Hall will escape me. The greatest difficulty is, not to compromise your father in any way; but that shall be cared for, too, to the very best of my power, be assured. Henceforth, dear lady, away with all reserve between us. While I am in this house, it will be absolutely necessary for you to communicate with me freely, and probably very often. Have no hesitation; have no scruple as to hour, or manner, or means. Trust to my honour as you have trusted this day, and you shall never find it fail you. I will enter into such explanations with my servant, Somers, in regard to poor Layton, as will make him think it nothing strange if you send him for me at any time. He is as discreet as a privy councillor, and you must, therefore, have no hesitation."

"I will not," answered Zara; "for I would do anything to save my sister from such a fate; and I do believe you will not think—you will not imagine——"

She paused in some confusion; and Sir Edward Digby answered, with a smile, but a kindly and a gentlemanly one, "Let my imagination do as it will, Zara. Depend upon it, it shall do you no wrong; and believe me when I say, that I can hardly feel so much pain at these circumstances as I otherwise might, since they bring me into such near and frequent communication with you."

"Hush, hush!" she answered, somewhat gravely; "I can think of nothing now but my poor sister; and you must not, Sir Edward, by one compliment, or fine speech, nay, nor by one kind speech either," she added, laying her hand upon his arm, and looking up in his face, with a glowing cheek; "for I know you mean it as kind; you must not, indeed, throw

any embarrassment over an intercourse which is necessary at present, and which is my only hope and resource, in the circumstances in which we are placed. So now tell me what you are going to do; for you seemed, but now, as if you were about to set out somewhere."

"I am going to Woodchurch instantly," replied Digby. "Sir Henry Layton must be there still."

"Sir Henry Layton!" exclaimed Zara; "then he has, indeed, been a successful campaigner."

"Most successful, and most deservedly so," answered his friend. "No man but Wolfe won more renown; and if he can but gain this battle, Layton will have all that he desires on earth. But I will not stay here, skirmishing on the flanks, dear lady, while the main body is engaged. I will ride over as fast as possible, see Layton, consult with him, and be back, if possible, by dinner-time. If not, you must tell your father not to wait for me, as I was suddenly called away on business."

"But how shall I know the result of your expedition?" demanded Zara; "we shall be surrounded I fear by watchful eyes."

"We must trust to fortune and our own efforts to afford us some means of communication," replied Digby. "But remember, dearest lady, that for this great object, you have promised to cast away all reserve. For the time, at least, you must look upon Edward Digby as a brother, and treat him as such."

"That I will!" answered the fair girl, heartily; and Digby, leaving her to explain their conduct to her aunt as she best might, ordered his horse, and rode away towards Woodchurch, in haste.

Pulling his rein at the door of the little inn, he inquired which was Sir Henry Layton's room, and was directed up stairs; but on opening the door of the chamber which had been pointed out, he found no one in it, but the somewhat strange-looking old man, whom we have once before seen with Layton, at Hythe.

"Ah, Mr. Warde, you here!" exclaimed Sir Edward Digby. "Layton told me you were in England. But where is he? I have business of some importance to talk with him upon;" and as he spoke, he shook the old man's hand warmly.

"I know you have," answered Mr. Warde, gazing upon

him; "at least, I can guess that such is the case. So have I; and doubtless the subject is the same."

"Nay, I should think not," replied Digby; "mine refers only to private affairs."

The old man smiled; and that sharp-featured, rude countenance assumed an expression of indescribable sweetness. "Mine is the same," he said. "You come to speak of Edith Croyland: so do I."

"Indeed!" cried his companion, a good deal surprised; "you are a strange being, Mr. Warde. You seem to learn men's secrets whether they will or not."

"There is nothing strange on earth but man's blindness," answered the other; "everything is so simple, when once explained, that its simplicity remains the only marvel. But here he comes. Let me converse with him first. Then when he is aware of all that I know, you shall have my absence, or my presence, as it suits you."

While he was speaking, the voice of Henry Layton was heard below, and then his step upon the stairs; and, before Digby could answer, he was in the room. His face was grave, but not so cloudy as it had been when he returned to Woodchurch half an hour before. He welcomed Mr. Warde frankly and cordially, but turned immediately to Sir Edward Digby, saying, "You have been quick, indeed, Digby. I could not have conceived that my letter had reached you."

"I got no letter," answered Digby; "perhaps it missed me on the way; for, the corn being down, I came straight across the country."

"It matters not; it matters not," answered Layton; "so you are here: that is enough. I have much to say to you, and that of immediate importance."

"I know it already," answered Digby. "But here is our good friend, Warde, who seems to have something to say to you on the same subject,

Sir Henry Layton turned towards the old man with some surprise. "I think Digby must be mistaken," he said, "for though, I am aware, from what you told me some time ago, that you have been in this part of the country before, yet it must have been long ago, and you can know nothing of the events which have affected myself since."

The old man smiled, and shook his head. "I know more

than you imagine," he answered. "It is, indeed, long since first I was in this land; but not so long since I was here last; and all its people and its things, its woods, its villages, its hills, are as familiar to me, ay, more so than to you. Of yourself, Layton, and your fate, I also know much: I might say I know all; for certainly I know more than you do, can do more than you are able to do, will do more than you can. To show you what I know, I will give you a brief summary of your own history: at least, that part of it of which you think I know nothing. Young, eager, and impatient, you were thrown constantly into the society of one, good, beautiful, gentle, and true. You had much encouragement from those who should not have given it, unless they had the intention of continuing it to the end. You loved, and were beloved; and then, in the impatience of your boyish ardour, you bound Edith Croyland to yourself, without her parent's knowledge and consent, by vows which, whatever human laws may say, are indissoluble by the law of heaven; and therein you did wrong. It was a great error. Do I say right?"

"It was, indeed," answered Sir Henry Layton, casting down his eyes sternly on the ground; "it was, indeed."

"More: I will tell you more," continued Mr. Warde; "you have bitterly repented it, and bitterly suffered for it. You are suffering even now."

"Not for it," replied the young officer; "not for it. My sufferings are not consequences of my fault."

"You are wrong," answered the old man; "wrong, as you will find. But I will go on, and tell you what you have done this day. Those who have behaved ill to you have been punished likewise; and their punishment is working itself out, but sweeping you in within its vortex. You have been over to see Edith Croyland. She has told you her tale. You have met in love, and parted in sorrow. Is it not so? And now you know not which way to turn for deliverance."

"It is so, indeed, my good friend," said Layton, sadly; "but how you have discovered all this, I cannot divine."

"That has nought to do with the subject," answered Warde. "Now, tell me, Layton, tell me, and remember you are dearer to me than you know; are you prepared to make atonement for your fault? The only atonement in your power: to give back to Edith the vows she plighted: to leave her free to

act as she may judge best. I have marked you well, as you know, for years. I have seen you tried as few men, perhaps, are tried; and you have come out pure and honest. The last trial is now arrived; and I ask you here, before your friend, your worldly friend, if you are ready to act honestly still, and to annul engagements that you had no right to contract?"

"I am," answered Sir Henry Layton; "I am, if——"

"Ay, if! There is ever an 'if' when men would serve their own purposes against their conscience,'' said Mr. Warde, sternly.

"Nay, but hear me, my good friend," replied the young officer. "I have every respect for you. Your whole character commands it and deserves it, as well as your profession; but, at the same time, though I may think fit to answer you candidly, in matters where I would reject any other man's interference, yet I must shape my answer as I think proper, and rule my conduct according to my own views. You must, therefore, hear me out. I say that I am ready to give back to Edith Croyland the vows she plighted me; to set her free from all engagements; to leave her, as far as possible, as if she had never known Henry Layton, whatever pang it may cost me, if it can be proved to me that by so doing I have not given her up to misery, as well as myself. My own wretchedness I can bear; I have borne it long, cheered by one little ray of hope. I can bear it still, even though that light go out; but to know that by any act of mine, however seemingly generous, or, as you term it honest, I had yielded her up to a life of anguish, that I could not bear. Show me that this will not be the case, and, as I have said before, I am ready to make the sacrifice if it cost me life. Nay, more; I returned hither, prepared, if at the last, and with every effort to avert it, I found that circumstances of which I know not the extent, rendered the keeping of her vows to me more terrible in its consequences than her union with another, however hateful he may be; I came hither, prepared, I say, in such a case, to set her free; and I will do it!"

The old man took both his hands, and gazed on him with a look of glad satisfaction. "Honest to the last," he said, "honest to the last! The resolution to do this, is as good as the deed; for I know you are not one to fail where you have resolved. But those who might exact the sacrifice are not

worthy of it. Your willingness has made the atonement, Layton; and I will deliver you from your difficulty."

"You, Mr. Warde!" exclaimed Sir Edward Digby; "I cannot suppose that you really have the power; or, perhaps, after all, you do not know the whole circumstances."

"Hush, hush, young man!" answered Warde, with a wave of the hand; "I know all, I see all, where you know little or nothing. You are a good youth, as the world goes; better than most of your bad class and station; but these matters are above you. Listen to me, Layton. Did not Edith tell you that her father had worked upon her, by fears for his safety, for his honour, for his life, perhaps?"

"Yes, indeed," exclaimed Layton, eagerly, and with a ray of hope beginning to break upon him. "Was the tale not true, then?"

"I guessed so," answered the old man. "I was sure that would be the course at last. Nevertheless, the tale he told was true: too true. It was forced from him by circumstances. Yet, I have said I will deliver you from your difficulty, and I will. Pursue your own course; as you have commenced, go on to the end. I ask you not now to give Edith back her promises. Nay, I tell you, that her misery, her wretchedness, ay, tenfold more than any you could suffer, would be the consequence, if you did so. Let her go on firmly in her truth to the last; but tell her, that deliverance will come. Now I leave you; but, be under no doubt. Your course is clear; do all you can by your own efforts to save her; but it is I who must deliver her in the end."

Without any further farewell, he turned and left the room; and Sir Henry Layton and his friend remained for a minute or two in thought.

"His parting advice is the best," said Digby, at length, "and doubtless you will follow it, Layton; but, of course, you will not trust so far to the word of a madman as to neglect any means that may present themselves."

"He is not mad," answered Layton, shaking his head. "When first he joined us in Canada, before the battle of Quebec, I thought as you do; but he is not mad, Digby. There are various shades of reason; and there may be a slight aberration in his mind from the common course of ordinary thought. He may be wrong in his reasonings, rash in his

opinions, somewhat over-excited in imagination, but that is not madness. His promises give me hope, I will confess; but still I will act as if they had not been made. Now let us speak of our plans; and first tell me what has taken place at Harbourne, for you seem to know all the particulars already which I sent for you to communicate, though how you learned them I cannot divine."

"Oh! my dear Layton, if I were to tell you all that has happened," replied Sir Edward Digby, "I should have to go on as long as a Presbyterian minister, or a popular orator. I had better keep to the point;" and he proceeded to relate to his friend the substance of the conversation which had last taken place between himself and Zara.

"It is most fortunate," answered Layton, "that dear girl has thus become acquainted with the facts; for Edith would not have told her, and now we have some chance of obtaining information of all that occurs, which must be our great security. However, since I returned, I have obtained valuable information, which puts good Mr. Radford's liberty, if not his life, in my power. Three of the men whom we have taken, distinctly state that he sent them upon this expedition himself, armed, and mounted them; and, therefore, he is a party to the whole transaction. I have sent off a messenger to Mowle, the officer, as faithful and as true a fellow as ever lived, begging him to bring me up, without a moment's delay, a magistrate in whom he can trust; for one of the men is at the point of death, and all the justices round this place are so imbued with the spirit of smuggling, that I do not choose the depositions to be taken by them. I have received and written down the statements made before witnesses, and the men have signed them, but I have no power in this case to administer an oath. As soon as the matter is in more formal train, I shall insist upon the apprehension of Mr. Radford, whatever be the consequences to Sir Robert Croyland; for here my duty to the country is concerned, and the very powers with which I am entrusted, render it imperative upon me so to act."

"If you can catch him, if you can catch him!" replied Sir Edward Digby. "But be sure, my dear Layton, if he once discovers that you have got such a hold upon him, he will take care to render that matter difficult. You may find it troublesome, also, to get a magistrate to act as you desire; for they

are all of the same leaven; and I fancy you have no power to do anything yourself except in aid and support of the civil authorities. You must be very careful, too, not to exceed your commission, where people might suspect that personal feelings are concerned."

"Personal feelings shall not bias me, Digby, even in the slightest degree," replied his friend. "I will act towards Mr. Radford exactly as I would towards any other man who had committed this offence; and, as to the imputation of motives, I can well afford to treat such things with contempt. Were I, indeed, to act as I wish, I should not pursue this charge against the chief offender, in order not to bring down his vengeance suddenly upon Sir Robert Croyland's head, or should use the knowledge I possess merely to impose silence upon him through fear. But my duty is plain and straightforward, and it must be done. As to my powers, they are more extensive than you suppose. Indeed, I would have sooner thrown up my commission, than have undertaken a service I disliked, without sufficient authority to execute it properly. Thus, if no magistrate could be found to act as I might require, I would not scruple, with the aid of any officer of customs, or even without, to apprehend this man on my own responsibility. But I think we shall easily find one who will do his duty."

"At all events," replied Sir Edward Digby, "you had better be cautious, my dear Layton. If you are not too quick in your movements, you may perhaps trap the old bird and the young one together; and that will be a better day's sport than if you only got a single shot."

"Heaven send it may be before these fatal four days are over!" answered Layton; "for then the matter will be decided and Edith delivered."

"Why, if you were to catch the young one, it would be sufficient for that object," said his friend.

But Layton shook his head. "I fear not," he replied; "yet that purpose must not be neglected. Where he has concealed himself I cannot divine. It would seem certain that he never got out of Harbourne Wood, unless, indeed, it was by some of the bye-paths; and in that case, he surely must have been seen. I will have it searched, to-morrow, from end to end."

In the same strain the conversation proceeded for half an

hour more, without any feasible plan of action having been decided upon, and with no further result than the arrangement of means for frequent and private communication. It was settled, indeed, that Layton should fix his head-quarters at Woodchurch, and that two or three of the dragoons should be biletted at a small public-house on the road to Harbourne. To them any communication from Sir Edward Digby was to be conveyed by his servant, Somers, for the purpose of being forwarded to Woodchurch. Such matters being thus arranged, as far as circumstances admitted, the two friends parted; and Digby rode back to Harbourne House, which he reached, as may be supposed, somewhat later than Sir Robert Croyland's dinner-hour.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

About six o'clock on the evening of the same day, the cottage of Mrs. Clare was empty. The good widow herself stood at the garden gate, and looked up the road into the wood, along which the western sun was streaming low. After gazing for a moment in that direction, she turned her eyes to the left, and then down the edge of the wood, which stretched along in a tolerably even line till it reached the farther angle. The persevering dragoons were patrolling round it still; and Mrs. Clare murmured to herself, "How will he ever get out, if they keep such a watch?"

She was then going into the cottage again, when a hurried step caught her ear, coming apparently from the path which led from the side of Halden to the back of the house, and thence round the little garden into the road.

"That sounds like Harding's step," thought the widow; and her ear had not deceived her. In another minute she beheld him turn the corner of the fence and come towards her; but there was a heated and angry look upon his face, which she had never seen there before; and, although she had acted for the best, and not without much consideration, in sending Kate upon Mr. Radford's commission, and not going herself, she feared that her daughter's lover might not be well pleased his bride should undertake such a task. As he came near,

the symptoms of anger were more apparent still. There was the cloudy brow, the flashing eye, the hurried and impetuous walk, which she had often seen in her own husband, a man very similar in character to him who now approached her, when irritated by harsh words; and Widow Clare prepared to do all she could to soothe him ere Kate's return.

But Harding did not mention her he loved, demanding, while yet at some distance, "Where is Mr. Radford, Mrs. Clare?"

"He is not here, Mr. Harding," replied the widow; "he has not been here since the morning. But what makes you look so cross, Harding? You seem angry."

"And well I may be," answered Harding, with an oath. "What do you think they have set about? That I informed against them, and betrayed them into the hands of the dragoons, when they know I saw them safe out of the Marsh; and it must have been their own stupidity, or the old man's babbling fears, that ruined them; always trusting people that were sure to be treacherous, and doubting those he knew to be honest. But I'll make him eat his words, or cram them down his throat with my fist."

"Why, he spoke quite kindly of you this morning, Harding," said the widow; "there must be some mistake."

"Mistake!" cried the smuggler, sharply; "there is no mistake. It is all over Hythe and Folkestone already, and every one says that it came from him. Can you not tell me where he is gone? Which way did he turn?"

"Towards his own house," replied Mrs. Clare; "but you had better come in, Harding, and get yourself cool before you go to him. You will speak angrily now, and mischief will come of it. I am sure there is some mistake."

"I will not sit down till I have made him own it," answered the smuggler. "Perhaps he is up at Harbourne. I'll go there. Where is Kate, Mrs. Clare?"

"She has gone towards Harbourne House," said the widow, not chosing, in the excited state of his feelings, to tell him her daughter's errand; "but she will be back in one minute, if you will but come in."

"No," he replied; "I will come back by-and-bye. Perhaps I shall meet her as I go;" and he was turning towards the wood, when suddenly, at the spot where the road entered

amongst the trees, the pretty figure of Kate Clare, as trim, and neat, and simple as a wild flower, appeared walking slowly back towards the cottage. But she was not alone. By her side was a tall, handsome young man, dressed in full military costume, with his heavy sword under his arm, and a star upon his breast. He was bending down, talking to his fair companion with a friendly air, and she was answering him with a gay smile.

A pang shot through Harding's bosom; it was the first that ever the poor girl had caused; nor, indeed, would he have felt it then, had he not been irritated; for his was a frank and confiding heart, open as the day, in which that foul and dangerous guest, Suspicion, usually could find no lurking place. At first he did not recognize, in the glittering personage before his eyes, the grave, plain-looking stranger, who, a week or two before, had conversed with him for a few minutes on the cliffs near Sandgate; but he saw, as the two came on, that Kate raised her eyes; and as soon as she perceived him standing by her mother, a look of joy lighted up her face, which made him murmur to himself, "I'm a fool!"

The stranger, too, saw him; but it made no change in his demeanour; and the next moment, to Harding's surprise, the officer came forward somewhat more quickly, and took Widow Clare by the hand, saying, with a grave smile, "Do you not know me, Mrs. Clare?"

"Gracious heaven!" cried the widow, drawing back and gazing at him. "Can it be you, sir?"

"Yes, indeed!" he answered. "Why, Kate here knew me directly, though she was but ten or eleven, I think, when I went away."

"Oh! that was because you were always so fond of her, Mr. Henry," replied Widow Clare. "Gracious! how you are changed!"

Harding was talking to Kate while these few words passed, but he heard them; nor did he fail to remark that two mounted dragoons, one leading a horse by the rein, followed the young officer from the wood. He now recognised him also; and by his dress perceived the rank he held in the army, though Mrs. Clare called him "Mr. Henry."

"Yes, I am changed, indeed!" replied Layton, to the widow's last remark, "in body and health, Mrs. Clare, but

not in heart, I can assure you; and as I was obliged to visit this wood, I resolved I would not be so near you without coming in to see how you were going on, with your pretty Kate here."

"My pretty Kate, very soon!" said Harding, aloud; and the young officer turned suddenly round, and looked at him more attentively than before.

"Ah, Mr. Harding!" he exclaimed, "is that you? We have met before, though perhaps you don't remember me."

"Oh! yes, I do, sir," replied the smuggler, drily. "But I must go, Kate;" and he added, in a low tone, "I shall be back by-and-bye."

Thus saying, he walked away; but before he had taken ten steps, Layton followed, and took him by the arm. "What do you want with me, sir?" asked the smuggler, turning sharply round, and putting his hand in the bosom of his coat.

"Hush!" replied the young officer; "I seek no harm to you; merely one word. For heaven's sake! Harding, quit this perilous life of yours; at least, before you marry that poor girl—if I have understood you rightly, that you are about to marry her. I speak as a friend."

"Thank you, sir!" answered the smuggler, "I dare say you mean it kind; but it was hardly fair of you, either, to come and talk with me upon the cliff, if you are, as I suppose, the Sir Henry Layton all the folks are speaking about."

"Why, my good friend, my talking with you did you no harm," replied the young officer; "you cannot say that I led you to speak of anything that could injure either you or others. Besides, I have nothing to do with you gentlemen of the sea, though I may with your friends on land. But take the advice of one well disposed towards you; and, above all, do not linger about this place at present, for it is a dangerous neighbourhood for any one who has had a share in the late transactions."

"That advice I shall take, at all events," answered Harding, bluntly; "and perhaps the other too, for I am sick of all this!" And thus saying, he walked away, passing close by the two dragoons, who offered no obstruction.

In the meanwhile Layton, returning to Widow Clare and her daughter, went into the cottage, and talked to them, for a few minutes, of old days. Gradually, however, he brought

the conversation round to the inhabitants of Harbourne House, and asked if either the widow or Kate ever went up there.

"Oh! Kate goes twice every day, sir," said Mrs. Clare, "for we have all the finest of the poultry to keep down here. But are you not going there yourself, Mr. Henry?"

"Alas, no!" answered Layton, with a sigh. "Those days have gone by, Mrs. Clare; and I am now a stranger where I was once loved."

"Don't say so, sir," replied the widow, "don't say so! For, I am sure, where you were best loved of all, there you are best loved still."

"That I believe," answered Layton; "but, at all events, I am not going there at present; and if Kate would do me a service, she would, the first time she sees Miss Zara Croyland alone, tell her, that if ever she rides or walks out along the road by the Chequers, she will find an old friend by the way."

"Miss Zara, sir, did you say?" asked Widow Clare.

"Yes, mother, yes," cried Kate; "you forget Miss Edith is not there now; she is down at Mr. Croyland's."

"But remember, Kate," continued Layton, "I do not wish my name mentioned to many persons in the house. Indeed, it will be better not to speak of me at all to any one but Zara. It must be soon known that I am here, it is true; but I wish to let events take their course till then. And now, Mrs. Clare, good evening. I shall see you again some day soon; and you must let me know when Kate's wedding-day is fixed."

The mother looked at her daughter with a smile, and Kate blushed and laughed. "It is to be this day week, sir," answered Mrs. Clare.

Layton nodded his head, saying, "I will not forget," and, mounting his horse at the door, rode away.

"Now, did you find him, Kate?" asked Mrs. Clare, in a low tone, the moment Sir Henry Layton was gone.

"Oh! yes," replied her daughter; "the dragoons did not follow me, as you thought they would, mother; and I set down the basket close to the willow. At first he did not answer when I asked if he wanted anything; but when I spoke again, he said, 'No. A thousand thanks for what you have brought;' and he spoke kind and civilly. Then, just as I was going away, he said, 'Kate, Kate! let me know when

the soldiers are gone. If you could bring me a woman's dress, I could easily get away.' I should not be afraid of going any more, mother," the girl continued, "for he seems quite changed by his misfortune, and not rude and jesting as he always used to be, whenever I saw him before."

The idea of the woman's clothes seemed to strike Mrs. Clare very much; and the good widow and her daughter set their wits to work, to consider how all that was necessary could be procured; for a very serious impediment thrust itself in the way of either mother or child lending him a suit of their own apparel. Neither of them were very tall women; and though young Radford was himself not above the middle height, yet Kate's gown would not have fallen further than half way down his leg; and the poor girl laughed merrily, to think of what a figure he would make dressed in her garments. It would have been the old story of the wolf in sheep's clothing, assuredly.

"If we could but accomplish it, and enable him to escape," thought Mrs. Clare, "especially after Harding has just been up here, it would show Mr. Radford clearly enough that John had nothing to do with informing against him." But the question, of where fitting apparel was to be procured still remained unsettled, till Kate suggested that perhaps her aunt's, at Glassenbury, might do. "She is very tall," continued the girl, "and I am sure she would lend them to me, for she and my uncle have always been so kind. Suppose I walk over early to-morrow, and ask her?"

Now the little farm which Mrs. Clare's brother held was somewhat more than seven miles off, on the other side of Cranbrook. But still, what is the exertion which woman will not make for a fellow-creature in distress? and Mrs. Clare determined that she would rise betimes and go to William Harris's herself, certain of a kind reception and ready consent from those who had always displayed towards her, in adversity, the feelings of affection, which the more worldly-minded generally shower upon prosperity alone.

It was far for her daughter to walk, she thought; and besides, Harding might come, and it would not do for Kate to be absent. Thus had she settled it in her own mind, when Mr. Radford entered the cottage to inquire after his son.

High were the praises that he bestowed upon Kate and Mrs. Clare for their kindness; and he expressed his warm approval

of their little scheme. Nevertheless, he turned the matter in his mind, in order to see whether he could not save Mrs. Clare the trouble of going nearly to Goudhurst, by obtaining the necessary articles of female apparel somewhere else. His own women servants, however, were all short and stout; the only other persons whom he could think of, as at all approaching his son in height, he did not choose to trust; and, therefore, it was at length determined that the original plan should be followed. But the worthy gentleman laid strict injunctions upon Mrs. Clare to be early in her proceedings, as he feared much, from all he had gathered, that the wood might be more strictly searched in the course of the following day.

When this was settled, and Mr. Radford had expressed his thanks more than once, Mrs. Clare thought it a good opportunity of turning the conversation to Harding; and she asked Mr. Radford if he had seen him, adding: "He has gone to look for you, sir, and seems very quick and angry, because the people down about his place have got a report that he informed about the run, and he fancies you have said so."

"Pooh! nonsense, Mrs. Clare, I never said anything of the kind," replied Mr. Radford. "It is a story put about by the custom-house officers themselves, just to cover the persons from whom they had the information. But we shall discover them some day, and pay them handsomely. Tell Harding not to mind what people say, for I never thought of such a thing."

"That I will, sir," replied the widow, "for I'm sure it will set his mind at rest. You must know very well, sir, that he's as honest a man as ever lived."

"To be sure, to be sure," answered Mr. Radford, with great warmth of manner; "no one knows that better than I do, Mrs. Clare."

But whether Mr. Radford really felt the warmth which he assumed, may be another question. His seemings were not always the best indications of his real sentiments; and when he left Mrs. Clare's cottage, after all had been arranged, his first thought was, "We will reckon with Mr. Harding by-and-bye. The account is not made up yet."

Before I proceed to other scenes, it may be as well to go on with the part assigned in this history to Mrs. Clare and her daughter, at least, till the morning of the following day.

About eight o'clock at night Harding returned, still irritable and discontented, having failed to find Mr. Radford. The account, however, which the widow gave of her conversation with that gentleman, soothed him a good deal; but he would not stay the night, as he had done before, saying that he must absolutely be at home as soon as possible, and would return, perhaps, the next day, or, at all events, the day after.

"I must do the best I can, Mrs. Clare," he continued, "to help these fellows out of the scrape they've run into. Two or three of them are good men enough; and, as they risk their necks if they are taken, I should like to get them down, and give them a passage to the other side. So you see I shall be going about here a good deal for the next four or five days, and will look in, from time to time, to see you and my dear little Kate."

"But are you going to walk all the way back to-night, John?" asked Kate, as he rose to depart.

"No, my love," he answered; "I've got a horse up at Plurendon; but the beast cast a shoe as I was coming, and I was obliged to leave him at the blacksmith's."

No sooner was Harding gone, than a little kindly contest rose between mother and daughter, as to which should go over to Glassenbury; but Mrs. Clare persisted, against all her child's remonstrances; and, in order that they might rise before daylight, both retired to bed early, and slept calmly and peacefully, unknowing what the morrow, to which they both looked anxiously forward, was to bring. The sun was yet some way below the horizon, when Mrs. Clare set out; but she met with no impediment, and, walking on stoutly, arrived, at an early hour, at a little farm-house, inhabited by her brother. She found farmer Harris and his wife, with their two sons and Mrs. Harris's nephew (three stout, good-humoured, young men) seated at their breakfast; and warm and joyful was the reception of Aunt Clare; one joking her upon Kate's approaching marriage; another declaring Jack Harding, whom they all knew, was a capital fellow; and all striving to make her comfortable, and pressing her to partake of their morning meal.

Every one of the party was eager to obtain some information from her, who lived so much nearer to the spot, in regard to the late discomfiture of the smugglers, although none seemed

to take any great interest in them; all declaring that the Ramleys and their gang were the pest of the country, and that young Dick Radford was not a bit better. Such opinions, regarding that young gentleman, acted as a warning to Mrs. Clare, not to mention the object of the loan she came to solicit; and when, after having rested about twenty minutes, she preferred her petition to Mrs. Harris, it was readily granted by the tall farmer's wife, although not without some expression of curiosity, as to what her sister-in-law could want a dress of hers for.

"Kate or I will bring it back to-night or to-morrow morning," replied Mrs. Clare, "and I'll tell you what we want it for, at the wedding, which, remember, is to be yesterday week."

"Ay, we will all come down with white favours, and our best buckles," said young William, the farmer's eldest son; "and I'll have a kiss of the bride."

A gown and cloak of Mrs. Harris's, having been brought down (they were not her best) and neatly folded up in a shawl-handkerchief, Mrs. Clare set forward on her way home, hurrying her steps as much as possible, lest any untoward event should prevent the execution of her scheme. A stout countrywoman, accustomed to exercise, the widow accomplished the walk in as short a time as possible; yet it was nine o'clock before she reached the cottage, and she instantly despatched her daughter to the "hide" in the wood, with the clothes folded up in as small a space as possible, and laid in the bottom of a basket, covered over with eggs.

The only difficulty was, in regard to a bonnet; and, after earnest consultation between mother and child, it was determined that, as Mrs. Clare's head was somewhat larger than Kate's, her bonnet should be put over her daughter's, which was easily accomplished. Both were of straw, and both were plain enough; but, to conceal the contrivance from the eyes of any one whom Kate might meet, Mrs. Clare pinned a small piece of lace, which had been bought for the wedding, into the inside of her own bonnet; remarking that it would do to hide young Mr. Radford's face a bit.

Furnished with all that was needful, and having had the instructions which Mr. Radford had left, repeated carefully to her by her mother, fair Kate Clare set out upon her expedi-

tion, passing one of the dragoons, that were still patrolling round the wood, near the place where the road entered it. The man said something to her, as she went by, but did not attempt to follow; and Kate walked on, looking behind her from time to time, till she was satisfied that her proceedings were unwatched. Then, hurrying on, with a quicker step, she turned to the path which led to the back of the gardens of Harbourne House, and approached the old willow, and the brushwood which covered the place where Richard Radford was concealed.

"Mr. Radford," she said, as soon as she was quite close, "Mr. Radford! Here is what you wanted. Take it as fast as you can."

"Is there any one near but you, Kate?" asked the voice of Richard Radford.

"Oh, no!" she replied; "but the soldiers are still on the outside of the wood watching."

"I know that," rejoined the voice again, "for I saw them last night, when I tried to get out. But are you sure that none of them followed you, Kate?"

"Oh! quite sure," she answered, "for I looked behind all the way!"

"Well, stay and help me to put the things on," said Richard Radford, issuing forth from behind the bushes, like a snake out of its hole. Kate Clare willingly agreed to help him, and while the gown and the cloak were thrown over his other clothes, told him all his father had said, desiring him not to come up to Radford Hall till he heard more; but to go down to the *lone house*, near Iden Green, where he would find one or two friends already collected.

"Why, these are never your own clothes, Kate!" said young Radford, as she pinned on the gown for him. "They fit as if they were made for me."

"Not at the back," answered Kate, laughing, "I cannot get the gown to meet there; but that will be covered up by the cloak, so it does not matter. No, they are my aunt's, at Glassenbury; and you must let me have them back, Mr. Radford, as soon as ever you have got to Iden Green; for my mother has promised to return them to-night."

"I don't know how I shall get them back, Kate," answered Richard Radford; "for none of our people will like to venture

up here. Can't you come down, and fetch them? It is not much out of your way."

"No, I can't do that," answered Kate, who did not altogether like going to the lone house she had mentioned; "but you can send them down to Cranbrook, at all events; and there they can be left for me, at Mrs. Tims's shop; they'll be quite safe; and I will call for them either to-night, or to-morrow morning,"

"Well, I will do that, my love," replied Richard Radford, taking the bonnet, and putting it on his head.

"Very well, sir," answered Kate, not well pleased with the epithet he had bestowed upon her, and taking a step to move away, "I will call for them there."

But young Radford threw his arm round her waist, saying, "Come, Kate, I must have a kiss before you go. You give plenty to Harding, I dare say."

"Let me go, sir!" cried Kate Clare, indignantly. "You are a base, ungrateful young man!"

But young Radford did not let her go. He took the kiss she struggled against, by force; and he was proceeding to further insult, when Kate exclaimed, "If you do not let me go, I will scream till the soldiers are upon you. They are not far."

She spoke so loud, that her very tone excited his alarm; and he withdrew his arm from her waist, but still held her hand tight, saying, "Come, come, Kate! nonsense, I did not mean to offend you! Go up to Harbourne House, there's a good girl, and stay as long as you can there, till I get out of the wood."

"You do offend me; you do offend me!" cried Kate Clare, striving to withdraw her hand from his grasp.

"Will you promise to go up to Harbourne, then?" said Richard Radford, "and I will let you go."

"Yes, yes," answered Kate, "I will go;" and the moment her hand was free, she darted away, leaving the basket she had brought behind her.

As soon as she was gone, Richard Radford cursed her for a saucy jade, as if the offence had been hers, not his; and then taking up the basket, he threw it, eggs and all, together with his own hat, into the deep hole in the sand-bank. Advancing along the path till he reached the open road, he hurried on in

the direction of Widow Clare's cottage. Of a daring and resolute disposition, for his only virtue was courage, he thought of passing the soldiers as a good joke, rather than a difficult undertaking; but still recollecting the necessity of caution, as he came near the edge of the wood he slackened his pace, tried to shorten his steps, and assumed a more feminine demeanour. When he was within a couple of hundred yards of the open country, he saw one of the dragoons slowly pass the end of the road and look up; and, on issuing forth from the wood, he perceived that the man had paused, and was gazing back. But at that distance, the female garments which he wore deceived the soldier, and he was suffered to walk on unopposed towards Iden Green.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Sir Robert Croyland himself did not return to Harbourne House till the hands of the clock pointed out to every one that went through the hall that it was twenty minutes past the usual dinner-hour; and, though he tried to be as expeditious as he could, he was yet fully ten minutes longer in dressing than usual. He was nervous, he was agitated: all the events of that day had shaken and affected him; he was angry with his servant, and several times he gave the most contradictory orders. Although for years he had been undergoing a slow and gradual change, under the painful circumstances in which he had been placed, and had, from the gay, rash, somewhat noisy and overbearing country gentleman, dwindled down into the cold, silent, pompous, and imperative man of family, yet the alteration during that day had been so great and peculiar that the valet could not help remarking it, and wondering if his master was ill.

Sir Robert tried to smooth his look and compose his manner for the dining-room, however; and when he entered, he gazed round for Sir Edward Digby, observing aloud: "Why, I thought soldiers were more punctual. However, as it happens, to-day I am glad Sir Edward is not down."

"Down!" cried Mrs. Barbara, who had a grand objection to dinners being delayed, "why, he is out; but you could expect no better, for yesterday you were so long that the fish was done to rags, so I ordered it not to be put in till he made his appearance."

"I told you, my dear aunt, that he said he might not be back before dinner," replied her niece; "and, therefore, it will be vain to wait for him. He desired me to say so, papa."

"Oh! yes, Zara knows all about it," said Mrs. Barbara, with a shrewd look; "they were talking together for ten minutes in the library, and I cannot get her to tell me what it was about."

It is, indeed, conscience that makes cowards of us all, and had the fair girl's conversation with her new friend been on any other subject than that to which it related, had it been about love, marriage, arms, or divinity, she would have found no difficulty in parrying her aunt's observations, however mal-appropos they might have been. At present, however, she was embarrassed by doubts of the propriety of what she was doing, more especially as she felt sure that her father would be inquisitive and suspicious, if the tale the maid had told was true. Acting, however, as she not unfrequently did, in any difficulty, she met Mrs. Barbara's inuendoes at once, replying, "Indeed I shall not say anything about it to any one, my dear aunt. I will manage some matters for myself; and the only thing I shall repeat is Sir Edward's last dying speech, which was to the effect, that he feared he might be detained till after our dinner hour, but would be back as soon as ever he could, and trusted my father would not wait."

"Do you know where he is gone, and why?" asked Sir Robert Croyland, in a much quieter tone than she expected. But poor Zara was still puzzled for an answer; and, as her only resource, she replied vaguely, "Something about some of the smugglers, I believe."

"Then had he any message or intelligence brought him?" inquired Sir Robert Croyland.

"I do not know. Oh! yes, I believe he had," replied his daughter, in a hesitating tone and with a cheek that was beginning to grow red. "He spoke with one of the soldiers at the corner of the road, I know; and, oh! yes, I saw a man ride up with a letter."

"That was after he was gone," observed Mrs. Barbara; but Sir Robert paid little attention, and, ringing, ordered dinner to be served. Could we see into the breasts of others, we should often save ourselves a great deal of unnecessary anxiety. Zara forgot that her father was not as well aware that Sir Edward Digby was Layton's dearest friend, as she was; but, in truth, all that he concluded, either from the pertinent remarks of Mrs. Barbara or from Zara's embarrassment, was, that the young baronet had been making a little love to his daughter, which, to say sooth, was a consummation that Sir Robert Croyland was not a little inclined to see.

In about a quarter of an hour more, the dinner was an-

nounced; and the master of the house, his sister, and Zara, sat down together. Hardly had the fish and soup made any progress, when the quick canter of Sir Edward Digby's horse put his fair confidante out of her anxiety; and, in a few minutes after, he appeared himself, and apologized gracefully to his host for having been too late. "You must have waited for me, I fear," he added, "for it is near an hour after the time; but I thought it absolutely necessary, from some circumstances I heard, to go over and see my colonel before he returned to Hythe, and then I was detained."

"Pray, who does command your regiment?" asked Mrs. Barbara. But Sir Edward Digby was, at that moment, busily engaged in taking his seat by Zara's side, and he did not hear. The lady repeated the question when he was seated; but then he replied, "No, I thank you, my dear madam, no soup to-day: a solid meal always after a hard ride; and I have galloped till I have almost broken my horse's wind. By the way, Sir Robert, I hope you found my bay a pleasant goer. I have only ridden him twice since I bought him, though he cost two hundred guineas."

"He is well worth the money," replied the baronet: "a very powerful animal: bore me like a feather, and I ride a good weight."

"Have your own horses come back?" asked the young officer, with a laugh.

Sir Robert Croyland answered in the negative, adding, "And that reminds me I must write to my brother to let Edith have his carriage to-morrow, to bring her back, for mine are gone, coach-horses and all."

"Edith, to-morrow!" exclaimed Mrs. Barbara, in surprise; "why, I thought she was going to stay four or five days."

"She is coming back to-morrow, Bab," replied Sir Robert, sharply, and instantly turned the conversation.

During the rest of the evening, Sir Edward Digby remained very constantly by fair Zara's side; and, moreover, he paid her most particular attention in so marked a manner, that both Sir Robert Croyland and Mrs. Barbara thought matters were taking their course very favourably. The father busied himself in writing a letter and one or two notes, which he pronounced to be of consequence, as, indeed, they really were; while the aunt worked diligently and discreetly at embroider-

ing, not interrupting the conference of her niece and their guest above ten times in a minute. Sir Edward, indeed, kept himself within all due and well-defined rules. He never proceeded beyond what a great master of the art has pronounced to be "making-love;" "a course of small, quiet, attentions: not so pointed as to alarm, nor so vague as to be misunderstood." Strange to say, Zara was very much obliged to him for following such a course, as it gave an especially good pretext for intimacy, for whispered words and quiet conversation, and even for a little open seeking for each other's society, which would have called observation, if not inquiry, upon them, had not her companion's conduct been what it was. She thought fit to attribute it, in her own mind, entirely to his desire of communicating to her, without attracting notice, whatever he had learned, that could in any way affect her sister's fate; and she judged it a marvellous good device that they should appear for the time as lovers, with full powers on both parts to withdraw from that position whenever it suited them. Poor girl! she knew not how far she was entangling herself.

Sir Edward Digby, in the meanwhile, took no alarming advantage of his situation. The whispered word was almost always of Edith or of Layton. He never spoke of Zara herself, or of himself, or of his own feelings; not a word could denote to her that he was making love, though his whole demeanour had very much that aspect to those who sat and looked on. Oh! those who sit and look on, what a world they see, and what a world they don't see! Ever more than those who play the game, be they shrewd as they may: ever less than the cards would show, were they turned up. By fits and snatches, he communicated to his fair companion, while he was playing with this ball of gold thread, or winding and unwinding that piece of crimson silk, as much as what had passed between himself and Sir Henry Layton as he thought necessary; and then he asked her to sing, as her aunt had given him a quiet hint that her niece did sometimes do such a thing; saying, in a low tone, while he preferred the request, "Pray, go on with the song, though I may interrupt you sometimes with questions, not quite relevant to the subject."

"I understand, I quite understand," answered Zara; but it may be a question whether the sweet girl really quite understood either herself or him. It is impossible that any two free

hearts can go on long, holding such intimate and secret communion, on subjects deeply interesting to both, without being drawn together by closer bonds, than perhaps they fancy can ever be established between them, unless there be something inherently repulsive on one part or the other. Propinquity is certainly much, in the matter of love; but there are circumstances, not rarely occurring in human life, which mightily abridge the process; and such are, difficulties and dangers experienced together, a common struggle for a common object, but more than all, mutual and secret communion with, and aid of each other in things of deep interest. The confidence that is required, the excitement of imagination, the unity of effort, and of purpose, the rapid exercise of mind to catch the half-uttered thought, the enforced candour from want of time, which admits of no disguise or circumlocution, the very mystery itself, all cast that magic chain around those so circumstanced, within which they can hardly escape from the power of love. Nine times out of ten, they never try; and, however Zara Croyland might feel, she rose willingly enough to sing, while Sir Edward Digby leaned over her chair, as she sat at the instrument, which in those days supplied the place of that which is now absurdly enough termed in England, a piano. Her voice, which was fine, though not very powerful, wavered a little as she began, from emotions of many kinds. She wished to sing well, but she sang worse than she might have done, yet quite well enough to please Sir Edward Digby, though his ear was refined by art, and good by nature. Nevertheless, though he listened with delight, and felt the music deeply, he forgot not his purpose, and between each stanza asked some question, obtaining a brief reply. But I will not so interrupt the course of an old song, and will give the interrogatory a separate place:—

THE LADY'S SONG.

"Oh! there may be many, many griefs,
In this world's sad career,
That shun the day, that fly the gaze,
And never, never meet the ear.

But what is darkest, darkest of them all?
The pang of love betray'd;
The hopes of youth all fleeting by;
Spring flowers that early, early fade?

But there are griefs, ay, griefs as deep:
The friendship turned to hate;
And, deeper still, and deeper still,
Repentance come too late, too late!

The doubt of those we love; and more
The rayless, dull despair,
When trusted hearts are worthless found,
And all our dreams are air, but air.

Deep in each bosom's secret cell,
The hermit-sorrows lie;
And thence, unheard on earth, they raise
The voice of prayer on high, on high.

Oh! there may be many, many griefs,
In this world's sad career,
That shun the day, that fly the gaze,
And, never, never meet the ear."

Thus sang the lady; and one of her hearers, at least, was delighted with the sweet voice, and the sweet music, and the expression which she gave to the whole. But though he listened with deep attention, both to words and tones, as long as her lips moved, yet, when the mere instrumental part of the music recommenced, which was the case between every second and third stanza, and the symphonetic parts of every song were somewhat long in those days—he instantly remembered the object with which he had first asked her to sing, (little thinking that such pleasure would be his reward); and bending down his head, as if he were paying her some lover-like compliment on her performance, he asked her quietly, as I have said before, a question or two, closely connected with the subject on which both their minds were at that moment principally bent.

Thus, at the first pause, he inquired, "Do you know, did you ever see, in times long past, a gentleman of the name of Warde, a clergyman; a good and clever man, but somewhat strange and wild?"

"No," answered Zara, looking down at the keys of the harpsichord; "I know no one of that name;" and she recommenced the song.

When her voice again ceased, the young officer seemed to have thought further; and he asked, in the same low tone,

"Did you ever know a gentleman answering that description; his features must once have been good; somewhat strongly marked, but fine and of an elevated expression, with a good deal of wildness in the eye, but a particularly bland and beautiful smile when he is pleased: too remarkable to be overlooked or forgotten?"

"Can you be speaking of Mr. Osborn?" asked Zara, in return. "I barely recollect him in former days; but I and Edith met him about ten days ago; and he remembered and spoke to her."

The song required her attention, and though she would fain have played the symphony over again, she was afraid her father would remark it, and went on to sing the last two stanzas. As soon as she had concluded, however, she said, in a low, quick voice, "He is a very extraordinary man."

"Can you give me any sign by which I should know him?" asked Digby.

"He has now got a number of blue lines traced on his face," answered Zara; "he went abroad to preach to the savages, I have heard. He is a good man, but very eccentric."

At the same moment the voice of her father was raised, saying, "I wish, my dear, you would not sing such melancholy things as that. Cannot you find something gayer? I do not like young ladies singing such dull ditties, only fit for sentimental misses of the true French school."

What was the true French school of his day, I cannot tell. Certainly, it must have been very different from the present.

"Perhaps Sir Edward will sing something more cheerful himself?" answered Zara.

"Oh! I am a very bad musician," replied the young officer; "I cannot even accompany myself. If you will, and have any of the few things I know, I shall be very happy. In everything, one can but try," he added, in a low voice, "still hopeing for the best."

Zara looked over her collection of music with him; and at last she opened one song which was somewhat popular in those times, though it has long fallen into well-merited oblivion. "Can you venture to sing that?" she asked, pointing to the words rather than the music; "it is quite a soldier's song."

Sir Edward Digby read the first line; and thinking he ob-

served a double meaning in her question, he answered, "Oh! yes, that I will, if you will consent to accompany me."

Zara smiled, and sat down to the instrument again; and the reader must judge from the song itself whether the young officer's conjecture, that her words had an enigmatical sense, was just or not.

THE OFFICER'S SONG.

"A star is still beaming
Beyond the grey cloud;
Its light rays are streaming,
With nothing to shroud;
And the star shall be there
When the clouds pass away;
Its lustre unchanging,
Immortal its ray.

'Tis the guide of the true heart,
In field, or on sea;
'Tis the hope of the slave,
And the trust of the free;
The light of the lover,
Whatever assail;
The strength of the honest,
That never can fail.

Waft, waft, thou light wind,
From the peace-giving ray,
The vapours of sorrow,
That over it stray;
And let it pour forth,
All unshrouded and bright,
That those who now mourn,
May rejoice in its light."

"God grant it!" murmured the voice of Sir Robert Croyland. Zara said, "Amen!" in her heart; and in a minute or two after, her father rose and left the room.

During the rest of the evening, nothing very important occurred in Harbourne House. Mrs. Barbara played her usual part, and would contribute to Sir Edward Digby's amusement in a most uncomfortable manner. The following morning, too, went by without any incident of importance, till about ten o'clock, when breakfast just being over, and Zara having been called from the room by her maid, Sir Robert's butler an-

nounced to his master that the groom had returned from Mr. Croyland's.

"Where is the note?" demanded his master, eagerly.

"He has not brought one, Sir Robert," replied the servant, "only a message, sir, to say that Mr. Croyland is very sorry he cannot spare the horses to-day, as they were out a long way yesterday."

Sir Robert Croyland started up in a state of fury not at all becoming. He stamped, he even swore. But we have got rid of a great many of the vices of those times; and swearing was so common at the period I speak of, that it did not even startle Mrs. Barbara. Her efforts, however, to soothe her brother, only served to irritate him the more; and next he swore at her, which did surprise her mightily.

He then fell into a fit of thought, which ended in his saying aloud, "Yes, that must be the way. It is his business, and so—" But Sir Robert did not conclude the sentence, retiring to his own sitting-room, and there writing a letter.

When he had done, he paused and meditated: his mind rambling over many subjects, though still occupied intensely with only one. "I am a most unfortunate man," he thought. "Nothing since that wretched day has ever gone right with me. Even trifles combine to frustrate everything I attempt. Would I had died many years ago! Poor Edith, poor girl! she must know more sorrow still; and yet it must be done, or I am lost! If that wretched youth had been killed in that affray yesterday, it would have all been over. Was there no bullet that could find him? and yet, perhaps, it might not have had the effect. No, no; there would have been some new kind of demand from that greedy, craving scoundrel. May there not be such even now? Will he give up that fatal paper? He shall! by heaven he shall! But I must send the letter. Sir Edward Digby will think this all very strange. How unfortunate, that it should have happened just when he was here. Would to heaven I had any one to consult with! But I am lone, lone indeed. My wife, my sons, my friends, gone, gone, all gone! It is very sad;" and after having mused for several minutes more, he rang the bell, gave the servant who appeared the letter which he had just written, and directed him to take it over to Mr. Radford's as soon as possible.

Returning to the room which he had previously left, without bestowing one word upon Mrs. Barbara, whom he passed in the corridor, Sir Robert Croyland entered into conversation with Sir Edward Digby, and strove, though with too evident an effort, to appear careless and unconcerned.

In the mean time, however, we must notice what was passing in the corridor; for it was of some importance, though, like many other important things, it was transacted very quietly.

Mrs. Barbara had overheard Sir Robert's directions to the servant; and she had seen the man, as he went away to get ready the pony, which was usually sent in the morning to the post, deposit the note he had received upon an antique piece of furniture, a large marble table, with great sprawling gilt legs, which stood in the hall, close to the double doors that led to the offices.

Now, Mrs. Barbara was one of the most benevolent people upon earth: she literally overflowed with the milk of human kindness; and, if a few drops of that same milk occasionally spotted the apron of her morality, which we cannot help acknowledging was sometimes the case, she thought, as a great many other people do of a great many other sins, that "there was no great harm in it if the motive was good." This was one of those cases and occasions when the milk was beginning to run over. She had a deep regard for her brother: she would have sacrificed her right hand for him; and she was quite sure that something very sad had happened to vex him, or he never would have thought of swearing *at her*. She would have done, she was ready to do, anything in the world to help him; but how could she help him without knowing what he was vexed about? It is wonderful how many lines the devil always has out for those who are disposed to take a bait. Something whispered to Mrs. Barbara, as she gazed at the letter, "The whole story is in there!" Ah! Mrs. Barbara, do not take it up, and look at the address! It is dangerous, very dangerous.

But Mrs. Barbara did take it up and looked at the address, and then at the two ends. It was folded as a note, unfortunately; and she thought—"There can be no harm, I'm sure; I won't open it, though I've seen him open Edith's letters, poor thing! I shall hear the man pull back the inner door,

and can put it down in a minute. Nobody else can see me here; and if I could but find out what is vexing him, I might have some way of helping him; I'm sure I intend well."

All this argumentation in Mrs. Barbara's mind took up the space of about three seconds; and then the note, pressed between two fingers in the most approved fashion, was applied as a telescope to her eye, to get a perspective view of the cause of her brother's irritation. I must make the reader a party to the transaction, I am afraid, and let him know the words which Mrs. Barbara read:—

"My dear Radford," the note began—"As misfortune would have it, all my horses have been taken out of the stable, and have not been brought back. I fear that they have fallen into other hands than those that borrowed them; and my brother Zachary has one of his crabbed moods upon him, and will not lend his carriage to bring Edith back. If your horses have not gone as well as mine, I should feel particularly obliged by your sending them down here, to take over my coach to Zachary's and bring Edith back; for I do not wish her to stay there any longer, as the marriage is to take place so soon. If you can come over to-morrow, we can settle whether it is to be at your house or here, though I should prefer it here, if you have no objection."

There seemed to be a few words more; but it took Mrs. Barbara longer to decipher the above lines, in the actual position of the note, than it might have done, had the paper been spread out fair before her; so that, just as she was moving it a little, to get at the rest, the sound of the farther of the two doors being thrown open, interrupted her proceedings; and, laying down the letter quickly, she darted away, full of the important intelligence which she had acquired.

CHAPTER XXX.

There are periods in the lives of some men, when, either by a concatenation of unfortunate events, or by the accumulated consequences of their own errors, the prospect on every side becomes so clouded, that there is no resource for them, but to shut their eyes to the menacing aspect of all things, and to take refuge in the moral blindness of thoughtless inaction, against the pressure of present difficulties. "I dare not think," is the excuse of many a man, for continuing in the same course of levity which first brought misfortune upon him; but such is not always the case with those who fly to wretched merriment in the hour of distress; and such was not the case with Sir Robert Croyland.

He had thought for long years, till his very heart sickened at the name of reflection. He had looked round for help and had found none. He had tried to discover some prospect of relief; and all was darkness. The storm he had long foreseen was now bursting upon his head; it was no longer to be delayed; it was not to be warded off. His daughter's misery, or his own destruction, was the only choice before him; and he was resolved to think no more: to let events take their course, and to meet them as he best might.

But to resolve is one thing, to execute, another; and Edith's father was not a man who could keep such a determination long. He might indeed, for a time, cease to think of all the painful particulars of his situation; but there will ever come moments when thought is forced even upon the thoughtless, and events will arise, to press reflection upon any heart. His efforts were, at first, very successful. After he had despatched the letter to Mr. Radford, he had said, "I must really pay my visitor some attention. It will serve to occupy my mind, too. Anything to escape from the torturing consideration of questions, which must ever be solved in wretchedness." And when he returned to Sir Edward Digby, his conversation was particularly gay and cheerful. It first turned to the unpleasant

fact of the abstraction of all his horses; but he now spoke of it in a lighter and less careful manner than before.

"Doubtless," he said, "they have been taken without leave, as usual, by the smugglers, to use for their own purposes. It is quite a common practice in this county; and yet we all go on leaving our stable-doors open, as if to invite all who pass to enter, and choose what they like. Then, I suppose, they have been captured with other spoil, in the strife of yesterday morning, and are become the prize of the conquerors; so that I shall never see them again."

"Oh, no!" answered the young officer, "they will be restored, I am quite sure, upon your identifying them, and proving that they were taken, without your consent, by the smugglers. I shall go over to Woodchurch by-and-bye; and if you please, I will claim them for you."

"It is scarcely worth while," replied the baronet; "I doubt that I shall ever get them back. These are little losses which every man in this neighbourhood must suffer, as a penalty for remaining in a half savage part of the country. What are you disposed to do this morning, Sir Edward? Do you again walk the stubbles?"

"I fear it would be of little use," answered Digby; "there has been so much galloping lately, that I do not think a partridge has been left undisturbed in its furrow; and the sun is too high for much sport."

"Well, then, let us walk in the garden for a little," said Sir Robert; "it is curious, in some respects, having been laid out long before this house was built, antiquated as it is."

Sir Edward Digby assented, but looked round for Zara, as he certainly thought her society would be a great addition to her father's. She had not yet returned to the room, however; and Sir Robert, as if he divined his young companion's feelings, requested his sister to tell her niece, when she came, that he and their guest were walking in the garden. "It is one of her favourite spots, Sir Edward," he continued, as they went out, "and many a meditative hour she spends there; for, gay as she is, she has her fits of thought too."

The young baronet internally said, "Well she may, in this house!" but making a more civil answer to his entertainer, he followed him to the garden; and so well and even cheerfully did Sir Robert Croyland keep up the conversation, so learnedly

did he descant upon the levelling and preservation of turf in bowling-greens, and upon the clipping of old yew-trees, both before and after Zara joined them, that Digby began to doubt, notwithstanding all he had heard, whether he could really have such a load upon his heart as he himself had stated to Edith, and to fancy that after all, it might be a stratagem to drive her to compliance with his wishes.

A little incident, of no great moment in the eyes of any one but a very careful observer of his fellow-men; and Digby was far more so than he seemed, soon settled the doubt. As they were passing under an old wall of red brick, channelled by time and the shoots of pears and peaches, which separated the garden from the different courts, a door suddenly opened behind them, just after they had passed it; and while Sir Edward's eyes were turned to the face of the master of the house, Sir Robert's ear instantly caught the sound, and his cheek became as pale as ashes.

"There is some dark terror there!" thought the young officer; but, turning to Zara, he finished the sentence he had been uttering, while her father's coachman, who was the person that had opened the door, came forward to say that one of the horses had returned.

"Returned!" exclaimed Sir Robert Croyland; "has been brought back, I suppose you mean?"

"Ay, Sir Robert," replied the man; "a fellow from the lone house at Iden Green brought him, and in a sad state the poor beast is. He's got a cut like with a knife all down his shoulder."

"Your dragoon's swords are sharp, Sir Edward," said the old baronet, gaily, to his guest; "however, I will go and see him myself, and rejoin you here in a minute."

"I am so glad to have a moment alone," cried Zara, as soon as her father was gone, "that you must forgive me if I use it directly. I am going to ask you a favour, Sir Edward. You must take me a ride, and lend me a horse. I have just had a message from poor Harry Layton; he wishes to see me, but I am afraid to go alone, with so many soldiers about."

"Are they such terrible animals?" asked her companion, with a smile, adding, however, "I shall be delighted, if your father will consent; for I have already told him that I am going to Woodchurch this afternoon."

"Oh! you must ask me yourself, Sir Edward," replied Zara, quite in a civil tone; "and then when you see that I am willing, you must be very pressing with my father, quite as if you were a lover; and he will not refuse you. I'll bear you harmless, as I have heard Mr. Radford say;" she added with a playful smile that was quickly saddened.

"You shall command for the time," answered Digby, as gaily; "perhaps, after that, I may take my turn, sweet lady. But I have a good deal to say to you, too, which I could not fully explain last night."

"As we go, as we go," replied Zara; "my father will be back directly, otherwise I would tell you a long story about my aunt, who has evidently got some great secret which she is all impatience to divulge. If I had stayed an hour with her, I might have arrived at it; but I was afraid of losing my opportunity here. Oh! that invaluable thing, opportunity. Once lost, what years of misery does it not sometimes leave behind. Would to heaven that Edith and Layton had run away with each other when they were about it. We should all have been happier now."

"And I should never have known you," replied Digby. Zara smiled, and shook her head, as if saying, "That is hardly fair;" but Sir Robert Croyland was seen coming up the walk, and she only replied, "Now, do your *devoir*, gallant knight, and let me see if you do it zealously."

"I have been trying in your absence, my dear sir," said Digby, rather maliciously, as the baronet joined them, "to persuade your fair daughter to run away with me. But she is very dutiful, and will not take such a rash step, though the distance is only to Woodchurch, without your consent. I pray you give it; for I long to mount her on my quietest horse, and see her try her skill in horsemanship again."

Sir Robert Croyland looked grave; and ere the words were half spoken, Sir Edward Digby felt that he had committed an error in his game; for he was well aware that when we have a favour to ask, we should not call up, by speech or look, in the mind of the person who is to grant it, any association having a contrary tendency.

"I am afraid that I have no servant whom I could send with you, Sir Edward," replied her father; "one I have just despatched to some distance, and you know I am left without

horses, for this poor beast just come back, is unfit. Neither do I think it would be altogether consistent with decorum, for Zara to go with you quite alone."

Sir Edward Digby mentally sent the word decorum back to the place from whence it came; but he was resolved to press his point; and when Zara replied, "Oh! do let me go, papa;" he added, "My servant can accompany us, to satisfy propriety, Sir Robert; and you know I have quartered three horses upon you. Then, as I find the fair lady is somewhat afraid of a multitude of soldiers, I promise most faithfully not even to dismount in Woodchurch, but to say what I have to say, to the officer in command there, and then canter back over the country."

"Who is the officer in command?" asked Sir Robert Croyland.

Zara drew her breath quick, but Sir Edward Digby avoided the dangerous point. "Irby has one troop there," he replied; "and there are parts of two others. When I have made interest enough here," he continued, with a half bow to Zara, "I shall beg to introduce Irby to you, Sir Robert; you will like him much, I think. I have known him long."

"Pray invite him to dinner while he stays," said Sir Robert Croyland; "it will give me much pleasure to see him."

"Not yet; not yet!" answered Digby, laughing; "I always secure my own approaches first."

Sir Robert Croyland smiled graciously, and, turning to Zara, said, "Well, my dear, I see no objection, if you wish it. You had better go and get ready."

Zara's cheek was glowing, and she took her father at the first word; but when she was gone, Sir Robert thought fit to lecture his guest a little, upon the bad habit of spoiling young ladies which he seemed to have acquired. He did it jocularly, but with his usual pompous and grave air; and no one would have recognised in the Sir Robert Croyland walking in the garden, the father whom we have lately seen humbled before his own child. There is no part of a man's character which he keeps up so well to the world as that part which is not his own. The assertion may seem to be a contradiction in terms; but there is no other way of expressing the sense clearly; and whether those terms be correct or not, will depend upon whether character is properly innate or accumulated.

Sir Edward Digby answered gaily, for it was his object to keep his host in good humour; at least, for the time. He denied the possibility of spoiling a lady, while he acknowledged his propensity to attempt impossibilities in that direction; and at the same time, with a good grace, and a frankness, real yet assumed, for his words were true, though they might not have been spoken just then, under any other circumstances, he admitted that, of all people whom he should like to spoil, the fair being who had just left them was the foremost. The words were too decided to be mistaken. Sir Edward Digby was evidently a gentleman, and known to be a man of honour. No man of honour trifles with a woman's affections; and Sir Robert Croyland, wise in this instance, if not in others, did as all wise fathers would do, held his tongue for a time that the matter might cool and harden, and then changed the subject.

Digby, however, had grown thoughtful. Did he repent what he had said? No, certainly not. He wished, indeed, that he had not been driven to say it so soon; for there were doubts in his own mind whether Zara herself were altogether won. She was frank, she was kind, she trusted him, she acted with him; but there was at times a shade of reserve about her, coming suddenly, which seemed to him as a warning. She had from the first taken such pains to ensure that her confidence, the confidence of circumstances, should not be misunderstood; she had responded so little to the first approaches of love, while she had yielded so readily to those of friendship, that there was a doubt in his mind which made him uneasy; and, every now and then, her uncle's account of her character rung in his ear, and made him think—"I have found this artillery more dangerous than I expected."

What a pity it is that uncles will not hold their tongues!

At length, he bethought him that it would be as well to order the horses, which was accordingly done; and some time before they were ready, the fair girl herself appeared, and continued walking up and down the garden with her father and their guest, looking very lovely, both from excitement, which gave a varying colour to her cheek, and from intense feelings, which, denied the lips, looked out with deeper soul from the eyes.

"I think, Zara," said Sir Robert Croyland, when it was

announced that the horses and the servant were ready, "that you took Sir Edward to the north, when you went over to your uncle's. You had better, therefore, in returning, for I know, in your wild spirits, when once on horseback, you will not be contented with the straight road, you had better, I say, come by the south-west."

"Oh! papa, I could never learn the points of the compass in my life!" answered Zara, laughing; "I suppose that is the reason why, as my aunt says, I steer so ill."

"I mean, by the lower road," replied her father; and he laid such emphasis on the words, that Zara received them as a command.

They mounted and set out, much to the surprise of Mrs. Barbara Croyland, who saw them from the window, and thence derived her first information of their intended expedition; for Zara was afraid of her aunt's kindnesses, and never encountered them when she could help it. When they were a hundred yards from the house, the conversation began; but I will not enter into all the details; for at first they related to facts with which the reader is already well acquainted. Sir Edward Digby told her at large, all that had passed between himself and Layton on the preceding day, and Zara, in return, informed him of the message she had received from his friend, and how it had been conveyed. Their minds then turned to other things, or rather to other branches of the same subjects; and, what was to be done? was the next question; for hours were flying. The moment that was to decide the fate of the two beings in whom each felt a deep though separate interest, was approaching fast; and no progress had apparently been made.

Zara's feelings seemed as much divided as Edith's had been. She shrank from the thought, that her sister, whom she loved with a species of adoration, should sacrifice herself on any account to such a fate as that which must attend the wife of Richard Radford. She shrank also, as a young, generous woman's heart must ever shrink, from the thought of any one wedding the abhorred, and separating for ever from the beloved; but then, when she came to turn her eyes towards her father, she trembled for him as much as for Edith; and, with her two hands resting on the pommel of the saddle, she gazed down in anxious and bitter thought.

"I know not your father as well as you do, my dear Miss Croyland," said her companion, at length, as he marked these emotions; "and therefore I cannot tell what might be his conduct under particular circumstances." Zara suddenly raised her eyes, and fixed them on his face; but Digby continued. "I do not speak of the past, but of the future. I take it for granted, not alone as a courtesy, but from all I have seen, that Sir Robert Croyland cannot have committed any act that could justly render him liable to danger from the law."

"Thank you; thank you!" said Zara, dropping her eyes again; "you judge rightly, I am sure."

"But at the same time," he proceeded, "it is clear that some unfortunate concurrence of circumstances has placed him either really, or in imagination, in Mr. Radford's power. Now, would he but act a bold and decided part, dare the worst, discountenance a bad man and a villain; even, if necessary, in his magisterial capacity, treat him as he deserves, he would take away the sting from his malice. Any accusation this man might bring would have *enmity* too strongly written upon it, to carry much weight; and all the evidence in favour of your father would have double force."

"He cannot; he will not," answered Zara, sadly, "unless he be actually driven. I know no more than you, Sir Edward, how all this has happened; but I know my father, and I know that he shrinks from disgrace more than death. An accusation, a public trial, would kill him by the worst and most terrible kind of torture. Mr. Radford, too, has wound the toils around him completely; that I can see. He could say that Sir Robert Croyland has acted contrary to all his own principles, at his request; and he could point to the cause. He could say that Sir Robert Croyland suddenly became, and has been for years, the most intimate friend and companion of a man he scorned and avoided; and he could assert that it was because the proud man was in the cunning man's power. If, for vengeance, he chooses to avow his own disgrace; (and what is there Mr. Radford would not avow to serve his ends?) believe me, he has my father in a net, from which it will be difficult to disentangle him."

They both fell into thought again; but Zara did not sink, in Digby's estimation, from the clear and firm view which she took of her father's position.

"Well," he said, at length, "let us wait, and hear what poor Layton has to tell you. Perhaps he may have gained some further insight, or may have formed some plan; and now Zara, let us for a moment speak of ourselves. You see, to-day, I have been forced to make love to you."

"Too much," said Zara, gravely. "I am sure you intended it for the best; but I am sorry it could not be avoided."

"And yet it is very pleasant," answered Digby, half jestingly, half seriously.

Zara seemed agitated: "Do not, do not!" she replied; "my mind is too full of sad things, to think of what might be pleasant or not at another time;" and she turned a look towards him, in which kindness, entreaty, and seriousness were all so blended, that it left him in greater doubt than ever, of her sensations. "Besides," she added, the serious predominating in her tone, "consider what a difference one rash word, on either part, may make between us. Let me regard you, at least for the present, as a friend, or a brother as you once said, Digby; let me take counsel with you, seek your advice, call for your assistance, without one thought or care to shackle or restrain me. In pity, do; for you know not how much I need support."

"Then I am most ready to give it, on your own terms, and in your own way," answered Digby, warmly; but, immediately afterwards, he fell into a reverie, and in his own mind thought: "She is wrong in her view; or indifferent towards me. With a lover to whom all is acknowledged, and with whom all is decided, she would have greater confidence, than with a friend, towards whom the dearest feelings of the heart are in doubt. This must be resolved speedily, but not now; for it evidently agitates her too much. Yet, after all, in that agitation is hope."

Just as his meditations had reached this point, they passed by the little public house of the Chequers, then a very favourite sign in England, and especially in that part of the country; and in five minutes after, they perceived a horseman on the road, riding rapidly towards them.

"There is Layton," said Sir Edward Digby, as he came somewhat nearer; but Zara gazed forward with surprise at the tall, manly figure, dressed in the handsome uniform of the time, the pale but noble countenance, and the calm command-

ing air. "Impossible!" she cried. "Why, he was a gay, slight, florid, young man!"

"Six or seven years ago," answered Digby; "but that, my dear Miss Croyland, is Sir Henry Layton, depend upon it."

Now, it may seem strange that Edith should have instantly recognised, even at a much greater distance, the man whom her sister did not, though the same period had passed since each had seen him; but it must be remembered, that Edith was between two and three years older than Zara; and those two or three years, at the time of life which they had reached when Layton left England, are amongst the most important in a woman's life; those when new feelings and new thoughts arise, to impress for ever, on the woman's heart, events and persons that the girl forgets in an hour.

Layton, however, it certainly was; and when Zara could see his features distinctly, she recalled the lines. Springing from his horse as soon as he was near, her sister's lover cast the bridle of his charger over his arm, and, taking the hand she extended to him, kissed it affectionately: "Oh! Zara how you are changed," he said. "But so am I; and you have gained, whilst I have lost. It is very kind of you to come thus speedily."

"You could not doubt, Layton, that I would, if possible," answered Zara; "but all things are much changed in our house, as well as ourselves; and that wild liberty which we formerly enjoyed, of running whithersoever we would, is sadly abridged now. But what have you to say, Layton? for I dare not stay long."

Digby was dropping behind, apparently to speak to his servant for a moment; but Layton called to him assuring him that he had nothing to say which he might not hear.

"Presently, presently," answered Zara's companion; and leaving them alone, he rode up to good Mr. Somers, who, with his usual discretion, had halted, as they halted, at a very respectful distance. The young officer seemed to give some orders, which were rather long, and then returned at a slow pace. In the mean time, the conversation of Layton and Zara had gone on; but his only object, it appeared, was to see her, and to entreat her to aid and support his Edith in any trial she might be put to. "I spent a short period of chequered happiness with her last night," he said; "and she then told

me, dear Zara, that she was sure her father would send for her in the course of this day. If such be the case, keep with her always as far as possible; bid her still remember Harry Layton; bid her resist to the end; and assure her that he will come to her deliverance ultimately. Were it myself alone, I would sacrifice anything, and set her free; but when I know that, by so doing, I should make her wretched for ever, that her own heart would be broken, and nothing but an early death would relieve her, I cannot do it, Zara; no one can expect it."

"Perhaps not, perhaps not, Layton;" answered Zara, with the tears in her eyes; "but yet, my father! However, I cannot advise, I cannot even ask anything. All is so dark and perplexed, I am lost!"

"I am labouring now, dear Zara," replied the young officer, "to find or devise means of rendering his safety sure. Already I have the power to crush the bad man in whose grasp he is, and render his testimony, whatever it may be, nearly valueless. At all events, the only course before us, is that which I have pointed out; and while Digby is with you, you can never want the best and surest counsel and assistance. You may confide in him fully, Zara. I have now known him many years; and a more honourable and upright man, or one of greater talent, does not live."

There was something very gratifying to Zara in what he said of his friend; and had she been in a mood to scrutinize her own feelings accurately, the pleasure that she experienced in hearing such words spoken of Sir Edward Digby, the agitated sort of pleasure, might have given her an insight into her own heart. As it was, it only sent a passing blush into her cheek, and she replied, "I am sure he is all you say, Harry; and indeed, it is to his connivance that I owe my being able to come hither to-day. These smugglers took away all my father's horses; and I suppose, from what I hear, that some of them have been captured by your men."

"If such is the case they shall be sent back," replied Layton; "for I am well aware that the horses being found with the smugglers is no proof that they were there with the owner's consent. To-morrow, I trust to be able to give you a further insight into my plans, for I am promised some information of importance to-night; and, perhaps, even before you reach

home, I shall have put a bar against Mr. Richard Radford's claims to Edith, which he may find insurmountable."

As he was speaking, Sir Edward Digby returned, quickening his horse's pace as he came near, and pointing with his hand. "You have got a detachment out, I see, Layton," he said; "is there any new affair before you?"

"Oh! no," replied the colonel; "it is merely Irby and a part of his troop, whom I have despatched to search the wood, for I have certain intelligence that the man we are seeking is concealed there."

"They may save themselves the trouble," replied Zara, shaking her head; "for though he was certainly there all yesterday, he made his escape this morning."

Layton bit his lip, and his brow grew clouded. "That is unfortunate," he said, "most unfortunate! I do not ask you how you know, Zara; but are you quite sure?"

"Perfectly," she answered; "I would not deceive you for the world, Layton, and I only say what I have said, because I think that, if you do search the wood, it may draw attention to your being in this neighbourhood, which as yet is not known at Harbourne, and it may embarrass us very much."

"I am not sure, Layton," said Sir Edward Digby, "that as far as your own purposes are concerned, it might not be better to seem, at all events, to withdraw the troops, or at least a part of them from this neighbourhood. Indeed, though I have no right to give you advice upon the subject, I think also it might be beneficial in other respects, for as soon as the smugglers think you gone, they will act with more freedom."

"I propose to do so, to-morrow," replied the colonel, "but I have some information already, and expect more, upon which I must act in the first place. It will be as well, however, to stop Irby's party, if there is no end to be obtained by their proceedings."

He then took leave of Zara and his friend, mounted his horse, and rode back to meet the troop that was advancing; while Zara and Sir Edward Digby, after following the same road up to the first houses of Woodchurch, turned away to the right, and went back to Harbourne by the small country road which leads from Kenardington to Tenterden.

Their conversation, as they went, would be of very little interest to the reader; for it consisted almost altogether of

comments upon Layton's changed appearance, and discussions of the same questions of doubt and difficulty which had occupied them before. They went slowly, however; and when they reached the house it did not want much more than three quarters of an hour to the usual time of dinner. Sir Robert Croyland they found looking out of the glass-door which commanded a view towards his brother's house, and his first question was, which way they had returned. Sir Edward Digby gave an easy and unconcerned reply, describing the road they had followed, and comparing it, greatly to its disadvantage, with that which they had pursued on their former expedition.

"Then you saw nothing of the carriage, Zara?" inquired her father. "It is very strange that Edith has not come back."

"No; we saw no carriage of any kind, but a carrier's cart replied the young lady. "Perhaps, if Edith did not know you were going to send, she might not be ready."

This reason, however, did not seem to satisfy Sir Robert Croyland; and after talking with him for a few minutes more as he stood, still gazing forth over the country, Zara and Digby retired to change their dress before dinner, and the latter received a long report from his servant of facts which will be shown hereafter. The man was particularly minute and communicative, because his master asked him no questions, and suffered him to tell his tale his own way. But that tale fully occupied the time till the second bell rang, and Digby hurried down to dinner.

Still, Miss Croyland had not returned; and it was evident that Sir Robert Croyland was annoyed and uneasy. All the suavity and cheerfulness of the morning was gone, for one importunate source of care and thought will always carry the recollection back to others, and he sat at the dinner table in silence and gloom, only broken by brief intervals of conversation, which he carried on with a laborious effort.

Just as Mrs. Barbara rose to retire, however, the butler reentered the room, announcing to Sir Robert Croyland that Mr. Radford had called, and wished to speak with him. "He would not come in, sir," continued the man, "for he said he wanted to speak with you alone, so I showed him into the library."

Sir Robert Croyland instantly rose, but looked with a hesi-

tating glance at his guest, while Mrs. Barbara and Zara retired from the room.

"Pray, do not let me detain you, Sir Robert," said the young officer; "I have taken as much wine as I ever do, and will go and join the ladies in the drawing room."

The customs of the day required that the master of the house should press the bottle upon his guest; and Sir Robert Croyland did not fail to do so. But Digby remained firm, and, to settle the question, walked quietly to the door and entered the drawing-room. There, he found Zara seated; but Mrs. Barbara was standing near the table, and apparently in a state, for which the English language supplies but one term, and that not a very classical one. I mean, she was in *a fidget.*

The reader is aware that the library of Harbourne House was adjacent to the drawing-room, and that there was a door between them. It was a thick, solid, oaken door, however, such as shut out the wind in the good old times; and, moreover, it fitted very close. Thus, though the minute after Sir Edward had entered the room, a low murmur, as of persons speaking somewhat loud, was heard from the library, not a single syllable could be distinguished; and Mrs. Barbara looked at the keyhole, with a longing indescribable. After about thirty seconds' martyrdom, Mrs. Barbara quitted the room: Zara, who knew her aunt, candidly trusting that she had gone to put herself out of temptation; and Sir Edward Digby never for a moment imagining, that she could have been in any temptation at all. It may now be necessary, however, to follow Sir Robert Croyland to the library, and to reveal to the reader all that Mrs. Barbara was so anxious to learn.

He found Mr. Radford, booted and spurred, standing, with his tall, bony figure, in as easy an attitude as it could assume, by the fire-place; and the baronet's first question was, "In the name of heaven, Radford, what has become of Edith? Neither she nor the carriage have returned."

"Oh! yes, the carriage has, half an hour ago!" replied Mr. Radford; "and I met the horses going back as I came. Didn't you get my message which I sent by the coachman?"

"No, I must have been at dinner," answered Sir Robert Croyland, "and the fools did not give it to me."

"Well, it is no great matter," rejoined Mr. Radford, in the

quietest possible tone. "It was only to say that I was coming over, and would explain to you all about Miss Croyland."

"But where is she! Why did she not come?" demanded her father, with some of the old impetuosity of his youth.

"She is at my house," answered the other, deliberately; "I thought it would be a great deal better, Croyland, to bring her there at once, as you left to me the decision of where the marriage was to be. She could be quite as comfortable there as here. My son will be up to-morrow; and the marriage can take place quietly, without any piece of work. Now, here it would be difficult to manage it; for, in the first place, it would be dangerous for my son. You have got a stranger in the house, and a whole heap of servants, who cannot be trusted. I have arranged everything for the marriage, and for their going off quietly on their little tour. We shall soon get a pardon for this affair with the dragoons; and that will be all settled."

Sir Robert Croyland had remained mute; not with any calm or tranquil feelings, but with indignation and astonishment. "Upon my life and soul," he cried, "this is too bad! Do you mean to say, sir, that you have ventured, without my knowledge or consent, to change my daughter's destination, and take her to your house when I wished her to be brought here?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Radford, with the most perfect calmness.

"Well then, sir," exclaimed the baronet, irritated beyond all endurance; "I have to tell you, that you have committed a gross, insolent, and unjustifiable act; and I have to insist that she be brought back here this very night."

"Nay, my dear friend, nay," replied Mr. Radford, in a half jeering tone. "These are harsh words that you use; but you must hear me first, before I pay any attention to them."

"I want to hear nothing, sir," cried Sir Robert Croyland, his anger still carrying him forward. "But if you do not send her back to her own home, I will get horses over from Tenterden, and bring her myself. Her slavery has not yet commenced, Mr. Radford."

"I shall not be able to bring her over," answered Mr. Radford, still maintaining the same provoking coolness; "because, in case of her return, I should be obliged to use my

horses myself, to lay certain important facts, which we both know of, before a brother magistrate."

He paused, and Sir Robert Croyland winced. But still indignation was uppermost for the time; and rapidly as lightning the thoughts of resistance passed through his mind. "This man's conduct is too bad," he said to himself. "After such a daring act as this, with his character blackened by so many stains, and so clear a case of revenge, the magistrates will surely hardly listen to him." But as he continued to reflect, timidity, the habitual timidity of many years, began to mingle with and dilute his resolution; and Mr. Radford, who knew him to the very heart, after having suffered him to reflect just long enough to shake his firmness, went on in a somewhat different tone, saying, "Come, Sir Robert! don't be unreasonable; and before you quarrel irretrievably with an old friend, listen quietly to what he has got to say."

"Well, sir, well," said Sir Robert Croyland, casting himself into a chair, "what is it you have got to say?"

"Why, simply this, my dear friend," answered Mr. Radford; "that you are not aware of all the circumstances, and therefore cannot judge yet whether I have acted right or wrong. You and I have decided, I think, that there can no longer be any delay in the arrangement of our affairs. I put it plainly to you yesterday, that it was to be now or never; and you agreed that it should be now. You brought me your daughter's consent in the afternoon; and so far the matter was settled. I don't want to injure you; and if you are injured, it is your own fault—"

"But I gave no consent," said Sir Robert Croyland, "that she should be taken to your house. The circumstances, the circumstances, Mr. Radford!"

"Presently, presently," replied his companion. "I take it for granted, that, when you have pledged yourself to a thing, you are anxious to accomplish it. Now I tell you, there was no sure way of accomplishing this, but that which I have taken. Do you know who is the commander of this dragoon regiment which is down here? No: but I do. Do you know who is the man, who, like a sub-officer of the customs, attacked our friends yesterday morning, took some fifty of them prisoners, robbed me of some seventy thousand pounds, and is now hunting after my son, as if he were a fox? No: but I do;

and I will tell you who he is: one Harry Layton, whom you may have heard of; now, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Layton, Knight of the Bath, forsooth!"

Sir Robert Croyland gazed upon him in astonishment; but, whatever were his other sensations, deep grief and bitter regret mingled with them, when he thought that circumstances should ever have driven or tempted him to promise his daughter's hand to a low, dissolute, unprincipled villain, and to put a fatal barrier between her and one whom he had always known to be generous, honourable, and high principled, and who had now gained such distinction in the service of his country. He remained perfectly silent, however; and the expression of surprise and consternation which his countenance displayed, was misinterpreted by Mr. Radford to his own advantage.

"Now, look here, Sir Robert," he continued; "if your daughter were in your house, you could not help this young man having some communication with her. He has already been over at your brother's, and has seen her, I doubt not. Here, then, is your fair daughter, Miss Zara; your guest, Sir Edward Digby, his intimate friend, I dare say; all your maids and half your men servants, even dear Mrs. Barbara herself, with her sweet meddling ways, would all be ready to fetch and carry between the lovers. In short, our whole plans would be overturned; and I should be compelled to do that which would be very disagreeable to me, and to strike at this upstart Henry Layton through the breast of Sir Robert Croyland. In my house, he can have no access to her; and though some mischief may already have been done, yet it can go no further."

"Now I understand what you mean by revenge," said the baronet, in a low tone, folding his hands together. "Now I understand."

"Well, but have I judged rightly or wrongly?" demanded Mr. Radford.

"Rightly, I suppose," said Sir Robert Croyland, sadly. "It can't be helped; but poor Edith, how does she bear it?"

"Oh! very well," answered Mr. Radford, quietly. "She cried a little at first, and when she found where they were going, asked the coachman what he meant. It was my coachman, you know, not yours; and so he lied, like a good, honest

fellow, and said you were waiting for her at my house. I was obliged to make up a little bit of a story too, and tell her you knew all about it, but that was no great harm; for I was resolved you should know all about it, very soon."

"Lied like a good honest fellow!" murmured Sir Robert Croyland, to himself. "Well," he continued, aloud, "at all events I must come over to-morrow, and try to reconcile the poor girl to it,"

"Do so, do so," answered Mr. Radford; "and in the mean time, I must be off, for I've still a good deal of work to do to-night. Did you see, they have withdrawn the dragoons from the wood? They knew it would be of no use to keep them there. So now, good night: that's all settled."

"All settled, indeed," murmured Sir Robert Croyland, as Mr. Radford left him; and, for nearly half an hour after, he continued sitting in the library, with his hands clasped upon his knee, exactly in the same position.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Sir Edward Digby did not take advantage of the opportunity which Mrs. Barbara's absence afforded him. This may seem extraordinary conduct in a good soldier and quick and ready man; but he had his reasons for it. Not that he was beginning to hesitate, as some men do, when, after having quite made up their minds, they begin to consider all the perils of their situation, and retreat, without much regard for their own consistency, or the feelings of the other persons interested. But no, Digby justly remembered that what he had to say might require some time, and that it might produce some agitation. Moreover, he recollected that there are few things so disagreeable on earth, as being interrupted at a time when people's eyes are sparkling or in tears, when the cheek is flushed or deadly pale; and as he knew not when Mrs. Barbara might return, and certainly did not anticipate that she would be long absent, he resolved to wait for another opportunity.

When he found minute after minute slip by, however, he began to repent of his determination; and certainly, although the word love never passed his lips, something very like the reality shone out in his eyes. Perhaps, had Zara been in any of her usual moods, more serious words might have followed. Had she been gay and jesting, or calm and thoughtful, a thousand little incidents might have led on naturally to the unfolding of the heart of each. But, on the contrary, she was neither the one nor the other. She was evidently anxious, apprehensive, ill at ease; and though she conversed rationally enough for a person whose mind was in such a state, yet she frequently turned her eyes towards the door of the adjoining room, from which the sound of her father's voice and that of Mr. Radford might still be heard.

Sir Edward Digby endeavoured to gain her attention to himself, as much with a view to withdraw it from unpleasant subjects as anything else; and it was very natural that, with

one so fair and so excellent, one possessing so much brightness, in spite of a few little spots, it was natural that his tone should become tenderer every minute. At length, however, she stopped him, saying, "I am very anxious just now. I fear there is some mischief going on there, which we cannot prevent, and may never know. Edith's absence is certainly very strange; and I fear they may foil us yet."

In a minute or two after, Mrs. Barbara Croyland returned, but in such a flutter that she spoilt her embroidery, which she snatched up to cover her agitation, dropped her finest scissors and broke the point off, and finally ran the needle into her finger, which, thereupon, spotted the silk with blood. She gave no explanation, indeed of all this emotion, but looked several times at Zara, with a meaning glance; and when, at length, Sir Robert Croyland entered the drawing-room, his whole air and manner did not tend to remove from his daughter's mind the apprehension which his sister's demeanour had cast over it.

There is a general tone in every landscape which it never entirely loses; yet how infinite are the varieties which sunshine, and cloud, and storm, and morning, evening, and noon, bring upon it; and thus with the expression and conduct of every man, although they retain certain distinctive characteristics, yet innumerable are the varieties produced by the moods, the passions, and the emotions of the mind. Sir Robert Croyland was no longer irritably thoughtful; but he was stern, gloomy, melancholy. He strove to converse, indeed; but the effort was so apparent, the pain it gave him so evident, that Sir Edward Digby felt, or fancied, that his presence was a restraint. He had too much tact, however, to show that he imagined such to be the case; and he only resolved to retire to his own room as soon as he decently could. He was wrong in his supposition, indeed, that his host might wish to communicate something privately to Zara, or to Mrs. Barbara. Sir Robert had nothing to tell; and therefore the presence of Sir Edward Digby was rather agreeable to him than not, as shielding him from inquiries, which it might not have suited him to answer. He would have talked if he could, and would have done his best to make his house agreeable to his young guest; but his thoughts still turned, with all the bitterness of smothered anger, to the indignity he had suffered, and he

asked himself, again and again, "Will the time ever come, when I shall have vengeance for all this?"

The evening passed gloomily, and in consequence slowly; and at length, when the clock showed that it still wanted a quarter to ten, Digby rose and bade the little party good night, saying that he was somewhat tired, and had letters to write.

"I shall go to bed too," said Sir Robert Croyland, ringing for his candle. But Digby quitted the room first; and Zara could not refrain from saying, in a low tone, as she took leave of her father for the night, and went out of the room with him, "There is nothing amiss with Edith, I trust, my dear father?"

"Oh! dear, no!" answered Sir Robert Croyland, with as careless an air as he could assume. "Nothing at all, but that she does not come home to-night, and perhaps may not to-morrow."

Still unsatisfied, Zara sought her own room; and when her maid had half performed her usual functions for the night, she dismissed her, saying, that she would do the rest herself. When alone, however, Zara Croyland did not proceed to undress, but remained thinking over all the events of the day, with her head resting on her hand, and her eyes cast down. The idea of Edith and her fate mingled with other images. The words that Digby had spoken, the increasing tenderness of his tone and manner, came back to memory, and made her heart flutter with sensations unknown till then. She felt alarmed at her own feelings; she knew not well what they were; but still she said to herself, at every pause of thought, "It all nonsense! He will go away and forget me; and I shall forget him! These soldiers have always some tale of love for every woman's ear. It is their habit, almost their nature." Did she believe her own conclusions? Not entirely; but she tried to believe them, and that was enough for the present.

Some minutes after, however, when a light knock was heard at the door, she started almost as if some one had struck her; and Fancy, who is always drawing upon improbability, made her believe, for an instant, that it might be Digby. She said, "Come in," however, with tolerable calmness; and the next instant, the figure of her aunt presented itself, with eagerness in her looks and importance in her whole air.

"My dear child!" she said, "I did not know whether your maid was gone; but I am very happy she is, for I have something to tell you of very great importance indeed. What do you think that rascal Radford has done?" and as she spoke, she sank, with a dignified air, into a chair.

"I really can't tell, my dear aunt," replied Zara, not a little surprised to hear the bad epithet which her aunt applied to a gentleman, towards whom she usually displayed great politeness. "I am sure he is quite capable of anything that is bad."

"Ah! he is very much afraid of me, and what he calls my sweet meddling ways," said the old lady; "but, perhaps, if I had meddled before, it might have been all the better. I am sure I am the very last to meddle, except when there is an absolute occasion for it, as you well know, my dear Zara."

The last proposition was put in some degree as a question; but Zara did not think fit to answer it, merely saying, "What is it, my dear aunt? I am all anxiety and fear regarding Edith."

"Well you may be, my love," said Mrs. Barbara; and thereupon she proceeded to tell Zara, how she had overheard the whole conversation between Mr. Radford and her brother, through the door of the library, which opened into the little passage, that ran between it and the rooms beyond. She did not say that she had put her ear to the keyhole, but that Zara took for granted, and indeed felt somewhat like an accomplice, while listening to secrets which had been acquired by such means.

Thus almost everything that had passed in the library, with a few very short variations and improvements, but with a good deal of comment, and a somewhat lengthy detail, was communicated by Mrs. Barbara to her niece; and when she had done, the old lady added, "There, my dear, now go to bed and sleep upon it; and we will talk it all over in the morning, for I am determined that my niece shall not be treated in such a way by any vagabond smuggler like that. Dear me! one cannot tell what might happen, with Edith shut up in his house in that way. Talk of my meddling, indeed! He shall find that I will meddle now to some purpose! Good night, my dear love; good night!" But Mrs. Barbara stopped at the door, to explain to Zara that she had not told her

before, "Because, you know," said the good lady, "I could not speak of such things before a stranger, like Sir Edward Digby; and when he was gone, I didn't dare say anything to your father. Think of it till to-morrow, there's a dear girl, and try and devise some plan."

"I will," said Zara, "I will;" but as soon as her aunt had disappeared, she clasped her hands together, exclaiming: "Good heaven! what plan can I form? Edith is lost! They have her now completely in their power. Oh! that I had known this before Sir Edward Digby went to sleep. He might have gone over to Layton to-morrow, early; and they might have devised something together. Perhaps he has not gone to rest yet. He told me to throw off all restraint, to have no ceremony in case of need. Layton told me so, too; that I might trust in him, that he is a man of honour. Oh! yes, I am sure he is a man of honour: but what will he think? He promised he would think no harm of anything I might be called upon to do, and I promised I would trust him. I will go! He can speak to me in the passage. No one sleeps near to overhear. But I will knock softly; for though he said he had letters to write, he may have gone to bed by this time."

Leaving the lights standing where they were, Zara cast on a long dressing-gown, and crept quietly out into the passage, taking care not to pull the door quite to. All was silent in the house; not a sound was heard; and with her heart beating as if it would have burst through her side, she approached Sir Edward Digby's door, but there she paused. Had she not paused, but gone on at once, and knocked, all would have been well; for, so far from being in bed, he was sitting calmly reading. But ladies' resolutions, and men's, are made of very much the same materials. The instant her foot stopped, her whole host of woman's feelings crowded upon her, and barred the way. First, she thought of modesty, and propriety, and decency; and then, though she might have overcome the whole of that squadron for Edith's sake, the remembrance of many words that Digby had spoken, the look, the tone, the manner, all rose again upon her memory. She felt that he was a lover; and putting her hand to her brow, she murmured: "I cannot; no, I cannot. Had he been only a friend, I would. I will see him early to-morrow. I will sit up all night, that I may not sleep, and miss the opportunity; but I cannot go to-night;"

and, returning as quietly to her own chamber as she had come thence, she shut the door and locked it. She had never locked it in her life before, and she knew not why she did it.

Then, drawing the arm-chair to the hearth, Zara Croyland trimmed the fire, wrapped herself up as warmly as she could, and putting out one of the candles, that she might not be left in darkness by both being burnt out together, she took up a book and began to read. From time to time, during that long night, her eyes grew heavy, and she fell asleep; but something always woke her. Either her own thoughts troubled her in dreams, or else the book fell out of her hand, or the wind shook the window, or the cold chill that precedes the coming morning disturbed her; and at length she looked at her watch, and, finding it past five o'clock, she congratulated herself at having escaped the power of the drowsy god, and, dressing in haste, undrew the curtains, and looked out by the light of the dawning day. When she saw the edge of the sun coming up, she said to herself, "He is often very early. I will go down." But, bethinking herself that no time was to be lost, she hurried first to her maid's room, and waking her, told her to see Sir Edward Digby's servant as soon as he rose, and to bid him inform his master that she wanted to speak with him in the library. "Speak not a word of this to any one else, Eliza," she said; and then, thinking it necessary to assign some reason for her conduct, she added, "I am very anxious about my sister; her not coming home yesterday alarms me, and I want to hear more."

"Oh! dear, you needn't frighten yourself, Miss Zara," replied the maid. "I dare say there's nothing the matter."

"But I cannot help frightening myself," replied Zara; and going down into the library, she unclosed one of the shutters.

The maid was very willing to gratify her young lady, for Zara was a favourite with all; but thinking from the look of the sky, that it would be a long time before the servant rose, and having no such scruples as her mistress, she went quietly away to his room, and knocked at his door, saying, "I wish you would get up, Mr. Somers, I want to speak with you."

Zara remained alone for twenty minutes in the library, or not much more, and then she heard Digby's step in the passage. There was a good deal of alarm and surprise in his look when he entered; but his fair companion's tale was soon

told, and that sufficiently explained her sudden call for his presence. He made no comment at the moment, but replied, "Wait for me here one instant. I will order my horse, and be back directly."

He was speedily by her side again; and then, taking her hand in his, he said, "I wish I had known this last night. You need not have been afraid of disturbing me, for I was up till nearly one."

Zara smiled. "You do not know," she answered, "how near I was to your door, with the intention of calling you."

"And why did you not?" asked Digby eagerly. "Nay, you must tell me, why you should hesitate when so much was at stake."

"I can but answer, because my heart failed me," replied Zara. "You know women's hearts are weak foolish things."

"Nay," said Digby, "you must explain further. Why did your heart fail you? Tell me, Zara. I cannot rest satisfied unless you tell me."

"Indeed, there is no time now for explanation," she replied, feeling that her admission had drawn her into more than she had anticipated; "your horse will soon be here; and there is not a moment to lose."

"There is time enough for those who will," answered Digby, in a serious tone; "you promised me that you would not hesitate, whenever necessity required you to apply to me for counsel or aid; you have hesitated, Zara. Could you doubt me, could you be apprehensive, could you suppose that Edward Digby would, in word, deed, or thought, take advantage of your generous confidence?"

"No, no! oh, no!" answered Zara, warmly, blushing, and trembling at the same time, "I did not, I could not, after all you have done, after all I have seen. No, no; I thought you would think it strange; I thought—"

"Then you supposed I would wrong you in thought!" he replied, with some mortification in his manner; "you do not know me yet."

"Oh! yes, indeed I do," she answered, feeling that she was getting further and further into difficulties; and then she added, with one of her sudden bursts of frankness, "I will tell you how it was, candidly and truly. Just as I was at your door, and about to knock, the memory of several things you had

said, inadvertently, perhaps, crossed my mind; and, though I felt that I could go at any hour to consult a friend in such terrible circumstances, I could not, no, I could not do so with a—with one— You see what harm you have done by such fine speeches!"

She thought that by her last words she had guarded herself securely from any immediate consequences of this unreserved confession; but she was mistaken. She merely hurried on what might yet have rested for a day or two.

Sir Edward Digby took her other hand also, and held it gently, yet firmly, as if he was afraid she should escape from him. "Zara," he said, "dear Zara, I have done harm, by speaking too much, or not enough. I must remedy it by the only means in my power. Listen to me for one moment, for I cannot go till all is said. You must cast off this reserve, you must act perfectly freely with me; I seek to bind you by no engagement, I will bear my doubt; I will not construe anything you do as an acceptance of my suit; but you must know, nay, you do know, you do feel, that I am your lover. It was doubt of your own sensations towards me, that made you hesitate; it was fear that you should commit yourself to that which you might, on consideration, be indisposed to ratify. You thought that I might plead such confidence as a tacit promise, and that made you pause. But hear me, as I pledge myself, upon my honour, as a gentleman, that if you act fearlessly and freely in the cause in which we are both engaged—if you confide in me, trust in me, and never hesitate to put yourself, as you may think, entirely in my power, I will never look upon anything as plighting you to me in the slightest degree, till I hear you say the words, 'Digby, I am yours,' if ever that happy day should come. In the mean time, however, to set you entirely free from all apprehension of what others may say, I hold myself bound to you by every promise that man can make; and this very day I will ask your father's approbation of my suit. But I am well aware, though circumstances have shown me, in a marvellous short time, that your heart and mind is equal to your beauty, yet it is not to be expected that such a being can be won in a few short days, and that I must wait in patience, not without hope, indeed, but with no presumption. By your conduct, at least, I shall know whether I have gained your esteem; your love, perhaps, may

follow; and now I leave you, to serve your sister and my friend to the best of my power."

Thus saying, he raised her hand to his lips, kissed it, and moved towards the door.

There was a sad struggle in Zara's breast; but as he was laying his hand upon the lock, to open it, she said, "Digby—Digby—Edward!"

He instantly turned, and ran towards her; for her face had become very pale. She gave him her hand at once, however: "Kind, generous man!" she said, "you must not go without hearing my answer. Such a pledge cannot be all on one part. I am yours, Digby, if you wish it; yet know me better first before you answer; see all my faults, and all my failings. Even this must show you how strange a being I am: how unlike other girls, how unlike, perhaps, the woman you would wish to call your wife!"

"Wish it!" answered Digby, casting his arm round her. "from my heart, from my very soul, Zara. I know enough, I have seen enough, for I have seen you in circumstances that bring forth the bosom's inmost feelings; and though you are unlike others, and I have watched many in their course: that very dissimilarity is to me the surpassing charm. They are all art, you are all nature, ay, and nature in its sweetest and most graceful form; and I can boldly say, I never yet saw woman whom I should desire to call my wife till I saw you. I will not wait, dear girl; but pledged to you as you are pledged to me, will not press this subject further on you, till your sister's fate is sealed. I must, indeed, speak with your father at once, that there may be no mistake, no misapprehension; but till all this sad business is settled, we are brother and sister, Zara; and then a dearer bond."

"Oh! yes, yes; brother and sister!" cried Zara, clinging to him at the name which takes fear from woman's heart, "so will we be, Edward; and now all my doubts and hesitations will be at an end. I shall never fear more to seek you when it is needful."

"And my suit will be an excuse and a reason to all others, for free interviews, and solitary rambles, and private conference, and every dear communion," answered Digby, pleased, and yet almost amazed at the simplicity with which she lent herself to the magic of a word, when the heart led her.

But Zara saw he was a little extending the brother's privilege; and with a warm cheek but smiling lip, she answered, "There, leave me now; I see you are learned in the art of leading on from step to step. Go on your way, Edward; and, oh! be kind to me, and do not make me feel this new situation too deeply at first. There, pray take away your arm; none but a father's or a sister's has been there before; and it makes my heart beat, as if it were wrong."

But Digby kept it where it was for a moment or two longer, and gave a few instants to happiness, in which she shared, though it agitated her. "Nay, go," she said, at length, in a tone of entreaty, "and I will lie down and rest for an hour; for I have sat up all night by the fire, lest I should be too late. You must go, indeed. There is your horse upon the terrace; and we must not be selfish, but remember poor Edith before we think of our own happiness."

There was a sweet and frank confession in her words that pleased Digby well; and leaving her with a heart at rest on his own account, he mounted his horse and rode rapidly away towards the quarters of Sir Henry Layton.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The reader has doubtless remarked—for every reader who peruses a book to any purpose must remark everything, inasmuch as the most important events are so often connected with insignificant circumstances, that the one cannot be understood without the other; the reader has doubtless remarked, that Mr. Radford, on leaving Sir Robert Croyland, informed his unhappy victim, that he had still a good deal of business to do that night. Now, during the day he had, as may well be judged from his own statement of all the preparations he had already made, done a great deal of very important business; but the details of his past proceedings I shall not enter into, and only beg leave to precede him by a short time, to the scene of those farther operations which he had laid out as the close of that evening's labours. It is to the lone house, as it was called, near Iden Green, that I wish to conduct my companions, and a solitary and gloomy-looking spot it was, at the time I speak of. All that part of the country is now very thickly inhabited: the ground bears nearly as large a population as it can support; and though there are still fields, and woods, and occasional waste places, yet no such events could now happen as those which occurred eighty or a hundred years ago, when one might travel miles, in various parts of Kent, without meeting a living soul. The pressure of a large population crushes out the bolder and more daring sorts of crime, and leaves small cunning to effect, in secret, what cannot be accomplished openly, under the police of innumerable eyes.

But it was not so in those days; and the lone house near Iden Green, whatever it was originally built for, had become the refuge and the lurking-place of some of the most fierce and lawless men in the country. It was a large building, with numerous rooms and passages; and it had stables behind it, but no walled court-yard; for the close sweeping round of

the wood, a part of which still exists in great beauty, was a convenience on which its architect seemed to have calculated. Standing some way off the high road, and about half a mile from Collyer Green, it was so sheltered by trees that, on whichever side approached, nothing could be seen but the top of the roof and part of a garret-window, till one was within a short distance of the edifice. But that garret-window had its advantages, for it commanded a view over a great part of the country, on three sides, and especially gave a prospect of the roads in the neighbourhood.

The building was not a farm-house, for it had none of the requisites; it could not well be a public-house, though a sign swung before it; for the lower windows were boarded up, and the owner or tenant thereof, if any traveller whom he did not know, stopped at his door, which was, indeed, a rare occurrence, told him that it was all a mistake, and cursing the sign, vowed he would have it cut down. Nevertheless, if the Ramleys, or any of their gang, or, indeed, any members of a similar fraternity, came thither, the doors opened as if by magic; and good accommodation for man and horse was sure to be found within.

It was also remarked, that many a gentleman in haste went in there, and was never seen to issue forth again till he appeared in quite a different part of the country; and, had the master of the house lived two or three centuries earlier, he might on that very account have risked the faggot, on a charge of dealing with the devil. As it was, he was only suspected of being a coiner; but in regard to that charge, history has left no evidence, pro or con.

It was in this house, however, on the evening of the day subsequent to the discomfiture of the smugglers, that six men were assembled in a small room at the back, all of whom had, more or less, taken part in the struggle near Woodchurch. The two younger Ramley's were there, as well as one of the principal members of their gang, and two other men, who had been engaged in carrying smuggled goods from the coast, as a regular profession; but who were, in other respects, much more respectable persons than those by whom they were surrounded. At the head of the table, however, was the most important personage of the whole: no other than Richard Radford himself, who had joined his comrades an hour or two before.

The joy and excitement of his escape from the wood, the temporary triumph which he had obtained over the vigilance of the soldiery, and the effect produced upon a disposition naturally bold, reckless, and daring, by the sudden change from imminent peril to comparative security, had all raised his spirits to an excessive pitch; and, indeed, the whole party, instead of seeming depressed by their late disaster, appeared elevated with that wild and lawless mirth, which owns no tie or restraint, reverences nothing sacred or respectable. Spirits and water were circulating freely amongst them; and they were boasting of their feats in the late skirmish, or commenting upon its events, with many a jest and many a falsehood.

"The major did very well, too," said Ned Ramley, "for he killed one of the dragoons, and wounded another, before he went down himself, poor devil!"

"Here's to the major's ghost!" cried young Radford, "and I'll try to give it satisfaction by avenging him. We'll have vengeance upon them yet, Ned."

"Ay, upon all who had any concern in it," answered Jim Ramley, with a meaning look.

"And first upon him who betrayed us," rejoined Richard Radford; "and I will have it, too, in a way that shall punish him more than if we flogged him to death with horse-whips, as the Sussex men did to Chater, at the Flying Bull, near Hazlemere."

The elder of the two Ramley's gave a look towards the men who were at the bottom of the table; and Richard Radford, dropping his voice, whispered something to Ned Ramley, who replied aloud, with an oath, "I'd have taken my revenge, whatever came of it."

"No, no," answered Radford, "the red-coats were too near. However, all's not lost, that's delayed. I wonder where that young devil, Little Starlight's gone to. I sent him three hours ago to Cranbrook with the clothes, and told him to come back and tell me if she passed. She'll not go now, that's certain; for she would be in the dark. Have you any notion, Ned, how many men we could get together in case of need?"

"Oh, fifty or sixty!" said one of the men from the bottom of the table, who seemed inclined to have his share in the conversation, as soon as it turned upon subjects with which he was familiar; "there are seven or eight hid away down at

Cranbrook, and nine or ten at Tenderden, with some of the goods, too."

"Ah, that's well!" answered young Radford; "I thought all the goods had been taken."

"Oh! dear no," replied Jim Ramley, "we've got a thousand pounds' worth in this house, and I dare say double as much is scattered about in different hides. The light things were got off; but they are the most valuable."

"I'll tell you what, my men," cried young Radford, "as soon as these soldiers are gone down to the coast again, we'll all gather together, and do some devilish high thing, just to show them that they are not quite masters of the country yet. I've a great mind to burn their inn at Woodchurch, just for harbouring them. If we don't make these rascally fellows fear us, the trade will be quite put down in the county."

"I swear," exclaimed Ned Ramley, with a horrible blasphemy, "that if I can catch any one who has peached, even if it be but by one word, I will split his head like a lobster."

"And I, too!" answered his brother; and several others joined in the oath.

The conversation then took another turn, and while it went on generally around the table, young Radford spoke several times in a low voice to the two who sat next to him, and the name of Harding was more than once mentioned. The glass circulated very freely also; and although none of them became absolutely intoxicated, yet all of them were more or less affected by the spirits, when the boy whom we have called Little Starlight, crept quietly into the room, and approached Mr. Radford.

"She's not come, sir," he said; "I waited a long while, and then went and asked the old woman of the shop, telling her that I was to be sure and see that Kate Clare got the bundle; but she said that she certainly wouldn't come to-night."

"That's a good boy," said young Radford. "Go and tell the people to bring us some candles; and then I'll give you a glass of Hollands for your pains. It's getting infernally dark," he continued, "and as nothing more is to be done to-day, we may as well make a night of it."

"No, no," answered one of the men at the bottom of the table, "I've had enough, and I shall go and turn in."

Nobody opposed him; and he and his companion soon after left them. A smile passed round amongst the rest as soon as the two had shut the door.

"Now those puny fellows are gone," said Jim Ramley, "we can say what we like. First, let us talk about the goods, Mr. Radford, for I don't think they are quite safe here. They had better be got up to your father's as soon as possible, for if the house were to be searched, we could get out into the wood, but they could not."

"Hark!" said young Radford; "there's some one knocking hard at the house door, I think."

"Ay, trust all that to Obadiah," said Ned Ramley. "He won't open the door till he sees who it is."

The minute after, however, old Mr. Radford stood amongst them; and he took especial care not to throw any damp upon their spirits, but rather to encourage them, and make light of the late events. He sat down for a few minutes by his son, took a glass of Hollands and water, and then whispered to his hopeful heir that he wanted to speak with him for a minute. The young man instantly rose, and led the way out into the room opposite, which was vacant.

"By heaven, Dick, this is an awkward job!" said his father; "the loss is enormous, and never to be recovered."

"The things are not all lost," answered Richard Radford. "A great quantity of the goods are about the country. There's a thousand pounds' worth, they say, in this house."

"We must have them got together as fast as possible," said Mr. Radford, "and brought up to our place. All that is here had better be sent up about three o'clock in the morning."

"I'll bring them up myself," replied his son.

"No, no, no!" said Mr. Radford; "you keep quiet where you are, till to-morrow night."

"Pooh, nonsense," answered the young man; "I'm not at all afraid. Very well, very well, they shall come up, and I'll follow to-morrow night, if you think I can be at the Hall in safety."

"I don't intend you to be long at the Hall," answered Mr. Radford: "you must take a trip over the sea, my boy, till we can make sure of a pardon for you. There! you need not look so blank. You shan't go alone. Come up at eleven o'clock; and you will find Edith Croyland waiting to give you her hand,

the next day. Then a post-chaise and four, and a good tight boat on the beach, and you are landed in France in no time. Everything is ready, everything is settled; and with her fortune, you will have enough to live like a prince, till you can come back here."

All this intelligence did not seem to give Richard Radford as much satisfaction as his father expected. "I would rather have had little Zara, a devillish deal!" he replied.

"Very likely," answered his father, with his countenance changing, and his brow growing dark; "but that won't do, Dick. We have had enough nonsense of all sorts; and it must now be brought to an end. It's not the matter of the fortune alone; but I am determined that both you and I shall have revenge."

"Revenge!" said his son; "I don't see what revenge has to do with that."

"I'll tell you," answered old Mr. Radford, in a low tone, but bitter in its very lowness: "The man who so cunningly surrounded you and the rest yesterday morning, who took all my goods, and murdered many of our friends, is that very Harry Layton, whom you've heard talk of. He has come down here on purpose to ruin you and me, if possible, and to marry Edith Croyland; but he shall never have her, by—," and he added a fearful oath which I will not repeat.

"Ay, that alters the case," replied Richard Radford, with a demoniacal smile; "oh! I'll marry her, and make her happy, as the people say. But I'll tell you what, I'll have my revenge, too, before I go, and upon one who is worse than the other fellow; I mean the man who betrayed us all."

"Who is that?" demanded the father.

"Harding," answered young Radford, "Harding."

"Are you sure that it was he?" asked the old gentleman; "I have suspected him myself, but I have no proof."

"But I have," replied his son; "he was seen several nights before by Little Starlight, talking for a long while with this very colonel of dragoons upon the cliff. Another man was with him, too, most likely Mowle; and then, again, yesterday evening, some of these good fellows, who were on the look-out to help me, saw him speaking to a dragoon officer at Widow Clare's door; so he must be a traitor, or they would have taken him."

"Then he deserves to be shot," said old Radford, fiercely; "but take care, Dick, you had better not do it yourself. You'll find him difficult to get at, and may be caught."

"Leave him to me; leave him to me," answered his hopeful son; "I've a plan in my head that will punish him better than a bullet. But the bullet he shall have, too, for all the men have sworn that they will take his blood; but that can be done after I'm gone."

"But what's your plan, my boy?" asked old Mr. Radford.

"Never mind, never mind!" answered Richard; "I'll find means to execute it. I only wish those dragoons were away from Harbourne Wood."

"Why, they are," exclaimed his father, laughing. "They were withdrawn this afternoon, and a party of them, too, marched out of Woodchurch, as if they were going to Ashford. I dare say, by this time to-morrow night, they will be all gone to their quarters again."

"Then it's all safe!" said his son; and after some more conversation between the two, and various injunctions upon the part of the old man, as to caution and prudence, upon the part of the young one, they parted for the time. Young Radford then rejoined his companions, and remained with them till about one o'clock in the morning, when the small portion of smuggled goods which had been saved, was sent off, escorted by two men, towards Radford Hall, where they arrived safely, and were received by servants well accustomed to such practices. They consisted of only one horse-load, indeed, so that the journey was quickly performed, and the two men returned before five. Although Richard Radford had given his father every assurance that he would remain quiet, and take every prudent step for his own concealment, his very first acts showed no disposition to keep his word. Before eight o'clock in the morning, he, the two Ramleys, and one or two other men, who had come in during the night, were out amongst the fields and woods, "reconnoitring," as they called it; but with a spirit in their breasts which rendered them ready for any rash and criminal act that might suggest itself. Thus occupied, I shall for the present leave them, and show more of their proceedings at a future period.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Having now led the history of a great part of the personages in our drama up to the same point of time, namely, the third morning after the defeat of the smugglers, we may as well turn to follow out the course of Sir Edward Digby, on a day that was destined to be eventful to all the parties concerned. On arriving at Woodchurch, he found a small body of dragoons, ready mounted, at the door of the little inn, and two saddled horses, held waiting for their riders. Without ceremony, he entered, and went up at once to Layton's room, where he found him, booted and spurred to set out, with Mowle, the officer, standing by him, looking on while Sir Henry placed some papers in a writing-desk and locked them up.

The young commander greeted his friend warmly; and then, turning to the officer of customs, said, "If you will mount, Mr. Mowle, I will be down with you directly;" and as soon as Mowle, taking the hint, departed, he continued, in a quick tone, but with a faint smile upon his countenance, "I know your errand, Digby, before you tell it. Edith has been transferred to the good charge and guidance of Mr. Radford; but that has only prepared me to act more vigorously than ever. My scruples on Sir Robert Croyland's account are at an end. Heaven and earth! Is it possible that a man can be so criminally weak, as to give his child up; a sweet, gentle girl like that, to the charge of such a base unprincipled scoundrel!"

"Nay, nay, we must do Sir Robert justice," answered Digby. "It was done without his consent; indeed, against his will; and a more impudent and shameless piece of trickery was never practised. You must listen for one moment, Layton, though you seem in haste;" and he proceeded to detail to him, as succinctly as possible, all that had occurred between Mr. Radford and Edith's father on the preceding evening, stating his authority, and whence Zara had received her information.

"That somewhat alters the case, indeed;" answered Layton; "but it must not alter my conduct. I am, indeed, in haste, Digby, for I hope, ere two or three hours are over, to send the young scoundrel, for whose sake all this is done, a prisoner to the gaol. Mowle has somehow got information of where he is, from undoubted authority, he says; and we are away to Iden Green, in consequence. We shall get more information by the way; and I go with the party for a certain distance, in order to be at hand, in case of need; but, as it does not do for me, in my position, to take upon me the capture of half-a-dozen smugglers, the command of the party will rest with Cornet Joyce. We will deal with Mr. Radford, the father, afterwards. But, in the mean time, Digby, as your information certainly gives a different view of the case, from that which I had before taken, you will greatly oblige me if you can contrive to ride over to Mr. Croyland's, and see if you can find Mr. Warde there. Beg him to let me have the directions he promised, by four o'clock to-day; and if you do not find him, leave word to that effect, with Mr. Croyland himself."

"You seem to place great faith in Warde," said Sir Edward Digby, shaking his head.

"I have cause, I have cause, Digby," answered his friend. "But I must go, lest this youth escape me again."

"Well, God speed you, then!" replied Digby. "I will go to Mr. Croyland at once, and can contrive, I dare say, to get back to Harbourne by breakfast time. It is not above two or three miles round, and I will go twenty at any time, to serve you, Layton."

Sir Edward Digby found good Mr. Zachary Croyland walking about in his garden, in a state of irritation indescribable. He, also, was aware, by this time, of what had befallen his niece; and such was his indignation, that he could scarcely find it in his heart to be even commonly civil to any one. On Sir Edward Digby delivering his message, as he found that Mr. Warde was not there, the old gentleman burst forth, exclaiming, "What have I to do with Warde, sir, or you friend either, sir? Your friend's a fool! He might have walked out of that door with Edith Croyland in his hand; and that's no light prize, let me tell you; but he chose to be delicate, and gentlemanly, and all that sort of stupidity, and you see what has come of it. And now, forsooth, he sends over to ask advice

and directions from Warde. Well, I will tell the man, if I see him, though heaven only knows whether that will be the case or not."

"Sir Henry Layton seems to place great confidence in Mr. Warde," replied Digby, "which I trust may be justified."

Mr. Croyland looked at him sharply, for a moment, from under his cocked hat, and then exclaimed, "Pish! you are a fool, young man. There, don't look so fierce. I've given over fighting for these twenty years; and, besides, you wouldn't come to the duello with little Zara's uncle, would you? Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed immoderately, but splenetically enough at the same time. "But I ought to have put my meaning as a question, not as a proposition," he continued. "Are you such a fool as not to know the difference between an odd man and a madman, an eccentric man and a lunatic? If so, you had better get away as fast as possible; for you and I are likely soon to fall out. I understand what you mean about Warde, quite well; but I can tell you, that if you think Warde mad, I'm quite as mad as he is, only that his oddities lie all on the side of goodness and philanthropy, and mine now and then take a different course. But get you gone, get you gone; you are better than the rest of them, I believe. I do hope and trust you'll marry Zara, and then you'll plague each other's souls to my heart's content."

He held his hand out as he spoke; and Digby shook it, laughing good-humouredly; but, ere he had taken ten steps towards the door of the house, through which he had to pass before he could mount his horse, Mr. Croyland called after him. "Digby, Digby! Sir Eddard! Eldest son! I say, how could you be such a fool as not to run that fellow through the stomach when you had him at your feet? You see what a quantity of mischief has come of it. You are all fools together, you soldiers, I think; but it's true, a fool does as well as anything else to be shot at. How's your shoulder? Better, I suppose."

"I have not thought of it for the last two days," replied Digby.

"Well, that will do," said Mr. Croyland. "Cured by the first intention. There, you may go; I don't want you. Only, pray tell my brother that I think him as great a rascal as old Radford. He'll know how much that means. One's a weak

rascal, and the other's a strong one; that's the only difference between them; and Robert may fit on which cap he likes best."

Digby did not think it necessary to stop to justify Sir Robert Croyland in his brother's opinion; but, mounting his horse, he rode back across the country towards Harbourne as fast as he could go. He reached the house before the usual breakfast hour; but he found that everybody there had been an early riser as well as himself; the table was laid ready for breakfast; and Sir Robert Croyland was waiting in the drawing-room with some impatience in his looks.

"I think I am not too late, Sir Robert," said Digby, taking out his watch, and bowing with a smile to Zara and Mrs. Barbara.

"No, oh dear! no, my young friend," replied the baronet; "only in such a house as this, breakfast is going on all the morning long; and I thought you would excuse me, if I took mine a little earlier than usual, as I have got some way to go this morning.'

This was said as they were entering the breakfast-room; but Sir Edward Digby replied, promptly, "I must ask you to spare me five minutes before you go, Sir Robert, as I wish to speak with you for a short time."

His host looked uneasy; for he was in that nervous and agitated state of mind, in which anything that is not clear and distinct seems terrible to the imagination, from the consciousness that many ill-defined calamities are hanging over us. He said, "Certainly, certainly!" however, in a polite tone; but he swallowed his breakfast in haste; and the young officer perceived that his host looked at every mouthful he took as if likely to procrastinate the meal. Zara's face, too, was anxious and thoughtful; and consequently he hurried his own breakfast as fast as possible, knowing that the signal to rise would be a relief to all parties.

"If you will come into my little room, Sir Edward," said the master of the house, as soon as he saw that his guest was ready, "I shall be very happy to hear what you have to say."

Sir Edward Digby followed in silence; and, to tell the truth, his heart beat a good deal, though it was not one to yield upon slight occasions.

"I will not detain you a moment, Sir Robert," he said,

when they had entered, and the door was shut, "for what I have to say will be easily answered. I am sensible, that yesterday my attention to your youngest daughter must have been remarked by you, and, indeed my manner altogether must have shown you, and herself also, that I feel differently towards her and other women. I do not think it would be right to continue such conduct for one moment longer, without your approbation of my suit; and I can only farther say, that if you grant me your sanction, I feel that I can love her deeply and well, that I will try to make her happy to the best of my power, and that my fortune is amply sufficient to maintain her in the station of life in which she has always moved, and to make such a settlement upon her as I trust will be satisfactory to you. I will not detain you to expatiate upon my feelings; but such is a soldier's straightforward declaration, and I trust you will countenance and approve of my addressing her."

Sir Robert Croyland shook him warmly by the hand. "My dear Sir Edward," he said, "you are your father's own son; frank, candid, and honourable. He was one of the most gentlemanly and amiable men I ever knew; and it will give me heartfelt pleasure to see my dear child united to his son. But, indeed, I must deal with you as candidly." He hesitated for a moment or two, and then went on, "Perhaps you think that circumstances here are more favourable than they really are. Things may come to your knowledge—things may have to be related, Zara's fortune will be—"

Sir Edward Digby saw that Sir Robert Croyland was greatly embarrassed; and for an instant, for love is a very irritable sort of state, at least for the imagination, and he was getting over head and ears in love, notwithstanding all his good resolutions; for an instant, I say, he might think that Zara had been engaged before, and that Sir Robert was about to tell him that it was not the ever-coveted, first freshness of the heart he was to possess in her love, even if it were gained entirely. But a moment's thought, in regard to her father's situation, together with the baronet's last words, dispelled that unpleasant vision, and he replied, eagerly, "Oh! my dear sir, that can make no difference in my estimation. If I can obtain her full and entire love, no external circumstance whatsoever can at all affect my views. I only desire her hand."

"No external circumstances whatsoever!" said Sir Robert

Croyland, pausing on the words. "Are you sure of your own firmness, Sir Edward Digby? If her father were to tell you he is a ruined man; if he had many circumstances to relate which might make it painful to you to connect yourself with him; I do not say that it is so; but if it were?"

"Rather an awkward position," thought Sir Edward Digby; but his mind was fully made up, and he replied, without hesitation, "It would still make no difference in my eyes, Sir Robert. I trust that none of these terrible things are the case, for your sake; but I should despise myself if, with enough of my own, I made fortune any ingredient in my considerations, or if I could suffer my love for a being perfectly amiable in herself, to be affected by the circumstances of her family."

Sir Robert Croyland wrung his hand hard; and Digby felt that it was a sort of compact between them. "I fear I must go," said Zara's father, "and therefore I cannot explain more; but it is absolutely necessary to tell you that all my unmortgaged property is entailed, and will go to my brother, that Edith's fortune is totally independent, and that Zara has but a tithe of what her sister has."

"Still I say, as I said before," replied Digby, "that nothing of that kind can make any difference to me; nor will I ever suffer any consideration, not affecting your daughter personally, (and I beg this may be clearly understood,) to make any change in my views. If I can win her love, her entire, full, hearty love, with your sanction, she is mine. Have I that sanction, Sir Robert?"

"Fully, and from my heart," replied Sir Robert Croyland, with the unwonted tears coursing over his cheeks. "Go to her, my dear friend; go to her, and make what progress you may, with my best wishes. This is, indeed, a great happiness, a great relief."

Thus saying, he followed Sir Edward Digby out of the room, and mounting a new horse which had been brought up from his bailiff's, he rode slowly and thoughtfully away. As he went, a faint hope, nay, it could hardly be called a hope, a vague, wild fancy of explaining his whole situation to Sir Edward Digby, and gaining the blessed relief of confidence and counsel, arose in Sir Robert Croyland's breast.

Alas! what an unhappy state has been brought about by

the long accumulation of sin and deceit which has gathered over human society; that no man can trust another fully; that we dare not confide our inmost thoughts to any; that there should be a fear, the necessity for a fear, of showing the unguarded heart to the near and dear; that every man should, according to the most accursed axiom of a corrupt world, live with his friend as if he were one day to be his enemy! Oh! truth, and honour, and sincerity! Oh! true Christianity! whither are ye gone? Timidity soon banished such thoughts from the breast of Sir Robert Croyland, though there was something in the whole demeanour of his daughter's lover which showed him that, if ever man was to be trusted, he might trust there; and had he known how deeply Digby was already acquainted with much that concerned him, he might, perhaps, have gone one step farther, and told him all. As it was, he rode on, and soon gave himself up to bitter thoughts again.

In the mean time, Sir Edward Digby returned to Zara and Mrs. Barbara in the drawing-room, with so well satisfied a look, that it was evident to both, his conversation with Sir Robert had not referred to any unpleasant subject, and had not had any unpleasant result. He excited the elder lady's surprise, however, and produced some slight agitation in the younger, by taking Zara by the hand, and in good set terms of almost formal courtesy, requesting a few minutes' private audience. Her varying colour, and her hesitating look, showed her lover that she apprehended something more unpleasant than he had to say; and he whispered, as they went along towards the library, "It is nothing; it is nothing but to tell you what I have done, and to arrange our plan of campaign."

Zara looked up in his face with a glad smile, as if his words took some terror from her heart; and as soon as he was in the room, he let go her hand, and turned the key in such a manner in the door, that the key-hole could not serve the purpose of a prospective glass, even if it might that of an ear-trumpet.

"Forgive me, dear Zara," he said, "if I take care to secure our defences; otherwise, as your good aunt is perfectly certain that I am about to fall on my knees, and make my declaration, she might be seized with a desire to witness the scene, not at all aware that it has been performed already. But not to say

more," he continued, "on a subject on which you have kindly and frankly set a lover's heart at rest, let me only tell you that your father has fully sanctioned my suit, which I know, after what you have said, will not be painful to you to hear."

"I was sure he would," answered Zara; "not that he entered into any of my aunt's castles in the air, or that he divined my schemes, Digby; but, doubtless, he wishes to see a fortuneless girl well married, and would have been content with a lover for her who might not have suited herself quite so well. You see I deal frankly with you, Digby, still; and will do so both now and hereafter, if you do not check me."

"Never, never will I!" answered Sir Edward Digby; "it was so you first commanded my esteem, even before my love; and so you will always keep it."

"Before your love?" said Zara, in an unwontedly serious tone; "your love is very young yet, Digby; and sometimes I can hardly believe all this to be real. Will it last? or will it vanish away like a dream, and leave me waking, alone and sorrowful?"

"And yours for me, Zara?" asked her lover; but then he added quickly, "no, I will not put an unfair question: and every question is unfair that is already answered in one's own heart. Yours will, I trust, remain firm for me; so mine, I know, will for you, because we have seen each other under circumstances which have called forth the feelings, and displayed fully all the inmost thoughts which years of ordinary intercourse might not develope. But now, dear Zara, let us speak of our demeanour to each other. It will, perhaps, give us greater advantage if you treat me, perhaps, as a favoured, but not yet as an accepted lover. I will appear willingly as your humble slave and follower, if you will, now and then, let me know in private that I am something dearer; and by keeping up the character with me, which has gained you your uncle's commendation as a fair coquette, you may, perhaps, reconcile Mrs. Barbara to many things, which her notions of propriety might interfere with, if they were done as between the betrothed."

"I fear I shall manage it but badly, Digby," she answered. "It was very easy to play the coquette before, when no deeper feelings were engaged, when I cared for no one, when

all were indifferent to me. It might be natural to me, then; but I do not think I could play the coquette with the man I loved. At all events, I should act the part but badly, and should fancy he was always laughing at me in his heart, and triumphing over poor Zara Croyland, when he knew right well that he had the strings of the puppet in his hand. However, I will do my best, if you wish it; and I do believe, from knowing more of this house than you do, that your plan is a good one. The airs I have given myself, and the freedom I have taken, have been of service both to myself and Edith; to her in many ways, and to myself in keeping from me all serious addresses from men I could not love. Yours is the first proposal I have ever had, Digby; so do not let what my uncle has said, make you believe that you have conquered a queen of hearts, who has set all others at defiance."

"No *gentleman* was ever refused by a *lady*," answered Digby, laying a strong emphasis on each noun-substantive.

"So, then, you were quite sure before you said a word!" cried Zara, laughing. "Well, that is as frank a confession as any of my own! And yet you might have been mistaken; for esteeming you as I did, and circumstanced as I was, I would have trusted you as much, Digby, if you had been merely a friend."

"But you would not have shown me the deeper feelings of your heart upon other indifferent subjects," replied her lover.

Zara blushed and looked down; then suddenly changed the course of the conversation, saying, "But you have not told me what Layton thought of all this, and what plans you have formed. What is to be done? Was he not deeply grieved and shocked?"

Sir Edward Digby told her all that had passed, and then added, "I intend now to send out my servant, Somers, to reconnoitre. He shall way-lay Layton on his return, and bring me news of his success. If this youth be safely lodged in gaol, his pretensions are at an end, at least for the present; but if he again escape, I think, ere noon to-morrow, I must interfere myself. I have now a better right to do so than I have hitherto had; and what I have heard from other quarters will enable me to speak boldly, even to your father, dear one, without committing either you or Edith."

Zara paused and thought; but all was still dark on every side, and she could extract no ray of light from the gloom. Digby did not fail (as how could a lover neglect?) to try to lead her mind to pleasanter themes; and he did so in some degree. But we have been too long eaves-dropping upon private intercourse, and we will do so no more. The rest of the day passed in that mingled light and shade, which has a finer interest than the mere broad sunshine, till the return of Sir Robert Croyland, when the deep sadness that overspread his countenance clouded the happiness of all the rest.

Shortly after, Zara saw her lover's servant ride up the road, at considerable speed; and as it wanted but half an hour to dinner-time, Digby, who marked his coming also, retired to dress. When he returned to the drawing-room, there was a deeper and a sterner gloom upon his brow than the fair girl had ever seen; but her father and aunt were both present, and no explanation could take place. After dinner, too, Sir Robert Croyland and his guest returned to the drawing-room together; and though the cloud was still upon Digby's countenance, and he was graver than he had ever before appeared, yet she whom he loved could gain no tidings. To her he was still all tenderness and attention; but Zara could not play the part she had undertaken; and often her eyes rested on his face, with a mute, sad questioning, which made her aunt say to herself, "Well, Zara is in love at last!"

Thus passed a couple of hours, during which not above ten words were uttered by Sir Robert Croyland. At length, lights were brought in, after they had been for some time necessary; and at the end of about ten minutes more, the sound of several horses coming at a quick pace was heard. The feet stopped at the great door, the bell rang, and voices sounded in the hall. The tones of one, deep, clear and mellow, made both Zara and her father start; and in a minute after, the butler entered (he was an old servant) saying, in a somewhat embarrassed manner, "Colonel Sir Henry Layton, sir, wishes to speak with you on business of importance."

"Who, who?" demanded Sir Robert, "Sir Henry Layton! Well, well, take him in somewhere!"

He rose from his chair, but staggered perceptibly for a moment; then, overcoming the emotion that he could not but feel, he steadied himself by the arm of his chair, and left the

room. Zara gazed at Digby, and he at her he loved; but this night Mrs. Barbara thought fit to sit where she was; and Digby, approaching Zara's seat, bent over her, whispering, "Layton has a terrible tale to tell; but not affecting Edith. She is safe. What more he seeks, I do not know."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

After parting with Sir Edward Digby at Woodchurch, Henry Layton had ridden on at a quick pace to Park-gate, and thence along the high road, to Cranbrook. He himself was habited in the undress of his regiment, though with pistols at his saddle, and a heavy sword by his side. One of his servants followed him similarly accoutred, and an orderly accompanied the servant, while by the young officer's side appeared our good friend Mr. Mowle, heavily armed, with the somewhat anomalous equipments of a riding officer of customs in those days. At a little distance behind this first group, came Cornet Joyce, and his party of dragoons; and in this order they all passed through Cranbrook, about nine o'clock; but a quarter of a mile beyond the little town they halted, and Mowle rode on for a short way alone, to the edge of Hangley Wood, which was now close before them. There he dismounted, and went in amongst the trees; but he was not long absent, for in less than five minutes he was by the colonel's side again. "All's right, sir," he said, "the boy assures me that they were all there still, at six this morning, and that their captain, Radford, does not move till after dark, to-night. So now we shall have the worst fellows amongst them: the two Ramleys and all."

"Well then," answered Layton, "you had better go on at once with the party, keeping through the wood. I will remain behind, coming on slowly; and if wanted, you will find me somewhere in the Hanger. Cornet Joyce has his orders in regard to surrounding the house; but of course he must act according to circumstances."

No more words were needed: the party of dragoons moved on rapidly, with Mowle at their head; and Layton, after pausing for a few minutes on the road, dismounted, and giving his rein to the servant, walked slowly on into the wood, telling the two men who accompanied him to follow. There was, at

that time, as there is now, I believe, a broad road through Hangley Wood, leading into the cross-road from Biddenden to Goudhurst; but at that period, instead of being tolerably straight and good, it was very tortuous, rough, and uneven. Along this forest path, for so it might be called, the dragoons had taken their way, at a quick trot; and by it their young colonel followed, with his arms crossed upon his chest, and his head bent down, in deep and anxious meditation. The distance across the wood at that part is nearly a mile; and when he had reached the other side, Layton turned upon his steps again, passed his servant and the orderly, and walked slowly on the road back to Cranbrook. The two men went to the extreme verge of the wood, and looked out towards Iden Green for a minute or two before they followed their officer, so that in the turnings of the road, they were out of sight by the time he had gone a quarter of a mile.

Layton's thoughts were busy, as may be well supposed; but at length they were suddenly interrupted by loud, repeated, and piercing shrieks, apparently proceeding from a spot at some distance before him. Darting on, with a single glance behind, and a loud shout to call the men up, he rushed forward along the road, and the next instant beheld a sight which made his blood boil with indignation. At first, he merely perceived a girl, struggling in the hands of some five or six ruffians, who were maltreating her in the most brutal manner; but in another instant, as, drawing his sword, he rushed forward, he recognised—for it can scarely be said, he saw—poor Kate Clare. With another loud shout to his men to come up, he darted on without pause or hesitation; but his approach was observed; the ruffians withdrew from around their victim, and one of them exclaimed, "Run, run! the dragoons are coming!"

"D— me! give her a shot before you go," cried another, "or she'll peach."

"Let her," cried young Radford; "but here goes;" and turning as he hurried away, he deliberately fired a pistol at the unhappy girl, who was starting up wildly from the ground. She instantly reeled and fell, some seconds before Layton could reach her, for she was still at the distance of a hundred yards.

All this had taken place in an inconceivably short space of

time; but the next minute the panic with which the villains had been seized subsided a little. One turned to look back, another turned; they beheld but one man on the road; and all the party were pausing, when Layton reached poor Kate Clare, and raised her in his arms. It might have fared ill with him had he been alone; but just at that moment the orderly appeared at the turn, coming up at the gallop, with the young officer's servant behind him; and not doubting that a large party was following, Radford and his companions fled as fast as they could.

"On after them, like lightning!" cried Layton, as the men came up. "Leave the horse, leave the horse, and away! Watch them wherever they go, especially the man in the green coat! Take him if you can: shoot him dead if he resist. Ah! my poor girl," he cried, with the tears rising in his eyes, "this is sad, indeed! Where has he wounded you?"

"There," said Kate, faintly taking away her hand, which was pressed upon her right side; "but that was his kindest act. Thank God, I am dying!"

"Nay, nay," answered Leyton, "I trust not!" But the blood poured rapidly out, staining all her dress, which was torn and in wild disorder, and so rapidly did it flow that Layton clearly saw her words would probably prove too true. Who was that villain?" he cried; "I will punish him if there be justice on earth!"

"Don't you know him?" said Kate, her voice growing more and more low. "I thought you were seeking him: Richard Radford."

"The atrocious scoundrel!" said Layton; and drawing his handkerchief from his breast, he tied it tightly over her side, trying, though he saw it was nearly in vain, to staunch the blood, while at the same time he supported her against his knee, with one arm thrown round her waist. Poor Kate closed her eyes with a faint shudder, and for a moment Layton thought she was dead. She appeared to be reviving again, however, when a loud voice, not far distant, exclaimed, "Ha! halloo! What the devil is this?"

Layton looked suddenly up, for his eyes had been bent on the poor girl's face for several minutes, and then beheld, hurrying up the road with a look of fury in his countenance, Kate's promised husband, Harding. With a violent oath the

man rushed on, exclaiming, "Kate, what is all this? Villain, have you misused the girl?"

"Hush, hush!" cried Layton, with a stern gesture of his hand; "she is dying! I would have saved her if I could; but, alas! I came too late."

The whole expression of Harding's countenance changed in an instant. Grief and terror succeeded to rage; and, catching her frantically in his arms, he exclaimed, "Kate, Kate, speak to me! Tell me, who has done this?"

"I can tell you," answered Layton: "Richard Radford."

While he was speaking, Kate Clare opened her eyes again, and gazed on Harding's face, moving her hand faintly round and placing it upon his.

"Give me that handkerchief from your neck," said Layton; "if we can stop the blood, we may save her yet. I have seen very bad wounds recovered from ——"

"No, no!" said Kate Clare; "thank God, I am dying; I would rather die! Harding, I am not in fault: they caught me in the wood. Oh! they treated me horribly. Mr. Radford said it was revenge. God forgive him! God forgive him! But I would rather die thus in your arms. Do not try to stop it; it is all in vain."

Layton and Harding still persisted, however, and bound another handkerchief tight over the wound, in some degree diminishing the stream of blood, but yet not stopping it entirely.

"Let us carry her to some house," cried Layton, "and then send for assistance. See! her lips are not so pale."

"I will carry her," cried Harding, raising her in his powerful arms.

"To my aunt's, then; to my aunt's, Harding," muttered Kate; "I would sooner die there than in any other place." And on Harding sped without reply, while Layton, sheathing his sword, which he had cast down, followed him, inquiring, "Is it far?"

"But a step, sir," answered the smuggler. "Pray, come with us. This must be avenged."

"It shall," replied Layton, sternly; "but I must stay here for a minute or two, till you can send somebody to me to take my place, and let my men know where I am when they return."

Harding nodded his head, and then turned his eyes upon the face of the poor girl whom he bore in his arms, hurrying on without a moment's pause, till he was lost to the young officer's sight.

It is needless to describe the feelings of a high-minded and noble man like Layton, when left alone to meditate over the horrible outrage which had been committed under his very eyes. He gave way to no burst of indignation, indeed, but with a frowning brow walked back upon the road, caught his horse without difficulty, and mounting, remained fixed near the spot where poor Kate had received her death-wound, like a soldier upon guard. In less than ten minutes, a lad ran up, saying, "Mr. Harding sent me, sir."

"Well, then, walk up and down here, my good boy," replied Layton, "till some one comes to inquire for me. If it should be a servant, or a single soldier, send him down to the place which you came from, and wait where you are till a larger party of dragoons come up, when you must tell them the same, to go down to me there. If the party come first, wait for the servant and the soldier."

Having given these directions, he was turning away, but paused again to inquire his way to the place where Harding was; and then, pointing to a bundle that lay upon the road, he said, "You had better bring that with you."

Following the boy's direction, as soon as he issued out of the wood, Sir Henry Layton turned through a little field to the left, and seeing a small farm-house at some distance before him, he leaped his horse over two fences to abridge the way. Then riding into the farm-yard, he sprang to the ground, looking round for some one to take his charger. Several men of different ages were running about with eagerness and haste in their faces. Horses were being led forth from the stable; guns were in the hands of several; and one of them, a fine, tall, powerful young fellow, exclaimed, as soon as he saw Layton, "We will catch them, sir; we will catch them; and, by ——, they shall be hanged as high as Haman for hurting the poor dear girl. Here, take his honour's horse, Bill."

"Is she still living?" asked Layton.

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" cried the young man; "she seemed somewhat better for what mother gave her."

"Well, then," rejoined the young officer, "if you are going

to search for these scoundrels, gallop up to the wood as fast as you can; you will find my servant and a trooper watching. They will give you information of which way the villains are gone. I will join you in a minute or two with a stronger force."

"Oh, sir, we shall do! we shall do," cried William Harris; "we will raise the whole county as we go, and will hunt them down like foxes. Do they think that our sisters and our wives are to be ill-used and murdered by such scum as they are?" and at the same time he sprang upon his horse's back. Layton turned towards the house, but met the old farmer himself coming out with a great cavalry sword in his hand, and the butt end of a pistol sticking out of each pocket. "Quick, quick! to your horses!" he cried, "they shall rue the day, they shall rue the day! Ah! sir, go in," he continued, seeing Layton; "she is telling my wife and Harding all about it; but I can't stop to hear. I will have that young Radford's blood, if I have a soul to be saved!"

"Better take him alive, and hand him over to justice," said Layton, going into the house.

"D—n him, I'll kill him like a dog!" cried the farmer; and mounting somewhat less nimbly than his son, he put himself at the head of the whole party assembled, and rode fast away towards Hangley Wood.

In the mean time Layton entered the kitchen of the farm; but it was quite vacant. Voices, however, were heard speaking above, and he ventured to go up and enter the room. Three or four women were assembled there round good Mrs. Harris's own bed, on which poor Kate Clare was stretched, with Harding on his knees beside her, and her hand in his, the hot tears of man's bitterest agony, coursing each other down his bronzed and weather-beaten cheek.

"There, there!" said Mrs. Harris; "don't take on so, Harding, you only keep down her spirits. She might do very well, if she would but take heart. You see she is better for the cordial stuff I gave her."

Harding made no reply; but Kate Clare faintly shook her head; and Layton, after having gazed on the sad scene for a moment, with bitter grief and indignation in his heart, drew back, thinking that his presence would only be a restraint to Kate's family and friends. He made a sign, however, to one

of the women before he went, who followed him out of the room.

"I merely wish to tell you," he said, in a low voice, when the woman joined him at the top of the stairs, "that I am going back to the wood, to aid in the pursuit of these villains; for I can be of no use here, and may be there. If any of my people come, tell them where to find me; bid them follow me instantly, and stop every man on foot they see quitting the wood, till he gives an account of himself. But had you not better send for a surgeon?"

"One is sent for, sir," replied the woman; "but I think she is not so bad as she was. I'll take care and tell your people. I do hope they will catch them, for this is *too* bad."

Without more words Layton went down, remounted his horse, and galloped back towards the edge of the wood. The news of what had happened, however, seemed to have spread over the country with the speed of lightning; for he saw four or five of the peasantry mounted on horseback, already riding in the same direction across the fields. Two stout farmers joined him as he went, and both were already full of the story of poor Kate Clare. Rage and indignation were universal amongst the people; but as usual on such occasions, one proposed one plan, and another the other, so that by want of combination in their operations, all their resolution and eagerness were likely to be fruitlessly employed.

Layton knew that it was of little use to argue on such points with undisciplined men; and his only trust was in the speedy arrival of the soldiers from Iden Green. When he reached the edge of the wood, however, with his two companions, they came upon farmer Harris's party, now swelled to twelve or thirteen men; and at the same moment his own servant rode round, exclaiming, as soon as he saw his master, "They are still in the wood, sir, if they have not come out this way. They dispersed so that we could not follow them on horseback, and we galloped out by different ways to watch."

"They haven't come here," cried farmer Harris, "or we should have seen them. So now we have them safe enough."

"Ride off towards Iden Green," said Layton to the servant, "and direct Cornet Joyce to bring down his men at the gallop to the edge of the copse. Let him dismount twelve on the north side of the wood, and, with all the farm-servants and

country people he can collect, sweep it down, while the rest of the mounted men advance, on a line, on either side. Stay, I will write;" and tearing a leaf out of his pocket-book, he put down his orders in pencil.

The man had just galloped away, when the young farmer, William Harris, shouted, "There they go, there they go! After them! after them! Tally ho!" and instantly set spurs to his horse. All the rest but Layton followed at full speed; but he paused, and, directing his eyes along the edge of the wood, clearly saw, at the distance of somewhat more than half a mile, three men, who seemed to have issued forth from amongst the trees, running across the fields as fast as they could go. It would seem that they had not been aware of the numbers collected to intercept them, till they had advanced too far to retreat; but they had got a good start; the country was difficult for any but well-trained horses; and darting on, they took their way towards Goudhurst, passing within a hundred yards of the spot where the victim of their horrid barbarity lay upon the bed of death.

Taking the narrow paths, leaping the stiles and gates, they at first seemed to gain upon the mass of peasantry who followed them, though their pursuers were on horseback and they on foot. But, well knowing the country, the farmers spread out along the small bridle-roads; and, while the better mounted horsemen followed direct across the fields, the others prepared to cut off the ruffians on the right and left. Gradually a semicircle, enclosing them within its horns, was thus formed; and all chance of escape by flight was thus cut off.

In this dilemma the three miscreants made straight towards a farm-house at which they occasionally received hospitality in their lawless expeditions, and which bears the name of "Smuggler Farm" to this day; but they knew not that all hearts had been raised against them by their late atrocities, and that the very tenant of the farm himself was now one of the foremost in pursuit. Rushing in, then, with no farther ceremony than casting the door open, they locked and barred it, just as some of the peasantry were closing in upon them; and then, hurrying to the kitchen, where the farmer's wife, his sister, and a servant was collected, Ned Ramley, who was the first, exclaimed, "Have you no hide, good dame?"

"Hide!" replied the stout farmer's wife, eyeing him ask-

ance; "not for such villains as you! Give me the spit, Madge; I've a great mind to run him through." Ned Ramley drew a pistol from his pocket; but at that moment the window was thrown up, the back door of the house was cast open, and half-a-dozen of the stout yeomanry rushed in. The smugglers saw that resistance would be vain; but still they resisted; and though, in the agitation of the moment, Ned Ramley's pistol was discharged innocuously, he did not fail to aim it at the head of young William Harris, who was springing towards him. The stout farmer, however, instantly levelled him with the ground by a thundering blow upon the head; and the other two men, after a desperate struggle, were likewise taken and tied.

"Lucky for you it was me, and not my father, Master Ramley," said William Harris. "He'd have blown your brains out; but you're only saved to be hanged, anyhow. Ay, here he comes! Stop, stop, old gentleman! he's a prisoner; don't you touch him. Let the law have the job, as the gentleman said."

"Oh, you accursed villain! oh, you hellish scoundrel!" cried old Harris, kept back with difficulty by his son and the rest. "You were one of the foremost of them. But where is the greatest villain of them all? Where's that limb of the devil, young Radford? I will have him! Let me go, Will; I will have him, I say!"

Ned Ramley laughed aloud: "You won't, though," he answered, bitterly; "he's been gone this half hour, and will be at the sea, and over the sea, before you can catch him. You may do with me what you like, but he's safe enough."

"Some one ride off and tell the officer what he says!" cried the farmer. But when the intelligence was conveyed to Sir Henry Layton, he was already aware that some of the men must have made their escape unobserved; for his servant had met Cornet Joyce and the party of dragoons by the way, and with the aid of a number of farm servants from Iden Green and its neighbourhood, the wood had been searched with such strictness, that the pheasants, which were at that time numerous there, had flown out in clouds, as if a battue had been going on. He mistrusted Ned Ramley's information, however; knowing that the hardened villain would find a sort of pride in misleading the pursuers of young Radford, even

though taken himself. Riding quickly across to the farm, then, together with Mowle and the cornet, he interrogated the men separately, but found they were all in the same story, from which they varied not in the least; that Richard Radford had crept out by the hedges near the wood, and had gone first to a place where a horse was in waiting for him, and thence would make straight to the sea-side, where a boat was already prepared. Instant measures to prevent him from executing this plan now became necessary; and Layton directed the cornet to hasten away as fast as possible in pursuit, sending information from Woodchurch to every point of the coast where the offender was likely to pass, spreading out his men so as to cover all the roads to the sea, and only leaving at the farm a sufficient guard to secure the prisoners.

On hearing the latter part of this order, however, farmer Harris exclaimed, "No, no, sir; no need of that. We've taken them, and we'll keep them safe enough. I'll see these fellows into prison myself; ay, and hanged too, please God! and we'll guard them sure, don't you be afraid."

Layton looked to Mowle, saying, "I must abide by your decision, Mr. Mowle." But the officer answered, "Oh! you you may trust them, sir, quite safely, after all I hear has happened. But I think, Mr. Harris, you had better have just a few men to help you. You've got no place to keep them here; and they must be taken before a magistrate first, before they can be committed."

"Oh! we'll keep them safe enough," replied the farmer. "We'll put them in Goudhurst church, till we can send them off, and, in the mean time, I'll have them up before Squire Broughton. My son's a constable, so they are in proper hands."

"Very well," answered Layton; "in this case I have no right to interfere; but, of course, you are responsible for their safe custody."

"I say, Mowle," cried Ned Ramley, in his usual daring manner, "bid them gave me something to drink, for I'm devilish thirsty; and I'll give you some information, if you will."

Mowle obtained some beer for him, and then demanded, "Well, what is it, Ned?"

"Why, only this," said Ned Ramley, after they had held

the beer to his lips, and he had taken a deep draught, "you will have your brains blown out, before ten days are over."

"I am not afraid," replied Mowle, laughing.

"That's right," answered Ned Ramley. "But it will happen; for fifty of us have sworn it. We have had our revenge of your spy, Harding; and we have only you to settle with now."

"Harding!" cried Mowle. "He's no spy of mine. It was not he that peached, you young scoundrel; it was one of those whom you trusted more than him."

"Ah! well," answered Ned Ramley, indifferently; "then he'll have a sore heart to-night that he didn't work for. But you'll have your turn yet, Mr. Mowle, so look that you make good use of your brains, for they won't be long in your skull."

"You are a hardened villain," said Sir Henry Layton. "You had better march them off as fast as you can, my good friends; take them before a magistrate; and above all things, get them to prison ere nightfall, or we may have another rescue."

"No fear; no fear!" answered farmer Harris. "To rescue a smuggler is one thing. I never liked to see them taken myself; but bloodthirsty villains like these, that would ill use a poor, dear, good girl, and murder her in cold blood, why there is not a man in the county would not help to hang them. But I wish, sir, you would go yourself, and see and stop that other great villain. If he isn't hanged too, I don't think I shall ever rest in my bed again."

"I will do my best, depend upon it," replied Layton; "but I must first, Mr. Harris, go to your house, and see the state of that poor girl. I have known her since she was a child, and feel for her almost as if she were a sister."

"Thank you, sir; thank you!" cried old Harris, shaking him by the hand. "There, boys," he continued, dashing away the tears from his eyes; "make a guard, and take these blackguards off in the middle of you. We'll have them up to Squire Broughton's at once; and then I must go back, too."

On his way to the farm, Layton desired Mowle to return to Woodchurch, and to wait for him there, taking every step that he might think necessary, with the aid of Captain Irby. "I will not be long," he added.

"Pray don't, sir," rejoined Mowle; "for we have other business to do to-night;" and, sinking his voice to a whisper, he added, "I've got the information I wanted, sir. A part of the goods are certainly at Radford Hall, and if we can seize them there, that, with the deposition of the men at Woodchurch, will bring him in for the whole offence."

"I shall, very likely, overtake you by the way," replied Layton. "But, at all events, I shall be there before four."

Most such calculations are vain, however. Layton turned aside to the Harris's farm, where he found poor Kate Clare sinking rapidly. The curate of the parish had been sent for, and, by his advice, Mr. Broughton, the magistrate, who had entered the house but two or three minutes before Layton himself. Though her voice now scarcely rose above a whisper, she made her dying declaration with clearness and accuracy. It is not necessary here to give any of the details; but, as she concluded, she turned her faint and swimming eyes towards Layton, saying, "That gentleman, who has always been such a good friend to me and mine, can tell you more, sir, for he came up to my help, just as they shot me."

The magistrate raised his eyes, and inquired, in a low tone, "Who is he?"

"Sir Henry Layton," replied the poor girl, loud enough for that officer to hear; and thinking that she asked for him, he approached nearer, and stood by Harding's side. Kate raised her hand a little from the bedclothes, as if she would have given it to him, and he took it kindly in his, speaking words of comfort.

"Thank you, sir; thank you, for all your kindness," said Kate. "I am glad you have come, that I may wish you good-bye, and ask you to be kind to poor Harding, too. It will soon be over now; and you had better all leave me. Not you, Harding, not you. You must close my eyes, as my poor mother is not here."

A groan burst from the stout seaman's breast; and giving way to all his feelings, he sobbed like a child. According to her desire, Layton and Mr. Broughton retired from the room; and the young officer informed the magistrate, that the prisoners who had been taken were waiting for examination at his house.

"We shall want your evidence, Sir Henry," said the ma-

gistrate. "It is absolutely necessary, if, as I understand, you were eye-witness to the murder."

Leyton saw the propriety of the magistrate's demand, and he yielded immediately. But the investigation was prolonged by several circumstances; and, what between the time that it took up, and that which had been previously spent in the pursuit of the murderers, it was past three o'clock before Layton mounted his horse at Mr. Broughton's door. He paused for an instant at the gate of the Harris's farm-yard, where a girl was standing with tears in her eyes; but before he could ask any question, she replied to that which was rising to his lips. "She is gone, sir," said the girl; "she is gone. She did not last half an hour after you were here."

With a sad heart, Leyton rode on, passing at a quick pace through Harbourne Wood, and not trusting himself to stop at Mrs. Clare's cottage. The windows, however, were closed; and the young officer concluded from that circumstance, that the tidings of her daughter's fate must by this time have reached the childless widow. Not far beyond her gate, he was met by Sir Edward Digby's servant; but eager to arrive at Woodchurch, Layton did not stop to speak with him, and Somers, turning his horse with the orderly and his old companion, Layton's servant, gleaned what information he could from them as he went.

Notwithstanding all the speed he could use, however, it was half-past four before Layton reached Woodchurch; and, on inquiring for Mr. Warde, he found that gentleman had called, but gone away again, saying he would return in an hour.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Such as we have described in the last chapter, were the fatal events to which Sir Edward Digby had alluded in the few words he had spoken to Zara Croyland; and it may be needless to explain to the reader, that he had learned the tale from his servant just before he came down to dinner.

Sir Robert Croyland, as we have shown, after some agitation and hesitation, quitted the drawing-room to meet—the first time for many years—the son of a man, whom, at the instigation of others, he had cruelly persecuted. He paused as soon as he got into the passage, however, to summon courage, and to make up his mind as to the demeanour which he should assume, always a vain and fruitless task; for seldom, if ever, do circumstances allow any man to maintain the aspect which he has predetermined to affect. Sir Robert Croyland resolved to be cold, stately, and repulsive; to treat Sir Henry Layton as a perfect stranger, and if he alluded to their former intimacy, to cut the conversation short by telling him that, as all the feelings of those days were at an end, he did not wish to revive their memory in any shape. He did not calculate, indeed, upon the peculiar state of Layton's mind, at the moment, nay, nor even upon the effect of his former favourite's personal appearance upon himself; and when he entered the library and saw the tall, powerful, dignified-looking man, the pale, thoughtful, stern countenance, and the haughty air, he felt all his predeterminations vain.

Layton, on his part, had done the same as Sir Robert Croyland, and in setting out from Woodchurch had made up his mind to see in the man he went to visit, nothing but Edith's father, to treat him kindly, gently, and with compassion for his weakness, rather than anger at his faults; but as he rode along, and conversed with one who accompanied him thither, the memory of much that Sir Robert Croyland had done in

former days, came painfully back upon him, and combining with his treatment of Edith, raised up bitter and indignant feelings that he could have wished to quell. The scenes which he had passed through that day, too, had given a tone of sternness to his mind which was not usual; and the few minutes he had waited in the library, when every moment seemed of value, added impatience to his other sensations.

The baronet entered as firmly as he could, bowing his head and motioning coldly to a chair. But Layton did not sit down, gazing for an instant on the countenance of Sir Robert, struck and astonished by the change that he beheld. That steadfast gaze was painful to its object, and sank his spirit still farther, but Layton, the moment after, began to speak, and the well-known tones of his clear, mellow voice, awakened the recollection of the days when they were once pleasant to hear.

"Sir Robert Croyland," he said, "I have come to you on business of importance, in which it is necessary for you to act immediately in your magisterial capacity."

"I have no clerk with me, sir," answered the baronet, in a hesitating manner; "at this late hour, it is not usual, except under circumstances——"

"The circumstances admit of no delay, Sir Robert Croyland," replied Layton. "As the nearest magistrate, I have applied to you in the first instance, and have done so for many other reasons besides your being the nearest magistrate."

"Well, sir, what is your application?" demanded Edith's father. "I wish, indeed, you had applied to somebody else at this time of night; but I will do my duty: oh, yes, I will do my duty!"

"That is all that is required, sir," answered the young officer. "My application is for a warrant to search the house of one Richard Radford, and I have to tender you, on oath, information that customable goods, which have been introduced without the payment of duty, are concealed on his premises. One moment more, if you please; I have also to apply to you, upon similar evidence, for a warrant to search his house for his son, Richard Radford, charged with murder; and, in the end, if you would allow me to advise you, you would instantly mount your horse, and superintend the search yourself."

There was a marked and peculiar emphasis on the last few words which Sir Robert Croyland did not understand. The

manner was not agreeable to him, but it was scarcely, perhaps, to be expected that it should be; for there had been nothing in his own to invite that kindly candour which opens heart to heart. All that had of late years passed between him and Sir Henry Layton, had been of a repulsive kind. For one youthful error, he had not only repelled and shut his house against the son, but he had persecuted, ruined, and destroyed the father, who had no part in that fault. Every reason, too, which he had given, every motive he had assigned, for his anger at Henry Layton's pretensions to Edith's hand, he had set at nought, or forgotten in the case of him whom he had chosen for her husband. Even now, although his manner was wavering and timid, it was cold and harsh; and it was a hard thing for Henry Layton to assume the tone of kindness towards Sir Robert Croyland, or to soften his demeanour towards him, with all the busy memories of the past and the feelings of the present thronging upon him, on his first return to the house where he had spent many happy days in youth. I am painting a man, and nothing more; and he could not, and did not, overcome the sensations of human nature.

His words did not please Sir Robert Croyland, but they somewhat alarmed him. Everything that was vague in his present situation, did produce fear; but after a moment's thought, he replied, coldly, "Oh dear no, sir! I do not see that it is at all necessary I should go myself. I really think the application altogether extraordinary, seeing that it comes from, I am led to imagine, the lieutenant-colonel, commanding the — regiment of dragoons, quartered in this district, who has no primary power, or authority, or even duty in such affairs; but can only act as required by the officers of customs, to whom he is so far subordinate. But still I am ready to receive the informations tendered, and then shall decide in regard to my own conduct, as the case may require."

"You are wrong in all respects, but one, Sir Robert Croyland," answered Layton, at once; "I am empowered to act very differently from any officer who has been in command here before me. If my powers are beyond that which the law authorizes, those who gave them are responsible to their country; but, for an extraordinary case, extraordinary means are requisite; and as I require of you nothing but what the law requires, I shall not pause to argue, whether I am exactly the

proper person to make the application. It might easily be made by another, who is without; but I have reasons for what I am doing, and reasons, believe me," he added, after a moment's pause and reflection, "not unfriendly to Sir Robert Croyland."

Again his words and manner were peculiar. Sir Robert Croyland began to feel some apprehension lest he might push his coldness too far. But he did not see how he could change his tone; and he was proceeding with the same distant reserve, to repeat that he was ready to receive the information in a formal manner, when Layton suddenly interrupted him, after a severe struggle with himself.

"Sir Robert Croyland," he said, "let us speak as friends. Let griefs and complaints on both sides be forgotten for the moment; let us bury, for the time, seven years in oblivion. Look upon me, if it be but for a few minutes, as the Henry Layton you knew before anything arose to produce one ill feeling between us; for, believe me, I come to you with kindly sentiments. Your own fate hangs in the balance at this hour. I would decide it favourably for you, if you would let me. But, you must shake off doubt and timidity; you must act boldly and decidedly, and all will be well."

"I do not understand what you mean, sir," cried Sir Robert Croyland, astonished at his change of tone, and without time to collect his ideas, and calculate the probabilities. "My fate! How can you affect my fate?"

"More than you are aware," answered Layton; "even now I affect your fate, by giving you the choice of at once proceeding in the line of your duty, against a bad man who has overruled your better nature too long, by allowing you to conduct the search, which must be instituted either by yourself or others. In one word, Sir Robert Croyland, I know all, and would serve you, if you would let me."

"You know all!" exclaimed Edith's father, in a dull, gloomy tone; "you know all! She has told you, then! That explains it; that shows how she retracted her consent; how she was willing to-day to sacrifice her father. You have seen her; you have taught her her part! Yes, she has betrayed her parent's confidence."

Layton could bear no more. Himself he could have heard slandered calmly; but he could not hear such words of her he

loved. "It is false!" he said; "she did not betray your confidence! She told me no more than was needful to induce me to release her from bonds she was too faithful and true to break. From her I have heard nothing more, but from others I have heard all; and now, Sir Robert Croyland, you have chosen your part, I have but to call in those who must lay the required information. Our duty must be done, whatever be the consequences; and as you reject the only means of saving yourself from much grief, though, I trust, not the danger you apprehend, we must act without you;" and he rose and walked towards the door.

"Stay, Layton; stay!" cried Sir Robert Croyland, catching him eagerly by the arm; "yet a moment; yet a moment. You say you know all. Do you know all? all? everything?"

"All! everything!" answered Layton, firmly; "every word that was spoken; every deed that was done; more than you know yourself."

"Then, at least, you know I am innocent," said the old man.

A calm but grave serenity took the place, on Sir Henry Layton's countenance, of the impetuous look with which he had last spoken. "Innocent," he said "of intentional murder; but not innocent of rash and unnecessary anger; and, oh! Sir Robert Croyland, if I must say it, most culpable in the consequences which you have suffered to flow from one hasty act. Mark me, and see the result! Your own dear child, against your will, is in the hands of a man whom you hate and abhor. You are anxious to make her the wife of a being you condemn and despise! The child of the man that your own hand slew, is now lying a corpse, murdered by him to whom you would give your daughter! Your own life is ——"

"What, Kate! Kate Clare!" exclaimed Sir Robert Croyland, with a sudden change coming over his countenance: "murdered by Richard Radford!"

"By his hand, after the most brutal usage," replied Layton.

Sir Robert Croyland sprang to the bell and rang it violently, then threw open the door and called aloud: "My horse! my horse! saddle my horse! If it cost me land and living, life and honour, she shall be avenged!" he added,

turning to Layton, and raising his head erect, the first time for many years. "It is over: the folly and the weakness and crime are at an end. I have been bowed and broken, but there is a spark of my former nature yet left. I vowed to God in heaven that I would ever protect and be a father to that child, as an atonement, as some—some compensation, however small, and I will keep my vow."

"Oh! Sir Robert," cried Layton, taking his hand and pressing it in his, "be ever thus, and how men will love and venerate you!"

The barrier was broken down, the chain which had so long bound him was cast away; and Sir Robert returned Layton's grasp with equal warmth. "Harry," he said, "I have done you wrong; but I will do so no more. I was driven, I was goaded along the road to all evil, like a beast driven to the slaughter. But you have done wrong, too, young man; yours was the first offence."

"It was," answered Layton; "I own it, I did do wrong; and I will make no excuse, though youth, and love as true as ever man felt, might afford some. But let me assure you, that I have been willing to make reparation; I have been willing to sacrifice all the brightest hope of years to save you, even now. I assured Edith that I would, when she told me the little she could venture to tell; but it was her misery that withheld me, it was the life-long wretchedness to which she was doomed if I yielded, that made me resist. Nothing else on earth should have stopped me; but now, Sir Robert, the prospect is more clear for you."

"Nay, do not speak of that," replied Sir Robert Croyland; "I will think of it no more, I have now chosen my path; and I will pursue it, without looking at the consequences to myself. Let them come when they must come; for once in life, I will do what is just and right."

"And by so doing, my dear sir, you will save yourself," answered Layton. "Moved by revenge, with no doubt whatsoever of his motive, after a concealment of six years, this base man's accusation will be utterly valueless. Your bare statement of the real circumstances will be enough to dissipate every cloud. I shall require that all his papers be seized; and I have many just reasons for wishing that they should be in your hands."

"I understand you, Harry, and I thank you," said Sir Robert Croyland; "but with my present feelings I would not—"

"You do not understand me fully, Sir Robert," replied Layton. "I wish you only to act as you will find just, right, and honourable, and wait for the result. It will be, or I am much mistaken, more favourable to you, personally, than you imagine. Now, as you have decided on the true and upright course, let us lose no time in carrying it into execution. I will call in the men who have to lay the information; and when you have received it, I will place before you depositions which will justify the most vigorous measures against both father and son. In regard to the latter, I must act under your authority in my military capacity, as I have no civil power there; but in regard to the former, I am already called upon, by the officers of the revenue, to aid them in entering his house by force, and searching it thoroughly."

"Call them in, Harry; call them in!" replied Sir Robert Croyland;" every man is justified by the law in apprehending a murderer. But you shall have full authority. Kate Clare! How could this have happened?"

"I will explain as we ride on," answered Layton, going to the door; and speaking to one of the servants who was standing in the hall, he added, "Desire Mr. Mowle to walk in, and bring the boy with him."

In another minute, Mowle entered the room with another man, holding by the arm the boy Ray, whom the smugglers had chosen to denominate Little Starlight. He came, apparently, unwillingly, for though ever ready, for money, to spy and to inform secretly, he had a great abhorrence of being brought publicly forward, and when on coming to Mowle that evening with more information, he was detained and told he must go before a magistrate, he had made every possible effort to escape.

He was now somewhat surprised, on being brought forward after Mowle had laid the information, to find that he was not questioned upon any point affecting the smuggling transactions which had lately taken place, as the evidence upon that subject was sufficient without his testimony. But in regard to the proceedings of young Radford, and to the place where he was concealed, he was interrogated closely. It was all in vain,

however. To obtain a straightforward answer from him was impossible; and although Mowle repeated distinctly that the boy had casually said, the murderer of poor Kate Clare had gone to his father's house, Little Starlight lied and prevaricated at every word, and impudently, though not unskilfully, attempted to put another meaning on his previous admission.

As time was wearing away, however, Sir Henry Layton, at length, interposed; "I think it is unnecessary, Sir Robert," he said, "to push this inquiry further at present. As the whole house and premises must be searched on other grounds, we shall discover the villain if he is there. Mr. Mowle and I have adopted infallible means, I think, to prevent his escaping from any point of the coast; and the magistrates at every port were this evening furnished with such information that, if they act with even a moderate degree of ability, he must be taken."

"Besides, sir," rejoined Mowle, "the frigate has come round; and she will take care that, with this wind, not a boat big enough to carry him over shall get out. We had better set out, your worship, if you please; for if old Radford gets an inkling of what is going on, he will double upon us some way."

"I am quite ready," said Sir Robert Croyland. "I will call my clerk to accompany us as we go, in case of any further proceedings being necessary. We must pass through the village where he lives."

With a firm step he moved towards the door; and, strange as it may seem, though for six years, while supposing he was taking the only means of self-preservation, he had lived in constant terror and anxiety, he felt no fear, no trepidation now, when he had determined to do what was right at every personal risk. An enfeebling spell seemed to have been taken off his mind, and the lassitude of doubt and indecision was gone. But such is almost always the result, even upon the nerves of our corporeal frame, of a strong effort of mental energy. It is one thing certainly to resolve and another to do; but the very act of resolution, if it be sincerely exerted, affords a degree of vigour which is sure to produce as great results as the means at our disposal can accomplish. Energetic determination will carry men through things that seem impossible, as a bold heart will

carry them over Alps, that, viewed from their base, appear insurmountable.

Sir Robert Croyland did not venture into the drawing-room before he went; but he told the butler, who was waiting in the hall, to inform Sir Edward Digby and the family that he had been called away on business, and feared he should not return till a late hour; and having left this message, he went out upon the terrace. He found there a number of persons assembled, with some twenty or thirty of the dragoons. Five or six officers of the customs were present, besides Mowle; but the darkness was too great to admit of their faces being seen; and Sir Robert Croyland mounted without speaking to any one. Sir Henry Layton paused for an instant to give orders, that the boy should be taken back to Woodchurch, and kept there under a safe guard. He then spoke a few words to Digby's servant, Somers, and springing on his horse placed himself at Sir Robert Croyland's side.

The night was as dark as either of the two which had preceded it; the same film of cloud covered the sky; not a star was to be seen; the moon was far below the horizon; and slowly the whole party moved on, two and two abreast, through the narrow lanes and tortuous roads of that part of the country. It halted for a minute in the nearest village, while Sir Robert Croyland stopped at his clerk's house, and directed him to follow as fast as possible to Mr. Radford's; and then, resuming their march, the dragoons, and those who accompanied them, wound on for between four and five miles further, when, as they turned the angle of a wood, some lights, apparently proceeding from the windows of a house half way up a gentle slope, were seen shining out in the midst of the darkness.

"Halt!" said Sir Henry Layton; and before he proceeded to give his orders for effectually surrounding the house and grounds of Mr. Radford, he gazed steadfastly for a moment or two upon the building which contained her who was most dear to him, and whose heart he well knew was at that moment wrung with the contention of many a painful feeling. "I promised her I would bring her aid, dear girl," he thought, "and so I have. Thanks be to God, who has enabled me!"

Sir Robert Croyland, too, gazed, with very different feelings, it is true, but still with a stern determination that was not shaken in the least. It seemed, when he thought of Kate

Clare, that he was atoning to the spirit of the father, by seeking to avenge the child; and the whole tale of her wrongs and death, which he had heard from Layton, as they came, had raised the desire of so doing almost to an enthusiasm. Human passions and infirmities, indeed, will mingle with our best feelings; and as he gazed upon Mr. Radford's house, and remembered all that he had endured for the last six years, he said to himself, with some bitterness, "That man shall now taste a portion of the same cup he has forced upon others."

Sir Henry Layton woke from his reverie sooner than his companion; and turning his horse, he spoke for a few moments with Mowle, somewhat longer with another person wrapped in a dark horseman's coat behind, and then gave various distinct orders to the dragoons, who immediately separated into small parties, and, taking different roads, placed themselves in such positions as to command every approach to the house. Then riding forward with Sir Robert Croyland, the officers of customs, and one or two soldiers, he turned up the little avenue which led from the road, consulting with Edith's father as he went. At about a couple of hundred yards from the house he paused, turning his head and saying to Mowle, "You had better, I think, all dismount; and, making fast the horses, get behind the nearest laurels and evergreens, while Sir Robert and I ride on alone, and ask admission quietly. When the door is opened, you can come up and make yourselves masters of the servants till the search is over. I do not anticipate any resistance; but if the young man be really here, it may be made."

He then rode on with the baronet at a quicker pace, the noise of their horses' feet, as they trotted on and approached the great doors, covering the sound of the movements of the party they left behind.

The house, to which the actual possessor had given the name of Radford Hall, was an old-fashioned country mansion, and presented, like many another building at that time, several large iron hooks, standing out from the brick-work on each side of the door-way, on which it was customary for visitors on horseback to hang their rein while they rang the bell, or till a servant could be called to take them to the stable. Sir Robert Croyland was acquainted with this peculiarity of the house, though Layton was not, and he whispered to his companion,

"Let us hook up our horses before we ring." This was accordingly done, and then taking the long iron handle of the bell, Layton pulled it gently. A minute or two after, a step sounded in the hall, and a servant appeared: a stout, red-faced, shrewd-looking fellow, who at first held the great door only half open. As soon, however, as he saw Sir Robert Croyland's face, he threw it back, replying, in answer to the baronet's question as to whether Mr. Radford was at home, "Yes, Sir Robert, he has been home this hour."

Layton had stood back, and, in the darkness, the man did not see him, or took him for a groom; but when the young officer advanced, and the uniform of the dragoon regiment became apparent, Mr. Radford's servant suddenly stretched his hand towards the door again, as if about to throw it violently to. But Layton's strong grasp was on his shoulder in a moment. "You are my prisoner," he said, in a low tone; "not a word—not a syllable, if you would not suffer for it. No harm will happen to you if you are only quiet."

At the same moment, Mowle and the rest came running across the lawn, and, giving the man into their hands, Layton entered the house with Sir Robert Croyland.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

About an hour before the event took place, which we have last related, Edith Croyland sat in a small drawing-room at the back of Mr. Radford's house, in which she had been kept captive, for we may well use that term, ever since her removal from Mr. Croyland's. Her first day had been spent in tears and indignation; for immediately after her arrival, on finding that her father was not really there, she became convinced that she had been deceived, and naturally doubted that it was with his consent she had been removed. Nor had Mr. Radford's manner at all tended to do away with this impression. He laughed at her remonstrances and indignation, treated her tears with cold indifference, and told his servants, before her face, that she was on no account to be suffered to go out, or to see any one but Sir Robert Croyland. In other respects, he treated her well; did all in his power to provide for her comfort; and, as his whole establishment was arranged upon a scale of luxury and extravagance rarely met with in the old country houses of the gentry of that time, none of the materials of that which is commonly called comfort were wanting.

But it was the comfort of the heart which Edith required, and did not find. Mr. Radford handed her down to dinner himself, and with as much ceremonious politeness as he could show, seated her at the end of his ostentatious table; but Edith did not eat. She retired at night to the downy bed prepared for her; but Edith did not sleep. Thus passed the first day and the morning of the second; and when, about noon, Sir Robert Croyland arrived, he found her pale and wan with anxiety and watching, and he left her paler still; for he resisted all her entreaties to take her thence, and her last hope of relief was gone.

He had spoken kindly, tenderly, indeed; he had even shed tears; but his mind at the time of his visit was still in a state

of suspense, irritated by injuries and insult, but not yet roused by indignation to dare the worst that Mr. Radford could do; and though he heard her express her determination never to marry Richard Radford, unless free from her vows to Henry Layton, without remonstrance, only begging her to keep that resolution secret till the last moment, yet, with the usual resource of weakness, he sought to postpone the evil hour by seeming to enter into all his enemy's views.

Thus had passed Edith's time; and it is unnecessary to enter into a more detailed account of her thoughts and feelings previous to the period we have mentioned: namely, one hour before the arrival of her father and Henry Layton at the door of the house. She was sitting, then, in that small back drawing-room, with her fair cheek leaning on her hand, her eyes bent down upon the table, and her mind busy with the present and the future. "It is foolish," she thought, "thus to alarm myself. No harm can happen. They dare not show me any violence; and no clergyman in England will venture to proceed with the service against my loud dissent. My uncle and Layton, too, must soon hear of this, and will interfere. I will not give way to such terrors any more."

As she thus meditated, she heard a rapid step upon the great stairs, and the next moment Mr. Radford entered, booted, spurred, and dusty, as from a journey, and with a heavy horsewhip in his hand. His face betrayed more agitation than she had ever seen it display. There was a deep line between his brows, as if they had been long bent into such a frown, that they could not readily be smoothed again. His long upper-lip was quivering with a sort of impatient vehemence that would not be restrained; and his eye was flashing as if under the influence of some strong passion.

"Well, Miss Croyland," he said, throwing his horsewhip down upon the table, and casting himself into a chair, "I hope they have made you comfortable during my absence?"

Edith merely bowed her head without reply.

"Well, that's civil!" cried Mr. Radford; "but I think everybody is going mad, and so it is no wonder that women do! Miss Croyland, I have a piece of news for you; there is going to be a wedding in our house, to-night!"

Still Edith was silent, and looked towards the fire.

"I tell you of the fact," continued Mr. Radford, "because it may be necessary for you to make some little preparation for your journey. I don't know whether you hear or not; but you are to be married to my son, to-night. It is now nine; the clergyman and Richard will be here by eleven; and the marriage will take place half an hour before twelve. So you have two hours and a half to prepare."

"You are mistaken altogether, Mr. Radford," replied Edith, in as firm a tone as she could assume. "It is not my intention to marry your son at all. I have often told you so; I now repeat it."

"You do, do you!" exclaimed Mr. Radford, giving her a furious glance across the table; "then I will tell you something, young woman. Your consent was given to your father; and I will have no trifling backwards and forwards. Circumstances have arisen to-day, curses be upon them all! which render it necessary that the marriage should take place four-and-twenty hours before it was first fixed, and it shall take place, by ——!" and he added a terrible oath.

"You will find it will not take place, Mr. Radford," replied Edith, in the same tone as before, "for, in the first place, I never did consent. My father left me fainting, without waiting to hear what I had to say, or he would not have so deceived himself."

"Then he shall die the death of a felon," cried Mr. Radford, "and you yourself shall be the person to put the rope round his neck."

"Whatever be the consequences, I shall be firm," replied Edith; "but at the same time, let me tell you, I do not believe you have the power you suppose. You may bring a false accusation, an accusation you know to be false; but such things are never so well prepared but they are discovered at last; and so it will be in your case."

"A false accusation!" exclaimed Mr. Radford vehemently; "an accusation I know to be false! I'll soon show you that, girl;" and starting up from his seat, he hurried out of the room.

Contrary to Edith's expectation, Mr. Radford was absent for a long time; but when he returned he had several papers in his hand, some apparently freshly written, and one which bore the yellow marks of age. His face was stern and reso-

lute, but displayed less excitement than when he left her. He entered with a slow step, leaving the door partly open behind him, seated himself, and gazed at her for a moment, then spread out the small yellow paper on the table, but held his hand tight upon the lower part, as if he feared she might snatch it up and destroy it.

"There, look at that, Miss Croyland!" he said; "you spoke of false accusations; look at that, and be ashamed of bringing them yourself."

Edith gave a glance towards it with a sensation of awe, but did not attempt to read it. Her eye rested upon the words, "Deposition of;" and upon a stain of blood at the bottom of the page, and she turned away with a shudder. I have heard of it before," she answered, "yet every word in it may be false."

"False, or not false," replied Mr. Radford, "it sends your father to gaol to-morrow, and to the gallows a month after; if you do not instantly sign that!" and he laid another freshly written page open before her.

Edith took it in her hand, and read, "I hereby consent and promise, when called upon, to marry Richard Radford, junior, Esquire, the son of Richard Radford, of Radford Hall."

"You have your choice, Miss Croyland," continued her persecutor, in a low and bitter tone, "either to save your father, or to put him to death with your own hands; for I swear, by all that I hold sacred, that if you do not instantly sign that paper, ay, and fulfil its engagement, I will send off this deposition to the bench of magistrates, with the letter I have just written, giving an account of all the circumstances, and explaining how, out of weak kindness and friendship for Sir Robert Croyland, I have been prevailed upon to keep back the information until now. Do not deceive yourself, and think that his fortune or his station would save him. A peer of the realm has been hanged before now for the murder of his own servant. Neither must you suppose that upon that deposition alone rests the proof of his guilt. There was other evidence given at the coroner's inquest, all bearing upon the same point, which requires but this light to be made plain. The threats your father previously used, the falsehoods he told regarding where he had been, all these things can be proved, for I have taken care to preserve that evidence."

"That was like a friend, indeed!" murmured Edith; "but such are the friendships of the world."

"I am acting like a friend to you, Miss Croyland," rejoined Mr. Radford, apparently neither touched nor hurt by her words, "in letting you see clearly your father's situation, while I give you the opportunity of saving him if you will. Do as you please, there is the paper. Sign it if you like, but sign it quickly; for this night brings all tergiversation to an end. I will have no more of it; and five minutes decides your father's life or death. Do not say I do it. It is you. His pardon is before you. You have nothing to do but to put your name. If you do not, you sign his death warrant!"

"Five minutes!" said Edith, with her heart beating violently.

"Ay, five minutes," answered Mr. Radford, who saw, from the wild look of her beautiful eyes, and the ashy paleness of her cheek and lips, how powerfully he had worked upon her; "five minutes, no longer;" and he laid his watch upon the table. Then, turning somewhat ostentatiously to a small fixed writing-desk, which stood near, he took up a stick of sealing-wax, and laid it down beside the letter he had written, as if determined not to lose a moment beyond the period he had named.

Edith gazed upon the paper for an instant, agitated and trembling through her whole frame; but her eye fell upon the name of Richard Radford. His image rose up before her, recalling all the horror that she felt whenever he was in her presence; then came the thought of Layton, and of her vows to him yet uncancelled. "Richard Radford!" she said to herself; "Richard Radford! marry him, vow that I will love him, call God to witness, when I know I shall abhor him more and more; when I love another? I cannot do it, I will not do it!" and she pushed the paper from her, saying, aloud, "No, I will not sign it!"

"Very well," said Mr. Radford, "very well. Your parent's blood be upon your head;" and he proceeded to fold up slowly the deposition he had shown her in the letter he had written. But he stopped in the midst; and then, abandoning the calm, low tone, and stern, but quiet, demeanour he had lately used, he started up, striking the table violently with his hand, and exclaiming, in a loud and angry tone, "Wretched, miserable

girl, dare you bring upon your head the guilt of parricide? What was the curse of Cain to that? How will you bear the day of your father's trial? ay, how bear the day of his death, the lingering agony of his imprisonment, the public shame of the court of justice, the agony of the gallows and the cord? The proud Sir Robert Croyland become the gaze of hooting boys, the spectacle of the rude multitude, expiring, through his daughter's fault, by the hand of the common hangman! Ay, think of it all, for in another minute it will be too late! Once gone from my hand, this paper can never be recalled."

Edith uttered a faint cry; but at the same moment, a voice behind Mr. Radford said, "Nor can it, now!" and Sir Robert Croyland himself laid his hand upon the papers.

Mr. Radford turned round fiercely, and was darting forward to seize them from him, but he was held back by a more powerful arm; and the baronet went on, in a voice grave and sad, but firm and strong: "Sir Henry Layton," he said, "I give these papers into your hands, to do with them exactly as you may think right, as a man of honour, a gentleman, and a respecter of the law. I ask not to hold them for one moment."

"Do not struggle, sir, do not struggle!" cried Layton, holding Mr. Radford fast by the collar; "you are a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" exclaimed Mr. Radford. "What! in my own house; a magistrate!"

"Anywhere, sir," answered Layton; "and for the time, you are a magistate no longer. Ho! without there! send some one in."

Edith had sunk down in her seat; for she knew not whether to rejoice or grieve. The first feeling undoubtedly was joy; but the next was bitter apprehension for her father. At first she covered her eyes with her hands, for she thought to hear the terrible truth proclaimed aloud; but when she looked up, Sir Robert Croyland's face was so calm, so resolute, so unlike what it had ever appeared of late years, that fear gave way to surprise, and surprise began to verge into hope. As that bright flame arose again in her heart, she started up, and cast herself upon her father's bosom, murmuring, while the tears flowed rapidly from her eyes, "Are you safe; are you safe?"

"I know not, my dear child," replied Sir Robert Croyland, "but I am now doing my duty, and that gives me strength."

In the mean time, a dragoon had appeared at the door, and

as soon as Mr. Radford beheld him, he exclaimed, "This is a base and infamous plot to defeat the ends of justice. I understand it all: the military power called in, right willingly, I have no doubt, to take away the documents which prove that felon's guilt. But this shall be bitterly repaid, and I hold you responsible, sir, for the production of these papers."

"Certainly, Mr. Radford," replied Layton, with a calm smile, "I will be responsible. But as you object to the military power, we will hand you over to the civil. Hart," he continued, speaking to the soldier, "call up Mowle or Birchett, or any of the other officers, and let them bring one of the constables with them, for this is not purely a case for the customs. Then tell Serjeant Shaw to bring on his men from the back, as I directed, seeing that nothing, not an inch of ground, not a shed, not a tool-house, remains unexamined."

"Of what am I accused, sir, that you dare to pursue such a course in my house?" demanded Mr. Radford.

"Of murder, sir," replied Sir Henry Layton.

"Murder!" exclaimed Mr. Radford, and then burst into an affected laugh.

"Yes, sir," replied the young officer; "and you may find it not so much a jest as you suppose; for though the law, in consequence of the practices of yourself and others, has slept long ineffective, it is not dead. I say for murder; as an accessory before the fact, to the armed resistance of lawful authority, in which his majesty's subjects have been killed in the execution of their duty, and as an accessory after the fact, in harbouring and comforting the actual culprits, knowing them to be such."

Mr. Radford's countenance fell; for he perceived that the matter was much more serious than he at first supposed. He trusted, indeed, from the laxity with which the law had lately been carried into execution, that he might escape from the gravest part of the charge; but still, if Sir Henry Layton was in a condition to prove the participation of which he accused him, in the crimes that had been committed, nothing short of transportation for life could be anticipated. But he had other sources of anxiety. His wretched son, he expected to present himself every minute; and well aware of the foul deed which Richard Radford had that morning perpetrated, and of his person having been recognised, he was perfectly certain, that

his apprehension would take place. He would have given worlds to speak for a single instant with one of his own servants; but none of them appeared; and while these thoughts were passing rapidly through his brain, the officer Birchett entered the room with a constable, and several other persons followed them in. He was startled from his reverie, however, by Sir Henry Layton's voice demanding: "Have you brought handcuffs, constable?"

"Oh! ay, sir," answered the man, "I've got the bracelets."

"Good evening, Mr. Radford!" said Birchett; "we have hold of you at last, I fancy."

Mr. Radford was silent, and the young officer demanded, "Have you found anything else, Birchett?"

"Oh! yes sir, plenty," answered Birchett; "and besides the run goods, things enough to prove all the rest even if we had not proof sufficient before; one of your own dragoon's swords, sir, that must have been snatched up from some poor fellow who was killed. Corporal Hart says, he thinks it belonged to a man named Green."

"Well, there is your prisoner," replied Layton; "you and the constable must take care that he be properly secured. No unnecessary harshness, I beg; but you know how rescue is sometimes attempted, and escape effected. You had better remove him to another room; for we must have all the papers and different articles of smuggled goods brought hither."

"I protest against the whole of this proceeding," exclaimed Mr. Radford, on whom the constable was now unceremoniously fixing a pair of handcuffs, "and I beg everybody will take notice of my protest. This person, who is, I suppose, a military officer, is quite going beyond his duty, and acting as if he were a civil magistrate."

"I am acting under the orders and authority of a magistrate, sir," replied Sir Henry Layton, "and according to my instructions. Dear Edith," he continued, crossing over to her, and taking her hand as she still clung to her father; for all that I have described had taken place with great rapidity; "you had better go into another room till this is over. We shall have some papers to examine, and I trust another prisoner before the search is finished. Had she not better retire, Sir Robert?"

But Mr. Radford raised his voice again, as the constable was moving him towards the door, exclaiming, "At all events, I claim my right to witness all these extraordinary proceedings. It is most unjust and illegal for you to seize and do what you will with my private papers, in my absence."

"It is a very common occurrence," said Sir Henry Layton, "in criminal cases like your own."

"Let him remain, let him remain!" said Sir Robert Croyland. "He can but interrupt us a little. Oh! here is the clerk at last! Now, Edith, my love, you had better go; these are no scenes for you."

Layton took her by the hand, and led her to the door, bending down his head and whispering as he went, "Be under no alarm, dear girl. All will go well."

"Are you sure, Harry, are you sure?" asked Edith, gazing anxiously in his face.

"Certain," he replied; "your father's decision has saved him."

As he spoke, there was a violent ringing at the bell; and Mr. Radford said to himself, "It is that unhappy boy; he will be taken, to a certainty." But the next instant, he thought, "No, no, he would never come to the front door. It must be some more of their party."

Sir Robert Croyland, in the mean time, seated himself at the end of the table, and handed over a number of papers, which Layton had given him at his own house, to the clerk, who, by his direction, seated himself near. "I have no objection, Mr. Radford," he said, turning to the prisoner, "that you should hear read, if you desire it, the depositions on which I have granted a warrant for your apprehension, and, at the requisition of the officers of customs, have authorised your premises to be searched for the smuggled goods, a part of which has been found upon them. The depositions are those of a man named George Jones, since dead, and of Michael Scalesby, and Edward Larchant, at present in the hands of justice; and the information is laid by John Mowle and Stephen Birchett."

At the recital of the names of several of the men whom he himself had furnished with arms and directions, Mr. Radford's heart sunk; but the moment after, a gleam of bitter satisfaction sprang up in his breast, as the door opened, and Mr.

Zachary Croyland entered, exclaiming, "How's this, how's this? I came to take a dove out of a hawk's nest, and here I find the dogs unearthing a fox."

"I am very glad you are come, sir," replied Mr. Radford, before any one else could speak; "for, though you are the brother of that person sitting there, you are a man of honour, and an honest man——"

"More than I can say for you, Radford," grumbled Mr. Croyland.

"And, moreover, a magistrate for this county," continued Mr. Radford.

"I never act, I never act!" cried the old gentleman. "I never have acted; I never will act."

"But in this case I shall insist upon your acting," said the prisoner; "for your brother, who is now proceeding thus virulently against me, does it to shield himself from a charge of murder, which he knew I was about to bring against him."

"Fiddlesticks' ends!" cried Mr. Croyland. "This is what people call turning the tables, I think. But it won't succeed with me, my good friend. I am an old bird, a very old bird, indeed; and I don't like chaff at all, Radford. If you have any charge to make against my brother, you must make it where you are going. I'll have nothing to do with it. I always knew him to be a fool; but never suspected him of being anything else."

"At all events," said Mr. Radford, in a gloomy tone, "since simple justice is denied me at all hands, I require that the papers which have been seized in this house, be placed in proper hands, and duly authenticated. The important evidence of the crime of which I charge him, has been given by your brother, sir, to one who has but too great an interest, I believe, to conceal or destroy it. I say it boldly, those papers are not safe in the keeping of Sir Henry Layton; and I demand that they be given up, duly marked by the clerk, and signed by myself, and some independent person."

Layton's eyes flashed for a moment, at the insinuation which the prisoner threw out; but he overcame his anger instantly, and took the papers which had been handed him, from his pocket, saying, "I will most willingly resign these documents whatever they may be. Mr. Croyland, this person seems to wish that you should keep them rather than myself; but here

is another paper on the table, which may throw some light upon the whole transaction;" and he took up the written promise, which Mr. Radford had been urging Edith to sign, and on which his eyes had been fixed during the last few minutes, and handed it with the rest to her uncle.

"Stay, stay a moment!" said Mr. Croyland, putting on his spectacles. "I will be responsible for the safe keeping of nothing of which I do not know the contents;" and he proceeded to read aloud the engagement to wed Richard Radford, which Edith had rejected. "Ay, a precious rascally document indeed!" said the old gentleman, when he had concluded; "written in the hand of the said Richard Radford, Esq. senior, and which, I suppose, Miss Croyland refused to sign under any threats. Be so good as to put your name on that, at the back, Mr. Clerk. I will mark it too, that there be no mistake."

"And now, sir, since you have read the one, will you be good enough to read the other?" exclaimed Mr. Radford, with a triumphant smile. "Even-handed justice, if you please, Mr. Zachary Croyland; the enclosure first, then the letter, if you will. I see there are a multitude of persons present; I beg they will all attend."

"I will read it certainly," replied Mr. Croyland, drawing one of the candles somewhat nearer. "It seems to be somewhat indistinct."

Sir Robert Croyland leaned his head upon his hand, and covered his eyes; and several persons pressed forward, to hear what seemed of importance, in the eyes of the prisoner, at least.

Mr. Croyland ran over the writing, as a preliminary to reading it aloud; but as he did so, his countenance fell, and he paused and hesitated. The next moment, however, he exclaimed, "No, hang it! it shall be read. 'The deposition of William Clare, now lying at the point of death, and with the full assurance that he has not many minutes to live, made before Richard Radford, Esquire, J.P.; this 24th day of September, in the year of grace 17—;" and he proceeded to read, with a voice occasionally wavering, indeed, but in general firm and clear, the formal setting forth of the same tale which the reader has heard before, in the statement of Sir Robert Croyland to his daughter.

His brother paused, and held the paper in his hand for a

moment after he had done, while Layton, who had been standing close beside him, bore a strange, almost sarcastic smile upon his lip, which strongly contrasted with the sad and solemn expression of Mr. Croyland's countenance.

"What is this great red blot just below the man's name?" asked the old gentleman, at length, looking to Mr. Radford.

"That, sir," replied the prisoner, in a calm, grave tone, which had much effect upon the hearers, "is the poor fellow's own blood, as I held him up to sign the declaration. He had been pressing his right hand upon the wound, and where it rested on the paper it gave that bloody witness to the authenticity of the document."

There was something too fine in the reply, and Mr. Croyland repeated, "Bloody witness!—authenticity of the document!"

But Layton stretched out his hand, saying, "will you allow me to look at the paper, Mr. Croyland?" and then added, as soon as he received it, "Can any one tell me whether William Clare was left-handed?"

"No!" replied Sir Robert Croyland, suddenly raising his head, "no, he was not. Why do you ask?"

"That I can answer for," said the constable, coming forward, "for he carved the stock of a gun for me; and I know he never used his left hand when he could use his right one."

"Why do you ask, Harry? why do you ask?" exclaimed Mr. Croyland.

"Because, my dear sir," answered Layton, aloud and clear, "this is the print of the thumb of a man's right hand. To have made it at all, he must have held the paper with his right, while he signed with his left, and even then, he could have done it with difficulty, as it is so near the signature that his fingers would not have room to move;" and as he ended, he fixed his eyes sternly on Mr. Radford's face.

The prisoner's countenance had changed several times while Sir Henry Layton spoke, first becoming fiery red, then deadly pale, then red again.

"However it happened, so it was," he said, doggedly.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr. Croyland, sharply, "your evidence will fetch what it is worth! I hope, clerk, you have got down Mr. Radford's statement."

"He has written the same down here, your worship," re-

plied the man, pointing to the letter in which the deposition had been enclosed, and which, having been cast down by Mr. Zachary, had been busily read by the clerk.

"Well, then, we will read that too," observed the old gentleman. "Silence there!" he continued; for there was a good deal of noise at the side of the room, as the different persons present conversed over the events that were passing: "but first we had better docket this commodity which we have just perused. Mr. Clerk, will you have the goodness to sign it also: on the back?"

"Stay," said a voice from behind the rest, "let me sign it first;" and the man who accompanied Layton thither, wrapped in the dark horseman's coat, advanced between Mr. Croyland and the clerk.

"Any one that likes, any one that likes!" answered the former. "Ah! is that you, my old friend?"

Both Mr. Radford and Sir Robert Croyland gazed, with looks of surprise not unmingled with more painful feelings, on the countenance of Mr. Warde, though each doubted his identity with one whom they had known in former years. But, without noticing any one, the strange-looking old man took the paper from the clerk, dipped the pen in the ink, and, in a bold, free hand, wrote some words upon the back.

"Ha, what is this?" cried Mr. Croyland, taking the paper, and reading: "An infamous forgery; Henry Osborn!"

"Villain, you are detected!" cried the person who has been called Mr. Warde. "I wrote from a distant land to warn you, that I was present when you knelt by William Clare; that I heard all, that I marked you try to prompt the dying man to an accusation he would not make; that I saw you stain the paper with his blood, ay, and sign it, too, after life had quitted him. I wrote to warn you, for I suspected you, for all I heard of your poor tool's changed conduct; and I gave you due notice, that if you ceased not, the day of retribution would arrive. It is come; and I am here, though you thought me dead! All your shifts and evasions are at an end. There is no collusion here; there is no personal interest. I have not conversed with that weak man for many years; and he it was who persecuted my sister's husband unto death!"

"At his suggestion; from his threats!" exclaimed Sir Robert Croyland, pointing with his hand to Mr. Radford.

"Take me away," said the prisoner, turning to the constable; "I am faint, I am sick; take me away!"

Mr. Croyland nodded his head; and, supported by the constable and Birchett, Mr. Radford was led into the adjoining room.

The scene that followed is indescribable. It was all confusion; every one spoke at once; some strove to make themselves heard above the rest; some seemed little to care whether they were heard or not; if any man thought he could fix another's attention, he tried to converse with him apart; many fixed upon the person nearest; but one or two endeavoured to make others hear across the room; and all order and common form were at an end.

I have said every one spoke; but I should have made one exception. Sir Robert Croyland talked eagerly with his brother, and said a few low words to Mr. Osborn; but Layton remained profoundly silent for several minutes. The din of many voices did not seem to disturb him; the strange turn that events had taken, appeared to produce no surprise; but he remained fixed to the same spot, with his eyes bent upon the table, and his mind evidently absent from all that was passing round. It was the abstraction of profound emotion; the power which the heart sometimes exercises over the mind, in withdrawing all its perceptions and its operative faculties from external things, to fix them concentrated upon some great problem within. At length, however, a sense of higher duties made him shake off the thoughts of his own fate and situation; of the bright and glorious hopes that were rising out of the previous darkness, like the splendour of the coming star after a long night; of the dreams of love and joy at length; of the growing light of "trust in the future," still faintly overshadowed by the dark objects of the past. With a quick start, as if he had awakened from sleep, he looked round, and demanded of one of the soldiers, many of whom were in the room, "Have you found the person accused; Richard Radford, I mean; has any one been taken in the premises and the house, besides the servants?"

"Yes, sir, a person just arrived in a post-chaise," replied the sergeant.

"We must have order, Sir Robert," continued Layton, his powerful voice rising above the din; "there is much more to

be done! Clear the room of your men, sergeant. They are not wanted here; but stay, I will speak with Mr. Haveland;" and he went out, followed by the sergeant and some half-dozen of the dragoons, who had accompanied their non-commissioned officer into the room.

Layton soon returned; but the precautions he had gone to enforce were vain. The person who had arrived in the chaise, proved to be a somewhat disreputable clergyman from a distant parish. Young Richard Radford was not taken; another fate awaited him. A man, indeed, on horseback, was seen to approach the grounds of Radford Hall towards eleven o'clock; but the lights that were apparent through many windows seemed to startle him as he rode along the road. He paused for a moment, and gazed, and then advanced more slowly; but the eagerness of the small guard at that point, perhaps, frustrated their object, for it is not certain to this day who the person was. When he again halted, and seemed to hesitate, they dashed out after him; but instantly setting spurs to his horse, he galloped off into the woods and, knowing the country better than they did, he was soon lost to their pursuit.

In the mean time, the result of the search in Mr. Radford's house was made known, in a formal manner, to the party assembled in the small drawing-room. Abundant evidence was found of his having been implicated in all the most criminal parts of the late smuggling transactions, and the business of the night concluded by an order to remand him, to be brought before the bench of magistrates on the following day: for Sir Robert Croyland declined to commit him on his own responsibility.

"He has preferred a charge against me," he said, in the same firm tone he had lately assumed, "let us see whether he will sustain it to-morrow."

Before all was concluded, it was near midnight; and then every one rose to depart. Mr. Croyland eagerly asked for Edith, saying he would convey her home in his carriage; but Layton interposed, replying, "We will bring her to you in a moment, my dear friend. Sir Robert, it may be as well that you and I should seek Miss Croyland alone. I think I saw her maid below."

"Certainly," answered her father; "let us go, my dear Henry, for it is growing very late."

Mr. Croyland smiled, saying, "Well, well, so be it;" and the other two left the room. They found Edith, after some search, seated in the dining-hall. She looked pale and anxious; but the expression of Layton's face relieved her from her worst apprehensions, not that it was joyful, for there was a touch of sadness in it; but she knew that his aspect could not be such if her father's life were in any real danger.

Layton advanced towards her at once, even before her father, took her hand in his, and kissed it tenderly. "I told you, dearest Edith," he said, "that I would bring you aid; and I have, thank God, been able to redeem that promise; but now I have another task to perform. Your father's safety is placed beyond doubt, his innocence made clear, and your happiness, beloved one, is not sacrificed. The chance of endangering that happiness was the only cause of my not doing what, perhaps, you desired for his sake, what I do now. Sir Robert Croyland, I did wrong in years long past, in boyhood and the intemperance of youthful love and hope, by engaging your daughter to myself by vows, which she has nobly though painfully kept. As an atonement to you, as a satisfaction to my own sense of right, I now, as far as in me lies, set her free from those engagements, leaving to her own self how she will act, and to you how you will decide. Edith, beloved, you are free, as far as I can make you so; and, Sir Robert, I ask your forgiveness for the wrong act I once committed."

Edith Croyland turned somewhat pale, and looked at her father earnestly; but Sir Robert did not answer for a moment. Was it that he hesitated? No; but there was an oppressive weight at his heart, when he thought of all that he had done, all that he had inflicted, not only on the man before him, but on others guiltless of all offence, which seemed almost to stop its beating. But at length, he took Edith's hand and put it in Layton's, saying, in a low, tremulous voice, "She is yours, Henry, she is yours; and, oh! forgive the father for the daughter's sake!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

There was a solitary light in an upstairs window of farmer Harris's house, and, by its dim ray, sat Harding the smuggler, watching the inanimate form of her upon whom all the strong affections of his heart had been concentrated. No persuasions could induce him to entrust "the first watch," as he called it, to others; and there he sat, seldom taking his eyes from that pale but still beautiful countenance, and often stooping over to print a kiss upon the cold and clay-like forehead of the dead. His tears were all shed: he wept not, he spoke not; but the bitterness which has no end was in his heart, and, with a sleepless eye, he watched through the livelong night. It was about three o'clock in the morning, when a hard knocking was heard at the door of the farm; and, without a change of feature, Harding rose and went down in the dark. He unlocked the door, and opened it, when a hand holding a paper was thrust in, and instantly withdrawn, as Harding took the letter.

"What is this?" he said; but the messenger ran away without reply; and the smuggler returned to the chamber of death.

The paper he had taken was folded in the shape of a note, but neither sealed nor addressed; and, without ceremony, Harding opened it, and read. It was written in a free, good hand, which he recognised at once, with rage and indignation all the more intense because he restrained them within his own breast. He uttered not a word; his face betrayed, only in part, the workings of strong passion within him. It is true, his lip quivered a little, and his brow became contracted, but it soon relaxed its frown; and, without oath or comment,

though very blasphemous expletives were then tolerated in what was called the best society, and were prevalent amongst all the inferior classes, he proceeded to read the few lines which the letter contained, and which something, perhaps the emotions he felt, had prevented him from seeing distinctly at first.

The epistle was, as we have seen, addressed to no one, and was drawn up, indeed, more in the form of a general notice than anything else. Many, of nearly the same import, as was afterwards discovered, has been delivered at various farm-houses in the neighbourhood; but, as all were in substance the same, one specimen will suffice.

"We give you to know," so the letter ran, "that, unless Edward Ramley and his two comrades are set free before day-light to-morrow, we will come to Goudhurst, and burn the place. Neither man, woman, nor child, shall escape. We are many, more than you think, and you know we will keep our word. So look to it, if you would escape—

"VENGEANCE!"

Harding approached the bed, with the letter in his hand, gazed steadfastly upon the corpse for several minutes, and then, without a word, quitted the room. He went straight to the chamber which farmer Harris and his wife now occupied, and knocked sharply at the door, exclaiming, "Harris, Harris! I want to speak with you!"

The good farmer was with difficulty roused; for though no man felt more warmly, or, indeed, more vehemently, yet the corporeal had its full share with the mental; and when the body was fatigued with more than its ordinary portion of labour, the mind did not keep the whole being waking. At length, however, he came out, still drowsy, and taking the letter, gazed on it by the light of the candle, "with lack-lustre eye!" But Harding soon brought him to active consciousness, by saying, "They threaten to burn the village, Harris, unless the murderers be suffered to escape. I am going up to the church, where they are kept. Wake some one to sit up stairs. I will die before a man of them goes out."

"And so will I," cried Harris; "let me see, let me see!

My heart's asleep still, but I'll soon wake up. Why, where the mischief did this come from?" and he read the letter over again, with more comprehension of its contents. When he had done, he swore vehemently, "They shall find that the men of Goudhurst can match them," he cried; "but we must set about it quick, Harding, and call up all the young men. They will come, that is certain; for the devil himself has not their impudence; but they must be well received when they do come. We'll give them a breakfast, Harding, they shan't forget. It shall be called the Goudhurst breakfast, as long as men can remember. Stay, I'll just put on my coat, and get out the gun and the pistols, we shall want as many of those things as we can muster. I'll be back in a minute."

From that hour till five o'clock the little village of Goudhurst was all alive. Intimation of the danger was sent to all the neighbouring farmers; every labouring man was roused from his bed with directions to meet the rest in the churchyard; and there, as the sky became grey, a busy scene was displayed: some sixty stout men being assembled before the porch, most of them armed with old muskets or fowling pieces. Amongst those to whom age or habitual authority assigned the chief place, an eager consultation went on as to their proceedings; and though there was, as is generally the case in such meetings, a great difference upon many points, yet three acts were unanimously decided upon; first, to send all the women and children out of the village; next, to despatch a messenger to Woodchurch for military aid; and next, to set about casting bullets immediately, as no shot larger than slugs were to be found in the place.

The reader will probably ask, with a look of surprise, "Is this a scene in North America, where settlers were daily exposed to the incursions of the savages?" and he may add, "This could not have happened in England!" But I beg to say, this happened in the county of Kent, less than a century ago; and persons are still living, who remember having been sent with the women and children out of the village, that the men might not be impeded by fear for those they loved, while defending the spot on which they were born.

A fire of wood was speedily lighted by some of the men in the churchyard; others applied themselves with what moulds could be procured to the casting of ball; others, again, woke

the still slumbering inhabitants of the cottages and houses round, and warned the women to remove to the neighbouring farms, and the men to come and join their friends at the rendezvous; and a few of the best instructed proceeded to arrange their plan of defence, barricading the gates of the cemetery, and blocking up a stile, which at that time led from the right-hand wall, with an old grave-stone, against which they piled up a heap of earth.

The vestry, in which the prisoners had been confined, after having been brought from Mr. Broughton's at too late an hour to convey them to gaol, was luckily protected by strong iron bars over the windows, and a heavy plated door between it and the church; and the old tower of the building afforded a strong point in the position of the villagers, which they flattered themselves could not easily be forced.

"How many men do you think they can muster, Harding?" asked farmer Harris, when their first rude preparations were nearly complete.

"I can but guess," answered the smuggler; "perhaps two hundred. They had more than that in the Marsh, of whom I hear some fifty were taken or killed; but a good many were not there, who may, and will be here to-day: old Ramley for one, I should think."

"Then we had better get into the church when they come," replied the farmer; "they cannot force us there till the soldiers come."

"Did you send for them?" asked Harding.

"Oh, yes!" answered the farmer, "half-an-hour ago. I sent the young boy, who would be of no good here, on the pony; and I told him to let Sir Robert know, as he passed; for I thought the soldiers might not meddle if they had not a magistrate with them."

"Very well," replied Harding, and set himself to work away again.

Six o'clock was now past, seven approached and went by; the hand of the dial moved half-way on to eight, and yet nothing indicated the approach of the smugglers. In a few minutes after, however, the sound of horses' feet galloping was heard; and a young man who had been placed in the belfry to look out, shouted down to those below, "Only two!" and the next moment a horseman in military half dress, with

a servant behind him, rode up at speed to the principal entrance of the churchyard.

"I am come to help you, my men," cried Sir Edward Digby, springing to the ground, and giving his rein to his servant. "Will you let us in to your redoubt? The dragoons will soon be over; I sent your messenger on."

"Perhaps, sir, you may have your trouble for your pains, after all," answered young Harris, opening the gate to let Digby and his horses in; "the fellows have not shown themselves, and very likely won't come."

"Oh, yes! they will," said the young baronet, advancing amongst them, and looking round on every side; "I saw a long line of men on horseback moving over the hill as I came. Put the horses under cover of that shed, Somers. You should cut down those thick bushes near the wall. They will conceal their movements. Have you any axes?"

"Here is one," cried a young man, and immediately he set to work, hewing down the shrubs and bushes to which Digby pointed.

In the mean time the young officer ran over the groups with his eye, calculating their numbers, and at length he said: "You had better confine yourselves to defending the church; you are not enough to meet them out here. I counted a hundred and fifty, and there may be more. Station your best marksmen at the windows and on the roof of the tower, and put a few stout resolute fellows to guard the door in case these scoundrels get nearer than we wish them. As we all act upon our own responsibility, however, we had better be cautious, and abstain from offensive measures till they are absolutely necessary for the defence of ourselves and the security of the prisoners. Besides, if they are kept at bay for some time, the dragoons will take them in flank, and a good number may be captured."

"We can deal with them ourselves," said the voice of Harding, in a stern tone. He had been standing by, listening in grave silence, with a gun in his hand, which he had borrowed at farmer Harris's; and now, as soon as he had spoken, he turned away, walked into the church, and climbed to the roof of the tower. There, after examining the priming of the piece, he seated himself coolly upon the little parapet, and looked out over the country. The moment after his voice was

heard, calling from above: "They are coming up, Harris! Tell the officer."

Sir Edward Digby had, in the mean time, advanced to the gates to insure that they were securely fastened; but he heard what Harding said, and turning his head, exclaimed: "Go into the church, and garnish the windows with marksmen, as I said. I will be with you in a moment. Here, Somers, help me here for a moment. They will soon pull this down;" and he proceeded calmly to fasten the barricade more strongly. Before he had accomplished this to his satisfaction, men on horseback were seen gathering thick in the road, and on the little open space in front; but he went on without pausing to look at them, till a loud voice exclaimed: "What are you about there? Do you intend to give the men up or not?"

Sir Edward Digby then raised his head, and replied: "Certainly not! Oh! Mr. Richard Radford, you will have the goodness to remark that if you advance one step towards these gates, or attempt to pass that wall, you will be fired on from the church."

While he was speaking, he took a step back, and then walked slowly towards the building, making his servant go first; but half-way thither he paused, and turning towards the ruffians congregated at a little distance from the wall, he added aloud, addressing Richard Radford: "You had better tell your gang what I say, my good friend, for they will find we will keep our word."

As he spoke, some one from the mass fired a pistol at him; but the ball did not take effect, and Digby raised his hand, waving to those in the church not to fire, and at the same time hurrying his pace a little till he had passed the door and ordered it to be shut.

"They have now fair warning," he said to one of the young Harrises, who was on guard at the door; "but I will go up above and call to you when I think anything is necessary to be done. Remember, my good fellows, that some order must be kept; and as you cannot all be at the windows, let those who must stand back load while the rest fire."

Thus saying, he mounted to the top of the tower with a quick step, and found Harding and five others on the roof. The horsemen in front of the church were all gathered together at a little distance, and seemed in eager consultation; and

amongst them the figures of young Radford and the two Ramleys, father and son, were conspicuous from the vehement gestures that they made, now pointing to the top of the tower, now to the wall of the churchyard.

"I think we could bring a good many down as they stand now," said young William Harris, moving his gun towards his shoulder, as if the inclination to fire were almost irresistible.

"Stay, stay! not yet," replied Sir Edward Digby; "let it be clearly in our own defence. Besides, you must remember these are but fowling-pieces. At that distance, few shots would tell."

"One shall tell at least, before this day is over," said Harding, who had remained seated, hardly looking at the party without. "Something tells me I shall have vengeance this day."

"Hallo! they are going to begin!" cried another man; and the same moment the gang of miscreants spread out, and while some advanced on horseback towards the wall, at least fifty, who were armed with guns, dismounted and aimed deliberately at the tower and windows.

"Down with your heads behind the parapet!" cried Digby, though he did not follow the caution himself; "no use of exposing your lives needlessly. Down, down, Harding!"

But Harding sat where he was, saying, bitterly, "They'll not hit me; I know it; they've done worse already." As he spoke, a single gun was fired, and then a volley from the two sides of the churchyard wall. One of the balls whizzed close by Sir Edward Digby's head, and another struck the parapet near Harding; but neither were touched, and the stout seaman did not move a muscle.

"Now up, and give it them back!" exclaimed Digby; and, speaking down the trap that led to the stairs, he called to those below, "Fire now, and pick them off! Steadily, steadily!" he continued, addressing his companions on the roof, who were becoming somewhat too much excited. "Make every shot tell, if you can; a good aim; a good aim!"

"Here goes for one!" cried William Harris, aiming at Jim Ramley, and hitting him in the thigh; and instantly, from the roof and the windows of the church, blazed forth a sharp fire of musketry, which apparently was not without severe effect; for the men who had dismounted were thrown into great con-

fusion, and the horsemen who were advancing recoiled, with several of their horses plunging violently."

The only one on the roof who did not fire was Harding, and he remained with his gun resting on the parapet beside him, gazing, with a stern, dark brow, upon the scene.

"There are three down," cried one of the men, "and a lot of horses!"

But Richard Radford was seen gesticulating vehemently; and at length taking off his hat, he waved it in the air, shouting so loud that his words reached those above: "I will show you the way, then; let every brave man follow me!" And as he spoke he stuck his spurs into his horse's sides, galloped on, and pushed his beast at the low wall of the churchyard.

The animal, a powerful hunter, which had been sent to him by his father the day before, rose to the leap as if with pride. But just then Harding raised his gun, aimed steadily, and pulled the trigger. The smoke for a moment obscured Digby's view; but the instant after he saw Richard Radford falling headlong from the saddle, and his shoulder striking the wall as the horse cleared it. The body then fell over, bent up, with the head leaning against a tombstone and the legs upon an adjoining grave.

"There! that's done!" said Harding; and laying down the gun again, he betook himself quietly to his seat upon the parapet once more.

"The dragoons! the dragoons!" cried a young man from the other side of the tower. But ere he spoke, the gang of villains were already in retreat, several galloping away, and the rest wavering.

Loading as fast as they could, the stout yeomanry in the church continued firing from the windows and from the roof, accelerating the movements of their assailants, who seemed only to pause for the purpose of carrying off their wounded companions. Sir Edward Digby, however, ran round to the opposite side of the tower, and, clearly seeing the advance of some cavalry from the side of Cranbrook, though the trees prevented him from ascertaining their numbers, he bade the rest follow, and ran down into the body of the church.

"Now out, and after them!" he exclaimed; "we may make some prisoners!" But as soon as the large wooden doors were thrown back and the peasantry were seen pouring

forth, old Ramley, who was amongst the last who lingered, turned his horse and galloped away, his companions following as fast as they could. Four men were found on the outside of the churchyard wall, of whom two were living; but Sir Edward Digby advanced with several others to the spot where Richard Radford was lying. He did not appear to have moved at all since he fell; and on raising his head, which had fallen forward on his chest as he lay propped up by the gravestone, a dark red spot in the centre of the forehead, from which a small quantity of blood had flowed down over his eyes and cheeks, told how fatally true the shot had gone to the mark.

When he had gazed on him for a moment, Digby turned round again, to look for Harding; but the man who had slain him, did not approach the corpse of Richard Radford; and Digby perceived him standing near a low shed, which at that time encumbered the churchyard of Goudhurst, and under which the young baronet's horses had been placed. Thither the strong hunter, which Radford had been riding, had trotted as soon as his master fell; and Harding had caught it by the bridle, and was gazing at it with a thoughtful look.

The last time Sir Edward Digby had seen him, before that morning, he was in high happiness by the side of poor Kate Clare; and when the young officer looked at him, as he stood there, with a sort of dull despair in his whole aspect, he could not but feel strong and painful sympathy with him, in his deep grief.

"Mr. Harding," he said, approaching him, "the unhappy man is quite dead."

"Oh! yes, sir," answered Harding; "dead enough, I am sure. I hope he knew whose hand did it."

"I am sorry to give you any further pain or anxiety at this moment," continued Digby, sinking his voice, "but I have heard that you are supposed to have taken some part in landing the goods which were captured the other day. For aught we know, there may be information lodged against you, and probably there will be some officer of customs with the troop that is coming up. Would it not be better for you to retire from this scene for a little?"

"Thank you, sir; thank you! That is kind," answered Harding. "Life's a load to me; but a prison is another thing. I would have given any of those clumsy fellows a

hundred guineas to have shot me as I sat there; but no man shall ever take me, and clap me up in a cell. I could not bear that, and my poor Kate lying dead there, too! I'll go, as you say."

But before he could execute his purpose, a small party of dragoons, commanded by a lieutenant, with Birchett, the riding-officer, and two or three of his companions, came up at a trot, and poured through the gate of the churchyard, which was now open.

Sir Edward Digby advanced at once towards them, if the truth must be told, to cover Harding's retreat; but Birchett's quick, shrewd eye had run round the place in an instant, and, before the young baronet had taken two steps along the path, he cried, "Why, there is Harding! Stop him! stop him! We have information against him! Don't let him pass!"

"I *will* pass, though," cried Harding, leaping at once upon the back of Richard Radford's horse. "Now, stop me, if you can!" and striking it with his heel, he turned the animal across the churchyard, taking an angle away from the dragoons. Birchett spurred after him in a moment, and the other officers followed, but the soldiers did not move. Passing close by the spot where young Radford lay, as the officers tried to cut him off from the gate, Harding cried, with a wild and bitter laugh, "He is a good leaper, I know!" and instantly pushed his horse at the wall.

The gallant beast took it at once, and dashed away with its rider along the road. The officers of customs dared not trust their own cattle with the same feat; but Birchett exclaimed, in a loud and imperative tone, turning to the lieutenant of dragoons, "I require your aid in capturing that man. He is one of the most daring smugglers on the whole coast. We can catch him easily, if we are quick."

"I do not know that I am authorized," said the lieutenant, not well pleased with the man's manner; "where no armed resistance is apprehended, I doubt if—"

"But there may be resistance, sir," replied Birchett, vehemently; "he is gone to join his comrades. Well, the responsibility be on your head! I claim your aid! Refuse it or not, as you shall think fit. I claim and require it instantly."

"What do you think, sir?" asked the young officer, turning to Digby.

"Nay, I am not in command here," answered the other; "you know your orders."

"To give all lawful aid and assistance," said the lieutenant. "Well, take a serjeant's guard, Mr. Birchett."

In haste, the men were drawn out, and followed; Birchett leading them furiously on the pursuit: but ere they had quitted the churchyard, Harding was half-a-mile upon the road, and that was all he desired.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

There was a large lugger lying off, at no great distance from the beach, near Sandgate, and a small boat, ready for launching, on the shore. At the distance of two or three miles out, might be seen a vessel of considerable size, and of that peculiar rig and build which denoted, to nautical eyes, that there lay a king's vessel. She was, indeed, a frigate of inferior class, which had been sent round to co-operate with the customs, in the suppression of the daring system of smuggling, which, as we have shown, was carried on in Romney Marsh, and the neighbouring country. By the lesser boat, upon the shore, stood four stout fellows, apparently employed in making ready to put off; and upon the high ground above, was seen a single officer of customs, walking carelessly to and fro, and apparently taking little heed of the proceedings below. Some movements might be perceived on board the ship; the sails, which had been furled, now began to flutter in the wind, which was blowing strong; and it seemed evident that the little frigate was about to get under weigh. The lugger, however, remained stationary; and the men near the boat continued their labours for nearly an hour after they seemed in reality to have nothing more to do.

At length, however, coming at a furious pace, down one of the narrow foot-paths from the high ground above, which led away towards Cheriton and Newington, was seen a horseman, waving his hand to those below, and passing within fifty yards of the officer of customs. The sailors, who were standing by the boat, instantly pushed her down to the very verge of the water; the officer hallooed after the bold rider, but without causing him to pause for an instant in his course; and down,

at thundering speed, across the road, and over the sand and shingle, Harding, the smuggler, dashed on, till the horse that bore him stood foaming and panting beside the boat. Instantly springing out of the saddle, he cast the bridle on the tired beast's neck, and jumped into the skiff, exclaiming, "Shove her off!"

"Arn't there some more Jack?" asked one of the men.

"None but myself," replied Harding, "and me they shan't catch. Shove her off, I say; you'll soon see who are coming after!"

The men obeyed at once; the boat was launched into the water; and almost at the same instant, the party of dragoons who were in pursuit appeared upon the top of the rise, followed a moment after, by Birchett, and another officer of the customs. The vehement and angry gestures of the riding officer indicated plainly enough that he saw the prey had escaped him; but while the dragoons and his fellow officer made their way slowly down the bank, to the narrow road which at that time ran along the beach, he galloped off towards a signal-post, which then stood upon an elevated spot, not far from the place where the turnpike, on the road between Sandgate and Folkestone, now stands. In a few minutes various small flags were seen rapidly running up to the top of the staff; and, as speedily as possible afterwards, signals of the same kind were displayed on board the frigate.

In the mean time, however, Harding and his party had rowed rapidly towards the lugger, the sails of which were already beginning to fill; and in less than two minutes she was scudding through the water as fast as the wind would bear her. But the frigate was also under weigh; and, to both experienced and inexperienced eyes, it seemed that the bold smuggler had hardly one chance of escape. Between Dungeness Point, and the royal vessel, there appeared to be no space for any of those daring manœuvres by which the small vessels, engaged in the contraband trade, occasionally eluded the pursuit of their larger and more formidable opponents; but Harding still pursued his course, striving to get into the open sea, before the frigate could cut him off.

Bending under the press of sail, the boat rushed through the waves, with the uptide running strong against her, and the spray dashing over her from stem to stern; but still, as

she took an angle, though an acute one, with the course of the frigate, the latter gained upon her every moment, till at length a shot, whistling across her bows, gave her the signal to bring to. It is needless to tell the reader, that that signal received no attention; but, still steered with a firm hand, and carrying every stitch of canvass she could bear, the lugger pursued her way. A minute had scarcely passed, ere flash and report came again from the frigate, and once more a ball whistled by. Another and another followed; but, no longer directed across the lugger's bows, they were evidently aimed directly at her; and one of them passed through the foresail, though without doing any farther damage. The case seemed so hopeless, not only to those who watched the whole proceeding from the shore, but to most of those who were in the lugger, that a murmured consultation took place among the men; and after two or three more shots had been fired, coming each time nearer and nearer to their flying mark, one of the crew turned to Harding, who had scarcely uttered a word since he entered the boat, and said, "Come, sir, I don't think this will do. We shall only get ourselves sunk for no good. We had better douse."

Harding looked sternly at him for a moment without reply, and a somewhat bitter answer rose to his lips. But he checked himself, and said, at length, "There's no use sacrificing your lives. You've got wives and children, fathers and mothers. I have no one to care for me. Get into the boat and be off. Me they shall never catch, dead or alive; and if I go to the bottom, it's the best berth for me now. Here, just help me reeve these tiller-ropes that I may take shelter under the companion; and then be off as fast as you can."

The men would fain have remonstrated, but Harding would hear nothing; and, covering himself as much as he could from the aim of small arms from the vessel, he insisted that the whole of his crew should go and leave him.

A short pause in the lugger's flight was observable from the shore, and everybody concluded that she had struck. The row-boat, filled with men, was seen to pull off from her, and the large heavy sails to flap for an instant in the wind. But then her course was altered in a moment; the sails filled again with the full breeze; and going like a swallow over the waves, she dashed on towards the frigate, and passing her within

pistol-range immediately after, shot across upon her weather-bow.

A cloud of smoke ran all along the side of the frigate, as this bold and extraordinary manœuvre was executed. The faint report of small arms was wafted by the wind to the shore, as well as the sound of several cannon; but still, whether Harding was wounded or not wounded, living or dead, his gallant boat dashed steadily on, and left the frigate far behind, apparently giving up the chase, as no longer presenting any chance of success. On, on, went the lugger, diminishing as it flew over the waves, till at length, to the eyes even of those who watched from the heights, its dark, tanned sails grouped themselves into one small speck, and were then lost to the sight.

The after-fate of that adventurous man, who thus, single and unaided, trusted himself to the wide waves, is wrapped in obscurity. The writer of these pages, indeed, did once see a stern-looking old man of the same name, who had returned some few years before from distant lands, no one well knew whence, to spend the last few years of a life, which had been protracted considerably beyond the ordinary term of human existence, in a seaport not very far from Folkestone. The conversation of the people of the place pointed him out as one who had done extraordinary deeds, and seen strange sights; but whether he was, indeed, the Harding of this tale or not, I cannot say. Of one thing, however, the reader may be certain, that in all the statements regarding the smuggler's marvellous escape, the most scrupulous accuracy has been observed, and that every fact is as true as any part of history, and a great deal more so than most.

Having now disposed of one of our principal characters, let me take the reader gently by the hand, and lead him back to Harbourne House. The way is somewhat long, but still, not more than a stout man can walk without fatigue upon a pleasant morning; and it lies, too, among sweet and interesting scenes, which, to you and me are, I trust, embellished by some of the charms of association.

It was about six days after the attack upon the church at Goudhurst, when a great number of those personages with whom it has been necessary to make the reader acquainted, were assembled in the drawing-room of Sir Robert Croyland's

mansion. One or two, indeed, were wanting, even of the party which might have been expected there, but their absence shall be accounted for hereafter. The baronet himself was seated in the arm-chair, which he generally occupied more as a mark of his state and dignity, than for comfort and convenience. In the present instance, however, he seemed to need support, for he leaned heavily upon the arm of the chair, and appeared languid and feeble. His face was very pale, his lips somewhat livid; and yet, though suffering evidently under considerable corporeal debility, there was a look of mental relief in his eyes, and a sweet placidity about his smile, that no one had seen on his countenance for many years.

Mrs. Barbara was, as usual, seated at her everlasting embroidery; and here we may as well mention a fact which we omitted to mention before, but which some persons may look upon as indicative of her mental character; namely, that the embroidery, though it had gone on all her life, by no means proceeded in an even course of progression. On the contrary, to inexperienced eyes, it seemed as if no sooner was a stitch put in than it was drawn out again; the point of the needle being gently thrust under the loop of the thread, and then the arm extended with an even sweep, so as to withdraw the silk from its hole in the canvass. Penelope's web was nothing to Mrs. Barbara Croyland's embroidery: for the queen of Ithaca only undid what she had previously done, every night; and Aunt Bab undid it every minute. On the present occasion, she was more busy in the retroactive process than ever, not only pulling out the silk she had just put in, but a great deal more; so that the work of the last three days, was in imminent danger of total destruction.

Mr. Zachary Croyland never sat down when he could stand; for there was about him, a sort of mobility and activity of spirits, which always inclined him to keep his body ready for action. He so well knew that, when seated, he was incessantly inclined to start up again, that probably he thought it of little use to sit down at all; and consequently he was even now upon his feet, midway between his brother and his sister, rubbing his hands, and giving a gay, but cynical glance from one to the other.

In a chair near the window, with his wild, but fine eye gazing over the pleasant prospect which the terrace com-

manded, and apparently altogether absent in mind from the scene in the drawing-room, was seated Mr. Osborn; and not far from Mr. Croyland stood Sir Henry Layton, in an ordinary riding-dress, with his left hand resting on the hilt of his sword, speaking in any easy, quiet tone to Sir Robert Croyland; and nearly opposite to him was Edith, with her arm resting on the table, and her cheek supported on her hand. Her face was still pale, though the colour had somewhat returned; and the expression was grave, though calm. Indeed, she never recovered the gay and sparkling look which had characterised her countenance in early youth; but the expression had gained in depth and intensity more than it had lost in brightness; and then, when she did smile, it was with ineffable sweetness: a gleam of sunshine upon the deep sea. Her eyes were fixed upon her lover; and those who knew her well could read in them satisfaction, love, hope, nay, more than hope, a pride, the only pride that she could know, that he whom she had chosen in her girlhood, to whom she had remained true and faithful through years of sorrow and unexampled trial, had proved himself in every way worthy of her first affection and her long constancy.

But where was Zara? where Sir Edward Digby? for neither of them were present at the time. From the laws of attraction between different terrestrial bodies, we have every reason to infer that Digby and Zara were not very far apart. However, they had been somewhat eccentric in their orbits; for Zara had gone out about a couple of hours before, Digby being then absent, no one knew where, upon a charitable errand, to carry consolation and sympathy to the cottage of poor Mrs. Clare, whose daughter had been committed to the earth the day before. How it happened, heaven only knows, but certain it is, that at the moment I now speak of, she and Digby were walking home together, towards Harbourne House, while his servant led his horse at some distance behind.

Before they reached the house, however, a long conversation had taken place between the personages in the drawing-room, of which I shall only give the last few sentences.

"It is true, Harry, it is true," said Sir Robert Croyland, in reply to something just spoken by Layton; "and we have both things to forgive; but you far more than I have; and as

you have set me an example of doing good for evil, and atoning, by every means, for a slight error, I will not be backward to do the same, and to acknowledge that I have acted most wrongly towards you, for which may heaven forgive me, as you have done! I have small means of atoning for much that is past; but to do so, as far as possible, freely and with my full consent, take the most valuable thing I have to give, my dear child's hand: nay, hear me yet a moment. I wish your marriage to take place as soon as possible. I have learned to doubt of time, and never to trust the future. Say a week, a fortnight, Edith; but let it be speedily. It is my wish; let me say, for the last time, it is my command."

"But, brother Robert," exclaimed Mrs. Barbara, ruining her embroidery irretrievably in the agitation of the moment, "you know it can't be so very soon; for there are all the dresses to get ready, and the settlements to be drawn up, and a thousand things to buy; and our cousins in Yorkshire must be informed, and—

"D—n our cousins in Yorkshire!" exclaimed Mr. Zachary Croyland. "Now, my dear Bab, tell me candidly, whether you have or have not any nice little plan ready for spoiling the whole, and throwing us all into confusion again. Don't you think you could just send Edith to visit somebody in the small-pox? or get Harry Layton run through in a duel? or some other little comfortable consummation, which may make us all as unhappy as possible?"

"Really, brother Zachary, I don't know what you mean!" said Mrs. Barbara, looking the picture of injured innocence.

"I dare say not, Bab," answered Mr. Croyland; "but I understand what you mean; and I tell you it shall not be. Edith shall fix the day; and as a good child, she will obey her father, and fix it as early as possible. When once fixed, it shall not be changed or put off, on any account or consideration whatever, if my name's Croyland. As for the dresses, don't you trouble your head about that; I'll undertake the dresses, and have them all down from London by the coach. Give me the size of your waist, Edith, upon a piece of string, and your length from shoulder to heel, and leave all the rest to me. If I don't dress her like a Mahommedan princess, may I never hear Bismillah again."

Edith smiled, but answered, "I don't think it will be at all

necessary, my dear uncle, to put you to the trouble; and I do not think it would answer its purpose if you took it."

"But I will have my own way," said Mr. Croyland; "you are my pet; and all the matrimonial arrangements shall be mine. If you don't mind, and say another word, I'll insist upon being bridesmaid too; for I can encroach in my demands, I can tell you, as well as a lady or a prime minister."

As he spoke, the farther progress of the discussion was interrupted by the entrance of Zara, followed by Sir Edward Digby. Her colour was a little heightened, and her manner somewhat agitated; but she shook hands with her uncle and Layton, neither of whom she had seen before during that morning; and then passing by her father, in her way towards Edith, she whispered a word to him as she went.

"What, what!" exclaimed Sir Robert Croyland, turning suddenly round towards Digby, with a look of alarm, and pressing his left hand upon his side, "she says you have something important to tell me, Sir Edward. Pray speak! I have no secrets from those who are around me."

"I am sure, what I have to say will shock all present!" replied Sir Edward Digby, gravely; "but the fact is, I heard a report this morning, from my servant, that Mr. Radford had destroyed himself last night in prison; and I rode over as fast as I could, to ascertain if the rumour was correct. I found that it was but too accurate, and that the unhappy man terminated a career of crime by the greatest that he could commit."

"Well, there's one rascal less in the world; that's some comfort," said Mr. Zachary Croyland; "I would rather, indeed, he had let some one else hang him, instead of doing it himself; for I don't approve of suicide at all; it's foolish, and wicked, and cowardly. Still, nothing else could be expected from such a man; but what's the matter with you, Robert? you seem ill; surely, you can't take this man's death much to heart?"

Sir Robert Croyland did not reply, but made a faint sign to open the window, which was immediately done; and he revived under the influence of the air.

"I will go out for a few minutes," he said, rising; and Edith instantly starting up, approached to go with him. He would not suffer her, however. "No, my child," he replied

to her offer, "no: you can understand what I feel; but I shall be better presently. Stay here, and let all this be settled; and remember, Edith, name the earliest day possible; arrange with Zara and Digby. Theirs can take place at the same time."

Thus saying, he went out, and was seen walking slowly to and fro upon the terrace for some minutes after. In the meanwhile the war had commenced between Mr. Zachary Croyland and his younger niece. "Ah! Mrs. Madcap!" he exclaimed, "so I hear tales of you. The coquette has been caught at length! You are going to commit matrimony; and as birds of a feather flock together, the wild girl and the wild boy must pair."

With her usual light, graceful step, and with her usual gay and brilliant smile, Zara left Sir Edward Digby's side, and crossing over to her uncle, rested both her hands upon his arm, while he stood as erect and stiff as a finger post, gazing down upon her with a look of sour fun. But in Zara's eyes, beautiful and beaming as they were, there was a look of deeper feeling than they usually displayed when jesting, as was her wont, with Mr. Croyland.

"Well, chit," he said, "well, what do you want? A new gown, or a smart hat, or a riding-whip, with a tiger's head in gold at the top?"

"No, my dear uncle," she answered, "but I want you not to tease me, nor to laugh at me, nor to abuse me just now. For once in my life, I feel that I must be serious; and I think even less teasing than ordinary might be too much for me. Perhaps, one time or another, you may find out that poor Zara's coquetry was more apparent than real, and that though she had an object, it was a better one than you, in your benevolence, were disposed to think."

An unwonted drop swam in her eyes as she spoke; and Mr. Croyland gazed down upon her tenderly for a moment. Then throwing his arms round her, he kissed her cheek. "I know it, my dear," he said; "I know it. Edith has told me all; and she who has been a kind, good sister, will, I am sure, be a kind, good wife. Here, take her away, Digby. A better girl doesn't live, whatever I may have said. The worst of it is, she is a great deal too good for you, or any other wild, harem-scarem fellow. But stay, stay," he continued, as

Digby came forward laughing, and took Zara's hand: "here's something with her; for, as I am sure you will be a couple of spendthrifts, it is but fit you should have something to set out upon."

Mr. Croyland, as he spoke, put his hand into the somewhat wide and yawning pocket of his broad-tailed coat, and produced his pocket-book, from which he drew forth a small slip of paper.

Digby took it, and looked at it, but instantly held it out again to Mr. Croyland, saying, "My dear sir, it is quite unnecessary. I claim nothing but her hand; and that is mine by promises which I hope will not be very long ere they are fulfilled."

"Nonsense, nonsense!" cried Mr. Croyland, putting away the paper with the back of his hand; "did ever any one see such a fool? I tell you, Sir Edward Digby, I'm as proud a man as you are; and you shall not marry my niece without receiving the same portion as her sister possesses. I hate all eldest sons, as you well know; and I don't see why eldest daughters should exist either. I'll have them all equal. No differences here. I've made up to Zara the disparity which one fool of an uncle thought fit to put between her and Edith. Such was always my intention; and moreover, let it be clearly understood, that when you have put this old carrion under ground, what I leave is to be divided between them; all equal, all equal; co-heiresses of Zachary Croyland, Esq. surnamed the Nabob, *alias* the Misanthorpe; and then, if you like it, you may each bear in your arms a crow rampant, on an escutcheon of pretence."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear uncle," answered Edith Croyland, while Zara's gay heart was too full to let her speak; "thank you for such thought of my sweet sister; for, indeed, to me, during long years of sorrow and trouble, she has been the spirit of consolation, comfort, strength, even hope."

Poor Zara was overpowered, and she burst into tears. It seemed as if all the feelings, which for the sake of others she had so long suppressed: all the emotions, anxieties, and cares which she had conquered or treated lightly, in order to give aid and support to Edith, rushed upon her at once in the moment of joy, and overwhelmed her.

"Why, what's the foolish girl crying about?" exclaimed

Mr. Croyland; but then, drawing her kindly to him, he added, "Come, my dear, we will make a truce upon the following conditions: I won't tease you any more; and you shall do everything I tell you. In the first place, then, wipe your eyes, and dry up your tears; for if Digby sees how red your cheeks can look when you've been crying, he may find out that you are not quite such a Venus as he fancies just now. There; go along!" and he pushed her gently away from him.

While this gayer conversation had been going on within, Mr. Osborn had passed through the glass doors, and was walking slowly up and down with Sir Robert Croyland. The subject they spoke upon must have been grave, for there was gloom upon both their faces when they returned.

"I know it," said Sir Robert Croyland to his companion, as they entered the room; "I am quite well aware of it; it is that which makes me urge speed."

"If such be your view," replied Mr. Osborn, "you are right, Sir Robert; and heaven will bless those acts which are done under such impressions."

The party in the drawing-room heard no more; and, notwithstanding the kindly efforts of Mrs. Barbara, and a thousand little impediments, which, "with the very best motives in the world," she created or discovered, all the arrangements for the double marriage were made with great promptitude and success. At the end of somewhat less than a fortnight, without any noise or parade, the two sisters stood together at the altar, and pledged their troth to those they truly loved. Sir Robert Croyland seemed well and happy; for during the last few days previous to the wedding, both his health and spirits had apparently improved. But ere a month was over, both his daughters received a summons to return, as speedily as possible, to Harbourne House. They found him on the bed of death, with his brother and Mr. Osborn sitting beside him. But their father greeted them with a well-contented smile, and reproved their tears in a very different tone from that which he had been generally accustomed to use.

"My dear children," he said, in a feeble voice, "I have often longed for this hour; and though life has become happier now, I have for many weeks seen death approaching, and have seen it without regret. I did not think it would have been so slow, and that was the cause of my hurrying your

marriage; for I longed to witness it with my own eyes, yet was unwilling to mingle the happiness of such a union with the thought that it took place while I was in sickness and danger. My brother will be a father to you, I am sure, when I am gone; but still it is some satisfaction to know that you have both better protectors, even here on earth, than he or I could be. I trust you are happy; and believe me, I am not otherwise, though lying here with death before me."

Towards four o'clock on the following day, the windows of Harbourne House were closed; and about a week after, the mortal remains of Sir Robert Croyland were conveyed to the family vault in the village church. Mr. Croyland succeeded to the estates and title of his brother; but he would not quit the mansion which he himself had built, leaving Mrs. Barbara with a handsome income, which he secured to her, to act the Lady Bountiful of Harbourne House.

The fate of Edith and Zara we need not farther trace. It was such as might be expected from the circumstances in which they were now placed. We will not venture to say that it was purely happy; for when was ever pure and unalloyed happiness found on earth? There were cares, there were anxieties, there were griefs from time to time: for the splendid visions of young imagination may be prophetic of joys that *shall* be ours, if we deserve them in our trial here, but are never realized within the walls of our mortal prison, and recede before us, to take their stand for ever beyond the portals of the tomb. But still they were as happy as human beings, perhaps, ever were; for no peculiar pangs or sufferings were destined to follow those which had gone before; and in their domestic life, having chosen well and wisely, they found, as every one will find who judges upon such grounds, that love, when it is pure, and high, and true, is a possession, to the brightness of which even hope can add no sweetness, imagination no splendour, that it does not in itself possess.

The reader may be inclined to ask the after fate of some of the other characters mentioned in this work. In regard to many of them, I must give an unsatisfactory reply. What became of most, indeed, I do not know. The name of Mowle, the officer of customs, is still familiar to the people of Hythe and its neighbourhood. It is certain that Ramley and one of his sons were hanged; but the rest of the records of that

respectable family are, I fear, lost to the public. Little Starlight seems to have disappeared from that part of the country, for some time; and in truth, I have no certainty that the well-known pickpocket, Night Ray, who was transported to Botany Bay, some thirty years after the period of this tale, and was in an attempt to escape, was the same person whose early er is here recorded. But of one thing the reader may be erfectly certain, that, whatever was the fortune which attended any of the persons I have mentioned; whether worldly pros-ity, or temporary adversity befell them, the real, the solid n, the happiness of spirit, was awarded in exact proportion ch, as their acts were good, and their hearts were pure.

THE END.