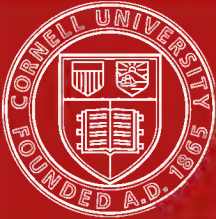


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The Reckoning

THE NOVELS OF CHARLES LEVER.

With an Introduction by Andrew Lang.

THE O'DONOGHUE.

A Tale of Ireland Fifty Years Ago.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A RENT IN A CLOUD.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHIZ.

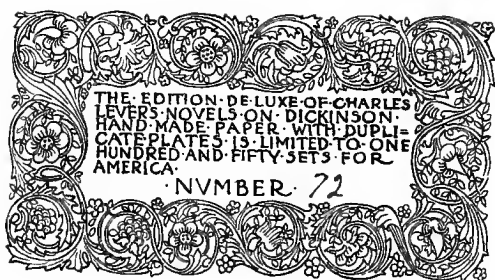
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
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1894.

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LEVER'S NOVELS ON DICKINSON
HAND-MADE PAPER WITH DUPLI-
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To JOHN WILSON, Esq.,

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF EDINBURGH, ETC.

DEAR SIR, — It is but seldom that the few lines of a dedication can give the pleasure I now feel in availing myself of your kind permission to inscribe this volume to you. As a boy, the greatest happiness of my life was in your writings; and among all my faults and failures, I can trace not one to your influence, while, if I have ever been momentarily successful in upholding the right, and denouncing the wrong, I owe more of the spirit that suggested the effort to yourself than to any other man breathing.

With my sincerest respects, and, if I dared, I should say with my warmest regards,

I am, yours truly,

CHARLES LEVER.

CARLSRUHE, October 18, 1845.

P R E F A C E.

IT was in wandering through the south of Ireland I came to visit the wild valley of Glenflesk, — a scene of loneliness and desolation, with picturesque beauty I have never seen surpassed. The only living creature I met for miles of the way was a very old man, whose dress and look bespoke extreme poverty, but who, on talking with him, I discovered to be the owner of four cows that were grazing on the rocky sides of the cliff. He had come some miles, he told me, to give the cows the spare herbage that cropped up amidst the granite bowlders. As I had seen no house nor trace of habitation as I came along, I was curious to know where he lived; but his answer, as he pointed to the mountain, was, “There, alone,” and this with evident unwillingness to be more freely communicative.

Though not caring to be interrogated, nor, like most Irish peasants, much disposed to have a talk with a stranger, he made no scruple to ask for alms, and pleaded his wretched rags — and they were very miserable — as a proof of his poverty. I did not think that the pittance I gave him exactly warranted me in asking how the owner of the cows we saw near us could be in that condition of want he represented; at all

events, I preferred not to dash the pleasure I was giving him by the question. We parted, therefore, on good terms; but some miles farther on in the Glen I learned from a woman who was "beelling" her clothes in the river that "ould Mat," as she called him, was one of the most well-to-do farmers in that part of the county, that he had given his daughters, of whom he had several, good marriage portions, and that his son was a thriving attorney in the town of Tralee. "Maybe, yer honer's heard of him," said the woman, — "Tim O'Donoghue."

It was no new thing to me to know the Irish peasant in his character of a hoarder and a saver. There is no one trait so indicative of the Celt as acquisitiveness, nor does Eastern story contain a man more given to the castle-building that grows out of some secret hoard — however small — than Paddy. He is to add half an acre to his potato garden, or to buy another pig, or to send the "gossoon" to a school in the town, or to pay his passage to New York. This tendency to construct a future, so strong in the Irish nature, has its rise in a great reliance on what he feels to be the goodness of God; a firm conviction that all his struggles are watched and cared for, and that every little turn of good fortune has been given him by some especial favor, lies deep in his nature, and suggests an amount of hope to him which a less sanguine spirit could never have conceived.

While I thought over the endless contrarities of this mysterious national character, where good and evil eternally lay side by side, I wondered within myself whether the new civilization of later years was likely to be successful in dealing with men whose temperaments and manners were so unlike the English, or were we right in extinguishing the old feudalism that bound the peas-

ant to the landlord before we had prepared each for the new relations of mere gain and loss that were in future to subsist between them?

Between the great families—the old houses of the land and the present race of proprietors—there lay a couple of generations of men who, with all the traditions and many of the pretensions of birth and fortune, had really become in ideas, modes of life, and habits, very little above the peasantry around them. They inhabited, it is true, the “great house,” and they were in name the owners of the soil; but, crippled by debt and overborne by mortgages, they subsisted in a shifty conflict with their creditors, rack-renting their miserable tenants to maintain it. Survivors of everything but pride of family, they stood there like the stumps, blackened and charred, the last remnants of a burnt forest, their proportions attesting the noble growth that had preceded them.

What would the descendants of these men prove when, destitute of fortune and helpless, they were thrown upon a world that actually regarded them as blamable for the unhappy condition of Ireland? Would they stand by “their order” in so far as to adhere to the cause of the gentry? or would they share the feelings of the peasant to whose lot they had been reduced, and charging on the Saxon the reverses of their fortune, stand forth as rebels to England?

Here was much for speculation, and something for story. For an opening scene what could I desire finer than the gloomy grandeur and the rugged desolation of Glenflesk; and if some patches of bright verdure here and there gleamed amidst the barrenness,—if a stray sunlight lit up the granite cliffs and made the heather glow,—might there not be certain reliefs of human ten-

derness and love to show that no scene in which man has a part is utterly destitute of those affections whose home is the heart? I had now got my theme and my locality. For my name I took the O'Donoghue: it had become associated in my mind with Glenflesk, and would not be separated from it.

Here, then, in one word, is the history of this book. If the performance bears but slight relation to the intention,—if, indeed, my story seems to have little reference to what suggested it,—it will be only another instance of a waywardness which has beset me through life, and left me never sure when I started for Norway that I might not find myself in Naples.

It is not necessary, perhaps, for me to say that no character in this tale was drawn from a model. I began the story, in so far as a few pages went, at a little inn at Killarney, and I believe I stole the name of Kerry O'Leary from one of the boatmen on the lake; but, so far as I am aware, it is the only theft in the book. I believe that the very crude notions of an English tourist for the betterment of Ireland, and some exceedingly absurd comments he made me on the habits of people which an acquaintanceship of three weeks enabled him to pronounce on, provoked me to draw the character of Sir Marmaduke; but I can declare that the traveller aforesaid only acted as tinder to a mine long prepared, and afforded me a long-sought-for opportunity, not for exposing, for I did not go that far, but for touching on the consummate effrontery with which a mere passing stranger can settle the difficulties and determine the remedies for a country in which the resident sits down overwhelmed by the amount, and utterly despairing of a solution.

I have elsewhere recorded that I have been blamed

for the fate I reserved for Kate O'Donoghue, and that she deserved something better than to have her future linked to one who was so unworthy of her in many ways. Till I re-read the story after a long lapse of years, I had believed that this charge was better founded than I am now disposed to think it. First of all, judging from an Irish point of view, I do not consent to regard Mark O'Donoghue as a bad fellow. The greater number of his faults were the results of neglected training, irregular — almost utter want of — education, and the false position of an heir to a property so swamped by debt as to be valueless. I will not say these are the ingredients which go to the formation of a very regular life or a very perfect husband, but they might all of them have made a worse character than Mark's if he had not possessed some very sterling qualities as a counterbalance. Secondly, I am not of those who think that the married life of a man is but the second volume of his bachelor existence. I rather incline to believe that he starts afresh in life under circumstances very favorable to the development of whatever is best, and to the extinguishment of what is worst, in him. That is, of course, where he marries well, and where he allies himself to qualities of temper and tastes which will serve as the complement or, at times, the correctives of his own. Now, Kate O'Donoghue would instance what I mean in this case.

Then I keep my best reason for the last, — they liked each other: this, if not a guarantee for their future happiness, is still the best "martingale" the game of marriage admits of.

I am free to own that the book I had in my head to write was a far better one than I have committed to paper; but as that is a sort of event that has happened

to better men than myself, I bear it as one of the accidents that authorship is heir to. At all events, my Public received it with favor, and I can now — after an interval of close on thirty years — recall with warm gratitude the reception it met with.

A French critic — one far too able to have his *dicta* lightly despised — has sneered at my making a poor ignorant peasant child find pleasure in the resonance of a Homeric verse ; but I could tell him of barefooted boys in the south, running errands for a scanty subsistence, with a knowledge of classical literature which would puzzle many a gowned student to cope with. If the improbabilities of this volume went no further than this, it would have been worthy of the reader's attention, and far more grateful to the conscience of the author.

CHARLES LEVER.

TRIESTE, 1872.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. GLENFLESK	1
II. THE WAYSIDE INN	7
III. THE "COTTAGE AND THE CASTLE"	15
IV. KERRY O'LEARY	31
V. IMPRESSIONS OF IRELAND	41
VI. "THE BLACK VALLEY"	51
VII. SIR ARCHY'S TEMPER TRIED	63
VIII. THE HOUSE OF SICKNESS	75
IX. A DOCTOR'S VISIT	83
X. AN EVENING AT "MARY" M'KELLY'S	92
XI. MISTAKES ON ALL SIDES	111
XII. THE GLEN AT MIDNIGHT	124
XIII. "THE GUARDSMAN"	135
XIV. THE COMMENTS ON A HURRIED DEPARTURE	145
XV. SOME OF THE PLEASURES OF PROPERTY	153
XVI. THE FOREIGN LETTER	166
XVII. KATE O'DONOGHUE	177
XVIII. A HASTY PLEDGE	186
XIX. A DIPLOMATIST DEFEATED	192
XX. TEMPTATION IN A WEAK HOUR	206
XXI. THE RETURN OF THE ENVOY	216
XXII. A MORNING VISIT	222
XXIII. SOME OPPOSITE TRAITS OF CHARACTER	230
XXIV. A WALK BY MOONLIGHT	246
XXV. A DAY OF DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS	251

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXVI. A LAST EVENING AT HOME	262
XXVII. A SUPPER PARTY	272
XXVIII. THE CAPITAL AND ITS PLEASURES	286
XXIX. FIRST IMPRESSIONS	300
XXX. OLD CHARACTERS WITH NEW FACES	308
XXXI. SOME HINTS ABOUT HARRY TALBOT	316
XXXII. A PRESAGE OF DANGER	327
XXXIII. THE ST. PATRICK'S BALL	333

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHIZ IN VOL. I.

Etchings.

THE RECKONING	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE FAREWELL CANTER	38
ROACH'S RETURN TO THE O'DONOGHUE CASTLE	122
ROACH'S CONVENIENCY	148
THE GAME OF CHESS	204
KERRY ASTONISHES SIR MARMADUKE	226
GOOD NIGHT!	270
THE WAGER	320

Illustrations in the Text.

A FIRESIDE GROUP	21
SIR ARCHY AND THE BEGGARS	67
KENNY O'LEARY READING THE NEWS BY DEPUTY	77
TERRY, SIR MARMADUKE, AND SYBELLA	114
SIR ARCHY IN A DILEMMA	125
FREDERICK AND MARK	197
THE CAVERN	213
MARK DRAWING A CORK	276
THE STUDENT	297
MARK'S EXIT FROM THE BALL	343
THE PAPER	350



The Poisoning

THE O'DONOGHUE:

A TALE OF IRELAND FIFTY YEARS AGO.



CHAPTER I.

GLENFLESK.

IN that wild and picturesque valley which winds its way between the town of Macroom and Bantry Bay, and goes by the name of Glenflesk, the character of Irish scenery is perhaps more perfectly displayed than in any other tract of the same extent in the island. The mountains, rugged and broken, are singularly fanciful in their outline; their sides a mingled mass of granite and straggling herbage, where the deepest green and the red purple of the heath-bell are blended harmoniously together. The valley beneath, alternately widening and narrowing, presents one rich meadow tract, watered by a deep and rapid stream, fed by a thousand rills that come tumbling and foaming down the mountain-sides, and to the traveller are seen like white streaks marking the dark surface of the precipice. Scarcely a hut is to be seen for miles of this lonely glen, and save for the herds of cattle and the flocks of sheep here and there to be descried, it would seem as if the spot had been forgotten by man, and left to sleep in its own gloomy desolation. The river itself has a character of wildness all its own, — now brawling over rugged rocks; now foaming between high and narrow sides, abrupt as walls, sometimes flowing over a ledge of granite, without a ripple on the surface; then plunging madly into some dark abyss, to emerge again lower down the valley in

one troubled sea of foam and spray : its dull roar the only voice that echoes in the mountain gorge.

Even where the humble roof of a solitary cabin can be seen, the aspect of habitation rather heightens than diminishes the feeling of loneliness and desolation around. The thought of poverty enduring its privations unseen and unknown, without an eye to mark its struggles, or a heart to console its griefs, comes mournfully on the mind, and one wonders what manner of man he can be who has fixed his dwelling in such solitude.

In vain the eye ranges to catch sight of one human being, save that dark speck be such which crowns the cliff, and stands out from the clear sky behind. Yes, it is a child watching the goats that are browsing along the mountain, and as you look, the swooping mist has hidden him from your view. Life of dreariness and gloom ! What sad and melancholy thoughts must be his companions, who spends the livelong day on these wild heaths, his eye resting on the trackless waste where no fellow-creature moves ! how many a mournful dream will pass over his mind ! what fearful superstitions will creep in upon his imagination, giving form and shape to the flitting clouds, and making the dark shadows, as they pass, seem things of life and substance.

Poor child of sorrow ! How destiny has marked you for misery ! For you no childish gambols in the sun — no gay playfellow — no paddling in the running stream, that steals along bright and glittering, like happy infancy — no budding sense of a fair world, opening in gladness, but all a dreary waste, the weariness of age bound up with the terrors of childhood.

The sun was just setting on a mellow evening, late in the autumn of a year towards the close of the last century, as a solitary traveller sat down to rest himself on one of the large rocks by the roadside ; divesting himself of his gun and shot-pouch, he lay carelessly at his length, and seemed to be enjoying the light breeze which came up the valley.

He was a young and powerfully built man, whose well-knit frame and muscular limbs showed how much habitual exercise had contributed to make the steepest paths of the mountain a task of ease to him. He was scarcely above the middle height, but with remarkable breadth of chest, and

that squareness of proportion which indicates considerable physical strength; his countenance, except for a look of utter listlessness and vacuity, had been pleasing; the eyes were large and full, and of the deep gray which simulates blue; the nose large and well formed; the mouth alone was unprepossessing — the expression it wore was of ill-humor and discontent; and this character seemed so habitual that even as he sat thus alone and in solitude the curl of the upper lip betrayed his nature.

His dress was a shooting-jacket of some coarse stuff, stained and washed by many a mountain streamlet; loose trousers of gray cloth, and heavy shoes, — such as are worn by the peasantry, wherever such luxuries are attainable. It would have been difficult, at a mere glance, to have decided what class or condition of life he pertained to; for, although certain traits bespoke the person of a respectable rank, there was a general air of neglect about him that half contradicted the supposition. He lay for some time perfectly motionless, when the tramp of horses at a distance down the glen suddenly roused him from his seeming apathy, and resting on his elbow he listened attentively. The sounds came nearer and nearer, and now the dull roll of a carriage could be heard approaching. Strange noises these in that solitary valley, where even the hoofs of a single horse but rarely roused the echoes. A sudden dip of the road at a little distance from where he lay concealed the view, and he remained in anxious expectancy, wondering what these sounds should portend, when suddenly the carriage seemed to have halted, and all was still.

For some minutes the youth appeared to doubt whether he had not been deceived by some swooping of the wind through the passes in the mountains, when the sound of voices fell on his ear, and at the same moment two figures appeared over the crest of the hill, slowly advancing up the road. The one was a man advanced in years, but still hale and vigorous in look; his features, even yet eminently handsome, wore an air of mingled frankness and haughtiness; there was in their expression the habitual character of one accustomed to exert a degree of command and influence over others, — a look which, of all the characteristics of temper, is least easily mistaken.

At his side walked one who, even at a passing glance, might be pronounced his daughter, so striking the resemblance between them. She did not seem above sixteen years of age, but through the youthful traits of her features you could mark the same character of expression her father's wore, modified by tender beauty, which at that age blends the loveliness of the girl with the graces of womanhood. Rather above than below the middle height, her figure had that distinguishing mark of elegance high birth impresses, and in her very walk a quick observer might detect an air of class.

They both stopped short as they gained the summit of the hill, and appeared wonder-struck at the scene before them. The gray gloom of twilight threw its sombre shadows over the valley, but the mountain peaks were tipped with the setting sun, and shone in those rich violet and purple hues the autumn heath displays so beautifully. The dark-leaved holly and the bright arbutus blossom lent their color to every jutting cliff and promontory, which, to eyes unacquainted with the scenery, gave an air of culture strangely at variance with the desolation around.

"Is this wild enough for your fancy, Sybella," said the father, with a playful smile, as he watched the varying expression of the young girl's features, "or would you desire something still more dreary?" But she made no answer. Her gaze was fixed on a thin wreath of smoke that curled its way upwards from what appeared a low mound of earth in the valley below the road; some branches of trees, covered with sods of earth, grass-grown and still green, were heaped up together, and through these the vapor found a passage and floated into the air.

"I am wondering what that fire can mean," said she, pointing downwards with her finger.

"Here is some one will explain it," said the old man, as for the first time he perceived the youth, who still maintained his former attitude on the bank, and with a studied indifference paid no attention to those whose presence had before so much surprised him.

"I say, my good fellow, what does that smoke mean we see yonder?"

The youth sprang to his feet with a bound that almost

startled his questioner, so sudden and abrupt the motion; his features, inactive and colorless the moment before, seemed almost convulsed now, while they became dark with blood.

“Was it to me you spoke?” said he, in a low, guttural tone, which his passion made actually tremulous.

“Yes —”

But before the old man could reply, his daughter, with the quick tact of womanhood, perceiving the mistake her father had fallen into, hastily interrupted him by saying, —

“Yes, sir; we were asking you the cause of the fire at the foot of that cliff.”

The tone and the manner in which the words were uttered seemed at once to have disarmed his anger; and although for a second or two he made no answer, his features recovered their former half-listless look, as he said :

“It is a cabin; there is another yonder, beside the river.”

“A cabin! Surely you cannot mean that people are living there?” said the girl, as a sickly pallor spread itself across her cheeks.

“Yes, to be sure,” replied the youth; “they have no better whereabouts.”

“What poverty — what dreadful misery is this!” said she, as the great tears gushed forth, and stole heavily down her face.

“They are not so poor,” answered the young man, in a voice of almost reproof. “The cattle along that mountain all belong to these people — the goats you see in that glen are theirs also.”

“And whose estate may this be?” said the old man.

Either the questioner or his question seemed to have called up again the youth’s former resentment, for he fixed his eyes steadily on him for some time without a word, and then slowly added, —

“This belongs to an Englishman, — a certain Sir Marmaduke Travers: it is the estate of O’Donoghue.”

“Was, you mean, once,” answered the old man, quickly.

“I mean what I say,” replied the other, rudely. “Confiscation cannot take away a right; it can at most —”

This speech was fortunately not destined to be finished, for while he was speaking, his quick glance detected a dark

object soaring above his head. In a second he had seized his gun, and taking a steady aim, he fired. The loud report was heard repeated in many a far-off glen, and ere its last echo died away, a heavy object fell upon the road not many yards from where they stood.

"This fellow," said the youth, as he lifted the body of a large black eagle from the ground—"this fellow was a confiscator too, and see what he has come to. You'd not tell me that our lambs were his, would you?"

The roll of wheels happily drowned these words, for by this time the postilions had reached the place, the four post-horses laboring under the heavy laden travelling carriage, with its innumerable boxes and imperials.

The postboys saluted the young man with marked deference, to which he scarcely deigned an acknowledgment, as he replaced his shot-pouch, and seemed to prepare for the road once more.

Meanwhile the old gentleman had assisted his daughter to the carriage, and was about to follow, when he turned around suddenly and said,—

"If your road lies this way, may I offer you a seat with us?"

The youth stared as if he did not well comprehend the offer, and his cheek flushed, as he answered coldly,—

"I thank you; but my path is across the mountain."

Both parties saluted distantly, the door of the carriage closed, and the word to move on was given, when the young man, taking two dark feathers from the eagle's wing, approached the window.

"I was forgetting," said he, in a voice of hesitation and diffidence; "perhaps you would accept these feathers."

The young girl smiled, and, half blushing, muttered some words in reply, as she took the offered present. The horses sprang forward the next instant, and a few minutes after the road was as silent and deserted as before, and save the retiring sound of the wheels nothing broke the stillness.

CHAPTER II.

THE WAYSIDE INN.

As the glen continues to wind between the mountains, it gradually becomes narrower, and at last contracts to a mere cleft, flanked on either side by two precipitous walls of rock, which rise to the height of several hundred feet above the road; this is the pass of Keim-an-eigh, one of the wildest and most romantic ravines of the scenery of the south.

At the entrance to this pass there stood, at the time we speak of, a small wayside inn, or shebeen-house, whose greatest recommendation was in the fact that it was the only place where shelter or refreshment could be obtained for miles on either side. An humble thatched cabin abutting against the granite rock of the glen, and decorated with an almost effaced sign of St. Finbar converting a very unprepossessing heathen, over the door, showed where Mary M'Kelly dispensed "entertainment for man and baste."

A chance traveller, bestowing a passing glance upon this modest edifice, might deem that an inn in such a dreary and unfrequented valley must prove a very profitless speculation. Few, very few, travelled the road — fewer still would halt to bait within ten miles of Bantry. Report, however, said differently; the impression in the country was, that "Mary's" — as it was briefly styled — had a readier share of business than many a more promising and pretentious hotel; in fact, it was generally believed to be the resort of all the smugglers of the coast, and the market where the shopkeepers of the interior repaired in secret to purchase the contraband wares and "run goods" which poured into the country from the shores of France and Holland.

Vast storehouses and caves were said to exist in the rock behind the house, to store away the valuable goods which from time to time arrived; and it was currently believed

that the cargo of an Indiaman might have been concealed within these secret recesses, and never a cask left in view to attract suspicion.

It is not into these gloomy receptacles of contraband that we would now conduct our reader, but into a far more cheerful and more comfortable locality — the spacious kitchen of the cabin, or, in fact, the apartment which served for the double purpose of cooking and eating — the common room of the inn, where around a blazing fire of black turf was seated a party of three persons.

At one side sat the fat and somewhat comely figure of Mary herself, a woman of some five-and-forty years, with that expression of rough and ready temperament the habits of a wayside inn will teach. She had a clear, full eye — a wide, but not unpleasant mouth — and a voice that suited well the mellifluous intonation of a Kerry accent. Opposite to her were two thin, attenuated old men, who, for dress, look, age, voice, and manner, it would have been almost impossible to distinguish from each other; for while the same weatherbeaten, shrivelled expression was common to both, their jackets of blue cloth, leather breeches, and top-boots, were so precisely alike, that they seemed the very Dromios brought back to life, to perform as postilions. Such they were — such they had been for above fifty years. They had travelled the country from the time they were boys — they entered the career together, and together they were jogging onward to the last stage of all, the only one where they hoped to be at rest! Joe and Jim Daly were two names no one ever heard disunited; they were regarded as but one corporeally, and although they affected at times to make distinctions themselves, the world never gave them credit for any consciousness of separate identity. These were the postilions of the travelling carriage, which having left at its destination, about two miles distant, they were now regaling themselves at Mary's, where the horses were to rest for the night.

“Faix, ma'am, and it's driving ye may call it,” said one of the pair, as he sipped a very smoking compound the hostess had just mixed — “a hard gallop every step of the way, barrin' the bit of a hill at Carrignacurra.”

“Well, I hope ye had the decent hansel for it, anyhow, Jim?”

“I’m Joe, ma’am, av it’s plazing to ye. Jim is the pole-end boy; he rides the layders. And it’s true for ye — they behaved dacent.”

“A goold guinea, divil a less,” said the other; “there’s no use in denying it. Begorra, it was all natural, them’s as rich as Crasis; sure did n’t I see the young lady herself throwing out the tenpenny bits to the gossoons, as we went by, as if it was dirt; bad luck to me, but I was going to throw down the Bishop of Cloyne.”

“Throw down who?” said the hostess.

“The near wheeler, ma’am; he’s a broken-kneed ould devil we bought from the bishop, and called him after him; and as I was saying, I was going to cross them on the pole and get a fall, just to have a scramble for the money with the gaffers.”

“‘They look so poor,’ says she. God help her — it’s little poverty she saw; there isn’t one of them crayters has n’t a sack of potatoes.”

“Ay — more of them a pig.”

“And hens,” chimed in the first speaker, with a horror at the imposition of people so comfortably endowed affecting to feel any pressure of poverty.

“And what’s bringing them here at all?” said Mrs. M’Kelly, with a voice of some asperity; for she foresaw no pleasant future in the fact of a resident great man, who would not be likely to give any encouragement to the branch of traffic her principal customers followed.

“Sorrow one of me knows,” was the safe reply of the individual addressed, who, not being prepared with any view of the matter save that founded on the great benefit to the country, preferred this answer to a more decisive one.

“’T is to improve the property, they say,” interposed the other, who was not equally endowed with caution. “To look after the estate himself he has come.”

“Improve, indeed!” echoed the hostess. “Much we want their improving! Why did n’t they leave us the ould families of the country? It’s little we used to hear of

improving, when I was a child. God be good to us! There was ould Miles O'Donoghue, the present man's father, I'd like to see what he'd say, if they talked to him about improvement. Ayeh! sure I mind the time a hogshead of claret did n't do the fortnight. My father — rest his soul! — used to go up to the house every Monday morning for orders; and ye'd see a string of cars following him at the same time, with tay, and sugar, and wine, and brandy, and oranges, and lemons. Them was the raal improvements!”

“’T is true for ye, ma’am. It was a fine house, I always heerd tell.”

“Forty-six in the kitchen, besides about fourteen colleens and gossoons about the place; the best of entertainment upstairs and down.”

“Musha! that was grand.”

“A keg of sperits, with a spigot, in the servants’ hall, and no saying by your leave, but drink while ye could stand over it.”

“The Lord be good to us!” piously ejaculated the twain.

“The hams was boiled in sherry wine.”

“Begorra, I wish I was a pig them times.”

“And a pike dare n’t come up to table without an elegant pudding in his belly that cost five pounds!”

“’T is the fish has their own luck always,” was the profound meditation at this piece of good fortune.

“Ayeh! ayeh!” continued the hostess, in a strain of lamentation, “when the ould stock was in it, we never heerd tell of improvements. He’ll be making me take out a license, I suppose,” said she, in a voice of half contemptuous incredulity.

“Faix! there’s no knowing,” said Joe, as he shook the ashes out of his pipe, and nodded his head sententiously, as though to say, that in the miserable times they’d fallen upon anything was possible.

“Licensed for sperits and groceries,” said Mrs. M’Kelly, with a sort of hysterical giggle, as if the thought were too much for her nerves.

“I would n’t wonder if he put up a ‘pike,’” stammered out Jim, thereby implying that human atrocity would have reached its climax.

The silence which followed this terrible suggestion was now loudly interrupted by a smart knocking at the door of the cabin, which was already barred and locked for the night.

"Who's there?" said Mary, as she held a cloak across the blaze of the fire, so as to prevent the light being seen through the apertures of the door — "'tis in bed we are, and late enough too."

"Open the door, Mary, it's me," said a somewhat confident voice. "I saw the fire burning brightly, and there's no use hiding it."

"Oh, troth, Mr. Mark, I'll not keep ye out in the cowl," said the hostess, as, unbarring the door, she admitted the guest whom we had seen some time since in the glen. "Sure enough, 't is n't an O'Donoghue we'd shut the door agin, anyhow."

"Thank ye, Mary," said the young man; "I've been all day in the mountains, and had no sport; and as that pleasant old Scotch uncle of mine gives me no peace when I come home empty-handed, I have resolved to stay here for the night, and try my luck to-morrow. Don't stir, Jim — there's room enough, Joe: Mary's fire is never so grudging but there's a warm place for every one. What's in this big pot here, Mary?"

"It's a stew, sir; more by token, of your honor's providin'."

"Mine — how is that?"

"The hare ye shot afore the door yesterday morning; sure it's raal luck we have it for you now." And while Mary employed herself in the pleasant bustle of preparing the supper, the young man drew near to the fire, and engaged the others in conversation.

"That travelling carriage was going on to Bantry, Joe, I suppose?" said the youth, in a tone of easy indifference.

"No, sir; they stopped at the lodge above."

"At the lodge! — surely you can't mean that they were the English family — Sir Marmaduke?"

"'T is just himself, and his daughter. I heerd them say the names as we were leaving Macroom. They were not expected here these three weeks; and Captain Hemsworth,

the agent, is n't at home; and they say there's no servants at the lodge, nor nothin' ready for the quality at all; and sure when a great lord like that —"

"He is not a lord, you fool; he has not a drop of noble blood in his body: he's a London banker — rich enough to buy birth, if gold could do it." The youth paused in his vehemence; then added, in a muttering voice, "Rich enough to buy the inheritance of those who have blood in their veins."

The tone of voice in which the young man spoke, and the angry look which accompanied these words, threw a gloom over the party, and for some time nothing was said on either side. At last he broke silence abruptly by saying, —

"And that was his daughter, then?"

"Yes, sir; and a purty crayture she is, and a kind-hearted. The moment she heerd she was on her father's estate, she began asking the names of all the people, and if they were well off, and what they had to ate, and where was the schools."

"The schools!" broke in Mary, in an accent of great derision — "musha, it's great schooling we want up the glen to teach us to bear poverty and cowl'd without complain-ing; learning is a fine thing for the hunger —"

Her irony was too delicate for the quick apprehension of poor Jim, who felt himself addressed by the remark, and piously responded, —

"It is so, glory be to God!"

"Well," said the young man, who now seemed all eagerness to resume the subject, — "well, and what then?"

"Then she was wondering where was the roads up to the cabins on the mountains, as if the likes of them people had roads!"

"They've ways of their own, the English," interrupted Jim, who felt jealous of his companion being always referred to, "for whenever we passed a little potato garden, or a lock of oats, it was always, 'God be good to us! but they're mighty poor hereabouts;' but when we got into the raal wild part of the glen, with divil a house nor a human being near us, sorrow word out of their mouths but 'fine!

beautiful! elegant!’ till we came to Keim-an-eigh, and then ye’d think that it was fifty acres of wheat they were looking at, wid all the praises they had for the big rocks and black cliffs over our heads.”

“I showed them your honor’s father’s place on the mountains,” said Joe.

“Yes, faith,” broke in Jim; “and the young lady laughed, and said, ‘You see, father, we have a neighbor after all.’”

The blood mounted to the youth’s cheek, till it became purple, but he did not utter a word.

“‘T is the O’Donoghue, my lady,’ said I,” continued Joe, who saw the difficulty of the moment, and hastened to relieve it; “‘that’s his castle up there, with the high tower. ’T was there the family lived these nine hundred years, whin the whole country was their own; and they wor kings here.’”

“And did you hear what the ould gentleman said then?” asked Jim.

“No, I did n’t — I was n’t mindin’ him,” rejoined Joe, endeavoring with all his might to repress the indiscreet loquacity of the other.

“What was it, Jim?” said the young man, with a forced smile.

“Faix, he begun a-laughing, yer honor, and says he, ‘We must pay our respects at Coort,’ says he; ‘and I’m sure we’ll be well received, for we know his Royal Highness already’ — that’s what he called yer honor.”

The youth sprang to his feet with a gesture so violent and sudden as to startle the whole party.

“What!” he exclaimed, “and are we sunk so low as to be a scoff and a jibe to a London money-changer? If I but heard him speak the words —”

“Arrah, he never said it at all,” said Joe, with a look that made his counterpart tremble all over. “That bosthoun there would make you believe he was in the coach, convarsing the whole way with him. Sure was n’t I riding the wheeler, and never heerd a word of it. Whisht, I tell ye, and don’t provoke me.”

“Ay, stop your mouth with some of this,” interposed

Mary, as she helped the smoking and savory mess around the table.

Jim looked down abashed and ashamed; his testimony was discredited; and without knowing why or wherefore, he yet had an indistinct glimmering that any effort to vindicate his character would be ill received; he therefore said nothing more. His silence was contagious, and the meal which a few moments before promised so pleasantly, passed off with gloom and restraint.

All Mary M'Kelly's blandishments, assisted by a smoking cup of mulled claret, — a beverage which not a château on the Rhone could rival in racy flavor, — failed to recall the young man's good-humor: he sat in gloomy silence, only broken at intervals by sounds of some low muttering to himself. Mary, at length having arranged the little room for his reception, bade him good-night, and retired to rest. The postilions sought their dens over the stable, and the youth, apparently lost in his own thoughts, sat alone by the embers of the turf fire, and at last sank to sleep where he was, by the chimney corner.

CHAPTER III.

THE "COTTAGE AND THE CASTLE."

OF Sir Marmaduke Travers there is little to tell the reader beyond what the few hints thrown out already may have conveyed to him. He was a London banker, whose wealth was reputed to be enormous. Originally a younger son, he succeeded somewhat late in life to the baronetcy and large estates of his family. The habits, however, of an active city life — the pursuits which a long career had made a second nature to him — rendered him both unfit to enter upon the less exciting duties of a country gentleman's existence, and made him regard such as devoid of interest or amusement. He continued, therefore, to reside in London for many years after he became the baronet; and it was only at the death of his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, that these habits became distasteful; he found that he could no longer continue a course which companionship and mutual feeling had rendered agreeable, and he resolved at once to remove to some one of his estates, where a new sphere of occupation might alleviate the sorrows of his loss. To this no obstacle of any kind existed. His only son was already launched into life as an officer in the Guards; and, except his daughter, so lately before the reader, he had no other children.

The effort to attain forgetfulness was not more successful here than it is usually found to be. The old man sought, but found not, in a country life the solace he expected. Neither his tastes nor his habits suited those of his neighbors; he was little of a sportsman, still less of a farmer. The intercourse of country social life was a poor recompense for the unceasing flow of London society. He grew wearied very soon of his experiment, and longed once more

to return to his old haunts and habits. One more chance, however, remained for him, and he was unwilling to reject without trying it. This was, to visit Ireland, where he possessed a large estate which he had never seen. The property, originally mortgaged to his father, was represented as singularly picturesque and romantic, possessing great mineral wealth, and other resources never examined into nor made available. His agent, Captain Hemsworth, a gentleman who resided on the estate, at his annual visit to the proprietor used to dilate upon the manifold advantages and capabilities of the property, and never ceased to implore him to pay a visit, if even for a week or two, sincerely trusting the while that such an intention might never occur to him. These entreaties, made from year to year, were the regular accompaniment of every settlement of account, and as readily replied to by a half promise, which the maker was certainly not more sincere in pledging.

Three years of country life had now, however, disposed Sir Marmaduke to reflect on this long unperformed journey; and, regardless of the fact that his agent was then grouse-shooting in Scotland, he set out at a moment's notice, and without a word to apprise the household at the lodge of his intended arrival, reached the house in the evening of an autumn day, by the road we have already been describing.

It is but justice to Sir Marmaduke to add that he was prompted to this step by other than mere selfish considerations. The state of Ireland had latterly become a topic of the press in both countries. The poverty of the people — interpreted in various ways, and ascribed to very opposite causes — was a constant theme of discussion and conversation. The strange phenomenon of a land teeming with abundance, yet overrun by a starving population, had just then begun to attract notice; and theories were rife in accounting for that singular and anomalous social condition, which, unhappily, the experience of an additional half-century has not succeeded in solving.

Sir Marmaduke was well versed in these popular writings. He had the "Whole State of Ireland" by heart; and so firmly was he persuaded that his knowledge of the subject was perfect, that he became actually impatient until he

had reached the country, and commenced the great scheme of regeneration and civilization, by which Ireland and her people were to be placed among the most favored nations. He had heard much of Irish indolence and superstition; Irish bigotry and intolerance; the indifference to comfort; the indisposition to exertion; the recklessness of the present; the improvidence of the future. He had been told that saint-days and holidays mulcted labor of more than half its due; that ignorance made the other half almost valueless. He had read that the easy contentment with poverty had made all industry distasteful, and all exertion, save what was actually indispensable, a thing to be avoided.

"Why should these things be, when they were not so in Norfolk nor in Yorkshire?" was the question he ever asked, and to which his knowledge furnished no reply. There, superstitions, if they existed, — and he knew not if they did, — came not in the way of daily labor. Saints never unharnessed the team, nor laid the plough inactive; comfort was a stimulant to industry that none disregarded. Habits of order and decorum made the possessor respected; poverty almost argued misconduct, and certainly was deemed a reproach. Why, then, not propagate the system of these happy districts in Ireland? To do this was the great end and object of his visit.

Philanthropy would often seem unhappily to have a dislike to the practical; the generous emotions appear shorn of their freedom when trammelled with the fruit of experience or reflection. So certainly it was in the case before us. Sir Marmaduke had the very best intentions, the weakest notions of their realization; the most unbounded desire for good, the very narrowest conceptions of how to effect it. Like most theorists, no speculative difficulty was great enough to deter; no practical obstacle was so small as not to affright him. It never, apparently, occurred to him that men are not everywhere alike, and this trifling omission was the source of difficulties which he persisted in ascribing to causes outside of himself. Generous, kind-hearted, and benevolent, he easily forgave an injury; never willingly inflicted one. He was also, however, hot-tempered

and passionate; he could not brook opposition to his will where its object seemed laudable to himself, and was utterly unable to make allowance for prejudices and leanings in others, simply because he had never experienced them in his own breast.

Such was, in a few words, the present occupant of "the Lodge," as the residence of the agent was styled. Originally a hunting-box, it had been enlarged and ornamented by Captain Hemsworth, and converted into a cottage of singular beauty without, and no mean pretension to comfort within doors. It occupied an indenture of the glen of Keim-an-eigh, and stood on the borders of a small mountain lake, the surface of which was dotted with wooded islands. Behind the cottage, and favored by the shelter of the ravine, the native oaks grew to a great size, and contrasted by the rich foliage waving in the breeze with the dark sides of the cliff opposite, rugged, barren, and immutable.

In all the luxuriance of this mild climate, shrubs attained the height of trees; and flowers, rare enough elsewhere to demand the most watchful care, grew here, unattended and unregarded. The very grass had a depth of green softer and more pleasing to the eye than in other places. It seemed as if nature had, in compensation for the solitude around, shed her fairest gifts over this lonely spot, — one bright gem in the dreary sky of winter.

About a mile further down the glen, and seated on a lofty pinnacle of rock, immediately above the road, stood the once proud castle of the O'Donoghue. Two square and massive towers still remained to mark its ancient strength, and the ruins of various outworks and bastions could be traced, extending for a considerable distance on every side. Between these square towers, and occupying the space where, originally, a curtain wall stood, a long, low building now extended, whose high-pitched roof and narrow windows vouched for an antiquity of little more than a hundred years. It was a strange, incongruous pile, in which fortress and farm-house seemed welded together, the whole no bad type of its past and its present owners. The approach was by a narrow causeway cut in the rock, and protected by a

square keep, through whose deep arch the road penetrated, flanked on either hand by a low battlemented wall; along these, two rows of lime-trees grew, stately and beautiful in the midst of all the ruin about them. They spread their waving foliage around, and threw a mellow, solemn shadow along the walk. Except these, not a tree nor even shrub was to be seen; the vast woods of nature's own planting had disappeared, the casualties of war, the chances of times of trouble, or the more ruinous course of poverty, had laid them low, and the barren mountain now stood revealed, where once were waving forests and shady groves, the home of summer birds, the lair of the wild deer.

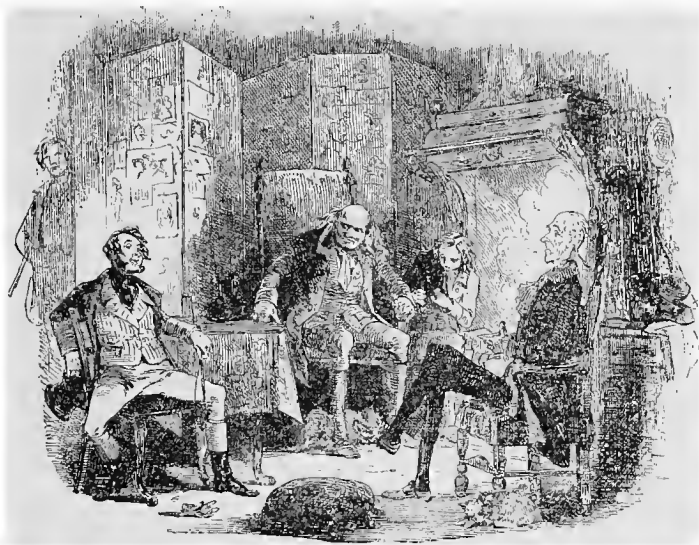
Cows and farm-horses were stabled in what once had been the outworks of the castle. Implements of husbandry lay carelessly on all sides, neglect and decay marked everything, the garden wall was broken down in many places, and cattle strayed at will among the torn fruit-trees and dilapidated terraces; while, as if to add to the dreary aspect of the scene, the ground for a considerable distance around had been tilled, but never subsequently restored to grass land; and now, along its ridged surface noisome weeds and thistles grew rankly, tainting the air with their odor, and sending up heavy exhalations from the moist and spongy earth. If, without, all looked sad and sorrow-struck, the appearances within were not much better. A large flagged hall opened upon two long ill-lighted corridors, from which a number of small sitting-rooms led off. Many of these were perfectly devoid of furniture; in the others, what remained seemed to owe its preservation to its want of value rather than any other quality. Cracked looking-glasses, broken chairs rudely mended by some country hand, ragged and patched carpets, were the only things to be found, with here and there some dirt-disfigured piece of framed canvas, which, whether tapestry or painting, no eye could now discover. These apartments bore little or no trace of habitation; indeed, for many years they were rarely entered by any one. A large square room in one of the towers, of some forty feet in dimensions, was the ordinary resort of the family, serving the purposes of drawing and dining-room. This was somewhat better in appear-

ance. Whatever articles of furniture had any pretension to comfort or convenience were here assembled; and here were met old-fashioned sofas, deep arm-chairs, quaint misshapen tables like millepedes, and fat old foot-stools, the pious work of long-forgotten grandmothers. A huge screen, covered with a motley array of prints and caricatures, cut off the group around the ample fireplace from the remainder of the apartment; and it is within this charmed circle we would now conduct our reader.

In the great arm-chair to the right of the ample fireplace, sat a powerfully built old man, whose hair was white as snow, and fell in long waving masses at either side of his head. His forehead, massive and expanded, surmounted two dark, penetrating eyes, which even extreme old age had not deprived of their lustre. The other features of his face were rather marked by a careless, easy sensuality, than by any other character, except that in the mouth the expression of firmness was strongly displayed. His dress was a strange mixture of the costume of gentleman and peasant. His coat, worn and threadbare, bore traces of better days, in its cut and fashion. His vest also showed the fragment of tarnished embroidery along the margin of the flapped pockets; but the coarse knee-breeches of corduroy, and the thick gray lamb's-wool stockings, wrinkled along the legs, were no better than those worn by the poorer farmers of the neighborhood.

This was the O'Donoghue himself. Opposite to him sat one as unlike him in every respect as it was possible to conceive. He was a tall, spare, raw-boned figure, whose gray eyes and high cheek-bones bore traces of a different race to that of the aged chieftain. An expression of intense acuteness pervaded every feature of his face, and seemed concentrated about the angles of the mouth, where a series of deep wrinkles were seen to cross and intermix with each other, — omens of a sarcastic spirit, indulged without the least restraint on the part of its possessor. His wiry gray hair was brushed rigidly back from his bony temples, and fastened into a short cue behind, thus giving greater apparent length to his naturally long and narrow face. His dress was that of a gentleman of the time, — a full-skirted

coat of a dark brown, with a long vest descending below the hips; breeches somewhat a deeper shade of the same color, and silk stockings, with silver-buckled shoes, completed an attire, which, if plain, was yet scrupulously neat and respectable. As he sat, almost bolt upright in his chair, there was a look of vigilance and alertness about him very opposite to the careless, nearly drooping air of the O'Donoghue. Such was Sir Archibald M'Nab, the brother



of the O'Donoghue's late wife; for the old man had been a widower for several years. Certain circumstances of a doubtful and mysterious nature had made him leave his native country of Scotland many years before; and since that, he had taken up his abode with his brother-in-law, whose retired habits and solitary residence afforded the surest guarantee against his ever being traced. His age must have been almost as great as the O'Donoghue's; but the energy of his character, the lightness of his frame, and the habits of his life, all contributed to make him seem much younger.

Never were two natures more dissimilar. The one, reckless, lavish, and improvident; the other, cautious, saving, and full of forethought. O'Donoghue was frank and open, — his opinions easily known, his resolutions hastily formed. M'Nab was close and secret, carefully weighing everything before he made up his mind, and not much given to imparting his notions when he had done so.

In one point alone was there any similarity between them: pride of ancestry and birth they both possessed in common; but this trait, so far from serving to reconcile the other discrepencies of their natures, kept them even wider apart, and added to the passive estrangement of ill-matched associates an additional element of active discord.

There was a lad of some fifteen or sixteen years of age, who sat beside the fire on a low stool, busily engaged in deciphering, by the fitful light of the bog-wood, the pages of an old volume, in which he seemed deeply interested. The blazing pine, as it threw its red gleam over the room, showed the handsome forehead of the youth, and the ample locks of rich auburn which hung in clusters over it; while his face was strikingly like the old man's, the mildness of its expression — partly the result of youth, partly the character imparted by his present occupation — was unlike that of either his father or brother; for Herbert O'Donoghue was the younger son of the house, and was said, both in temper and appearance, to resemble his mother.

At a distance from the fire, and with a certain air of half assurance, half constraint, sat a man of some five-and-thirty years of age, whose dress of green coat, short breeches, and top-boots suggested at once the jockey, to which the mingled look of confidence and cunning bore ample corroboration. This was a well-known character in the South of Ireland at that time. His name was Lanty Lawler. The sporting habits of the gentry, their easiness on the score of intimacy, the advantages of a ready-money purchaser whenever they wished "to weed their stables," admitted the horse-dealer pretty freely among a class to which neither his habits nor station could have warranted him in presenting himself. But, in addition to these qualities, Lanty was rather a prize in remote and unvisited tracts such as

the one we have been describing; his information being both great and varied in everything going forward. He had the latest news of the capital, — the fashions of hair and toilet, the colors worn by the ladies in vogue, and the newest rumors of any intended change. He knew well the gossip of politics and party; upon the probable turn of events in and out of Parliament he could hazard a guess with a fair prospect of accuracy. With the prices of stock and the changes in the world of agriculture he was thoroughly familiar, and had, besides, a world of stories and small talk on every possible subject, which he brought forth with the greatest tact as regarded the tastes and character of his company, one half of his acquaintances being totally ignorant of the gifts and graces by which he obtained fame and character with the other.

A roving, vagabond life gave him a certain free-and-easy air, which, among the majority of his associates, was a great source of his popularity; but he well knew when to lay this aside and assume the exact shade of deference and respect his company might require. If, then, with O'Donoghue himself he would have felt perfectly at ease, the presence of Sir Archy, and his taciturn solemnity, was a sad check upon him, and mingled the freedom he felt with a degree of reserve far from comfortable. However, he had come for a purpose, and, if successful, the result would amply remunerate him for any passing inconvenience he might incur; and with this thought he armed himself as he entered the room some ten minutes before.

"So you are looking for Mark?" said the O'Donoghue to Lanty. "You can't help hankering after that gray mare of his."

"Sure enough, sir, there's no denying it. I'll have to give him the forty pounds for her, though, as sure as I'm here, she's not worth the money; but when I've a fancy for a beast, or take a conceit out of her, — it's no use, I must buy her; that's it!"

"Well, I don't think he'll give her to you now, Lanty; he has got her so quiet — so gentle — that I don't think he'll part with her."

"It's little a quiet one suits him; faix, he'd soon tire of

her if she was n't rearing or plunging like mad! He's an elegant rider, God bless him! I've a black horse now that would mount him well; he's out of 'Divil-may-care,' Mooney's horse, and can take six foot of a wall flying, with fourteen stone on his back; and barring the least taste of a capped hock, you could not see speck nor spot about him wrong."

"He's in no great humor for buying, just now," interposed the O'Donoghue, with a voice to which some suddenly awakened recollection imparted a tone of considerable depression.

"Sure we might make a swop with the mare," rejoined Lanty, determined not to be foiled so easily. And then, as no answer was forthcoming, after a long pause he added, "And have n't I the elegant pony for Master Herbert there? a crame color — clean bred — with white mane and tail. If he was the Prince of Wales he might ride her. She has racing speed — they tell me, for I only have her a few days; and, faix, ye'd win all the county stakes with her."

The youth looked up from his book, and listened with glistening eyes and animated features to the description, which, to one reared as he was, possessed no common attraction.

"Sure I'll send over for her to-morrow, and you can try her," said Lanty, as if replying to the gaze with which the boy regarded him.

"Ye mauna do nae sich a thing," broke in M'Nab. "Keep your roguerries and rascalities for the auld generation ye hae assisted to ruin; but leave the young anes alane to mind ither matters than dicing and horse-racing."

Either the O'Donoghue conceived the allusion one that bore hardly on himself, or he felt vexed that the authority of a father over his son should have been usurped by another, or both causes were in operation together, for he turned an angry look on Sir Archy, and said, —

"And why should n't the boy ride? was there ever one of his name or family that did n't know how to cross a country? I don't intend him for a Highland pedler."

"He might be waur," retorted M'Nab, solemnly, — "he might be an Irish beggar."

"By my soul, sir —" broke in O'Donoghue. But fortunately an interruption saved the speech from being concluded; for at the same moment the door opened, and Mark O'Donoghue, travel-stained and weary-looking, entered the room.

"Well, Mark," said the old man, as his eyes glistened at the appearance of his favorite son, "what sport, boy?"

"Poor enough, sir; five brace in two days is nothing to boast of, besides two hares. Ah, Lanty, you here — how goes it?"

"Purty well, as times go, Mr. Mark," said the horse-dealer, affecting a degree of deference he would not have deemed necessary had they been alone. "I'm glad to see you back again."

"Why — what old broken-down devils have you now got on hand to pass off upon us? It's fellows like you destroy the sport of the country. You carry away every good horse to be found, and cover the country with spavined, wind-galled brutes, not fit for the kennel."

"That's it, Mark; give him a canter, lad," cried the old man, joyfully.

"I know what you are at, well enough," resumed the youth, encouraged by these tokens of approval; "you want that gray mare of mine. You have some fine English officer ready to give you a hundred and fifty, or, maybe, two hundred guineas for her, the moment you take her over to England."

"May I never —"

"That's the trade you drive. Nothing too bad for us; nothing too good for them."

"See, now, Mr. Mark, I hope I may never —"

"Well, Lanty, one word for all: I'd rather send a bullet through her skull this minute than let you have her for one of your fine English patrons."

"Won't you let me speak a word at all?" interposed the horse-dealer, in an accent half imploring, half deprecating. "If I buy the mare — and it is n't for want of a sporting offer if I don't — she'll never go to England; no — devil a step. She's for one in the country here beside you; but I won't say more, and there, now" — at these words he drew

a soiled black-leather pocket-book from the breast of his coat, and, opening it, displayed a thick roll of bank-notes, tied with a piece of string, — “there ’s sixty pounds in that bundle there; at least, I hope so, for I never counted it since I got it. Take it for her or leave it, just as you like; and may I never have luck with a beast, but there ’s not a gentleman in the county would give the same money for her.” Here he dropped his voice to a whisper, and added, “Sure the speedy cut is ten pounds off her price any day, between two brothers.”

“What!” said the youth, as his brows met in passion, and his heightened color showed how his anger was raised.

“Well, well, it ’s no matter; there ’s my offer. And if I make a ten-pound note of her, sure it ’s all I live by; I was n’t born to an estate and a fine property, like yourself.”

These words, uttered in such a tone as to be inaudible to the rest, seemed to mollify the young man’s wrath; for, sullenly stretching forth his hand, he took the bundle and opened it on the table before him.

“A dry bargain never was a lucky one, they say, Lanty; is n’t that so?” said the O’Donoghue, as, seizing a small hand-bell, he ordered up a supply of claret, as well as the more vulgar elements for punch, should the dealer, as was probable, prefer that liquor.

“These notes seem to have seen service,” muttered Mark; “here ’s a ragged fellow. There ’s no making out whether he ’s two or ten.”

“They were well handled, there ’s no doubt of it,” said Lanty; “the tenants was paying them in; and sure you know yourself how they thumb and finger a note before they part with it. You ’d think they were trying to take leave of them. There ’s many a man can’t read a word can tell you the amount of a note just by the feel of it! — Thank you, sir, I ’ll take the spirits — it ’s what I ’m most used to.”

“Who did you get them from, Lanty?” said the O’Donoghue.

“Malachi Glynn, sir, of Cahernavorra, and, by the same token, I got a hearty laugh at the same house once before.”

"How was that?" said the old man; for he saw by the twinkle of Lanty's eye that a story was coming.

"Faix, just this way, sir. It was a little after Christmas last year that Mr. Malachi thought he'd go up to Dublin for a month or six weeks with the young ladies, just to show them, by way of — for, ye see, there's no dealing at all, down here — and he thought he'd bring them up and see what could be done. Musha! but they're the hard stock to get rid of; and somehow they don't improve by holding them over. And as there was levees, and drawing-rooms, and balls going on, sure it would go hard but he'd get off a pair of them, anyhow. Well, it was an elegant scheme, if there was money to do it; but devil a farthin' was to be had, high or low, beyond seventy pounds I gave for the two carriage-horses and the yearlings that was out in the field, and sure that would n't do at all. He tried the tenants for 'the November;' but what was the use of it, though he offered a receipt in full for ten shillings in the pound? — when a lucky thought struck him. Troth, and it's what ye may call a grand thought too. He was walking about before the door, thinking and ruminating how to raise the money, when he sees the sheep grazing on the lawn forment him — not that he could sell one of them, for there was a strap of a bond or mortgage on them a year before. 'Faix,' and says he, 'when a man's hard up for cash, he's often obliged to wear a mighty threadbare coat, and go cold enough in the winter season — and sure it's reason sheep is n't better than Christians; and begorra,' says he, 'I'll have the fleece off ye, if the weather was twice as cowl.' No sooner said than done. They were ordered into the haggard-yard the same evening, and, as sure as ye're there, they cut the wool off them three days after Christmas. Musha! but it was a pitiful sight to see them turned out shivering and shaking, with the snow on the ground. And it did n't thrive with him; for three died the first night. Well, when he seen what come of it, he had them all brought in again, and they gathered all the spare clothes and the ould rags in the house together, and dressed them up, — at least, the ones that were worst; and such a set of craytures never was seen. One had an old

petticoat on, another a flannel waistcoat, many could only get a cravat or a pair of gaiters; but the ram beat all, for he was dressed in a pair of corduroy breeches and an old spencer of the master's; and may I never live, if I did n't roll down full length on the grass when I seen him."

For some minutes before Lanty had concluded his story, the whole party were convulsed with laughter. Even Sir Archy vouchsafed a grave smile, as, receiving the tale in a different light, he muttered to himself, —

"They 're a' the same, — ne'er-do-well, reckless deevils."

One good result, at least, followed the anecdote: the good-humor of the company was restored at once. The bargain was finally concluded; and Lanty succeeded by some adroit flattery in recovering five pounds of the price, under the title of luck-penny, — a portion of the contract M'Nab would have interfered against at once, but that, for his own especial reasons, he preferred remaining silent.

The party soon after separated for the night, and as Lanty sought the room usually destined for his accommodation, he muttered, as he went, his self-congratulations on his bargain. Already he had nearly reached the end of the long corridor, where his chamber lay, when a door was cautiously opened, and Sir Archy, attired in a dressing-gown, and with a candle in his hand, stood before him.

"A word wi' ye, Master Lawler," said he, in a low, dry tone the horse-dealer but half liked. "A word wi' ye before ye retire to rest."

Lanty followed the old man into the apartment with an air of affected carelessness, which soon, however, gave way to surprise, as he surveyed the chamber, so little like any other in that dreary mansion. The walls were covered with shelves, loaded with books; maps and prints lay scattered about on tables. An oak cabinet of great beauty in form and carving occupied a deep recess beside the chimney; and over the fireplace a claymore of true Highland origin, and a pair of silver-mounted pistols, were arranged like a trophy, surmounted by a flat Highland cap, with a thin black eagle's feather.

Sir Archy seemed to enjoy the astonishment of his guest, and for some minutes made no effort to break silence. At length he said, —

"Ye war speaking about a sma' powny for the laird's son, Mister Lawler: may I ask ye the price?"

The words acted like a talisman; Lanty was himself in a moment. The mere mention of horseflesh brought back the whole crowd of his daily associations, and with his native volubility he proceeded, not to reply to the question, but to enumerate the many virtues and perfections of the "sweetest tool that ever travelled on four legs."

Sir Archy waited patiently till the eloquent eulogy was over, and then dryly repeated his first demand.

"Is it her price?" said Lanty, repeating the question to gain time to consider how far circumstances might warrant him in pushing a market. "It's her price ye're asking me, Sir Archibald? Troth, and I'll tell you; there's not a man in Kerry could say what's her price. Goold would n't pay for her, av it was value was wanted. See, now, she's not fourteen hands high, but may I never leave this room if she would n't carry me — ay, myself here, twelve stone six in the scales — over e'er a fence between this and Inchigeela."

"It's no exactly to carry you that I was making my inquiry," said the old man, with an accent of more asperity than he had used before.

"Well, then, for Master Herbert — sure she is the very beast —"

"What are you asking for her? Canna you answer a straightforred question, man?" reiterated Sir Archy, in a voice there was no mistaking.

"Twenty guineas, then," replied Lanty, in a tone of defiance; "and if ye offer me pounds I won't take it."

Sir Archy made no answer; but turning to the old cabinet, he unlocked one of the small doors, and drew forth a long leather ponch, curiously embroidered with silver; from this he took ten guineas in gold, and laid them leisurely on the table. The horse dealer eyed them askance, but without the slightest sign of having noticed them.

"I'm no goin' to buy your beast, Mr. Lawler," said the old man, slowly; "I'm just goin' merely to buy your ain good sense and justice. You say the powny is worth twenty guineas?"

"As sure as I stand here. I would n't —"

"Weel, weel, I'm content. There's half the money; tak' it, but never let's hear anither word about her here. Tak' her awa' wi' ye; sell or shoot her, do what ye please wi' her; but, mind me, man," — here his voice became full, strong, and commanding, — "tak' care that ye meddle not wi' that young callant, Herbert. Dinna fill his head wi' ranting thoughts of dogs and horses. Let there be one of the house wi' a soul above a scullion or a groom. Ye have brought ruin enough here; you can spare the boy, I trow. There, sir, tak' your money."

For a second or two Lanty seemed undecided whether to reject or accept a proposal so humiliating in its terms; and when at length he acceded, it was rather from his dread of the consequences of refusal than from any satisfaction the bargain gave him.

"I'm afraid, Sir Archibald," said he, half timidly, — "I'm afraid you don't understand me well."

"I'm afraid I do," rejoined the old man, with a bitter smile on his lip; "but it's better we should understand each other. Good-night."

"Well, good-night to you, anyhow," said Lanty, with a slight sigh, as he dropped the money into his pocket, and left the room.

"I have bought the scoundrel cheap!" muttered Sir Archy, as the door closed.

"Begorra, I thought he was twice as knowing!" was Lanty's reflection, as he entered his own chamber.

CHAPTER IV.

KERRY O'LEARY.

LANTY LAWLER was stirring the first in the house. The late sitting of the preceding evening, and the deep potations he had indulged in, left little trace of weariness on his well-accustomed frame. Few contracts were ratified in those days without the solemnity of a drinking bout, and the habits of the O'Donoghue household were none of the most abstemious. All was still and silent, then, as the horse-dealer descended the stairs and took the path towards the stable, where he had left his hackney the night before.

It was Lanty's intention to take possession of his new purchase, and set out on his journey before the others were stirring; and with this object he wended his way across the weed-grown garden, and into the wide and dreary courtyard of the building.

Had he been disposed to moralize, — assuredly an occupation he was little given to, — he might have indulged the vein naturally enough as he surveyed on every side the remains of long past greatness and present decay. Beautifully proportioned columns, with florid capitals, supplied the place of gate-piers. Richly carved armorial bearings were seen upon the stones used to repair the breaches in the walls. Fragments of inscriptions and half-obliterated dates appeared amid the moss-grown ruins; and the very door of the stable had been a portal of dark oak, studded with large nails, its native strength having preserved it when even the masonry was crumbling to decay. Lanty passed these with perfect indifference. Their voice awoke no echo within his breast; and even when he noticed them, it was to mutter some jeering allusion to their fallen estate,

rather than with any feeling of reverence for what they once represented.

The deep bay of a hound now startled him, however. He turned suddenly round, and close beside him, but within the low wall of a ruined kennel-yard, lay a large fox-hound, so old and feeble that, even roused by the approach of a stranger, he could not rise from the ground, but lay helplessly on the earth, and with uplifted throat sent forth a long wailing note. Lanty leaned upon the wall, and looked at him. The emotions which other objects failed to suggest, seemed to flock upon him now. That poor dog, the last of a once noble pack, whose melody used to ring through every glen and ravine of the wild mountains, was an appeal to his heart he could not withstand, and he stood with his gaze fixed upon him.

"Poor old fellow!" said he, compassionately; "it's a lonely thing for you to be there now, and all your friends and companions dead and gone. Rory, my boy, don't you know me?"

The tones of his voice seemed to soothe the animal, for he responded in a low cadence indescribably melancholy.

"That 's my boy. Sure I knew you did n't forget me;" and he stooped over and patted the poor beast upon the head.

"The top of the morning to you, Mister Lawler," cried out a voice straight over his head; and at the same instant a strange-looking face was protruded from a little one-paned window of a hayloft. "'T is early you are to-day."

"Ah, Kerry, how are you, man? I was taking a look at Rory, here."

"Faix, he's a poor sight now," responded the other, with a sigh, "but he was n't so once. I mind the time he could lead the pack over Cubber-na-creena mountain, and not a dog but himself catch the scent, after a hard frost and a north wind. I never knew him wrong. His tongue was as true as the priest's, — sorrow lie in it."

A low whine from the poor old beast seemed to acknowledge the praise bestowed upon him; and Kerry continued, —

"It's truth, I'm telling; and if it was n't, it's just

himself would contradict me. Tally-ho! Rory — tally-ho! my ould boy;" and both man and dog joined in a deep-toned cry together.

The old walls sent back the echoes, and for some seconds the sounds floated through the still air of the morning.

Lanty listened with animated features and lit-up eyes to notes which so often had stirred the strongest chords of his heart, and then suddenly, as if recalling his thoughts to their former channel, cried out, —

"Come down, Kerry, my man, — come down here, and unlock the door of the stable. I must be early on the road this morning."

Kerry O'Leary — for so was he called, to distinguish him from those of the name in the adjoining county — soon made his appearance in the court-yard beneath. His toilet was a hasty one, consisting merely of a pair of worn corduroy small-clothes and an old blue frock, with faded scarlet collar and cuffs, which, for convenience, he wore on the present occasion buttoned at the neck, and without inserting his arms in the sleeves, leaving these appendages to float loosely at his side. His legs and feet were bare, as was his head, save what covering it derived from a thick fell of strong black hair that hung down on every side like an ill-made thatch.

Kerry was not remarkable for good looks. His brow was low, and shaded two piercing black eyes, set so closely together, that they seemed to present to the beholder one single continuous dark streak beneath his forehead. A short snubby nose, a wide thick-lipped mouth, and a heavy massive under-jaw, made up an assemblage of features, which, when at rest, indicated little remarkable or striking; but when animated and excited, displayed the strangest possible union of deep cunning and simplicity, intense curiosity and apathetic indolence. His figure was short, almost to dwarfishness; and as his arms were enormously long, they contributed to give that air to his appearance. His legs were widely bowed, and his gait had that slouching, shambling motion so indicative of an education cultivated among horses and stable-men. So it was, in fact; Kerry had begun life as a jockey. At thirteen he rode a

winning race at the Curragh, and came in first on the back of Blue Blazes, the wickedest horse of the day in Ireland. From that hour he became a celebrity, and, until too old to ride, was the crack jockey of his time. From jockey he grew into trainer, — the usual transition of the tadpole to the frog; and when the racing stud was given up by the O'Donoghue in exchange for the hunting-field, Kerry led the pack to their glorious sport. As time wore on, and its course brought saddening fortunes to his master, Kerry's occupation was invaded; the horses were sold, the hounds given up, and the kennel fell to ruins. Of the large household that once filled the castle, a few were now retained; but among these was Kerry. It was not that he was useful, or that his services could minister to the comfort or convenience of the family; far from it, — the commonest offices of in-door life he was ignorant of, and, even if he knew, would have shrunk from performing them, as being a degradation. His whole skill was limited to the stable-yard, and there now his functions were unneeded. It would seem as if he were kept as a kind of memento of their once condition, rather than anything else. There was a pride in maintaining one who did nothing the whole day but lounge about the offices and the court-yard, in his old ragged suit of huntsman. And so, too, it impressed the country people, who, seeing him, believed that at any moment the ancient splendor of the house might shine forth again, and Kerry, as of yore, ride out on his thoroughbred, to make the valleys ring with music. He was, as it were, a kind of staff, through which, at a day's notice, the whole regiment might be mustered. It was in this spirit he lived, and moved, and spoke. He was always going about looking after a "nice beast to carry the master," and a "real bit of blood for Master Mark;" and he would send a gossoon to ask if Barry O'Brien of the bridge "heard tell of a fox in the cover below the road." In fact, his preparations ever portended a speedy resumption of the habits in which his youth and manhood were spent.

Such was the character who now, in the easy dishabille described, descended into the court-yard with a bunch of keys in his hand, and led the way towards the stable.

"I put the little mare into the hack-stable, Mr. Lawler," said he, "because the hunters is in training, and I did n't like to disturb them with a strange beast."

"Hunters in training!" replied Lanty, in astonishment. "Why, I thought he had nothing but the gray mare with the black legs."

"And sure, if he has n't," responded Kerry, crankily, "could n't he buy them when he wants them?"

"Oh, that 's it," said the other, laughing to himself. "No doubt of it, Kerry. Money will do many a thing."

"Oh, it 's wishing it I am for money! Bad luck to the peace or ease I ever seen since they became fond of money. I remember the time it was, 'Kerry, go down and bring this, or take that,' and devil a more about it; and lashings of everything there was. See, now! if the horses could eat peas-pudding and drink punch, they 'd got it for askin'; but now it 's all for saving, and saving. And sure, what 's the use of goold? God be good to us, as I heard Father Luke say, he 'd do as much for fifteen shillings as for fifty pounds, av it was a poor boy wanted it."

"What nonsense are you talking, you old sinner, about saving? Why, man, they have n't got as much as they could bless themselves on among them all. You need n't be angry, Kerry. It 's not Lanty Lawler you can humbug that way. Is there an acre of the estate their own now? Not if every perch of it made four, it would n't pay the money they owe."

"And if they do," rejoined Kerry, indignantly, "who has a better right, tell me that? Is it an O'Donoghue would be behind the rest of the country? Begorra, ye 're bould to come up here and tell us that!"

"I 'm not telling you anything of the kind; I 'm saying that if they are ruined entirely —"

"Arrah! don't provoke me. Take your baste and go, in God's name!"

And so saying, Kerry, whose patience was fast ebbing, pushed wide the stable-door, and pointed to the stall where Lanty's hackney was standing.

"Bring out that gray mare, Master Kerry," said Lanty, in a tone of easy insolence, purposely assumed to provoke the old huntsman's anger, — "bring her out here."

"And what for would I bring her out?"

"Maybe I'll tell you afterwards," was the reply. "Just do as I say, now."

"The devil a one o' me will touch the beast at your bidding; and, what's more, I'll not let yourself lay a finger on her."

"Be quiet, you old fool!" said a deep voice behind him. He turned, and there stood Mark O'Donoghue himself, pale and haggard after his night's excess. "Be quiet, I say. The mare is his, — let him have her."

"Blessed Virgin!" exclaimed Kerry, "here's the hunting season beginning, and sorrow thing you'll have to put a saddle on, barrin' — barrin' —"

"Barring what?" interposed Lanty, with an insolent grin.

The young man flushed at the impertinence of the insinuation, but said not a word for a few minutes; then suddenly exclaimed, —

"Lanty, I have changed my mind; I'll keep the mare."

The horse-dealer started, and stared him full in the face.

"Why, Mr. Mark, surely you're not in earnest? The beast is paid for, — the bargain all settled."

"I don't care for that. There's your money again. I'll keep the mare."

"Ay, but listen to reason. The mare is mine. She was so when you handed me the luck-penny, and if I don't wish to part with her, you cannot compel me."

"Can't I?" retorted Mark, with a jeering laugh, — "can't I, faith? Will you tell me what's to prevent it? Will you take the law of me? Is that your threat?"

"Devil a one ever said I was that mean, before!" replied Lanty, with an air of deeply offended pride. "I never demeaned myself to the law, and I'm fifteen years buying and selling horses in every county in Munster. No, Mr. Mark, it is not that; but I'll just tell you the truth. The mare is all as one as sold already; there it is now, and that's the whole secret."

"Sold! what do you mean? — that you had sold that mare before you ever bought her?"

"To be sure I did," cried Lanty, assuming a forced look

of easy assurance he was very far from feeling at the moment. "There's nothing more common in my trade. Not one of us buys a beast without knowing where the next owner is to be had."

"And do you mean, sir," said Mark, as he eyed him with a steady stare, — "do you mean to tell me that you came down here, as you would to a petty farmer's cabin, with your bank-notes, ready to take whatever you may pitch your fancy on, sure and certain that our necessities must make us willing chapmen for all you care to deal in? Do you dare to say that you have done this with *me*?"

For an instant Lanty was confounded. He could not utter a word, and looked around him in the vain hope of aid from any other quarter, but none was forthcoming. Kerry was the only unoccupied witness of the scene, and his face beamed with ineffable satisfaction at the turn matters had taken; and as he rubbed his hands he could scarcely control his desire to laugh outright at the lamentable figure of his late antagonist.

"Let me say one word, Master Mark," said Lanty, at length, and in a voice subdued to its very softest key, — "just a single word in your own ear." And with that he led the young man outside the door of the stable, and whispered for some minutes with the greatest earnestness, concluding in a voice loud enough to be heard by Kerry, "And after that, I'm sure I need say no more."

Mark made no answer, but leaned his back against the wall, and folded his arms upon his breast.

"May I never, if it is not the whole truth," said Lanty, with a most eager and impassioned gesture; "and now I leave it all to yourself."

"Is he to take the mare?" asked Kerry, in anxious dread lest his enemy might have carried the day.

"Yes," was the reply, in a deep, hollow voice, as the speaker turned away and left the stable.

While Lanty was engaged in placing the saddle on his new purchase, an operation in which Kerry contrived not to afford him any assistance whatever, Mark O'Donoghue paced slowly to and fro in the courtyard, with his arms folded, and his head sunk upon his breast; nor was he aroused

from his reverie until the step of the horse was heard on the pavement beside him.

"Poor Kittane," said he, looking up suddenly, "you were a great pet. I hope they'll be as kind to you as I was; and they'd better, too," added he, half savagely; "for you've a drop of the Celt in your blood, and can revenge harsh treatment when you meet with it. Tell her owner that she is all gentleness if not abused; but get her temper once up, and, by Jove! there's not a torrent on the mountain can leap as madly. She knows her name, too: I trust they'll not change that. She was bred beside Lough Kittane, and called after it. See how she can follow." And with that the youth sprang forward, and placing his hand on the top bar of a gate, vaulted lightly over; but scarcely had he reached the ground, when the mare bounded after him, and stood with her head resting on his shoulder.

Mark turned an elated look on the others, and then surveyed the noble animal beside him with all the pride and admiration of a master regarding his handiwork. She was, indeed, a model of symmetry, and well worthy of all the praise bestowed on her.

For a moment or two the youth gazed on her with a flashing eye and quivering lip, while the mare, catching excitement from the free air of the morning and the spring she had made, stood with swelled veins and trembling limbs, his counterpart in eagerness. One spirit seemed to animate both. So Mark appeared to feel it, as with a bound he sprang into the saddle, and with a wild cheer dashed forward. With lightning's speed they went, and in a moment disappeared from view. Kerry jumped up on a broken gate-pier, and strained his eyes to catch them; while Lanty, muttering maledictions to himself on the hare-brained boy, turned everywhere for a spot where he might view the scene.

"There he goes!" shouted Kerry. "Look at him now; he's coming to the furze ditch into the big field. See, see! she does not see the fence; her head's in the air. Whew — elegant, by the mortal — never touched a hoof to it! Murther, murther! how she gallops in the deep ground, and



The Farewell Cantor.

the wide gripe that's before her! Ah, he won't take it; he's turning away."

"I wish to the Lord he'd break a stirrup-leather," muttered Lanty.

"Oh, Joseph!" screamed Kerry, "there was a jump — twenty feet, as sure as I'm living. Where is he now? — I don't see him."

"May you never!" growled Lanty, whose indignant anger had burst all bounds. "That's not treatment for another man's horse."

"There he goes, the jewel; see him in the stubble-field; sure it's a real picture to see him going along at his ease. Whurroo — he's over the wall. What the devil's the matter now? — they're away." And so it was; the animal that an instant before was cantering perfectly in hand, had now set off at top speed and at full stretch. "See the gate — mind the gate, Master Mark — tear and ages, mind the gate!" shouted Kerry, as though his admonition could be heard half a mile away. "Oh, Holy Mary, he's through it!" And true enough; the wild and now affrighted beast dashed through the frail timbers, and held on her course without stopping. "He's broke the gate to flitters."

"May I never! if I don't wish it was his neck," said Lanty, in open defiance.

"Do you, then?" called out Kerry. "Why, then, as sure as my name's Kerry O'Leary, if there's a hair of his head hurted, I'll —"

What the threat was intended for cannot be known; for his eye once more caught sight of his idol, and he yelled out, —

"Take care of the sheep. Bad luck to ye for sheep, ye're always in the way. That's the darling; 't was myself taught you to have a light hand. Ah, Kittane, you're coming to rayson, now."

"The mare won't be worth sixpence," muttered Lanty.

"'T was as good as a day's sport to me," said Kerry, wiping his brow with the loose sleeve of his coat, and preparing to descend from the elevation, for the young man now entered the distant part of the lawn, and, at an easy canter, was returning to the stable-yard.

"There!" said Mark, as he flung himself from the saddle, — "there, Kittane, it's the last time you're likely to have a bold burst of it, or myself either, perhaps. She touched her counter on that gate, Lanty; but she's nothing the worse of it."

Lanty grumbled some indistinct mutterings as he wiped a blood-stain from the mare's chest, and looked sulkily at her heaving flanks and sides reeking with foam and sweat.

"'T is a darling you wor," said Kerry, patting her over from her mane to her hind-quarters.

"Faix, that cut is ten pounds out of my pocket this morning, anyhow," said Lanty, as he pointed to the slight scratch from which a few drops of blood still flowed.

"Are you off the bargain, then?" said Mark, sternly, as he turned his head round; for he was already leaving the spot.

"I did n't say so," was the answer.

For a second or two Mark seemed uncertain what reply to make, and then, as if controlling his temper, he nodded carelessly, and with a "Good-bye, Lanty," he sauntered slowly towards the house.

"Well, Mr. O'Leary," said Lanty, in a voice of affected politeness Irishmen are occasionally very fond of employing when they intend great self-respect, "may I trouble you to bring out that hack of mine?"

"'T is a pleasure, Mr. Lawler, and no trouble in life, av it helps to get rid of you," responded Kerry, as he waddled off on the errand.

Lanty made no reply. Perhaps he felt the encounter unequal; perhaps he despised his antagonist. In any case, he waited patiently for Kerry's appearance, and then, passing his arm within the bridle of each horse, he slowly descended the avenue towards the high road.

CHAPTER V.

IMPRESSIONS OF IRELAND.

It was not without a feeling closely allied to disappointment that Sir Marmaduke Travers found the advent to his Irish estates uncelebrated by any of those testimonies on the part of his tenantry his agent, Captain Hemsworth, had often so graphically pictured before him. The post-horses were suffered to drag his carriage unmolested to its destination; there was no assemblage of people to welcome — not a bonfire to hail his arrival. True, he had come totally unexpectedly. The two servants sent forward to prepare the lodge for his reception only reached there a single day before himself. But Sir Marmaduke had often taken his Yorkshire tenants as much by surprise, and there he always found a deputation and a *cortège* of mounted yeomen. There were addresses, and triumphal arches, and newspaper paragraphs, and all the innumerable but well-known accompaniments of those patronizing acts of condescension which consist in the visit of a rich man to his own home. Now, however, all was different. No cheering sounds broke the quiet stillness of the deep valley. No troops of people on horseback or on foot filled the glen. The sun set, calm and golden, behind the purple hills, unscared by the lurid glow of a single bonfire. Save from an appearance of increased bustle, and an air of movement and stir around the lodge itself, there was nothing to mark his coming. There, indeed, servants were seen to pass and repass; workmen were employed upon the flower-garden and the shrubbery walks; and all the indications of care and attention to the villa and its grounds easily perceptible. Beyond these precincts, however, all was still and solitary as before. For miles

the road could be seen without a single traveller. The mountains seemed destitute of inhabitants. The peaceful solemnity of the deep glen, along which the cloud shadows moved slowly in procession, increased the sense of loneliness, and Sir Marmaduke already began to suspect that this last trial of a residence would scarcely prove more fortunate than the previous ones.

Age and wealth are uncomplying task-masters — habit and power endure restraint with an ill grace. The old baronet was half angry with himself for what he felt a mistake, and he could not forgive the country which was the cause of it. He had come expressly to see and pronounce for himself — to witness with his own eyes — to hear with his own ears; and yet, he knew not how it was, nothing revealed itself before him. The very laborers who worked in the garden seemed uncommunicative and shy. Their great respect and reverence he understood as a cautious reserve. He must send for Hemsworth — there was nothing else for it. Hemsworth was used to them, and could explain the mode of dealing with them. Their very idioms required translating, and he could not advance without an interpreter.

Not so his daughter. To her the scene had all the charm of romance. The lone dwelling beside the blue lake, the tall and peaked mountains lost in the white clouds, the waving forest with its many a tangled path, the bright islands that, gem-like, spangled the calm surface of the water, realized many a poetic dream of her childhood, and she felt that visionary happiness which serenity of mind, united to the warm imagination of early life, alone can bestow.

It was a fairy existence to live thus secluded in that lonely valley, where the flowers seemed to blossom for them alone; for them the summer birds sang their roundelays, and the fair moon shed her pale light over hill and stream, with none to mark her splendor save themselves. Not these thoughts alone filled her mind. Already had she noticed the artless habits of the humble peasantry — their gratitude for the slightest services, their affectionate greetings, the touching beauty of their expressions, teeming with an

imagery she never heard before. All appealed to her mind with a very different force from what they addressed themselves with to her father's. Already she felt attracted by the figurative eloquence, so popular a gift among the people. The warm fervor of fancy she had believed the attribute of highly wrought temperaments only she found here amid poverty and privation; flashes of bright wit broke from the gloom of daily suffering, and the fire which gives life its energy burned brightly amid the ashes of many an extinguished hope. These were features she was not prepared to meet among a peasantry living in a wild, unvisited district, and day by day they fascinated her more strongly.

It was not entirely to the difference between father and daughter that these varied impressions were owing. The people themselves assumed a tone quite distinctive to each. Sir Marmaduke they had always heard spoken of as a stern-tempered man, whose severity towards his tenantry was, happily, tempered by the personal kindness of the agent. Captain Hemsworth constantly impressed them with a notion that all harsh measures originated with his principal — the favors came from himself only. The exactions of high rents, the rigorous prosecutions of the law, he ever asserted were acts compulsory with him, but always repugnant to his own better feelings. Every little act of grace he accompanied by an assurance that he “hoped Sir Marmaduke might not hear of it,” as the consequences to himself might prove ruinous. In fact, he contrived to mislead both parties in their estimate of each other, and their first acquaintance-ship, it could not be supposed, should dispel the illusion. The peasantry, however, were the first to discover the error. Long before Sir Marmaduke had made any progress in deciphering the mystic symbols of *their* natures, they had read *his* from end to end. They scanned him with powers of observation no other people in Europe can compete with; and while *he* was philosophizing about the combined influence of their superstitious, their ignorance, and their apathy to suffering, *they* were accurately speculating on all the possible benefits which might accrue from the residence amongst them of so very kind-hearted, but such a mere simpleton of a man as himself.

They listened with sincere pleasure — for they love any appeal to themselves — to the precepts he so liberally bestowed regarding “industry” and “frugality,” nor did they ever make the reply, which was ready at every lip, that industry cannot be practised without an occupation, nor frugality be pushed beyond the very borders of starvation. No; they answered with a semblance of concurrence, “True for you, sir; the devil a lie in it — your honor knows it well.” Or, when pushed home by any argument against their improvidence or recklessness, the ever-pleasant reply was, “Sure, sir, it’s the will of God,” — a piece of fatalism that rescued them from many a difficulty when no other aid was near.

“They are a simple set of people,” said Sir Marmaduke, as he sat at his breakfast in the small parlor of the lodge which looked out upon the glen — “very ignorant, very barbarous, but easily led — I see through them clearly.”

“I like them greatly,” said his daughter; “their gratitude knows no bounds for the slightest services; they have a kind of native courtesy, so rare to find amongst a peasantry. How that poor fellow last night wished to climb the cliff where the eagle’s nest is, because I foolishly said I had never seen a young eagle.”

“They are totally misunderstood,” said Sir Marmaduke, sententiously, rather following out the train of his own reflections than noticing the remark of his daughter; “all one hears of their absurd reverence for the priest, or the devoted adherence they practise towards the old families of the country, is mere nonsense. You heard how Dan laughed this morning when I joked with him about purgatory and the saints; and what a droll description they gave of that queer household — the chieftain — what is his name?”

“The O’Donoghue.”

“Yes; I never can remember it. No, no, they are not so bigoted; they are merely uninformed. We shall soon see many changes among them. I have written to Bradston about the plans for the cottages, and also the design for a school-house; and then there’s the chapel — that reminds me I have not returned the priest’s visit; he was here the day before yesterday.”

“If you like, we ’ll ride there; I have heard that the glen is beautiful higher up.”

“I was just going to propose it. That mare seems quiet enough — Lawler says that she has been carrying a lady these two years — will you try her?”

“I am longing to do so. I am certain she is gentleness itself.”

“Strange fellow that horse-dealer is, too,” said the old gentleman, in half soliloquy. “In no other country in the universe would such a mere simpleton have taken to the trade of a jockey. He actually did not know what price to ask for his horse; he left it all to ourselves. He ’d soon finish his career in London, at that rate of going. But what have we got here? — what, in Heaven’s name, is all this?” cried he aloud, as he suddenly rose from the table, and approached a small glass door that opened upon the lawn.

The object which so excited his astonishment was an assemblage of something more than a hundred poor people of every sex and age — from infancy to dotage — seated on the grass in a wide semicircle, and awaiting the moment when he should issue forth. Every phase of human misery which want and wretchedness can bestow was there. The cheeks of some were pale and haggard with recent sickness; others had but a few tattered rags to cover them; many were cripples, unable to move without assistance. There was wan and sickly childhood, and tremulous old age; yet the tone of their voices showed no touch of sadness; they laughed and talked with all the seeming of light-heartedness; and many a droll and merry saying broke from that medley mass of suffering and sorrow. The sudden appearance of Sir Marmaduke at the door instantaneously checked all merriment, and a solemn silence ensued as he walked forth and stood in front of them.

“What do you want, my good people?” said he at length, as none seemed disposed to open the proceedings.

Had their tongues been unlocked by the spell of a magician the effect could not have been more instantaneous; a perfect volley of speech succeeded, in which Sir Marmaduke in vain endeavored to follow the words of any single speaker. Their rapid utterance, their vehement gesticulation, and a certain guttural mode of pronunciation, quite

new to him, made them totally unintelligible, and he stood confused, perplexed, and confounded, for several minutes, staring round on every side.

“Do, in Heaven’s name, be quiet,” cried he at last; “let one or two only talk at a time, and I shall learn what you mean.”

A renewal of the clamor ensued; but this time it was a general effort to enforce silence, — a process which eventuated in a far greater uproar than before.

“Who, or what are you?” cried Sir Marmaduke, at last losing all temper at the continuance of a tumult there seemed no prospect of coming to an end.

“We’re your honor’s tenants, every one of us,” shouted the crowd with one voice.

“*My* tenants!” reiterated he in horror and astonishment. “What! is it possible that you are tenants on my property? Where do you live, my poor old man?” said he, addressing a venerable old fellow, with a head as white as snow, and a beard like a patriarch’s.

“He does not talk any English, your honor’s worship — he has only Irish; he lives in the glen beyond,” said a comely woman at his side.

“And you, where do you come from yourself?”

“I’m a poor widow, your honor, with six childer; and sorra bit I have but the little garden, and the grass of a goat; and sure, fifteen shillings every half-year is more nor I can pay, wid all the scrapin’ in life.”

Sir Marmaduke turned away his head, and as he did so, his eye fell upon a poor creature, whose bloated cheeks and swollen figure denoted dropsy. The man interpreting the look into a compassionate inquiry, broke forth in a feeble voice, “I brought the nine shillings with me, yer honor; and though the captain refused to take it, I’m sure you won’t turn me out of the little place, for being a trifle late. It’s the watery dropsy — glory be to God! — I’m under; but they say I’m getting better.”

While the poor creature spoke, a low muttering of pity burst from those around him, and many a compassionate look, and many a cheering word, was expressed by those scarce less miserable than himself.

There was now a certain kind of order restored to the

assembly; and as Sir Marmaduke moved along the line, each in turn addressed his supplication or complaint. One was threatened with a distress on his pig, because he owed two half-years' rent, and could only pay a portion of the debt; there was a failure in the potato crop, and a great famine the consequence. Another was only recovering from the "shaking ague," and begged for time, since if he thrashed his oats now, they would bring nothing in the market. A third entreated liberty to cut his turf on a distant bog, as he was up to his knees in water in the place allotted to him.

Some came with odd shillings due on the last rent-day, and anxious to get leave to send their children to the school without payment.

Every one had some favor to look for — some mere trifle to the granter; the whole world to him who asked — and, for these, many had come miles away from homes far in the mountains, a glimmering hope of succor the only encouragement to the weary journey.

As Sir Marmaduke listened with a feigned composure to narratives at which his very heart bled, he chanced to observe a strange-looking figure in an old scarlet uniform, and a paper cap, with a cock's feather stuck slantwise in the side of it. The wearer, a tall, bony youth, with yellow hair, carried a long wattle over his shoulder, as if it were a gun, and when the old baronet's eye fell upon him, he immediately stood bolt upright, and held the sapling to his breast, like a soldier presenting arms.

"Shoulder arms," he cried, and as the words were heard, a hearty burst of laughter ran through the crowd; every grief and sorrow was at once forgotten; the eyes wet with tears of sadness, were now moistened with those of mirth, and they laughed like those whose hearts had never known suffering.

"Who is this fellow?" said Sir Marmaduke, half doubting how far he might relish the jest like the others.

"Terry the Woods, your honor," replied a score of voices together.

"Terry the Woods!" repeated he, "and is Terry a tenant of mine?"

“Faix, I am proud to say I am not,” said Terry, grounding his weapon, and advancing a step towards him; “divil a farthin’ of rent I ever paid, nor ever will. I do have my health mighty well—glory be to God!—and sleep sound, and have good clothes, and do nothing for it; and they say I am a fool: but which of us is the greatest fool after all?”

Another outbreak of laughter was only quelled by Sir Marmaduke asking the reason of Terry’s appearance there that morning, if he had nothing to look for.

“I just come to pay my respects,” said Terry, composedly, “to wish you a welcome to the country. I thought that as you might be lading the same kind of life as myself, we wouldn’t be bad companions, you see, neither of us having much on our hands; and then,” continued he, as he took off his paper bonnet and made a deep reverence, “I wanted to see the young lady there, for they tould me she was a born beauty.”

Miss Travers blushed—she was young enough to blush at a compliment from such a source—as her father said, laughingly,—

“Well, Terry, and have they been deceiving you?”

“No,” said he, gravely, as with steady gaze he fixed his large blue eyes on the fair features before him—“no—she is a purty crayture,—a taste sorrowful or so; but I like her all the better. I was the same myself when I was younger.”

Terry’s remark was true enough. The young girl had been a listener for some time to the stories of the people, and her face betrayed the sad emotions of her heart. Never before had such scenes of human suffering been revealed before her—the tortuous windings of the poor man’s destiny, where want and sickness lie in wait for those whose happiest hours are the struggles against poverty and its evils.

“I can show you the beautifullest places in the whole country,” said Terry, approaching Miss Travers, and addressing her in a low voice; “I’ll tell you where the white heath is growing, with big bells on it, like cups, to hould the dew. Were you ever up over Keim-an-eigh?”

"Never," said she, smiling at the eagerness of her questioner.

"I'll take you, then, by a short cut, and you can ride the whole way, and maybe we'll shoot an eagle. Have you a gun in the house?"

"Yes, there are three or four," said she, humoring him.

"And if I shoot him I'll give you the wing-feathers — that's what they always gave their sweethearts long ago; but them times is gone by."

The girl blushed deeply, as she remembered the present of young O'Donoghue, on the evening they came up the glen. She called to mind the air of diffidence and constraint in which he made the proffer, and for some minutes paid no attention to Terry, who still continued to talk as rapidly as before.

"There, they are fling off," said Terry — "orderly time," as he once more shouldered his sapling and stood erect. This observation was made with reference to the crowd of poor people, whose names and place of residence Sir Marmaduke having meanwhile written down, they were now returning to their homes with happy and comforted hearts. "There they go," cried Terry, "and an awkward squad they are."

"Were you ever a soldier, Terry?" said Miss Travers.

The poor youth grew deadly pale — the very blood forsook his lips, as he muttered, "I was." Sir Marmaduke came up at the instant, and Terry checked himself at once, and said, —

"Whenever you want me, leave word at Mary M'Kelly's, in the glen below, and I'll hear of it."

"But don't you think you had better remain here with us? you could help in the garden and the walks."

"No; I never do be working at all — I hate work."

"Yes, but easy work, Terry," said Miss Travers, "among the flowers and shrubs here."

"No — I'd be quite low and sorrowful if I was to be staying in one place, and maybe — maybe" — here he whispered so low as only to be heard by her — "maybe they'd find me out."

"No; there's no fear of that," said she; "we'll take care no one shall trouble you — stay here, Terry."

“Well, I believe I will,” said he, after a pause; “I may go away when I like.”

“To be sure; and now let us see how you are to be lodged,” said Sir Marmaduke, who already, interested by that inexplicable feeling which grows out of our pity for idiocy, entered into his daughter’s schemes for poor Terry’s welfare.

A small cottage near the boat-house on the verge of the lake, inhabited by a laborer and his children, offered the wished-for asylum, and there Terry was at once installed, and recognized as a member of the household.

CHAPTER VI.

“THE BLACK VALLEY.”

ALTHOUGH deferred by the accidents of the morning, Sir Marmaduke's visit to the priest was not abandoned, and at length he and his daughter set out on their excursion up the glen. Their road, after pursuing the highway for about two miles, diverged into a narrow valley, from which there was no exit save by the mode in which it was entered. Vast masses of granite rock, piled heap above heap, hung as it were suspended over their heads, the tangled honeysuckle falling in rich festoons from these, and the purple arbutus glowing like grape clusters among the leaves. It was a mellow, autumnal day, when the warmth of coloring is sobered down by massive shadows, — the impress of the clouds which moved slowly above. The air was hot and thick, and, save when an occasional breeze came, wafted from the water, was even oppressive.

The silence of the glen was profound — not a bird was heard, nor was there in the vast expanse of air a single wing seen floating. As they rode, they often stopped to wonder at the strange but beautiful effects of light that glided now slowly along the mountains — disappeared — then shone again; the giant shadows seeming to chase each other through the dreary valley. Thus sauntering along they took no note of time, when at last the long low cottage, where the priest lived, came in sight. It was an humble abode, but beautifully situated at the bottom of the glen; the whole valley lying expanded in front, with its bright rivulet and its bold sides of granite. The cottage itself was little better than that of a poor farmer; and save from the ornament of some creepers, which were trained against the walls, and formed into a deep porch at the entrance, differed in no

respect from such. A few straggling patches of cultivation, of the very rudest kind, were seen here and there, but all without any effort at fence or enclosure. Some wild fruit-trees were scattered over the little lawn in front, if the narrow strip of grass that flanked the river could be called such, and here a small Kerry cow was grazing, the only living thing to be seen.

A little well, arched over with pieces of rock, and surmounted by a small wooden cross, stood close to the roadside, and the wild-thorn that overshadowed it was hung on every side with small patches of rags of every color and texture that human dress ever consisted of; a sight new to the eyes of the travellers, who knew not that the shrine was deemed holy, and the tree the receptacle of the humble offering of those whose sorrows of mind and body came there for alleviation and succor.

Sir Marmaduke dismounted and approached the door, which lay wide open; he knocked gently with his whip, and as no answer to his summons was returned, repeated it again and again. He now ventured to call aloud, but no one came, and at last both father and daughter began to suspect there might be no one in the house.

"This is most strange," said he, after a long pause, and an effort to peep in through the windows, half hid with honeysuckle. "The place seems totally deserted. Let us try at the back, however."

As the old baronet wended his way to the rear of the cottage, he muttered a half upbraiding against his daughter for not complying with his desire to have a groom along with them, — a want which now increased the inconvenience of their position. She laughingly defended herself against the charge, and at the same moment sprang down from her saddle to assist in the search.

"I certainly perceived some smoke from the chimney as we came up the glen, and there must have been some one here lately, at least," said she, looking eagerly on every side.

"This is indeed solitude," muttered her father, as he listened for some minutes, during which the stillness had an effect most appalling.

While he was speaking, Miss Travers had drawn near to a low latticed window which lay half open, and as she peeped in, immediately drew back, and beckoned with her hand for her father to approach, intimating by a cautious gesture that he should do so noiselessly. Sir Marmaduke came stealthily to her side, and, leaning over her shoulder, looked into the room. As both father and daughter exchanged glances, they seemed with difficulty to refrain from laughing, while astonishment was strongly depicted on the countenance of each. As they continued to gaze, their first emotion gradually yielded to a look of intense interest at the scene before them.

Seated beside the large turf fire of the priest's kitchen, for such it was, was a youth of some fifteen or sixteen years. His figure, light and well proportioned, was clad in a fashion which denoted his belonging to the better class, though neglect and time had made many an inroad on the costume. His brow was lofty and delicately formed — the temples marked by many a thin blue vein, which had given a look of delicacy to the countenance, if the deep glow of health had not lit up his cheeks, and imparted a bright lustre to his eyes. He held before him an open volume, from which he declaimed rather than read aloud, as it seemed, for the special delight and amusement of a small ragged urchin of about nine years old, who, with bare legs and feet, was seated on a little pyramid of turf right opposite to him.

Well might Sir Marmaduke and his daughter feel surprise; the volume was Homer, from which, with elevated voice and flashing eye, the boy was reading, — the deep-toned syllables ringing through the low-vaulted chamber with a sweet but a solemn music. Contrasted with the fervid eloquence of the youth was the mute wonder and rapt attention of the little fellow who listened. Astonishment, awe, and eager curiosity blended together in that poor little face, every lineament of which trembled with excitement. If a high soaring imagination and elevated tone of thought were depicted in the one, the other not less forcibly realized the mute and trembling eagerness of impassioned interest.

The youth paused for a few seconds, and seemed to be

reflecting over what he read, when the boy, in an accent broken with anxiety, cried out, —

“Read it again, Master Herbert. Oh, read it again. It’s like the cry of the big stag-hound at Carrignacurra.”

“It is the language of the gods, Mickey, — finer and grander than ever man spoke,” replied the youth, with fervor. “Listen to this, here.” And then, with solemn cadence, he declaimed some twenty lines, while, as if the words were those of an incantation, the little fellow sat spell-bound, with clasped hands and staring eye-balls gazing before him.

“What does it mean, Master Herbert? — what is it?” said he, in panting eagerness.

“It’s about a great hero, Mickey, that was preparing for battle. He was putting on his armor, a coat and a cap of steel, and he was belting on his sword.”

“Yes, yes,” broke in the little fellow, “and was n’t he saying how he’d murder and kill all before him?”

“Right enough,” said the youth, laughing. “You guessed it well.”

“Ah, I knew it,” said the boy. “I saw how you clenched your fist, and your eyes wor shinin’ like sparks of fire, and I knew it was darin’ them he was, in the book there. What did he do after, Master Herbert? Just tell me that, sir.”

“He went out in his chariot —”

“Say it like himself first, sir, av it’s plazin’ to ye,” said he, with a most imploring look of entreaty. “I do be glad to hear it out of the book.”

The youth, thus entreated, resumed the volume, and read on for several minutes without stopping.

“Oh, that’s grand!” said the boy, in a burst of enthusiasm. “’T is for all the world the way the thunder comes down the glen, — moanin’ first, far off on the mountains, and then swellin’ into a big roar, and afterwards goin’ clap! clap! like a giant clapping his hands. Did he kill the inimy, master dear?”

“No, he was killed himself, and his body dragged over the battle-field.”

“Wirra, wirra, wirra!” broke in the child, while he wrung

his hands, and burst forth into a torrent of tumultuous grief.

“He was killed, Mickey; and listen to the lament of his friends for his death.”

Scarcely had the youth read a few lines, when, Sir Marmaduke advancing a little farther, his shadow fell across the chamber. The youth sprang up at once, and came towards them. The flush of surprise — it might be, too, of shame — was on his features; but there was less of awkwardness than many might have exhibited in the manner of his address, as he said, —

“Father Luke is from home, sir. He has been sent for to Ballyvourney —”

“You are his relation, I presume?” said Sir Marmaduke, without letting him finish his speech.

“I am his pupil,” replied the youth, with a tone in which offended pride was clearly confessed.

“I ask pardon,” said the baronet, hastily. “It was merely that I might convey my respectful greetings to the worthy father that I asked the question. Perhaps you will allow me to trespass so far upon you, and say that Sir Marmaduke Travers has been here.”

While Sir Marmaduke was speaking, the youth’s eyes were fixed with a steadfast gaze on the features of the young girl, of whose presence till then he seemed unconscious. Fixed and earnest as his stare was, there was nothing in it of rudeness, still less of insult. It was the unequivocal expression of astonishment, the suddenly awakened sense of admiration in one, on whom, till that very instant, beauty had shed no fascination. His eyes were bent upon her, as Sir Marmaduke thus finished speaking, and the old man smiled as he saw the wonder-struck admiration of the boy.

“You will please to say Sir Marmaduke Travers,” repeated he once more, to recall the scattered senses of the youth.

“And his daughter?” murmured the other, as he still continued to stare at her.

“Yes, his daughter,” replied Sir Marmaduke, smiling. “May I ask if there be no shorter road back to ‘the Lodge’

than that yonder? for I perceive it is full two hours later than I suspected."

"None for those on horseback. The mountain path lies yonder, but even on foot it is not without danger."

"Come, then, Sybella; let us lose no time. We must ride briskly, to reach home by daylight. We are late enough already."

"Too late, if you ride not very fast," replied the youth. "The rain has fallen heavily on the mountains this afternoon. See that waterfall yonder, I crossed it dryshod at daybreak, and now it is a cataract. This river rises rapidly, and in a single night's rain I have seen the valley all one lake."

"What are we to do then?" cried Miss Travers, eagerly, for now she felt self-reproach at her refusal to take a groom along with them, and was vexed with herself, as well as uneasy for her father.

"Keep the left of the valley till you reach the tall black rock they call 'the Pulpit,' — you know it; at least you must have seen it as you came along, — then cross the stream, it will be fordable enough by that time, and make the best of your way along under the cliffs till you arrive at the broken bridge, — the two buttresses, I mean. Recross the stream there, and gain the meadows, and in some hundred yards you are safe upon the high road. Away then; lose no more time, now; a minute is all the space between risk and safety." And with these words he sprang forward and lifted the young girl to her saddle, ere she had time or forethought to decline the service.

"May we not know the name of our kind adviser?" asked Sir Marmaduke, as he mounted his horse.

"Hark! there it comes!" cried the youth, pointing upwards to the brow of a cliff, over which a leaping torrent had just bounded. "The mountain lakes are flooded when Derrybahn is spouting. Away! away! if you care for safety."

They turned their horses' heads as he spoke, and with a hasty "good-bye" they spurred forwards. Short as the time had been since they travelled the same path, the scene was wonderfully changed; the placid stream that stole

along, murmuring over its gravelly bed, now rushed onward with a yellow current streaked with white foam; the tiny rivulets that came in slender drops upon the roadside, were now become continuous streams of water, hurrying on to bear their tribute to the river. The sky itself was black and lowering, resting midway on the mountains, or drifting past in heavy clouds, while no breeze was stirring below. The many torrents as they fell filled the air with a low monotonous sound, like the noise of tree-tops moved by a distant storm.

"I thought I heard a voice calling to us," said Sir Marmaduke, as for the first time they slackened their pace, to clear several loose stones that obstructed the way; "did you hear it?"

"I half thought so too," replied his daughter; "but I can see no one near. There it is again!"

They halted and listened; but the swelling uproar of the waterfalls drowned every sound, and they spurred forward once more, fearing to loiter longer; yet both as they went thought they could trace the words "Come back! come back!" but from some strange dread of communicating fears that might not be real, neither told the other.

"He said the left side of the valley; but surely he mistook: see how the water has gained here, and the opposite bank seems dry."

"Let us follow the advice, father," cried Sybella; "we have no guidance save his; he could not — would not deceive us. Is it not grand! With all its danger, I can admire it."

As she spoke, a tremendous clap of thunder broke above their heads, and made the valley tremble with the sound, while, as if by the shock, the charged clouds were rent open, and the rain descended in torrents. With the swooping gush of the ocean spray, storm-lashed and drifted, the rain came down, wrapping in misty darkness every object around them. And now the swollen cataracts tore madly down the mountain sides, leaping from crag to crag, and rending the clayey soil in deep clefts and gashes. Again the thunder pealed out, and every echo sent back the sound, till the whole glen vibrated with the deafening clamor.

Still they sped onward. The terrified horses strained every limb, and dashed madly on, mid rock and rushing water they went, now clearing at a bound the course of some gushing stream, now breasting the beating rain with vigorous chest.

The storm increased; the howling wind joined with the deep-toned thunder into one long continuous roar, that seemed to shake the very air itself.

"Yonder!" said the father, as he pointed to the tall dark pinnacle of rock known by the country people as "the Pulpit" — "yonder!"

Sybella strained her eye to see through the dense beating rain, and at last caught sight of the huge mass, around whose summit the charged clouds were flying.

"We must cross the river in this place," said the old man, as he suddenly checked his horse, and looked with terrified gaze on the swollen stream that came boiling and foaming over to where they stood, with branches of trees and fragments of rock rolling onward in the tide. "The youth told us of this spot."

"Let us not hesitate, father," cried the young girl, with a tone of firm, resolute daring she had not used before; "remember what he said; a minute may save or ruin us. Great Heaven! what is that?"

A terrific shriek followed her words, and she fell with her head upon her horse's mane: a broad flash of lightning had burst from a dark cloud, and came with vivid force upon her eyeballs.

"Father, dear father, my sight is gone!" she screamed aloud, as lifting up her head she rubbed the orbs now paralyzed by the shock.

"My child! my child!" cried the old man, with the piercing shriek of a breaking heart; "look on me, look towards me. Oh, say that you can see me now — my brain is turning."

"O God, I thank thee!" said the terrified girl, as once more her vision was restored, and, dimly, objects began to form themselves before her.

With bare head and upturned eyes the aged man looked up, and poured forth his prayer of thankfulness to Heaven.

The raging storm beat on his brow unfelt; his thoughts were soaring to the Throne of Mercies, and knew not earth, nor all its sorrows.

A clap of thunder at the moment broke from the dense cloud above them, and then, in quick succession, like the pealing of artillery, came several more, while the forked lightning shot to and fro, and at last, as if the very earth was riven to its centre, a low, booming sound was heard amid the clouds; the darkness grew thicker, and a crash followed that shook the ground beneath them, and splashed the wild waves on every side. The spray sprang madly up, while the roaring of the stream grew louder; the clouds swept past, and the tall Pulpit rock was gone! Struck by lightning, it had rolled from its centre, and fallen across the river, the gushing waters of which poured over it in floods, and fell in white sheets of foam and spray beyond it.

"God is near us, my child," said the old man, with fervor; "let us onward."

Her streaming eyes turned on him one look of affection, — the emblem of a heart's love, — and she prepared to follow.

To return was now impossible; the river had already extended the whole way across the valley in the rear; the only chance of safety lay in front.

"Keep by my side, dearest," said the father, as he rode first into the stream, and tried to head the terrified animal against the current.

"I am near you, father, — fear not for me," said she, firmly, her bold heart nerved to the danger.

For some seconds the affrighted horses seemed rooted to the earth, and stood amid the boiling current as if spell-bound. A fragment of a tree, however, in its course, struck the flank of the leading horse, and he sprang madly forward, followed by the other. Now breasting the stream, now sinking to the mane beneath it, the noble beasts struggled fiercely on till near the spot where the Pulpit rock had left a space between it and the opposite bank, and here a vast volume of water now poured along unchecked by any barrier.

"To my side — near me, dearest — near me!" cried the

father, as his horse dashed into the seething flood, and sank above the crest beneath it.

"I cannot father — I cannot!" screamed the affrighted girl, as, with a bound of terror, her horse sprang back from the chasm, and refused to follow. The old man heard not the words — the current had swept him far down into the stream, amid the rent branches and the rolling rocks — "My child! my child!" the only accents heard above the raging din.

Twice did the heroic girl try to face the current, but in vain — the horse plunged wildly up, and threatened to fall back, when suddenly through the white foam a figure struggled on and grasped the bridle at the head; next moment, a man leaped forward and was breasting the surge before her.

"Head the stream — head the stream, if you can!" cried he, who still held on, while the wild waves washed over him. But the poor horse, rendered unmanageable through fear, had yielded to the current, and was now each moment nearing the cataract.

"Cling to me, now!" cried the youth, as, with the strength of desperation, he tore the girl from the saddle, while with the other hand he grasped an ash bough that hung drooping above his head. As he did so, the mare bounded forward — the waves closed over her, and she was carried over the precipice.

"Cling fast to me, and we are safe!" cried the youth; and with vigorous grasp he held on the tree, and, thus supported, breasted the stream and reached the bank. Exhausted and worn out, both mind and body powerless, they both fell senseless on the grass.

The last shriek of despair broke from the father's heart as the horse, bereft of rider, swept past him in the flood. The cry aroused the fainting girl; she half rose to her feet, and called upon him. The next moment they were locked in each other's arms.

"It was he who saved me, father," said she, in accents broken with joy and sorrow; "he risked his life for mine."

The youth recovered consciousness as the old man pressed him to his heart.

“Is she safe?” were the first words he said, as he stared around him vaguely; and then, as if overcome, he fell heavily back upon the sword.

A joyous cheer broke forth from several voices near, and, at the instant, several country people were seen coming forward, with Terry at their head.

“Here we are, here we are, and in good time too,” cried Terry; “and if it was n’t that you took a fool’s advice, we’d have gone the other road. The carriage is in the glen, my lady,” said he, kneeling down beside Sybella, who still remained clasped in her father’s arms.

By this time some of Sir Marmaduke’s servants had reached the spot, and by them the old man and his daughter were assisted towards the high road, while two others carried the poor youth, by this time totally unable to make the least exertion.

“This brave boy — this noble fellow,” said Sir Marmaduke, as he stooped to kiss the pale high forehead, from which the wet hair hung backwards — “can no one tell me who he is?”

“He’s the young O’Donoghue,” replied a half-dozen voices together: “a good warrant for courage or bravery any day.”

“The O’Donoghue!” repeated Sir Marmaduke, vainly endeavoring in the confusion of the moment to recall the name, and where he had heard it.

“Ay, the O’Donoghue,” shouted a coarse voice near him, as a new figure rode up on a small mountain pony. “It ought n’t to be a strange name in these parts. Rouse yourself, Master Herbert, rouse up, my child, — sure it is n’t a wettin’ would cow you this way?”

“What! Kerry, is this you?” said the youth, faintly, as he looked around him with half-closed eyelids. “Where’s my father?”

“Faix, he’s snug at the parlor fire, my darlin’, where his son ought to be, if he was n’t turning guide on the mountains to the enemy of his kith and kin.”

These words were said in a whisper, but with an energy that made the boy start from the arms of those who bore him.

“Here’s the pony, Master Herbert, — get up on him, and be off at once; sure there is n’t a blackguard there, with lace on his coat, would n’t be laughing at your old clothes when the light comes.”

Sir Marmaduke and his daughter were a few paces in advance as these words were spoken, the old baronet giving directions for bestowing every care and attention on one he deemed his guest.

The boy, ashamed and offended both, yielded to the counsel, and suffered himself to be placed upon the saddle.

“Now then, hould fast, and I’ll guide him,” said Kerry, as, elbowing the crowd right and left, he sprang forward at a run, and in less than a minute had disappeared in the darkness.

Sir Marmaduke became distracted at the loss of his benefactor, and message after message was despatched to bring him back; but all in vain. Kerry and his pony had already gained so much in advance none could overtake them.

“To-morrow, then, my child,” said Sir Marmaduke, — “to-morrow will, I hope, enable me to speak my gratitude, though I shall not sleep well to-night. I never rested with so heavy a debt unpaid before.”

And with these words they slowly wended their way homeward.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR ARCHY'S TEMPER TRIED.

IT was strange that, although the old man and his tender daughter should have sustained no other ill results from their adventure than the terror which even yet dwelt on their minds, the young and vigorous youth, well trained to every accident of flood or field, felt it most seriously.

The exertions he made to overtake Sir Marmaduke and his daughter, followed by the struggle in the swollen stream, had given such a shock to his frame that ere day broke the following morning he was in a fever. The mental excitement, conspiring with fatigue and exhaustion, had brought on the symptoms of his malady with such rapidity that it was evident, even to the unaccustomed observers around him, his state was precarious.

Sir Archibald was the first person at the sick youth's bedside. The varied fortunes of a long life, not devoid of its own share of vicissitude, had taught him so much of medical skill as can give warning of the approach of fever; and as he felt the strong and frequent pulse, and saw the flushed and almost swollen features before him, he recognized the commencement of severe and dangerous illness.

Vague and confused images of the previous night's adventure, or visions of the dark valley and the tempest, occupied all the boy's thoughts; and though he endeavored, when spoken to, to preserve coherency and memory, the struggle was unavailing, and the immediate impression of a question past, his mind wandered back to the theme which filled his brain.

"How was it, then?" said Sir Archy, who, as he sat beside the sick-bed, questioned the youth about his adventure. "You said something of a horse?"

"Yes; she was riding. Oh, how bravely she rode too! It was fine to see her as the spray fell over her like a veil, and she shook the drops from her hair."

"Whence came she? Who was the lady?"

"Take care — take care," said the youth, in a solemn whisper, and with a steadfast look before him; "Derrybahn has given warning — the storm is coming. It is not for one so tender as you to tempt the river of the black valley."

"Be still, my boy," said the old man; "you must not speak thus; your head will ache if you take not rest — keep quiet."

"Yes; my head, my head!" muttered he vaguely, repeating the words which clinked upon his mind. "She put her arm round my neck — There — there," cried he, starting up wildly in his bed, "catch it — seize it — my feet are slipping — the rock moves — I can hold no longer; there — there!" And with a low moaning sigh he sank back fainting on the pillow.

Sir Archibald applied all his efforts to enforce repose and rest; and having partially succeeded, hastened to the O'Donoghue's chamber, to confer with the boy's father on what steps should be taken to procure medical aid.

It was yet some hours earlier than the accustomed time of his waking, as the old man saw the thin and haggard face of Sir Archy peering between the curtains of his bed.

"Well, what is it?" said he, in some alarm at the unexpected sight. "Has Gubbins issued the distress? Are the scoundrels going to sell us out?"

"No, no; it is another matter brings me here," replied M'Nab, with a gravity even deeper than usual.

"That infernal bond! By God, I knew it; it never left my dreams these last three nights. Mark was too late, I suppose; or they would n't take the interest. And the poor fellow sold his mare to get the money!"

"Dinna fash about these things now," said M'Nab, with impatience. "It's that poor callant, Herbert, — he's very ill; it's a fever he's caught, I'm thinking."

"Oh, Herbert!" said O'Donoghue, with a tone of evident relief that his misfortunes had taken any other shape than the much-dreaded one of money calamity. "What of him?"

“He’s in a fever; his mind is wandering already.”

“Not a bit of it; it’s a mere wetting, — a common cold: the boy fell into the river last night at the old bridge there; Kerry told me something about it; and so, maybe, Mark may reach Cork in good time after all.”

“I am no speaking of Mark just now,” said M’Nab, tartly, “but of the other lad, wha may be dangerously ill, if something be nae done quickly.”

“Then send for Roach. Let one of the boys saddle a horse and ride over to Killarney. Oh! I was forgetting; let a fellow go off on foot, he’ll get there before evening. It is confoundedly hard to have nothing in the stables even to mount a messenger. I hope Mark may be able to manage matters in Cork. Poor fellow, he hates business as much as I do myself.”

Sir Archy did not wait for the conclusion of this rambling reply. Long before it was over, he was halfway down stairs in search of a safe messenger to despatch to Killarney for Doctor Roach, muttering between his teeth as he went, —

“We hae nae muckle chance of the doctor if we canna send the siller to fetch him as well as the flunkie — eh, sirs? He’s a cannie chiel is auld Roach, and can smell a fee as soon as scent a fever.” And with this sensible reflection he proceeded on his way.

Meanwhile the O’Donoghue himself had summoned energy enough to slip on an old and ragged dressing-gown, and a pair of very unlocomotive slippers, with which attired he entered the sick boy’s room.

“Well, Herbert, lad,” said he, drawing the curtains back, and suffering the gray light to fall on the youth’s features, “what is the matter? Your uncle has been routing me up with a story about you.”

He ceased suddenly, as his eyes beheld the change a few hours had wrought in the boy’s appearance. His eyes, deep-buried in their orbits, shone with an unnatural lustre; his cheeks were pale and sunken, save where a bright patch of florid red marked the centre of each; his lips were dry and shrivelled, and had a slight tremulous motion, as if he were muttering to himself.

"Poor fellow," said the father, "how dreadfull ill he looks. Have you any pain, my boy?"

The boy knew the voice, and recognized the kindly accent, but could not hear or understand the words; and, as his eyes glistened with delight, he stole his burning hand from beneath the bedclothes, and held it out, all trembling, towards his father.

"How sudden this has been — you were quite well last night, Herbert!"

"Last night!" echoed the boy, with a strange emphasis on the only words he had caught up.

"No, by the way, it was the night before, I mean. I did not see you last night; but, cheer up, my dear boy; we've sent for Roach, — he'll put you to rights at once. I hope Mark may reach home before the doctor goes. I'd like to have his advice about that strain in the back."

These last words were uttered in soliloquy, and seemed to flow from a train of thought very different from that arising from the object before him. Sunk in these reflections, he drew near the window, which looked out upon the old court-yard behind the house, and where now a very considerable crowd of beggars had assembled to collect the alms usually distributed each morning from the kitchen. Each was provided with an ample canvas bag, worn over the neck by a string, and capable of containing a sufficiency of meal or potatoes, the habitual offering, to support the owner for a couple of days at least. They were all busily engaged in stowing away the provender of various sorts and kinds, as luck, or the preference of the cook, decided, laughing or grumbling over their portions, as it might be, when Sir Archibald M'Nab hurriedly presented himself in the midst of them, — an appearance which seemed to create no particular satisfaction, if one were to judge from the increased alacrity of their movements, and the evident desire they exhibited to move off.

The O'Donoghue laughed as he witnessed the discomfiture of the ragged mob, and let down the window-sash to watch the scene.

"'T is going we are. God be good to us!"

"Ye need n't be cursing that way," said an old hag, with a sack on her back large enough to contain a child.

“Eyah! the Lord look down on the poor!” said a little fat fellow, with a flannel nightcap and stockings without any feet; “there’s no pity now at all, at all.”

“The heavens be your bed, anyway,” said a hard-featured little woman, with an accent that gave the blessing a very different signification from the mere words.



“Blessed Joseph! sure it is n’t robbers and thieves we are, that ye need hunt us out of the place.”

Such were the exclamations on every side, intermingled with an under-growl of the “Scotch naygur!” — “The ould scrape-gut!” and other equally polite and flattering epithets.

“This is no a place for ye, ye auld beldames and blackguards. Awa’ wi’ ye — awa’ wi’ ye at once!”

“Them’s the words ye’ll hear in heaven yet, darlint!” said an old fiend of a woman, with one eye, and a mouth

garnished by a single tooth. "Them's the very words St. Peter will spake to yourself."

"Begorra! he'll not be strange in the other place, anyhow," muttered another. "'T is there he'll meet most of his countrymen."

This speech was the signal for a general outburst of laughter.

"Awa' wi' ye, ye ragged deevils! — ye'r a disgrace to a Christian country!"

"Throth, we wear breeches an us," said an old fellow on crutches; "and sure I hear that's more nor they do in the parts your honor comes from."

Sir Archy's passion boiled over at this new indignity. He stormed and swore, with all the impetuous rage of one beside himself with passion; but the effect on his hearers was totally lost. The only notice they took was an occasional exclamation of —

"There it is, now!" "Oh, blessed Father! hear what he says!" "Oh, holy Mother! is n't he a terrible man?" — comments by no means judiciously adapted to calm his irritation. Meanwhile, symptoms of evacuating the territory were sufficiently evident. Cripples were taken on the backs and shoulders of their respective friends; sacks and pouches were slung over the necks. Many a preparatory shake of the rags showed that the wearer was getting ready for the road, when Sir Archy, suddenly checking himself in the full torrent of his wrath, cried out, —

"Bide a wee — stay a minit, ye auld beasties, — I hae a word to say to some amang ye."

The altered tone of voice in which he spoke seemed at once to have changed the whole current of popular feeling; for now they all chimed in with, —

"Arrah! he's a good man, after all. Sure, 't is only a way he has," — sentiments which increased in fervency as Sir Archibald took a tolerably well-filled purse from his pocket, and drew out some silver into his hand, many exclaiming, —

"'T is the kind heart often has the hard word; and sure ye can see in his face he is n't cruel."

"Hear till me," cried Sir Archy, aloud, as he held up a

shilling before their wistful eyes, "there 's mony a ane among ye able to earn siller. Which o' ye, now, will step down to Killarney, and tell the doctor he 's wanted up here wi' a' despatch? Ye maun go fast and bring him, or send him here to-night; and if ye do, I'll gie ye this piece o' siller money when ye come back."

A general groan from that class whose age and infirmities placed them out of the reach of competitorship met this speech, while from the more able section a not less unequivocal expression of discontent broke forth.

"Down to Killarney!" cried one. "Begorra! I wonder ye did n't say Kenmare, when ye war about it — the devil a less thau ten miles it is."

"Eyah! I'll like to see my own four bones going the same road; sorra a house the whole way where 's there 's a drop of milk or a pratie."

"That 's the charity to the poor, I suppose," said the fat fellow of the nightcap. "'T is wishing it, I am, the same charity."

"We wor to bring the doctor on our back, I hope," said a cripple in a bowl.

"Did ever man hear or see the like o' this?" exclaimed M'Nab, as with uplifted hands he stared in wonderment around him. "One would na believe it."

"True for you, honey," joined in one of the group. "I'm fifty-three years on the road, and I never heerd of any one askin' us to do a hand's turn afore."

"Out of my sight, ye worthless ne'er-do-weels; awa' wi' ye at once and forever. I'll send twenty miles round the country but I'll hae a mastiff here 'ill worry the first o' ye that dares to come near the house."

"On my conscience, it will push you hard to find a wickeder baste nor yourself."

"Begorra, he won't be uglier, anyhow."

And with these comments, and the hearty laughter that followed, the tattered and ragged group defiled out of the yard with all the honors of war, leaving Sir Archy alone, overwhelmed with astonishment and anger.

A low chuckling laugh, as the sash was closed overhead, made him look up, and he just caught a glimpse of

O'Donoghue as he retired from the window; for in his amusement at the scene the old man forgot the sick boy and all about him, and only thought of the ridiculous interview he had witnessed.

"His ain father — his ain father!" muttered Sir Archy, as with his brows contracted and his hands clasped behind his back, he ruminated in sadness on all he saw. "What brings ye back again, ye lazy scoundrels? How dare ye venture in here again?"

This not over-courteous interrogatory was addressed to poor Terry the Woods, who, followed by one of Sir Marmaduke's footmen, had at that instant entered the yard.

"What for are ye come, I say? and what's the flunkie wanting beside ye?"

Terry stood thunderstruck at the sudden outbreak of temper, and turned at once to the responsible individual, to whom he merely acted as guide, to make a reply.

"And are ye tramping it too?" said M'Nab, with a sneering accent as he addressed the footman. "Methinks ye might hae a meal's meat out o' the goold lace on your hat, and look mair like a decent Christian afterwards. Ye 'r out of place, maybe."

These last words were delivered in an irony to which a tone of incredulity gave all the sting; and these only were intelligible to the sleek and well-fed individual to whom they were addressed.

In all likelihood, had he been charged with felony or highway robbery, his self-respect might have sustained his equanimity; any common infraction of the statute law might have been alleged against him without exciting an undue indignation; but the contemptuous insinuation of being "out of place" — that domestic outlawry — was more than human endurance could stomach; nor was the insult more palatable coming from one he believed to be a servant himself. It was therefore with the true feeling of outraged dignity he replied, —

"Not exactly out of place jest now, friend; though, if they don't treat you better than your looks show, I'd recommend you trying for a new situation."

Of a verity, Sir Archibald's temper was destined to sore

trials that morning; but this was a home thrust, for which no forethought could have prepared him.

"I hope I am no going to lose my senses," said he, as he pressed his hands on either side of his temples. "May the Lord keep me from that worst of a' human calamities."

This pious wish, uttered with real, unfeigned fervency, seemed to act like a charm upon the old man's temper, as though the very appeal had suggested a calmer and more patient frame of mind. It was, then, with all the dignity of his natural character, when unclouded by momentary flashes of passion, that he said, —

"What may be your errand here this morning?"

Few and simple as the words were, there was that in their quiet, unassuming delivery, which in a second recalled the footman to a full consciousness of his impertinent mistake. He saw at once the immeasurable gulf, impassable to any effort of assumption or insolence, which separated them, and with the ready tact of his calling he respectfully took off his hat, and held forth a sealed letter, without one word of reply or apology.

Sir Archibald put on his spectacles, and having carefully read the superscription, turned back towards the house without speaking.

"Here is a letter for you, O'Donoghue," said he, as he entered the parlor, where the chief was already seated at his breakfast, while Kerry O'Leary, a short distance behind his chair, was relating the circumstance of the last night's adventure.

"Is it from Mark?" said the old man, eagerly; and then glancing at the writing, he threw it from him in disappointment, and added, "I am getting very uneasy about that lad."

"Had ye no better read the letter? the messenger wha brought it seems to expect an answer," interposed M'Nab.

"Messenger! — eh — not by post? Is Hemsworth come back?" exclaimed O'Donoghue, with an evident degree of fear in his manner.

"No, sir," said Kerry, guessing to what topic his master's thoughts were turning; "the captain is not coming, they say, for a month or six weeks yet."

"Thank God!" muttered O'Donoghue; "that scoundrel never leaves me a night's rest when I hear he's in the neighborhood. Will you see what's in it, Archy? My head is quite confused this morning; I got up three hours before my time."

Sir Archibald resumed his spectacles, and broke the seal. The contents were at some length, it would seem, for as he perused the letter to himself several minutes elapsed.

"Go on, Kerry," said O'Donoghue; "I want to hear all about this business."

"Well, I believe your honor knows the most of it now; for when I came up to the glen they were all safe over, barrin' the mare; poor Kittane, she was carried down the falls, and they took her up near a mile below the old bridge, stone dead; Master Mark will fret his heart out when he hears it."

"This is a very polite note," interposed Sir Archy, as he laid the letter open before him, "from Sir Marmaduke Travers, begging to know when he may be permitted to pay his personal respects to you, and express his deep and grateful sense — his own words — of your son's noble conduct in rescuing his daughter at the hazard of his life. It is written with much modesty and good sense, and the writer canna be other than a true gentleman."

"Travers — Travers," repeated O'Donoghue; "why that's the man himself. It was he bought the estate; he's Hemsworth's principal."

"And if he be," replied M'Nab, "canna an honest man hae a bad servant? There's nothing about Hemsworth here. It's a ceevil demand from one gentleman to auither."

"So it is, then, Sir Marmaduke that has been staying at the lodge these some weeks past. That was Mark's secret — poor dear boy, he wouldn't tell me, fearing it would annoy me. Well, what is it he wants?"

"To visit you, O'Donoghue."

"What nonsense! the mischief's done already. The mortgage is foreclosed; and as for Carrignacurra, they can do nothing before the next term. Swaby says so, at least."

"Can ye no comprehend? It is no law document, but a ceevil way to make your acquaintance. Sir Marmaduke wad pay his respects to ye."

"Well, let him come," said O'Donoghue, laughing; "he's sure to find me at home. The sheriff takes care of that for him. Mark will be here to-morrow or next day; I hope he won't come before that."

"The answer must be a written one," said M'Nab; "it wadna be polite to gie the flunkie the response."

"With all my heart, Archy, so that I am not asked to indite it. Miles O'Donoghue are the only words I have written for many a year;" and he added, with a half bitter laugh, "it would have been as well for poor Mark if I had forgotten even that same."

Sir Archibald retired to write the answer, with many a misgiving as to the substance of the epistle; for, while deeply gratified at heart that his favorite, Herbert, had acquitted himself so nobly, his own pride was mortified, as he thought over the impressions a visit to the O'Donoghue household might have on the mind of a "haughty Southern," for such in his soul he believed him.

There was no help for it, however; the advances were made in a spirit so very respectful, every line breathed such an evident desire, on the writer's part, to be well received, that a refusal, or even a formal acceptance of the proffered visit, was out of the question. His reply, then, accepted the intended honor with a profession of satisfaction; apologizing for his omission in calling on Sir Marmaduke, on the score of ill-health, and concluded by a few words about Herbert, for whom many inquiries were made in the letter. This, written in the clear, but quaint old-fashioned characters of the writer's time, and signed "O'Donoghue," was carefully folded, and enclosed in a large square envelope, and with it in his hand M'Nab re-entered the breakfast-room.

"Wad you like to hear the terms of the response, O'Donoghue, before I seal it up?" asked Sir Archy, with an air of importance.

"No, no; I am sure it is all right and proper. You mentioned, of course, that Mark was from home, but we were expecting him back every day."

"I didna make ony remark o' that kind. I said ye wad be happy to see him, and felt proud at the honor of making acquaintance wi' him."

“Damn me if I do, then, Archy,” broke in the old man, roughly. “For so great a stickler for truth as yourself, the words were somewhat out of place. I neither feel pride nor honor on the subject. Let it go, however, and there’s an end to it.”

“I’ve despatched a messenger for Roach to Killarney; that bit of a brainless body, Terry, is gone by the mountain road, and we may expect the doctor here to-night.” And with these words Sir Archy departed to send off his epistle, and the O’Donoghue leaned back in his easy-chair, sorely wearied and worried by the fatigues of the day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOUSE OF SICKNESS.

How painfully is the sense of severe illness diffused through every part of a household! How solemn is the influence it sheds on every individual, and every object: the noiseless step, the whispered words, the closed curtains, the interruption to the ordinary avocations of life, or the performance of them in gloom and sadness! When wealth and its appliances exist, these things take all the features of extreme care and solicitude for the sufferer; all the agencies of kindness and skill are brought into active exertion to minister to the rich man in sickness: but when poverty and its evils are present, when the struggle is against the pressure of want, as well as the sufferings of malady, the picture is indeed a dark one.

The many deficiencies in comfort which daily habit has learned to overlook, the privations which in the active conflict with the world are forgotten, now come forth in the solitude of the sick house to affright and afflict us, and we sorrow over miseries long lost to memory till now.

Never since the fatal illness which left O'Donoghue a widower had there been anything like dangerous sickness in the house; and like most people who have long enjoyed the blessings of uninterrupted health, they had no thought for such a calamity, nor deemed it among the contingencies of life. Now, however, the whole household felt the change. The riotous laughter of the kitchen was silenced, the loud speaking hushed, the doors, banged by the wind or the rude violence of careless hands, were closed noiselessly; everything betokened that sorrow was there. O'Donoghue himself paced to and fro in the chamber of the old tower, now stopping to cast a glance down the glen, where he still

hoped to see Mark approaching, now resuming his melancholy walk in sadness of heart.

In the darkened sick room, and by the bed, sat Sir Archibald, concealed by the curtain, but near enough to give assistance to the sick boy should he need it. He sat buried in his own gloomy thoughts, rendered gloomier as he listened to the hurried breathings and low mutterings of the youth, whose fever continued to increase upon him. The old ill-tempered cook, whose tongue was the terror of the region she dwelt in, sat smoking by the fire, nor noticed the presence of the aged foxhound, who had followed Kerry into the kitchen, and now lay asleep before the fire. Kerry himself ceased to hum the snatches of songs and ballads by which he was accustomed to beguile the weary day. There was a gloom on everything, nor was the aspect without doors more cheering. The rain beat heavily in drifts against the windows; the wind shook the old trees violently, and tossed their gnarled limbs in wild confusion, sighing with mournful cadence along the deep glen, or pouring a long melancholy note through the narrow corridors of the old house. The sound of the storm, made more audible by the dreary silence, seemed to weigh down every heart. Even the bare-legged little gossoon, Mickey, who had come over from Father Luke's with a message, sat mute and sad, and as he moved his naked foot among the white turf ashes, seemed to feel the mournful depression of the hour.

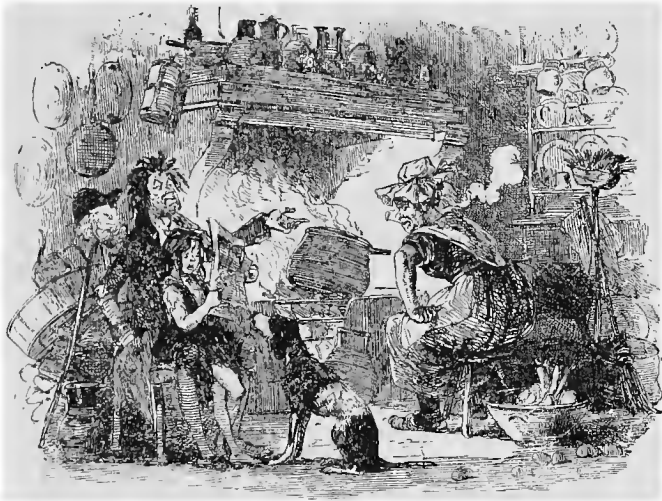
"'T is a dreadful day of rain, glory be to God!" said Kerry, as he drew a fragment of an old much-soiled newspaper from his pocket, and took his seat beside the blazing fire. For some time he persevered in his occupation without interruption; but Mrs. Branaghan, having apparently exhausted her own reflections, now turned upon him to supply a new batch.

"What's in the news, Kerry O'Leary? I think ye might as well read it out, as be mumbling it to yourself there," said she, in a tone seldom disputed in the realm she ruled.

"Musha, then," said Kerry, scratching his head, "the little print bates me entirely; the letters do be so close, they have n't room to stir in, and my eye is always going to the line above and the line below, and can't keep straight in the

furrow at all. Come here, Mickey, alanah! 't is you ought to be a great scholar, living in the house with his reverence. They tell me," continued he, in a whisper to the cook, — "they tell me, he can sarve mass already."

Mrs. Branaghan withdrew her dudeen at these words, and gazed at the little fellow with unmixed astonishment, who, in obedience to the summons, took his place beside Kerry's chair, and prepared to commence his task.



"Where will I begin, sir?"

"Begin at the news, av coorse," said Kerry, somewhat puzzled to decide what kind of intelligence he most desired. "What's this here with a large P in the first of it?"

"Prosperity of Ireland, sir," said the child.

"Ay, read about that, Mickey," said the cook, resuming her pipe.

With a sing-song intonation, which neither regarded paragraph nor period, but held on equably throughout the column, the little fellow began:—

"The prospect of an abundant harvest is now very general throughout the country; and should we have a continu-

ance of the heavenly weather for a week or so longer, we hope the corn will all be saved."

As the allusion made here by a journalist was to a period of several years previous, the listeners might be excused for not feeling a perfect concurrence in the statement.

"Heavenly weather indeed!" grunted out the cook, as she turned her eyes towards the windows, against which the plashing rain was beating. "Mike, read on."

"Mr. Foran was stopped last night in Baggot Street, and robbed of his watch and clothes, by four villains who live in Stony Batter; they are well known, and are advised to take care, as such depredations cannot go long unpunished. — The two villains that broke into the house of the Archbishop of Dublin, and murdered the housemaid, will be turned off 'Lord Temple's trap' on Saturday next; this will be a lesson to the people about the Cross Puddle, that we hope may serve to their advantage.

"Sir Miles M'Shane begs to inform the person who found his shoe-buckle after the last levee, that he will receive one-and-eightpence reward for the same, by bringing it to No. 2, Ely Place; or, if he prefer it, Sir Miles will toss up who keeps the pair. They are only paste, and not diamond, though mighty well imitated."

"Paste!" echoed Mrs. Branaghan; "the lying thieves!" her notions on the score of that material being limited to patties and pie-crusts.

"The 'Bucks' are imitating the ladies in all the arts of beautifying the person. Many were seen painted and patched at the duchess's last ball. We hope this effeminacy may not spread any further. — It is Mr. Rigby, and not Mr. Harper, is to have the silk gown. — Sir George Rose is to get the red ribbon for his services in North America."

"A silk gown and a red ribbon!" cried Mrs. Branaghan. "Bad luck to me, but they might be ashamed of themselves."

"Faix, I never believed what Darby Long said before," broke in Kerry. "He tould me he saw the Bishop of Cork in a black silk petticoat like a female. Is there no more murders, Mickey?"

“I don't know, sir, barrin' they're in the fashionable intelligence.”

“Well, read on.”

“Donald, the beast, who refused to leave his cell in Trim jail at the last assizes, and was consequently fired at by a file of infantry, had his leg amputated yesterday by Surgeon Huston of this town, and is doing remarkably well.”

“Where's the sporting news?” said Kerry. “Is not this it here?” as he pointed to a figure of a horse above a column.

“Mr. Connolly's horse Gabriel would have been in first, but he stopped to eat Whaley, the jockey, when he fell. The race is to be run again on Friday next. It was Mr. Daly, and not Mr. Crosbie, horsewhipped the attorney over the course last Tuesday. Mr. Crosbie spent the day with the Duke of Leinster, and is very angry at his name being mentioned in the wrong, particularly as he is bound over to keep the peace towards all members of the bar for three years.

“Captain Heavyside and Mr. Malone exchanged four shots each on the Bull this morning. The quarrel was about racing and politics, and miscellaneous matters.

“It is rumored that if the Chief Justice be appointed from England, he will decline giving personal satisfaction to the Master of the Rolls; but we cannot credit the report.

“The Carmelites have taken Ranelagh House for a nunnery.”

“That's the only bit in the paper I'd give the snuff of my pipe for,” said Mrs. Branaghan. “Read it again, acushla.”

The boy re-read the passage.

“Well, well, I wonder if Miss Kate will ever come back again,” said she, in a pause.

“To be sure she will,” said Kerry; “what would hinder her? Has n't she a fine fortune out of the property? Ten thousand, I heard the master say.”

“Ayeh! sure it's all gone many a day ago; the sorra taste of a brass farthen's left for her, or any one else. The master sould every stick an' stone in the place, barrin'

the house that's over us, and sure that's all as one as sould too. Ah, then, Miss Kate was the purty child, and had the coaxing ways with her."

"'T is a pity to make her a nun," said Kerry.

"A pity! why would it be a pity, Kerry O'Leary?" said the old lady, bristling up with anger. "Is n't the nuns happier, and dacent, and higher nor other women, with rapsCALLIONS for husbands, and villains of all kinds for childer? Is it the likes of ye, or the crayture beside ye, that would teach a colleen the way to heaven? Musha, but they have the blessed times of it — fastin' and prayin', and doing all manner of penance, and talking over their sins with holy men."

"Whisht! what's that? there's the bell ringing above stairs," said Kerry, suddenly starting up and listening. "Ay, there it is again;" and, so saying, he yawned and stretched himself, and after several interjectional grumblings over the disturbance, slowly mounted the stairs towards the parlor.

"Are ye sleepin' down there, ye lazy deevils?" cried Sir Archy, from the landing of the stairs. "Did ye no hear the bell?"

"'T is now I heerd it," said Kerry, composedly, for he never vouchsafed the same degree of deference to Sir Archy he yielded to the rest of the family.

"Go see if there be any lemons in the house, and lose no time about it."

"Faix, I need n't go far, then, to find out," whined Kerry; "the master had none for his punch these two nights. They put the little box into a damp corner, and, sure enough, they had beards on them like Jews, the same lemons, when they went to look for them."

"Go down, then, to the woman M'Kelly's, in the glen, and see if she hae na some there."

"Oh, murther! murther!" muttered Kerry to himself, as the whistling storm reminded him of the dreadful weather without doors. "'T is no use in going without the money," said he, slyly, hoping that by this home-thrust he might escape the errand.

"Ye maun tell her to put it in the account, man."

“’T is in bad company she’d put it, then,” muttered Kerry below his breath; then added, aloud, “Sorrow one she’d give, if I had n’t the sixpence in my hand.”

“Canna ye say it’s no for yoursel’, it’s for the house? She wad na refuse that.”

“No use in life,” reiterated he, solemnly. “She’s a real naygur, and would not trust Father Luke with a week’s snuff, and he’s dealt there for sneeshin these thirty years.”

“A weel, a weel,” said M’Nab, in a low, harsh voice; “the world’s growing waur and waur. Ye maun e’en gie her a shilling, and mind ye get nae bad bawbees in change. She suld gie ye twelve for saxpence.”

Kerry took the money without a word of reply: he was foiled in the plan of his own devising, and, with many a self-uttered sarcasm on the old Scotchman, he descended the stairs once more.

“Is Master Herbert worse?” said the cook, as the old huntsman entered the kitchen.

“Begorra, he must be bad entirely, when ould Archy would give a shilling to cure him. See here, he’s sending me for lemons down to Mary’s.”

Kerry rang the coin upon the table, as if to test its genuineness, and muttered to himself, —

“’T is a good one, — devil a lie in it!”

“There’s the bell again; musha, how he rings it!”

This time the voice of Sir Archy was heard in loud tones summoning Kerry to his assistance, for Herbert had become suddenly worse, and the old man was unable to prevent him rising from his bed and rushing from the room.

The wild and excited tones of the youth were mixed with the deeper utterings of the old man, who exerted all his efforts to calm and restrain him as Kerry reached the spot. By his aid the boy was conveyed back to his bed, where, exhausted by his own struggles, he lay without speaking or moving for some hours.

It was not difficult to perceive, however, that this state boded more unfavorably than the former one. The violent paroxysms of wild insanity betokened, while they lasted, a degree of vital energy and force, which now seemed totally to have given way; and although Kerry regarded the change

as for the better, the more practised and skilful mind of Sir Archibald drew a far different and more dispiriting augury.

Thus passed the weary hours, and at last the long day began to decline; but still no sign nor sound proclaimed the doctor's coming, and M'Nab's anxiety became hourly more intense.

"If he come na soon," said he, after a long and dreary silence, "he need na tak' the trouble to look at him."

"'Tis what I'm thinking too," said Kerry, with a sententious gravity almost revolting. "When the fingers does be going that way, it's a mighty bad sign. If I seen the hounds working with their toes, I never knew them recover."

CHAPTER IX.

A DOCTOR'S VISIT.

THE night was far advanced as the doctor arrived at the O'Donoghue's house, drenched with rain, and fatigued by the badness of the roads, where his gig was often compelled to proceed for above a mile at a foot pace. Doctor Roach was not in the most bland of tempers as he reached his destination; and, of a verity, his was a nature that stood not in any need of increased acerbity. The doctor was a type of a race at one time very general; but now, it is hard to say wherefore, nearly extinct in Ireland. But so it is; the fruits of the earth change not in course of years more strikingly than the fashions of men's minds. The habits, popular enough in one generation, survive as eccentricities in another, and are extinct in a third.

There was a pretty general impression in the world, some sixty or seventy years back, that a member of the medical profession, who had attained to any height in his art, had a perfect right to dispense with all the amenities and courtesies which regulate social life among less privileged persons. The concessions now only yielded to a cook were then extended to a physician; and in accordance with the privilege by which he administered most nauseous doses to the body, he was suffered to extend his dominion, and apply scarcely more palatable remedies to the minds of his patients. As if the ill-flavored draughts had tintured the spirit that conceived them, the tone of his thoughts usually smacked of bitters, until at last he seemed to have realized, in his own person, the conflicting agencies of the pharmacopœia, and was at once acrid, and pungent, and soporific together.

The College of Physicians could never have reproached Doctor Roach with conceding a single iota of their privi-

leges. Never was there one who more stoutly maintained, in his whole practice through life, the blessed immunity of "the Doctor." The magic word "Recipe," which headed his prescriptions, suggested a tone of command to all he said, and both his drugs and dicta were swallowed without remonstrance.

It may not be a flattering confession for humanity, but it is assuredly a true one, that the exercise of power, no matter how humble its sphere, or how limited its range, will eventually generate a tyrannical habit in him who wields it. Doctor Roach was certainly not the exception to this rule. The Czar himself was not more autocrat in the steppes of Russia, than was he in any house where sickness had found entrance. From that hour he planted his throne there. All the caprices of age, all the follies of childhood, the accustomed freedoms of home, the indulgences which grow up by habit in a household, had to give way before a monarch more potent than all, — "the Doctor." Men bore the infliction with the same patient endurance they summoned to sustain the malady. They felt it to be grievous and miserable, but they looked forward to a period of relief, and panted for the arrival of the hour when the disease and the doctor would take their departure together.

If the delight they experienced at such a consummation was extreme, so to the physician it savored of ingratitude. "I saved his life yesterday," saith he. "and see how happy he is to dismiss me to-day." But who is ever grateful for the pangs of a toothache? Or what heart can find pleasure in the memory of sententiousness, senna, and low diet?

Never were the blessings of restored health felt with a more suitable thankfulness than by Doctor Roach's patients. To be free once more from his creaking shoes, his little low dry cough, his harsh accents, his harsher words, his contradictions, his sneers, and his selfishness, shed a halo around recovery which the friends of the patient could not properly appreciate.

Such was the individual whose rumbling and rattling vehicle now entered the court-yard of Carrig-na-curra, escorted by poor Terry, who had accompanied him the

entire way on foot. The distance he had come, his more than doubts about the fee, the severity of the storm, were not the accessories likely to amend the infirmities of his temper; while a still greater source of irritation than all existed in the mutual feeling of dislike between him and Sir Archibald M'Nab. An occasional meeting at a little boarding-house in Killarney, which Sir Archy was in the habit of visiting each summer for a few days, — the only recreation he permitted himself, — had cultivated this sentiment to such a pitch, that they never met without disagreement, or parted without an actual quarrel. The doctor was a democrat, and a Romanist of the first water. Sir Archy was a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church; and, whatever might have been his early leanings in politics, and in whatever companionship his active years were passed, experience had taught him the fallacy of many opinions, which owe any appearance of truth or stability they possess to the fact that they have never advanced beyond the stage of speculative notions into the realms of actual and practical existence. But, above all, the prudent Scotchman dreaded the prevalence of these doctrines among young and unsettled minds, ever ready to prefer the short and hazardous career of fortune to the slow and patient drudgery of daily industry.

If the doctor anticipated but little enjoyment in the society of Sir Archy, neither did the latter hope for any pleasure to himself from Roach's company. However, as the case of poor Herbert became each hour more threatening, the old man resolved to bury in oblivion every topic of mutual disagreement, and, so long as the doctor remained in the house, to make every possible or impossible concession to conciliate the good-will of one on whose services so much depended.

"Do ye hear?" cried Roach, in a harsh voice, to Kerry, who was summoned from the kitchen fire to take charge of his horse; "let the pony have a mash of bran, — a hot mash, — and don't leave him till he's dry."

"Never fear, sir," replied Kerry, as he led the jaded and wayworn beast into the stable, "I'll take care of him as if he was a racer;" and then, as Roach disappeared, added,

"I'd like to see myself strapping the likes of him, — an ould mountaineer. A mash of bran, indeed! Cock him up with bran! Begorra, 'tis thistles and docks he's most used to;" and, with this sage reflection on the beast's habits, he locked the stable door, and resumed his former place beside the blazing turf fire.

O'Donoghue's reception of the doctor was most cordial. He was glad to see him on several accounts. He was glad to see any one who could tell him what was doing in the world, from which all his intercourse was cut off; he was glad, because the supper was waiting an hour and a half beyond its usual time, and he was getting uncommonly hungry; and, lastly, he really felt anxious about Herbert, whenever by any chance his thoughts took that direction.

"How are you, Roach?" cried he, advancing to meet him with an extended hand. "This is a kind thing of you; you've had a dreadful day, I fear."

"D—n me, if I ever saw it otherwise in this confounded glen. I never set foot in it that I was n't wet through."

"We have our share of rain, indeed," replied the other, with a good-humored laugh; "but if we have storm, we have shelter."

Intentionally misunderstanding the allusion, and applying to the ruined mansion the praise bestowed on the bold mountains, the doctor threw a despairing look around the room, and repeated the word "shelter" in a voice far from complimentary.

The O'Donoghue's blood was up in a moment. His brow contracted and his cheek flushed, as, in a low and deep tone, he said, —

"It is a crazy old concern. You are right enough, — neither the walls nor the company within them are like what they once were."

The look with which these words were given recalled the doctor to a sense of his own impertinence; for, like certain tethered animals, who never become conscious of restraint till the check of the rope lays them on their back, nothing short of such a home-blow could have staggered his self-conceit.

"Ay, ay," muttered he, with a cackling apology for a

laugh, "time is telling on us all. But I'm keeping the supper waiting."

The duties of hospitality were always enough to make O'Donoghue forget any momentary chagrin, and he seated himself at the table with all his wonted good humor and affability.

As the meal proceeded, the doctor inquired about the sick boy, and the circumstances attending his illness; the interest he bestowed on the narrative mainly depending on the mention of Sir Marmaduke Travers's name, whose presence in the country he was not aware of before, and from whose residence he began already to speculate on many benefits to himself.

"They told me," continued O'Donoghue, "that the lad behaved admirably. In fact, if the old weir-rapid be anything like what I remember it, the danger was no common one. There used to be a current there strong enough to carry away a dozen horsemen."

"And how is the young lady? Is she nothing the worse from the cold, and the drenching, and the shock of the accident?"

"Faith, I must confess it, I have not had the grace to ask after her. Living as I have been for some years back has left me sadly in arrear with every demand of the world. Sir Marmaduke was polite enough to say he'd call on me; but there is a still greater favor he could bestow, which is, to leave me alone."

"There was a lawsuit, or dispute of some kind or other between you, was there not?"

"There is something of the kind," said O'Donoghue, with an air of annoyance at the question; "but these are matters gentlemen leave to their lawyers, and seek not to mix themselves up with."

"The strong purse is the sinew of war," muttered the inexorable doctor; "and they tell me he is one of the wealthiest men in England."

"He may be, for aught I know or care."

"Well, well," resumed the other, after a long deliberative pause, "there's no knowing how this adventure may turn out. If your son saved the girl's life, I scarcely think he could press you so hard about—"

"Take care, sir," broke in O'Donoghue, and with the words he seized the doctor's wrist in his strong grasp, — "take care how you venture to speak of affairs which nowise concern you;" then, seeing the terrified look his speech called up, he added, "I have been very irritable latterly, and never desire to talk on these subjects; so, if you please, we'll change the topic."

The door was cautiously opened at this moment, and Kerry presented himself, with a request from Sir Archibald, that, as soon as Doctor Roach found it convenient, he would be glad to see him in the sick room.

"I am ready now," said the doctor, rising from his chair, and not by any means sorry at the opportunity of escaping a *tête-à-tête* he had contrived to render so unpalatable to both parties. As he mounted the stairs, he continued in broken phrases to inveigh against the house and the host in a half soliloquy: "A tumble-down old barrack it is — not fifty shillings worth of furniture under the roof — the ducks were as tough as soaked parchment; and where's the fee to come from? I wish I knew that; unless I take one of these old devils instead of it;" and he touched the frame of a large, damp, discolored portrait of some long-buried ancestor, several of which figured on the walls of the staircase.

"The boy is worse, — far worse," whispered a low but distinct voice beside him. "His head is now all astray; he knows no one."

Doctor Roach seemed vexed at the ceremony of salutation being forgotten in Sir Archibald's eagerness about the youth, and dryly answered, —

"I have the honor to see you well, sir, I hope."

"There is one here very far from well," resumed Sir Archy, neither caring for nor considering the speech. "We have lost too much time already; I trust you may na be too late now."

The doctor made no reply, but rudely taking the candle from his hand, walked towards the bed.

"Ay, ay," muttered he, as he beheld the lustrous eyes and wide-spread pupils, the rose-red cheek, and dry, cracked lips of the youth, "he has it sure enough."

"Has what? what is it?"

"The fever, — brain fever, and the worst kind of it, too."

"And there is danger, then?" whispered M'Nab.

"Danger, indeed! I wonder how many come through it. Pshaw! there 's no use trying to count his pulse;" and he threw the hand rudely back upon the bed. "That 's going as fast as ever his father went with the property." A harsh, low, cackling laugh followed this brutal speech, which demanded all Sir Archy's predetermined endurance to suffer unchecked.

"Do you know me?" said the doctor, in the loud voice used to awaken the dormant faculty of hearing, — "do you know me?"

"Yes," replied the boy, staring steadfastly at him.

"Well, who am I, then? Am I your father?"

A vacant gaze was all the answer.

"Tell me, am I your father?"

No reply followed.

"Am I your uncle, then?" said the doctor, still louder.

The word "uncle" seemed to strike upon some new chord of his awakened sense. A faint smile played upon his parched lips, and his eyes wandered from the speaker, as if in search of some object, till they fell upon Sir Archy, as he stood at the foot of the bed; when suddenly his whole countenance was lighted up, and he repeated the word "uncle" to himself in a voice indescribably sweet and touching.

"He has na forgotten me," murmured M'Nab, in a tone of deep emotion. "My ain dear boy, he knows me yet."

"You agitate him too much," said Roach, whose nature had little sympathy with the feelings of either. "You must leave me alone here to examine him myself."

M'Nab said not a word, but, with noiseless step, stole from the room. The doctor looked after him as he went, and then followed to see that the door was closed behind. This done, he beckoned to Kerry, who still remained, to approach, and deliberately seated himself in a chair near the window.

"Tell me, my good fellow," said he, affecting an air of confidence as he spoke, "ain't they all broke here? Is n't the whole thing smashed?"

"Broke — smashed!" repeated Kerry, as he held up both

hands in feigned astonishment. "'T is a droll smash; begorra, I never see money as plenty this many a year. Sure av there was n't lashings of it, would he be looking out for carriage-horses, and buying hunters, not to say putting the kennel in order?"

"Is it truth you are telling?" said Roach, in astonishment.

"True as my name is Kerry O'Leary. We offered Lanty Lawler a hundred and twenty guineas on Friday last for a match wheeler, and we're not off of him yet; he's a big brown horse, with a star on his face; and the cob for the master cost forty pounds. He'll be here to-morrow or next day; sure ye'll see him yourself."

"The place is falling to ruin; the roof will never last the winter," broke in the doctor.

"Well, and whose fault is it but that spalpeen Murphy's, that won't set the men to work till he gets oak timber from the Black Say? 'T is the finest wood in the world, they tell me, and lasts for ever and ever."

"But don't they owe money everywhere in the country? There is n't a little shop in Killarney without an account of theirs in it."

"Of course they do; and the same in Cork, — ay, and in Tralee, for the matter of that. Would you have them not give encouragement to more places nor one? There's not one of those crayturs would send in their bill — no, though we do be asking for it week after week. They're afraid of losing the custom. And I'll engage, now, they do be telling you they can't get their money by hook or by crook; that's it, — I knew it well."

The doctor meditated long on these strange revelations, so very opposite to all he had heard of the circumstances of the O'Donoghues; and while his own convictions were strongly against Kerry's narrative, that worthy man's look of simplicity and earnest truth puzzled him considerably, and made him hesitate which side to credit.

After a long pause, from which the incoherent ravings of the sick boy aroused him, he looked up at Kerry, and then, with a motion of his thumb towards the bed, he muttered, —

"He 's going fast."

"Going fast!" echoed Kerry, in a voice very different from his former accent. "Oh, wirra! there 's nothing so bad as death! Distress and poverty is hard enough, but that 's the raal misfortune."

A dry, sarcastic grin from the doctor seemed to say that poor Kerry's secret was discovered. The allusion to want of means came too naturally not to be suggested by present circumstances, and the readiness of Doctor Roach's apprehension clinched the discovery at once.

"We 'll go down, now," said the doctor; "I believe I know the whole state of the case." And, with these words of ambiguous meaning, he returned to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER X.

AN EVENING AT "MARY" M'KELLY'S.

IF sorrow had thrown its sombre shadow over the once proud house of the O'Donoghue, within whose walls now noiseless footsteps stole along, and whispered words were spoken, a very different scene presented itself at the small hostel of Mary M'Kelly. There, before the ample fireplace, a quarter of a sheep was roasting, while various utensils of cookery, disposed upon and around the fire, diffused a savory odor through the apartment. A table, covered with a snow-white napkin, and containing covers for a party of six, occupied the middle of the room; cups and drinking-vessels of richly chased silver, silver forks and spoons of handsome pattern, were there also, — strange and singular spectacle beneath the humble thatch of a wayside cabin. Mary herself displayed in her toilet a more than usual care and attention, and wore, in her becoming cap, with a deep lace border, a bouquet of tricolored ribbons, coquettishly knotted, and with the ends falling loosely on her neck. While she busied herself in the preparation for the table, she maintained from time to time a running conversation with a person who sat smoking in the chimney corner. Although screened from the glare of the fire, the light which was diffused around showed enough of the dress and style of the wearer to recognize him at once for Lanty Lawler, the horse-dealer. His attitude, as he lolled back on one chair, and supported his legs on another, bespoke the perfection of ease, while in the jaunty manner he held the long pipe-stick between his fingers could be seen the affectation of one who wished to be thought at home, as well as to feel so.

"What hour did they mention, Mary?" said he, after a pause of some minutes, during which he puffed his pipe assiduously.

"The gosssoon that came from Beerhaven said it would be nine o'clock, at any rate; but sure it's nigher to ten now. They were to come up on the flood tide. Whisht! what was that? Was n't that like the noise of wheels?"

"No; that's the wind, and a severe night it is, too. I'm thinking, Mary, the storm may keep them back."

"Not a bit of it; there's a creek down there, they tell me, safer nor e'er a harbor in Ireland. And you'd never see a bit of a vessel till you were straight over her; and sure it's little they mind weather. That Captain Jack, as they call him, says there's no time for business like a gale of wind. The last night they were here there were two wrecks in the bay."

"I mind it well, Mary. Faix, I never felt a toast so hard to drink as the one they gave after supper."

"Don't be talking about it," said Mary, crossing herself devoutly; "they said it out of devilment, sorra more."

"Well, maybe so," muttered he, sententiously. "They're wild chaps, any way, and they've a wild life of it."

"Troth, if I was a man, 't is a life I'd like well," said Mary, with a look of resolute determination well becoming the speech. "Them's the fine times they have, going round the world for sport, and nothing to care for; as much gold as they'd ask, fine clothes, the best of eating and drinking; sure there's not one of them would drink out of less than silver."

"Faix, they may have iron round their ankles for it, after all, Mary."

"Sorra bit of it; the jail is n't built yet that would howld them. What's that noise, now? That's them. Oh, no; it's the water running down the mountain."

"Well, I wish they'd come, any way," said Lanty, "for I must be off early to-morrow; I've an order from the ould banker here above for six beasts, and I'd like to get a few hours' sleep before morning."

"'T is making a nice penny you are there, Lanty," said Mary, with a quizzical look from the corner of her eye.

“A good stroke of business, sure enough, Mary,” replied he, laughingly. “What d’ ye think I did with him yesterday morning? I heerd here, ye know, what happened to the gray mare I bought from Mark O’Donoghue, — that she was carried over the weir-gash and drowned. What does I do, but goes up to the Lodge and asks for Sir Marmaduke; and, says I, ‘I’m come, sir, to offer a hundred and fifty for the little mare I sould you the other day for a hundred; ’t is only now I found out her real value, and I can get two hundred for her in Cork the day I bring her up; and sure your honor would n’t prevent a poor man making a trifle in the way of his trade.’ ‘You’re an honest fellow, Lanty,’ says he, — devil a lie in it, Mary, don’t be laùghing, — ‘you’re an honest fellow; and although I cannot let you have your mare back again, for she was killed last night, you shall have your own price for the four carriage-horses and the two roadsters I ordered.’ With that I began blubbering about the mare, and swore I was as fond of her as if she was my sister. I wish you had seen his daughter then; upon my conscience, it was as good as a play. ‘They have so much feelin’,” says she to her father. ‘For fun,’ says I to myself. O murther, murther, Mary, and them’s the people that rules us!”

“Omadhauns they are, the devil a more!” interposed Mary, whose hearty contempt for the Saxon originated in the facility by which he could be imposed upon.

“That’s what I’m always saying,” said Lanty. “I’d rather have the chaytin’ than the baytin’ of John Bull, any day! You’ll humbug him out of his shirt, and, faix, it’s the easiest way to get it, after all.”

“It’s a mane way, Lanty,” interposed Mary, with a look of pride, — “it’s a dirty, mane way, and does n’t become an Irishman.”

“Wait till the time comes, Mary M’Kelly,” said Lanty, half angrily, “and maybe I’d be as ready as another.”

“I wish it was come,” said Mary, sighing; “I wish to the Virgin it was; I’m tired heerin’ of the preparations. Sorra one of me knows what more they want, if the stout heart was there. There’s eight barrels of gunpowder in that rock there,” said she, in a low whisper, “behind your

back; you need n't stir, Lanty. Begorra, if a spark was in it, 't would blow you and me, and the house that 's over us, as high as Hungry mountain."

"The angels be near us!" said Lanty, making the sign of the cross.

"Ay," resumed Mary, "and muskets for a thousand min, and pikes for two more. There 's saddles and bridles, eighteen hogsheads full."

"True enough," chimed in Lanty; "and I have an order for five hundred cavalry horses, — the money to be paid out of the Bank of France. Musha, I wish it was some place nearer home."

"Is it doubting them ye are, Lanty Lawler?"

"No, not a bit; but it 's always time enough to get the beasts when we see the riders. I could mount two thousand men in a fortnight, any day, if there was money to the fore; ay, and mount them well, too; not the kind of devils I give the government, that won't stand three days of hard work. Musha, Mary, but it 's getting very late; that mutton will be as dry as a stick."

"The French likes it best that way," said Mary, with a droll glance, as though to intimate she guessed the speaker's object. "Take a look down the road, Lanty, and try if you can hear any one coming."

Lanty arose from his comfortable corner with evident reluctance, and laid down his pipe with a half sigh, as he moved slowly towards the door of the cabin, which having unbarred, he issued forth into the darkness.

"It 's likely I 'd hear anything such a night as this," grumbled he to himself, "with the trees snapping across, and the rocks tumbling down! It 's a great storm entirely."

"Is there any sign of them, Lanty?" cried Mary, as she held the door ajar, and peeped out into the gloomy night.

"I could n't see my hand fornint me."

"Do you hear nothing?"

"Faix, I hear enough over my head; that was thunder! Is there any fear of it getting at the powder, Mary?"

"Divil a fear; don't be unasy about that," said the stout-hearted Mary. "Can you see nothing at all?"

"Sorra a thing, barrin' the lights up at Carrignacurra:

they're moving about there, at a wonderful rate. What's O'Donoghue doing at all?"

"'T is the young boy, Herbert, is sick," said Mary, as she opened the door to admit Lanty once more. "The poor child is in a fever. Kerry O'Leary was down here this evening for lemons for a drink for him. Poor Kerry! he was telling me, himself has a sore time of it with that ould Scotchman that's up there; nothing ever was like him for scoulding, and barging, and abusing; and O'Donoghue now minds nothing inside or out, but sits all day long in the big chair, just as if he was asleep. Maybe he does take a nap sometimes, for he talks of bailiffs, and writs, and all them things. Poor ould man! it's a bad end when the law comes with the gray hairs!"

"They've a big score with yourself, I'll be bound," said Lanty, inquiringly.

"Troth, I'd like to see myself charge them with anything," said she, indignantly. "It's to them and theirs I owe the roof that's over me, and my father, and my father's father before me owes it. Musha, it would become me to take their money, for a trife of wine and spirits, and tay and tobacco, as if I was n't proud to see them send down here, — the raal ould stock that's in it! Lanty, it must be very late by this. I'm afeard something's wrong up in the bay."

"'T is that same I was thinking myself," said Lanty, with a sly look towards the roasted joint, whose savory odor was becoming a temptation overmuch for resistance.

"You've a smart baste in the stable," said Mary. "He has eaten his corn by this time, and must be fresh enough; just put the saddle on him, Lanty dear, and ride down the road a mile or two, — do, and good luck attend you."

There never was a proposition less acceptable to the individual to whom it was made; to leave a warm fireside was bad enough, but to issue forth on a night it would have been inhumanity to expose a dog to, was far too much for his compliance; yet Lanty did not actually refuse; no, he had his own good reasons for keeping fair with Mary M'Kelly. So he commenced a system of diplomatic delay and discussion, by which time at least might be gained, in

which it was possible the long-expected guests would arrive, or the project fall to the ground on its own merits.

"Which way will they come, Mary?" said he, rising from his seat.

"Up the glen, to be sure, — what other way could they, from the bay? You'll hear them plain enough, for they shout and sing every step of the road, as if it was their own; wild devils they are."

"Sing is it? Musha, now, do they sing?"

"Ay, faix, the drollest songs ever ye heerd; French and Roosian songs, — sorra the likes of them going at all."

"Light hearts they have of their own."

"You may say that, Lanty Lawler; fair weather or foul, them's the boys never change. But come now, be alive, and get out the baste."

"I'm going, I'm going; it's myself would like to hear them sing a Roosian song. Whisht! what's that? did ye hear a shout there?"

"Here they are; that's them," said Mary, springing towards the door and withdrawing the bolt, while a smart knock was heard, and the same instant a voice called out,—

"Holloa! house ahoy!"

The door at the moment flew open, and a short, thick-set looking man, in a large boat cloak, entered, followed by a taller figure, equally muffled. The former, dropping his heavy envelope, and throwing off an oilskin cap from his head, held out his arms wide, as he said, —

"*Marie, ma mie! embrasse-moi;*" and then, not waiting for a compliance with the request, sprang forward, and clasped the buxom landlady in his arms, and kissed her on each cheek, with an air compounded of true feeling and stage effect.

"Here's my friend and travelling companion, Henry Talbot, come to share your hospitality, Mary," said he in English, to which the slightest foreign accent lent a tone of recitative. "One of us, Mary, — one of us."

The individual alluded to had by this time dropped his cloak to the ground, and displayed the figure of a slight and very young man, whose features were singularly handsome, save for a look of great effeminacy; his complexion

was fair as a girl's, and, flushed by exercise, the tint upon his cheek was of a pale rose color; he was dressed in a riding-coat and top-boots, which, in the fashion of the day, were worn short, and wrinkled around the leg. His hair he wore without powder, and long upon his neck; a heavy riding-whip, ornamented with silver, the only weapon he carried, composed his costume, — one as unlike his companion's as could be.

Captain Jacques Flahault was a stout-built, dark-complexioned fellow, of some four or five-and-forty, his face a grotesque union of insolence and drollery, the eyes black as jet, shaded by brows so arched as to give always the idea of laughing to a countenance the lower part of which, shrouded in beard and moustache, was intended to look stern and savage.

His dress was a short blue frock, beneath which he wore a jersey shirt, striped in various colors, across which a broad buff leather belt, loosely slung, supported four pistols and a dirk. Jack-boots reached about the middle of the thigh, and were attached to his waist by thongs of strong leather, — no needless precaution, apparently, as in their looseness the wearer might at any moment have stepped freely from them. A black handkerchief, loosely knotted round his neck, displayed a throat brawny and massive as a bull's, and imparted to the whole head an appearance of great size, — the first impression every stranger conceived regarding him.

"Ah, ah! Lawler, you here? How goes it, my old friend? Sit down here, and tell me all your rogueries since we parted. — *Par St. Pierre*, Henry, this is the veriest *fripou* in the kingdom," — Talbot bowed, and, with a sweetly courteous smile, saluted Lanty, as if accepting the speech in the light of an introduction, — "a fellow that, in the way of his trade, could cheat the Saint Père himself."

"Where's the others, Captain Jack?" said Mary, whose patience all this time endured a severe trial, — "where's the rest?"

"*Place pour le potage, ma mie!* — soup before a story. You shall hear everything by-and-by. Let us have the supper at once."

Lanty chimed in a willing assent to this proposition; and in a few moments the meat smoked upon the table, around which the whole party took their places with evident good-will.

While Mary performed her attentions as hostess by heaping up each plate, and ever supplying the deficiency caused by the appetite of the guests, the others eat on like hungry men, — Captain Jacques alone intermingling with the duties of the table a stray remark from time to time.

"*Ventrebleu*, how it blows! If it veers more to the south'ard, there will be a heavy strain on that cable. *Trinquons, mon ami, trinquons toujours. Ma belle Marie, you eat nothing.*"

"'T is unasy I am, Captain Jack, about what's become of the others," said Mrs. M'Kelly.

"Another bumper, *ma mie*, and I'm ready for the story, — the more as it is a brief one. *Allons donc*, — now for it. We left the bay about nine o'clock, or half-past, perhaps, intending to push forward to the glen at once, and weigh with the morning's tide; for it happens that this time our cargo is destined for a small creek on the northwest coast, our only business here being to land my friend Harry," — here Talbot bowed and smiled, — "and to leave two hogs-heads of Bordeaux for that very true-hearted, kind, *brave homme* Hemsworth, at the Lodge there. You remember last winter we entered into a compact with him to stock his cellar, provided no information of our proceedings reached the revenue from any quarter. Well, the wine was safely stored in one of the caves on the coast, and we started with a light conscience; we had neither despatches nor run-brandied to trouble us, — nothing to do but eat our supper, *saluer madame*," — here he turned round, and, with an air of mock respect, kissed Mary's hand, — "and get afloat again. As we came near the Lodge, I determined to make my visit a brief one, and so, leaving all my party, Harry included, outside, I approached the house, which, to my surprise, showed lights from nearly every window. This made me cautious, and so I crept stealthily to a low window, across which the curtain was but loosely drawn, and, *mort de ma vie!* what did I behold but the prettiest face in Europe. *Un ange de beauté.* She was leaning

over a table copying a drawing, or a painting of some sort or other. *Tête bleue!* here was a surprise. I had never seen her before, although I was with Hemsworth a dozen times."

"Go on, — go on!" said Lanty, whose curiosity was extreme to hear what happened next.

"*Eh bien*, I tried the sash, but it was fastened. I then went round the house, and examined the other windows, one after the other — all the same. *Que faire?* I thought of knocking boldly at the back door, but then I should have no chance of a peep at *la belle* in that way."

"What did you want with a peep at her?" asked Mary, gruffly.

"*Diable!* what did I want? *Pour l'admirer, l'adorer*, — or at least to make my respects, as becomes a stranger and a Frenchman. *Poursuivons*. There was no *entrée* without some noise, so I preferred the room she was in to any other, and gently disengaging my dirk, I slipped it between the two sashes, to lift up the latch that fastened them. *Morbleu!* the weapon slipped and came slap through the pane, with a tremendous fracas. She started up, and screamed — there was no use in any more delay. I put my foot through the window, and pushed open the sash at once; but, before I was well in the room, the bells were ringing in every quarter of the house, and men's voices calling aloud, and shouting to each other; when suddenly the door opened, and whiz went a pistol-ball close by my head, and shattered the shutter behind me. My fellows outside, hearing the shot, unslung their pieces, and, before I could get down to them, poured in a volley, — why, wherefore, or upon whom, the devil himself, that instigated them, can tell. The garrison mustered strong, however, and replied — that they did, by Jove! — for one of ours, Emile de Louvois, is badly wounded. I sounded the retreat, but the scoundrels would not mind me; and, before I was able to prevent it, *tête bleue!* they had got round to the farm-yard, and set fire to the corn-stacks; in a second, the corn and hay blazed up, and enveloped house and all in smoke. I sounded the retreat once more, and off the villains scampered, with poor Emile, to the boat; and I, finding my worthy friend here an inactive spectator of the whole from a grove near the road,

resolved not to give up my supper—and so, *me voici!* But come, can none of you explain this affair? What is Hemsworth doing, with all this armed household, and this captive princess?"

"Is the Lodge burned down?" said Lanty, whose interest in the inhabitants had a somewhat selfish origin.

"No; they got the fire under. I saw a wild-looking devil mount one of the ricks with a great canvas sail, all wetted, and drag it over the burning stack; and before I left the place the Lodge was quite safe."

"I'm sorry for it," said Mary, with a savage determination. "I'm sorry to the heart's core. Luck nor grace never was in the glen since the first stone of it was laid—nor will it be again, till it is a ruin! Why did n't they lay it in ashes when they were about it?"

"Faith, it seemed to me," said Talbot, in a low, soft voice, "they would have asked nothing better. I never saw such bulldogs in my life. It was all you could do, Flahault, to call them off."

"True enough," replied Jacques, laughing. "They enjoy a *brisée* like that with all their hearts."

"The English won't stay long here, after this night," was Lanty's sage reflection, but one which he did not utter aloud in the present company. And then, in accordance with Jacques' request, he proceeded to explain by what different tenants the Lodge became occupied since his last visit; and that an English baronet and his daughter, with a household of many servants, had replaced Hemsworth and his few domestics. At every stage of the recital, Flahault stopped the narrative, to give him time to laugh. To him the adventure was full of drollery. Even the recollection of his wounded comrade little damped his enjoyment of a scene which might have been attended by the saddest results; and he chuckled a hundred times over what he suspected the Englishman must feel on this his first visit to Ireland.

"I could rob the mail to-morrow, for the mere fun of reading his letters to his friends," said he. "*Morbleu!* what a description of Irish rapparees, five hundred in number, armed with pikes!"

"I wish ye'd give him the cause to do it," said Mary, bitterly. "What brings them here? who wants them, or looks for them?"

"You are right, Mary," said Talbot, mildly. "Ireland for the Irish!"

"Ay, Ireland for the Irish!" repeated Mary and Lanty, and the sentiment was drunk with all the honors of a favored toast.

For some time the party continued to discuss Flahault's story, and calculate on every possible turn the affair might give rise to; all agreeing, finally, on one point, that Sir Marmaduke would scarcely venture to protract his stay in a country where his visit had been signalized by such a reception. The tone of the conversation seemed little to accord with Captain Jacques' humor, whose convivial temperament found slight pleasure in protracted or argumentative discussions of any kind.

"*Que le diable l'emporte!*" cried he, at last. "This confounded talk has stopped the bottle this half-hour. Come, Talbot, let's have a song, my lad; never shake your head, *mon enfant*. — Well, then, here goes."

Thus saying, Flahault pushed back his chair a little from the table, and in a rich, deep, bass voice, which rang through the high rafters of the cabin, chanted out the following rude verses to a French vaudeville air, giving the final *e* of the French words, at the end of each line, that peculiar accentuation of *a*, which made the word sound *contrebanda*.

Though this information as to Captain Jacques' performance seems of little moment, yet such was the fact, that any spirit the doggerel possessed could only be attributed to the manner of the singer, and the effect produced by the intonation we have mentioned.

LA CONTREBANDE.

A bumper, "mes enfans," to swallow your care,

A full bumper, we pledge, "à l'Irlande;"

The land of "belles femmes, le pays de bonne chère

Et toujours de la Contrebande."

Some like to make love, and some like to make war,
 Some of beauty obey "la commande;"
 But what is the glance from an eye, "bleu" or "noir,"
 Except it be "la Contrebande."

When a prince takes the cash that a peasant can't spare,
 And lets him lie down "sur la lande,"
 Call it as you like, but the truth is, I swear,
 "C'est bien pire que la Contrebande."

Stolen kisses are ever the sweetest, we're told,
 They sink like a "navire qui foudre;"
 And what's true of a kiss is the same, too, of gold,
 They're both in their way, "Contrebande!"

When kings take your money, they won't even say,
 "Mon ami, que Dieu vous le rende;"
 While even the priest, for a blessing takes pay,
 "C'est partout et toujours Contrebande."

The good things of life are not equal, I'm sure,
 Then how pleasant to make the "amende;"
 To take from the wealthy, and give to the poor,
 "Voilà ce que j'appelle Contrebande."

Yet, as matters go, one must not deem it strange,
 That even "la France et l'Irlande,"
 If good wishes and friendship they simply exchange,
 There are folks that call that "Contrebande."

"*Vive la Contrebande, mes amis!*" shouted out Jacques, as he arose, glass in hand, and made the room ring with the toast. And every voice repeated the words, in such imitations as they were able.

"Tis an elegant song, any way," said Lanty, "if one only understood it all; and the tune's mighty like the 'Cruiskeen Lawn.'"

"Well, Harry," said Flahault, slapping his friend on the shoulder, "will the song persuade you to turn smuggler? I fear not. You'd rather practise your own 'Contrebande' among the bright eyes and dark locks of the capital. Well, there are worse 'métiers.' I have had a turn at it these fifteen years, and whether on the waters of Ontario or Champlain, or scudding along under the fog-banks of the

Scheldt, I never grew weary of it. But now for a little business talk; where is the *Padre*? where's Father Luke? was he not to have been here to-night?"

Mary whispered the answer in the captain's ear.

"Ah, *parbleu!*" exclaimed he, aloud — "is it so? Practising a little 'Contrebande' of his own — trying to see a poor fellow safe over the frontier, into the next world."

"Fie, for shame, Captain Jacques!" said Mary, with pious horror. "That's not the way to talk of the holy offices."

"I wish I had old Maurice Dulang here, the priest of Trois Rivières, — he's the boy could despatch them without trouble."

Neither Lanty nor Mary gave any encouragement to Flahault's new turn of the conversation, and so, addressing himself to Talbot, he went on, —

"We were dining together one day at the little inn at Trois Rivières, when a messenger came from Lachégon for the Père to administer the last rites to a 'mourant.' Maurice promised to be there in half-an-hour, but never stirred; and though three other messengers came for him, the answer was all the same, until at last came word, '*C'est trop tard, il est mort.*'"

"'*Trop tard!*' said Maurice, 'not a bit of it; give me a pen and ink and some paper.' With that he folded a piece, note fashion, and wrote, —

"MON CHER PIERRE, — Fais ton petit possible pour ce pauvre diable, qui s'est glissé hors du monde sans mes soins. Apparemment il était bien pressé; mais tu t'arrangeras pour le mieux.

"Ton viel ami,

"MAURICE DULANG.

"St. Pierre, à la Conciergerie du Paradis.

"'Put that in his mouth,' said Maurice, 'and there's no fear of him.'"

"'T was a blessed gospel he gave him," said Mary, who did not comprehend the French portion of the story, "and sure it's as good as anything."

"We all thought so, Mary. Poor Maurice related the

story at Lyons, when he was led out to the guillotine; but though the Commissaire laughed heartily, and enjoyed it much, they had found a breviary in his portmanteau, and they could n't let him off. *Pauvre bête!* To travel about the world with the 'pièce de conviction' in his possession. What, Harry, no more wine?"

"I thank you, no more for me, although that claret is a temptation."

"A bouquet, every glass of it! What say you, Master Lawler, — does it suit your palate?"

"I begin to think it a taste cold or so by this time," said Lanty; "I'm not genteel enough for wine, God help me. But it's time to turn in, anyhow, — and there's Mary asleep already."

"I don't stir till I finish the flask," said Jacques, firmly; "and if you won't drink, you need n't grudge me your company. It's hard to say when we meet again. You go northward, Talbot, is n't that so?"

"Yes; and that's the point I wish to come to: where and how shall I find a mount? — I depended on this priest you spoke of to meet me, but he has not made his appearance."

"You never fell upon your legs more fortunately: here's your man for a horse, all Ireland over. Eh, Lanty, what's to be had now?"

"Devil a thing can be got for love or money," said Lanty. "If the gentleman only told me yesterday —"

"Yesterday, Master Lanty, we were ridiug white horses in the Western Ocean, — but that's gone by; let us talk of to-day."

"My own hackney is here in the stable. If his honor likes him, I'll sell him; but he's a fancy beast, and must have a fancy price."

"Has he strength and speed for a fast ride?" said Talbot, "and will his condition bear it?"

"I'll answer for it — you may push on to Cork in a hand gallop, if you give him ten minutes' rest and a glass of whiskey at Macroom."

"That's enough; what's his pricc?"

"Take a look at him first," replied Lanty; "for if you

are judge of a beast, you'll not refuse what I ask you." With these words he lighted a candle, and placed it in an old iron lantern which hung against the wall, and opening a small door at the back of the cabin, proceeded, by a narrow passage cut in the rock, towards the stable, followed by Talbot, Flahault remaining where he was, as if sunk in meditation. Scarcely, however, had the two figures disappeared in the distance, when he shook Mary violently by the shoulder, and whispered in a quick, but collected tone, —

"Mary — Mary, I say — is that fellow all safe?"

"Ay, is he safe?" said she, resuming her wonted calmness in a second. "Why do you ask now?"

"I'll tell you why — for myself I care not a sou — I'm here to-day, away to-morrow; but Talbot's deep in the business — his neck's in the halter — can we trust Lawler on his account — a man of rank and large fortune as he is cannot be spared — what say you?"

"You may trust him, captain," said Mary; "he knows his life would not be his own two hours if he turned informer; and then this Mr. Talbot, he's a great man, you tell me?"

"He's a near kinsman of a great peer, and has a heavy stake in the game — that's all I know, Mary — and, indeed, the present voyage was more to bring him over than anything else. But hush, here they come."

"You shall have your money — you've no objection to French gold, I hope — for several years I have seen no other," said Talbot, entering.

"I know it well," said Lanty, "and would just as soon take it as if it had King George on it."

"You said forty pounds — fifty louis is not far off — will that do?" said the youth, as he emptied a heavily filled purse of gold upon the table, and pushed fifty pieces towards the horse-dealer.

"As well as the best, sir," said Lanty, as he stored the money in his long leathern pocket-book, and placed it within his breast-pocket.

"Will Mrs. M'Kelly accept this small token as a keepsake?" said the youth, while he took from around his neck

a fine gold chain of Venetian work, and threw it gallantly ever Mary's. "This is the first shelter I have found, after a long exile from my native land; and you, my old comrade, I have left you the pistols you took a fancy to; they are in the lugger. And so, now, good-bye all; I must take to the road at once: I should like to have met the priest, but all chance of that seems over."

Many and affectionate were the parting salutations between the young man and the others; for, although he had mingled but little in the evening's conversation, his mild and modest demeanor, added to the charm of his good looks, had won their favorable opinions; besides that he was pledged to a cause which had all their sympathies.

While the last good-bye was being spoken, Lanty had saddled and bridled the hackney, and led him to the door. The storm was still raging fiercely, and the night dark as ever.

"You'd better go a little ways up the glen, Lanty, beside him," said Mary, as she looked out into the wild and dreary night.

"T is what I mean to do," said Lanty; "I'll show him as far as the turn of the road."

Though the stranger declined the proffered civility, Lanty was firm in his resolution, and the young man, vaulting lightly into the saddle, called out a last farewell to the others, and rode on beside his guide.

Mary had scarcely time to remove the remains of the supper, when Lanty re-entered the cabin.

"He's the noble-hearted fellow any way," said he, "never took a shilling off the first price I asked him;" and with that he put his hand into his breast-pocket to examine once more the strange coin of France. With a start, a tremendous oath broke from him. "My money — my pocket-book is lost!" exclaimed he, in wild excitement, while he ransacked pocket after pocket of his dress. "Bad luck to that glen! I dropped it out there; and with the torrent of water that's falling it will never be found. Och, murther, this is too bad!"

In vain the others endeavored to comfort and console him; all their assurances of its safety, and the certainty of its

being discovered the next morning, were in vain. Lanty relighted the lantern, and muttering maledictions on the weather, the road, and his own politeness, he issued forth to search after his treasure, — an occupation which, with all his perseverance, was unsuccessful; for when day was breaking, he was still groping along the road, cursing his hard fate, and everything which had any share in inflicting it.

“The money is not the worst of it,” said Lanty, as he threw himself down, exhausted and worn out, on his bed. “The money’s not the worst of it — there was papers in that book I would n’t have seen for double the amount.”

Long after the old smuggler was standing out to sea the next day, Lanty Lawler wandered backwards and forwards in the glen, now searching among the wet leaves that lay in heaps by the wayside, or, equally in vain, sounding every rivulet and watercourse which swept past. His search was fruitless; and well it might be: the road was strewn with fragments of rocks and tree-tops for miles, while even yet the swollen stream tore wildly past, cutting up the causeway in its passage, and foaming on amid the wreck of the hurricane.

Yet the entire of that day did he persevere, regardless of the beating rain, and the cold, drifting wind, to pace to and fro, his heart bent upon recovering what he had lost.

“Yer sowl is set upon money; devil a doubt of it, Lanty,” said Mary, as, dripping with wet, and shaking with cold, he at last re-entered the cabin: “sorra one of me would go rooting there for a crock of goold, if I was sure to find it.”

“It is not the money, Mary, I tould you before, — it’s something else was in the pocket-book,” said he, half angrily, while he sat down to brood in silence over his misfortune.

“’T is a letter from your sweetheart, then,” said she, with a spice of jealous malice in her manner, for Lanty had more than once paid his addresses to Mary, whose wealth was reported to be something considerable.

“Maybe it is, and maybe it is not,” was the cranky reply.

“Well, she’ll have a saving husband, any way,” said

Mary, tartly, "and one that knows how to keep a good grip of the money."

The horse-dealer made no answer to this encomium on his economy, but with eyes fixed on the ground, pondered on his loss; meanwhile Mrs. M'Kelly's curiosity, piqued by her ineffectual efforts to obtain information, grew each instant stronger, and at last became irrepressible.

"Can't you say what it is you've lost? Sure there's many a one goes by here of a Saturday to market — and if you leave the token —"

"There's no use in it — sorra bit," said he, despondingly.

"You know your own saycrets best," said Mary, foiled at every effort; "and they must be the dhroll saycrets too, when you're so much afraid of their being found out."

"Troth, then," said Lanty, as a ray of his old gallantry shot across his mind, — "troth, then, there is n't one I'd tell a saycret to as soon as yourself, Mary M'Kelly; you know the most of my heart already, and why would n't you know it all?"

"Faix, it's little I care to hear about it," said Mary, with an affectation of indifference the most finished coquetry could not have surpassed. "Ye may tell it, or no, just as you plaze."

"That's it now," cried Lanty, — "that's the way of women, the whole world over; keep never minding them, and bad luck to peace or ease you get; and then try and plaze them, and see what thanks you have. I was going to tell you all about it."

"And why don't you?" interrupted she, half fearing lest she might have pulled the cord over-tight already, — "why don't you tell it, Lanty dear?"

These last words settled the matter. Like the feather that broke the camel's back, these few and slight syllables were all that was wanting to overcome the horse-dealer's resistance.

"Well, here it is now," said he, casting, as he spoke, a cautious glance around, lest any chance listener should overhear him. "There was in that pocket-book a letter, sealed with three big seals, that Father Luke gave me yesterday morning, and said to me, 'Lanty Lawler, I'm

going over to Ballyvourney, and after that I'm going on to Cork, and it's mighty likely I'll go as far as Dublin, for the Bishop may be there, and if he is, I must follow him; and here's a letter,' says he, 'that you must give the O'Donoghue with your own hands,' — them was the words, — 'with your own hands, Lanty; and now swear you'll not leave it to any one else, but do as I tell you;' and, faix, I took my oath of it, and see, now, it's lost. May I never, but I don't know how I'll ever face him again; and sure God knows what was in it."

"And there was three seals on it," said Mary, musingly, as if such extraordinary measures of secrecy could bode nothing good.

"Each of them as big as a half-crown — and it was thick inside too; musha, 't was the evil day I ever set eyes on it!" And with this allusion to the lost money, which, by the adroitness of superstition, he coupled with the bad luck the letter had brought him, Lanty took his farewell of Mary, and, with a heavy heart, set out on his journey.

CHAPTER XI.

MISTAKES ON ALL SIDES.

THE occurrence so briefly mentioned by Flahault, of the night attack on the Lodge, was not so easily treated by the residents; and so many different versions of the affair were in circulation that Miss Travers, the only one whose information could have thrown any light upon it, was confused by the many marvels she heard, and totally unable to recall to mind what had really taken place. Sir Marmaduke himself examined the servants, and compared their testimony; but fear and exaggeration conspired to make the evidence valueless; some asserting that there were at least a hundred assailants surrounding the house at one time, others, that they wore a kind of uniform, and had their faces blackened. Some again had seen parties prowling about the premises during the day, and could positively swear to one man, "a tall fellow in a ragged blue coat, and without shoes or stockings," — no uncommon phenomenon in those parts. But the butler negatived all these assertions, and stoutly maintained that there had been neither attack nor assailants; that the whole affair was a device of Terry's, to display his zeal and bravery; and, in short, that he had set fire to the rick in the haggard, and "got up" the affray for his own benefit.

In proportion as any fact occurred to throw discredit on the testimony of each, he who proffered it became a thousand times more firm and resolute in his assertion; circumstances dubious a moment before, were then suddenly remembered and sworn to, with numerous little aids to corroboration newly recalled to mind. To one point, however, all the evidence more or less converged, and that was, to accuse Terry of being the cause, or, at least, an accom-

plise in the transaction. Poor fellow! his own devotedness had made enemies for him everywhere; the alacrity with which he mounted the burning stack was an offence not soon to be forgotten by those who neither risked life nor limb, nor were the taunts he lavished on their sluggish backwardness to be forgiven now. Unhappily, too, Terry was not a favorite among the servants. He had never learned how much deference is due from the ragged man to the pampered menial of a rich household; he had not been trained to that subserviency of demeanor which should mark the intercourse of a poor, houseless, friendless creature like himself, with the tagged and lace-covered servants of a wealthy master. Terry, by some strange blunder of his nature, imagined that in his freedom and independence he was the better man of the two. He knew that to do nothing was the prerogative of the great; and as he fulfilled that condition to a considerable extent, he fancied he should enjoy its privileges also. For this reason he had ever regarded the whole class of servants as greatly his inferiors; and although he was ready and willing to peril his life at any moment for Sir Marmaduke or his daughter, the merest commonplace services he would refuse to the others without a moment's hesitation. Neither intimidation could awe, nor bribery bend him; his nature knew not what fear was in any shape, save one, — that of being apprehended and shot for a deserter; and as to any prospect of buying his good offices, that was totally out of the question.

In an Irish household Terry's character would have been appreciated at once. The respect which is never refused to any bereavement, but in particular to that greatest of all afflictions, would have secured for him there both forgiveness and affection, — his waywardness and caprice would have been a law to the least good tempered servant of the family; but Sir Marmaduke's retainers were all English, and had about as much knowledge of, or sympathy with, such a creature, as he himself possessed of London life and manners.

As his contempt was not measured by any scale of prudence, but coolly evinced on every occasion of their inter-

course, they, one and all, detested him beyond bounds, — most asserting that he was a thorough-paced knave, whose folly was a garb assumed to secure a life of idleness, and all regarding him in the light of a spy, ever ready to betray them to their master.

When, therefore, one after another the servants persisted in either openly accusing or insinuating suggestions against Terry, Sir Marmaduke became sorely puzzled. It was true he himself had witnessed his conduct the night before; but if their version was correct, all his daring, energy, and boldness were so many proofs against him. He was, indeed, reluctant to think so badly of the poor fellow; but how discredit the evidence of his entire household? His butler had been in his service for years — and, oh! what a claim for all the exercise of evil influence, for the petty tyranny of the low-minded and the base-born, tracking its way through eavesdropping, and insinuating its venom in moments of unguarded freedom. His footman, too — But why go on? His daughter alone rejected the notion with indignation; but, in her eager vindication of the poor fellow's honor, her excitement militated against success — for age thus ever pronounces upon youth, and too readily confounds a high-spirited denunciation of wrong with a mistaken, ill-directed enthusiasm. He listened, it is true, to all she said of Terry's devotedness and courage, of his artless, simple nature, of his single-minded, gentle character; but, by a fatal tendency, too frequent as we advance in years, the scales of doubt ever lean against, and not to the side favorable to, human nature, and, as he shook his head mournfully, he said, —

“I wish I did not suspect him.”

“Send for him, at least,” said his daughter, as with an effort she restrained the emotion that agitated her; “speak to him yourself.”

“To what end, my child, if he really is innocent?”

“Oh! yes; indeed — indeed he is,” she exclaimed, as the tears at length fell fast upon her cheek.

“Well, then, be it so,” said Sir Marmaduke, as he rang the bell, and ordered Terry to be sent for.

While Miss Travers sat with her head buried in her

hands, her father paced slowly up and down the room; and so absorbed was he in his thoughts that he had not noticed Terry, who had meanwhile entered the room, and now stood respectfully beside the door. When the old man's eyes did fall on him, he started back with horror and astonishment. The poor fellow's clothes were actually reduced to a mass of burned rags; one sleeve was completely gone, and there



could be seen his bare arm, scorched and blackened by the fire, a bandage of coarse linen wrapping the hand and fingers. A deep cut marked his brow, and his hair was still matted and clotted with the blood, while his face was of the color of death itself.

"Can you doubt him now, father?" whispered the young girl, as she gazed on the poor fellow, whose wandering eyes roamed over the ornaments of the chamber, in total unconsciousness of himself and his sufferings.

"Well, Terry," said Sir Marmaduke, after a pause, "what account do you give of last night's business?"

"That's a picture of Keim-an-eigh," said Terry, as he fixed his large eyes, open to their widest extent, on a framed drawing on the wall. "There's the Eagle's Cliff, and that's Murrow Waterfall; and there's the lake — ay, and see if there is n't a boat on it. Well, well, but it's beautiful; one could walk up the shepherd's path, there, where the goat is — ay, there's a fellow going up — masha, that's me — I'm going over to Cubber-na-creena, by the short cut."

"Tell me all you know of what happened last night, Terry," repeated Sir Marmaduke.

"It was a great fire, devil a doubt of it," said Terry, eagerly. "The blaze from the big stack was twice as high as the roof; but when I put the wet sail of the boat on it, it all went into black smoke; it nearly choked me."

"How did it catch fire first, Terry? Can you tell us that?"

"They put a piece of tinder in it. I gave them an ould rag, and they rubbed it over with powder, and set it burning."

"Who were they that did this?"

"The fellows that threw me down. What fine pistols they had, with silver all over them! They said that they would not beat me at all, and they did n't either. When I gave them the rag, they said, 'Now, my lad, we'll show you a fine fire!' and, true for them, I never seen a grander."

In this vague, rambling strain did Terry reply to every question put to him, his thoughts ever travelling in one narrow circle. Who they were that fired the haggard, how many, and what kind of appearance they were, he knew nothing of, whatever; for, in addition to his natural imbecility of mind, the shock of the adventure, and the fever of his wounds and bruises, had utterly routed the small remnant of understanding which usually served to guide him.

To one question only did his manner evince hesitation and doubt in the answer, and that was when Sir Marmaduke asked him how it happened that he should have been

up at the Lodge at so late an hour, since the doors were all locked and barred a considerable time previous.

Terry's face flushed scarlet at the question, and he made no reply. He stole a sharp, quick glance towards Miss Travers, beneath his eyelids, but so rapidly withdrew it again, when his color grew deeper and deeper.

The old man marked the embarrassment, and all his suspicions were revived at once.

"You must tell me this, Terry," said he, in a voice of some impatience; "I insist upon knowing it."

"Yes, Terry, speak it out, freely; you can have no cause for concealment," said Sybella, encouragingly.

"I'll not tell it," said he, after a pause of some seconds, during which he seemed to have been agitating within himself all the reasons on either side, — "I'll not tell it."

"Come, sir," said Sir Marmaduke, angrily, "I must and will know this; your hesitation has a cause, and it shall be known."

The boy started at the tones so unusual to his ears, and stared at the speaker in mute astonishment.

"I am not displeased with you, Terry; at least, I shall not be if you speak freely and openly to me. Now, then, answer my question. What brought you about the Lodge at so late an hour?"

"I'll not tell," said the youth, resolutely.

"For shame, Terry," said Sybella, in a low, soothing voice, as she drew near him; "how can you speak thus to my father? You would not have *me* displeased with you?"

The boy's face grew pale as death, and his lips quivered with agitation, while his eyes, glazed with heavy tears, were turned downwards; still he never spoke a word.

"Well, what think you of him now?" said Sir Marmaduke, in a whisper, to his daughter.

"That he is innocent, — perfectly innocent," replied she, triumphantly. "The poor fellow has his own reasons — shallow enough, doubtless — for his silence; but they have no spot or stain of guilt about them. Let me try if I cannot unfathom this business; I'll go down to the boat-house."

The generous girl delayed not a moment, but hastened

from the room as she spoke, leaving Sir Marmaduke and Terry silently confronting each other. The moment of his daughter's departure, Sir Marmaduke felt relieved from the interference her good opinion of Terry suggested, and, at once altering his whole demeanor, he walked close up to him, and said, —

“I shall but give you one chance more, sir. Answer my question now, or never.”

“Never, then!” rejoined Terry, in a tone of open defiance.

The words, and the look by which they were accompanied, overcame the old man's temper in a moment, and he said, —

“I thought as much. I guessed how deeply gratitude had sunk in such a heart. Away! Let me see you no more!”

The boy turned his eyes from the speaker till they fell upon his own seared and burned limb, and the hand swathed in its rude bandage. That mute appeal was all he made, and then burst into a flood of tears. The old man turned away to hide his own emotions, and when he looked round, Terry was gone. The hall-door lay open. He had passed out and gained the lawn, — no sight of him could be seen.

“I know it, father, I know it all now!” said Sybella, as she came running up the slope from the lake.

“It is too late, my child; he has gone — left us forever, I fear,” said Sir Marmaduke, as in shame and sorrow he rested his head upon her shoulder.

For some seconds she could not comprehend his words; and, when at last she did so, she burst forth, —

“And, oh, father, think how we have wronged him! It was in his care and devotion to us the poor fellow incurred our doubts. His habit was to sit beneath the window each night, so long as lights gleamed within. Till they were extinguished, he never sought his rest. The boatman tells me this, and says his notion was that God watches over the dark hours only, and that man's precautions were needed up to that time.”

With sincere and heartfelt sorrow Sir Marmaduke turned

away. Servants were despatched on foot and horseback to recover the idiot boy, and persuade him to return; but his path lay across a wild and mountain region, where few could follow; and at nightfall the messengers returned unsuccessful in their search.

If there was real sorrow over his departure in the parlor, the very opposite feeling pervaded the kitchen. There, each in turn exulted in his share of what had occurred, and took pains to exaggerate his claims to gratitude for having banished one so unpopular and unfriended.

Alarm at the attack of the previous night, and sorrow for the unjust treatment of poor Terry, were not Sir Marmaduke's only emotions on this sad morning. His messenger had just returned from Carrignacurra with very dispiriting tidings of Herbert O'Donoghue. Respect for the feelings of the family under the circumstances of severe illness had induced him to defer his intended visit to a more suitable opportunity; but his anxiety for the youth's recovery was unceasing, and he awaited the return of each servant sent to inquire after him with the most painful impatience. In this frame of mind was he as evening drew near, and he wandered down his avenue to the roadside to learn some minutes earlier the last intelligence of the boy. It was a calm and peaceful hour; not a leaf moved in the still air, and all in the glen seemed bathed in the tranquil influence of the mellow sunset. The contrast to the terrific storm which so lately swept through the mountain pass was most striking, and appealed to the old man's heart, as reflecting back the image of human life, so varying in its aspect, so changeful of good and evil. He stood and meditated on the passages of his own life, whose tenor had, till now, been so equable, but whose fortunes seemed already to participate in the eventful fate of a distracted country. He regretted, deeply regretted, that he had ever come to Ireland. He began to learn how little power there is to guide the helm of human fortune when once engaged in the stormy current, and he saw himself already the sport of a destiny he had never anticipated.

If he was puzzled at the aspect of a peasantry, highly gifted with intelligence, yet barbarously ignorant, — active

and energetic, yet indolent and fatalist, — a few hints he had gathered of his neighbor, the O'Donoghue, amazed him still more; and by no effort of his imagination could he conceive the alliance between family pride and poverty — between the reverence for ancestry and an utter indifference to the present. He could not understand such an anomaly as pretension without wealth; and the only satisfactory explanation he could arrive at, to himself, was, that in a wild and secluded tract, even so much superiority as this old chieftain possessed attracted towards him the respect of all humbler and more lowly than himself, and even made his rude state seem affluence and power. If in his advances to the O'Donoghue he had observed all the forms of a measured respect, it was because he felt so deeply his debtor for a service, that he would omit nothing in the repayment. His gratitude was sincere and heartfelt, and would not admit any obstacle in the way of acknowledging it.

Reflecting thus, he was suddenly startled by the sound of wheels coming up the glen; he listened, and now heard the low trot of a horse, and the admonitions of a man's voice, delivered in tones of anger and impatience. The moment after, an old-fashioned gig, drawn by a small, miserable pony, appeared, from which a man had dismounted to ascend the hill.

"A fine evening, sir," said Sir Marmaduke, as the stranger, whose dress bespoke one of the rank of gentleman, drew near.

The other stopped suddenly, and surveyed the baronet without speaking; then, throwing down the collar of his greatcoat, which he wore high round his face, he made a respectful salute and said, —

"A lovely evening, sir. I have the honor to see Sir Marmaduke Travers, I believe? May I introduce myself? — Doctor Roach, of Killarney."

"Ah, indeed! Then you are probably come from Mr. O'Donoghue's house? Is the young gentleman better this evening?"

Roach shook his head dubiously, but made no reply.

"I hope, sir, you don't apprehend danger to his life?"

asked Sir Marmaduke, with an effort to appear calm as he spoke.

"Indeed I do, then," said Roach, firmly; "the mischief's done already."

"He's not dead?" said Sir Marmaduke, almost breathless in his terror.

"Not dead; but the same as dead. Effusion will carry him off some time to-morrow."

"And can you leave him in this state? Is there nothing to be done? Nothing you could suggest?" cried the old man, scarcely able to repress his indignant feeling at the heartless manner of the doctor.

"There's many a thing one might try," said Roach, not noticing the temper of the question, "for the boy is young; but for the sake of a chance, how am I to stay away from my practice and my other patients? And, indeed, slight a prospect as he has of recovery, my own of a fee is slighter still. I think I've all the corn in Egypt in my pocket this minute," said he, clapping his hand on his purse, — "one of the late king's guineas, wherever they had it lying by till now."

"I am overjoyed to have met you, sir," said Sir Marmaduke, hastily, and by a great exertion concealing the disgust this speech suggested. "I wish for an opinion about my daughter's health, — a cold, I fancy; but to-morrow will do better. Could you return to Mr. O'Donoghue's to-night? I have not a bed to offer you here. This arrangement may serve both parties, as I fervently hope something may yet be done for the youth."

"I'll visit Miss Travers in the morning, with pleasure."

"Don't leave him, sir, I entreat you, till I send over; it will be quite time enough when you hear from me. Let the youth be your first care, Doctor. In the mean while, accept this slight retainer, for I beg you to consider your time as given to me now;" and with that he pressed several guineas into the willing palm of the doctor.

As Roach surveyed the shining gold, his quick cunning divined the old baronet's intentions, and with a readiness long habit had perfected, he said, —

"The case of danger before all others, any day. I'll

turn about at once, and see what can be done for the lad."

Sir Marmaduke leaned towards him, and said some words hastily, in a low, whispering voice.

"Never fear — never fear, Sir Marmaduke," was the reply, as he mounted to the seat of his vehicle, and turned the pony's head once more down the glen.

"Lose no time, I beseech you," cried the old man, waving his hand in token of adieu; nor was the direction unheeded; for, using his whip with redoubled energy, the doctor sped along the road at a canter which threatened annihilation to the frail vehicle at every bound of the animal.

"Five hundred!" muttered Sir Marmaduke to himself, as he looked after him. "I'd give half my fortune to see him safe through it."

Meanwhile Roach proceeded on his way, speculating on all the gain this fortunate meeting would bring to him, and then meditating what reasons he should allege to the O'Donoghue for his speedy return.

"I'll tell him a lucky thought struck me in the glen," muttered he; "or what if I said I forgot something, — a pocket-book, or case of instruments, — anything will do;" and, with this comfortable reflection, he urged his beast onward.

The night was falling as he once more ascended the steep and narrow causeway which led to the old keep; and here, now, Kerry O'Leary was closing the heavy but time-worn gate, and fastening it with many a bolt and bar, as though aught within could merit so much precaution. The sound of wheels seemed suddenly to have caught the huntsman's ear; for he hastily shut down the massive hasp that secured the bar of the gate, and as quickly opened a little latched window, which, barred with iron, resembled the grated aperture of a convent door.

"You're late this time, anyhow," cried Kerry. "Tramp back again, friend, the way you came; and be thankful it's myself seen you, for, by the blessed Father, if it was Master Mark was here, you'd carry away more lead in your skirts than you'd like."

"What, Kerry? — what's that you're saying?" said the astonished doctor; "don't you know me, man?"

"Kerry's my name, sure enough; but, artful as you are, you'll just keep the other side of the door. Be off now, in God's name. 'T is a fair warning I give you; and, faix, if you won't listen to rayson, you might hear worse;" and, as he spoke, that ominous sound, the click of a gun-cock, was heard, and the muzzle of a carbine peeped between the iron bars.

"Tear and ounds! ye scoundrel! you're not going to fire a bullet at me?"

"'T is slugs they are," was the reply, as Kerry adjusted the piece, and seemed to take as good an aim as the darkness permitted; "divil a more nor slugs, as you'll know soon. I'll count three, now, and may I never wear boots if I don't blaze if you're not gone before it's over. Here's one!" shouted he, in a louder key.

"The saints protect me, but I'll be murdered," muttered old Roach, blessing himself, but unable, from terror, to speak aloud, or stir from the spot.

"Here's two!" cried Kerry, still louder.

"I'm going! — I'm going! give me time to leave this blasted place; bad luck to the day and the hour I ever saw it."

"It's too late," shouted Kerry. "Here's three!" and, as he spoke, bang went the piece, and a shower of slugs and duck-shot came peppering over the head and counter of the old pony; for, in his fright, Roach had fallen on his knees to pray. The wretched quadruped, thus rudely saluted, gave a plunge and a kick, and then wheeled about with an alacrity long forgotten, and scampered down the causeway with the old gig at his heels, rattling as if it were coming in pieces. Kerry broke into a roar of laughter, and screamed out, —

"I'll give you another yet, begorra! that's only a true copy; but you'll get the original now, you ould varmint!"

A heavy groan from the wretched doctor, as he sank in a faint, was the only response; for in his fear he thought the contents of the piece were in his body.

"Musha, I hope he is n't dead," said Kerry, as he opened



Roach's return to the O'Donoghue Castle.

the wicket cautiously, and peeped out with a lantern. "Mister Cassidy — Mister James, get up now — it's only joking I was. Holy Joseph! is he kilt?" And overcome by a sudden dread of having committed murder, Kerry stepped out, and approached the motionless figure before him. "By all that's good, I've done for the sheriff," said he, as he stood over the body. "Oh! wirra, wirra! who'd think a few grains of shot would kill him?"

"What's the matter here? who fired that shot?" said a deep voice, as Mark O'Donoghue appeared at Kerry's side, and snatching the lantern, held it down till the light fell upon the pale features of the doctor.

"I'm murdered! I'm murdered!" was the faint exclamation of old Roach. "Hear me, these are my dying words: Kerry O'Leary murdered me."

"Where are you wounded? where's the ball?" cried Mark, tearing open the coat and waistcoat in eager anxiety.

"I don't know, I don't know; it's inside bleeding I feel."

"Nonsense, man, you have neither bruise nor scar about you; you're frightened, that's all. Come, Kerry, give a hand, and we'll help him in."

But Kerry had fled; the idea of the gallows had just shot across his mind, and he never waited for any further disclosures about his victim; but deep in the recesses of a hayloft he lay cowering in terror, and endeavoring to pray. Meanwhile Mark had taken the half lifeless body on his shoulder, and with the ease and indifference he would have bestowed upon an inanimate burden, coolly carried him into the parlor, and threw him upon a sofa.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GLEN AT MIDNIGHT.

“WHAT have you got there, Mark?” called out the O’Donoghue, as the young man threw the still insensible figure of the doctor upon the sofa.

“Old Roach, of Killarney,” answered Mark, sullenly. “That confounded fool, Kerry, must have been listening at the door, there, to what we were saying, and took him for Cassidy, the sub-sheriff. He fired a charge of slugs at him, that’s certain; but I don’t think there’s much mischief done.” As he spoke, he filled a goblet with wine, and without any waste of ceremony, poured it down the doctor’s throat. “You’re nothing the worse, man,” added he, roughly; “you’ve given many a more dangerous dose yourself, I’ll be bound, and people have survived it, too.”

“I’m better now,” said Roach, in a faint voice, — “I feel something better. But, may I never leave this spot if I don’t prosecute that scoundrel O’Leary. It was all malice; I can swear to that.”

“Not a bit of it, Roach. Mark says the fellow mistook you for Cassidy.”

“No, no, — don’t tell me that; he knew me well, but I foresaw it all. He filled my pony with water. I might as well be rolling a barrel before me, as try to drive him this morning. The rascal had a spite against me for giving him nothing; but he shall hang for it.”

“Come, come, Roach, don’t be angry; it’s all past and over now; the fellow did it for the best.”

“Did it for the best! Fired a loaded blunderbuss into a fellow-creature for the best!”

“To be sure he did,” broke in Mark, with an imperious look and tone. “There’s no harm done, and you need not make such a work about it.”

“Where’s the pony and the gig, then?” called out Roach, suddenly remembering the last sight he had of them.

“I heard the old beast clattering down the glen as if he had fifty kettles at his tail. They’ll stop him at last; and if they should n’t, I don’t suppose it matters much. The



whole yoke was n’t worth a five-pound note — no, even giving the owner into the bargain,” muttered he, as he turned away.

The indignity of this speech acted like a charm upon Roach. As if galvanized by the insult, he sat bolt upright on the sofa, and thrust his hands down to the deepest recesses of his breeches-pockets, his invariable signal for close action.

"What, sir, do you tell me that my conveniency, with the pony, harness, and all—"

"Have patience, Roach," interposed the old man; "Mark was but jesting. Come over and join us here."

At the same instant the door was flung suddenly wide, and Sir Archy rushed in, with a speed very unlike his ordinary gait.

"There's a change for the better!" cried he, joyfully; "the boy has made a rally, and if we could overtake that d—d auld beestie, Roach, and bring him back again, we might save the lad."

"The d—d auld beestie," exclaimed Roach, as he sprang from the sofa, and stood before him, "is very much honored by your flattering mention of him." Then, turning towards the O'Donoghue, he added, "Take your turn out of me now, when you have me; for, by the Father of Physic, you'll never see Denis Roach under this roof again."

The O'Donoghue laughed till his face streamed with the emotion, and he rocked in his chair like one in a convulsion. "Look, Archy," cried he—"see now!—hear me, Roach!" were the only words he could utter between the paroxysms, while M'Nab, the very picture of shame and confusion, stood overwhelmed with his blunder, and unable to say a word.

"Let us not stand fooling here," said Mark, gruffly, as he took the doctor's arm. "Come and see my brother, and try what can be done for him."

With an under-growl of menace and rage, old Roach suffered himself to be led away by the young man, Sir Archy following slowly, as they mounted the stairs.

Although alone, the O'Donoghue continued to laugh over the scene he had just witnessed; nor did he know which to enjoy more,—the stifled rage of the doctor, or the mingled shame and distress of M'Nab. It was, indeed, a rare thing to obtain such an occasion for triumph over Sir Archy, whose studied observance of all the courtesies and proprieties of life formed so strong a contrast with his own careless and indifferent habits.

"Archy will never get over it, that's certain; and, begad, he sha'n't do so for want of a reminder. The d—d auld

beestie!" and with the words came back his laughter, which had not ceased as Mark re-entered the room. "Well, lad," he cried, "have they made it up? What has Sir Archy done with him?"

"Herbert's better," said the youth, in a low, deep voice, and with a look that sternly rebuked the heartless forgetfulness of his father.

"Ah! better is he? Well, that is good news, Mark; and Roach thinks he may recover?"

"He has a chance now; a few hours will decide it. Roach will sit up with him till four o'clock, and then I shall take the remainder of the night, for my uncle seems quite worn out with watching."

"No, Mark, my boy, you must not lose your night's rest; you've had a long and tiresome ride to-day."

"I'm not tired, and I'll do it," replied he, in the determined tone of his self-willed habit, — one which his father had never sought to control, from infancy upwards. There was a long pause after this, which Mark broke, at length, by saying, "So it is pretty clear now that our game is up; the mortgage is foreclosed. Hemsworth has noticed the Ballyvourney tenants not to pay us the rents, and the ejectment goes on."

"What of Callaghan?" asked the O'Donoghue, in a sinking voice.

"Refused — flatly refused to renew the bills. If we give him five hundred down," said the youth, with a bitter laugh, "he says he'd strain a point."

"You told him how we were circumstanced, Mark? Did you mention about Kate's money?"

"No," said Mark, sternly, as his brows met in a savage frown, — "no, sir, I never said a word of it. She shall not be made a beggar of for our faults. I told you before, and I tell you now, I'll not suffer it."

"But hear me, Mark. It is only a question of time. I'll repay —"

"Repay!" was the scornful echo of the young man, as he turned a withering glance at his father.

"Then there's nothing but ruin before us," said the O'Donoghue, in a solemn tone, — "nothing!"

The old man's head fell forward on his bosom, and, as his hands dropped listlessly down at either side, he sat the very impersonation of overwhelming affliction, while Mark, with heavy step and slow, walked up and down the roomy chamber.

"Hemsworth's clerk hinted something about this old banker's intention of building here," resumed he, after a long interval of silence.

"Building where? — over at the Lodge?"

"No, here, at Carrignacurra; throwing down this old place, I suppose, and erecting a modern villa instead."

"What!" exclaimed the O'Donoghue, with a look of fiery indignation, "are they going to grub us out, root and branch? Is it not enough to banish the old lords of the soil, but they must remove their very landmarks also?"

"It is for that he 's come here, I 've no doubt," resumed Mark; "he only waited to have the whole estate in his possession, which this term will give him."

"I wish he had waited a little longer, — a year, or, at most, two, would have been enough," said the old man, in a voice of great dejection; then added, with a sickly smile, "you have little affection for the old walls, Mark."

The youth made no reply, and he went on: "Nor is it to be wondered at. You never knew them in their happy days; but I did, Mark — ay, that I did. I mind the time well when your grandfather was the head of this great county; when the proudest and the best in the land stood uncovered when he addressed them, and deemed the highest honor they could receive an invitation to this house. In the very room where we are sitting, I 've seen thirty guests assembled, whose names comprised the rank and station of the province; and yet, all — every man of them — regarded him as their chief, and he was so, too, — the descendant of one who was a king."

The animated features of the young man, as he listened, encouraged the O'Donoghue, and he went on: "Thirty-seven thousand acres descended to my grandfather, and even that was but a moiety of our former possessions."

"Enough of this," interrupted Mark, rudely. "It is but an unprofitable theme. The game is up, father," added he, in a deep, stern voice, "and I, for one, have little fancy to

wait for the winner to claim the stakes. Could I but see you safely out of the scrape, I'd be many a mile away ere a week was over."

"You would not leave me, boy!" cried the old man, as he grasped the youth's hands in his, and gazed on him with streaming eyes — "you would not desert your poor old father. Oh, no — no, Mark! this would not be like you. A little patience, my child, and death will save you that cruelty."

The young man's chest heaved and fell like a swelling wave; but he never spoke, nor changed a muscle of his rigid features.

"I have borne all misfortunes well till now," continued the father. "I cared little on my own account, Mark; my only sorrow was for you; but so long as we were together, boy, — so long as hand in hand we stood against the storm, I felt that my courage never failed me. Stay by me, then, Mark, — tell me that whatever comes you'll never leave me. Let it not be said, that when age and affliction fell upon the O'Donoghue, his son — the boy of his heart — deserted him. You shall command in everything," said he, with an impassioned tone, as he fixed his eyes upon the youth's countenance. "I ask for nothing but to be near you. The house — the property — all shall be yours."

"What house — what property — do you speak of?" said Mark, rudely. "Are we not beggars?"

The old man's head dropped heavily; he relinquished the grasp of his son's hand, and his outstretched arm fell powerless to his side. "I was forgetting," murmured he, in a broken voice; "it is as you say — you are right, Mark — you *must* go."

Few and simple as the words were, the utterance sank deep into the young man's heart; they seemed the last effort of courage wrung from despair, and breathed a pathos he was unable to resist.

"I'll not leave you," said he, in a voice scarce louder than a whisper, "there's my hand upon it;" and he wrung in his strong grasp the unresisting fingers of the old man. "That's a promise, father, and now let us speak no more about it."

“I'll get to my bed, Mark,” said the O'Donoghue, as he pressed his hands upon his throbbing temples. It was many a day since anything like emotion had moved him, and the conflict of passion had worn and exhausted him. “Good night, my boy — my own boy;” and he fell upon the youth's shoulder, half choked with sobs.

As the O'Donoghue slowly ascended the stairs towards his bedroom, Mark threw himself upon a chair, and buried his face in his hands. His sorrow was a deep one. The resolve he had just abandoned had been for many a day the cherished dream of his heart — his comfort under every affliction — his support against every difficulty. To seek his fortune in some foreign service, to win an honorable name, even though in a strange land, was the whole ambition of his life; and so engrossed was he in his own calculations that he never deigned a thought of what his father might feel about it. The poverty that eats its way to the heart of families seldom fails to loosen the ties of domestic affection. The daily struggle, the hourly conflict with necessity, too often destroy the delicate and trustful sense of protection that youth should feel towards age. The energies that should have expanded into homely affection and mutual regard, are spent in warding off a common enemy; and with weary minds and seared hearts the gentler charities of life have few sympathies. Thus was it here. Mark mistook his selfishness for a feeling of independence; he thought indifference to others meant confidence in himself — and he was not the first who made the mistake.

Tired with thinking, and harassed with difficulties, through which he could see no means of escape, he threw open the window, to suffer the cool night air to blow upon his throbbing temples, and sat down beside the casement to enjoy its refreshing influence. The candles had burned down in the apartment, and the fire, now reduced to a mere mass of red embers, scarce threw a gleam beyond the broad hearthstone. The old tower itself flung a dark shadow upon the rock, and across the road beneath it, and, except in the chamber of the sick boy, in a distant part of the building, not a light was to be seen.

The night was calm and starlit: a stillness almost pain-

ful reigned around. It seemed as if exhausted nature, tired with the work of storm and hurricane, had sunk into a deep and wearied sleep. Thousands of bright stars speckled the dark sky; yet the light they shed upon the earth but dimly distinguished mountain and valley, save where the calm surface of the lake gave back their lustre in a heaven placid and motionless as their own. Now and then a bright meteor would shoot across the blue vault, and disappear in the darkness; while in tranquil splendor the planets shone on, as though to say, the higher destiny is rather to display an eternal brightness than the brilliancy of momentary splendor, however glittering its wide career.

The young man gazed upon the sky. The lessons which, from human lips, he had rejected with scorn and impatience, now sank deeply into his nature from those silent monitors. The stars looked down, like eyes, into his very soul, and he felt as if he could unburden his whole heart of its weary load, and make a confidence with heaven.

“*They* point ever downwards,” said he to himself, as he watched the bright streak of the falling stars, and moralized on their likeness to man’s destiny. But, as he spoke, a red line shot up into the sky, and broke into ten thousand glittering spangles, shedding over glen and mountain a faint but beautiful gleam, scarce more lasting than the meteor’s flash. It was a rocket sent up from the border of the bay, and was quickly answered by another from the remote end of the glen. The youth started, and leaning out from the window, looked down the valley; but nothing was to be seen or heard, all was silent as before, and already the flash of the signals, for such they must have been he could not doubt, had faded away, and the sky shone in its own spangled beauty.

“They are smugglers!” muttered Mark, as he sank back in his chair; for in that wild district such signals were employed without much fear by those who either could trust the revenue as accomplices, or dare them by superior numbers. More than once it had occurred to him to join this lawless band, and many a pressing invitation had he received from the leaders to do so; but still the youth’s

ambition, save in his darkest hours, took a higher and a nobler range. The danger of the career was its only fascination to him. Now, however, all these thoughts were changed. He had given a solemn pledge to his father never to leave him; and it was with a feeling of half apathy he sat pondering over what cutter it might be that had anchored, or whose party were then preparing to land their cargo.

“Ambrose Denner, belike,” muttered he to himself, “the Flemish fellow from the Scheldt, — a greedy old scoundrel too; he refused a passage to a poor wretch that broke the jail in Limerick, because he could not pay for it. I wish the people here may remember it to him. Maybe it’s Hans ‘der Teufel,’ though, as they call him; or Flahault, — he’s the best of them, if there be a difference. I’ve half a mind to go down the glen and see;” and while he hesitated, a low, monotonous sound of feet, as if marching, struck on his ear; and as he listened, he heard the distant tramp of men, moving in what seemed a great number. These could not be the smugglers, he well knew; reckless and fearless as they were, they never came in such large bodies as these noises portended.

There is something solemn in the sound of marching heard in the stillness of the night, and so Mark felt it, as with cautious breathing he leaned upon the window and bent his ear to listen. Nearer and nearer they came, till at last the footfalls beat loudly on the dull ground, as in measured tread they stepped. At first, a dark moving mass, that seemed to fill the narrow road, was all he could discern; but as this came closer, he could perceive that they marched in companies or divisions, each headed by its leader, who, from time to time, stepped from his place, and observed their order and precision. They were all country people; their dress, as well as he could discern, the common costume of every day, undistinguished by any military emblem. Nor did they carry arms; the captains alone wore a kind of white scarf over the shoulder, which could be distinctly seen even by the imperfect light. They alone carried swords, with which they checked the movements from time to time. Not a word was uttered in the

dense ranks, not a murmur broke the stillness of the solemn scene, as that host poured on, the one command, "Right shoulders forward — wheel!" being given at intervals, as the parties defiled beneath the rock, at which place the road made an abrupt turning.

So strange the spectacle, so different from all he had ever witnessed or heard of, the youth more than once half doubted lest a wearied and fevered brain had not called up the illusion; but as he continued to gaze on the moving multitude, he was assured of its reality; and now was he harassed by conjectures what it all should mean. For nearly an hour — to him it seemed many such — the human tide flowed on, till at length the sounds grew fainter, and the last party moved by, followed, at a little distance, by two figures on horseback. Their long cloaks concealed the wearers completely from his view, but he could distinctly mark the steel scabbards of swords, and hear their heavy clank against the horses' flanks.

Suffering their party to proceed, the horsemen halted for a few seconds at the foot of the rock, and as they reined in, one called out to the other, in a voice every syllable of which fell distinctly on Mark's ears, —

"That's the place, Godfrey; and even by this light you can judge of its strength."

"But why is he not with us?" said the other, hastily. "Has he not an inheritance to win back, — a confiscation to wipe out?"

"True enough," said the first speaker; "but eighty winters do not improve a man's nerve for a hazardous exploit. He has a son, though, and, as I hear, a bold fellow."

"Look to him, Harvey; it is of moment that we should have one so near the bay. See to this quickly. If he be like what you say, and desires a command —" The rest was lost in the sound of their retreating hoofs, for already the party resumed their journey, and were in a few minutes hidden from his view.

With many a conflicting doubt, and many a conjecture, each wilder than the other, Mark pondered over what he had seen, nor noted the time as it slipped past, till the gray

tint of day-dawn warned him of the hour. The rumbling sounds of a country cart just then attracted his attention, and he beheld a countryman, with a little load of turf, on his way to the market at Killarney. Seeing that the man must have met the procession, he called aloud, —

“I say, my good man, where were they all marching to-night, those fellows?”

“What fellows, your honor?” said the man, as he touched his hat obsequiously.

“That great crowd of people, — you could not help meeting them; there was no other road they could take.”

“Sorra man, woman, or child I seen, your honor, since I left home, and that’s eight miles from this.” And so saying he followed his journey, leaving Mark in greater bewilderment than before.

CHAPTER XIII.

“THE GUARDSMAN.”

LEAVING for a brief season Glenfesk and its inhabitants, we shall ask of our readers to accompany us to London, to a scene somewhat different from that of our last chapter.

In a handsomely furnished drawing-room in St. James's Street, where the appliances of ease and luxury were blended with the evidence of those tastes so popular among young men of fashion of the period, sat, or rather lay, in a deep-cushioned arm-chair, a young officer, who, even in the dishabille of the morning, and with the evident traces of fatigue and dissipation on his brow, was strikingly handsome. Though not more than three or four-and-twenty, the habits of his life, and the assured features of his character, made him appear several years older. In figure he was tall and well proportioned, while his countenance bore those lineaments which are pre-eminently distinguished as Saxon,—massive but well-chiselled features, the harmony of whose expression is even more striking than their individual excellence; a look of frank daring, which many were prone to attribute to superciliousness, was the most marked trait in his face; nor was the impression lessened by a certain *hauteur* which military men of the time assumed, and which he in particular somewhat prided himself on.

The gifts of fortune and the graces of person will often seem to invest their possessor with attributes of insolence and overbearing, which are, in reality, nothing more than the unbridled buoyancy of youth and power revelling in its own exercise.

We have no fancy to practise mystery with our reader, and shall at once introduce him to Frederick Travers, Sir Marmaduke's only son, and captain in the First Regiment

of Guards. Wealth and good looks were about as popular fifty years ago as they are in the year we write in, and Frederick Travers was as universal a favorite in the circles he frequented as any man of his day. Courtly manners, spirits nothing could depress, a courage nothing could daunt, expensive tastes, gratified as rapidly as they were conceived, were all accessories which won their way among his acquaintances, and made them proud of his intimacy and boastful of his friendship. That circumstances like these should have rendered a young man self-willed and imperious, is not to be wondered at, and such was he in reality, — less, however, from the unlimited license of his position, than from an hereditary feature which distinguished every member of his family, and made them as intolerant of restraint as they were wayward in purpose. The motto of their house was the index of their character, and in every act and thought they seemed under the influence of their emblazoned inscription, “*A tort et à travers.*”

Over his father, Frederick Travers exercised an unlimited influence; from his boyhood upward he had never met a contradiction, and the natural goodness of his temper, and the affectionate turn of his disposition, made the old man believe in the excellence of a system whose success lay less in its principle than in the virtue of him on whom it was practised.

Sir Marmaduke felt proud of his son's career in the world, and enjoyed to the utmost all the flattery which the young man's acceptance in society conferred; he was proud of him almost as much as he was fond of him, and a letter from Frederick had always the effect of restoring his spirits, no matter how deep their depression the moment before.

The youth returned his father's affection with his whole heart; he knew and valued all the high and generous principles of his nature; he estimated with an honest pride those gifts which had won Sir Marmaduke the esteem and respect of his fellow-citizens; but yet he thought he could trace certain weaknesses of character from which his own more enlarged sphere of life had freed him.

Fashionable associates, the society of men of wit and pleasure, seem often to suggest more acute and subtle views

of life than are to be obtained in less exalted and distinguished company; the smart sayings and witty epigrams which are current among clever men appear to be so many texts in the wisdom of the world. Nothing is more common than this mistake; nothing more frequent than to find that intercourse with such people diffuses few, if any, of their distinguishing merits among their less-gifted associates, who rarely learn anything from the intercourse but a hearty contempt for all who are debarred from it. Frederick was of this school; the set he moved in was his religion, — their phrases, their prejudices, their passions, he regarded as standards for all imitation. It is not surprising, then, if he conceived many of his father's notions obsolete and antiquated, and had they not been his, he would have treated them as ridiculous.

This somewhat tedious explanation of a character with whom we have not any very lengthened business hereafter, demands some apology from us; still, without it, we should be unable to explain to our reader the reason of those events to whose narrative we are hastening.

On the table, among the materials of a yet untasted breakfast, lay an open letter, which, from time to time, the young man read, and as often threw from him, with expressions of impatience and anger. A night of more than ordinary dissipation had made him irritable, and the contents of the epistle did not seem of a character to calm him.

"I knew it," said he at last, as he crushed the letter in his hand. "I knew it well; my poor father is unfit to cope with those savages; what could ever have persuaded him to venture among them I know not; the few hundreds a year the whole estate produces are not worth as many weeks' annoyance. Hemsworth knows them well; he is the only man fit to deal with them. Heigho!" said he, with a sigh, "there's nothing for it, I suppose, but to bring them back again as soon as may be; and this confounded accident Hemsworth has met with in the Highlands will lay him on his back these five weeks, — I must e'en go myself. Yet nothing was ever more ill-timed: the Queen's fête at Frogmore, fixed for Wednesday; there's the tennis match on Friday; and Saturday, the first day of the stag-hounds. It

is too bad. Hemsworth is greatly to blame; he should have been candid about these people, and not have made his Pandemonium an Arcadia. My father is also to blame; he might have asked my advice about this trip; and Sybella, too, why did n't she write? She above all should have warned me about the folly." And thus did he accuse in turn all the parties concerned in a calamity, which, after all, he saw chiefly reflected in the inconvenience it caused himself.

Now, assuredly, Hemsworth requires some vindication at our hands. It had never entered into that worthy man's most imaginative conceptions to believe a visit from Sir Marmaduke to his Irish property within the reach of possibility; for although, as we have already said, he was in the constant habit of entreating Sir Marmaduke to bestow this mark of condescension on his Irish tenants, he ever contrived to accompany the recommendation with certain casual hints about the habits and customs of the natives, as might well be supposed sufficient to deter a more adventurous traveller than the old baronet; and while he pressed him to come and see for himself, he at the same time plied him with newspapers and journals whose columns were crammed with the fertile theme of outrage; the editorial comments on which often indicated a barbarism even deeper than the offence they affected to deplore. The accident which ultimately led to Sir Marmaduke's hurried journey was a casualty which Hemsworth had overlooked, and when he heard that the family were actually domesticated at the Lodge, his regrets were indeed great. It was only on the day before the intelligence reached him — for the letter had followed him from place to place for a fortnight — that he had the misfortune to break his leg by a fall from a cliff in deer-shooting. Whatever the urgency of the measure, he was totally incapable of undertaking a journey to Ireland, whither, under other circumstances, he would have hastened with all speed. Hemsworth's correspondent, of whom we shall have occasion to speak more hereafter, was the sub-agent of the estate, — a creature of his own, in every sense, and far more in his interest than in that of his principal. He told him, in forcible terms, how Sir Marmaduke had commenced his work of Irish reformation; that, already,

both the baronet and his daughter had undertaken the task of improvement among the tenantry; that rents were to be lowered, school-houses erected, medical aid provided for the sick and suffering, more comfortable dwellings built, more liberal wages allowed, he narrated how rapidly the people, at first suspicious and distrustful, were learning to feel confidence in their benefactor, and anxious to avail themselves of his benevolence; but more than all, he dwelt upon the conviction, which every hour gained ground among them, that Hemsworth had misrepresented the landlord, and that, so far from being himself the instrument of, he had been the obstacle to, their welfare and happiness. The letter concluded with a pressing entreaty for his speedy return to the Lodge, as, should he be longer absent, the mischief would become past remedy.

Never did agent receive an epistle more alarming; he saw the game, for which he had been playing half a lifetime, slip from him at the very moment of winning. For above twenty years his heart was set upon becoming the owner of the estate; all his plans, his plots, his machinations, had no other end or object. From the deepest stroke of his policy, to the most trivial act of his power, he had held this in view. By his artful management a veil was drawn between the landlord and the people which no acuteness on either side could penetrate. The very acts intended as benefits by the owner of the soil passed through such a medium that they diverged from their destined direction, and fell less as blessings than inflictions. The landlord was taught to regard the tenant as incurably sunk in barbarism, ignorance, and superstition. The tenant to suppose the landlord a cruel, unfeeling taskmaster, with no care but for his rent; neither sympathy for their sufferings, nor sorrow for their calamities. Hemsworth played his game like a master; for while obtaining the smallest amount of rental for his chief, he exacted the most onerous and impoverishing terms from the people. Thus diminishing the apparent value of the property he hoped one day to be able to purchase, and at the same time preparing it for becoming a lucrative and valuable possession; for although the rents were nominally low, the amount of fees and

“duty-labor” were enormous. There was scarcely a man upon the property whose rent was paid to the day and hour; and for the favor of some brief delay, certain services were exacted which virtually reduced the tenants to a vassalage the most miserable and degrading.

If, then, the eye ranged over a district of poverty-struck and starving peasantry, with wretched hovels, naked children, and rude, unprofitable tillage, let the glance but turn to the farm around the Lodge, and there the trim fences, the well-weeded corn, and the nicely cultivated fields, were an evidence of what well-directed labor could effect; and the astounding lesson seemed to say: “Here is an object for imitation. Look at yonder wheat; see that clover, and the meadow beyond it. They could all do likewise. Their land is the same, the climate the same, the rent the same; but yet ignorance and obstinacy are incurable. They will not be taught, — prefer their own barbarous ways to newer and better methods; in fact, are beyond the lessons of either precept or example.”

Yet what was the real cause? To till that model-farm, to make these fields the perfection you see them, families were starving, age left to totter to the grave uncared-for, manhood pining in want and misery, and infancy to dawn upon suffering to last a life long. Duty-labor calls the poor man from the humble care of his own farm to come, with his whole house, and toil upon the rich man’s fields, the requital for which is some poor grace of a week’s or a month’s forbearance ere he be called on for that rent these exactions are preventing him from earning. Duty-labor summons him from his own profitless ground to behold the fruits his exertions are raising for another’s enjoyment, and of which he must never taste. Duty-labor culls the days of fair sky and sunshine, and leaves him the gloomy hours of winter, when, with darkness without and despair within, he may brood, as he digs, over the disproportioned fortunes of his tyrant and himself. Duty-labor is the type of a slavery that hardens the heart, by extinguishing all hope, and uprooting every feeling of self-confidence and reliance, till, in abject and degraded misery, the wretched man grows reckless of his life, while his vengeance yearns for that of his taskmaster.

Nor does the system end here. The agent must be conciliated by presents of various kinds: the humble pittance wrung from misery and hoarded up by industry must be offered to him, as the means of obtaining some poor and petty favor, — most frequently one the rightful due of the asker. A tyranny like this spreads its baneful influence far beyond the afflictions of mere poverty, — it breaks down the spirit, it demoralizes the heart of a people; for where was blackmail ever extorted that it did not engender cruelty on the one hand, and abject slavery on the other?

So far from regarding those placed above them in rank and station as their natural friends and protectors, the peasantry felt the great man as their oppressor. They knew him not as their comforter in sickness, their help in time of trouble, — they only saw in him the rigid exactor of his rent, the merciless taskmaster who cared not for time or season, save those that brought round the period of repayment; and as year by year poverty and misery ate deeper into their natures, and hope died out, fearful thoughts of retribution flashed upon minds on which no prospect of better days shone; and, in the gloomy desolation of their dark hours, they wished and prayed for any change, come in what shape, and surrounded by what danger it might, if only this bondage should cease.

Men spoke of their light-heartedness, their gayety of temper, their flashing and brilliant wit. How little they knew that such qualities, by some strange incongruity of our natures, are the accompaniments of deeply reflective and imaginative minds, overshadowed by lowering fortune. The glittering fancy that seems to illumine the path of life is often but the wildfire that dances over the bleak and desolate heath.

Their apathy and indifference to exertion was made a matter of reproach to them; yet, was it ever known that toil should be voluntary, when hopeless, and that labor should be endured without a prospect of requital?

We have been led almost unconsciously into this somewhat lengthened digression, for which, even did it not bear upon the circumstances of our story, we would not seek to apologize to our reader. Such we believe to have been, in

great part, the wrongs of Ireland — the fertile source of those thousand evils under which the land was suffering. From this one theme have arisen most, if not all, the calamities of the country. Happy were it if we could say that such existed no longer; that such a state of things was a matter for historical inquiry, or an old man's memory; and that, in our own day, these instances were not to be found among us.

When Hemsworth perceived that the project of his life was in peril, he bethought him of every means by which the danger could be averted. Deep and well-founded as was his confidence in the cleverness of his deputy, his station was an insurmountable barrier to his utility at the present conjuncture. Sam Wylie, for so this worthy was called, was admirable as a spy, but never could be employed as minister plenipotentiary: it needed one, now, who should possess more influence over Sir Marmaduke himself. For this purpose, Frederick Travers alone seemed the fitting person; to him, therefore, Hemsworth wrote a letter marked "strictly confidential," detailing with painstaking accuracy the inevitable misfortunes Sir Marmaduke's visit would entail upon a people whose demands no benevolence could satisfy, whose expectations no concessions could content.

He narrated the fearful instances of their vengeance, whenever disappointment had checked the strong current of their hopes, and told, with all the semblance of truth, of scenes of bloodshed and murder, no cause for which could be traced save in the dark suspicions of a people long accustomed to regard the Saxon as their tyrant.

The night attack upon the Lodge furnished also its theme of terror; and so artfully did he blend his fact and fiction, his true statement and his false inference, that the young man read the epistle with an anxious and beating heart, and longed for the hour when he should recall those he held dearest from such a land of anarchy and misfortune.

Not satisfied with the immediate object in view, Hemsworth ingeniously contrived to instil into Frederick's mind misgivings as to the value of an estate thus circumstanced, representing, not without some truth on his side, that the

only chance of bettering the condition of a peasantry so sunk and degraded was by an actual residence in the midst of them, — a penalty which, to the youth, seemed too dear for any requital whatever.

On a separate slip of paper, marked "to be burned when read," Frederick deciphered the following lines: —

Above all things, I would caution you regarding a family who, though merely of the rank of farmer, affect a gentility which had its origin some dozen centuries back, and has had ample opportunity to leak out in the mean time; these are the "O'Donoghues," a dangerous set, haughty, ill-conditioned, and scheming. They will endeavor, if they can, to obtain influence with your father, and I cannot too strongly represent the hazard of such an event. Do not, I entreat you, suffer his compassion, or mistaken benevolence, to be exercised in their behalf. Were they merely unworthy, I should say nothing on the subject; but they are highly and eminently dangerous in a land where their claims are regarded as only in abeyance, — deferred, but not obliterated, by confiscation.

E. H.

It would in no wise forward the views of our story were we to detail to our readers the affecting scenes which precluded Frederick's departure from London, the explanations he was called on to repeat, as he went from house to house, for a journey at once so sudden and extraordinary; for even so late as fifty years ago a visit to Ireland was a matter of more moment, and accompanied by more solemn preparation, than many now bestow on an overland journey to India. The Lady Marys and Bettys of the fashionable world regarded him pretty much as the damsels of old did some doughty knight when setting forth on his way to Palestine. That filial affection could exact such an instance of devotion called up their astonishment even more than their admiration; and many were the cautions, many the friendly counsels, given to the youth for his preservation in a land so rife with danger.

Frederick was a soldier, and a brave one; but still he was not entirely divested of those apprehensions which the ignorance of the day propagated; and although only accompanied by a single servant, they were both armed to the

teeth, and prepared to do valiant battle, if need be, against the Irish "rogues and rapparees."

Here, then, for the present, we shall leave him, having made his last "adieux" to his friends, and set out on his journey to Ireland.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COMMENTS ON A HURRIED DEPARTURE.

BRIEF as has been the interval of our absence from Glenflesk, time's changes have been there. Herbert O'Donoghue had experienced a fortunate change in his malady, and on the day following Roach's eventful return became actually out of danger. The symptoms of his disease, so suddenly subdued, seemed to reflect immortal honor on the doctor, who certainly did not scruple to attribute to his skill what, with more truth, was owing to native vigor and youth. Sir Archy alone was ungrateful enough to deny the claim of physic, and slightly hinted to Roach that he had at least benefited his patient by example, if not by precept, since he had slept the entire night through without awaking. The remark was a declaration of war at once; nor was Roach slow to accept the gage of battle, — in fact, both parties were well wearied of the truce, and anxious for the fray. Sir Archibald had only waited till the moment Roach's services in the sick room could be safely dispensed with to reopen his fire; while Roach, harassed by so unexpected a peace, felt like a beleaguered fortress during the operation of the miners, and knew not when and how the dreaded explosion was to occur. Now, however, the signal-gun was fired, hesitation was at an end; and, of a verity, the champions showed no disinclination for the field.

“Ye'll be hungry this morning, doctor,” said Sir Archy, “and I have ordered breakfast a bit early. A pick o' ham at twelve o'clock, and a quart of sherry, aye gives a man a relish for breakfast.”

“Begad, so it might, or for supper too,” responded Roach, “when the ham was a shank-bone, and the sherry-bottle like a four-ounce mixture.”

“Ye slept surprisingly after your slight refection. I heerd ye snoring like a grampus.”

“’T was n’t the nightmare from indigestion, anyhow,” said Roach, with a grin. “I’ll give you a clean bill of health from that malady here.”

“It’s weel for us that we ken a cure for it, — more than ye can say for the case you’ve just left.”

“I saved the boy’s life,” said Roach, indignantly.

“Assuredly ye did na kill him, and folks canna a’ways say as muckle for ye. We maun thank the Lord for a’ his mercies; and he vouchsafed you a vara sound sleep.”

How this controversy was to be carried on farther it is not easy to say, but at this moment the door of the breakfast-room opened cautiously, and a wild, rough head peeped stealthily in, which gradually was followed by the neck, and in succession the rest of the figure, of Kerry O’Leary, who, dropping down on both knees before the doctor, cried out in a most lamentable accent, —

“Oh! docther, darlint — docther dear — forgive me — for the love of Joseph, forgive me!”

Roach’s temper was not in its blandest moment, and his face grew purple with passion as he beheld the author of his misfortunes at his feet.

“Get out of my sight, you scoundrel; I never want to set eyes on you till I see you in the dock, — ay, with handcuffs on you.”

“Oh, murther, murther, is it take the law of me for a charge of swan-drops? Oh, docther acushla, don’t say you’ll do it.”

“I’ll have your life, as sure as my name’s Roach.”

“Try him wi’ a draught,” interposed M’Nab.

“Begorra, I’m willin’,” cried Kerry, grasping at the mediation. “I’ll take anything, barrin’ the black grease he gave the masther, — that would kill the divil.”

This exceptive compliment to his skill was not so acceptable to the doctor, whose passion boiled over at the new indignity.

“I’ll spend fifty guineas but I’ll hang you, — there’s my word on it.”

“Oh, wirra! wirra!” cried Kerry, whose apprehensions

of how much law might be had for the money made him tremble all over, "that's what I get for tramping the roads all night after the pony."

"Where's the pony — where's the gig?" called out Roach, suddenly reminded by material interests that he had more at stake than mere vengeance.

"The beast is snug in the stable, — that's where he is, eating a peck of oats — last year's corn — divil a less."

"And the gig?"

"Oh, the gig is it? Musha, we have the gig, too," responded Kerry, but with a reluctance that could not escape the shrewd questioner.

"Where is it, then?" said Roach, impatiently.

"Where would it be, but in the yard? We're going to wash it."

The doctor did not wait for the conclusion of this reply, but hastening from the room, passed down the few stairs that led towards the old court-yard, followed by Sir Archy and Kerry, the one eager to witness the termination of the scene, the other muttering in a very different spirit, "Oh, but it's now we'll have the divil to pay!"

As soon as Roach arrived at the court-yard, he turned his eyes on every side to seek his conveyance; but although there were old harrows, broken ploughs, and disabled wheelbarrows in numbers, nothing was there that bore any resemblance to what he sought.

"Where is it?" said he, turning to Kerry, with a look of exasperation that defied all attempt to assuage by mere "blarney," — "where is it?"

"Here it is, then," said O'Leary, with the tone of one whose courage was nerved by utter despair, while, at the same time, he drew forth two wheels and an axle, the sole surviving members of the late vehicle. As he displayed the wreck before them, the ludicrous — always too strong for an Irish peasant, no matter how much it may be associated with his own personal danger — overcame his more discreet instincts, and he broke forth into a broad grin, while he cried, "'There 's the inside of her now!' as Darby Cossoon said, when he tuk his watch in pieces, and, begorra, we'll see how she's made, any way.'"

This true history must not recount the expressions in which Roach permitted himself to indulge. It is enough to say that his passion took the most violent form of invective against the house, the glen, the family, and their retainers, to an extreme generation, while he stamped and gesticulated like one insane.

"Ye'll hae sma' space for yer luggage in yon," said M'Nab, with one of his dryest laughs, while he turned back and re-entered the house.

"Where's my pony? — where's my pony?" shouted out the doctor, determined to face all his calamities at once.

"Oh, faix, he's nothing the worse," said Kerry, as he unlocked the door of the stable, and pointed with all the pride of veracity to a beast in the stall before him. "There he is, jumping like a kid out of his skin wid fun this morning."

Now, although the first part of Kerry's simile was assuredly incorrect, as no kid of which we have any record ever bore the least resemblance to the animal in question, as to the fact of being "out of his skin," there could not be a second opinion, the beast being almost entirely flayed from his shoulders to his haunches, his eyes being represented by two globular masses about the size of billiard-balls, and his tail bearing some affinity to an overgrown bamboo, as it hung down, jointed and knotted, but totally destitute of hair.

"The thief of the world!" said Kerry, as he patted him playfully. "He stripped a trifle of hair off him with kicking; but a little gunpowder and butter will bring it on again in a day or two."

"Liar that thou art, Kerry, it would take a cask of one and a firkin of the other to make up the necessary ointment!"

There are some evils which no anticipation can paint equal to their severity, and these, in compensation, perhaps, are borne for the most part without the same violent exuberance of sorrow lesser misfortunes elicit. So it was, — Roach spoke not a word; one menace of his clinched hand towards Kerry was the only token he gave of his malice, and he left the stable.

"I've a note here for Doctor Roach," said the servant,



Roach's Convenience.

in Sir Marmaduke's livery, to Kerry, as he proceeded to close and lock the stable door.

"I'm the person," said the doctor, taking the billet and breaking the seal. "Have you the carriage here now?" asked he, when he had finished reading.

"Yes, sir, it's on the road. Sir Marmaduke desired me not to drive up, for fear of disturbing the sick gentleman."

"I'm ready, then," said the doctor; and never casting a look backward, nor vouchsafing another word, he passed out of the gate, and descended towards the high road.

"I'll take good care of the baste till I see you, sir!" shouted Kerry after him; and then, as the distance widened, he added, "and may I never see your ould yallow wig agin, I pray this day. Divil take me, but I hope you've some of the slugs in ye, after all." And with these pious wishes, expressed fervently, Kerry returned to the house, his heart considerably lightened by the doctor's departure.

Scarcely was he seated beside the kitchen fire, — the asylum he regarded as his own, — when, all fears for his misconduct and its consequences past, he began speculating in a very Irish fashion on the reasons of the doctor's sudden departure.

"He's off now to the Lodge — divil fear him — faix, if he gets in there, they'll not get him out so asy; they'll have a pain for every day of the week before he leaves them. Well, well, thanks be to God, he's out of this."

"Is he gone, Kerry?" said Mrs. Branaghan. "Did he leave a 'cure' for Master Herbert before he went?"

"Sorra bit," cried Kerry, as if a sudden thought struck him, "that's what he did n't!" And, without hesitating another moment, he sprang from his chair, and mounted the stairs towards the parlor, where now the O'Donoghue, Mark, and Sir Archy were assembled at breakfast.

"He's away, sir, he's off again," said Kerry, as though the nature of his tidings did not demand any more ceremonious preliminary.

"Who's away? Who's gone?" cried they all, in a breath.

"The doctor, sir, — Doctor Roach. There was a chap

THE O'DONOGHUE.

sky-blue livery came up with a bit of a letter for him down there, and when he read it, he just turned to this way," — here Kerry performed a not over graceful flourish, — "and without saying 'By yer leave,' he went down the road and gets into the coach. 'Won't you tell Master Herbert before you go, sir,' says I; 'sure you're leaving him that way?' But bad luck to one word I say, but went away wid a grin on him."

"What!" cried Mark, as his face crimsoned with passion.

"Is this true? — are you sure of what you're saying?"

"I'll take the book an it," said Kerry, solemnly.

"Well, Archy," said the O'Donoghue, addressing his brother-in-law. "You are a good judge of these matters. Is this conduct on the part of our neighbors suitable or proper? Was it exactly right and proper to send here for the services we had taken the trouble to seek, when we might much have needed besides? Should we not have consulted, think you?"

"There's not a poor farmer in the glen would not resent this," cried Mark, passionately.

"Bide a wee, bide a wee," said Sir Archy, cautiously; "we hae na heard a' the tale yet. Roach may perhaps be in."

"He had better not come here to do so," interrupted Mark, as he strode the room in passion; "he has a taste for hasty departures, and, by G—, I'll help him to one; out of that window he goes, as sure as my name is Mark."

"That's the way to serve him, divil a doubt," chimed in Sir Archy, who was not sorry to think how agreeably he might be relieved from any legal difficulties.

"I am no seeking to excuse the man," said Sir Archy, earnestly. "It's weel kenned we hae na muckle love for the man; but fair play is bonnie play."

"I never heard a mean action yet, but there was a Scotchman who went to warrant it," muttered Mark, in a whisper inaudible to the rest.

"It's no improbable but that Sir Marmaduke Travers might ask if the doctor could be spared, and it's no impos-

sible, either, that Roach took the answering the question in his ain hands."

"I don't think so," broke in Mark; "the whole thing bears a different aspect. It smacks of English courtesy to an Irish kern."

"By Jove, Mark is right," said the O'Donoghue, whose prejudices, strengthened by poverty, too readily chimed in with any suspicion of intended insult.

"They were not long learning the game," said Mark, bitterly; "they are, if I remember aright, scarce two months in the country, and, see, they treat us as 'mere Irish' already."

"Ye'r ower hasty, Mark. I hae na muckle respect for Roach, nor wad I vouch for his good breeding; but a gentleman, as this Sir Marmaduke's note bespeaks him —"

"What note? I never heard of it."

"Oh, it was a polite kind of message, Mark, to say he would be obliged if I permitted him to pay his respects here. I forgot to tell you of it."

"Does the enemy desire to peep at the fortress, that he may calculate how long we can hold out?" said the youth, sternly.

"Begorra, with the boys from Ballyyourney and Inchi-geela, we'll howld the place agin the English army," said Kerry, mistaking the figurative meaning of the speech; and he rubbed his hands with delight at the bare prospect of such a consummation.

Sir Archy turned an angry look towards him, and motioned with his hand for him to leave the room. Kerry closed the door after him, and for some minutes the silence was unbroken.

"What does it matter, after all?" said the O'Donoghue, with a sigh. "It is a mere folly to care for these things, now. When the garment is worn and threadbare, one need scarce fret that the lace is a little tarnished."

"True, sir, quite true; but you are not bound to forget or forgive him who would strip it rudely off, even a day or an hour before its time."

"There is na muckle good in drawing inferences from imaginary evils. Shadows are a' bad enough, but they

needna hae children and grandchildren; and so I'll even take a cup of tea to the callant." And thus, wise in practice and precept, Sir Archibald left the room, while O'Donoghue and Mark, already wearied of the theme, ceased to discuss it farther.

CHAPTER XV.

SOME OF THE PLEASURES OF PROPERTY.

In a small, but most comfortable apartment of the Lodge, which, in virtue of its book-shelves and smartly bound volumes, was termed "the Study," sat Sir Marmaduke Travers. Before him was a table covered with writing materials, books, pamphlets, prints, and drawings; his great arm-chair was the very ideal of lounging luxury, and in the soft carpet his slippered feet were almost hidden. Through the window at his right hand an alley in the beech wood opened a view of mountain scenery it would have been difficult to equal in any country of Europe. In a word, it was a very charming little chamber, and might have excited the covetousness of those whose minds must minister to their maintenance, and who rarely pursue their toilsome task save debarred from every sound and sight that might foster imagination. How almost invariably is this the case! Who has not seen, a hundred times over, some perfect little room, every detail of whose economy seemed devised to sweeten the labor of the mind, teeming with its many appliances for enjoyment, yet encouraging thought more certainly than ministering to luxury; with its cabinet pictures, its carvings, its antique armor, suggestive in turn of some passage in history, or some page in fiction; — who has not seen these devoted to the half-hour lounge over a newspaper, or the tiresome examination of house expenditure with the steward, while he, whose mental flights were soaring midway 'twixt earth and heaven, looked out from some gloomy and cobwebbed pane upon a forest of chimneys, surrounded by all the evils of poverty, and tortured by the daily conflict with necessity.

Here sat Sir Marmaduke, a great volume like a ledger open before him, in which, from time to time, he employed himself in making short memoranda. Directly in front of him stood, in an attitude of respectful attention, a man of about five-and-forty years of age, who, although dressed in an humble garb, had yet a look of something above the common; his features were homely, but intelligent, and though a quick, sharp glance shot from his gray eye when he spoke, yet in his soft, smooth voice the words came forth with a measured calm that served to indicate a patient and gentle disposition. His frame betokened strength, while his face was pale and colorless, and without the other indications of active health in his gait and walk would have implied a delicacy of constitution. This was Sam Wylie, the sub-agent, — one whose history may be told in a few words. His father had been a butler in the O'Donoghue house, where he died, leaving his son, a mere child, as a legacy to his master. The boy, however, did not turn out well; delinquencies of various kinds — theft among the number — were discovered against him; and after many, but ineffectual, efforts to reclaim him, he was turned off, and advised, as he wished to escape worse, to leave the county. He took the counsel, and did so; nor for many a year after was he seen or heard of. A report ran that he passed fourteen years in transportation; but however that might be, when he next appeared in Kerry, it was in the train of a civil engineer, come to make surveys of the county. His cleverness and skill in this occupation recommended him to the notice of Hemsworth, who soon after appointed him as bailiff, and subsequently sub-agent on the estate; and in this capacity he had now served about fifteen years, to the perfect satisfaction, and with the full confidence of his chief. Of his "antecedents" Sir Marmaduke knew nothing; he was only aware of the implicit trust Hemsworth had in him, and his own brief experience perfectly concurred in the justice of the opinion. He certainly found him intelligent, and thoroughly well informed on all connected with the property. When questioned, his answers were prompt, direct, and to the purpose; and to one of Sir Marmaduke's business habits this

quality possessed merit of the highest order. If he had a fault with him, it was one he could readily pardon, — a leniency towards the people, a desire to palliate their errors and extenuate their failings, and always to promise well for the future, even when the present looked least auspicious. His hearty concurrence with all the old baronet's plans for improvement were also highly in his favor; and already Wylie was looked on as "a very acute fellow, and with really wonderful shrewdness for his station;" as if any of that acuteness or that shrewdness, so estimated, could have its growth in a more prolific soil than in the heart and mind of one bred and reared among the people, who knew their habits, their tone of thinking, their manners, and their motives, — not through any false medium of speculation and theory, but practically, innately, instinctively, — who had not studied the peasantry like an algebraic formula, or a problem in Euclid, but read them as they sat beside their turf fires, in the smoke of their mud hovels, cowering from the cold of winter, and gathering around the scanty meal of potatoes, — the only tribute they had not rendered to the landlord.

"Roger Sweeney," said Sir Marmaduke, — "Roger Sweeney complains of his distance from the bog; he cannot draw his turf so easily as when he lived on that swamp below the lake; but I think the change ought to recompense him for the inconvenience."

"He's a Ballyvourney man, your honor," said Sam, placidly, "and if you could n't bring the turf up to his door, and cut it for him, and stack it, and carry a creel of it inside, to make the fire, he'd not be content."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Sir Marmaduke, accepting an explanation he was far from thoroughly understanding. "Then there's Jack Heffernan, — what does this fellow mean by saying that a Berkshire pig is no good?"

"He only means, your honor, that he's too good for the place, and wants better food than the rest of the family."

"The man's a fool, and must learn better. Lord Mulford told me that he never saw such an excellent breed, and his swineherd is one of the most experienced fellows in England. Widow Mul — Mul — what?" said he, endeavor-

ing to spell an unusually long name in the book before him, — “Mulla —”

“Mallahedert, your honor,” slipped in Wylie, “a very dacent crayture.”

“Then why won't she keep those beehives? Can't she see what an excellent thing honey is in the house? — if one of her children was sick, for instance.”

“True for you, sir,” said Sam, without the slightest change of feature. “It is wonderful how your honor can have the mind to think of these things, — upon my word, it's surprising.”

“Samuel M'Elroy refuses to drain the field, does he?”

“No, sir; but he says the praties is n't worth digging out of dry ground, nor never does grow to any size. He's a Ballyvourney man, too, sir.”

“Oh, is he?” said Sir Marmaduke, accepting this as a receipt in full for any degree of eccentricity.

“Shamus M'Gillicuddy, — Heavens, what a name! This Shamus appears a very desperate fellow; he beat a man the other evening, coming back from the market.”

“It was only a neighbor, sir; they live fornint each other.”

“A neighbor! but, bless my heart, that makes it worse.”

“Sure, sir, it was nothing to speak of; it was Darby Lenahan said your honor's bull was a pride to the place, and Shamus said the O'Donoghue's was a finer baste any day; and from one word they came to another, and the end of it was, Lenahan got a crack on the skull that laid him quivering on the daisies.”

“Savage ruffian, that Shamus; I'll keep a sharp eye on him.”

“Faix, and there's no need, — he's a Ballyvourney man.”

The old baronet looked up from his large volume, and seemed for a moment undecided whether he should not ask the meaning of a phrase, which, occurring at every moment, appeared most perplexing in signification; but the thought that by doing so he should confess his ignorance before the sub-agent deterred him, and he resolved to leave the interpretation to time and his own ingenuity.

“What of this old fellow who has the mill, — has he consented to have the overshot wheel?”

“He tried it on Tuesday, sir,” said Sam, with an almost imperceptible smile, “and the sluice gave way, and carried off the house and the end of the barn into the tail race. He’s gone in to take an action again your honor for the damages.”

“Ungrateful rascal! I told him I’d be at the whole expense myself, and I explained the great saving of water the new wheel would insure him.”

“True, indeed, sir; but as the stream never went dry for thirty years, the ould idiot thought it would last his time. Begorra, he had enough of water on Tuesday, anyhow.”

“He’s a Ballyvourney man, is n’t he?”

“He is, sir,” replied Wylie, with the gravity of a judge.

Another temptation crossed Sir Marmaduke’s mind, but he withstood it, and went on, —

“The mountain has then been divided as I ordered, has it?”

“Yes, sir; the lines were all marked out before Saturday.”

“Well, I suppose the people were pleased to know that they have each their own separate pasturage?”

“Indeed, and, sir, I won’t tell you a lie, — they are not; they’d rather it was the ould way still.”

“What, have I taken all this trouble for nothing, then? Is it possible that they’d rather have their cattle straying wild about the country than see them grazing peaceably on their own land?”

“That’s just it, sir; for, you see, when they had the mountain among them, they fed on what they could get; one had, maybe, a flock of goats; another, maybe, a sheep or two, a heifer, an ass, or a bullsheen.”

“A what?”

“A little bull, your honor; and they did n’t mind if one had more nor another, nor where they went, for the place was their own; but now that it is all marked out and divided, begorra, if a beast is got trespassing, out comes some one with a stick and wallops him back again, and then

the man that owns him, natural enough, would n't see shame on his cow, or whatever it was, and that leads to a fight; and, *faix*, there 's not a day now but there 's blood spilt over the same boundaries."

"They 're actually savages!" said Sir Marmaduke, as he threw his spectacles over his forehead, and dropped his pen from his fingers in mute amazement; "I never heard — I never read of such a people."

"They 're Ballyvourney men," chimed in Wylie, assentively.

"D—d—"

Sir Marmaduke checked himself suddenly, for the idea flashed ou him that he ought, at least, to know what he was cursing, and so he abstained from such a perilous course, and resumed his search in the big volume. Alas! his pursuit of information was not more successful as he proceeded. Every moment disclosed some case where, in his honest efforts to improve the condition of the people, from ignorance of their habits, from total unconsciousness of the social differences of two nations essentially unlike, he discovered the failure of his plans, and unhesitatingly ascribed to the prejudices of the peasantry what with more justice might have been charged against his own unskilfulness. He forgot that a people long neglected cannot at once be won back; that confidence is a plant of slow growth. But, more than all, he lost sight of the fact that to ingraft the customs and wants of richer communities upon a people sunk in poverty and want, to introduce among them new and improved modes of tillage, to inculcate notions which have taken ages to grow up to maturity in more favored lands, must be attended with failure and disappointment. On both sides the elements of success were wanting. The peasantry saw — for, however strange it may seem, through every phase of want and wretchedness their intelligence and apprehension suffer no impairment — they saw his anxiety to serve them. They believed him to be kind-hearted and well-wishing, but they knew him to be also wrong-headed and ignorant of the country, and what he gained on the score of good feeling he lost on the score of good sense; and Paddy, however humble his lot, however hard his con-

dition, has an innate reverence for ability, and can rarely feel attachment to the heart where he has not felt respect for the head. It is not a pleasant confession to make, yet one might explain it without detriment to the character of the people; but, assuredly, popularity in Ireland would seem to depend far more on intellectual resources than on moral principle and rectitude. Romanism has fostered this feeling, so natural is it to the devotee to regard power and goodness as inseparable, and to associate the holiness of religion with the sway and influence of the priesthood. If the tenantry regarded the landlord as a simple-hearted, crochety old gentleman, with no harm in him, the landlord believed them to be almost incurably sunk in barbarism and superstition. Their native courtesy in declining to accept suggestions they never meant to adopt he looked on as duplicity; he could not understand that the matter-of-fact sternness of English expression has no parallel here; that politeness, as they understood it, has a claim to which truth itself may be sacrificed; and he was ever accepting, in a literal sense, what the people intended to be received with its accustomed qualification.

But a more detrimental result followed than even these. The truly well conducted and respectable portion of the tenantry felt ashamed to adopt plans and notions they knew inapplicable and unsuited to their condition; they therefore stood aloof, and by their honest forbearance incurred the reproach of obstinacy and barbarism; while the idle, the lazy, and the profligate became converts to any doctrine or class of opinion which promised an easy life and a rich man's favor. These, at first sight, found favor with him, as possessing more intelligence and tractability than their neighbors, and for them cottages were built, rents abated, improved stock introduced, and a hundred devices organized to make them an example for all imitation. Unhappily, the conditions of the contract were misconceived. The people believed that all the landlord required was a patient endurance of his benevolence; they never reckoned on any reciprocity in duty. They never dreamed that a Swiss cottage cannot be left to the fortunes of a mud cabin; that stagnant pools before the door, weed-grown fields, and

broken fences, harmonize ill with rural palings, drill cultivation, and trim hedges. They took all they could get, but assuredly they never understood the obligation of repayment. They thought (not very unreasonably, perhaps), "It's the old gentleman's hobby that we should adopt a number of habits and customs we were never used to, — live in strange houses, and work with strange tools. Be it so; we are willing to gratify him," said they, "but let him pay for his whistle."

He, on the other hand, thought they were greedily adopting what they only endured, and deemed all converts to his opinion who lived on his bounty. Hence, each morning presented an array of the most worthless, irreclaimable of the tenantry around his door, all eagerly seeking to be included in some new scheme of regeneration, by which they understood three meals a day and nothing to do.

How to play off these two distinct and very opposite classes, Mr. Sam Wylie knew to perfection; and while he made it appear that one portion of the tenantry, whose rigid rejection of Sir Marmaduke's doctrines proceeded from a sturdy spirit of self-confidence and independence, were a set of wild, irreclaimable savages, he softly insinuated his compliments on the success in other quarters, while in his heart he well knew what results were about to happen.

"They're here now, sir," said Wylie, as he glanced through the window towards the lawn, where, with rigid punctuality, Sir Marmaduke each morning held his levee; and where, indeed, a very strange and motley crowd appeared.

The old baronet threw up the sash, and as he did so, a general murmur of blessings and heavenly invocations met his ears, — sounds, that if one were to judge from his brightening eye and beaming countenance, he relished well. No longer, however, as of old, suppliant and entreating, with tremulous voice and shrinking gaze, did they make their advances. These people were now enlisted in his army of "regenerators;" they were converts to the landlord's manifold theories of improved agriculture, neat cottages, pigsties, dovecots, beehives, and Heaven knows

what other suggestive absurdity, ease and affluence ever devised to plate over the surface of rude and rugged misery.

"The Lord bless your honor every morning you rise, 't is the iligant little place ye gave me to live in. Musha, 't is happy and comfortable I do be every night, now, barrin' that the slates does be falling betimes — bad luck to them for slates, one of them cut little Joe's head this morning, and I brought him up for a bit of a plaster."

This was the address of a stout, middle-aged woman, with a man's greatcoat around her in lieu of a cloak.

"Slates falling — why does n't your husband fasten them on again? He said he was a handy fellow, and could do anything about a house."

"It was no lie, then; Thady Morris is a good warrant for a job any day, and if it was thatch was on it —"

"Thatch — why, woman, I'll have no thatch; I don't want the cabins burned down, nor will I have them the filthy hovels they used to be."

"Why would your honor? — sure there 's rayson and sinse agin it," was the chorus of all present, while the woman resumed, —

"Well, he tried that same, too, your honor, and if he did, by my sowl, it was worse for him; for when he seen the slates going off every minit with the wind, he put the harrow on the top —"

"The harrow — put the harrow on the roof?"

"Just so; was n't it natural? But as sure as the wind riz, down came the harrow, and stripped every dirty kippeen of a slate away with it."

"So the roof is off?" said Sir Marmaduke, with stifled rage.

"'T is as clean as my five fingers, the same rafters," said she, with unmoved gravity.

"This is too bad; Wylie, do you hear this?" said the old gentleman, with a face dark with passion.

"Ay," chorused in some half-dozen friends of the woman; "nothing stands the wind like the thatch."

Wylie whispered some words to his master, and by a side gesture motioned to the woman to take her departure. The

hint was at once taken, and her place immediately filled by another. This was a short little old fellow in yellow rags, his face concealed by a handkerchief, on removing which he discovered a countenance that bore no earthly resemblance to that of a human being; the eyes were entirely concealed by swollen masses of cheek and eyelid, — the nose might have been eight noses, — and the round, immense lips, and the small aperture between, looked like the opening in a ballot-box.

“Who is this? what’s the matter here?” said Sir Marmaduke, as he stared in mingled horror and astonishment at the object before him.

“Faix, ye may well ax,” said the little man, in a thick, guttural voice. “Sorra one of the neighbors knew me this morning. I’m Tim M’Garrey, of the cross-roads.”

“What has happened to you, then?” asked Sir Marmaduke, somewhat ruffled by the sturdy tone of the ragged fellow’s address.

“’T is your own doing, then, — divil a less; you may be proud of your work.”

“My doing! — how do you dare to say so?”

“’T is no darin’ at all; ’t is thrue, as I’m here. Them cursed beehives you made me take home wid me, I put them in a corner of the house, and, by bad luck, it was the pig’s corner, and, sorra bit, but she rooted them out and upset them, and with that the varmiut fell upon us all, and it was two hours before we killed them; divil such a fight ever ye seen. Peggy had the beetle, and I the griddle, for flattening them agin the wall; and maybe we did n’t work hard, while the childer was roarin’ and bawlin’ for the bare life.”

“Gracious mercy! could this be credited? Could any man conceive barbarism like this?” cried Sir Marmaduke, as, with uplifted hands, he stood overwhelmed with amazement.

Wylie again whispered something, and again telegraphed to the applicant to move off; but the little man stood his ground and continued, “’T was a heifer you gave Tom Lenahan, and it’s a dhroll day the M’Garreys war n’t as good as the Lenahans, to say we’d have nothing but bees, and them was to get a dacent baste!”

“Stand aside, sir,” said Sir Marmaduke; “Wylie has got my orders about you. Who is this?”

“Faix, me, sir, — Andrew Maher. I ’m come to give your honor the key; I could n’t stop there any longer.”

“What! not stay in that comfortable house, with the neat shop I had built and stocked for you? What does this mean?”

“’T is just that, then, your honor: the house is a nate little place, and barrin’ the damp, and the little grate, that won’t burn turf at all, one might do well enough in it; but the shop is the divil entirely.”

“How so? — what ’s wrong about it?”

“Everything ’s wrong about it. First and foremost, your honor, the neighbors has no money; and though they might do mighty well for want of tobacco, and spirits, and bohea, and candles, and soap, and them trifles, as long as they never came near them, throth they could n’t have them there fornint their noses without wishing for a taste; and so one comes in for a pound of sugar, and another wants a ha’porth of nails, or a piece of naygar-head, or an ounce of starch, — and divil a word they have, but ‘Put it in the book, Andy.’ By my conscience, it ’s a quare book would hould it all.”

“But they ’ll pay in time, — they ’ll pay when they sell the crops.”

“Bother! I ax your honor’s pardon, I was manin’ they ’d see me far enough first. Sure, when they go to market, they ’ll have the rint, and the tithe, and the taxes; and when that ’s done, and they get a sack of seed potatoes for next year, I ’d like to know where ’s the money that ’s to come to me?”

“Is this true, Wylie? — are they as poor as this?” asked Sir Marmaduke.

Wylie’s answer was still a whispered one.

“Well,” said Andy, with a sigh, “there ’s the key, any way. I ’d rather be tachin’ the gaffers again than be keepin’ the same shop.”

These complaints were followed by others, differing in kind and complexion, but all agreeing in the violence with which they were urged, and all inveighing against “the

improvements" Sir Marmaduke was so interested in carrying forward. To hear them, you would suppose that the grievances suggested by poverty and want were more in unison with comfort and enjoyment than all the appliances wealth can bestow; and that the privations to which habit has inured us are sources of greater happiness than we often feel in the use of unrestricted liberty.

Far from finding any contented, Sir Marmaduke only saw a few among the number willing to endure his bounties, as the means of obtaining other concessions they desired more ardently. They would keep their cabins clean if anything was to be made by it; they'd weed their potatoes if Sir Marmaduke would only offer a price for the weeds. In fact, they were ready to engage in any arduous pursuit of cleanliness, decency, and propriety, but it must be for a consideration. Otherwise, they saw no reason for encountering labor which brought no requital; and the *real* benefits offered to them came so often associated with newfangled and absurd innovations, that both became involved in the same disgrace, and both sank in the same ridicule together. These were the refuse of the tenantry; for we have seen that the independent feeling of the better class held them aloof from all the schemes of "improvement" which the others, by participating in, contaminated.

Sir Marmaduke might, then, be pardoned if he felt some sinking of the heart at his failure; and, although encouraged by his daughter to persevere in his plan to the end, more than once he was on the brink of abandoning the field in discomfiture, and confessing that the game was above his skill. Had he taken but one-half the pains to learn something of national character that he bestowed on his absurd efforts to fashion it to his liking, his success might have been different. He would, at least, have known how to distinguish between the really deserving and the unworthy recipients of his bounty, — between the honest and independent peasant, earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, and the miserable dependent, only seeking a life of indolence, at any sacrifice of truth or character; and even this knowledge, small as it may seem, will go far in appreciating the difficulties which attend all attempts at Irish

social improvement, and explain much of the success or failure observable in different parts of the country. But Sir Marmaduke fell into the invariable error of his countrymen: he first suffered himself to be led captive by "blarney," and when heartily sick of the deceitfulness and trickery of those who employed it, coolly sat down with the conviction that there was no truth in the land.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FOREIGN LETTER.

THE arrival of a post-letter at the O'Donoghue house was an occurrence of sufficient rarity to create some excitement in the household; and many a surmise, as to what new misfortune hung over the family, was hazarded between Mrs. Branaghan and Kerry O'Leary, as the latter poised and balanced the epistle in his hand, as though its weight and form might assist him in his divination.

After having conned over all the different legal processes which he deemed might be conveyed in such a shape, and conjured up in his imagination a whole army of sheriffs, sub-sheriffs, bailiffs, and drivers, of which the ominous letter should prove the forerunner, he heaved a heavy sigh at the gloomy future his forebodings had created, and slowly ascended towards his master's bedroom.

"How is Herbert?" said the O'Donoghue, as he heard the footsteps beside his bed, for he had been dreaming of the boy a few minutes previous. "Who is that? Ah! Kerry. Well, how is he to-day?"

"Troth, there's no great change to spake of," said Kerry, who, not having made any inquiry himself, and never expecting to have been questioned on the subject, preferred this safe line of reply, as he deemed it, to a confession of his ignorance.

"Did he sleep well, Kerry?"

"Oh, for the matter of the sleep we won't boast of it. But here's a letter for your honor, come by the post."

"Leave it on the bed, and tell me about the boy."

"Faix, there's nothing particular, then, to tell your honor; sometimes he'd be one way, sometimes another, —

and more times the same way again. That 's the way he 'd be all the night through."

The O'Donoghue pondered for a second or two, endeavoring to frame some distinct notion from these scanty materials, and then said, —

"Send Master Mark to me." At the same time he drew aside the curtain, and broke the seal of the letter. The first few lines, however, seemed to satisfy his curiosity, although the epistle was written in a close hand, and extended over three sides of the paper; and he threw it carelessly on the bed, and lay down again once more. During all this time, however, Kerry managed to remain in the room, and, while affecting to arrange clothes and furniture, keenly scrutinized the features of his master. It was of no use, however. The old man's looks were as apathetic as usual, and he seemed already to have forgotten the missive Kerry had endowed with so many terrors and misfortunes.

"Herbert has passed a favorable night," said Mark, entering a few moments after. "The fever seems to have left him, and, except for debility, I suppose there is little to ail him. What! — a letter? Who is this from?"

"From Kate," said the old man, listlessly. "I got as far as 'My dear uncle;' the remainder must await a better light, and, mayhap, sharper eyesight too, — for the girl has picked up this new mode of scribbling, which is almost unintelligible to me."

As the O'Donoghue was speaking, the young man had approached the window, and was busily perusing the letter. As he read, his face changed color more than once. Breaking off, he said, —

"You don't know, then, what news we have here? More embarrassment — ay, by Jove! and a heavier one than even it seems at first sight. The French armies, it appears, are successful all over the Low Countries, and city after city falling into their possession; and so the convents are breaking up, and the Sacré Cœur, where Kate is, has set free its inmates, who are returning to their friends. She comes here."

"What! here?" said the O'Donoghue, with some evi-

dence of doubt at intelligence so strange and unexpected. "Why, Mark, my boy, that's impossible, — the house is a ruin; we haven't a room; we have no servants, and have nothing like accommodation for the girl."

"Listen to this, then," said Mark, as he read from the letter. "You may then conceive, my dear old papa, — for I must call you the old name again, now that we are to meet, — how happy I am to visit Carrignacurra once more. I persuade myself I remember the old beech wood in the glen, and the steep path beside the waterfall, and the wooden railings to guard against the precipice. Am I not right? And there's an ash-tree over the pool, lower down. Cousin Mark climbed it to pluck the berries for me, and fell in, too. There's memory for you!"

"She'll be puzzled to find the wood now," said the O'Donoghue, with a sad attempt at a smile. "Go on, Mark."

"It's all the same kind of thing; she speaks of Molly Cooney's cabin, and the red boat-house, and fifty things that are gone many a day ago. Strange enough, she remembers what I myself have long since forgotten. 'How I long for my own little blue bedroom that looked out on the Keim-an-eigh! —'"

"There, Mark — don't read any more, my lad. Poor dear Kate! — what would she think of the place now?"

"The thing is impossible," said Mark, sternly. "The girl has got a hundred fancies and tastes unsuited to our rude life; her French habits would ill agree with our barbarism. You must write to your cousin, — that old Mrs. Bedingfield; if that's her name. She must take her for the present, at least; she offered it once before."

"Yes," said the old man, with an energy he had not used till now, "she did, and I refused. My poor brother detested that woman, and would never, had he lived, have intrusted his daughter to her care. If she likes it, the girl shall make this her home. My poor Harry's child shall not ask twice for a shelter while I have one to offer her."

"Have you thought, sir, how long you may be able to extend the hospitality you speak of? Is this house now your own, that you can make a proffer of it to any one? —

and if it were, is it here, within these damp, discolored walls, with ruin without and within, that you 'd desire a guest, — and such a guest?"

"What do you mean, boy?"

"I mean what I say. The girl, educated in the midst of luxury, pampered and flattered; we heard that from the abbé, — what a favorite she was there, and how naturally she assumed airs of command and superiority over the girls of her own age, — truly, if penance were the object, the notion is not a bad one."

"I say it again: this is her home. I grieve it should be so rude a one, but I'll never refuse to let her share it."

"Nor would I," muttered Mark, gloomily, "if it suited either her habits or her tastes. Let her come, however; a week's experience will do more to undeceive her than if we wrote letters for a twelvemonth."

"You must write to her, Mark; you must tell her that matters have not gone so well with us latterly, — that she'll see many changes here; but mind you say how happy we are to receive her."

"She can have her choice of blue bedrooms, too, — shall I say that?" said Mark, almost savagely. "The damp has given them the proper tinge for her fancy; and as to the view she speaks of, assuredly there is nothing to balk it. The window has fallen out many a long day ago that looked on Keim-an-eigh."

"How can you torture me this way, boy?" said the old man, with a look of imploring, to which his white hairs and aged features gave a most painful expression. But Mark turned away, and made no answer.

"My uncle," said he, after a pause, "must answer this epistle. Letter-writing is no burden to him. In fact, I believe he rather likes it; so here goes to do him a favor. It is seldom the occasion presents itself."

It was not often that Mark O'Donoghue paid a visit to Sir Archibald in his chamber; and the old man received him as he entered with all the show of courtesy he would have extended to a stranger, — a piece of attention which was very far, indeed, from relieving Mark of any portion of his former embarrassment.

"I have brought you a letter, sir," said he, almost ere

he took his seat, — “a letter which my father would thank you to reply to. It is from my cousin Kate, who is about to return to Ireland and take up her abode here.”

“Ye dinna mean she’s coming here, to Carrignacurra?”

“It is even so! though I don’t wonder at your finding it hard of belief.”

“It’s mair than that, — it’s far mair; it’s downright incredible.”

“I thought so, too; but my father cannot agree with me. He will not believe that this old barrack is not a baronial castle; and persists in falling back on what is past, rather than look on the present, not to speak of the future.”

“But she canna live here, Mark,” said Sir Archy, his mind ever dwelling on the great question at issue. “There’s no a spot in the whole house she could inhabit. I ken something of these French damsels and their ways; and the strangers that go there for education are a’ worse than the natives. I mind the time I was in Paris with his Royal —” Sir Archy coughed, and reddened up, and let fall his snuff-box, spilling all the contents on the floor. “Gude save us, here’s a calamity! It was real macabaw, and cost twa shillings an ounce. I maun even see if I canna scrape it up wi’ a piece of paper;” and so he set himself diligently to glean up the scattered dust, muttering, all the time, maledictions on his bad luck.

Mark never moved nor spoke the entire time, but sat with the open letter in his hand, patiently awaiting the resumption of the discussion.

“Weel, weel,” exclaimed Sir Archy, as he resumed his seat once more; “let us see the epistle, and perhaps we may find some clew to put her off.”

“My father insists on her coming,” said Mark, sternly.

“So he may, lad,” replied Sir Archy; “but she may hae her ain reasons for declining; dinna ye see that? This place is a ruin. Wha’s to say it is no undergoing a repair; that the roof is off, and will not be on for sax months to come. The country, too, is in a vera disturbed state. Folks are talking in a suspicious way.”

Mark thought of the midnight march he had witnessed, but said nothing.

“There’s a fever, besides, in the house, and wha can tell

the next to tak' it. 'The Lord be mercifu' to us!' added he, gravely, as if the latter thought approached somewhat too close on a temptation of Providence.

"If she 's like what I remember her as a child," replied Mark, "your plan would be a bad one for its object. Tell her the place is a ruin, and she'd give the world to see it for bare curiosity; say there was a likelihood of a rebellion, and she would risk her life to be near it; and as for a fever, we never were able to keep her out of the cabins when there was sickness going. Faith, I believe it was the danger, and not the benevolence, of the act charmed her."

"You are no far wrong. I mind her weel; she was a saucy cutty; and I canna forget the morning she gave me a bunch o' thistles on my birthday, and ca'ed it a 'Scotch bouquet.'"

"You had better read the letter, in any case," said Mark, as he presented the epistle. Sir Archy took it, and perused it from end to end without a word; then, laying it open on his knee, he said, —

"The lassie's heart is no far wrang, Mark, depend upon it. Few call up the simple memories o' childish days if they have no retained some of the guileless spirit that animated them. I wad like to see her mysel'," said he, after a pause. "But what have we here in the postscript?" And he read aloud the following lines: —

"'I have too good a recollection of a Carrignacurra household to make any apology for adding one to the number below stairs, in the person of my maid Mademoiselle Hortense, from whose surprise and astonishment at our Irish mountains I anticipate a rich treat. She is a true Parisian, who cannot believe in anything outside the Boulevards. What will she think of Mrs. Branaghan and Kerry O'Leary? and what will they think of her?'

"Lord save us, Mark, this is an awfu' business; a French waiting-woman here! Why, she might as weel bring a Bengal tiger. I protest I'd rather see the one than the other."

"She'll not stay long; make your mind easy about her, — nor will Kate either, if she need such an attendant."

"True enough, Mark; we maun let the malady cure itsel';

and so, I suppose, the lassie must even see the nakedness o' the land wi' her ain eyes, though I'd just as soon we could 'put the cover on the parritch,' as the laird said, 'and make the fules think it brose.' It's no ower pleasant to expose one's poverty."

"Then you'll write the letter," said Mark, rising, "and we must do what we can in the way of preparation. The time is short enough, too, for that letter was written almost a month ago. She might arrive this very week."

As he spoke, the shuffling sounds of feet were heard in the corridor outside; the young man sprang to the door and looked out, and just caught sight of Kerry O'Leary, with a pair of boots under his arm, descending the stairs.

"That fellow Kerry — listening, as usual," said Mark. "I heard him at my door about a fortnight since, when I was talking to Herbert, and I sent a bullet through the panel; I thought it might cure him."

"I wonder it did na kill him!" exclaimed M'Nab, in horror.

"No, no, my hand is too steady for that. I aimed at least two inches above his head; it might have grazed his hair."

"By my word, I'll no play the eavesdropper wi' you, Mark; or, at least, I'd like to draw the charge o' your pistols first."

"She can have my room," said Mark, not heeding the speech. "I'll take that old tower they call the guard-room; I fancy I shall not be dispossessed for a considerable time." And the youth left the chamber to look after the arrangements he spoke of.

"'T is what I tould you," said Kerry, as he drew his stool beside the kitchen fire; "I was right enough, she's coming back again to live here. I was listening at the door, and heard it all."

"And she's laving the blessed nunnery!" exclaimed Mrs. Branaghan, with a holy horror in her countenance; "desarting the elegant place, with the priests, and monks, and friars, to come here again, in the middle of every wickedness and divilment — ochone! ochone!"

"What wickedness and what divilment are you spaking

about?" said Kerry, indignantly, at the aspersion thus east on the habits of the house.

Mrs. Branaghan actually started at the bare idea of a contradiction, and turned on him a look of fiery wrath as she said, —

"Be my conscience you 're bould to talk that way to me! — What wickedness! Is n't horse-racing, card-playing, raffling, wickedness? Is n't drinking and swearing wickedness? Is n't it wickedness to kill three sheep a week, and a cow a fortnight, to feed a set of dirty spalpeens of grooms and stable chaps? Is n't it wickedness — Botheration to you, but I would n't be losing my time talking to you! When was one of ye at his duties? Answer me that. How much did one of ye pay at Ayster or Christmas, these ten years? Signs on it, Father Luke has n't a word for ye when he comes here; he trates ye with contimpt."

Kerry was abashed and terrified. He little knew when he pulled up the sluice-gate the torrent that would flow down; and now would have made any "amende" to establish a truce again. But Mrs. Branaghan was a woman, and, having seen the subjugation of her adversary, her last thought was mercy.

"Wickedness, indeed! It's fifty years out of purgatory, sorra less, to live ten years here, and see what goes on."

"Divil a lie in it," chimed in Kerry, meekly; "there 's no denying a word you say."

"I 'd like to see who 'd dare deny it; and, signs on it, there 's a curse on the place — nothing thrives in it."

"Faix, then, ye must n't say that, anyhow," said Kerry, insinuatingly. "*You* have no rayson to spake again it. 'T was Tuesday week last I heerd Father Luke say, — it was to myself he said it, — 'How is Mrs. Branaghan, Kerry?' says he. 'She 's well and hearty, your reverence,' says I. 'I 'll tell you what she is, Kerry,' says he: 'she 's looking just as I knew her five-and-thirty years ago; and a comelier, dacenter woman was n't in the three baronies. I remember well,' says he, 'I seen her at the fair of Killarney, and she had a cap with red ribbons.' Had n't ye a cap with red ribbons in it?"

A nod was the response.

"True for him, ye see he did n't forget it; and says he, 'She took the shine out of the fair; she could give seven pounds and half a distance to ere a girl there, and beat her after by a neck.'"

"What's that ye 're saying?" said Mrs. Branaghan, who did n't comprehend the figurative language of the turf, particularly when coming from Father Luke's lips.

"I'm saying ye were the purtiest woman that walked the fair-green," said Kerry, correcting his phraseology.

"Father Luke was a smart little man then himself, and had a nate leg and foot."

"Killarney was a fine place, I'm tould," said Kerry, with a dexterous shift to change the topic. "I was n't often there myself, but I heerd it was the iligant fair entirely."

"So it was," said Mrs. Branaghan; "there never was the kind of sport and divarsion was n't there. It begun on a Monday, and went through the week; and short enough the time was. There was dancing, and fighting, and singing, and 'stations' up to Aghadoe, and down again on the bare knees, and a pilgrimage to the holy well, — three times round that, maybe after a jig two hours long; and there was a dwarf that tould fortunes, and a friar that sould gospels agin fever and fallin' sickness, and ballad-singers, and play-actors. Musha, there never was the like of it." And in this strain did she pour forth a flood of impassioned eloquence on the recollection of those carnal pleasures and enjoyments which, but a few minutes before, she had condemned so rigidly in others, nor was it till at the very close of her speech that she suddenly perceived how she had wandered from her text; then, with a heavy groan, she muttered, "Ayeh! we 're sinful craytures, the best of us."

Kerry responded to the sentiment with a fac-simile sigh, and the peace was ratified.

"You would n't believe, now, what Miss Kate is bringing over with her; faix, you would n't believe it."

"Maybe a monkey," said Mrs. Branaghan, who had a vague notion that France lay somewhere within the tropics.

"Worse nor that."

"Is it a bear?" asked she again.

"No; but a French maid, to dress her hair, and powder her, and put patches on her face."

"Whisht, I tell you," cried Mrs. Branaghan, "and don't be talking that way. Miss Kate was never the one to turn to the likes of them things."

"'T is truth I'm telling ye, then; I heerd it all between the master and Master Mark, and afterwards with ould Sir Archy, and the three of them is in a raal fright about the maid; they say she'll be the divil for impidence."

"Will she, then!" said Mrs. Branaghan, with an eye glistening in anticipation of battle.

"The never a day's peace or ease we're to have again, when she's here; 't is what the master says. 'I pity poor Mrs. Branaghan,' says he; 'she's a quiet crayture that won't take her own part, and—'"

"Won't I? Be my conscience, we'll soon see that."

"Them's his words; 'and if Kerry and she don't lay their heads together to make the place too hot for her, she'll bully the pair of them.'"

"Lave it to myself, — lave it to me alone, Kerry O'Leary."

"I was thinking that same, ma'am," said Kerry, with a droll leer as he spoke; "I'd take the odds on you any day, and never ask the name of the other horse."

"I'll lay the mark of my fingers on her av she says 'pays,'" said Mrs. Branaghan, with an energy that looked like truth.

Meanwhile, Kerry, perceiving that her temper was up, spared nothing to aggravate her passion, retailing every possible and impossible affront the new visitor might pass off on her, and expressing the master's sorrows at the calamities awaiting her.

"If she isn't frightened out of the country at once, there's no help for it," said he, at last. "I have a notion myself, but sure, maybe it's a bad one."

"What is it, then? Spake it out free."

"'T is just to wait for the chaise, — she'll come in a chaise, it's likely —"

But what was Kerry's plan, neither Mrs. Branaghan nor the reader are destined to hear; for at that moment a loud

summons at the hall door, a very unusual sound, announced the arrival of a stranger. Kerry, therefore, had barely time for a hasty toilet with a pocket-comb, before a small fragment of looking-glass he carried in his pocket, as he hastened to receive the visitor.

CHAPTER XVII.

KATE O'DONOGHUE.

BEFORE Kerry O'Leary had reached the hall, the object around whose coming all his schemes revolved was already in her uncle's arms.

"My dear, dear Kate," said the old man, as he embraced her again and again, while she, overcome by a world of conflicting emotions, concealed her face upon his shoulder.

"This is Mark, my dearest girl, — Cousin Mark."

The girl looked up, and fixed her large, full eyes upon the countenance of the young man, as, in an attitude of bashful hesitation, he stood uncertain how far the friendship of former days warranted his advances. She, too, seemed equally confused; and when she held out her hand, and he took it half coldly, the meeting augured but poorly for warmth of heart on either side.

"And Herbert, — where is he?" cried she, eagerly, hoping to cover the chilling reception by the inquiry; "and my uncle Archy —"

"Is here to answer for himsel'," said M'Nab, quietly, as he came rapidly forward and kissed her on either cheek; and, with an arm leaning on each of the old men, she walked forward to the drawing-room.

"And are you alone, my dear child, — have you come alone?" said the O'Donoghue.

"Even so, papa. My attached and faithful Hortense left me at Bristol. Sea-sickness became stronger than affection. She had a dream, besides, that she was lost, devoured or carried off by a merman, — I forget what. And the end was, she refused to go farther, and did her best to persuade me to the same opinion. She did n't remember that I had sent on my effects, and that my heart was here already."

“My own dearest child,” said O’Donoghue, as he pressed her hand fervently between his own.

“But how have ye journeyed by yoursel’?” said Sir Archy, as he gazed on the slight and delicate figure before him.

“Wonderfully well, uncle. During the voyage every one was most polite and attentive to me. There was a handsome young Guardsman who would have been more, had he not been gentleman enough to know that I was a lady. And once at Cork, I met, at the very moment of landing, with a kind old friend, Father Luke, who took care of me hither. He only parted with me at the gate, not wishing to interfere, as he said, with our first greetings. But I don’t see Herbert, — where is he?”

“Poor Herbert has been dangerously ill, my dear,” said the father; “I scarcely think it safe for him to see you.”

“No, no,” interposed Sir Archy, feelingly. “If the sight of her can stir the seared heart of an auld carle like mysel’, it wadna be the surest way to calm the frenzied blood of a youth.’”

Perhaps Sir Archy was not far wrong. Kate O’Donoghue was, indeed, a girl of no common attraction. Her figure — rather below than above the middle size — was yet so perfectly moulded that, for very symmetry and grace, it seemed as if such should have been the standard of womanly beauty, while her countenance had a character of loveliness even more striking and beautiful; her eyes were large, full, and of a liquid blue that resembled black; her hair a rich brown, through which a golden tinge was seen to run, almost the color of an autumn sunset, giving a brilliancy to her complexion which, in its transparent beauty, needed no such aid; but her mouth was the feature whose expression, more than any other, possessed a peculiar charm. In speaking, the rounded lips moved with a graceful undulation, more expressive than mere sound, while, as she listened, the slightest tremble of the lip harmonizing with the brilliant glance of her eyes, gave a character of rapid intelligence to her face well befitting the vivid temper of her nature. She looked her very self, — a noble-hearted, high-spirited girl, without a thought save for what was honorable and lofty; one who

accepted no compromise with a doubtful line of policy, but eagerly grasped at the right, and stood firmly by the consequence. Although educated within the walls of a convent, she had mixed, her extreme youth considered, much in the world of the city she lived in, and was thus as accomplished in all the "usage" and conventional habits of society, as she was cultivated in those gifts and graces which give it all its ornament. To a mere passing observer there might seem somewhat of coquetry in her manner; but very little observation would show, that such unerring gracefulness cannot be the result of mere practice, and that innate character had assumed that garb which best suited it, and not one to be merely worn for a season. Her accent, too, when she spoke English, had enough of foreign intonation about it to lay the ground for a charge of affectation; but he should have been a sturdy critic who could have persisted in the accusation. The fear was rather, that one leaned to the very fault of pronunciation as an excellence, so much of piquancy did it occasionally lend to expressions which, from other lips, had seemed tame and commonplace. To any one who has seen the graceful coquetry of French manner ingrafted on the more meaning eloquence of Irish beauty, my effort at a portrait will appear a very meagre and barren outline; and I feel how poorly I have endeavored to convey any idea of one, whose Spanish origin had left a legacy of gracefulness and elegance, to be warmed into life by the fervid character of the Celt, and tempered again by the consummate attraction of French manner.

The ease and kindliness of spirit with which she sat between the two old men, listening in turn to each, or answering with graceful alacrity the questions they proffered — the playful delicacy with which she evaded the allusions they made from time to time to the disappointment the ruined house must have occasioned her — and the laughing gayety with which she spoke of the new life about to open before her, were actually contagious. They already forgot the fears her anticipated coming had inspired, and gazed on her with the warm affection that should wait on a welcome. Oh! what a gift is beauty, and how powerful its influence, when strengthened by the rich eloquence of a spotless na-

ture, beaming from beneath long-lashed lids, when two men like these, seared and hardened by the world's ills — broken on the wheel of fortune — should feel a glow of long-forgotten gladness in their chilled hearts as they looked upon her! None could have guessed, however, what an effort that seeming light-heartedness cost her. Poor girl! Scarcely was she alone, and had closed the door of her room behind her, when she fell upon the bed in a torrent of tears, and sobbed as if her heart was breaking. All that Father Luke had said as they came along — and the kind old man had done his utmost to break the shock of the altered state of her uncle's fortunes — was far from preparing her for the cold reality she witnessed. It was not the ruined walls, the treeless mountain, the desolate and dreary look of all around that smote upon her heart. Sad as these signs were, her grief had a higher source. It was the sight of that old man she called father, tottering feebly to the grave, surrounded by images of poverty and misfortune. It was the aspect of Mark, the cousin she had pictured to her mind as an accomplished gentleman in look and demeanor — the descendant of a house more than noble — the heir of a vast property; and now she saw him scarce in gesture and manner above the peasant, — in dress, as slovenly and uncared-for. She was prepared for a life of monotonous retirement and isolation. She was ready to face the long winter of dreary solitude, — but not in such company as this. That she never calculated on. Her worst anticipations had never conjured up more than an unchecked existence, with little to vary or relieve it; and now, she foresaw a life to be passed amid the miserable straits and shifts of poverty, with all its petty incidents and lowering accidents, to lessen her esteem for those she wished to look up to and love. And this was Carrignacurra, the proud castle she had so often boasted of to her school companions, the baronial seat she had loved to exalt above the antique châteaux of France and Flanders; and these the haughty relatives, whose pride she mentioned as disdaining the alliance of the Saxon, and spurning all admixture of blood with a race less noble than their own. The very chamber she sat in, how did it contradict her own animated descriptions of its once comforts and lux-

ries! Alas! it seemed to be like duplicity and falsehood, that she had so spoken of these things. More than once she asked herself — “Were they always thus?” Poor child! she knew not that poverty can bring sickness, and sorrow, and premature old age. It can devastate the fields, and desolate the affections, and make cold both heart and home together.

If want stopped short at privation, men need not to tremble at its approach. It is in the debasing and degrading influence of poverty its real terror lies. It is in the plastic facility with which the poor man shifts to meet the coming evil that the high principle of rectitude is sacrificed, and the unflinching course of honor deviated from. When the proud three-decker, in all the majesty of her might, may sail along her course unaltered, the humble craft, in the same sea, must tack, and beat, and watch for every casualty of the gale to gain her port in safety. These are the trials of the poor but proud man. It is not the want of liveried lackeys, of plate, of equipage, and all the glittering emblems of wealth, that smite his heart and break his spirit. It is the petty subterfuge he is reduced to that galls him; it is the sense of struggle between his circumstances and his conscience, between what he does and what he feels.

It is true Kate knew not these things, but yet she had before her the results of them too palpably to be mistaken. Sir Archibald was the only one on whom reverse of fortune had not brought carelessness and coarseness of manner. He seemed, both in dress and demeanor, little changed from what she remembered him years before; nor had time, apparently, fallen on him with heavier impress in other respects. What was Herbert like? was the question ever rising to her mind, but with little hope that the answer would prove satisfactory.

While Kate O'Donoghue was thus pondering over the characters of those with whom she was now to live, they, on the other hand, were exerting themselves to the utmost to restore some semblance of its ancient comfort to the long-neglected dwelling. A blazing fire of bog deal was lighted in the old hall, whose mellow glare glanced along the dark oak wainscot, and threw a rich glow along the

corridor itself, to the very door of the tower. In the great chamber, where they sat, many articles of furniture, long disused and half forgotten, were now collected, giving, even by their number, a look of increased comfort to the roomy apartment. Nor were such articles of ornament as they possessed forgotten. The few pictures which had escaped the wreck of damp and time were placed upon the walls, and a small miniature of Kate, as a child, — a poor performance enough, — was hung up over the chimney, as it were to honor her whose presence these humble preparations were made to celebrate. Sir Archy, too, as eager in these arrangements as Mark himself, had brought several books and illustrated volumes from his chamber to scatter upon the tables; while, as if for a shrine for the deity of the place, a little table of most elaborate marqueterie, and a richly carved chair beside the fire, designated the place Kate was to occupy as her own, and to mark which he had culled the very gems of his collection.

It is scarcely possible to conceive how completely even a few trifling objects like these can change the "morale" of a chamber; how that which before seemed cumbrous, sad, and dispiriting, becomes at once lightsome and pleasant-looking. But so it is: the things which speak of human thought and feeling appeal to a very different sense from those which merely minister to material comfort; and we accept the presence of a single book, a print, or drawing, as an evidence that mental aliment has not been forgotten.

If the changes here spoken of gave a very different air and seeming to the old tower, Kate's own presence there completed the magic of the transformation. Dressed in black silk, and wearing a profusion of lace of the same color, — for her costume had been adapted to a very different sphere, — she took her place in the family circle, diffusing around her a look of refinement and elegance, and making of that sombre chamber a spacious *salon*. Her guitar, her embroidery, her old-fashioned writing-desk, inlaid with silver, caught the eye as it wandered about the room, and told of womanly graces and accomplishments so foreign to the rude emblems of the chase and the field, henceforth to be banished to the old entrance hall.

The O'Donoghue himself felt the influence of the young girl's presence, and evidenced in his altered dress and demeanor the respect he desired to show; while Mark took from his scanty wardrobe the only garment he possessed above the rank of a shooting-jacket, and entered the room with a half-bashful, half-sullen air, as though angry and ashamed with himself for even so much compliance with the world's usages.

Although Kate was quick-sighted enough to see that these changes were caused on her account, her native tact prevented her from showing that knowledge, and made her receive their attentions with that happy blending of courtesy and familiarity so fascinating from a young and pretty woman. The dinner — and it was a *chef-d'œuvre* on the part of Mrs. Branaghan — passed off most pleasantly. The fear her coming had excited now gave way to the delight her presence conferred. They felt as if they had done her an injustice in their judgment, and hastened to make every *amende* for their unfair opinion. Never, for years long, had the O'Donoghue been so happy. The cold and cheerless chamber was once more warmed into a home. The fire beside which he had so often brooded in sadness was now the pleasant hearth surrounded by cheery faces. Memories of the past, soothing through all their sorrow, flowed in upon his mind, as he sat and gazed at her in tranquil ecstasy. Sir Archibald, too, felt a return to his former self in the tone of good-breeding her presence diffused, and evinced, by the attentive politeness of his manner, how happy he was to recur once more to the observances which he remembered with so much affection, associated as they were with the brightest period of his life.

As for Mark, although less an actor than the others in the scene, the effect upon him was not less striking. All his assumed apathy gave way as he listened to her descriptions of foreign society, and the habits of those she had lived amongst. The ringing melody of her voice, the brilliant sparkle of her dark eyes, the graceful elegance of gesture, — the Frenchwoman's prerogative, — threw over him their charm, a fascination never experienced before; and although a dark dread would now and then steal across his mind,

How was a creature, beautiful and gifted like this, to lead the life of dreariness and gloom their days were passed in? — the tender feeling of affection she showed his father, the fondness with which she dwelt on every little incident of her childhood — every little detail of the mountain scenery — showed a spirit which well might harmonize with a home even humble as theirs, and pleasures as uncostly and as simple. “Oh! if she grow not weary of us!” was the heart-uttered sentence each moment as he listened; and in the very anxiety of the doubt the ecstasy of enjoyment was heightened. To purchase this boon there was nothing he would not dare. To think that as he trod the glens, or followed the wild deer along some cragged and broken mountain gorge, a home like this ever awaited him, was a picture of happiness too bright and dazzling to look upon.

“Now, then, *ma belle*,” said Sir Archibald, as he rose from his seat, and with an air of gallantry that might have done credit to Versailles of old, threw the ribbon of her guitar over her neck, “now for your promise — that little romance ye spoke of.”

“Willingly, dear uncle,” replied she, striking the chords as a kind of prelude. “Shall I sing you one of our convent hymns? — or will you have the romance?”

“It is no fair to tempt one in a choice,” said M’Nab, slyly; “but sin ye say so, I must hear baith before I decide.”

“Your own favorite the first,” said she, smiling; and began the little chanson of the “Garde Ecossoise,” the song of the exiled nobles in the service of France, so dear to every Scotchman’s heart.

While the melody described the gathering of the clans in the mountains to take leave of their departing kinsmen, the measured tramp of the music, and the wild ringing of the pibroch, the old chieftain’s face lit up, and his eye glared with the fierce fire of native pride; but when the moment of leave-taking arrived, and the heartrending cry of “Farewell!” broke from the deserted, his eye became glazed and filmy, and, with a hand tremulous from emotion, he stopped the singer.

“Na, na, Kate; I canna bear that the noo. Ye hae

smote the rock too suddenly, lassie;" and the tears rolled heavily down his seared cheeks.

"You must let me finish, uncle," said she, disengaging her hand; and at the instant, sweeping the chord with a bold and vigorous finger, she broke into a splendid and chivalrous description of the Scottish valor in the service of France, every line swelling with their proud achievements, as foremost they marched to battle. To this succeeded the crash and turmoil of the fray, the ringing cheers of the plaided warriors mingling with the war-cries of the Gaul, till, in a burst of triumph and victory, the song concluded. Then the old man sprang from his chair and threw his arms around her in transport, as he cried, —

"It's a mercifu' thing, lassie, ye didna live fifty years ago; by my soul, there's nae saying how many a brave fellow the like o' that had laid low!"

"If that be one of the hymns you spoke of, Kate," said the O'Donoghue, smiling, "I fancy Mark would have no objection to be a nun; but where is he? — he has left the room."

"I hope there is nothing in my song he disliked?" asked she, timidly; but before there was time for an answer the door opened, and Mark appeared, with Herbert in his arms.

"There!" said he, laying him gently on the sofa; "if cousin Kate will only sing that once more, I'll answer for it, it will save you a fortnight in your recovery."

Kate knelt down beside the sick boy and kissed him tenderly, while he, poor fellow, scarce daring to believe in the reality of all before him, played with the long tangles of her silky hair, and gazed on her in silence.

"We maun be cautious, Mark," whispered M'Nab, carefully; but Mark had no ears nor eyes save for her who now sat beside his brother, and in a low, soft voice breathed her affectionate greetings to him.

In this way passed the first evening of her coming, — a night whose fascination dwelt deep in every heart, and made each dreamer blest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HASTY PLEDGE.

WHILE these things were happening within the ruined castle of the O'Donoghue, a guest, equally unexpected as theirs, had arrived at the Lodge. Frederick Travers, delayed in Bristol by contrary winds, had come over in the same packet with Kate; but without being able either to learn her name, or whither she was going. His unlooked-for appearance at the Lodge was a most welcome surprise both to Sir Marmaduke and Sybella; and as he did not desire to avow the real object of his coming, it was regarded by them as the most signal proof of affection. They well knew how much London life engrossed him, how completely its peculiar habits and haunts possessed attractions for him, and with what a depreciating estimate he looked down on every part of the globe save that consecrated to the fashionable follies and amusements of his own set.

He was not, in reality, insensible to other and better influences; his affection for his father and sister was unbounded; he had a bold, manly spirit, unalloyed with anything mean or sordid; a generous, candid nature, and straightforward earnestness of purpose, that often carried him farther by impulse than he was followed by his convictions. Still, a conventional cant, a tone of disparaging, half-contemptuous indifference to everything which characterized his associates, had already infected him; and he felt ashamed to confess to those sentiments and opinions, to possess and to act upon which should have been his dearest pride.

"Well, Fred," said Sybella, as they drew around the fire after dinner, in that happy home circle so suggestive of enjoyment, "let us hear what you thought of the scenery. Is not Glenfesk fine?"

“Matlock on a larger scale,” said he, coolly. “Less timber and more rocks.”

“Matlock! dear Fred. You might as well compare Keim-an-eigh with Holborn, — you are only jesting.”

“Compare what? Repeat that droll name, I beg of you.”

“Keim-an-eigh. It is a mountain pass quite close to us here.”

“Admirably done! Why, Sybella dear, I shall not be surprised to see you take to the red petticoat and bare feet soon. You have indoctrinated yourself wonderfully since your arrival.”

“I like the people with all my heart, Fred,” said she, artlessly, “and if I could imitate many of their traits of forbearance and long-suffering patience by following their costume, I promise you I’d don the scarlet.”

“Ay, Fred,” said Sir Marmaduke, with a sententious gravity, “they don’t know these Irish at all at our side of the water. They mistake them totally. They only want teaching, — a little example, a little encouragement, that’s all, — and they are as docile and tractable as possible. I’ll show you to-morrow what improvements a few months have effected. I’ll bring you over a part of the estate where there was not a hovel fit for a dog, and you shall see what comfortable dwellings they have. We hear nothing in England but the old songs about popery, and superstition, and all that. Why, my dear Fred, these people don’t care a straw for the priest, — they’d be anything I asked them.”

“Devilish high principled that, any way,” said Fred, dryly.

“I did n’t exactly mean that, — at least, in the sense you take it. I was about to say, that such is their confidence, such their gratitude to the landlord, that — that —”

“That, in short, they’d become Turks, for an abatement in the rent. Well, Sybella dear, is this one of the traits you are so anxious to imitate?”

“Why will you misunderstand, Fred?” said Sybella, imploringly. “Cannot you see that gratitude may lead an uninstructed people far beyond the limits of reason? — my father is so good to them.”

“With all my heart; I have not the slightest objection in life; indeed, I'm not sure, if all the estate be like what I passed through this afternoon, if *my* generosity would n't go farther, and, instead of reducing the rent, make them an honest present of the fee simple.”

“Foolish boy!” said Sir Marmaduke, half angrily. “There are forty thousand acres of reclaimable land —”

“Which might bear crops anno Domini 3095.”

“There are mines of inexhaustible wealth.”

“And would cost such to work them, sir, no doubt. Come, come, father, — Hemsworth has passed a life among these people. He knows more than we do, or ever shall.”

“I tell you, sir,” said Sir Marmaduke, nettled by such a sarcasm on his powers of observation, “I know them perfectly; I can read them like a book. They are a guileless, simple-minded, confiding people; you may see every thought they have in their countenances. They only need the commonest offices of kindness to attach them; and as for political or religious leanings, I have questioned them pretty closely, and, without a single exception, have heard nothing but sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the church.”

“Well, I only hope you don't mean to prolong your stay here. I'm sure you've done enough for any ordinary call of conscience; and, if you have not, set about it in right earnest, — convert the tens into hundreds; make them all as comfortable as possible, — and then, in Heaven's name, get back again to England. There is no earthly reason why you should pass your time here; and as for Sybella —”

“Don't include me, Fred, in your reasons for departure. I never was so happy in my life.”

“There, boy, there's an example for you; and if you need another, here am I, ready to confess the same thing. I don't mean that there are not little dampers and difficulties. There's that fool about the mill-wheel, and that fellow that persists in dragging the river with a net;” and so he muttered on for some minutes between his teeth, to the evident enjoyment of Fred, whose quivering lip and laughing eye told how he appreciated the conflicting evidence memory was eliciting.

Thus, for some time, the conversation continued, until

Miss Travers retired for the night. Then Sir Marmaduke drew his chair closer to his son's, and, in an earnest manner, related the whole circumstance of Sybella's escape from the mountain torrent, dwelling with grateful eloquence on the young O'Donoghue's heroism in coming to her rescue. "The youth has narrowly escaped with his life. The doctor, who left this but a few hours ago, said he 'never witnessed a more dangerous case than the symptoms at one time presented.' He is well, however, now, — the risk is past, — and I want your aid, Fred, to devise some suitable mode of evincing our gratitude."

"These O'Donoghues are your tenants, are they not?" asked the young man.

"Yes, they are tenants; but on that score we must not say much in their favor. Wylie tells me that they have been at feud with Hemsworth for years past: they never pay rent, nor will they surrender possession. The whole thing is a difficult matter to understand; first of all, there is a mortgage —"

"There, there, my dear father, don't puzzle my brain and your own with a statement we'll never get to the end of. The point I want to learn is, they are your tenants —"

"Yes, at least for part of the land they occupy. There is a dispute about another portion; but I believe Hemsworth has got the Attorney-General's opinion that their case cannot stand."

"Tush — never mind the Attorney-General. Give up the question at issue; send him, or his father, or whoever it is, the receipt for the rent due, and take care Hemsworth does not molest him in future."

"But you don't see, boy, what we are doing. We hope to obtain the whole of the Ballyvourney property, — that is part of our plan; the tenants there are in a state of absolute misery and starvation."

"Then, in God's name, give them plenty to eat; it does n't signify much, I suppose, whose tenantry they are when they're hungry."

The old gentleman was scarcely prepared for such an extended basis for his philanthropy, and, for a moment or

two, seemed quite dumfounded by his son's proposition, while Fred continued, —

“If I understand the matter, it lies thus: you owe a debt of gratitude which you are desirous to acquit; you don't care to pay highly.”

“On the contrary, I am quite willing,” interposed Sir Marmaduke; “but let the price be one which shall realize a benefit equivalent to its amount. If I assure these people in the possession of their land, what security have I that they will not continue, as of old, the same useless, wasteful, spendthrift set they ever were, — presenting the worst possible example to the other tenants, and marring the whole force of the lesson I am endeavoring to inculcate?”

“That, I take it, is more *their* affair than *yours*, after all,” said Fred; “you are not to confer the boon and allocate its advantages afterwards. But come, what kind of people are they?”

“Oh! a species of half-gentry, half-farmer set, I believe, proud as they are poor, deeming themselves, as O'Donoghues, at least our equals, but living, as I believe, in every kind of privation.”

“Very well; sit down there, and let me have a check on your banker for five hundred pounds, and leave the affair to me.”

“But you mistake, Fred, they are as haughty as Lucifer.”

“Just leave it to me, sir. I fancy I know something of the world by this time. It may require more money, but the result I will answer for.”

Sir Marmaduke's confidence in his son's tact and worldly skill was one of the articles of his faith, and he sat down at the table and wrote the order on the bank at once. “Here, Fred,” said he; “I only beg of you to remember that the way to express the grateful sense I entertain of this boy's conduct is not by wounding the susceptibilities of his feelings; and if they be above the class of farmers, which I really cannot ascertain, your steps must demand all your caution.”

“I hope, sir,” said Fred, with some vanity in the tone, “that I have never made you blush for my awkwardness, and I don't intend to do so now. I promise for the success

of my negotiation ; but I must not say a word more of how I mean to obtain it."

Sir Marmaduke was far from feeling satisfied with himself for having even so far encouraged a plan that his own blind confidence in his son's cleverness had for a moment entrapped him into ; he would gladly have withdrawn his consent, but old experience taught him that Fred was never completely convinced he was right until he met opposition to his opinion. So he parted with him for the night, hoping that sleep might suggest a wiser counsel and a clearer head ; and that, being left free to act, he might possibly feel a doubt as to the correctness of his own judgment.

As for Fred, no sooner was he alone than he began to regret the pledge his precipitancy had carried him into. What were the nature of the advances he was to make, how to open the negotiation, in a quarter the habits and prejudices of which he was utterly ignorant of, he had not the most vague conception ; and, as he sought his chamber, he had half persuaded himself to the conviction that the safest, and the most honest course, after all, would be to avow in the morning that he had overstated his diplomatic abilities, and fairly abandon a task to which he saw himself inadequate. These were his last sleeping thoughts ; for his waking resolves we must enter upon another chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DIPLOMATIST DEFEATED.

IF Frederick Travers went to sleep at night with very considerable doubts as to the practicability of his plans regarding the O'Donoghues, his waking thoughts were very far from reassuring him, and he heartily wished he had never engaged in the enterprise. Now, however, his honor was in a manner pledged; he had spoken so confidently of success, there was nothing for it but to go forward, and endeavor, as well he might, to redeem his promise.

At the time we speak of, military men never for a moment divested themselves of the emblems of their career; the uniform and the sword, the plumed hat and the high boot, formed a costume not to be worn at certain periods and laid aside at others, but was their daily dress, varying merely in the degree of full or half dress, as the occasion warranted. There was no affectation of the happy freedom of "mufti," no pretended enjoyment of the incognito of a black coat and round hat; on the contrary, the king's livery was borne with a pride which, erring on the opposite side, suggested a degree of assumption and conscious importance in the wearer which more or less separated the soldier from the civilian in bearing, and gradually originated a feeling of soreness on the part of the more humbly clad citizen towards the more favored order.

A certain haughty, overbearing tone of manner, was then popular in the army, and particularly in those regiments which boasted of an unalloyed nobility among the officers. If they assumed an air of superiority to the rest of the service, so much the more did they look down upon the mere civilian, whom they considered as belonging to a very subordinate class and order of mankind. To mark the sense of

this difference of condition in a hundred little ways, and by a hundred petty observances, was part of a military education, and became a more unerring test of the soldier in society, than even the cockade and the cross-belt. To suppose that such a line of conduct should not have inspired those against whom it was directed with a feeling of counter hatred, would be to disbelieve in human nature. The civilian, indeed, reciprocated with dislike the soldier's insolence, and, in their estrangement from each other, the breach grew gradually wider, — the dominant tyranny of the one, and the base-born vulgarity of the other, being themes each loved to dilate upon without ceasing.

Now this consciousness of superiority, so far from relieving Frederick Travers of any portion of the difficulty of his task, increased it tenfold. He knew and felt he was stooping to a most unwarrantable piece of condescension in seeking these people at all; and although he trusted firmly that his aristocratic friends were very unlikely to hear of proceedings in a quarter so remote and unvisited, yet how he should answer to his own heart for such a course, was another and a far more puzzling matter. He resolved, then, in the true spirit of his order, to give his conduct all the parade of a most condescending act, to let them see plainly how immeasurably low he had voluntarily descended to meet them; and to this end he attired himself in his full field uniform, and with as scrupulous a care as though the occasion were a review before his Majesty. His costume of scarlet coat, with blue velvet facings, separated at the breast so as to show a vest of white kerseymere, trimmed with a gold border — his breeches, of the same color and material, met at the knee by the high and polished boot, needed but the addition of his cocked hat, fringed with an edging of ostrich feathers, to set off a figure of singular elegance and symmetry. The young men of the day were just beginning to dispense with hair powder, and Fred wore his rich brown locks, long and floating, in the new mode, — a fashion which well became him, and served to soften down the somewhat haughty carriage of his head. There was an air of freedom, an absence of restraint, in the military costume of the period, which certainly contributed to increase the advantages of a

naturally good-looking man, in the same way as the present stiff Prussian mode of dress will assuredly conceal many defects in mould and form among less-favored individuals. The loosely-falling flaps of the waistcoat — the deep hanging cuffs of the coat — the easy folds of the long skirt — gave a character of courtliness to uniform which, to our eye, it at present is very far from possessing. In fact, the graceful carriage and courteous demeanor of the drawing-room suffered no impediment from the pillory of a modern stock, or the rigid inflexibility of a coat strained almost to bursting.

“Are you on duty, Fred?” said Sir Marmaduke, laughing, as his son entered the breakfast-room thus carefully attired.

“Yes, sir, I am preparing for my mission; and it would ill become an ambassador to deliver his credentials in undress.”

“To what court are you then accredited?” said Sybella, laughing.

“His Majesty The O'Donoghue,” interposed his father, “King of Glenflesk, Baron of Inchigeela, Lord Protector of — of half the blackguards in the county, I verily believe,” added he, in a more natural key.

“Are you really going to Carrignacurra, Fred?” asked Miss Travers, hurriedly; “are you going to visit our neighbors?”

“I'll not venture to say that such is the place, much less pretend to pronounce it after you, my dear sister, but I am about to wait on these worthy people, and, if they will permit me, have a peep at the interior of their stockade or wigwam, whichever it be.”

“It must have been a very grand thing in its day: that old castle has some fine features about it yet,” replied she, calmly.

“Like Windsor, I suppose,” said Fred, as he replied to her; and then complacently glanced at the well-fitting boot which ornamented his leg. “They'll not be over-ceremonious, I hope, about according me an audience.”

“Not in the forenoon, I believe,” said Sir Marmaduke, dryly; for he was recalling the description old Roach had

given him of his own reception by Kerry O'Leary, and which circumstance, by the bye, figured somewhat ostentatiously in his charge to the old baronet.

"Oh, then, they receive early," resumed Fred, "the old French style — the *petit lever du roi* — before ten o'clock. Another cup of tea, Sybella, and then I must look after a horse."

"I have given orders already on that score. I flatter myself you'll rather approve of my stud; for, amongst the incongruities of Ireland, I have fallen upon an honest horse-dealer."

"Indeed!" said the young man, with more interest than he had yet shown in the conversation; "I must cultivate that fellow: one might exhibit him with great success in London."

"Unquestionably, Fred, he is a curiosity; for while he is a perfect simpleton about the value of an animal, — an easy-tempered, good-natured, soft fellow, — with respect to knowledge of a horse, his points, his performance, and his soundness, I never saw his equal."

"I'll give him a commission to get me two chargers," said Fred, delighted at the prospect of deriving so much benefit from his Irish journey. "What makes you look so serious, Sybella?"

"Was I so, Fred? I scarcely know, — perhaps I was regretting," added she, archly, "that there were no ladies at Carrignacurra to admire so very smart a cavalier."

Frederick colored slightly and endeavored to laugh; but the consciousness that his "bravery" of costume was somewhat out of place, worried him, and he made no reply.

"You'll not be long, Fred," said his father; "I shall want you to take a walk with me to the lake."

"No, Fred, — don't stay long away; it is not above two miles from this at farthest."

"Had I not better send a guide with you?"

"No, no; if the place be larger than a mud hovel, I cannot mistake it. So here comes our steed. Well, I own, he is the best thing I've yet seen in these parts;" and the youth opened the window, and stepped out to approach the animal. He was, indeed, a very creditable specimen of

Lanty's taste in horseflesh, — the model of a compact and powerfully-built cob horse.

"A hundred guineas, eh?" said Fred, in a tone of question.

"Sixty — not a pound more," said the old man, in conscious pride. "The fellow said but fifty; I added ten on my own account."

Frederick mounted the cob, and rode him across the grass, with that quiet hand and steady seat which bespeaks the judgment of one called upon to be critical. "A little, a very little, over done in the mouthing, but his action perfect," said he, as he returned to the window, and held the animal in an attitude to exhibit his fine symmetry to advantage. "The Prince has a passion for a horse of this class; I hope you have not become attached to him?"

"His Royal Highness shall have him at once, Fred, if he will honor you by accepting him." And as he spoke, he laid the stress on the *you*, to evince the pleasure he anticipated in the present being made by Frederick, and not himself.

"Now, then, with God and St. George!" cried Fred, laughingly, as he waved an adieu with his plumed hat, and cantered easily towards the high road.

It was a clear and frosty day in December, with a blue sky above, and all below bright and glittering in a thin atmosphere. The lake, clear as crystal, reflected every cliff and crag upon the mountain, while each island on its surface was defined with a crisp sharpness of outline, scarce less beautiful than in the waving foliage of summer. The many colored heaths, too, shone in hues more bright and varied than usual in our humid climate; and the voices which broke the silence, heard from long distances away, came mellowed and softened in their tones, and harmonized well with the solitary grandeur of the scene. Nor was Frederick Travers insensible to its influence; the height of those bold mountains — their wild and fanciful outlines — the sweeping glens that wound along their bases — the wayward stream that flowed through the deep valleys, and, as if in sportiveness, serpented their course, were features of scenery he had not witnessed before, while the perfect solitude awed and appalled him.

He had not ridden long when the tall towers of the old castle of Carriguacurra caught his eye, standing proudly on the bold mass of rock above the road. The unseemly adjunct of farm-house and stables were lost to view at such a distance, or blended with the general mass of building, so



that the whole gave the impression of extent and pretension to a degree he was by no means prepared for. These features, however, gradually diminished as he drew nearer; the highly pitched roof, pierced with narrow windows, patched and broken — the crumbling battlements of the towers themselves — the ruinous dilapidation of the outer buildings, disenchanted the spectator of his first more favorable opinion; until at length, as he surveyed the incongruous and mis-

shapen pile, with its dreary mountain background, he wondered how, at any point of view, he should have deemed it other than the gloomy abode it seemed at that moment.

The only figure Frederick Travers had seen, as he rode along, was that of a man carrying a gun in his hand, in a dress somewhat like a gamekeeper's, who, at some short distance from the road, moved actively across the fields, springing lightly from hillock to hillock with the step of a practised mountain walker, and seemingly regardless of the weight of a burden which he carried on one shoulder; so rapidly did he move that Frederick found it difficult to keep pace with him, as the road was deeply cut up, and far from safe for horse travel. Curious to make out what he carried, Travers spurred eagerly forward; and at last, but not without an effort, came within hail of him at the iron-barred gate which formed the outer entrance to the castle from the high road. The burden was now easily seen, and at once suggested to Frederick's mind the reason of the bearer's haste. It was a young buck, just killed; the blood still trickled from a wound in its skull.

"Leave that gate open, my good fellow," cried Frederick, in a voice of command, as the other pushed the frail portal wide, and let it fall back heavily to its place again, — "do you hear me? — leave it open."

"We always leap it when mounted," was the cool reply, as the speaker turned his head round, and then, without deigning either another word or look, continued his way up the steep ascent.

Travers felt the rude taunt sorely, and would have given much to be near him who uttered it; but, whether disdainingly to follow a counsel thus insolently conveyed, or, it might be, not over-confident of his horse, he dismounted, and, flinging wide the gate, rode quickly up the causeway, — not, however, in time to overtake the other, for, although the way was enclosed by walls on both sides, he had disappeared already, but in what manner, and how, it seemed impossible to say.

"My father has omitted poaching, it would seem, in his catalogue of Irish virtues," muttered the young man, as he rode through the arched keep, and halted at the chief

entrance of the house. The door lay open, displaying the cheerful blaze of a pine-wood fire that burned briskly within the ample chimney in the keen air of a frosty morning. "I see I shall have my ride for my pains," was Fred's reflection as he passed into the wide hall, and beheld the old weapons and hunting spoils arranged around the walls. "These people affect chieftainship, and go hungry to bed to dream of fourteen quarterings. Be it so. I shall see the old rookery, at all events;" and, so saying, he gave a vigorous pull at the old bell, which answered loudly in its own person, and also by a deep howl from the aged foxhound, then lying at the fire in the drawing-room. These sounds soon died away, and a silence deep and unbroken as before succeeded. A second time, and a third, Travers repeated his summons, but without any difference of result, save that the dog no longer gave tongue; it seemed as if he were becoming reconciled to the disturbance, as one that needed no further attention from him.

"I must explore for myself," thought Fred; and so, attaching his horse to the massive ring by which a chain used once to be suspended across the portal, he entered the house. Walking leisurely forward, he gained the long corridor. For a second or two he was uncertain how to proceed, when a gleam of light from the half-open door in the tower led him onward. As he drew near, he heard the deep tones of a man's voice recounting, as it seemed, some story of the chase; the last words, at least, were, "I fired but one shot, — the herd is wild enough already." Travers pushed wide the door, and entered. As he did so, he involuntarily halted: the evidences of habits and tastes he was not prepared for suddenly rebuked his unannounced approach, and he would gladly have retreated were it now practicable.

"Well, sir," said the same voice he heard before, and from a young man who leaned with one arm on the chimney-piece, and with the other hand held his gun, while he appeared as if he had been conversing with a pale and sickly youth, propped and pillowed in a deep arm-chair. They were the only occupants of the room. "Well, sir, it would seem you have made a mistake: the inn is lower down the glen, — you'll see a sign over the doorway."

The look which accompanied this insolent speech recalled at once to Frederick's mind the same figure he had seen in the glen; and, stung by impertinence from such a quarter, he replied, —

“Have no fear, young fellow; you may poach every acre for twenty miles round, — I have not tracked you on that score.”

“Poach! — tracked me!” reiterated Mark O'Donoghue, for it is needless to say it was he; and then, as if the ludicrous were even stronger in his mind than mere passion, he burst into a rude laugh; while the sick boy's pale face grew a deep crimson, as, with faltering accents, he said:

“You must be a stranger here, sir, I fancy?”

“I am so,” said Travers, mildly, and yielding at once to the respect ever due to suffering: “my name is Travers. I have come over here to inquire after a young gentleman who saved my sister's life.”

“Then you've *tracked* him well,” interposed Mark, with an emphasis on the word. “Here he is.”

“Will you not sit down?” said Herbert, motioning with his wasted hand to a seat.

Frederick took his place beside the boy at once, and said, “We owe you, sir, the deepest debt of gratitude it has ever been our fortune to incur; and if anything could enhance the obligation, it has been the heroism, the personal daring —”

“Hold, there,” said Mark, sternly. “It's not our custom here to listen to compliments on our courage: we are O'Donoghues.”

“This young gentleman's daring was no' common one,” answered Travers, as if stung by the taunt.

“My brother will scarce feel flattered by your telling him so,” was Mark's haughty answer; and for some seconds Frederick knew not how to resume the conversation; at last, turning to Herbert, he said, —

“May I hope that, without offending you, we may be permitted in some shape to express the sentiment I speak of? It is a debt which cannot be requited; let us at least have some evidence that we acknowledge it.”

“It is the more like some of our own,” broke in Mark,

with a fierce laugh; "we have parchments enough, but we never pay. Your father's agent could tell you that."

Frederick gave no seeming attention to this speech, but went on: "When I say there is nothing in our power we would deem enough, I but express the feelings of my father and myself."

"There, there," cried Mark, preventing Herbert, who was about to reply, "you've said far more than was needed for a wet jacket and a few weeks' low diet. Let us have a word about the poaching you spoke of."

His fixed and steady stare — the rigid brow by which these words were accompanied — at once proclaimed the intention of one who sought reparation for an insult, and so instantly did they convey the sentiment that Travers, in a second, forgot all about his mission, and, starting to his feet, replied in a whisper audible but to Mark, —

"True, it was a very hazardous guess; but when, in England, we meet with a fustian jacket and a broken beaver in company with a gun and a game-bag, we have little risk in pronouncing the owner a gamekeeper or a poacher."

Mark struck his gun against the ground with such violence as shivered the stock from the barrel, while he grasped the corner of the chimney-piece convulsively with the other hand. It seemed as if passion had actually paralyzed him. As he stood thus, the door opened, and Kate O'Donoghue entered. She was dressed in the becoming half-toilette of the morning, and wore on her head one of those caps of blue velvet, embroidered in silver, which are so popular among the peasantry of Rhenish Germany. The light airiness of her step as she came forward, unconscious of a stranger's presence, displayed her figure in its most graceful character. Suddenly her eyes fell upon Frederick Travers; she stopped and courtesied low to him, while he, thunder-struck with amazement at recognizing his fellow-traveller so unexpectedly, could scarcely return her salute with becoming courtesy.

"Mr. Travers," said Herbert, after waiting in vain for Mark to speak, — "Mr. Travers has been kind enough to come and inquire after me. Miss O'Donoghue, sir;" and the boy, with much bashfulness, essayed, in some sort, the ceremony of introduction.

"My cousin, Mr. Mark O'Donoghue," said Kate, with a graceful movement of her hand towards Mark, whose attitude led her to suppose he was not known to Travers.

"I have had the honor of presenting myself already," said Frederick, bowing; but Mark responded not to the inclination, but stood still with bent brow and clinched lip, seemingly unconscious of all around him, while Kate seated herself, and motioned to Travers to resume his place. She felt how necessary it was that she should atone, by her manner, for the strange rudeness of her cousin's; and her mind being now relieved of the fear which first struck her, that Frederick's visit might be intended for herself, she launched freely and pleasantly into conversation, recurring to the incidents of the late journey, and the fellow-travellers they had met with.

If Kate was not sorry to learn that the Lodge was tenanted by persons of such condition and class as might make them agreeable neighbors, Travers, on the other hand, was overjoyed at discovering one of such attractions within an easy visiting distance; while Herbert sat by, wondering how persons so little known to each other could have so many things to say, and so many topics which seemed mutually interesting. For so it is; they who are ignorant of the world and its habits can scarcely credit the great extent of those generalities which form food for daily intercourse, nor with what apparent interest people can play the game of life with but counterfeit coinage. He listened at first with astonishment, and afterwards with delight, to the pleasant flippancy of each, as in turn they discussed scenes, and pleasures, and people, of whom he never so much as heard. The *gentillesse* of French manner — would that we had a name for the thing in English — imparted to Kate's conversation a graceful ease our more reserved habits rarely permit; and while in her costume and her carriage there was a certain coquetry discernible, not a particle of affectation pervaded either her opinions or expressions. Travers, long accustomed to the best society of London, had yet seen scarcely anything of the fascination of foreign agreeability, and yielded himself so insensibly to its charm that an hour slipped away unconsciously, and he totally forgot the great object of his visit, and lost all recollection of the

luckless animal he had attached to the door-ring, — luckless, indeed, for already a heavy snowdrift was falling, and the day had assumed all the appearance of severe winter.

“You cannot go now, sir,” said Herbert, as Frederick rose to take his leave, — “there’s a heavy snow-storm with-out;” for the boy was so interested in all he heard, he could not endure the thought of his departure.

“Oh, it’s nothing,” said Travers, lightly. “There’s an old adage, — ‘Snow should not scare a soldier.’”

“There’s another proverb in the French service,” said Kate, laughing, as she pointed to the blazing hearth, — “‘Le soldat ne tourne pas son dos au feu.’”

“I accept the augury,” cried Frederick, laughing heartily at the witty misapplication of the phrase, and resumed his seat once more.

“Cousin Kate plays chess,” said Herbert, in his anxiety to suggest a plausible pretext for delaying Frederick’s departure.

“And I am passionately fond of the game; would you favor me so far?”

“With pleasure,” said she, smiling; “I only ask one condition, — *point de grâce*; no giving back, — the O’Donoghues never take or give quarter, — is n’t that so, Mark? Oh, he’s gone!” And now for the first time it was remarked that he had left the apartment.

In a few moments after they had drawn the little marqueterie table close to the fire, and were deeply interested in the game.

At first each party played with a seeming attention, which certainly imposed on Herbert, who sat eagerly watching the progress of the game. Frederick Travers was, however, far more occupied in observing his antagonist, than in the disposition of his rooks and pawns. While she, soon perceiving his inattention, half suspected that he did not deem her an enemy worth exerting his skill upon, and thus, partly in pique, she bestowed more watchfulness than at first.

“So, Mademoiselle,” cried Travers, at length, recurring to his game, “I perceive you have only permitted me to

advance thus far to cut off my retreat forever. How am I to save myself now?"

"It's hard to say, Sir Captain. It's the old tactique of Celts and Saxons on both sides. You would advance into the heart of the enemy's country; and as, unhappily, the men in ivory are truer than the natives were here, and won't take bribes to fight against their fellows, you must e'en stand or fall by your own deservings."

"Come, then, the bold policy forever. Check!"

"And you lose your castle."

"And you your bishop."

"We must avenge the church, sir. Take care of your queen."

"*Parbleu*, Mademoiselle, you are a fierce foe! What say you if we draw the battle?"

"No, no, cousin Kate; continue, and you win it."

"Be it so. And now for my turn," said Travers, who was really a first-rate player, and at length began to feel interested in the result.

The move he made exhibited so much of skill that Kate foresaw that the fortune of the day was about to change. She leaned her brow upon her hand, and deliberated long on the move; and at length, lifting her head, she said:

"I should like much to beat you, — but in fair fight, remember; no courtesy nor favor."

"I can spare neither," said Travers, smiling.

"Then defeat is no dishonor. There's my move."

"And mine," cried Fred, as rapidly.

"What prevents my taking you? I see nothing."

"Nor I either," said he, half chagrined, for his move was an oversight.

"You are too proud to ask quarter, — of course you are, or I should say, Take it back."

"No, Kate, no," whispered Herbert, whose excitement was at the highest.

"I must abide my fortune," said Frederick, bowing; "and the more calmly, as I have won the game."

"Won the game! How? — where?"

"Check!"

"How tauntingly he says it now," said Kate, while her



The Game of Chess.

eyes sparkled brilliantly. "There is too much of the conqueror in all that."

Frederick's glance met hers at the instant, and her cheek colored deeply.

Who knows the source of such emotions, or of how much pleasure and pain they are made up! "And yet I have not won," said he, in a low voice.

"Then be it a drawn battle," said Kate. "You can afford to be generous, and I can't bear being beaten; that's the truth of it."

"If I could but win!" muttered Travers, as he rose from the table; and whether she overheard the words, and that they conveyed more than a mere allusion to the game, she turned hastily away, and approached the window.

"Is that snowball your horse, Captain Travers?" said she, with a wicked smile.

"My father's favorite cob, by Jove!" exclaimed Frederick; and, as if suddenly aroused to the memory of his lengthy visit, made his adieus with more confusion than was exactly suitable to a fashionable Guardsman — and departed.

"I like him," said Herbert, as he looked out of the window after him. "Don't you, cousin Kate?"

But cousin Kate did not reply.

CHAPTER XX.

TEMPTATION IN A WEAK HOUR.

WHEN Mark O'Donoghue left the room his passion had become almost ungovernable, — the entrance of his cousin Kate had but dammed up the current of his anger, — and, during the few moments he still remained afterwards, his temper was fiercely tried by witnessing the courtesy of her manner to the stranger, and the apparent intimacy which subsisted between them. “I ought to have known it,” was the expression he uttered over and over to himself, — “I ought to have known it! That fellow's gay jacket and plumed hat are dearer to her woman's heart than the rude devotion of such as I am. Curses be on them! they carry persecution through everything, — house, home, country, rank, wealth, station, — ay, the very affection of our kindred they grudge us. Was slavery ever like this?” And with these bitter words, the offspring of bitterer thoughts, he strode down the causeway, and reached the high road. The snow was falling fast; a chilling north wind drove the thin flakes along, but he heeded it not. The fire of anger that burned within his bosom defied all sense of winter's cold; and with a throbbing brow and fevered hand he went, turning from time to time to look up at the old castle, whence he expected each moment to see Travers take his departure. Now he hurried eagerly onward, as if to reach some destined spot; now he would stop, and retrace his steps, irresolutely, as though half determined to return home.

“Degraded, insulted, outraged on the very hearth of my father's house!” cried he, aloud, as he wrung his hands in agony, and gave his passion vent. Again he pressed forward, and at last arrived at that part of the glen where the

road seems escarped between the two mountains, which rise several hundred feet, like walls, on either side. Here he paused, and after examining the spot for some seconds, he muttered to himself, "He has no choice here but stand or turn!" And so saying, he drew from the breast of his coat two pistols, examined the priming of each, and then replaced them. The prospect of speedy revenge seemed to have calmed his vindictive spirit; for now he continued to walk backwards and forwards, at a slow pace, like a sentinel on his post, pausing occasionally to listen if a horse's hoofs could be heard upon the road, and then resuming his walk once more. A rustling sound in the brushwood above his head once startled him, but the granite cliffs that overhung the road prevented his seeing from what it proceeded, and his heart was now bent on a very different object than the pursuit of the deer. At that moment the proudest of the herd might have grazed in safety within pistol-shot of him, and he had not deigned to notice it. Thus passed an hour; a second and a third succeeded, — and already the dull shadows of approaching night were falling, yet no one came. Tortured with strange conjectures, Mark saw the day waning, and yet no sight nor sound of him he looked for. Let not poets speak of the ardent longing of a lover's heart, as in throbbing eagerness he waits for her whose smile is life, and hope, and heaven. Compared with the mad impatience of him who thirsts for vengeance, his passion is but sluggish apathy. It is the bad that ever calls forth the sternest energies of human nature. It is in crime that men transcend the common attributes of mankind. Here was one, now, who would have given his right hand beneath the axe for but one brief moment of vengeance, and have deemed years of suffering cheaply bought for the mere presence of his enemy before him.

"He must have guessed my meaning when I left the room," was the taunting expression he now uttered, as his unsated anger took the shape of an insolent depreciation of his adversary. "An Irishman would not need a broader hint."

It grew darker; the mountains frowned heavily beneath the canopy of clouds, and night was rapidly approaching,

when, from the gloom of his almost extinguished hope, Mark was suddenly aroused. He heard the tramp of a horse's feet; the dull reverberation on the deep snow filled the air, and sometimes they seemed to come from the opposite part of the glen, when the pace slackened, and at last the sounds became almost inaudible.

"There is yet enough of daylight if we move into the broad road," was Mark's soliloquy, as he stooped his ear to listen; and at the instant he beheld a man leading his horse by the bridle, while he himself seemed seeking along the roadside, where the snowdrift had not yet fallen, as if for some lost object. A glance, even by the imperfect light, and at some thirty paces off, showed Mark it was not him he sought, and were it not that the attitude attracted his curiosity, he had not wasted a second look on him; but the horseman by this time had halted, and was scraping with his whip-handle amid the pebbles of the mountain rivulet.

"I'll never see it again; it's no use!" was the exclamation of the seeker, as he gathered up his reins and prepared to mount.

"Is that Lanty Lawler?" cried Mark, as he recognized the voice. "I say, did you meet with a young officer riding down the glen, in the direction of Carrignacurra?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Mark; I never saw living thing since I left Bantry."

The young man paused for a few seconds; and then, as if anxious to turn all thought from his question, said, "What have you lost thereabouts?"

"Oh, more than I am worth in the world!" was the answer, in a deep, heart-drawn sigh; "but, blessed Heaven! what's the pistols for? Oh, Master Mark, dear — sure — sure —"

"Sure what?" cried the youth, with a hoarse laugh; "sure I'm not turned highway robber! Is that what you want to say? Make your mind easy, Lanty, I have not reached that point yet; though, if indifference to life might tempt a man, I'd not say it is so far off."

"'Tis a duel, then," cried Lanty, quickly; "but I hope you would n't fight without seconds. Oh, that's downright

murder! What did he do to you? Was it one of the fellows you met in Cork?"

"You are all wrong," said Mark, sullenly. "It is enough, however, that neither of us seem to have found what he was seeking. You have your secret; I have mine."

"Oh, faix, mine is soon told: 't was my pocket-book, with as good as seventy pounds in goold, I lost here a three weeks ago, and never set eyes on it since; and there was papers in it, — ay, faix, papers of great value, — and I dare n't face Father Luke without them. I may leave the country when he hears what happened."

"Where are you going now?" said Mark, gloomily.

"I'm going as far as Mary's, for the night. Maybe you'd step down there, and take a bit of supper? When the moon rises the night will take up fine."

The young man turned without speaking, and bent his steps in the direction Lanty was travelling.

The horse-dealer was too well versed in human nature to press for a confidence which he foresaw would be at last willingly extended to him; he therefore walked along at Mark's side, without uttering a word, and seeming to be absorbed in his own deep musings. His calculation was a correct one. They had not gone many paces forward when young O'Donoghue unburdened his whole heart to him: told him, with all the eloquent energy of a wounded spirit, of the insult he had received in his own home, before his younger brother's face. He omitted nothing in his description of the overbearing impertinence of Frederick Travers's manner; with what cool assurance he had entered the house, and with what flippant carelessness he treated his cousin Kate.

"I left home with an oath not to return thither un-avenged," said he; "nor will I, though this time luck seems against me. Had he but come, I should have given him his choice of pistols and his own distance. My hand is true from five paces to thirty. But he has not escaped me yet."

Lanty never interrupted the narrative, except to ask from time to time some question, the answer to which was certain to develop the deeper indignation of the youth. A

low, muttering commentary, intended to mean a heartfelt sympathy with his wrongs, was all he suffered to escape his lips; and, thus encouraged in his passionate vehemence, Mark's wrath became like a frenzy.

"Come in, now," said Lanty, as he halted at the door of Mary's cabin, "but don't say a word about this business. I have a thought in my head that may do you good service, but keep a fair face before people. Do you mind me?"

There was a tone of mystery and secrecy in these words Mark could not penetrate; but, however dark their meaning, they seemed to promise some hope of that revenge his heart yearned after, and with this trust he entered the house.

Mary received them with her wonted hospitality, — Lanty was an expected guest, — and showed how gratified she felt to have young O'Donoghue beneath her roof.

"I was afeard you were forgetting me entirely, Mr. Mark," said she; "you passed the door twice, and never as much as said, 'God save you, Mary.'"

"I did not forget you, for all that, Mary," said he, feelingly. "I have too few friends in the world to spare any of them; but I've had many things on my mind lately."

"Well, and to be sure you had, and why would n't you? 'T is no shame of you to be sad and down-hearted; an O'Donoghue of the ould stock, the best blood in Kerry, wandering about by himself, instead of being followed by a troop of servants, with a goold coat-of-arms worked on their coats, like your grandfather's men, — the heavens be his bed! Thirty-eight mounted men, armed, — ay, and well armed, — were in the saddle after him, the day the English general came down here to see the troops that was quartered at Bantry."

"No wonder we should go afoot now," said Mark, bitterly.

"Well, well, it's the will of God," ejaculated Mary, piously; "and who knows what's in store for you yet?"

"That's the very thing I do be telling him," said Lanty, who only waited for the right moment to chime in with the conversation. "There's fine times coming."

Mary stared at the speaker with the eager look of one

who wished to derive a meaning deeper than the mere words seemed to convey, and then, checking her curiosity at a gesture from Lanty, she set about arranging the supper, which only awaited his arrival.

Mark ate but little of the fare before him, though Mary's cookery was not without its temptations; but of the wine — and it was strong Burgundy — he drank freely. Goblet after goblet he drained with that craving desire to allay a thirst, which is rather the symptom of a mind fevered by passion than by malady. Still, as he drank, no sign of intoxication appeared; on the contrary, his words evinced a tone of but deeper resolution, and a more settled purpose than at first, when he told how he had promised never to leave his father, although all his hopes pointed to the glorious career a foreign service would open before him.

“It was a good vow you made, and may the saints enable you to keep it!” said Mary.

“And for the matter of glory, maybe there 's some to be got nearer home, and without travelling to look for it,” interposed Lanty.

“What do you mean?” said Mark, eagerly.

“Fill your glass. Take the big one, for it's a toast I'm going to give you. Are you ready? Here now, then — drink, —

“ A stout heart and mind,
And an easterly wind,
And the Devil behind
The Saxon.”

Mark repeated the doggerel as well as he was able, and pledged the only sentiment he could divine, — that of the latter part, — with all his enthusiasm.

“You may tell him what you plaze, now,” whispered Mary, in Lanty's ear; for her ready wit perceived that his blood was warmed by the wine, and his heart open for any communication.

Lanty hesitated but a second, then, drawing his chair close to Mark's, he said, —

“I'm going now to put my life in your hands, but I can't help it. When Ireland is about to strike for liberty,

it is not an O'Donoghue should be last in the ranks. Swear to me you'll never mention again what I'll tell you, — swear it on the book." Mary, at the same moment, placed in his hand a breviary, with a gilt cross on the binding, which Mark took reverently, and kissed twice. "That's enough; your word would do for me, but I must obey them that's over me." And so saying, Lanty at once proceeded to lay before the astonished mind of young O'Donoghue the plan of France for an invasion of Ireland, — not vaguely nor imperfectly, not in the mere language of rumor or chance allusion, but with such aids to circumstance and time, as gave him the appearance of one conversant with what he spoke on. The restoration of Irish independence, the resumption of forfeited estates, the return of the real nobility of the land to their long-lost position of eminence and influence, were themes he descanted upon with consummate skill, bringing home each fact to the actual effect such changes would work in the youth's own condition, who, no longer degraded to the rank of a mere peasant, would once again assert his own rightful station, and stand forth at the head of his vast property, — the heir of an honored name and house. Lanty knew well, and more, too, implicitly believed in all the plausible pretension of French sympathy for Irish suffering, which formed the cant of the day. He had often heard the arguments in favor of the success of such an expedition, — in fact, the reasons for which its failure was deemed impossible. These he repeated fluently, giving to his narrative the semblance of an incontestable statement, and then he told him that from Brest to Dublin was "fifty hours' sail, with a fair breeze," — that same "easterly wind" the toast alluded to; that the French could throw thirty, nay fifty thousand troops into Ireland, yet never weaken their own army to any extent worth speaking of; that England was distracted by party spirit, impoverished by debt, and totally unable to repel invasion; and, in fact, that if Ireland would be but "true to herself," her success was assured.

He told, too, how Irishmen were banded together in a sworn union to assert the independence of their country, and that such as held back, or were reluctant in the cause,

would meet the fate of enemies. On the extent and completeness of the organization he dwelt with a proud satisfaction; but when he spoke of large masses of men trained to move and act together, Mark suddenly interrupted him, saying, —

“Yes, I have seen them. It’s not a week since some hundreds marched through this glen at midnight.”



“Ay, that was Holt’s party,” said Mary, composedly; “and fine men they are.”

“They were unarmed,” said Mark.

“If they were, it is because the general did n’t want their weapons.”

“There’s arms enough to be had when the time comes for using them,” broke in Mary.

“Would n’t you show him —” and Lanty hesitated to conclude a speech, the imprudence of which he was already aware of.

“Ay will I,” said Mary. “I never mistrusted one of

his name;" and with that she rose from the fireside, and took a candle in her hand. "Come here a minute, Master Mark." Unlocking a small door in the back wall of the cabin, she entered a narrow passage which led to the stable, but off which a narrow door, scarcely distinguishable from the wall, conducted into a spacious vault excavated in the solid rock. Here were a vast number of packing-cases and boxes, piled on each other, from floor to roof, together with hogsheads and casks of every shape and size. Some of the boxes had been opened, and the lids laid loosely over them. Removing one of these, Mary pointed to the contents, as she said, —

"There they are, — French muskets and carbines. There 's pistols in that case; and all them, over there, is swords and cutlasses. 'T is pike-heads that 's in the other corner; and the casks has saddles and holsters and them kind of things."

Mark stooped down and took up one of the muskets. It was a light and handy weapon, and bore on its stock the words, — "Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse," for none of the weapons were new.

"These are all French," said he, after a brief pause.

"Every one of them," replied Mary, proudly; "and there 's more coming from the same place."

"And why can we not fight our own battles without aid from France?" said Mark, boldly. "If we really are worthy of independence, are we not able to win it?"

"Because there 's traitors among us," said Mary, replying before Lanty could interpose; "because there 's traitors that would turn again us if we were not sure of victory: but when they see we have the strong hand as well as the good cause, they 'll be sure to stand on the safe side."

"I don't care for that," said Mark. "I want no such allies as these. I say, if we deserve our liberty, we ought to be strong enough to take it."

"There 's many think the same way as yourself," said Lanty, quietly. "I heard the very words you said from one of the delegates last week. But I don't see any harm in getting help from a friend when the odds is against you."

“But I do, and great harm, too. What’s the price of the assistance?—tell me that.”

“Oh, make your mind easy on that score. The French hate the English, whether they love us or no.”

“And why would n’t they love us,” said Mary, half angry at such a supposition, “and we all Catholics? Don’t we both belong to the ould ancient church? and did n’t we swear to destroy the heretics wherever we’d find them? Ay, and we will, too!”

“I’m with you, whatever comes of it,” said Mark, after a few seconds of thought. “I’m with you; and if the rest have as little to live for, trust me, they’ll not be pleasant adversaries.”

Overjoyed at this bold avowal, which consummated the success they desired, they led Mark back into the cabin, and pledged, in a bumper, the “raal O’Donoghue.”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RETURN OF THE ENVOY.

SIR MARMADUKE TRAVERS and his daughter had passed a morning of great uneasiness at the delay in Frederick's return. Noon came, and yet no appearance of him. They wandered along the road, hoping to meet him, and at last turned homeward, with the intention of despatching a servant towards Carrignacurra, fearing lest he should have missed his way. This determination, however, they abandoned, on being told by a countryman that he had seen the horse young Travers rode still standing at the gate of the "castle."

A feeling of curiosity to hear his son's account of the O'Donoghues mingled with the old man's excitement at his absence; and as the day declined, and still no sign of his return, he walked every now and then to the door, and looked anxiously along the road by which he expected his approach. Sybella, too, was not without her fears, and though vague and undefined, she dreaded a possible collision between the hot blood of Mark and her brother. The evening of her first arrival was ever present to her mind, and she often thought of what might have then occurred had Frederick been present.

They had wearied themselves with every mode of accounting for his delay, guessed at every possible cause of detention, and were at length on the point of sending a messenger in search of him, when they heard the tramp of a horse coming, not along the high road, but, as it seemed, over the fields in front of them. A few minutes more of anxious expectancy, and Frederick, with his horse splashed and panting, alighted beside them.

"Well, you certainly have a very pretty eye for a country, father," said he, gayly. "That same line you advised

has got three as rasping fences as I should like to meet with”

“What do you mean, boy?” said Sir Marmaduke, as much puzzled at the speech as the reader himself may feel.

“Simply, sir, that though the cob is a capital horse, and has a great jump in him, I’d rather have daylight for that kind of thing; and I really believe the ragged fellow you sent for me chose the stiffest places. I saw the rascal grinning when I was coming up to the mill-stream.”

“Messenger! — ragged fellow! The boy is dreaming.”

“My dear Frederick, we sent no messenger. We were, indeed, very anxious at your delay, but we did not despatch any one to meet you.”

Frederick stared at both the speakers, and then repeated, in astonishment, the last words, — “Sent no messenger!” but when they once more assured him of the fact, he gave the following account of his return: —

“It was very late when I left the castle. I delayed there the whole day; but scarcely had I reached the high road, when a wild-looking fellow, with a great pole in his hand, came up to me, and cried out, —

“‘Are you for the Lodge?’ ‘Yes,’ said he, answering for himself, ‘you are her brother. I’m sent over to tell you not to go back by the road, for the bridge is down; but you’re to come over the fields, and I’ll show you the way.’

“Supposing the fellow was what he assumed to be, your messenger, I followed him; and, by George, it was no joking matter; for he leaped like a deer, and seemed to take uncommon pleasure in pitting himself against the cob. I should have given up the contest, I confess, but that the knave had me in his power. For when it grew dark, I knew not which way to head, until, at length, he shouted out, —

“‘There’s the Lodge now, where you see the light.’ And after that, what became of himself I cannot tell you.”

“It was Terry, poor Terry,” cried Sybella.

“Yes, it must have been Terry,” echoed her father.

“And is this Terry retained to play Will-o’-the-wisp?” asked Fred; “or is it a piece of amateurship?”

But both Sir Marmaduke and Sybella were too deeply

engaged in canvassing the motive for this strange act to pay due attention to his question.

As Frederick was but little interested in his guide, nor mindful of what became of him, they were not able to obtain any clew from him as to what road he took, nor what chance there was of overtaking him.

"So, then, this was a piece of *politesse* for which I am indebted to your friend Terry's own devising," said Fred, half angrily. "The fellow had better keep out of my way in future."

"You will not harm him, Fred, you never could, when I tell you of his gallant conduct here."

"My sweet sister, I am really wearied of this eternal theme. I have heard of nothing but heroism since my arrival. Once for all, I concede the matter, and am willing to believe of the Irish, as of the family of Bayard, that all the men are brave, and all the women virtuous. And now, let us to dinner."

"You have told us nothing of your visit to the enchanted castle, Fred," said his sister, when the servants had withdrawn, and they were once more alone; "and I am all impatience to hear of your adventures there."

"I confess, too," said Sir Marmaduke, "I am not devoid of curiosity on the subject; let us hear it all."

"I have little to recount," said Frederick, with some hesitation in his manner; "I neither saw the O'Donoghue, as they call him, nor his brother-in-law; the one was in bed, and the other had gone to visit some sick person on the mountain. But I made acquaintance with your *preux chevalier*, Sybella, — a fine-looking young fellow, even though wasted with sickness; he was there with an elder brother, an insolent kind of personage, — half peasant, all bully."

"He was not wanting in proper respect to *you*," said Sir Marmaduke. "I trust, Fred, he was aware of who you were?"

"Faith, sir, I fancy he cared very little on the subject; and had I been a much more important individual, he would have treated me in the same way, — a way, to say the least of it, not overburdened with courtesy."

"Had you any words together, boy?" said Sir Marmaduke, with an evident anxiety in his look and voice.

"A mere interchange of greeting," replied Fred, laughing, "in which each party showed his teeth, and did not bite withal. I unhappily mistook him for a gamekeeper, and, worse still, told him so, and he felt proportionably angry at the imputation, preferring, probably, to be thought a poacher. He is a rude, coarse fellow," said he, with a changed voice, "with pride to be a gentleman, but not breeding nor manner to enact the character."

"The visit was, after all, not an agreeable one," said Miss Travers, "and I am only surprised how you came to prolong it. You spent the whole day there."

Although there was not the slightest degree of suspicion insinuated by this remark, Fred stole a quick glance at his sister, to see if she really intended more than the mere words implied. Then, satisfied that she had not, he said, in a careless way, —

"Oh, the weather broke. It came on a heavy snow-storm; and as the younger brother pressed me to remain, and I had no fancy to face the hurricane, I sat down to a game of chess."

"Chess! Indeed, Fred, that sounds very humanizing. And how did he play?"

"It was not with him I played," answered he, hesitatingly.

"What — with the elder?"

"No, nor him either; my antagonist was a cousin, — I think they called her cousin."

"Call *her*," said Sybella, slyly. "So, then, Master Fred, there was a lady in the case. Well, we certainly have been a long while coming to her."

"Yes, she has lately arrived — a day or two ago — from some convent in the Low Countries, where she has lived since she was a child."

"A strange home for her," interposed Sir Marmaduke. "If I do not misconceive them greatly, they must be very unsuitable associates for a young lady educated in a French convent."

"So you would say if you saw her," said Fred, seizing

with avidity at the opening then offered to coincide with an opinion he was half afraid to broach. "She is perfectly foreign in look, dress, and demeanor, — with all the mannerism of Paris life, graceful and pleasing in her address; and they, at least one of them, a downright boor; the other, giving him credit for good looks and good nature, yet immeasurably *her* inferior in every respect."

"Is she pretty, Frederick?" said Sybella, not lifting her eyes from her work as she spoke.

"I should say pretty," replied he, with hesitation, as if qualifying his praise by a word which did not imply too much. "I prefer a quieter style of beauty, for my own part, — less dazzle, less sparkling effect; something to see every day, and to like the better the more one sees it;" and he placed his arm around his sister's waist, and gazed at her, as if to give interpretation to his speech.

"You have made me quite curious to see her, Fred," said Sybella. "The very fact of finding one like her in such a place has its interest."

"What if you were to visit her, my dear?" said Sir Marmaduke; "the attention would only be a proper one. You have books and music here, besides, which she might be glad to have in a region so remote as this."

Frederick never spoke a word, but anxiously awaited his sister's answer.

"I should like it greatly; what says Fred to the notion?"

"I see nothing against it," replied he, with a well-affected indifference. "She is a most ladylike person, and if it be your own intention to pass a few weeks longer in this solitude, would be of infinite value for companionship."

"A few weeks longer! — I shall remain till Christmas, boy," said his father, with determination. "I have taken a fancy to Ireland; and my intention is to go up to Dublin for a few months in winter, and return here in the spring."

This was at once approaching the very subject which Frederick had journeyed to determine; but whether it was that the time seemed unfavorable, or that his own ideas in the matter had undergone some modification since his arrival, he contented himself with simply a doubtful shake of the head, as if distrusting Sir Marmaduke's firmness,

and did not endeavor to oppose his determination by a single argument of any kind. On the contrary, he listened with patience and even seeming interest to his father's detailed account of his project; how he had already given orders to secure a house in Stephen's Green for the winter, intending to make acquaintances with the gentry of the capital, and present himself and his daughter at the vice-regal court.

"Sybella may as well make her *début* in society here as in London," said Sir Marmaduke. "Indeed, I am not sure but the provincial boards are the best for a first appearance. In any case, such is the line I have laid down for myself; and if it only secured me against a sea voyage to England in such a season, I shall be amply repaid for my resolve."

Against the season of his return, too, Sir Marmaduke hoped to make such additions to the Lodge as should render it more comfortable as a residence; various plans for which were heaped upon the library table, and littered the chairs about the room.

Miss Travers had already given her hearty concurrence to all her father's schemes, and seconded most ably every one of his views by such arguments as she was possessed of; so that Frederick, even if disposed to record his opposition, saw that the present was not an opportune moment, and prudently reserved for another time what, if unsuccessful now, could never be recurred to with advantage.

The conversation on these topics lasted long. They discussed with interest every detail of their plans; for so it is, the pleasures of castle-building are inexhaustible, and the very happiest realities of life are poor and vague compared with the resources provided by our hopes and fancies. The slightest grounds of probability are enough to form a foundation, but there is no limit to the superstructure we raise above.

In the indulgence of this view, they continued to chat till a late hour, and parted for the night in high good humor with each other, — a visit to the O'Donoghue being the plan for the succeeding day's accomplishment.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MORNING VISIT.

ON the afternoon of the following day, Sir Marmaduke, accompanied by his son and daughter, bent their steps towards the castle of the O'Donoghue. The day was a fine and bright one, with a blue sky above, and a hard, frosty surface on the earth beneath, and made walking as pleasant as open air and exercise can render it. The carriage was ordered to meet them on their return, less, indeed, on account of the distance, than that the shortness of the day made the precaution reasonable.

Chatting agreeably, on they went. The time slipped rapidly away, now adverting to the bold and majestic scenery around them, now speaking of the people, their habits, their prejudices, and their leanings, or anon discussing the O'Donoghue family, which, of all the puzzling themes the land presented, was certainly not the least embarrassing to them.

"We must think of some means of evincing our gratitude to this boy, Fred," said Sir Marmaduke, in a whisper. "You appear to have found the matter more difficult than you anticipated."

"Very true, sir. In the early part of my visit, it was rendered impossible by the interruption of the elder brother; and, in the latter part, somehow, I believe I — I actually begin to fear I forgot it altogether. However, I have thought of one thing, and it should be done without a moment's loss of time. You must write to Carden, the law agent, and stop any proceedings Hemsworth may have begun against these people. It would be most disgraceful to think that, while professing sentiments of good feeling

and friendliness, we were using the arm of the law to harass and distress them."

"I'll do it at once, Fred, by this night's post. In truth, I never understood the point at issue between us; nor can I clearly see Hemsworth's reason for the summary course he has taken with them. There must be more in it than I know of."

"The castle stands proudly, as seen from this point," said Sybella, who felt somewhat wearied of a conversation maintained in a voice too low for her to hear. And the remark had the effect of recalling them to other thoughts, in discussing which they arrived at the old keep of Carrignacurra.

Whether recent events had sharpened Kerry O'Leary to a more acute sense of his duties as butler, or that Kate O'Donoghue had exerted some influence in bringing about so desirable an object, we know not; but at the very first summons of the hall-door bell he made his appearance, his ordinary costume being augmented, if not improved, by a pair of very unwieldy top-boots of his master's, which reached somewhere to the middle of the thigh, and was there met by a green velvet waiscoat, from the same wardrobe, equally too large and voluminous for its present owner.

Visitors at the O'Donoghue house were generally of a character which Kerry felt necessary to close the door against. They unhappily came, not with the ceremonial of a visiting-card, but with some formidable missive of the law, in the shape of a distress warrant, a latitat, or that meeker and less dreaded engine, a protested bill. It was, then, with a considerable relief to his anxieties that his eye caught the flutter of a lady's dress, as he peeped from the small casement beside the door, and his heart expanded in a little thanksgiving of its own as he unbarred the portal to admit her.

Having informed his visitors that the family were at home, he preceded them to the drawing-room, with a step the noise of which happily drowned the tittering it was impossible to subdue at beholding him. To prevent the awkwardness which Sir Marmaduke foresaw might arise

from the blundering announcement Kerry would inevitably make of their names, he having repeated over and over as he went along, by way of refreshing his memory, "Sir Marmaduke, Sir Marmaduke Travers," the old gentleman stepped forward as the door opened, and presented himself by name, introducing his daughter at the same time.

The O'Donoghue, seated in his chair, half rose, for it was one of his gouty days, and he could not stir without great difficulty, and with an air and voice which bespoke the gentleman, welcomed his guests.

Herbert's eyes gleamed with delight as he gazed on the party; and Sir Archibald, bowing with an ancient grace that would have suited a courtier of a century previous, presented chairs to each, going through the ceremonial of a new obeisance to every one of the group. Kate O'Donoghue was not in the room, nor Mark; the latter, indeed, had not returned to the castle since the day previous.

The ordinary greetings over, and Sir Marmaduke having expressed, in well-chosen phrase, the gratitude he had so long labored to acquit, the conversation became easy and agreeable. Sir Marmaduke, seating himself next O'Donoghue, had entered into a discussion of the state of the country and the people. Frederick, beside Herbert's chair, was conversing with the boy by lively sallies and pleasant stories, that flowed the more rapidly as the listener was an eager one; while Sir Archibald, standing in an attitude of respectful attention, had engaged Miss Travers in a conversation about the glen and its scenery, to which his own correct taste and thorough appreciation of the picturesque gave a charm and piquancy that already interested her deeply. So naturally easy and unaffected was the tone of their reception that all astonishment at finding their host so superior to their anticipation was merged in the pleasure that Travers felt in the interview. The good-tempered heartiness of the O'Donoghue himself, his frank speech, his ready humor, won each moment more and more on Sir Marmaduke. Frederick, too, never grew wearied of the fresh and joyous spirit which gleamed out of every look and word from Herbert, whose ardent temperament and high-hearted nature caught up the enthusiasm of a spirit

like his own; and as for Sybella, the charm of Sir Archy's manner, whose perfection was its adaptation to the society of ladies, delighted her greatly, and she soon forgot any slight inclination to smile at the precision of language, where deep sound sense and high feeling were conveyed with only the fault of pedantry. While thus agreeably engaged on all sides, the door opened, and Kate entered, but so noiselessly withal that she was in the midst of the party before they knew of her approach. Recognizing Frederick Travers with a gracious smile, she received Sir Marmaduke's salutation with a deep courtesy, and then, as if similarity of years required a less ceremonious introduction, took her seat beside Miss Travers, with an air of mingled kindness and cordiality she so well knew how to assume. As in an orchestra, amid the swell of many instruments, where deep-toned thunders mingle with sounds of softer influence, some one strain will rise, from time to time, suggestive of feelings apart from the rest, with higher and nobler sympathies around it, so did her voice, heard among the others, sound thus sweetly. Her words came winged with a fine expression, which look and gesture could alone give them, and in the changing color of her cheek, her brilliant brow, her lips, even in silence eloquent, there was a character of loveliness as much above mere beauty as life transcends the marble. The more perfect regularity of Sybella's features, their classic outline, their chaste correctness in every line and lineament, seemed cold and inanimate when contrasted with the more expressive loveliness of Kate O'Donoghue. The fearless character of her mind, too, was blended with so much of womanly delicacy and refinement, the wish to please so associated with a seeming forgetfulness of self, that every act and every gesture teemed with a charm of interest for which there is no word save "fascination;" even that slightly foreign accent, of which we have already spoken, served to individualize all she said, and left it graven on the heart long after the words were spoken.

Frederick Travers watched with eager delight the effects these gifts were producing upon his sister. He saw the pleasure with which Sybella listened; he recognized, even

already, the symptoms of that conquest by which mind subdues mind, and was overjoyed as he looked.

To Sir Marmaduke's gracefully expressed hope that this visit should form a prelude to their nearer intimacy, the O'Donoghue, with a touch of sadness in his voice, replied that he himself was an invalid, whose steps never wandered beyond the precincts of his home; but his brother-in-law, and his niece, and the boys, they would all, he was certain, avail themselves of such a neighborhood. Sir Archibald bowed low, and somewhat stiffly, perhaps, in accordance with a pledge thus given without his concurrence; but Herbert's bright eyes grew brighter, and his cheek flushed with delight at the bare anticipation of the thought.

"And you, Miss O'Donoghue," said Sir Marmaduke, turning towards Kate, "our humble library at the Lodge is perfectly at your service; the only condition we ask is, that you come and choose from it in person."

"That promise is already most kindly made, father," interrupted Sybella, whose pleased look showed how she had been captivated by her new friend.

While their smiles and gracious words went round, the door was suddenly opened by Kerry O'Leary, who, forgetful of the visitors in his eager anxiety as the bearer of news, cried out, —

"There's a shindy, master dear! Such a row! May I never die in sin if ever I seen the equal of it!"

"What does he mean? — is the fellow mad?" cried the O'Donoghue, angrily, while Sir Archy, bending on him a most ominous frown, muttered, —

"Have ye lost a' decency together? Ye daft loon, what ails ye?"

"I ax your pardon, and the quality's pardon," said Kerry, with an expression of abject misery for his unceremonious *entrée*; "but, if you seen it, sorra bit but you'd forgive me."

"There has been good fun somewhere, I'm certain," cried out Frederick Travers, whose curiosity to learn Kerry's intelligence could no longer be repressed.

"What is it, then, Kerry?" said the O'Donoghue. "Let us hear it all."



Korry astonishes Sir Marmaduke.

"'T is Master Mark, good luck to him!" cried Kerry, overjoyed at the permission to speak out freely. "He was over at Ballyvourney with the greyhounds, when he seen that dirty spalpeen, Sam Wylie, wid a process-sarver along wid him, noticin' the tenants. The sarver was a stranger, and he did n't touch him; but he made the boys put Sam on Nick Malone's mule, and give him a fair start, and they run him down the mountain, with a fine view, and ran into him here at the horse-pond, where the mule flung him head over heels; and begorra, you would n't know 't was a Christian, if you seen him this minit dripping wet, and the duckweed all hanging round him; and he's running still, for he thinks Master Mark will take the life of him before he stops."

A roar of laughter from Frederick, joined in by Herbert, and at last by the O'Donoghue himself, for some moments prevented a word of commentary on this outrageous proceeding, when Sir Marmaduke, rising slowly, said, —

"I am a stranger here, very ignorant of the country and its habits; but I have yet to learn that any man, in the just discharge of his duty, should be thus treated. I call upon you, sir, to investigate this affair, and if it be as we have heard it, to make reparation —"

"Ye hae muckle reason for what ye say, sir," interposed Sir Archy; "but the freaks and follies o' young men hae a license here I doubt ye are na used to."

"I'll lay my life on it Mark was right," called out the O'Donoghue. "The boy never makes any mistake in these matters."

"If the fellow were insolent," said Frederick, "your son has served him properly."

Kate smiled at the speaker a look of gratitude, which amply repaid him for coming thus promptly to the rescue.

"It may be so," said Sir Marmaduke, happy at such a means of escaping from a farther prosecution of a most unpleasaut topic.

"The captain's guessed it well," cried Kerry. "The splapeen tould Master Mark that he'd be up here to-morrow wid a notice for the master himself, and it would go hard but he'd see us out of the place before Easter."

"Is this possible?" said Sir Marmaduke, blushing deeply. "I beg, my dear sir, that you will forgive any hasty expression I may have used."

"I can forgive the lad myself," said Sir Archy, proudly.

"Not I, then, uncle," interposed Kate, — "not I. Mark should have horsewhipped the fellow within an inch of his life."

Sybella Travers started at the energy of voice and manner which accompanied these words; while the O'Donoghue, rising from his chair, came slowly across the hearth, and imprinted a kiss upon Kate's forehead.

"You're one of the raal stock, there's no denying it," muttered Kerry, as he gazed on her with an expression of almost worship. "'T is blood that never gives in, — divil a lie in it!"

Herbert, who alone had witnessed the unfriendly meeting between his brother and young Travers, turned a pleasant smile at the latter, as he half whispered, —

"This was very kind of *you*."

It would have been a difficult, nay, an almost impossible task to recall the tone and temper of the party previous to this unhappy interruption. All Sir Marmaduke's efforts to resume the conversation had lost their former ease; the O'Donoghue himself was disconcerted, for he was not quite certain what were Sir Marmaduke's words on the occasion, and how far he should feel called upon to demand a retractation; and Sir Archibald, fretful and annoyed at the impression Mark's conduct would convey of the habits and temper of the house, felt his task a severe one to assume an air of serenity and quietude.

Frederick Travers alone seemed happy and delighted. The sudden expression of Kate O'Donoghue's opinion, so utterly unlike anything he had ever heard before from a young lady's lips, took him as much by surprise as the spirit pleased him; and he would willingly have engaged to horsewhip a dozen process-servers for another glance of her flashing eyes as she delivered the words; while Sybella could not help a sentiment bordering on fear, for one who, young as herself, gifted with every womanly attribute of grace and loveliness, had yet evinced a degree of impetu-

osity and passion she could not reconcile with such attractions. As for Kate, the sentiment had evoked no stir within her bosom. It was a wish as naturally expressed as it was felt, and all the surprise the others experienced at her words would have been nothing to her own to have known of their astonishment.

The visit soon came to a termination, and Sir Marmaduke, having succeeded in a great degree in restoring the favorable impression he had at first obtained, took his leave of the O'Donoghue, and then, addressing Sir Archy, said:

"You, sir, I rejoice to learn, are not an invalid. May I expect the happiness of seeing you sometimes?"

Sir Archy bowed deeply, and, with a motion of his hand towards Miss Travers, replied, —

"I have already made an engagement here, sir."

"Yes," said Sybella, to whom this speech seemed half addressed, "Sir Archibald has been kind enough to offer me his guidance up the glen, where there are several points of view finer than any I have seen."

Emboldened by the success of these advances, Sir Marmaduke, with a courtesy he was perfect master of, requested the party would not delay their kind intentions, but favor him with their company the following day.

It is doubtful whether Sir Archy might not have declined a more formal invitation; but there seemed something so frank in the abruptness of the present, that he acceded at once; and Kate having also pledged herself to accompany him, their greetings were interchanged, and they parted.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOME OPPOSITE TRAITS OF CHARACTER.

It may seem strange, and almost paradoxical, — but so it was, — Kate O'Donoghue's presence appeared to have wrought a most magical change in the whole household of the O'Donoghue. The efforts they themselves made to ward off the semblance of their fallen estate induced a happier frame of mind than that which resulted from daily brooding over their misfortunes: the very struggle elicited a courage they had left long in disuse; and the cheerfulness which at first was but assumed, grew gradually more and more natural. To the O'Donoghue, who, for many a day, desired no more than to fend off the evil in his own brief time, — who, with the selfishness of an old age passed in continual conflict with poverty, only sought a life interest in their bettered fortunes, — she was a boon above all price. Her light step, her lighter laugh, her mirthful tone of conversation, with its many anecdotes and stories of places and people he had not heard of before, were resources against gloom that never failed.

Sir Archy, too, felt a return to the old associations of his youth in the presence of a young, beautiful, and accomplished girl, whose gracefulness and elegance threw a halo around her as she went, and made of that old and crumbling tower, dark with neglect, and sad with time, a *salon* teeming with its many appliances against depression, where she herself, armed with so many fascinations, dispensed cheerfulness and bliss on all about her. Nor was he selfish in all this. He marked with delight the impression made upon his favorite Herbert by his cousin's attractive manners. How insensibly, as it were, the boy was won from ruder

pursuits and coarser pleasures to sit beside her as she sang, or near her as she read; with what interest he pursued his lessons in French beneath her tuition, and the ardor with which he followed every plan of study suggested by her! Sir Archibald saw all these things, and calculated on their result with accuracy. He foresaw how Kate's attractive gifts would throw into the shade the ruder tastes the boy's condition in life might expose him to adopt, and thus aid him in the great object of his whole existence, — to save him, at least, from the wreck of his house.

Mark alone seemed untouched by her presence, save that the wild excesses of high spirit, to which from time to time he ever gave way, were now gone, and, in their place, a deep gloom, a moroseness of character succeeded, rendering him usually silent before her, or sunk in his own saddening reflections. Kate would sometimes adventure to disperse the dark clouds from his mind, but ever without success; he either felt annoyed at being the subject of remark, or left the room; so that at last she abandoned the effort, hoping that time and its changes would effect what the present denied. Perhaps, too, she had reasons for this hope. More than once, with womanly quickness, had she marked how he had stood with his eye fixed upon her, unconscious of being seen; how, when about to leave the room, he would loiter about, as if in search of something, but, in reality, to listen to the song she was singing. Still, she showed no sign of having seen these things, but always, in her air towards him, affected a careless ease of manner as like his own as possible. For days, sometimes for an entire week, he would absent himself from home; and, as he was never submissive to much questioning, his appearance called forth no other remark than some passing observation of what had occurred in his absence, but which drew from him no interchange of confidence.

These symptoms of Mark's altered character made a deeper impression on his father than events of greater moment could have done. He watched every movement and expression of his favorite son, to catch some clew to the change; but all in vain. The young man never, by any accident, alluded to himself, nor did he often now advert to the cir-

cumstances of the family difficulties; on the contrary, a lethargic carelessness seemed to brood over him, and he went about like one who had lost all zest for life, and all care for its enjoyments.

The O'Donoghue was too well versed in the character of his son to hope for any elucidation of the mystery by a mere inquiry; so that he was left to speculate on the many causes which might have operated the change, and divine, as well as he was able, the secret grief that affected him. In this pursuit, like all who have long suffered the pressure of a particular calamity, he ever felt disposed to ascribe Mark's suffering to the same cause which produced his own, namely, the fallen fortunes of the house, and the ruin that hung over them. Yet, somehow, of late, matters had taken a turn more favorable. His attorney at Cork had informed him, that from some informality in the proceedings, the ejectment was stopped, at least for the present term. The notices to the tenants not to pay were withdrawn, and the rents came in as before; and the only very pressing evil were the bills, the renewal of which demanded a considerable sum of ready money. That this one misfortune should occasion a gloom the accumulated griefs of former days had not done, he could not understand; but by long musing on the matter, and deep reflection, he at last came to the conviction that such was the case, and that Mark's sorrow was the greater from seeing how near they were to a more favorable issue to their affairs, and yet how fatally debarred from such a consummation by this one disastrous circumstance.

The drowning man grasps not the straw with more avidity than does the harassed and wearied mind, agitated by doubts, and worn out with conjectures, seize upon some one apparent solution to a difficulty that has long oppressed it, and, for the very moment, convert every passing circumstance into an argument for its truthfulness. The O'Donoghue now saw, or believed he saw, why Mark would never accompany the others in their visits to the Lodge, nor be present when any of the Travers family came to the castle; he immediately accounted for his son's rejection of the proffered civilities, by that wounded pride which made him feel his present position so painfully, and, as the future head of

the house, grieve over a state so unbecoming to its former fortunes.

“The poor fellow,” said he, “is too high-spirited to be a guest to those he cannot be a host. Noble boy! the old blood flows strongly in *your* veins, at least.”

How to combat this evil now became his sole thought. He mused over it by day — he dreamed of it by night. Hour by hour he endured the harassing tortures of a poverty whose struggles were all abortive, and whose repulses came without ceasing. Each plan he thought of was met by obstacles innumerable; and when, worn out with unprofitable schemes, he had resolved on abandoning the subject forever, the sight of Mark’s wasted cheek and sunken eye rallied him again to an effort, which, each time, he vowed should be the last.

The old and often successful remedies to rally him from his low spirits his father possessed no longer, — the indulgence of some caprice, some momentary fancy for a horse or a hound, a boat or a fishing-rod. He felt, besides, that his grief, whatever it was, lay too deep for such surface measures as these, and he pondered long and anxiously over the matter. Nor had he one to share his sorrow, or assist him with advice. Sir Archibald he ever regarded as being prejudiced against Mark, and invariably more disposed to exaggerate than extenuate his faults. To have opened his heart to him would be to expose himself to some very plausible, but, as he would deem them, very impracticable remarks, on frugality and order, — the necessity of submitting to altered fortunes, — and, if need be, of undertaking some humble but honest occupation as a livelihood. These, and such like, had more than once been intruded upon him; but to seek and court them, to invite their presence, was not to be thought of.

Kerry O’Leary was, then, the only one who remained; and they who know the intimacy to which old servants, long conversant with the fortunes of the family, and deemed faithful, because, from utter inutility, they are attached to the house that shelters them, are admitted in Irish households, will not be surprised at the choice of the confidant. He, I say, was the O’Donoghue’s last resource; and from

him he still hoped to gain some clew, at least, to the secret of this mystery. Scarcely had the O'Donoghue retired to his room at night, when Kerry was summoned to his presence, and after a few preliminaries, was asked if he knew where, how, or with whom his young master latterly spent his time.

"Faix, and 'tis that same does be puzzling myself," said Kerry, to whom the matter had already been one of considerable curiosity. "Sometimes I think one thing, and then I think another; but it beats me entirely."

"What were your thoughts, then, Kerry?"

"'T was Tuesday last I suspected Joe Lenahan's daughter, — the fair-haired girl, above at the three meadows; then I took it into my head it might be a badger he was after, — for he was forever going along by the bank of the river; but, twice in the week, I was sure I had him — and faix, I think, maybe I have."

"How is that, Kerry? Tell me at once, man."

"It's a fine brown beast Lanty Lawler has, — a strapping four-year-old, as likely a weight-carrier as ever I seen, — that's what he's after; sorra lie in it. I obsarved him, on Friday, taking him over the big fences beyant the whinfield — and I measured his tracks — and may I never die in sin if he did n't stride nineteen feet over the yallow ditch."

"Do you know what he's asking for him, Kerry?" cried the old man, eagerly.

"His weight in goold, I heerd say; for the captaiu, up at the Lodge, will give him his own price for any beast will make a charger — and three hundred guineas Lanty expects for the same horse. Ayeh! he's a play-actor is Lanty, and knows how to rub the gentlemen down with a damp wisp."

"And you think that's it, Kerry?"

"I'll take the vestment it's not far off it. I never heerd Master Mark give a cheer out of him going over a fence that he had n't a conceit out of the beast under him. 'Whoop!' says he, throwing up his whip hand, 'this way.' 'Your heart's in him,' says I, 'and 'tis a murther he is n't your own.'"

"You may leave me, Kerry," said the old man, sighing heavily; "'tis getting near twelve o'clock."

“ Good night, sir, and a safe rest to you.”

“ Wait a moment — stay a few minutes. Are they in the drawing-room still? ”

“ Yes, sir; I heerd Miss Kate singing as I came up the stairs.”

“ Well, Kerry, I want you to wait till she is leaving the room, and just whisper to her, — mind now, for your life, that nobody sees nor hears you, — just say that I wish to see her up here for a few seconds to-night. Do you understand me? ”

“ Never fear, sir, I’ll do it, and sorra one the wiser.”

Kerry left the apartment as he spoke, nor was his master long doomed to suspense, for immediately after a gentle tap at the door announced Kate’s presence there.

“ Sit down there, my darling Kate,” cried the O’Donoghue, placing a chair beside his own, “ and let me have five minutes’ talk with you.”

The young girl obeyed with a smile, and returned the pressure of her uncle’s hand with warmth.

“ Kate, my child,” said he, — speaking with evident difficulty and embarrassment, and fixing his eyes, not on her, but towards the fire, as he spoke, — “ Kate, you have come to a sad and cheerless home, with few comforts, with no pleasure for one so young and so lovely as you are.”

“ My dear uncle, how can you speak thus to me? Can you separate me in your heart from your other children? Mark and Herbert make no complaint, — do you think that I could do so? ”

“ They are very different from you, my sweet child. The moss-rose will not bear the storms of winter that the wild thorn can brave without danger. To you this dreary house must be a prison. I know it — I feel it.”

“ Nay, nay, uncle. If you think thus, it must be my fault, — some piece of wilfulness of mine could alone have made you suppose me discontented; but I am not so, — far from it. I love dear old Sir Archy and my cousins dearly; yes, and my uncle Miles too, though he seems anxious to get rid of me.”

The old man pressed her fingers to his lips, and turned away his head.

“ Come, Kate,” said he, after a brief pause, “ it was with

no intention of that kind I spoke. We could none of us live without you now. My thoughts had a very different object."

"And that was —"

"Simply this," — and here he made a great effort, and spoke rapidly, as if fearing to dwell on the words, — "law-suits and knavish attorneys have wasted three-fourths of my estate, — the remainder I scarcely know if I be its master or not; on that portion, however, the old house stands, and the few acres that survive the wreck. At this moment heavy proceedings are pending in the courts, if successful in which, I shall be left in possession of the home of my father, and not turned adrift upon the world, a beggar. There — don't look so pale, child — the story is an old one now, and has few terrors for us as long as it remains merely anticipated evil. This is a sad tale for your ears, — I know it," said he, wiping away a tear that would come, in spite of him.

Both were now silent. The old man paused, uncertain how he should proceed farther. Kate spoke not; for as yet she could neither see the drift of the communication, nor, if it were in any way addressed to her, what part she was expected to take in the matter.

"Are you aware, my dear," resumed he, after a considerable delay, "that your father was married to your mother when she was but sixteen?"

"I have often heard she was scarcely more than a child," said Kate, timidly, for she had no recollection of having seen either of her parents.

"A child in years, love, she was, but a woman in grace, good sense, and accomplishments — in fact, so fortunate was my poor brother in his choice, he ever regarded the youthfulness of his wife as one of the reasons of that amiability of temper she possessed. Often have we talked of this together, and nothing could convince him to the contrary, as if, had the soil been unfruitful, the tares and the thistles had not been as abundant a crop as the good fruit really was. He acted on his conviction, however, Kate; for he determined, if ever he had a daughter, she should be of age at sixteen, — the period of life her mother was married at. I endeavored to dissuade him, I did my best to expose the dangers

and difficulties of such a plan. Perhaps, dearest, I should have been less obstinate in argument had I been prophetic enough to know what my niece would be; but it was all in vain. The idea had become a dominant one with him, and I was obliged to yield. And now, Kate, after the long lapse of years, — for the conversation I allude to took place a great while ago, — it is my lot to say, that my brother was right and I was wrong; that he foresaw with a truer spirit the events of the future than was permitted to me. You were of age two months since.”

The young girl listened with eager curiosity to every word that fell from her uncle’s lips, and seemed disappointed when he ceased to speak. To have gone thus far, and no farther, did not satisfy her mind, and she waited with impatience for him to continue.

“I see, my child,” said he, gently, “you are not aware of the proceedings of coming of age; you have not heard, perhaps, that, as your guardian, I hold in my hands the fortune your father bequeathed to you. It was his portion as a younger son; for, poor fellow! he had the family failing, and never could live within his income. Your ten thousand — he always called it yours — he never encroached upon, and that sum, at least, is secured to you.”

Although Kate knew that her uncle was her guardian, and had heard that some property would revert to her, what its amount was she had not the most remote idea of, nor that her power over it should commence so soon.

“I see, uncle, — I understand all you say,” said she, hurriedly; “I am of age, and the owner of ten thousand pounds.”

The tone of decision she employed half terrified the O’Donoghue for the prudence of his communication, and he almost hesitated to answer her directly, — “Yes, my child, it is a rent-charge — a — ”

“I care not for the name, sir. Does it represent the value?”

“Unquestionably it does.”

“Take it then, dearest uncle,” said she, flinging herself upon his neck, — “take it, and use it so that it may bring some comfort to yourself, some ease of mind at least, and

make your home a happier one. What need to think of the boys? Mark and Herbert are not of the mould that need fear failure, whatever path they follow; and as for me, when you grow weary of me, the *Sacré Cœur* will gladly take me back. Indeed, they feel their work of conversion of me but very imperfectly executed," added she, smiling, "and the dear nuns would be well pleased to finish their task."

"Kate, my child, my own darling," cried the old man, clasping her to his heart, "this may not — this cannot be."

"It must, and it shall be, uncle," said she, resolutely. "If my dear father's will be not a nullity, I have power over my fortune."

"But not to effect your ruin, Kate."

"No, sir, nor shall I. Will my dear uncle love me less for the consciousness in my own heart that I am doing right? Will he have a smile the less for me, that I can return it with an affection warmer from very happiness? I cannot believe this; nor can I think that you would render your brother's daughter unworthy of her father. You would not refuse *him*." Her lip trembled, and her eyes grew full as she uttered the last few words, in a voice every word of which went to the old man's heart.

"There is but one way, Kate."

"What need of more, uncle? Do we want a choice of roads, if we see a straight path before us?"

"Yes, dearest; but it will be said that I should not have suffered you to do this. That in accepting a loan —"

"A loan!" uttered she, reproachfully.

"As that, or nothing, can I ever touch a farthing of it," replied the O'Donoghue. "No, no! Distress and hardship have been a weary load this many a year; but all sense of honor is not yet obliterated in this poor heart!"

"Be it as you please, my dear, dear uncle," said the affectionate girl; "only let it not cost you another painful thought, to rob me of so many happy ones. There now, we must never speak of this any more;" and, so saying, she kissed him twice, and rose from her chair. "We are going to the Lodge to-morrow, to spend the day; Herbert is so well that he comes with us."

“And Mark, — what of him, dearest?”

“Mark will be none of us, sir. We are either too gay, or too frivolous, or too silly, or too something or other, for his solemn humor, and he only frowns and stares at us; but all that will pass away soon; I shall find the key to his temper yet, and then make him pay for all his arrears of sulkiness.”

“It is our changed condition, my love, that has made him thus,” said the father, anxious to excuse the young man’s morose habits.

“The poorer courage his, then,” replied the high-spirited girl; “I have no patience for a man who acts but the looking-glass to fortune, — frowns when she frowns, and smiles when she smiles. No! give me the temper that can enjoy the sunshine and brave the storm, — take all the good the world affords, and show a bold heart to resist the evil.”

“My own brother, my poor dear Mark, spoke there,” cried the old man in an ecstasy, as, springing up, he flung his arms about her; “and that’s your philosophy, sweet Kate?”

“Even so; the stout heart to the stae brae, as Sir Archy would call it, and as he mutters every evening he has to climb the steep stair towards his bedroom. And now, good night, dear uncle, good-night.”

With an affectionate greeting the old man took his leave of her for the night and sat down, in a frame of mingled happiness and shame, to think over what had passed.

The O’Donoghue was very far from feeling satisfied with himself for what he had done. Had Kate been at all difficult of persuasion, — had she yielded to his arguments, or been convinced by any explanations of his views, he would soon have reconciled himself to the act as one in which both parties concurred. Far from this: he saw that her only motive was affection; that she would listen to nothing save the promptings of her own warm heart; she would not let him even exculpate himself from the charge of his own conscience; and, although acquitted by her, he felt the guilt still upon him.

There was a time when he would not have stooped to such a course; but then he was rich, rich in the world’s wealth, and the honor such affluence suggests; for, alas! humbling

as the avowal may seem, the noble traits so often admired in prosperity are but the promptings of a spirit revelling in its own enjoyment—open-handed and generous, because these qualities are luxuries; free to give, because the giving involves gratitude; and gratitude is the incense of weakness to power,—of poverty to wealth. How often are the warm affections, nurtured by happy circumstances, mistaken for the evidence of right principles? How frequently are the pleasurable impulses of the heart confounded with the well-directed judgments of the mind. This man was less changed than he knew of: the world of his circumstances was, indeed, different, but he was little altered; the same selfishness that once made him munificent now made him mean; but, whether conferring or accepting favors, the spirit was one.

Besides, how ingenious is the mind in suggesting plausible reasons for its indulgences!—how naturally easy did it seem to borrow and repay! The very words satisfied his scruples on that score; but if he were indeed so contented with himself, why did he fear lest any one should ever learn the circumstance? Why cower with shame before himself to think of his brother-in-law, or even Mark, hearing of it? Were these the signs of conscious rectitude, or were they the evidence of a spirit seeking rest in casuistry and self-deception? In this conflict of alternate approval and condemnation he passed the greater part of the night,—sometimes a struggling sense of honor urging him to regret a course so fraught with humiliations of every kind; and again a thrill of delight would run through his heart to think of all the pleasure he could confer upon his favorite boy,—the indulgences he could once more shower upon him. He fancied the happiness of emancipation from pressing difficulties, and how instinctively Mark's buoyant temper would take the tone of their altered fortunes, and he once again become the gay and reckless youth he loved to see him.

“He must have that brown horse Kerry speaks of,” muttered he to himself. “Sir Marmaduke shall not outbid us there, and we'll see which of the two best becomes his saddle. I'll back my own boy against his scarlet-coated fop for a thousand. They've got some couples of dogs, too,

Kerry was telling me, up the mountains. We must inquire about them; with eight or ten couple Mark could have good sport in the glen. Then there's those bills of Callaghan's, — but he'll not press hard when he sees we've money. Cassidy must get his £800, and so he shall; and that scoundrel, Swaby, will be sending in his bill of costs; but a couple of hundred pounds ought to stop his mouth. Archy, too, — by Jove, I forget how much I owe him now; but he does n't, I'll warrant him. Well, well, if it won't stop the leak, it will at least give us time to work the pumps, — ay, time, time!" He asked for no more; he only sought to reach the haven himself, and cared nothing what happened the craft nor the crew afterwards.

His next thought was how to effect all the legal arrangements in these complicated matters without the knowledge of Mark or Sir Archy; and on this difficult point he spent till nigh morning deliberating. The only mode he could think of was by writing to Swaby himself, and making him aware of the whole proceeding. That, of course, would be attended by its own penalties, as Swaby would take care that his own costs were among the first things to be liquidated; but yet it seemed the sole course open to him, and with the resolve to do this on the morrow he turned on his pillow and fell asleep.

The morning broke with happiness to the uncle and the niece, but it was a happiness of a very different order. To him, the relief of mind for the long harassing cares of debt and difficulty was a boon of inestimable price, — life and liberty at once to the imprisoned spirit of his proud heart. To her, the higher and nobler sense of gratification which flows from having acted well, sent a thrill of ecstasy through her bosom such as only gentle and generous youth can ever feel. And thus, while the O'Donoghue mused over the enjoyments and pleasures his new accession of wealth might place at his disposal, she revelled in the delight of having ministered to the happiness of one she had always regarded as a father, and even felt grateful to him for the emotions of her own heart.

The O'Donoghue's first thought on awaking was to employ this large sum to liquidate some of his most pressing debts,

and to make such arrangements as might enable them to live economically but comfortably, paying off those creditors whose exorbitant interest was consuming all the remnant of his income, and entering into contracts with others for the gradual repayment of loans. The more he reflected on these good intentions, the less pleasure did they yield him. He had for years past taught himself to regard a creditor as an implacable enemy. The very idea of succumbing smacked of defeat. He had defied the law so long, it looked like cowardice to surrender now; besides, the very complication of his affairs offered an excuse which he was not slow to catch at. How could he pay Cassidy in full, and only give Hickson a part? Would not the mere rumor of his paying off his debts bring down a host of demands that had almost slumbered themselves out of existence. He had often heard that his grandfather "muddled away his fortune paying small debts." It could not be supposed he would reject the traditions of his own house, — nor did he.

He judged wisely, if not well, that new habits of expenditure would do more to silence the complaints of duns than the most accurately calculated system of liquidation; that entertainments and equipages, a stable full of horses, and a house crammed with guests, are a receipt in full for solvency which, however some may distrust, none are bold enough to question openly.

If the plan had fewer excellencies, it at least suited him better; and he certainly opened the campaign with vigor. No sooner had he decided on his line of acting, than he despatched Kerry O'Leary to Cork with a letter for Swaby, his attorney, requiring his immediate presence at Carrignacurra, and adding, "that if he brought a couple of hundred pounds over with him at the same time, he might include them with the costs, and get a check for the whole together."

As the old man sealed his epistle, he chuckled over the thoughts of Swaby's astonishment, and fancied the many guesses the crafty attorney would frame to account for such unexpected prosperity. The little remaining sorrow he felt for his share in the transaction gave way to the vulgar pleasure of this surprise; for, so it is, the conflict with poverty

can debase the mind, and make the very straits and stratagems of want seem straits of cleverness and ability.

It was a day of pleasure almost to all. Sir Archy, dressed in a suit which had not seen daylight for many a previous year, gave his arm to Kate, and, accompanied by Herbert, set out to pass the day at the Lodge. Mark alone had no participation in the general joy; he stood with folded arms at the window of the old tower, and gazed on the group that moved along the road. Although he never thought of accompanying them, there was a sense of desertion in his position of which he could not divest himself. With the idea of the pleasure their visit would afford them came the reflection that he was debarred from his share of such enjoyment, and the galling feeling of inferiority sent the blood with a throbbing current through his temples, and covered his face with a deep flush. He retorted his own isolation against those he had so strenuously avoided, and accused them of the very fault of which he was himself guilty. "My uncle is more distant to me than ever," muttered he, "and even Herbert, too, — Herbert, that used to look up to and rely on me, — even he shuns me." He did not utter his cousin's name, but a single tear, that rolled heavily down his cheek, and seemed to make it tremble as it passed, showed that another and a deeper spring of sorrow was opened in his heart. With a sudden gesture of impatience he roused himself from his musing, and hastily descending the stair, he crossed the old courtyard, and, without any fixed resolve as to his course, walked down the road; nor was it until after proceeding some distance that he perceived he was rapidly gaining on the little party on their way to the Lodge; then he quitted the high road, and soon lost himself in one of the mountain glens.

As for the others, it was indeed a day of unaccustomed pleasure, and such as rarely presented itself in that solitary valley. All that kindness and hospitality could suggest was done by the family at the Lodge to make their visit agreeable; and while Sir Marmaduke vied with his son and daughter in courteous attentions to his guests, they, on their part, displayed the happy consciousness of these civilities by efforts to please not less successful.

Sir Archy — albeit the faculty had long lain in disuse — was possessed of conversational powers of a high order, and could blend his observation of passing events with the wisdom derived from reflection, and the experience of long intercourse with the world; while, as if to relieve the sombre coloring of his thoughts, Kate's lively sallies and sparkling repartees lit up the picture, and gave it both brilliancy and action. The conversation ranged freely over the topics which form the staple of polite intercourse in the world of the cultivated and the fashionable; and although Sir Archy had long been removed from such companionship, it was easy to perceive how naturally he could revert to a class of subjects with which he had once been familiar.

It was thus alternating remarks of the past with allusions to the present, — mingling grave and gay with that happy blending which springs from the social intercourse of different ages, — they sat, after dinner, watching, through the unshuttered window, the bright moonlight that streamed across the glen and glittered on the lake, the conversation, from some reference to the scenery, turned to the condition of Ireland, and the then state of her people. Sir Marmaduke, notwithstanding his late experiences, fully maintaining the accuracy of his own knowledge in matters which have not ceased to puzzle even wiser heads, gained confidence from the cautious reserve of Sir Archy, who rarely ventured an opinion, and never hazarded a direct assertion.

“They would have me believe, in England,” said Sir Marmaduke, “that Ireland was on the very brink of a rebellion; that the organization of revolt was perfect, and only waiting French co-operation to burst forth. But how absurd such statements are to us who live amongst them.”

Sir Archy smiled significantly, and shook his head.

“You, surely, have no fears on this head, sir? It is not possible to conceive a state of more profound peace than we observe around us. Men do not take up arms against a rightful authority without the working of strong passions and headlong impulses. What is there to indicate them here?”

“You'll allow, Sir Marmaduke, they are no over-likely to mak' ye a coufidant if they intend a rising,” was the dry observation of M'Nab.

“True; but could they conceal their intentions from me, — that is the question? Think you that I should not have discovered them long since, and made them known to the Government?”

“I trust you’d have done no such thing, sir,” interposed Fred. “I heard Maitland say there never was a chance of keeping this country down if we did not have a brush with them every thirty or forty years; and, if I don’t mistake, the time for a lesson has just come round.”

“Is it so certain on which side is to be the teacher?” said Kate, with a voice whose articulate distinctness actually electrified the party; and, as it drew their eyes towards her, heightened the flush that mantled on her cheek.

“It never occurred to me to doubt the matter,” said Fred, with an air of ill-dissembled mortification.

“No more than you anticipated it, perhaps,” retorted she, quickly; “and yet events are happening every day which take the world by surprise. See there! — look. That mountain peak was dark but a moment back; and now, see the blazing fire that has burst forth upon it!”

The whole party started to their feet, and drew near the window, from which, at a distance of about two miles, the red glare of a fire was seen. It burned brightly for some minutes, and then decaying, became extinguished, leaving the dark mountain black and gloomy as before.

“What can it mean?” said Sir Marmaduke, in amazement. “Can it be some signal of the smugglers? I understand they still venture on this coast.”

“That mountain yonder is not seen from the bay,” said Sir Archy, thoughtfully. “It can scarcely be that.”

“I think we must ask Miss O’Donoghue for the explanation,” said Fred Travers. “She is the only one here not surprised at its appearance.”

“Miss O’Donoghue is one of those who, you assert, are to be taught; and, therefore, unable to teach others,” said she, in a low whisper only audible to Frederick, who stood beside her; and he almost started at the strange meaning the words seemed to convey.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A WALK BY MOONLIGHT.

THE visit alluded to in the last chapter formed the first step to an acquaintance which speedily ripened into intimacy. Seldom a day passed without some interchange of civilities; and as they progressed in knowledge of each other they advanced in esteem, so that, ere long, they learned to regard themselves as members of a single family. The conventional usages of society are stronger barriers against friendship than the world deems them. The life of cities supplies a coinage of social intercourse which but very imperfectly represents the value of true feeling; while in remoter and less-cultivated regions men are satisfied to disencumber themselves of this false currency, and deal frankly and openly with each other.

How little, now, did Sir Marmaduke remember of all Sir Archy's peculiarities of manner and expression! how seldom did Sybella think Kate's opinions wild and eccentric! and how difficult would it have been to convince the fastidious Guardsman that the society of St. James's possessed any superiority in tone or elegance over the evenings at the Lodge.

The real elements of mutual liking were present here: the discrepancy of character and taste — the great differences of age and habit of thought — yet moulded into one common frame of esteem from the very appreciation of qualities in others in which each felt himself deficient. If Kate admired the simple but high-minded English girl, whose thoughts were rarely faulty save when attributing to others higher and purer motives than the world abounds in, Sybella looked up with enthusiastic delight to the glittering talents of her Irish friend — the warm and generous glow of her imagination —

the brilliant flashes of her wit — the ready eloquence of her tongue ; and, perhaps, not least of all, the intrepid fearlessness of her nature inspired her with sentiments of almost awe, which seemed to deepen and not diminish her affection for Kate O'Donoghue.

It might appear an ungenerous theme to dwell on, but how often are our friendships suggested by self-love? — how frequently are we led to think highly and speak praisingly of qualities the opposite to our own, from the self-satisfaction our apparent impartiality yields us. Justice must, indeed, be a great virtue when its very shadow can ennoble human nature. Not such, however, were the motives here. Kate's admiration for the unerring rectitude of Sybella's character was as free from taint as was Sybella's heartfelt enthusiasm for the Irish girl. As for Frederick Travers, the same dissimilarity in character which made him at first compare Kate with his sister disadvantageously, now induced him to be struck and fascinated by her qualities. The standard by which he had measured her she had long since passed, in his estimation ; and any idea of a comparison between them would now have appeared ridiculous. It was true many of her opinions savored of a nationality too strong for his admiration. She was intensely Irish — or, at least, what he deemed such. The traditions which, as a child, she had listened to with eager delight, had given a bias to her mind that grew more confirmed with years. The immediate circumstances of her own family added to this feeling, and her pride was tintured with sorrow at the fallen condition of her house. All her affection for her cousins could not blind her to their great defects. In Mark she saw one whose spirit seemed crushed and stunned, and not awakened by the pressure of misfortune. Herbert, with all his kindness of nature and open-heartedness, appeared more disposed to enjoy the sunshine of life than to prepare himself to buffet with its storms.

How often she wished she had been a boy ; how many a day-dream floated before her of such a career as she might have struck out ! Ireland a nation — her “ own sons her rulers ” — had been the theme of many an oft-heard tale ; and there was a poetry in the sentiment of a people recalled

to a long-lost, long-sought-for nationality, that excited and exalted her imagination.

Her convent education had stored her mind with narratives of native suffering and Saxon tyranny, and she longed for the day of retribution on the "proud invaders." Great was her disappointment at finding her consins so dead to every feeling of this kind; and she preferred the chivalrous ardor of the French soldier to the sluggish apathy of Mark, or the happy indolence of Herbert O'Donoghue.

Had Frederick Travers been an Irishman, would he have borne his country's wrongs so meekly? was a reflection that more than once occurred to her mind, and never more powerfully than on parting with him the very evening we have mentioned. He had accompanied them on their return to Carrignacurra, which, as the night was fine and the moon nearly at her full, they did on foot. Kate, who rarely accepted an arm when walking, had, by some accident, taken his on this occasion, Sir Archy leaning on that of Herbert.

The young soldier listened with a high-beating heart as she related an incident of which the spot they were traversing had been the scene. It was a faithless massacre of a chieftain and his followers, seduced under pretences of friendship and a pledge of amity.

"They told him," said she, "that his young wife, who had been carried away by force, and imprisoned for two entire years, should on this spot be restored to him; that he had but to come, with twelve of his retainers, unarmed, save with their swords, and that here, where we now stand, she should once more become his own. The hour was sunset, and he waited with anxious impatience, beneath that tall cliff yonder, where you can see the deep cleft. Strange enough, they have added a legend to the true story, as if their wrongs could derive any force from fiction! and they tell you still that the great rock was never split until that night. Their name for it, in Irish, is 'the rent,' or 'the ruptured pledge.' Do I weary you with these old tales?"

"No, no; go on, I entreat you. I cannot say how the scene increases its fascinations from connection with your story."

“He stood yonder, where the black shadow now crosses the road, and having dismounted, he gave his horse to one of his attendants, and walked, with an anxious heart, up and down, waiting for their approach.

“There was less sympathy among his followers for their chieftain’s sorrow than might be expected; for she was not a native born, but the daughter of an English earl. He, perhaps, loved her the more; her very friendlessness was another tie between them.”

“Says the legend so, or is this a mere suspicion on your part?” whispered Travers, softly.

“I scarcely know,” continued Kate, with an accent less assured than before. “I believe I tell you the tale as I have heard it; but why may she not have been his own in every sentiment and thought? why not have imbibed the right from him she learned to love?” The last words were scarcely uttered, when, with a sudden exclamation, less of fear than astonishment, Kate grasped Travers’s arm, and exclaimed, “Did you see that?”

“I thought some dark object moved by the roadside.”

“I saw a man pass, as if from behind us, and gain the thicket yonder; he was alone, however.”

“And I am armed,” said Travers, coolly.

“And if you were not,” replied she, proudly, “an O’Donoghue has nothing to fear in the valley of Glenflesk. Let us join my uncle, however, for I see he has left us some distance behind him;” and while they hastened forward she resumed her story with the same unconcern as before the interruption.

Travers listened eagerly, — less, it is true, in sympathy with the story than in delight at the impassioned eloquence of her who related it. “Such,” said she, as they turned to bid him farewell at the old keep on the roadside, — “such are the traditions of our land; they vary in time, and place, and persons; but they have only one moral through all, — what a terrible thing is slavery!”

Travers endeavored to turn the application of her speech by some commonplace compliment about her own powers of inflicting bondage; but she stopped him suddenly with, —

“Nay, nay; these are not jesting themes, although you

may deem them unsuited for one as ignorant and inexperienced as I am; nor will I speak of them again, if they serve but as matter for laughter."

Amid his protestations of innocence against this charge, which, in his ardor, he pushed farther than calmer judgment might warrant, they shook hands cordially, and parted.

"He's a fine-hearted fellow, too," thought Kate, as she slowly moved along in silence. "Saxon though he be, there's a chord in his bosom that responds to the touch of truth and honor."

"Noble girl," said Frederick, half aloud, "it would be hard to rebuke treason, when spoken from such lips;" then added, with a smile, "it's no fair temptation to expose even a Guardsman to."

And thus each speculated on the character of the other, and fancied how, by their own influence, it might be fashioned and moulded to a better form; nor was their interest lessened in each other's fortune from the fact that it seemed to involve so much of mutual interposition.

"You should not walk this road so late," said Mark O'Donoghue, almost rudely, as he opened the door to admit them. "The smugglers are on the coast now, and frequently come up the glen at nightfall."

"Why not have come to be our escort, then?" said Kate, smiling.

"What, with the gay soldier for your guard?" said he, bitterly.

"How knew you that, my worthy cousin?" said Kate, rapidly; and then, with a significant shake of the head, added, in a whisper, "I see there *are* marauders about."

Mark blushed till his face became scarlet, and, turning abruptly away, sought his own room in silence.

CHAPTER XXV.

A DAY OF DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS.

THE time was now approaching when the Traverses were to remove to the capital, and, at Sybella's urgent entreaty, Sir Marmaduke was induced to request that Kate O'Donoghue might accompany them in their visit, and thus enjoy the pleasures of a winter in Dublin, then second to no city of Europe in all that constituted social excellence. The note of invitation, couched in terms the most flattering and cordial, arrived when the O'Donoghues were seated at breakfast, and, as was usual on all occasions of correspondence, was opened by Kate herself. Scarcely had she thrown her eyes over its contents, when, with a heightened color, and a slight tremor in her voice, she passed the letter across the table to her uncle, and said, "This is for your consideration, sir."

"Then you must read it for me, Kate," replied he, "for my ears have outlived my eyes."

"Shall I do it?" interposed Sir Archy, who, having remarked some hesitation in Kate's manner, came thus good-naturedly to the rescue.

"With all my heart, Archy," said the O'Donoghue; "or rather, if you would do me a favor, just tell me what it is about, — polite correspondence affects me pretty much as the ceremonies of bowing and salutation, when I have a fit of the gout. I become devilish impatient, and would give the world it was all over, and that I were back in my easy-chair again."

"The politeness in the present case lies less in the style than in the substance," said Sir Archy. "This is a vara civil, though, I must say, to me a vara unwelcome proposal,

to take our darling Kate away from us, for a season, and show her some of the life and gayeties of the capital."

"Well, that is handsomely done, at least," said the O'Donoghue, whose first thought sprang from gratified pride at the palpable evidence of social consideration; then suddenly changing his tone, he said, in a low voice, "but what says Kate herself?"

Mark turned his eyes full upon her as his father said these words, and as a deadly pallor came over his face, he sat steadfastly awaiting her reply, like one expecting the decree of a judge.

"Kate feels too happy here, sir, to risk anything by a change," replied she, avoiding, even for a second, to look towards where Mark was sitting.

"But you must not lose such an opportunity, dearest Kate," whispered Herbert eagerly into her ear. "These are the scenes and the places you are used to, and best fitted to enjoy and to adorn; and besides —"

A stern frown from Mark, who, if he had not overheard the speech, seemed to have guessed its import, suddenly arrested the youth, who now looked overwhelmed with confusion.

"We are a divided cabinet, that I see plainly enough, Kate," said O'Donoghue; "though, if our hearts were to speak out, I'd warrant they would be of one mind. Still, this would be a selfish verdict, my dear girl, and a poor requital for all the happiness you have brought back to these old walls;" and the words were spoken with a degree of feeling that made all indisposed to break the silence that followed.

"I should like to see the capital, I own," said Kate, "if my absence were to be a short one."

"And I wad hae nae objection the capital should see yersel'," said Sir Archy, "albeit I may lose a sweetheart by my generosity."

"Have no fears of my fidelity," said Kate, laughing, as she extended her hand towards him, while, with antique gallantry, he pressed it to his lips. "The youth of this land are not, so far as my little experience goes, likely to supplant so true an admirer; they who have so little devotion

to their country may well be suspected of having less for its daughters."

Mark's brow grew dark with the flush that covered his face and forehead in an instant; he bent his head almost to the table to avoid observation, and, as if in the distraction of the moment, he took up the note and seemed to pore over its contents; then, suddenly crushing it in his hand, he arose from the table and left the room.

"My sweet Kate," said Sir Archy, as he led her within the deep recess of a window, "tak' care ye dinna light up a flame of treason where ye only hoped to warm a glow of patriotism; such eyes and lips as yours are but too ready teachers: be cautious, lassie. This country, however others may think, is on the eve of some mighty struggle; the people have abandoned many of their old grudges, and seem disposed to unite."

"And the gentry, — where are they who should stand at their head and share their fortunes?" cried Kate, eagerly; for the warning, so far from conveying the intended moral, only stimulated her ardor and excited her curiosity.

"The gentry," replied Sir Archy, in a firm, decided tone, "are better satisfied to live under a government they dislike than to be at the mercy of a rabble they despise. I hae lived langer than you in this dreary world, lassie, and, trust me, the poetry of patriotism has little relation to the revengeful fury of rebellion. You wish freedom for those who cannot enjoy the portion of it they possess. It is time to outlive the evil memories of the past. We want here — time to blunt the acuteness of former and long-past sufferings; time to make traditions so far forgotten as to be inapplicable to the present; time to read the homely lesson that one-half the energy a people can expend in revolt will raise them in the rank of civilized and cultivated beings."

"Time to make Irishmen forget that the land of their birth was ever other than an English province," added Kate, impetuously. "No, no, it was not thus your own brave countrymen understood their 'devoirs.'"

"They rallied round the standard of a prince they loved, lassie," said M'Nab, in a tone whose fervor contrasted with his former accent.

“And will you tell me that the principle of freedom is not more sacred than the person of the sovereign?” said Kate, tauntingly.

“There can be nae mistake about the one, but folks may have vara unsettled notions of the other,” said he, dryly; “but we maunna quarrel, Kate dear: our time is e’en too short already. Sit ye down and sing me a sang.”

“It shall be a rebel one, then, I promise you,” replied she, with an air of defiance which it was impossible to pronounce more real or assumed. “But here comes a visitor to interrupt us, and so your loyalty is saved for this time.”

The observation was made in reference to a traveller, who, seated in a very antique-looking dennet, was seen slowly laboring his wearied horse up the steep ascent to the castle.

“It’s Swaby, father,” cried Herbert, who immediately recognized the equipage of the Cork attorney, and felt a certain uneasiness come over him at the unexpected appearance.

“What brings him down to these parts?” said the O’Donoghue, affecting an air of surprise. “On his way to Killarney, perhaps. Well, well, they may let him in.”

The announcement did not, to all appearance, afford much pleasure to the others; for scarcely had the door-bell ceased its jingle, when each quitted the drawing-room, leaving O’Donoghue alone to receive his man of law.

Although the O’Donoghue waited with some impatience for the entrance of his legal adviser, that worthy man did not make his appearance at once, his progress to the drawing-room being arrested by Sir Archy, who, with a significant gesture, motioned him to follow him to his chamber.

“I will not detain you many minutes, Mr. Swaby,” said he, as he made signs for him to be seated. “I hae a sma’ matter of business in which you can serve me. I need scarcely observe I reckon on your secrecy.”

Mr. Swaby closed one eye, and placed the tip of his finger on his nose, — a pantomime intended to represent the most perfect fidelity.

“I happen,” resumed Sir Archy, apparently satisfied with this pledge, — “I happen at this moment to need a

certain sum of money, and would wish to receive it on these securities. They are title-deeds of a property, which, for reasons I have no leisure at this moment to explain, is at present held by a distant relative in trust for my heir. You may perceive that the value is considerable;" and he pointed to a formidable array of figures which covered one of the margins. "The sum I require is only a thousand pounds, — five hundred at once, immediately; the remainder in a year hence. Can this be arranged?"

"Money was never so scarce," said Swaby, as he wiped his spectacles and unfolded one of the cumbrous parchments. "Devil take me if I know where it's all gone to. It was only last week I was trying to raise five thousand for old Hoare on the Ballyrickau property, and I could not get any one to advance me sixpence. The country is unsettled, you see. There's a notion abroad that we'll have a rising soon, and who knows what's to become of landed property after."

"This estate is in Perth," said M'Nab, tapping the deeds with his finger.

"So I perceive," replied Swaby; "and they have no objection to a 'shudy' there, too, sometimes. The Pretender got some of your countrymen into a pretty scrape with his tricks. There are fools to be had for asking everywhere."

"We will no discuss this question just noo," said Sir Archy, snappishly; "and, to return to the main point, please to inform me, is this loan impracticable?"

"I did n't say it was, all out," said Swaby. "In about a week or two —"

"I must know before three days," interrupted M'Nab.

"His honor's waiting for Mr. Swaby," said Kerry, who now appeared in the room, without either of the others having noticed his entrance.

Sir Archy rose with an angry brow, but spoke not a syllable, while he motioned Kerry to leave the room.

"You must join my brother-in-law, sir," said he, at last; "and if our conversation is not already become the gossip of the house, I entreat of you to keep it a secret."

"That, of course," said Swaby; "but I'm thinking I've

hit on a way to meet your wishes, so we'll talk of the matter again this evening;" and thus saying, he withdrew, leaving Sir Archy in a frame of mind very far indeed from tranquil or composed.

Swaby's surprise at his interview with Sir Archy, whom he never had the slightest suspicion of possessing any property whatever, was even surpassed by his astonishment on hearing the favorable turn of O'Donoghue's affairs; and while he bestowed the requisite attention to follow the old man's statement, his shrewd mind was also engaged in speculating what probable results might accrue from this unexpected piece of fortune, and how they could best be turned to his own benefit. O'Donoghue was too deeply interested in his own schemes to question Swaby respecting his business with M'Nab, of which Kerry O'Leary had already given him a hint. The attorney was, therefore, free to deliberate in his own mind how far he might most advantageously turn the prosperity of the one to the aid of the other, for the sole benefit of himself. It is not necessary, nor would it conduce to the object of this story, to ask the reader's attention to this interview. It will be enough to say that Swaby heard with pleasure O'Donoghue's disclosure, recognizing with practised acuteness how far he could turn such unlooked-for prosperity to his own purposes, and subsidize one brother-in-law at the expense of both.

While thus each within the limit of this narrow household was following out the thread of his destiny, eagerly bent on his own object, Kate O'Donoghue sat alone at the window of her chamber, buried in deep thought. The prospect of her approaching visit to the capital presented itself in so many aspects that, while offering pleasures and enjoyments none relished more highly than herself, she yet saw difficulties which might render the step unadvisable, if not perilous. Of all considerations, money was the one which least had occupied any share in her calculations; yet now she bethought herself that expense must necessarily be incurred which her uncle's finances could but ill afford. No sooner had this thought occurred to her than she was amazed it had not struck her before, and she felt actually

startled lest, in her eagerness for the promised pleasure, she had only listened to the suggestion of selfishness. In a moment more she determined to decline the invitation. She was not one to take half measures when she believed a point of principle to be engaged; and the only difficulty now lay how and in what manner to refuse an offer proffered with so much kindness. The note itself must open the way, thought she, and at the instant she remembered how Mark had taken it from the breakfast-table.

She heard his heavy step as he paced backwards and forwards in his chamber overhead, and without losing another moment, hastily ascended the stairs to his door. Her hand was already outstretched to knock, when suddenly she hesitated; a strange confusion came over her faculties. How would Mark regard her request?—would he attribute it to over-eagerness on the subject of the invitation? Such were questions which occurred to her; and as quick came the answer, "And let him think so. I shall certainly not seek to undeceive him. He alone of all here has vouchsafed me neither any show of his affection nor his confidence." The flush mounted to her cheek, and her eyes darkened with the momentary excitement; and at the same instant the door was suddenly thrown open, and Mark stood before her.

Such was his astonishment, however, that for some seconds he could not speak; when at last he uttered, in a low, deep voice, —

"I thought I heard a hand upon the lock, and I am so suspicious of that fellow Kerry, who frequently plays the eavesdropper here —"

"Not when you are alone, Mark?" said Kate, smiling.

"Ay, even then. I have a foolish habit of thinking aloud, of which I strive in vain to break myself; and he seems to know it, too."

"There is another absent trick you have acquired also," said she, laughing. "Do you remember having carried off the note that came while we were at breakfast?"

"Did I?" said he, reddening. "Did I take it off the table? Yes, yes; I remember something of it now. You must forgive me, cousin, if these careless habits take the shape of rudeness." He seemed overwhelmed with con-

fusion, as he added, "I know not why I put it into my pocket; here it is."

And so saying, he drew from the breast of his coat a crushed and crumpled paper, and gave it into Kate's hand. She wished to say something in reply, — something which would seem kind and good-natured; but, somehow, she faltered and hesitated. She twice got as far as, "I know, Mark, — I am certain, Mark;" then, unable to say what, perhaps, her very indecision rendered more difficult, she merely uttered a brief "thank you," and withdrew.

"Poor fellow!" said she, as she re-entered her own chamber, "his is the hardest lot of all."

She had often wished to persuade herself that Mark's morose, sullen humor was the discontent of one who felt the ignominy of an inglorious life, — that habits of recklessness had covered, but not obliterated, the traces of that bold and generous spirit for which his family had been long distinguished; and now, for the first time, she believed she had fallen on the evidences of such a temper. She pondered long on this theme, and fancied how, under circumstances favorable to their development, Mark's good qualities and courageous temper had won for him both fame and honor. "And here," exclaimed she, half aloud, — "here he may live and die a peasant!" With a deep sigh she threw herself into a chair, and, as if to turn her thoughts into some channel less suggestive of gloom, she opened the letter Mark had given her. Scarcely, however, had she cast her eyes over it when she uttered a faint cry, too faint, indeed, to express any mere sense of fear, but in an accent in which terror and amazement were equally blended.

The epistle was a brief one, not more than a few lines, and she had read it at a glance, before ever there was time to consider how far her doing so was a breach of confidence; indeed, the intense interest of the contents left little room for any self-examinings. It ran thus:—

DEAR BROTHER,— No precipitation — no haste — nothing can be done without France. T. has now good hopes from that quarter, and if not 30,000, 20,000 or at least 15,000 will be given,

and arms for double the number. Youghal is talked of as a suitable spot; and H. has sent charts, etc., over. Above all, be patient; trust no rumors, and rely on us for the earliest and the safest intelligence. L. will hand you this. You must contrive to learn the cipher, as any correspondence discovered would ruin all.

Yours ever, and in the cause,

H. R.

Here, then, was the youth she had been commiserating for his career of lowly and unambitious hopes — here the mere peasant — the accomplice of some deep and desperate plot, in which the arms of France should be employed against the government of England. Was this the secret of his preoccupation and his gloom? Was it to concentrate his faculties on such a scheme that he lived this lonely and secluded life? “Oh, Mark, Mark, how have I misjudged you!” she exclaimed, and, as she uttered the words, came the thought, quick as a lightning flash, to her mind, — what terrible hazards such a temperament as his must incur in an enterprise like this; without experience of men or any knowledge of the world whatever; without habitual prudence or caution of any kind, — the very fact of his mistaking the letter a palpable evidence of his unfitness for trust. Reckless by nature, more desperate still from the fallen fortunes of his house, what would become of him? Others would wait the time and calculate their chances. He would listen to nothing but the call of danger. She knew him well, from boyhood upwards, and had seen him often more fascinated by peril than others were by pleasure.

As she reasoned thus, her thoughts insensibly turned to all the dangers of such an enterprise as she believed him engaged in. The fascinating visions of a speculative patriotism soon gave way before the terrors she now conjured up. She knew he was the only tie that bound his father to existence, and that any misfortune to Mark would be the old man’s death-blow. Nor were these the most poignant of her reflections, for she now remembered how often she had alluded tauntingly to those who lived a life of mean or inglorious ambition; how frequently she had scoffed at the miserable part of such as, endowed with high

names and ancient lineage, evinced no desire to emerge from an ignoble position, and assume a station of eminence and power; could she, then, have contributed to this youth's rash step, — had her idle words and random speeches driven him to embrace a cause where his passions and not his judgment were interested? What misery was in this fear!

Each moment increased the agony of this reflection, while her doubts as to how she ought to act thickened around her. Sir Archy alone was capable of advising her; his calm and unbiassed reason would be now invaluable: but dare she, even to him, make use of a confidence thus accidentally obtained? Would Mark — could he — ever forgive her? And how many others might such a disclosure compromise? In this dilemma she knew no course open to her but one, — to address herself at once to Mark, to explain how his secret had become known, to learn from him as much as lay in her power of the dangers and difficulties of the meditated revolt, and if unable to dissuade him from participation, at least to mingle with his resolves all she could of prudence or good counsel. The determination was scarcely formed when she was once more at the door of his chamber; she knocked twice, without any reply following, then gently opened the door. The room was vacant, he was gone. "I will write to him," said she, hurriedly, and, with this new resolve, hastened to her chamber, and began a letter.

The task she proposed to herself was not so easy of accomplishment. A dozen times she endeavored, while explaining the accident that divulged his secret, to impress him with the hazard of an undertaking so palpably depicted, and to the safe keeping of which his own carelessness might prove fatal; but each effort dissatisfied her. In one place she seemed not to have sufficiently apologized for her unauthorized cognizance of his note; in another, the stress she laid upon this very point struck her as too selfish and too personal in a case where another's interests were the real consideration at issue; and even when presenting before him the vicissitudes of fortune to which his venturous career would expose him, she felt how every word contradicted the tenor of her own assertions for many a

day and week previous. In utter despair how to act, she ended by enclosing the letter with merely these few words:—

I have read the enclosed, but your secret is safe with me.

K. O'D.

This done, she sealed the packet, and had just written the address when, with a tap at the door, Sir Archy entered, and approached the table.

With a tact and delicacy he well understood, Sir Archy explained the object of his visit, — to press upon Kate's acceptance a sum of money sufficient for her outlay in the capital. The tone of half authority he assumed disarmed her at once, and made her doubt how far she could feel justified in opposing the wishes of her friends concerning her.

"Then you really desire I should go to Dublin?" said she.

"I do, Kate, for many reasons, — reasons which I shall have little difficulty in explaining to you hereafter."

"I half regret I ever thought of it," said Kate, speaking her thoughts unconsciously aloud.

"Not the less reason, perhaps, for going," said Sir Archy, dryly; while at the same moment his eye caught the letter bearing Mark O'Donoghue's name.

Kate saw on what his glance was fixed, and grew red with shame and confusion.

"Be it so then, uncle," said she, resolutely. "I do not seek to know the reasons you speak of; for if you were to ask my own against the project, I should not be able to frame them: it was mere caprice."

"I hope so, dearest Kate," said he, with a tone of deep affection, — "I hope so, with all my heart;" and thus saying, he pressed her hand fervently between his own and left the room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A LAST EVENING AT HOME.

WITH the experience of past events to guide us, it would appear now that a most unaccountable apathy existed in the English Cabinet of the period with regard to the plan of invasion meditated against Ireland by France; nor is it easy to determine whether this indifference proceeded more from ignorance of the danger, or that amount of information concerning it which disposed the Minister to regard it as little important.

From whatever cause proceeding, one thing is sufficiently clear, — the emissaries of France pervaded the country in every part without impediment or molestation; statistical information the most minute was forwarded to Paris every week. The state of popular opinion, the condition of parties, the amount of troops disposable by Government, even the spirit which animated them, were reported and commented on, and made the subject of discussion in the “bureau” of the War Minister of France. To such an extent was this system carried that more than once the French authorities became suspicious regarding the veracity of statements, from the very facility with which their details were communicated, and hinted that such regularity in correspondence might be owing to the polite attentions of the English Cabinet; and to this distrust is in a great measure to be attributed the vacillating and hesitating policy which marked their own deliberations.

Tone’s letters show the wearisome toil of his negotiation; the assurances of aid, obtained after months of painful, harassing solicitation, deferred or made dependent on some almost impossible conditions; guarantees demanded from him which he neither could nor would accord; infor-

mation sought, which, were they in actual possession of the country, would have been a matter of difficult acquisition; and, after all, when the promised assistance was granted, it came coupled with hints and acknowledgments that the independence of Ireland was nothing in their eyes, save as inflicting a death-blow to the power and greatness of England.

In fact, neither party was satisfied with the compact long before the time of putting it in operation arrived. Meanwhile, the insurgents spared no efforts to organize a powerful body among the peasantry, and, at least numerically, to announce to France a strong and effective co-operation. Such reports were necessary to enable Tone to press his demand more energetically; and although he never could have deceived himself as to the inutility of such undisciplined and almost unarmed masses, still they looked plausible on paper, and vouched for the willingness of the people to throw off the yoke of England.

It is now well known that the French party in Ireland was really very small. The dreadful wrongs inflicted on the Roman Catholic Church during the Revolution could not be forgotten or forgiven by that priesthood, who were their brethren; nor could it be supposed that they would lend a willing aid to further a cause which began its march to freedom over the ashes of their Church. Such as were best capable of pronouncing on the project — those educated in France — were naturally fearful of a repetition at home of the terrible scenes they had witnessed abroad, and thus the "patriots" lost the aid which, more than any other, could have stirred the heart of the nation. Abstract principles of liberty are not the most effective appeals to a people; and although the French agents were profuse of promises, and the theme of English oppression could be chanted with innumerable variations, the right chord of native sentiment was never touched, and few joined the cause save those who, in every country and in every age, are patriots, — because they are paupers. Some, indeed, like the young O'Donoghue, were sincere and determined. Drawn in at first by impulses more purely personal than patriotic, they soon learned to take a deep interest in the game, and grew

fascinated with a scheme which exalted themselves into positions of trust and importance. The necessity of employing this lure, and giving the adherents of the cause their share of power and influence, was another great source of weakness. Diversity of opinion arose on every subject; personal altercations of the bitterest kind, reproaches and insinuations, passed continually between them, and it needed all the skill and management of the chiefs to reconcile, even temporarily, these discordant ingredients, and maintain any semblance of agreement among these "United Irishmen."

Among those who lived away from such scenes of conflict the great complaint was the delay. "What are we waiting for?" "When are we to strike the blow?" were the questions ever arising; and their inability to answer such satisfactorily to the people only increased their chagrin and disappointment. If the sanguine betrayed impatience, the despondent—and there are such in every cause—showed signs of vacillation, and threw out dark hints of treachery and betrayal; while between both were the great masses, moved by every passing rumor, and as difficult to restrain to-day as impossible to muster to-morrow.

Such, briefly, was the condition of the party into which Mark O'Donoghue threw his fortune in life, as reckless of his fate as he was ignorant of the precise objects in view, or the means proposed for their accomplishment.

His influence among the people was considerable. Independently of all claims resulting from his name and family, he was individually a great favorite with them. Personal courage and daring, skill in every manly exercise, and undaunted resolution, are gifts which, when coupled with a rough good nature and a really kind heart, are certain of winning their way among a wild and uncultivated people; and thus Herbert, who scarcely ever uttered a harsh word, whose daily visits to the sick were a duty Sir Archy expected from him, whose readiness to oblige was the theme of every tongue, was less their favorite than his brother.

This influence, which, through Lanty Lawler, was soon reported to the delegates in Dublin, was the means of Mark's being taken into special confidence, and of a com-

mand being conferred on him, for the duties and privileges of which, he was informed, a few days would sufficiently instruct him.

Nearly a week had elapsed from the day on which Kate addressed her note to Mark, and he had not yet returned home. Such absences were common enough; but now she felt an impatience almost amounting to agony at the thought of what treasonable and dangerous projects he might be engaged in, and the doubt became a torture how far she ought to conceal her own discovery from others.

At length came the evening before her own departure from Carrignacurra, and they were seated around the tea-table, thoughtful and silent by turns, as are they who meet for the last time before separation. Although she heard with pleasure the announcement that Herbert would be her companion to the capital, where he was about to take up his residence as a student in Trinity College, her thoughts wandered away to the gloomier fortunes of Mark, darker as they now seemed in comparison with the prospects opening before his brother.

Of all the party Herbert alone was in good spirits. The career was about to begin which had engrossed all his boyish ambition, — the great race of intellect his very dreams had dwelt upon. What visions did he conjure of emulative ardor to carry off the prize among his companions, and win fame that might reflect its lustre on all his after life. From his very childhood Sir Archy had instilled into him this thirst for distinction, wisely substituting such an ambition for any other less ennobling. He had taught him to believe that there would be more true honor in the laurels there won than in all the efforts, however successful, to bring back the lost glories of their once proud house. And now he was on the very threshold of that career his heart was centred in. No wonder is it, then, if his spirits were high and his pulse throbbing. Sir Archy's eyes seldom wandered from him. He seemed as if reading the accomplishment of all his long teaching, and as he watched the flashing looks and the excited gestures of the boy, appeared as though calculating how far such a temperament might minister to or mar his future fortune.

The O'Donoghue was more thoughtful than usual. The idea of approaching solitude, so doubly sad to those advanced in life, depressed him. His evenings of late had been passed in a happy enjoyment he had not known for years before. Separation to the young is but the rupture of the ties of daily intercourse; to the old it has all the solemn meaning of a warning, and tells of the approach of the last dreadful parting, when adieus are said forever. He could not help those gloomy forebodings, and he was silent and depressed.

Kate's attention wandered from the theme of Herbert's anticipated pleasures to think again of him, for whom none seemed now interested. She had listened long and anxiously for some sound to mark his coming, but all was still without, and on the road for miles the moonlight showed no object moving; and at last a deep revery succeeded to this state of anxiety, and she sat lost to all around her. Meanwhile, Sir Archy, in a low, impressive voice, was warning Herbert of the dangers of involving himself in any way in the conflicts of party politics then so high in Dublin.

He cautioned him to reject those extreme opinions so fascinating to young minds, and which either give an unwarrantable bias to the judgment through life, or which, when their fallacy is detected, lead to a reaction as violent and notions as false. "Win character and reputation first, Herbert; gain the position from which your opinions will come with influence, and then, my boy, with judgment not rashly formed, and a mind trained to examine great questions, then you may fearlessly enter the lists, free to choose your place and party. You cannot be a patriot this way, in the newspaper sense of the term. It is possible, too, our dear Kate may deem your ambition a poor one —"

"Kate, did you say? — Kate, uncle?" said she, raising her head with a look of abstraction.

"Yes, my dear, I was speaking o' some of the dangers that beset the first steps in political opinion, and telling Herbert that peril does not always bring honor."

"True, sir — true; but Mark —" She stopped, and the blush that covered her face suffused her neck and shoulders. It was not till her lips pronounced the name that she

detected how inadvertently she had revealed the secret of her own musings.

"Mark, my sweet Kate, is, I trust, in no need of my warnings. He lives apart from the struggle; and, were it otherwise, he is older, and more able to form his opinions than Herbert here."

These words were spoken calmly, and with a studious desire to avoid increasing Kate's confusion.

"What about Mark?" cried the O'Donoghue, suddenly aroused by the mention of the name. "It's very strange he should not be here to say 'good-bye' to Kate. Did any one tell him of the time fixed for your departure?"

"I told him of it, and he has promised to be here," said Herbert. "He was going to Beerhaven for a day or two for the shooting, but, droll enough, he has left his gun behind him."

"The boy's not himself at all, latterly," muttered the old man. "Lanty brought up two horses here the other day, and he would not even go to the door to look at them. I don't know what he's thinking of."

Kate never spoke, and tried with a great effort to maintain a look of calm unconcern; when, with that strange instinct so indescribable and so inexplicable, she felt Sir Archy's eyes fixed upon her, her cheek became deadly pale.

"There — there he comes, and at a slapping pace, too!" cried Herbert; and as he spoke the clattering sound of a fast gallop was heard ascending the causeway, and the next moment the bell sent forth a loud summons.

"I knew he'd keep his word," said the boy, proudly, as he walked to meet him. The door opened, and Frederick Travers appeared.

So unexpected was the disappointment, it needed all Sir Archy's practised politeness to conceal from the young Guardsman the discomfiture of the rest. Nor did he entirely succeed, for Frederick was no common observer, and failed not to detect in every countenance around that his was not the coming looked for.

"I owe a thousand apologies for the hour of my visit, not to speak of its abruptness," said he, graciously; "but

we only learned accidentally to-day that Herbert was going up to Dublin, and my father sent me to request he would join our party."

"He is about to enter college," said Sir Archy, half fearing to divert the youth's mind from the great object of his journey.

"Be it so," said Fred, gayly. "We'll talk Virgil and Homer on the road."

"I'm afraid such pleasant companionship may put Greece and Rome in the background," said Sir Archy, dryly.

"I'll answer for it, he'll be nothing the worse for the brief respite from study. Besides, you'd not refuse me his company, when I tell you that otherwise I must travel alone, my father in his wisdom having decided to despatch me half a day in advance to make preparations for his arrival. Is that quite fair, Miss O'Donoghue?"

"I protest I think not, as regards us. As for you," added she, archly, "I should say so accomplished a traveller always finds sufficient to amuse him on the least interesting journey. I remember a little theory of yours on that subject; you mentioned it the first time I had the pleasure to meet you."

The allusion was with reference to the manner in which Travers made her acquaintance in the Bristol packet, and the cool assurance of which she, with most womanly pertinacity, had not yet forgiven. Travers, who had often felt ashamed of the circumstance, and had hoped it long since forgotten, looked the very picture of confusion.

"I perceive Sir Archibald has not taught you to respect his native proverb, Miss O'Donoghue, and let 'bygones be bygones.'"

"I hae taught her nothing Scotch, sir," replied Sir Archy, smiling, "but to love a thistle, and that e'en because it has a sting."

"Not for those that know how to take it, uncle," said she, archly, and with a fond expression that lit up the old man's face in smiles.

The Guardsman was less at his ease than usual; and, having arranged the matter of his visit satisfactorily, arose to take his leave.

"Then you'll be ready for me at eight, Herbert. My father is a martinet in punctuality, and the phaeton will not be a second behind time; remember that, Miss O'Donoghue, for he makes no exception, even for ladies."

He moved towards the door; then, turning suddenly, said, —

"By the by, have you heard anything of a movement in the country here about us? The Government have apparently got some information on the subject, but I suspect without any foundation whatever."

"To what extent does this information go?" said Sir Archy, cautiously.

"That I can't tell you. All I know is, that my father has just received a letter from the Castle, stating that we are living in the very midst of an organized rebellion, only waiting the signal for open revolt."

"That same rebellion has been going on, to my knowledge, something more than forty years," said the O'Donoghue, laughing; "and I never knew of a lord-lieutenant or chief secretary who did n't discover the plot, and save the kingdom; always leaving a nest-egg of treason for his successor to make a character by."

"I'm no so sure it will no come to a hatching yet," said Sir Archy, with a dry shake of the head.

"If it is to come, I wish with all my heart it might while I have a chance of being a spectator," said Travers. Then, suddenly remembering that the levity of the remark might not please the others, he muttered a few words about a hope of better prospects, and withdrew.

During this brief colloquy, Kate listened with breathless interest to learn some fact, or even some well-grounded suspicion, which might serve to put Mark on his guard; but nothing could be more vague and indecisive than Travers's information, and it was evident that he had not concealed anything he knew. Was he in a position to learn more? was the next question to herself; might he not be able to ascertain where the suspicion of Government rested, and on whom? Her decisions were seldom but the work of a second, and, as soon as this thought struck her, she determined to act upon it. Slipping noiselessly from the room,

she hastily threw a shawl around her, and hurried from the house by a small postern door which, leading down to the high road, was considerably shorter than the causeway by which Travers must pass.

It was no time for the indulgence of bashfulness, and, indeed, her thoughts were far too highly excited by another's destiny to leave any room to think of herself; and, short as the path was, it sufficed to let her arrange her plan of procedure, even to the very words she should employ.

"I must not tell him it is for Mark," said she; "he must think it is a general desire to save any rash or misguided enthusiast from ruin. But here he comes." And at the same instant the figure of a man was seen approaching, leading his horse by the bridle. The dark shadow of the castle fell across the road at the spot, and served to make the form dim and indistinct. Kate waited not for his coming nearer, but, advancing hastily towards him, cried out, —

"Captain Travers, I have a favor to ask you, — one which my coming thus to seek —"

"Say no more, Kate, lest I hear what was never intended for my ears," said a low, deep voice.

"Mark — cousin Mark, is this you?" cried she, with mingled pleasure and shame.

"Yes," replied he, in a tone of still deeper gravity; "I grieve to disappoint you, — it is me."

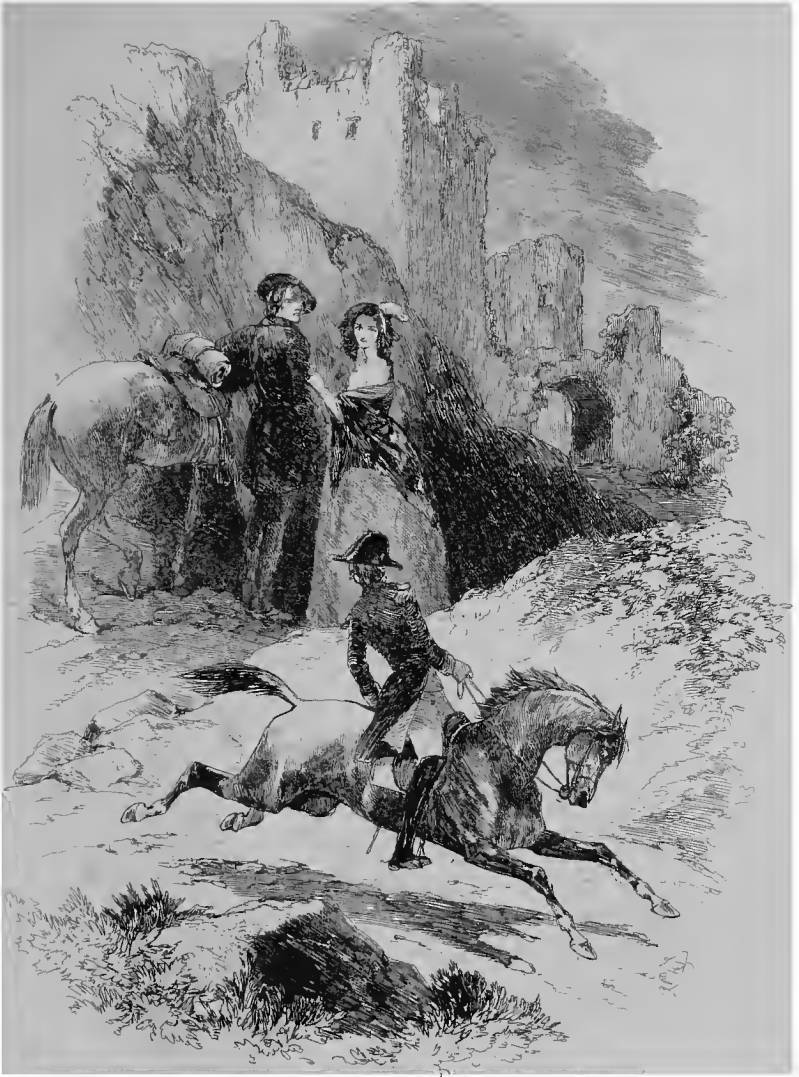
"Oh, Mark, mistake me not, — do not wrong me," said she, laying her hand affectionately on his arm. "I have longed so much to see you, — to speak to you, ere we went away."

"To see *me* — to speak to *me*!" said he, stepping back, and letting the moonlight fall full upon his features, now pale as death. "It was not *me* you expected to meet here."

"No, Mark, but it was for you I came. I wished to serve — perhaps to save you. I know your secret, Mark, but it is safe with me."

"And I know yours, young lady," retorted he, bitterly. "I cannot say how far my discretion will rival your own."

As he spoke, a horseman darted rapidly past, and, as he emerged from the shadow, turned round in his saddle,



Good Night!

stared fixedly at the figures before him, and then, taking off his hat, said, —

“Good-night, Miss O’Donoghue.”

When Kate recovered the shock of this surprise, she found herself alone, — Mark had disappeared; and she now returned slowly to the castle, her heart torn with opposing emotions, among which wounded pride was not the least poignant.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SUPPER PARTY.

As we are about to withdraw our reader for a brief period from the scenes wherein he has so kindly lingered with us hitherto, we may be permitted to throw on them a last look ere we part.

On the evening which followed that recorded in our last chapter, the two old men were seated alone in the tower of Carrignacurra, silent and thoughtful, each following out in his mind the fortunes of him for whom his interest was deepest, and each sad with the sorrow that never spares those who are, or who deem themselves, forsaken.

Unaided memory can conjure up no such memorials of past pleasure as come from the objects and scenes associated with days and nights of happiness. They appeal with a force mere speculation never suggests, and bring back all the lesser but more touching incidents of hourly intercourse, so little at the time — so much when remembered years afterwards.

The brightest moments of life are the most difficult to recall; they are like the brilliant lights upon a landscape, which we may revisit a hundred times, yet never behold under the same favorable circumstances, nor gaze on with the same enthusiasm as at first. It was thus that both the O'Donoghue and Sir Archy now remembered her whose presence lightened so many hours of solitude, and even grafted hope upon the tree scathed and withered by evil fortune. Several efforts to start a topic of conversation were made by each, but all equally fruitless, and both relapsed into a moody silence, from which they were suddenly aroused by a violent ringing at the gate, and the

voices of many persons talking together, among which Mark O'Donoghue's could plainly be heard.

"Yes, but I insist upon it," cried he; "to refuse will offend me."

Some words were then spoken in a tone of remonstrance, to which he again replied, but with even greater energy, —

"What care I for that? This is my father's house, and who shall say that his eldest son cannot introduce his friends —"

A violent jerk at the bell drowned the remainder of the speech.

"We are about to hae company, I perceive," said Sir Archy, looking cautiously about to secure his book and his spectacles before retreating to his bedroom.

"Bedad, you guessed it," said Kerry, who, having reconnoitred the party through a small window beside the door, had now prudently adjourned to take counsel whether to admit them. "There's eight or nine at laste, and it is n't fresh and fasting either they are."

"Why don't you open the door? — do you want your bones broken for you?" said the O'Donoghue, harshly.

"I'd let them gang the gate they cam," said Sir Archy, sagely; "if I may hazard a guess from their speech, they are no in a fit state to visit any respectable house. Hear till that?"

A fearful shout now was heard outside.

"What's the rascal staring at?" cried the O'Donoghue, with clinched teeth. "Open the door this instant."

But the words were scarcely uttered, when a tremendous crash resounded through the whole building, and then a heavy noise like the fall of some weighty object.

"'Tis the window he's bruk in, — divil a lie," cried Kerry, in an accent of unfeigned terror; and, without waiting a second, he rushed from the room to seek some place of concealment from Mark's anger.

The clash of the massive chain was next heard, as it banged heavily against the oak door; bolt after bolt was quickly shot, and Mark, calling out, "Follow me, — this way," rudely pushed wide the door and entered the tower. A mere passing glance was enough to show that his ex-

citement was not merely the fruit of passion; his eyes wild and bloodshot, his flushed cheek, his swollen and heavy lips, all betrayed that he had drunk deeply. His cravat was loose and his vest open, while the fingers of his right hand were one mass of blood, from the violence with which he had forced his entrance.

"Come along, Talbot — Holt, this way — come in, boys," said he, calling to those behind. "I told them we should find you here, though they insisted it was too late."

"Never too late to welcome a guest, Mark, but always too early to part with one," cried the O'Donoghue, who, although shocked at the condition he beheld his son in, resolved to betray for the time no apparent consciousness of it.

"This is my friend Harry Talbot, father, — Sir Archy M'Nab, my uncle. Holt, where are you? I'll be hanged if they're not slipped away;" and with a fearful imprecation on their treachery, he rushed from the room, leaving Talbot to make his own advances. The rapid tramp of feet, and the loud laughter of the fugitives without, did not for a second or two permit of his few words being heard; but his manner and air had so far assured Sir Archy that he stopped short as he was about to leave the room, and saluted him courteously.

"It would be very ungracious in me," said Talbot, smiling, "to disparage my friend Mark's hospitable intentions, but in truth I feel so much ashamed for the manner of our entry here this evening that I cannot express the pleasure such a visit would have given me under more becoming circumstances."

Sir Archibald's surprise at the tone in which these words were delivered did not prevent him making a suitable reply, while, relinquishing his intention of retiring, he extinguished his candle, and took a seat opposite Talbot.

Having in an early chapter of our tale presented this gentleman to our reader's notice, we have scarcely anything to add on the present occasion. His dress, indeed, was somewhat different: then, he wore a riding costume, — now, he was habited in a frock richly braided, and ornamented with a deep border of black fur; a cap of the same

skin, from which hung a band of deep gold lace, he also carried in his hand—a costume which at the time would have been called foreign.

While Sir Archy was interchanging courtesies with the newly arrived guest, the O'Donoghue, by dint of reiterated pulling at the bell, had succeeded in inducing Kerry O'Leary to quit his sanctuary, and venture to the door of his apartment, which he did with a caution only to be acquired by long practice.

“Is he here, sir?” whispered he, as his eyes took a rapid but searching survey of the apartment. “Blessed Virgin, but he's in a dreadful temper to-night.”

“Bring some supper here, directly,” cried O'Donoghue, striking the ground angrily with his heavy cane; “if I have to tell you again, I hope he'll break every bone in your skin.”

“I request you will not order any refreshment for me, sir,” said Talbot, bowing: “we partook of a very excellent supper at a little cabin in the glen, where, among other advantages, I had the pleasure of making your son's acquaintance.”

“Ah, indeed, at Mary's,” said the old man. “There are worse places than that little ‘shebeen’: but you must permit me to offer you a glass of claret, which never tastes the worse in company with a grouse-pie.”

“You must hae found the travelling somewhat rude in these parts,” said M'Nab, who thus endeavored to draw from the stranger some hint either as to the object or the road of his journey.

“We were not over particular on that score,” said Talbot, laughing. “A few young college men, seeking some days' amusement in the wild mountains of this picturesque district, could well afford to rough it for the enjoyment of the ramble.”

“You should visit us in the autumn,” said O'Donoghue, “when our heaths and arbutus blossoms are in beauty; then, they who have travelled far, tell me that there is nothing to be seen in Switzerland finer than this valley. Draw your chair over here, and let me have the pleasure of a glass of wine with you.”

The party had scarcely taken their places at the table, when Mark re-entered the room, heated and excited with the chase of the fugitives.

"They're off," muttered he, angrily, "down the glen, and I only hope they may lose their way in it, and spend the night upon the heather."

As he spoke, he turned his eyes to the corner of the room, where Kerry, in a state of the most abject fear, was



endeavoring to extract a cork from a bottle by means of a very impracticable screw.

"Ah, you there!" cried he, as his eyes flashed fire. "Hold the bottle up—hold it steady, you old fool!" and with a savage grin he drew a pistol from his breast-pocket, and levelled it at the mark.

Kerry was on his knees, one hand on the floor and in the other the bottle, which, despite all his efforts, he swayed backwards and forwards.

“O master, darlin’! — O Sir Archy dear! — O Joseph and Mary!”

“I’ve drunk too much wine to hit it flying,” said Mark, with a half-drunken laugh, “and the fool won’t be steady. There!” and as he spoke, the crash of the report resounded through the room, and the neck of the bottle was snapped off about half an inch below the cork.

“Neatly done, Mark, — not a doubt of it,” said the O’Donoghue, as he took the bottle from Kerry’s hand, who, with a pace a kangaroo might have envied, approached the table, actually dreading to stand up straight in Mark’s presence.

“At the risk of being thought an epicure,” said M’Nab, “I maun say I’d like my wine handled more tenderly.”

“It was cleverly done, though,” said Talbot, helping himself to a bumper from the broken flask. “I remember a trick we used to have at St. Cyr, which was, to place a bullet on a cork, and then, at fifteen paces, cut away the cork, and drop the bullet into the bottle.”

“No man ever did that twice,” cried Mark, rudely.

“I’ll wager a hundred guineas I do it twice, within five shots,” said Talbot, with the most perfect coolness.

“Done, for a hundred, — I say done,” said Mark, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder.

“I’ll not win your money on such unfair terms,” said Talbot, laughing; “and if I can refrain from taking too much of this excellent Bordeaux, I’ll do the trick to-morrow without a wager.”

Mark, like most persons who place great store by feats of skill and address, felt vexed at the superiority claimed by another, answered carelessly, “that, after all, perhaps the thing was easier than it seemed.”

“Very true,” chimed in Talbot, mildly; “what we have neither done ourselves nor seen done by another, has always the appearance of difficulty. What is called wisdom is little other than the power of calculating success or failure on grounds of mere probability.”

“Your definition has the advantage of being sufficient for the occasion,” said Sir Archy, smiling. “I am happy to find our glen has not disappointed you; but if you have

not seen the Lake and the Bay of Glengariff, I anticipate even a higher praise from you."

"We spent the day on the water," replied Talbot; "and if it were not a heresy, I should affirm that these bold mountains are grander and more sublime in the desolation of winter than even when clothed in the purple and gold of summer. There was a fine sea, too, rolling into that great bay bounding upon the rocks, and swelling proudly against the tall cliffs, which, to my eye, is more pleasurable than the glassy surface of calm water. Motion is the life of inanimate objects, and life has always its own powers of excitement."

While they conversed thus, M'Nab, endeavoring, by adroit allusions to the place, to divine the real reason of the visit, and Talbot, by encomiums on the scenery, or, occasionally, by the expression of some abstract proposition, seeking to avoid any direct interrogatory, Mark, who had grown weary of a dialogue, which, even in his clearer moments, would not have interested him, filling and refilling a large glass unceasingly, while the O'Donoghue merely paid that degree of attention which politeness demanded.

It was thus that, while Sir Archy believed he was pushing Talbot closely on the objects of his coming, Talbot was, in reality, obtaining from him much information about the country generally, the habits of the people, and their modes of life, which he effected in the easy, unconstrained manner of one perfectly calm and unconcerned. "The life of a fisherman," said he, in reply to a remark of Sir Archy's, — "the life of a fisherman is, however, a poor one; for though his gains are great at certain seasons, there are days — ay, whole months — he cannot venture out to sea. Now, it strikes me that in that very Bay of Bantry the swell must be terrific when the wind blows from the west or the nor'-west."

"You are right, — quite right," answered M'Nab, who at once entered freely into a discussion of the condition of the bay, under the various changing circumstances of wind and tide. "Many of our poor fellows have been lost within my own memory, and, indeed, save when we have an easterly wind —"

“An easterly wind?” re-echoed Mark, lifting his head suddenly from between his hands, and staring in half-drunken astonishment around him. “Is that the toast, — did you say that?”

“With all my heart,” said Sir Archy, smiling. “There are few sentiments deserve a bumper better by any who live in these parts. Won’t you join us, Mr. Talbot?”

“Of course I will,” said Talbot, laughing; but with all his efforts to seem at ease, a quick observer might have remarked the look of warning he threw towards the young O’Donoghue.

“Here, then,” cried Mark, rising, while the wine trickled over his hand from a brimming goblet, “I’ll give it, — are you ready?”

“All ready, Mark,” said the O’Donoghue, laughing heartily at the serious gravity of Mark’s countenance.

“Confound it,” cried the youth, passionately, “I forget the jingle.”

“Never mind — never mind,” interposed Talbot, slyly; “we’ll pledge it with as good a mind.”

“That’s — that’s it,” shouted Mark, as the last word clinked upon his memory. “I have it now,” and his eyes sparkled, and his brows were met, as he called out, —

“A stout heart and mind,
And an easterly wind,
And the Devil behind
The Saxon.”

Sir Archy laid down his glass untasted, while Talbot, bursting forth into a well-acted laugh, cried out, “You must excuse me from repeating your amiable sentiment, which, for aught I can guess, may be a sarcasm on my own country.”

“I’d like to hear the same toast explained,” said Sir Archy, cautiously, while his looks wandered alternately from Mark to Talbot.

“So you shall, then,” replied Mark, sternly, “and this very moment too.”

“Come, that’s fair,” chimed in Talbot, while he fixed his eyes on the youth with such a steady gaze as seemed actually to have pierced the dull vapor of his clouded intellect, and

flashed light upon his addled brain. "Let us hear your explanation."

Mark, for a second or two, looked like one suddenly awakened from a deep sleep, and trying to collect his wandering faculties, while, as if instinctively seeking the clew to his bewilderment from Talbot, he never turned his eyes from him. As he sat thus he looked the very ideal of half-drunken stupidity.

"I'm afraid we have no right to ask the explanation," whispered Talbot into M'Nab's ear. "We ought to be satisfied if he give us the rhyme, even though he forget the reason."

"I'm thinking you're right, sir," replied M'Nab; "but I suspect we hae na the poet before us ony mair than the interpreter."

Mark's faculties, in slow pursuit of Talbot's meaning, had just at this instant overtaken their object, and he burst forth into a boisterous fit of laughter, which, whatever sentiment it might have excited in the others, relieved Talbot, at least, from all his former embarrassment: he saw that Mark had, though late, recognized his warning, and was at once relieved from any uneasiness on the score of his imprudence.

Sir Archy was, however, very far from feeling satisfied. What he had heard, brief and broken as it was, but served to excite his suspicions, and make him regard this guest as at least a very doubtful character. Too shrewd a diplomatist to push his inquiries any farther, he adroitly turned the conversation upon matters of comparative indifference, reserving to himself the part of acutely watching Talbot's manner, and narrowly scrutinizing the extent of his acquaintance with Mark O'Donoghue. In whatever school Talbot had been taught, his skill was more than a match for Sir Archy's. Not only did he at once detect the meaning of the old man's policy, but he contrived to make it subservient to his own views by the opportunity it afforded him of estimating the influence he was capable of exerting over his nephew, and how far, if need were, Mark should become dependent on his will, rather than on that of any member of his own family. The frankness of his manner, the seeming

openness of his nature, rendered his task a matter of apparent amusement; and none at the table looked in every respect more at ease than Harry Talbot.

While Sir Archy was thus endeavoring, with such skill as he possessed, to worm out the secret reason — and such, he well knew, there must be — of Talbot's visit to that unfrequented region, Kerry O'Leary was speculating, with all his imaginative ability, how best to account for that event. The occasion was one of more than ordinary difficulty. Talbot looked neither like a bailiff nor a sheriff's officer; neither had he outward signs of a lawyer or an attorney. Kerry was conversant with the traits of each of these. If he were a suitor for Miss Kate, his last guess, he was a day too late.

“But sure he could n't be that; he'd never come with a throop of noisy vagabonds, in the dead of the night, av he was after the young lady. Well, well, he bates me out, — sorra lie in it,” said he, drawing a heavy sigh, and crossing his hands before him in sad resignation.

“On my conscience, then, it was a charity to cut your hair for you, anyhow!” said Mrs. Branaghan, who had been calmly meditating on the pistol-shot, which, in grazing Kerry's hair, had somewhat damaged his locks.

“See, then, by the holy mass! av he went half an inch lower, it's my life he'd be after taking; and av he was the fifty O'Donoghues, I'd have my vinginee. Bad cess to me, but they think the likes of me is n't fit to live at all.”

“They do,” responded Mrs. Branaghan, with a mild puff of smoke from the corner of her mouth — “they do; and if they never did worse than extarminate such varmin, their sowls would have an easier time of it.”

Kerry's brow lowered, and his lips muttered, but no distinct reply was audible.

“Sorra bit of good I see in ye at all,” said she, with inexorable severity. “I mind the time ye used to tell a body what was doing above stairs; and though half what ye said was lies, it was better than nothing: but now yer as stupid and lazy as the ould beast there fornint the fire, — not a word out of your head from morning to night. Ayeh, is it your hearin' 's failin' ye?”

"I wish to the Blessed Mother it was," muttered he, fervently, to himself.

"There's a man now eatin' and drinkin' in the parlor, and the sorra more ye know about him than if he was the Queen of Sheba."

"Don't I, thin, — maybe not," said Kerry, tauntingly, and with a look of such well-affected secrecy that Mrs. Branaghan was completely deceived by it.

"What is he, then? — spake it out free this minit," said she. "Bad cess to you, do you want to trate me like an informer?"

"No, indeed, Mrs. Branaghan; it's not that same I'd even to you — sure I knew your people — father and mother's side — two generations back. Miles Buoy — Yallow Miles, as they called him — was the finest judge of a horse in Kerry, — I wonder, now, he did n't make a power of money."

"And so he did, and spint it after. 'T was blackguards, with ould gaiters, and one spur on them, that ate up every shilling he saved."

"Well, well! think of that now," said Kerry, with the sententiousness of one revolving some strange and curious social anomaly; "and that's the way it wint?"

"Was n't it a likely way enough?" said Mrs. Branaghan, with flashing eyes; "feedin' a set of spalpeeus that thought of nothing but chating the world! The sight of a pair of top-boots gives me the heartburn to this day."

"Mine warms to them, too," said Kerry, timidly, who ventured on his humble pun with deep humility.

A contemptuous scowl was Mrs. Branaghan's reply, and Kerry resumed, —

"Them's the changes of the world; rich yesterday, — poor to-day. Dou't I know what poverty is well myself? Augh! sure enough they wor the fine times when I rode out on a beast worth eighty guineas in goold, wid clothes on my back a lord might envy; and now, look at me!"

Mrs. Branaghan, to whom the rhetorical figure seemed a direct appeal, did look; and assuredly the inspection conveyed nothing flattering, for she turned away abruptly and smoked her pipe with an air of profound disdain.

"Faix, ye may say so," continued Kerry, converting her

glance into words. " 'T is a poor object I am this blessed day. The coat on my back is more like a transparency, and my small-clothes, saving your favor, is as hard to get into as a fishing-net; and if I was training for the coorse I couldn't be on shorter allowance."

"What's that yer saying about yer vittals?" said the cook, turning fiercely towards him. "There's not your equal for an appetite from this to Cork. It's little time a Kerry cow would keep you in beef, and it's an ill skin it goes into. Yer a disgrace to a good family."

"Well, I am, and there's no denying it!" ejaculated Kerry, with a sigh that sounded far more like despair than resignation.

"Is it to hang yourself you have that piece of a rope there?" said she, pointing to the end of a stout cord that depended from Kerry's pocket.

"Maybe it might come to that same yet," said he; and then putting his hand into his pocket, he drew forth a great coil of rope, to the end of which a leaden weight was fastened. "There now," resumed he, "yer a cute woman — can ye tell me what's the meanin' of that?"

Mrs. Branaghan gave one look at the object in question, and then turned away, as though the inquiry was one beneath her dignity to investigate.

"Some would call it a clothes-line, and more would say it was for fishing; but sure there's no sign of hooks on it at all; and what's the piece of lead for? — that's what bothers me out entirely."

These observations were so many devices to induce Mrs. Branaghan to offer her own speculations; but they failed utterly, that sage personage not deigning to pay the least attention either to Kerry or the subject of his remarks.

"Well, I'll just leave it where I found it," said he, in a half soliloquy, but which had the effect of at least arousing the curiosity of his companion.

"And where was that?" asked she.

"Outside there, before the hall door," said he, carelessly, "where I got this little paper book too;" and he produced a small pocket almanac with blank pages interleaved, some of which had short pencil memoranda. I'll leave them

both there, for, somehow, I don't like the look of either of them."

"Read us a bit of it first, anyhow," said Mrs. Branaghan, in a more conciliating tone than she had yet employed.

"'T is what I can't do, then," said Kerry, "for it's writ in some outlandish tongue that's past me altogether."

"And you found them at the door, ye say?"

"Out there fornint the tower. 'T was the chaps that run away from Master Mark that dropped them. Ye'r a dhroll bit of a rope as ever I seen," added he, as he poised the lead in his hand, "av a body knew only what to make of ye." Then turning to the book, he pored for several minutes over a page, in which there were some lines written with a pencil. "Be my conscience I have it," said he, at length; "and faix it was n't bad of me to make it out. What do you think, now, the rope is for?"

"Sure I tould you afore I did n't know."

"Well, then, hear it, and no lie in it, — 't is for measurin' the say."

"Measurin' the say! What bother you're talking; is n't the say thousands and thousands of miles long?"

"And who says it is n't? — but for measurin' the depth of it, that's what it is. Listen to this — 'Bantry Bay, eleven fathoms at low water inside of Whiddy Island; but the shore current at half ebb makes landing difficult with any wind from the westward; and here's another piece, half rubbed out, about flat-bottomed boats being best for the surf.'"

"'T is the smugglers again," chimed in Mrs. Branaghan, as though summing up her opinion on the evidence.

"Troth, then, I don't think so; they never found it hard to land, no matter how it blew. I'm thinking of a way to find it out at last."

"And what's that?"

"I'll just go up to the parlor, wid an innocent face on me, and I'll lay the rope and the little book down on the table before the strange man there, and I'll just say, 'There's the things your honor dropped at the door outside;' and maybe ould Archy won't have the saycret out of him."

“Do that, Kerry avich,” said Mrs. Branaghan, who at length vouchsafed a hearty approval of his skill in devices, — “do that, and I’ll broil a bit o’ meat for ye agin ye come down.”

“Wid an onion on it, av it’s plazing to ye, ma’am,” said Kerry, insinuatingly.

“Sure I know how you like it; and if ye have the whole of the saycret, maybe you’d get a dhrop to wash it down besides.”

“And wish you health and happy days, Mrs. Branaghan,” added Kerry, with a courteous gallantry he always reserved for the kitchen. So saying, he arose from his chair, and proceeded to arrange his dress in a manner becoming the dignity of his new mission, rehearsing at the same time the mode of his entry.

“‘T is the rope and the little book, your honor,’ I’ll say, ‘that ye dropped outside there, and sure it would be a pity to lose it afther all your trouble measuring the places.’ That will be enough for ould Archy; let him get a sniff of the game once, and begorra he’ll run him home by himself afterwards.”

With this sensible reflection Kerry ascended the stairs in high good humor at his own sagacity and the excellent reward which awaited it on his return. As he neared the door, the voices were loud and boisterous; at least, Mark’s was such; and it seemed as if Talbot was endeavoring to moderate the violent tone in which he spoke, and successfully, too; for a loud burst of laughter followed, in which Talbot appeared to join heartily.

“Maybe I’ll spoil your fun,” said Kerry, maliciously, to himself; and he opened the door, and entered.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CAPITAL AND ITS PLEASURES.

DUBLIN, at the time we speak of, possessed social attractions of a high order. Rank, beauty, intellect, and wealth, contributed their several influences; and while the tone of society had all the charms of a politeness now bygone, there was an admixture of native kindness and cordiality as distinctive as it was fascinating.

Almost every Irishman of rank travelled in those days. It was regarded as the last finishing-touch of education, and few nations possess quicker powers of imitation, or a greater aptitude in adapting foreign habitudes to home usages, than the Irish; for, while vanity with the Frenchman — coldness with the Englishman — and stolid indifference with the German, are insuperable barriers against this acquirement, the natural gayety of Irish character, the buoyancy, but still more than all, perhaps, the inherent desire to please, suggest a quality which, when cultivated and improved, becomes that great element of social success — the most precious of all drawing-room gifts — men call *tact*.

It would be a most unfair criterion of the tastes and pleasures of that day, were we to pronounce from our experience of what Dublin now is. Provincialism had not then settled down upon the city, with all its petty attendant evils. The character of a metropolis was upheld by a splendid Court, a resident Parliament, a great and titled aristocracy. The foreground figures of the time were men whose names stood high, and whose station was recognized at every Court of Europe. There was wealth more than proportioned to the cheapness of the country; and while ability and talent were the most striking features of every circle, the taste for gorgeous display exhibited within doors and without, threw a glare of splendor over the scene, that

served to illustrate, but not eclipse, the prouder glories of mind. The comparative narrowness of the circle, and the total absence of English reserve, produced a more intimate admixture of all the ranks which constitute good society here than in London, and the advantages were evident; for while the aristocrat gained immeasurably from intercourse with men whose pursuits were purely intellectual, so the latter acquired a greater expansiveness, and a wider liberality in his views, from being divested of all the trammels of mere professional habit, and threw off his pedantry as a garment unsuited to his position in society. But what more than all else was the characteristic of the time, was the fact that social eminence — the *succès de salon* — was an object to every one. From the proud peer who aspired to rank and influence in the councils of the State, to the rising barrister ambitious of parliamentary distinction — from the mere fashionable idler of the squares to the deeper plotter of political intrigue — this was alike indispensable. The mere admission into certain circles was nothing, — the fact of mixing with the hundred others who are announced, and bow, and smile, and slip away, did not then serve to identify a man as belonging to a distinct class in society; nor would the easy platitudes of the present day, in which the fool or the fop can always have the ascendant, suffice for the absence of conversational ability, ready wit, and sharp intelligence, which were assembled around every dinner-table of the capital.

It is not our duty, still less our inclination, to inquire why have all these goodly attractions left us, nor wherefore is it, that, like the art of staining glass, social agreeability should be lost forever. So it would seem, however; we have fallen upon tiresome times, and he who is old enough to remember pleasanter ones has the sad solace of knowing that he has seen the last of them.

Crowded as the capital was with rank, wealth, and influence, the arrival of Sir Marmaduke Travers was not without its *éclat*. His vast fortune was generally known; besides that, there was a singularity in the fact of an Englishman, bound to Ireland by the very slender tie of a small estate, without connections or friends in the country, coming to

reside in Dublin, which gratified native pride as much as it excited public curiosity; and the rapidity with which the most splendid mansion in Stephen's Green was prepared for his reception vied in interest with the speculation as to what possible cause had induced him to come and live there. The rumors of his intended magnificence, and the splendor of his equipage, furnished gossip for the town and paragraphs for the papers.

It was, indeed, a wondrous change for those two young girls, — from the stillness and solitude of Glenflesk, to the gayety of the capital, from a life of reflection and retirement, to the dazzling scenes and fascinating pleasures of a new world. Upon Sybella the first effect was to increase her natural timidity, — to render her more cautious, as she found herself surrounded by influences so novel and so strange; and in this wise there was mingled with her enjoyment a sense of hesitation and fear that tinged all her thoughts, and even impressed themselves upon her manner. Not so with Kate: the instinct that made her feel at home in the world was but the consciousness of her own powers of pleasing. She loved society as the scene where, however glossed over by conventionalities, human passions and feelings were at work, and where the power of influencing or directing others gave a stimulus to existence far higher and nobler than all the pleasures of retirement. It was life, in fact. Each day had its own separate interests, dramatizing, as it were, the real, and making of the ordinary events of the world a romance, of which she felt herself a character. As much an actor as spectator, she threw herself into the pleasures of society with a zest which need only have the accompaniments of youth, beauty, and talents, to make it contagious. Thus differing in character as in appearance, these two young girls at once became the acknowledged beauties of the capital, and each was followed by a troop of admirers, whose enthusiasm exhibited itself in a hundred different ways. Their favorite colors at a ball became the fashionable emblems of the next day on the promenade, and even the ladies caught up the contagion, and enlisted themselves into parties, whose rivalry amused none so much as those in whom it had its origin.

While the galling enmity of Celt to Saxon was then stirring in secret the hearts of thousands in the country, and fashioning itself into the elements of open insurrection, the city was divided by a more peaceful animosity, and the English and the Irish party were arrayed against each other in the cause of beauty.

It would be impossible to conceive a rivalry from which every ungenerous or unworthy feeling was more perfectly excluded. So far from any jealousy obtruding, every little triumph of one was a source of unalloyed heartfelt pleasure to the other; and while Sybella sympathized with all the delight of Kate's followers in an Irish success, so Kate, with characteristic feeling, enjoyed nothing so much as the chagrin of her own party when Sybella was unquestionably in the ascendant. Happily for us, we are not called upon to explain a phenomenon so novel and so pleasing, — enough if we record it. Certain it is, the absence of all envy enhanced the fascinations of each, and exalted the objects in the eyes of their admirers. On this point alone opinion was undivided: none claimed any superiority for their idol by ascribing to her a greater share of this good gift; nor could even malice impute a difference in their mutual affection.

One alone among the circle of their acquaintances stood neutral, — unable to divest himself enough of natural partiality to be a fair and just judge. Sir Marmaduke Travers candidly avowed that he felt himself out of court. The leaders of fashion, the great arbiters of *bon ton*, were happily divided, and if England could boast of a majority among the Castle party, Ireland turned the scale with those who, having enjoyed opportunities of studying foreign manner, pronounced Kate's the very perfection of French agreeability, united to native loveliness and attraction.

So much for "the sensation," to use the phrase appropriated by the newspapers, their entrance into the fashionable life of Dublin excited. Let us now return to the parties themselves. In a large and splendidly furnished apartment of Sir Marmaduke's Dublin residence, sat the baronet, his daughter, and Kate, at breakfast, alternately reading from the morning papers, and discussing the news as they ate.

"Well, but, my dear Kate," — Sir Marmaduke had eman-

ipated himself from the more formal "Miss" a week before, — "turn to another column, and let us hear if they have any political news."

"There's not a word, sir, unless an allusion to the rebel color of my dress at the Chancellor's ball be such. You see, Sybella, Falkner fights not under my banner."

"I think you stole the Chancellor himself from me," replied Sybella, laughing, "and I must say most unhand- somely too: he had just given me his arm, to lead me to a chair, when you said something in a half whisper, — I could not catch it if I would, — he dropped my arm, burst out a laughing, and hurried over to Lord Clonmel, — I suppose to repeat it."

"It was not worth relating, then," said Kate, with a toss of her head. "I merely remarked how odd it was Lady Ridgeway could not dance in time, with such beautiful clocks on her stocking."

"Oh, Kate, dearest!" said Sybella, who, while she could not refrain from a burst of laughter, became deep scarlet at her friend's hardihood.

"Why, Meddlicot told that as his own at supper," said Sir Marmaduke.

"So he did, sir; but I cautioned him that a license for wholesale does not permit the retail even of jokes. Is not the worthy sheriff a druggist? But what have we here, — all manner of changes on the staff: Lord Sellbridge to join his regiment at Hounslow, vice Captain — your brother, Sybella — Captain Frederick Travers;" and she reddened slightly at the words. "I did not know he was appointed aide-de-camp to the Viceroy."

"Nor did I, my dear," said Sir Marmaduke. "I knew he was most anxious to make the exchange with Lord Sellbridge; but this is the first I have heard of the success of his negotiation."

"You see, Kate," said Sybella, while a sly glance shot beneath her long-lashed lids, "that even Fred has become a partisan of Ireland."

"Perhaps the prospect of the revolt he hinted at," replied Kate, with an air of scornful pride, "has made the Guardsman prefer this country for the moment."

“I incline to a very different reason,” said Sybella, but in a voice so subdued as to be only audible to Kate herself, who again blushed deeply, and seemed greatly confused.

“Ha! here it is,” said Sir Marmaduke, reading aloud a long paragraph from a morning paper, which, descanting on the abortiveness of any effort to destroy the peace of the realm by enemies without or within its frontiers, concluded with a glowing panegyric on the blessings of the British constitution. “‘The Government, while confiding implicitly on the loyalty and bravery of his Majesty’s people, have yet neglected no measures of precaution against the insane and rash attempts of our “natural enemies,” whose temerity is certain of again receiving the same severe lesson which every attempt upon our shores has taught them.’ Yes — yes — very prompt and active measures — nothing could be better,” muttered he to himself.

“May I ask what they consist in, these precautionary movements?” said Kate.

“A full organization of the militia and yeomanry,” replied Sir Marmaduke, proudly, — for he commanded a regiment of Northamptonshire Fencibles, — “strengthening the different garrisons in large towns, mounting guns of heavy calibre on the forts —”

A hearty burst of laughter broke from Kate, which she made no effort to control whatever.

“I cannot help laughing, because that same word recalls a conversation I once heard between two French officers in Bruges. One of them, who seemed to know Ireland well, averred that these forts were so placed as only to be capable of battering down each other. I know he instanced two on the southern coast, which, in three discharges, must inevitably make a drawn battle of it.”

“My dear young lady,” said Sir Marmaduke, with an unusual gravity, “it is not exactly to our enemies we must look for any warm encomium on our means of defence; nor has experience yet shown that British courage can be justly a subject for a Frenchman’s laughter.”

“And as to the militia and yeomanry,” continued Kate, for she seemed bent on tormenting, and totally indifferent to the consequences regarding herself, “Colonel Delcamp called

them 'arsenaux ambulants,' admirably contrived to provide an invading army with arms and ammunition."

"I heartily wish your friend Colonel Delcamp would favor us with a visit of inspection," said the baronet, scarcely able to control his anger.

"I should not think the occurrence unlikely," was the cool reply; "and if so, I may be permitted to assure you that you will be much pleased with his manners and agreeability." Sybella's imploring look was all in vain. Kate, as she herself said, belonged to a race who neither gave nor took quarter, and such a controversy was the very conflict she gloried in. How it was to be carried on any farther is not easy to foresee, had not the difficulty been solved by the entrance of Frederick Travers, come to communicate the news of his appointment. While Sir Marmaduke and Sybella expressed their joy at his success, Kate, half chagrined at the interruption to a game where she already deemed herself the winner, walked towards the window and looked out.

"Have I nothing like congratulation to expect from Miss O'Donoghue?" said Frederick, as he placed himself at her side.

"I scarcely knew if it were a subject where congratulation would be suitable. To exchange the glories of London life, the fascinations of a great Court, and the society of the first people in the land, for the lesser splendors of a second-rate capital, — perhaps you might have smiled at the simplicity of wishing you joy for all this;" and here her voice assumed a deeper, fuller accent. "I own that I do not feel Ireland in a position to bear even a smile of scorn without offence to one of her children."

"I was not aware till now that you could suspect me of such a feeling."

"You are an Englishman, sir, — that's enough," said Kate, hurriedly. "In *your* eyes, we are the people you have conquered; and it would be too much to expect you should entertain great respect for the prejudices you have labored to subdue. But, after all, there is a distinction worth making, and you have not made it."

"And that is — if I dare ask —"

"That is, there is a wide difference between conquering

the territory and gaining the affections of a people. You have succeeded in one; you'll never, at least by your present courses, accomplish the other."

"Speak more plainly to me," said Travers, who felt a double interest in a conversation which every moment contained an allusion that bore upon his own fortune.

"There — there, sir," said Kate, proudly, "your very request is an answer to yourself. We here, who have known each other for some time, have had opportunities of interchanging opinions and sentiments, cannot understand a simple matter in the same way, nor regard it in the same light; how do you suppose that millions, separated by distance, habits, and pursuits, can attain to what we, with our advantages, have failed in? Can you not see that we are not the same people?"

"But need our dissimilitudes sever — may they not be made rather ties to bind us more closely together?" said he, tenderly.

"Equality for the future, even if we obtained it, cannot eradicate the memory of the past. The penal laws —"

"Come — come. There is no longer anything there. See the University, for instance. By the by," — and here Travers caught eagerly at the opportunity of escape, — "what of Herbert? Is not this near the time for his examination?"

"The very day, the 28th of February," said she, reading from a small memorandum-book. "It is six weeks yesterday since we have seen him — poor boy!"

"How pale and sickly he looked, too! I wish with all my heart he had not set his mind so eagerly on college success."

"It is only for women to live without ambition of one sort or other," replied Kate, sadly; "and a very poor kind of existence it is, I assure you."

"What if we were to make a party, and meet him as he comes out? We might persuade him to join us at dinner, too."

"Well thought of, Fred," said Sir Marmaduke. "Herbert seems to have forgotten us latterly, and knowing his anxiety to succeed, I really scrupled at the thought of idling him."

"It's very kind of you all," said Kate, with one of her sweetest smiles, "to remember the poor student, and there is nothing I should like better than the plan you propose."

"We must find out the hour they leave the Hall," said Frederick.

"I heard him say it was at four o'clock," said Sybella, timidly, venturing for the first time to interpose a word in the conversation.

"You have the best memory in the world, Sybella," whispered Kate in her friend's ear; and simple as the words were, they called the blush to her cheek in an instant.

The morning passed away in the thousand little avocations which affluence and ease have invented to banish ennui and render life always interesting. A few minutes before four o'clock the splendid equipage of Sir Marmaduke Travers, in all the massive perfection of its London appointments, drew up at the outer gate of the University; the party preferring to enter the courts on foot

As Frederick Travers, with his two lady companions, appeared within the walls, the murmur of their names ran through the crowd of gownsmen already assembled in the court; for although by College time it still wanted fifteen minutes of the hour, a considerable number of students were gathered together, anxious to hear the result of the day. The simple but massive style of the buildings; the sudden change from the tumult and noise of a crowded city to the silence and quietude of these spacious quadrangles; the number of youths dressed in their University costume, and either gazing wistfully at the door of the Examination Hall, or conversing eagerly together, were all matters of curious interest to the Travers's party, who saw themselves in a world so different from that they daily moved in. Nor were the loungers the students only; mixed up with them, here and there, might be seen some of the leading barristers of the day, and one or two of the most distinguished members of the House of Commons, — men who themselves had tasted the sweets of College success, and were fain, even by a passing moment, to refresh the memory of youthful triumphs, and bring back, by the sight of familiar objects, the recollection of days to which all the

glories of after life are but poor in comparison. Many of these were recognized by the students, and saluted by them with marks of profound respect; and one, a small, mean-looking man, with jet-black eyes and olive complexion, was received with a cheer, which was with difficulty arrested by a waving motion with his hand and a gesture towards the door of the Hall, from which, with a hollow, cavernous sound, a heavy bolt was now drawn, and the wide portal opened. A general movement in the crowd showed how intense expectation then was; but it was destined to a further trial, for it was only the head porter, dressed in his crimson robe, and carrying his cap at arm's length before him, who, followed by the Provost, issued forth: the students removed their caps, and stood in respectful silence as he passed. Again the door was closed, and all was still.

"There is something in all this that stimulates curiosity strongly," said Kate. "When I came in here I could have waited patiently for an hour or two, but now, the sight of all these anxious faces, these prying looks, that seem eager to pierce the very door itself, those short sentences, broken by quick glances at the clock, have worked me up to an excitement high and fevered as their own."

"It wants but a minute now," said Fred.

"I think the hand has not moved for the last ten," said Sybella, smiling faintly.

"I hope he has gained the prize," muttered Kate, below her breath; and at the moment the bell tolled, and the wide doors, as if burst open by the sound, were flung wide, and the human tide poured forth, and mingled with that beneath; but what a different aspect did it present. The faces were mostly flushed and heated, the eyes flashing, the dress disordered, the cravats awry, the hair tangled,—all the signs of mental excitement, long and arduously sustained, were there, and save a few, whose careless look and unmoved expression showed that their part had no high ambition at stake, all were impressed with the same character of mingled eagerness and exhaustion.

Many among these were quickly singled out and surrounded by troops of eager and anxious friends, and the

passing stranger might easily read in the tone and accent of the speaker his fortune, whether good or evil.

"Where is Herbert?—where can he be?—I don't see him," said each of the Travers's party, as, mingling with the crowd, they cast their anxious looks on every side; but amid the bustle of the scene, the hurrying forms, and the babble of tongues, they felt bewildered and confused.

"Let us try at his chambers," said Frederick; "he will, in all likelihood, be there soon." And at once they turned their steps towards the corner of the old square near the library, where Herbert lived his solitary life; for although nominally linked with a companion, a chum, in college parlance, he rarely made his appearance within the walls, and then only for a few days at a time.

When they reached the door they found it open, and without further waiting, or any notice of their approach, they entered, but so noiselessly and quietly withal that the deep accents of grief—the heavy sound of broken sobs—struck at once upon their ears. They stopped and gazed in silence at each other, reading, as it were, their own heart-felt fears in the face of each.

"Poor fellow," said Kate, as her proud lip trembled with agitation; "this is a sad beginning."

"Let us go back," whispered Sybella, faintly, and her cheek was pale as death as she spoke.

"No, no," cried Frederick, hurriedly; "we must cheer him up. What signifies the whole affair,—a piece of mere boyish ambition that he'll only laugh at one of these days."

"Not so," said Kate; "the augury of success or failure in the outset of life is no such trifle as you deem it. If he be faint-hearted, the game is up with him forever; if he be made of sterner stuff, as one of his name and house ought to be, he'll revenge his present fall by a great hereafter. Let me see him;" and, at once disengaging her arm, she walked forward and entered the chamber, while Frederick and his sister retired to the court to await her return.

When Kate O'Donoghue entered the room, Herbert was seated before a table, on which his head was leaning, with his hands pressed against his face. At his feet lay his cap, and the books he carried with him from the Hall. Uncon-

scious of her presence, lost to everything save his overwhelming affliction, the sobs came with a convulsive shudder that shook his frame and made the very table rattle, while at intervals there broke from him a faint moan of heart-rending sorrow.



“My dear brother,” said Kate, placing her arm around his neck. The boy started and looked up, and, prepared as she was to see the traces of suffering there, she started at the ravages long days and nights of study and deep grief had left behind them. His eyes were sunk, and surrounded by dark circles that made them seem quite buried beneath his brows. His forehead traversed by a network of blue veins, had that transparent thinness mental labor impresses, and his lips were thin and colorless; while on each cheek a burning spot of red looked like the mark of hectic. He

made no answer, but the tears ran fast from his eyes, and his mouth quivered as he tried to say something.

She sat down beside him on the same chair, and bending her head till the silken curls touched his very cheek, she spoke to him, — not in words of encouragement or good cheer, for such her own instinct told her were inapplicable; but in the soft accents of affection, neither undervaluing the source of his grief, nor yet suffering him to be carried away by his own sense of his calamity. “Remember, my dear brother,” said she, “you are not less dear to our hearts for all this. Remember that for the casualties of the world and its chances, we can only do our utmost; that success is not for us to determine, but to strive for. Had you won to-day, some other must now have grieved like you, and who can tell if he could count as many fond and loving hearts to feel for and console him?”

“Oh, if you knew how I strived and longed — how I prayed for success,” said he, in a voice almost stifled by convulsive throbs.

“And it will come yet, Herbert. The tree is only the more fruitful when the knife has cut down to its very heart. Yours is not the nature to be deterred by one repulse, nor yours the name to be stamped with failure because the contest is difficult. Ambitions are only noble when their path is steep. Who knows how indolent you might have become had you found the prize too easily won. Come, come, Herbert; enough for the past. Look forward now, and with good courage and hope. The next struggle will end differently; but, above all, wear a fair face before the world. I remember some French prisoners being brought into Courtray, who amused us so much by their gay and smiling air, and look of ease and satisfaction. Their secret was, that defeat was never disgrace, save when it lowered the spirit and made the heart droop. Theirs never failed, and I promise you we thought all the better of them.”

“But my uncle — who is to tell him — ”

“Let *me* tell him. I see you have begun a letter already — ”

“That was written last night,” said the boy, as the tears

gushed forth afresh, — “last night, when hope was almost certainty.”

“Then I’ll finish it,” said Kate, taking up the half-written letter.

“Say to him — I would wish him to know all — say that I had beateu my opponents down to one, and that he, too, almost gave up the contest, when, somehow, — I cannot now say exactly how or wherefore, — I got into a dispute with the examiner about the meaning of a word in Terence. He seemed to enjoy the eagerness with which I defended my opinion for a time, and actually encouraged my persistence, until at length, my temper excited and my brain on fire, I said something, — I know not what, — but it was evidently an offence, for he closed the book, and merely replied, ‘Enough, sir; I give your opponent the premium. His temper more than compensates for any deficiency in his scholarship;’ and I was beaten.” The last words evoked all his sorrow once more, and the youth burst into tears.

“That, then, I call unfair,” said Kate, passionately, “unless the gentleman were the arbiter of temperament as well as talent. Come, Herbert, even this should reconcile you to your fortune; you have not failed unworthily.”

“But my uncle, Kate, — my uncle will deem it far otherwise. To guard against this very error of my temper was almost the last pledge I made him; and here, in my first trial, see how I have kept my promise.”

“Leave the explanation to me; only promise one thing, — and mind, Herbert, this is a pledge there must be no forgetting, — do all in your power; spare nothing to win the next time. I care not whether you ever carry away another prize within these walls; but one you must have. Is this agreed? — give me your hand upon it. There, that’s like your own self, and now don’t waste another thought on what’s bygone. The Traverses invited you to dine with them to-day.”

“Oh, no — no.”

“No, I have no intention to press you, only come soon to see us, — to see *me*.” She kissed his forehead tenderly as she spoke the last word, and glided rapidly from the room.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

KATE O'DONOGHUE was more deeply affected by Herbert's failure than she had let appear to the youth, or even confessed to herself. It was not that the character of his ambition enlisted her sympathies or engaged her interest. Far from it; she thought too meanly of such triumphs, and knew not how far they shed an influence on a future career. The habits of her education — all her early prejudices — disposed her to regard the life of a soldier as the only one becoming a gentleman. The passion for military glory which the great victories of the Republic and the Consulate had spread throughout Europe, penetrated into every remote village of the Continent; and even the prison-like walls of the convent did not keep out the spirit-stirring sounds of drum and trumpet, the tramp of marching hosts, and the proud clangor of war. It was a time when the soldier was everything. There was but one path in life by which to win honor, rank, fame, and fortune. Even the humblest might strive, for the race was open to all; or, in the phrase of the period, every conscript left a spare corner in his knapsack for his future *bâton de maréchal*.

All she had ever seen of foreign society partook of this character; for, strangely enough, on the ruin of an aristocracy a new and splendid chivalry was founded, — a chivalry whose fascinations covered many a wrong, and made many a bad cause glorious by the heroism it evoked. The peaceful path in life was then, in her estimate, the inglorious one. Still, her proud nature could not brook defeat in anything. It was not without its influence upon the hearts and minds of her house that the eagle figured as their crest. The soaring bird, with outstretched wing, careering high above his compeers, told of a race who once, at least,

thought no ambition above their daring; and she was worthy of the haughtiest of her ancestors.

Too proud to enter into any detail of Herbert's failure, she dismissed the subject as briefly as she could, and made her appearance in the drawing-room without any perceptible change of manner; nor did she appear to take any notice of the announcement made by Sir Marmaduke to his son, that Hemsworth, who had just arrived from Scotland, would join the family circle at dinner. Kate had never seen him, but his name was long associated in her mind with anecdotes of oppression and cruelty to her uncle, — of petty insults and annoyances which the letters from Carrignacurra used constantly to tell of, and of which her relatives abroad had often descanted in her hearing. The picture she had drawn of him in her own mind was not a flattering one, composed of features and ingredients which represented all that was base, low-minded, and treacherous: a vulgar scyphant, and a merciless tyrant. What was her astonishment, almost her chagrin, to discover that Hemsworth entered the room a gentlemanlike person, of about five-and-forty, tall and well-formed, with regular features, rather melancholy in their expression than otherwise, with a voice singularly low, soft, and pleasing, his manner a mixture of well-bred ease and that excessive deference so often seen in those who have passed a long portion of life about persons of rank superior to their own, but without the slightest trace, that she could discover, of anything subservient. With all her disposition to be critical, she could find little fault with either his manner or his conversation, nor could she detect any appearance of affectation. On the contrary, he seemed affable, like one who felt himself among friends, and need set no limits to his natural frankness. On the several topics he talked, he spoke with good sense and fairness; and even when the often agitated question of the state of Ireland was alluded to, he surprised Kate by the absence of any violent or exaggerated tone, speaking of the people in terms of kindness and even affection; lauding the native virtues of their character, and dwelling with pleasure on the traits which advantageously distinguish them from the peasantry of other lands.

She listened at first with suspicion and distrust, then, by degrees, with interested attention, and, at last, with actual delight, to the narrative he gave of the social condition of Ireland; in which he labored to show that a mistaken estimate of the people by England — a misconception of the national character, a contempt of it, perhaps — had perpetuated usages which, by their injustice, had excited the hatred and animosity of the country, and led to that condition of insulting depreciation on one side, and proud defiance on the other, which the two people exhibited towards each other.

So well and ably did he sustain his part, so powerfully support each position by reference to some fact with which his ample memory supplied him, that Sir Marmaduke was eventually obliged to confess himself vanquished, though unconvinced, — who ever was when worsted? — and Frederick, chagrined at the favor Kate bestowed on the speaker, merely remarked, as he concluded, —

“Very conclusive and satisfactory, I have no doubt it is; but, in my mind, all you have said goes to prove that we English are a very inferior nation, and very unworthily placed in rule and governance over a people so much our superiors.”

Kate's eyes flashed with an unwonted fire, and for an instant she felt almost unable to control the temptation to answer this taunt; but a quiet smile of half acquiescence on Hemsworth's face so adequately expressed what she wished, but dared not say, that she merely returned the smile, and was silent.

Had Hemsworth's whole object been on that evening to disabuse Kate O'Donoghue of her dislike to him, to obliterate all memory of the wrongs with which she had heard him charged towards her family, he could not have chosen a more successful path. There was the very degree of firmness and decision she admired in the manner he gave his opinions, and yet all the courtesy of one who would not be supposed capable of advancing them as incontrovertible or irrefutable. They were merely his sentiments, — his mode of seeing and estimating particular events, of which another might judge differently. For all he advanced he was ready

to show his reasons, — they might be shallow, they might be inconclusive, — but they were *his*, and, fortunately for his chance of winning her favor, they were *her* opinions also.

“So you think we shall have no outbreak, Hemsworth,” said Sir Marmaduke, as they sat at tea.

“I scarcely go so far,” said he, gravely. “There are too many reasons for an opposite fear, to say so much, even if the Secretary of State did not assure us that the danger is over. The youth of Ireland will always be dangerous when left without a career or a road to their ambition; and from them any peril that may now be apprehended will certainly come. Many young men of the best families of the country, whose estates are deeply encumbered, heavy mortgages and large dowries weighing them down, are ready to join in any bold attempt which promises a new order of things. They see themselves forgotten in the distribution of all patronage, excluded from every office; sometimes for reasons of religion, sometimes for family, even for a mere namesake. They are ready to play a bold game, where losing is only quicker ruin, and to gain would be a glorious victory.”

“But what could a few rash and desperate young men like these effect against a power so great and so consolidated as England?”

“Little, perhaps, as regards the overthrow of a government, but a world of injury to the prospect of future quiet. The rebellion of a week — ay, a day — in Ireland, will sow the seeds of fifty years of misery, and retard the settlement of peaceful relations at least another century. Had the Minister made the same concessions here he was glad to accord to Scotland, had he, without insulting a nationality converted it into a banner under which loyalty was only rendered more conspicuous, you might have, perchance, seen a different order of things in Ireland.”

“For the life of me, I cannot see the evils and wrongs these people labor under. I have a very large Irish acquaintance in London, and pleasanter, happier fellows cannot exist than they are.”

“All the young men of family in Ireland are not in the

Guards," said Hemsworth, with a smile, which, with all its blandishment, very thinly covered over the sarcasm of his remark.

Frederick's face flushed angrily, and he turned away without speaking.

"Should we not ask pardon of the ladies for this subject of our conversation?" said Hemsworth. "I am sure neither Miss Travers nor Miss O'Donoghue deem the topic interesting or amusing."

"On the contrary, sir, I believe I may reply for both of us," said Kate, "whatever concerns the fortunes of a country we have so near at heart has all our sympathy; and, as an Irish girl, I feel grateful for your explanation of motives which, while I appreciate, I should still be unable so satisfactorily to account for."

"How happy I am to meet my countrywoman's approval," said Hemsworth, bowing courteously, and with a marked emphasis directing his speech to Kate.

The manner in which he spoke the words was so palpably intended for herself, that she felt all the charm of a flattery to which the disparity of their years imparted force.

Soon after tea, Sir Marmaduke retired with Hemsworth to his study. Frederick took his leave at the same time, and Sybella and Kate were left alone together.

"I have a long letter to write this evening, my dear Sybella," said Kate, after they had talked some time. "Poor Herbert has failed in his examination, and I have promised to break the news to my uncle, — not so difficult a task as the poor boy deems, but one to which he is himself unequal."

"Does he then feel it so deeply?" said Sybella, timidly.

"Too much, as regards the object of the ambition; but no more than he ought as a defeat. It is so bad to be beaten, Sybella," said she, with a sharp distinctness on each word. "I shall hate the sight of that University until he carries off the next prize; and then — then I care not whether his taste incline him for another effort;" and so saying, she embraced her friend, and they parted for the night.

The epistle which Kate had promised to conclude was in

itself a lengthy one, — written at different intervals during the week before the examination, and containing a minute account of his progress, his hopes and his fears, up to that very moment. There was little in it which could interest any but him to whom it was addressed, and to whom every allusion was familiar, and the reference to each book and subject thoroughly known, — what difficulties he had found here, what obscurity there, how well he had mastered this, how much he feared he might have mistaken the other, — until on the evening of the first day's examination, when the following few lines, written with trembling hand, appeared: —

“They say I shall gain it. H—— called my translation of Horace a brilliant one, and asked the Vice-Provost to listen to my repeating it. I heard I gave it in blank verse. Oh, my dearest uncle, am I deceiving myself, and deceiving you? Shall I be able to write thus to-morrow night?”

Then came one tremulous line, dated “Twelve o'clock.”

“Better and better; I might almost even now say, victory; but my heart is too much excited to endure a chance.”

“And it remains for me, my dear uncle,” wrote Kate, after these words, “to fulfil the ungrateful task of bearing bad tidings; and I, who have never had the good fortune to bring you happiness, must now speak to you of misfortune. My dear cousin has failed.”

She followed these few lines by a brief narrative Herbert had given her, — neither seeking to extenuate his errors, nor excuse his rashness, — well knowing in her heart that Sir Archy would regard the lesson thus conveyed an ample recompense for the honor of a victory so hardly lost.

“It is to you he looks for comfort, — to you, sir, whom his efforts were all made to please, and for whose praise his weary nights and toilsome days were offered. You, who know more of the human heart than I do, can tell how far so severe a discouragement may work for good or evil on his future life; for myself, I feel the even current of prosperity is but a sluggish dream that calls for no efforts to stem its tide; and, were his grief over, I'd rather rejoice that he has found a conflict, because he may now discover he has courage to meet it.

“Even I, to follow a theme so dispiriting, — even I grow weary of pleasure, and tire of gayety. The busy world of enjoyment leaves not a moment free for happiness, and already I am longing to be back in the still valley of Glenflesk. It is not that Dublin is not very brilliant, or that society has less of agreeability than I expected, — both have exceeded my anticipations; nor is it that I have not been what we should call in France ‘successful’ in my *début*, — far from that, I am the fashion, or rather half the fashion, Sybella dividing public favor with me. But, somehow, nobody contradicts me here; no one has courage to tell me I’m wrong, no one will venture to say, what you have often said, and even oftener looked, that ‘I talked of what I knew nothing;’ and, in fact, my dear uncle, every one is so very much in love with me that I am beginning to detest them, and would give the world to be once more at home before I extend the hatred to myself, which I must inevitably end by doing, if nobody anticipates me in the sentiment.

“You told me I should prove faithless to you. Well, I have refused, Heaven knows how many ‘brilliant offers,’ for such even the proposers called them. Generals of four-score, guardsmen of twenty, dignitaries in the church, serjeants learned in the law, country gentlemen in hordes, two baronets, and one luckless viscount have asked for the valueless hand that writes these lines; and yet, — and yet, my dear chevalier, I shall still write myself at the bottom of this page, ‘Kate O’Donoghue.’ I have no doubt you are very vain of my constancy, and will be so when you read this; and it is right you should be, for I promise you, in my *robe, couleur de cerise*, looped with white roses, and my *chapeau de paysane*, I am a very pretty person indeed, — at least, it seems a point the twelve judges agree upon, and the Master of the Rolls tells me ‘that with such long eyelashes I might lift my eyes very high indeed.’

“And now, my dear, kind uncle, divide your sorrow between your niece who is dying of vanity, and your nephew who is sick of grief, — continue your affection to both, — and believe me, in all sincerity of heart, your own fond and faithful

“KATE O’DONOGHUE.

“I have met Hemsworth, and, strange to say, found him both pleasant and agreeable.”

Such were the concluding lines of an epistle in which few who did not possess Sir Archy's acuteness could successfully trace anything of the real character of the writer.

CHAPTER XXX.

OLD CHARACTERS WITH NEW FACES.

AT the time we speak of, Clontarf was the fashionable watering-place of the inhabitants of Dublin; and, although it boasted of little other accommodation than a number of small thatched cabins could afford, and from which the fishermen removed to give place to their more opulent guests, yet thither the great and the wealthy of the capital resorted in summer to taste the pleasures of a seaside, and that not inferior one, the change of life and habit entailed by altered circumstances and more restricted spheres of enjoyment.

If, with all the aid of sunshine and blue water, waving foliage and golden beach, this place had an aspect of modest poverty in its whitened walls and net-covered gardens in summer, in winter its dreariness and desolation were great indeed. The sea swept in long waves the narrow road, even to the doors of the cabins, the muddy foam settling on the window-sills, and even drifting to the very roofs; the thatch was fastened down with strong ropes, assisted by oars and spars, to resist the wild gale that generally blew from the southeast.

The trim cottages of summer were now nothing but the miserable hovels of the poor; their gardens waste, their gay aspect departed, — even the stirring signs of life seemed vanished. Few, if any, of the inhabitants stirred abroad, and, save some muffled figure that moved past, screening his face from the beating storm, all was silent and motionless. The little inn, which in the summer-time was thronged from morning till night, and from whose open windows the merry laugh and the jocund sound of happy voices poured, was now fast shuttered up, and all

the precautions of a voyage were taken against the dreaded winter; even to the sign of a gigantic crab, rudely carved in wood and painted red, everything was removed, and a single melancholy dip-candle burned in the bar, as if keeping watch over the sleeping revelry of the place.

If such were the gloomy features without, within doors matters wore a more thriving aspect. In a little parlor behind the bar a brisk fire was burning, before which stood a table neatly prepared for supper; the covers were laid for two, but the provision of wine displayed seemed suited to a larger number. The flashy-looking prints upon the walls shone brightly in the ruddy blaze; the brass fender and the glasses sparkled in its clear light, and even to the small keen eyes of Billy Corcoran, the host, who kept eternally running in and out, to see all right, everything presented a very cheering contrast to the bleak desolation of the night without.

It was evident that Mr. Corcoran's guests were behind time; his impatience was not to be mistaken. He walked from the kitchen to the parlor and back again without ceasing, now adding a turf to the fire, now removing the roasting chickens a little farther from the blaze, and anon bending his ear to listen if, perchance, he could catch the sound of approaching wheels. He had sat down on every chair of the parlor, he had taken a half-glass out of each decanter on the table, he had sharpened every knife in turn, and, in fact, resorted to every device to cheat time, when suddenly the sound of a carriage was heard on the road, and the next moment he unbarred the door and admitted two persons, whose dripping hats and soaked greatcoats bore evidence to the downpour without.

"Well, Billy," said the first who entered, "this rain will beat down the wind at last, and we shall be able to get some fish in the market."

"Sorra bit, sir," said Billy, as he assisted the speaker to remove his wet garments, leaving the other stranger to his own devices. "The wind is coming more round to the east, and I know from the noise on the Bull we'll have plenty of it. I was afeard something happened you, sir; you're an hour behind the time you said yourself."

"Very true, — so I am. I was detained at a dinner party, and my friend here also kept me waiting a few minutes for him."

"It was not my fault," interposed the other; "I was ready when —"

"Never mind, — it was of no consequence whatever; the only misfortune was, we could find no coach, and were forced to put up with a car, and got wet for our pains. But the supper, Bill, — the supper."

"Is smoking hot on the table," was the reply; and, as he opened the door into the parlor, the fact declared itself to their senses.

The strangers were soon seated at the meal, and like men who could relish its enjoyment not the less for the merit of what they had quitted without doors. It is not necessary to consume much time in presenting them to our readers; they are both already known to him. One was Mr. Hemsworth; the other no less a person than Lanty Lawler, the horse-dealer. One only remark is necessary. Familiar as these characters already are, they here appear in aspect somewhat different from what they have hitherto exhibited. Hemsworth, no longer the associate of fashionable company, had exchanged his silken deferential manner for an air of easy confidence that seemed to fit him even better; Lanty, on the other hand, had lost all his habitual self-possession, look abashed and sheepish, and seemed for all the world as though he were in the hands of one who could dispose of his destiny as he willed it. All the got-up readiness of his wit, all his acquired frankness, were now gone, and in their place a timid, hesitating manner that bespoke the most abject fear and terror; it was evident, too, that he struggled hard to conceal these signs of trepidation. He ate voraciously of all before him, and endeavored, by the preoccupation of the table, to cover his real sentiments at the moment. He drank, too, freely, filling a large goblet to the brim with sherry several times during the meal; nor was this unnoticed by Hemsworth, who at last interposed, in a calm but commanding tone, as he laid his hand on the decanter.

"A pipe of it, if you please, Lanty; you may have a whole

bank of the Guadalquivir for your own drinking at another time, but now, if you please, let us have calm heads and cool judgments. It is some time since we met, and it may be longer ere we have another opportunity like the present."

"Very true, sir," said Lanty, submissively, as he pushed his untasted glass before him. "It was the wetting I was afraid of; my clothes were soaked through."

Hemsworth paid no attention to the excuse, but sat for some minutes deeply sunk in his reflections; then lifting his head suddenly, he said, —

"And so these papers have never been found?"

"Never, sir. I did my best to get them. I spent days at the place, and had others looking besides. I said I'd give five guineas — and you know what a reward that is down there — to the man who would bring them to me; but from that hour to this I never set eyes on them."

While he was speaking these words, Hemsworth's eyes never turned from him. They were fixed on him, not with any expression of severity or harshness, neither did the glance indicate suspicion. It was a steady, passionless stare, rather like one seeking an explanation than prejudging a motive.

"You were quite certain that they were the papers we wanted?"

"Sure I opened them, — sure I read the writing myself when I took them out of the old man's desk."

"They had better have remained there," said Hemsworth to himself, but loud enough for the other to hear. Then, rallying quickly, he added, "No matter, however; we have evidence enough of another kind. There are the letters Mark wrote to the Delegates."

"I think Mr. Morrissy has most of them, sir," said Lanty, hesitating; "he is the man that keeps all the writings."

"So he may be, Lanty; but you have some of them yourself. Three or four are as good as thirty or forty, and you may have as many as that — ay, and here in your pocket, too, this minute. Come, my worthy friend, you may cheat me in horseflesh whenever I'm fool enough to deal with

you, but at this game I'm your master. Let me see these letters."

"How would I have them, captain, at all?" said Lanty, imploringly; "sure you know as well as me that I'm not in the scheme at all."

"Save so far as having a contract to mount five hundred men of the French on their landing in Ireland, the money for which you have partly received, and for which I hold the check, countersigned by yourself, Master Lanty. Very pretty evidence in a court of justice, — more than enough to hang you, that's all."

"There's many a one sould a horse, and did n't know what use he was for," replied Lanty, half rudely.

"Very true; but a contract that stipulates for strong cattle, able to carry twelve-stone men with full cavalry equipments, does not read like an engagement to furnish plough-horses." Then, altering his tone, he added, "No more of this, sir; I can't afford time for such fencing. Show me these letters, — show me that you have done something to earn your own indemnity, or, by G—d, I'll let them hang you as I'd see them hang a dog."

Lanty became lividly pale as Hemsworth was speaking; a slight convulsive tremor shook his lip for a moment, and he seemed struggling to repress a burst of passion, as he held the chair with either hand; but he uttered not a word. Hemsworth leisurely drew forth his watch and placed it on the table before him, saying, —

"It wants eleven minutes of one o'clock; I'll give you to that hour to make up your mind, whether you prefer five hundred pounds in your hand, or take your place in the dock with the rest of them; for, mark me, whether we have your evidence or not, they are equally in our hands. It is only an economy of testimony I'm studying here, and I reserve my other blackguards for occasions of more moment."

The taunt would appear an ill-timed one at such a minute; but Hemsworth knew well the temperament of him he addressed, and did not utter a syllable at random. Lanty still preserved silence, and looked as though doggedly determined to let the minutes elapse without speaking; his head

slightly sunk on his chest, his eyes bent downwards, he sat perfectly motionless. Hemsworth meanwhile refilled his glass, crossed his arms before him, and seemed awaiting, without impatience, the result of the other's deliberation. At length the hand approached the figure; it wanted but about half a minute of the time, and Hemsworth, taking up the watch from the table, held it before Lanty's eyes, as he said, —

"Time is nearly up, Master Lawler; do you refuse?"

"I only ask one condition," said Lanty, in a faint whisper.

"You shall make no bargains; the letters, or —. It is too late now;" and with these words he replaced his watch in his pocket and rose from the table.

Lanty never moved a muscle, while Hemsworth approached the fireplace and rang the bell. In doing so, he turned his back to the horse-dealer, but commanded a view of him through means of the little glass above the chimuey. He stood thus for a few seconds, when Lanty, in whose flashing eyes and darkened color inward rage was depicted, suddenly thrust his arm into the breast of his coat. Hemsworth turned round at once, and seizing the arm in his powerful grasp, said, in a cool, determined voice, —

"No, no, Lanty; I'm armed too."

"It was the pocket-book I was feeling for, sir," said Lanty, with a sickly effort at a smile, while he drew forth a black leather case, and handed it towards Hemsworth. "They are all there, — seventeen letters, — besides two French commissions signed by young Mark, and a receipt for four hundred pounds in French gold."

"You must find it hard to get bullets for those pistols I gave you, Lanty," said Hemsworth, in a tranquil voice. "I forgot to let you have the bullet-mould with them. Remind me of it to-morrow or next day."

Lanty muttered "I will," but looked the very picture of abject misery as he spoke.

"Let me see them, Lanty," said Hemsworth, in a manner as calm and unconcerned as could be. "If I don't mistake, they are nearly a quarter of an inch in the bore."

"About that same, sir," replied Lawler, while he drew

forth the two pistols from the same breast-pocket he had taken the letters.

Hemsworth first examined one, and then the other leisurely, passing the ramrod into each in turn, and then opening the pans, inspected the priming, adjusting the powder carefully with his finger. "You spoil such pistols as these by loading with two bullets, Lanty," said he, as he handed them back to him. "The bore is too perfect for such coarse usage. Now, this is a less delicate weapon, and will bear harder usage," and he drew forth a short pistol, containing four revolving barrels, each as wide as the bore of a musket. Lanty gazed in astonishment and terror at the murderous implement, into which the hand fitted by a handle like that of a saw. Hemsworth played the spring by which the barrels moved with a practised finger, and seemed to exult in the expression of Lanty's terror as he watched them. Then, quickly replacing the weapon, he resumed, "Well, I am glad, for your own sake, that you are more reasonable. You ought to know that I never place dependence on only one man for any single service. Such would be merely to play the part of slave instead of master. But, first of all, how did you become possessed of these letters?"

"I was charged by Mark to deliver them to the Delegates, and as they never saw his handwriting, I just copied the letters, and kept all the originals, so that he has received his answers regularly, and never suspects what has happened."

"All right so far. And the younger brother, — what of him?"

"Oh, he is too much under old M'Nab's influence to be caught. I would n't say but that he's a Protestant this minute."

"You appear to be greatly shocked at your suspicion, Lanty," said Hemsworth, smiling. "Well, well; we must hope for the best. And now, as to this other fellow: where and how can I see him, — this Talbot, I mean?"

"Ay, that's the puzzle," replied Lanty, with a greater appearance of ease in his manner than before. "You never can meet him when you look for him; but he's at your elbow every day twenty times if you don't want him."

“Could you not manage a meeting for me with him down here, Lanty?—I’ll take care of the rest.”

“I don’t think so; he’s a wary fellow. He gave me a fright once or twice already, by a word he let drop. I am not easy in his company at all.”

“False or true, he would be an immense service to us,” said Hemsworth, musingly. “If I only could see and speak with him, I’d soon convince him that he incurred no risk himself. It’s a bad sportsman shoots his decoy duck, Lanty,” and he pinched his cheek good-humoredly as he spoke. Lanty endeavored to laugh, but the effort was a feeble one. Meanwhile, the host, now summoned for a second time, made his appearance, and by Hemsworth’s orders the car was brought round to the door; for, severe as the night was, he determined to return to the city.

“You are coming back to town, too, Lanty?” said he, in a tone of inquiry.

“No, sir; I’m going to stop here with Billy, if your honor has no objection.”

“None whatever. Remember to let me see you on Tuesday, when I shall have everything in readiness for your journey south; till then, good-bye.” So saying, and handing Corcoran two guineas in gold, for he paid liberally, Hemsworth mounted the car and drove off.

Lanty looked after him till the darkness shut out the view, and then, buttoning his rough coat tightly around his throat, set out himself towards town, muttering, as he went, “I wish it was the last I was ever to see of you.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

SOME HINTS ABOUT HARRY TALBOT.

WE must beg of our reader to retrace his steps once more to the valley of Glenflesk, but only for a fleeting moment. When last we left Carrignacurra it was at night; the party were at supper in the old tower, and Kerry stood outside, rehearsing to himself for the tenth time the manner in which he should open his communication. The sound of Mark's voice, raised above its ordinary pitch, warned him that his mission might not be without danger, if perchance anything on his part might offend the youth. None knew better than Kerry the violent temper of the young O'Donoghue, and how little restraint he ever put upon any scheme he thought of to vent his humor on him who crossed him. It was an account of debtor and creditor then with him how he should act; on the one side lay the penalties, on the other the rewards of his venture: how was he to escape the one and secure the other? A moment's reflection suggested the plan.

"I'll not go in, divil a step, but I'll tell I was conversin' with them this half-hour, and that the rope and the bit of lead is a new way they do have for catching mermaids and other faymale fishes in the bay; and sure if I only say that there's an Act of Parlimint agin doin' it, she'll not only believe it all, but she'll keep the saycret to her dying bed." And with this profound reflection on Mrs. Branaghan's character, and a face of very well got up surprise, Kerry re-entered the kitchen to announce his discovery.

It is not our intention to dwell on the scene that followed; we have merely adverted to the fact, inasmuch as that on the trivial circumstances of Kerry's resolve depended the discovery of a plot which, if once known to M'Nab,

would immediately have been communicated to the Government. The fates willed it otherwise; and when the party separated in the old tower, Sir Archy was as little satisfied concerning Talbot's character as ever, and as eager to ascertain whence and wherefore he came, and with what intention he had made Mark's acquaintance. With many a wily scheme for the morrow, the old man went to rest, determining to spare no pains to unravel the mystery: a fruitless resolve after all, for when day broke Talbot and Mark were already away, many miles on the road to Dublin.

The O'Donoghue's first act, on completing his arrangements with Swaby, was to place at Mark's disposal a sum of five hundred pounds, an amount far greater than ever the young man had at any time possessed in his life. Talbot, to whom the circumstance was told by Mark, readily persuaded him to visit Dublin, not merely for the pleasures and amusements of the capital, but that he might personally be made known to the Delegates, and see and confer with those who were the directors of the threatened rebellion. Talbot understood perfectly the kind of flattery which would succeed with the youth, and by allusion to his ancient lineage, his more than noble blood, the rights to which he was entitled, and to which he would unquestionably be restored, not only stimulated his ardor in the cause, but bound him in a debt of gratitude to all who encouraged him to engage in it.

Mark's character, whatever its faults, was candid and frank in everything. He made no secret to his new friend of his present unhappiness, nor did he conceal that an unpaid debt of vengeance with respect to young Travers weighed heavily on his spirits. It was the first time in his life he had tasted the bitterness of an insult, and it worked like a deadly poison within him, sapping the springs of his health, and rendering miserable the hours of his solitude. The thought rarely left him day or night, — how was he to wipe out this stain? When Talbot, therefore, spoke of a visit to the capital, Mark cheerfully acceded, but rather from a secret hope that some opportunity might arise to gratify this cherished passion than from any desire of wit-

nessing the splendor of the metropolis; and while the one pictured the glittering scenes of festive enjoyment to which youth and money are the passports, the other darkly ruminated on the chances of meeting his enemy and provoking him to a duel.

It was on the evening of the third day after they left Carrignacurra that they drew near the capital, and after a promise from Mark that in everything he should be guided by his friend, nor take any step without his counsel and advice, they both entered the city.

"You see, Mark," said Talbot, as, after passing through some of the wider and better-lighted thoroughfares, they approached a less frequented and more gloomy part of the town, — "you see, Mark, that the day is not come when we should occupy the place of honor. An humble and quiet hotel will best suit us for the present; but the hour is not very distant, my boy, when the proudest mansion of the capital will throw wide its doors to receive us. The Saxon has but a short tenure of it now."

"I don't see any reason for secrecy," said Mark, half doggedly. "We have good names, and a good purse: why, then, must we betake ourselves to this gloomy and desolate quarter?"

"Because I am the guide," said Talbot, laughing; "and, if that 's not reason enough, that 's the only one I will give you just now. But come, here we are, and I do not think you will complain of your entertainment." And, as he spoke, the carriage entered the spacious court-yard of an old-fashioned inn, which, standing in Thomas Street, commanded a view of the river through one of the narrow streets leading down to the quay.

"This was the fashionable house, some fifty years back," said Talbot, as he assisted his friend to alight; "and though the heyday of its youth is over, there are many generous qualities in its good old age, — not your father's cellar can boast a better bottle of Burgundy."

Talbot's recommendation was far from being unmerited. The "Black Jack," as the inn was named, was a most comfortable house of the old school, with large, low-ceilinged rooms, wide stairs, and spacious corridors; the whole fur-

nished in a style which, though far from pretending to elegance or fashion, possessed strong claims for the tired traveller seeking rest and repose. Here, then, our young travellers alighted; Talbot being received with all the courteous urbanity due to an old acquaintance, the landlord himself appearing to do the honors of the house, and welcome a valued guest.

"We must get our host, Billy Crossley, to sup with us, Mark. No one can tell us so much of how matters are doing here; for, however it happens, Billy knows all the gossip of the day: fashionable, political, or sporting, he keeps himself up to what is going forward everywhere." And so saying, Talbot at once hastened after the landlord to secure his company for the evening.

Billy was somewhat fastidious about bestowing his agreeability in general, but on the present occasion he acceded at once; and in less than half an hour the three were seated at a meal which would not have disgraced an hotel of more pretensions exterior, Mr. Crossley doing the honors of the table, like a host entertaining his friends.

"I scarcely had expected to see you so soon, Mr. Talbot," said he, when the servants had left the room and the party drew round the fire. "They told me you would pass the winter in the country."

"So I had intended, Billy; but as good luck would have it, I made an acquaintance in the south, which changed my plans, — my friend, Mr. O'Donoghue here; and as he had never seen the capital, and knew nothing of your gay doings, I thought I'd just take a run back, and show him at least the map of the land."

"My service to you, sir," said Billy, bowing to Mark; "it would be hard to have got a better guide than you have in Master Harry. I can assure you, so far as wickedness goes, he's a match for anything here, — from the Royal Barracks to Trinity College."

"Flattery, gross flattery, Bill. I was your own pupil, and you can't help partiality."

"You are a most favorable specimen of private tuition, there's no doubt of it," said Crossley, laughing; "and I have reason to be proud of you. Did Mr. O'Donoghue

ever hear of your clearing out Hancey Hennessy at hazard, — the fellow that carried the loaded dice?"

"Have done, Bill. None of these absurd stories now."

"Nor what a trick you played Corny Mehan at the spring meeting with the roan cob that knew how to limp when you wanted him? — as great a devil as himself, Mr. O'Donoghue. You'd swear the beast had a bad blood spavin if you saw him move, and he all the time a three-quarter bred horse, without a stain or a blemish about him."

Talbot seemed for a second or two somewhat uneasy at these familiar reminiscences of his friend Crossley, not knowing precisely how Mark might take them; but when he saw that a hearty laugh was the reception they met with, he joined in the mirth as freely as the others.

"The best of all was the Wicklow steeple-chase; sorrow doubt about it, that was good fun?" and Crossley laughed till his eyes streamed again with the emotion.

"You must tell me that," said Mark.

"It was just this: Mister Henry there had a wager with Captain Steevens, of the staff, that he'd reach the course before him, each starting at the same moment from Quin's door, at Bray. Well, what does he do but bribes one of the boys to let him ride postilion to Steevens's chaise, because that way he was sure to win his wager. All went right. The blue jacket and boots fitted him neatly, — they were both new, got on purpose for the day; and Mr. Talbot lay snug in the stable, waiting for the chaise to be ordered round, when down comes the word, 'Number four, two bays, you're wanted;' and up he jumps into the saddle, and trots round to the door, afraid of his life to look round, and keeping his chin sunk down in his cravat to hide his face. He never once looked back, but let the boys harness the cattle without saying a word.

"My lord says you're to drive slow,' said one of the boys.

"He looked round, and what did he see but an old man in the chaise with a horseshoe wig, and in the full dress of a bishop.

"Who is he at all?' said Talbot.

"The Bishop of Cloyne,' whispered the boy; 'he's going up to the levee.'



Mr. Weyl.

“By my conscience he is not,” said Talbot; for at that moment he spied Steevens starting from the door at a round trot, and with that he turned the bishop’s horses sharp round, laid the whip heavily over them, and took the lead towards Wicklow.

“Never such cries were heard as the bishop’s. Some say that he swore hard, but it is n’t true; he prayed, and begged, and shouted, — but no use. Talbot gave them the steel at every stride, and after a long slapping gallop, he drew up at the stand-house, with a cheer that shook the course; and a fine sight it was to see the little man in the lawn sleeves stepping out, his face red with shame and passion.

“‘Twelve miles in forty-two minutes, my lord,’ said Talbot, showing his watch; ‘hope your lordship won’t forget the boy.’”

If Mark O’Donoghue enjoyed heartily the story, he was not the less surprised that Harry Talbot was the hero of it, — all his previous knowledge of that gentleman leading him to a very different estimate of his taste and pursuits. Indeed, he only knew Talbot from his own lips, and from them he learned to regard him as the emissary despatched by the Irish party in France to report on the condition of the insurgents in Ireland, and, if necessary, to make preparations for the French landing on the Irish shores. Mark could not well understand how any one charged with such a mission could have either wasted his time or endangered his safety by any ridiculous adventures, and did not scruple to show his astonishment at the circumstance.

Talbot smiled significantly at the remark, and exchanged a glance with Crossley, while he answered, —

“Placed in such a position as I have been for some years, Mark, many different parts have been forced upon me; and I have often found that there is no such safe mask against detection as following out the bent of one’s humor in circumstances of difficulty. An irresistible impulse to play the fool, even when high interests were at stake, has saved me more than once from detection; and from habit I have acquired a kind of address at the practice, that with the world passes for cleverness. And so, in turn, I have been

an actor, a smuggler, a French officer, an Irish refugee, a sporting character, a man of pleasure, and a man of intrigue; and however such features may have blended themselves into my true character, my real part has remained undetected. Master Crossley here might furnish a hint or two towards it; but — but, as Peachem says, 'we could hang one another' — eh, Bill?"

A nod and a smile, more grave than gay, was Crossley's answer, and a silence ensued on all sides. There was a tone of seriousness, even through the levity of what Talbot said, very unlike his ordinary manner; and Mark began, for the first time, to feel that he knew very little about his friend. The silence continued unbroken for some time; for while Mark speculated on the various interpretations Talbot's words might bear, Talbot himself was reflecting on what he had just uttered. There is a very strange, but not wholly unaccountable, tendency in men of subtle minds to venture near enough to disclosures to awaken the suspicions without satisfying the curiosity of others. The dexterity with which they can approach danger, yet not incur it, is an exercise they learn to pride themselves upon; and as the Indian guides his canoe through the dangerous rapids of the St. Lawrence, — now bending to this side and to that; each moment in peril, but ever calm and collected, — so do they feel all the excitement of hazard in the game of address. Under an impulse of this kind was it that Talbot spoke, and the unguarded freedom of his manner showed, even to so poor an observer as Mark, that the words conveyed a hidden meaning.

"And our gay city of Dublin, — what of it, Billy?" said he, at length rallying from his mood of thought, as he nodded his head, and drank to Crossley.

"Pretty much as you have always known it. 'A short life and a merry one,' seems the adage in favor here. Every one spending his money and character —"

"Like gentlemen, Bill, — that's the phrase," interrupted Talbot; "and a very comprehensive term it is, after all. But what is the Parliament doing?"

"Voting itself into Government situations."

"And the Viceroy?"

“Snubbing the Parliament.”

“And the Government in England?”

“Snubbing the Viceroy.”

“Well, they are all employed, at least; and, as the French say, that’s always something. And who are the play-men now?”

“The old set, — Tom Whaley and Lord Drogheda; your old friend Giles Daxon; Sandy Moore —”

“Ah, what of Sandy? They told me he won heavily at the October races.”

“So he did; beggared the whole club at hazard, and was robbed of the money the night after, when coming up through Naas.”

“Ha! I never heard of that, Billy. Let us hear all about it.”

“It’s soon told, sir. Sandy, who never tries economy till he has won largely, and is reckless enough of money when on the verge of ruin, heard, on leaving the course, that a strange gentleman was waiting to get some one to join him in a chaise up to Dublin. Sandy at once sent the waiter to open the negotiations, which were soon concluded, and the stranger appeared, — a fat, unwieldy-looking old fellow, with a powdered wig and green goggles, — not a very sporting style of travelling companion; but no matter for that, he had a dark chestnut mare with him that looked like breeding, and with strength enough for any weight over a country.

“‘She’ll follow the chaise; my son taught her that trick,’ said the old fellow, as he hobbled out of the inn, and took his place in the carriage.

“Well, in jumped Sandy, all his pockets bursting with guineas, and a book of notes crammed into his hat, very happy at his adventure, but prouder of saving half the posting than all besides.

“‘Keep to your ten miles an hour, my lad, or not a sixpence,’ said the old gentleman; and he drew his nightcap over his eyes, and was soon snoring away as sound as need be.

“That was the last was seen of him, however; for when the postilion drew up for fresh horses at Carrick’s, they

found Sandy alone in the chaise, with his hands tied behind him, and his mouth gagged. His companion and the dark chestnut were off, and all the winnings along with them."

"Cleverly done, by Jove!" cried Talbot, in an ecstasy of admiration.

"What a contemptible fellow your friend Sandy must be!" exclaimed Mark, in the same breath. "Man to man, — I can't conceive the thing possible."

"A bold fellow, well armed, Mark," observed Talbot, gravely, "might do the deed, and Sandy be no coward after all."

Chatting in this wise, the first evening was spent; and if Mark was, at times, disposed to doubt the morality of his new friend, he was very far from questioning his knowledge of mankind. His observations were ever shrewd and caustic, and his views of life those of one who looked at the world with a scrutinizing glance; and although the young O'Donoghue would gladly have seen in his young companion some traces of the enthusiasm he himself experienced in the contemplated rising, he felt convinced that a cooler judgment, and a more calculating head than his, were indispensable requisites to a cause beset with so many dangers. He, therefore, implicitly yielded himself to Talbot's guidance, resolving not to go anywhere, nor see any one, even his brother, save with his knowledge and consent.

If the scenes into which Talbot introduced Mark O'Donoghue were not those of fashionable life, they were certainly as novel and exciting to one so young and inexperienced. The taverns resorted to by young men of fashion, the haunts of sporting characters, the tennis-court, but, more frequently still, the houses where high play was carried on, — he was all familiar with, knew the precise type of company at each, and not a little of their private history; still, it seemed as if he himself were but little known, and rather received for the recommendation of good address and engaging manners than from any circumstance of previous acquaintance. Mark was astonished at this, as well as that, although now several weeks in Dublin, Talbot had made no advance towards introducing him to the leading members of the insurgent party,

and latterly had even but very rarely alluded to the prospect of the contemplated movement.

The young O'Donoghue was not one to harbor any secret thought long unuttered in his breast, and he briefly expressed to Talbot his surprise — almost his dissatisfaction — at the life they were leading. At first, Talbot endeavored to laugh off such inquiries, or turn them aside by some passing pleasantry; but when more closely pressed, he avowed that his present part was a duty imposed upon him by his friends in France, who desired, above all things, to ascertain the feeling among young men of family and fortune in the metropolis how they really felt affected towards England, and with what success, should French republicanism fail to convert them, would the fascinations of Parisian elegance and vice be thrown around them.

“There must be bribes for all temperaments, Mark,” said he, at the end of a very lengthened detail of his views and stratagems. “Glory is enough for such as you, and happily you can have wherewithal to satisfy a craving appetite; but some must be bought by gold, some by promises of vengeance upon others, some by indemnities for past offences, and not a few by the vague hope of change, which disappointed men ever regard as for the better. To sound the depths of all such motives is part of my mission here, and hence I have rigidly avoided those by whom I am more than slightly known; but, in a week or two, I shall exchange this part for another, and then, Mark, we shall mix in the gayer world of the squares, where your fair cousin shines so brilliantly. Meanwhile, have a little patience with me, and suffer me to seem sometimes inconsistent, that I may be least so in reality. I see you are not satisfied with me, Mark, and I am sorry to incur a friend's reproach, even for a brief season; but come — I make you a pledge. To-day is the 12th; in five days more the Viceroy gives his St. Patrick's ball, at which I am to meet one of our confederates. You seem surprised at this; but where can man speak treason so safely as under the canopy of the throne?”

“But how do you mean to go there? You do not surely expect an invitation?”

“Of course not; but I shall go notwithstanding, and you with me. Ay, Mark, never frown and shake your head. This same ball is a public assembly, to which all presented at the levee are eligible, without any bidding or invitation. Who is to say that Harry Talbot and Mark O'Donoghue have not paid their homage to mock royalty? If you mean that there is some danger in the step, I agree with you there is; but you are not the man, I take it, to flinch on that account.”

This adroit stroke of Talbot's settled the matter, and Mark felt ashamed to offer any objection to a course which, however disinclined to, he now believed was accompanied by a certain amount of peril.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A PRESAGE OF DANGER.

WHEN the long-wished-for evening drew nigh in which Talbot had pledged himself to reveal to Mark the circumstances of their enterprise, and to make him known to those concerned in the plot, his manner became flurried and excited; he answered, when spoken to, with signs of impatience, and seemed so engrossed by his own thoughts as to be unable to divert his attention from them. Mark, in general the reverse of a shrewd observer, perceived this, and attributing it to the heavy losses he had latterly incurred at play, forbore in any way to notice the circumstance, and from his silence Talbot became probably more indifferent to appearances, and placed less restraint on his conduct. He drank, too, more freely than was his wont, and appeared like one desirous by any means to rid himself of some unwelcome reflections.

“It is almost time to dress, Mark,” said he, with an effort to seem easy and unconcerned. “Let us have another flask of Burgundy before we go.”

“I’ll have no more wine; nor you, if you will be advised by me, either,” said Mark, gravely.

“Ha! then you would imply I have drunk too much already, Mark? Not far wrong there, perhaps, and under ordinary circumstances such would be the case; but there are times when the mind, like the body, demands double nourishment, and with me wine strengthens, never confuses thought. Do you know, Mark, that I have a presentiment of some evil before me;—whence, and in what shape it is to come, I cannot tell you; but I feel it as certain as if it had been revealed to me.”

“You are despondent about our prospects,” said Mark, gloomily.

Talbot made no answer, but leaned his head on the chimney-piece, and seemed buried in deep thought; then, recovering himself, he said, in a low but distinct accent, —

“Did you take notice of a fellow at the tennis-court the other day, who stood beside me all the time I was settling with the marker? Oh! I forgot, — you were not there. Well, there was such a one, — a flashy-looking, vulgar fellow, with that cast of countenance that betokens shrewdness and cunning. I met him yesterday in the Park, and this evening, as I came to dinner, I saw him talking to the landlord's nephew, in the hall.”

“Well, and what of all that? If any one should keep account of where and how often he had seen either of us, this week past, might he not conjure up suspicions fully as strong as yours? Let us begin to take fright at shadows, and we shall make but a sorry hand of it when real dangers approach us.”

“The shadows are the warnings, Mark, and the wise man never neglects a warning.”

“He who sees thunder in every dark cloud above him is but the fool of his own fears,” said Mark, rudely, and walked towards the window. “Is that anything like your friend, Talbot?” added he, as he beheld the dark outline of a figure which seemed standing intently looking up at the window.

“The very fellow!” cried Talbot; for at the moment a passing gleam of light fell upon the figure, and marked it out distinctly.

“There is something about him I can half recognize myself,” said Mark; “but he is so muffled up with great-coat and cravat, I cannot clearly distinguish him.”

“Indeed! Do, for Heaven's sake, think of where you saw him, and when, Mark; for I own my anxiety about him is more than common.”

“I'll soon find out for you,” said Mark, suddenly seizing his hat; — but at the same instant the door opened, and a waiter appeared.

“There's a gentleman below stairs, Mr. Talbot, would be glad to speak a few words with you.”

Talbot motioned, by an almost imperceptible gesture,

that Mark should retire into the adjoining room; and then, approaching the waiter, asked, in a low, cautious voice, if the stranger were known to him.

"No, sir, — never saw him before. He seems like one from the country; Mr. Crossley says he's from the south."

"Show him up," said Talbot, hurriedly; and, as the waiter left the room, he seated himself in his chair, in an attitude of well-assumed carelessness and ease. This was scarcely done, when the stranger entered, and closed the door behind him.

"Good evening to you, Mr. Talbot. I hope I see your honor well," said he, in an accent of very unmistakable Kerry Doric.

"Good evening to you, friend," replied Talbot. "My memory is not so good as yours, or I'd call you by your name also."

"I'm Lanty Lawler, sir, — that man that sold your honor the dark chestnut mare down in the county Kerry last winter. I was always wishing to see your honor again, by reason of that same."

"How so?" said Talbot, getting suddenly paler, but with no other appearance of emotion in his manner. "Was not our contract honestly concluded at the time?"

"It was, sir, — there's no doubt of it. Your honor paid like a gentleman, and in gold besides; but that's just the business I come about here. It was French money you gave me, and I got into trouble about it, — some saying that I was a spy, and others making out that I was, maybe, worse, and so I thought I would n't pass any more of it till I seen yourself, and maybe you'd change it for me."

While he was speaking, Talbot's eye never wandered from him, — not fixed, indeed, with any seeming scrutiny, but still intently watching every play of his features.

"You told me at the time, however, that French gold was just as convenient to you as English," said he, smiling good-humoredly, "and from the company I met you in, I found no difficulty in believing you."

"The times is changed, sir," said Lanty, sighing. "God help us! — we must do the best we can."

This evasive answer seemed perfectly to satisfy Talbot, who assented with a shake of the head, as he said, —

“Very well, Lanty; if you will come here to-morrow, I’ll exchange your gold for you.”

“Thank your honor kindly,” said Lanty, with a bow, but still making no sign of leaving the room, where he stood, changing from one foot to the other, in an attitude of bashful diffidence. “There was another little matter, sir, but I’d be sorry to trouble you about it — and sure you could n’t help it, besides.”

“And that is — Let us hear it, Lanty.”

“Why, sir, it’s the horse, — the mare with the one white fetlock. They say, sir, that she was left at Moran’s stables by the man that robbed Mr. Moore, of Moore Croft. Deaf Collison, the postboy, can swear to her; and as I bought her myself at Dycer’s, they are calling me to account for when I sold her, and to whom.”

“Why, there’s no end to your trouble about that unlucky beast, Lanty,” said Talbot, laughing; “and I confess it’s rather hard that you are not only expected to warrant your horse sound, but must give a guarantee that the rider is honest.”

“Devil a lie in it, but that’s just it,” said Lanty, who laughed heartily at the notion.

“Well, we must look to this for you, Lanty; for although I have no desire to have my name brought forward, still you must not suffer on that account. I remember paying my bill at Rathmallow with that same mare. She made an overreach coming down a hill, and became dead lame with me; and I gave her to the landlord of the little inn in the square in lieu or my score.”

“See, now, what liars there’s in the world!” said Lanty, holding up his hands in pious horror. “Ould Finn, of the Head Inn, tould me she ate a feed of oats at the door, and started again for Askeaton with a gentleman just like your honor the night after I sold her. He knew the mare well; and by the same token he said she was galled on the shoulder with holsters that was fixed to the saddle. Now, think of that, and he after buying her! Is it early in the morning I’m to come to your honor?” said he, moving towards the door.

“Yes — that is — no, Lanty, no — about twelve o’clock. I’m a late riser. Wait a moment, Lanty; I have something

more to say to you, if I could only remember it." He passed his hand across his brow as he spoke, and looked like one laboring to recall some lost thought. "No matter," said he, after a pause of some minutes; "I shall, perhaps, recollect it before to-morrow."

"Good-night to you, then, sir," said Lanty, with a most obsequious bow, as he opened the door.

Their eyes met: it was only for a moment; but with such intelligence did each glance read the other, that they both smiled significantly. Talbot moved quickly forward at the instant, and closing the door with one hand, he laid the other gently on Lanty's shoulder.

"Come, Lanty," said he, jocularly, "I can afford to sport ten pounds for a whim. Tell me who it was sent you after me this evening, and I'll give you the money."

"Done, then!" cried Lanty, grasping his hand; "and you'll ask no more than his name?"

"Nothing more. I pledge my word; and here's the money."

"Captain Hemsworth, the agent to the rich Englishman at Glenflesk."

"I don't think I ever saw him in my life, — I'm certain I don't know him. Is he a tall dark man?"

"I'll tell you no more," said Lanty. "The devil a luck I ever knew come of speaking of him."

"All fair, Lanty, — a bargain's a bargain; and so, good-night." And with a shake-hands of affected cordiality they parted.

"Your conference has been a long one," said Mark, who waited with impatience until the silence without permitted him to come forth.

"Not so long as I could have wished it," was Talbot's reply, as he stood in deep thought over what had passed. "It's just as I feared, Mark; there is danger brewing for me in some quarter, but how, or in what shape, I cannot even guess. This same horse-dealer, this Lanty Lawler —"

"Lanty Lawler, did you say?"

"Yes. You know him, then?"

"To be sure I do. We've had many dealings together. He's a shrewd fellow, and not over-scrupulous in the way

of his trade; but, apart from that, he's a true-hearted, honest fellow, and a friend to the cause."

"You think so, Mark," said Talbot, with a smile of significant meaning.

"I know it, Talbot. He is not an acquaintance of yesterday with me. I have known him for years long. He is as deep in the plot as any, and perhaps has run greater risks than either of us."

"Well, well," said Talbot, sighing, as either weary of the theme or disinclined to contradict the opinion; "let us think of other matters. Shall we go to this ball or not? I incline to say nay."

"What! Not go there?" said Mark, starting back in astonishment. "Why, what in Heaven's name have we been waiting for but this very opportunity?—and what reason is there now to turn from our plans?"

"There may be good and sufficient ones, even though they should be purely personal to myself," said Talbot, in a tone of ill-dissembled pique. "But come; we will go. I have been walking over a mine too long to care for a mere petard. And now, let us lose no more time, but dress at once."

"Must I really wear this absurd dress, Talbot? For very shame's sake, I shall not be able to look about me."

"That you must, Mark. Remember that your safety lies in the fact that we attract no notice of any kind. To be as little remarked as possible is our object; and for this reason I shall wear the uniform of an English militia regiment, of which there are many at every levee. We shall separate on entering the room, and meet only from time to time; but as we go along, I'll give you all your instructions. And now to dress as quickly as may be."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ST. PATRICK'S BALL.

MUCH as O'Donoghue marvelled at the change effected in his own appearance by the court dress, he was still more surprised at finding what a complete transformation his friend Talbot had undergone. The scarlet uniform seemed to make him appear larger and fatter; while the assumption of a pair of dark whiskers added several years to his apparent age, and totally changed the character of his countenance.

"I see by your face, Mark," said he, laughing, "that the disguise is complete. You could scarcely recognize me, — I may safely defy most others."

"But you are taller, I think?"

"About an inch and a half only, — false heels inside my boots give me a slight advantage over you. Don't be jealous, however; I'm not your match on a fair footing."

This flattery seemed successful, for Mark smiled and reddened slightly. As they drove along, Talbot entered minutely into an account of the people they should meet with, — warning Mark of the necessity there existed to avoid any, even the most trivial, sign of astonishment at anything he saw; to mix with the crowd, and follow the current from room to room, carefully guarding against making any chance acquaintance; and, above all, not to be recognized by his cousin Kate, if by any accident he should be near her.

In the midst of these directions, Talbot was interrupted by the sudden stoppage of the carriages in the line, already extended above a mile from the Castle gate.

"Here we are at last, Mark, in the train of the courtiers, — does your patriotism burn for the time when your homage shall be rendered to a native sovereign? Ha! there goes one of the privileged class, — that carriage, with the

two footmen, is the Lord Chancellor's; he has the right of the private *entrée*, and takes the lead of such humble folk as we are mixed up with."

A deep groan from the mob burst forth as the equipage, thus noticed, dashed forward. Such manifestations of public feeling were then frequent, and not always limited to mere expressions of dislike. The very circumstance of quitting the regular line and passing the rest, seemed to evoke popular indignation, and it was wonderful with what readiness the mob caught up allusions to the public or private life of those thus momentarily exposed to their indignation. Some speech or vote in Parliament, some judicial sentence, or some act or event in their private history, was at once recalled and criticised in a manner far more frank than flattering. None escaped this notice, for, notwithstanding the strong force of mounted police that kept the street clear, some adventurous spirit was always ready to rush forward to the carriage window, and in a moment announce to the others the name of its occupant. By all this Mark was greatly amused; he had few sympathies with those in little favor with the multitude, and could afford to laugh at the sallies which assailed the members of the Government. The taunting sarcasms and personal allusions, of which the Irish members were not sparing in the House, were here repeated by those who suffered the severity to lose little of its sting in their own version.

"Look at Flood, boys, — there's the old vulture with broken beak and cadaverous aspect, — a groan for Flood!" And the demand was answered by thousands.

"There's Tom Connolly," shouted a loud voice; "three cheers for the Volunteers, — three cheers for Castletown!"

"Thank you, boys, thank you," said a rich, mellow voice, as in their enthusiasm the mob pressed around the carriage of the popular member, and even shook hands with the footmen behind the carriage.

"Here's Luttrell, here's Luttrell!" cried out several together; and in a moment the excitement, which before was all joy, assumed a character of deepest execration.

Aware of the popular feeling towards him, this gentleman's carriage was guarded by two troopers of the horse

police. Nor was the precaution needless, for no sooner was he recognized than a general rush was made by the mob, and for a moment or two the carriage was separated from the rest of the line.

"Groan him, boys, groan him, but don't touch the traitor!" shouted a savage-looking fellow, who stood a head and shoulders above the crowd.

"Could n't you afford to buy new liveries with the eighty thousand pounds the Government gave you?" yelled another; and the sally was responded to with a burst of savage laughter.

"Throw us out a penny," called a third; "it will treat all your friends in Ireland. Let him go, boys, let him go—he's only stopping the way of his betters!"

"Here's the man that knows how to spend his money,—three cheers for the Englishman from Stephen's Green,—three cheers for Sir Marmaduke Travers!" And the cheers burst forth with an enthusiasm that showed how much more a character for benevolence and personal kindness conciliated mob estimation than all the attributes of political partisanship.

"Bring us a lamp here, bring us a lamp!" cried a miserable object in tattered rags; "take down a lamp, boys, till we have a look at the two beauties;" and, strange as the suggestion may seem, it was hailed with a cry of triumphal delight, and in another moment a street lamp was taken from its place and handed over the heads of the mob to the very widow of Sir Marmaduke's carriage; while the old baronet, kindly humoring the eccentricities of the people, lowered the glass to permit them to see in. A respectful silence extended over that crowd, motley and miserable as it was, and they stood in mute admiration, not venturing upon a word nor a remark, until, as it were, overcome by a spontaneous feeling of enthusiasm, they broke forth into one loud cheer that echoed from the College to the very gates of the Castle; and with blessings deep and fervent, as they would have bestowed for some real favor, the carriage was allowed to proceed on its way once more.

"Here's Morris, here's the Colonel!" was now the cry; and a burst of as merry laughter as ever issued from happy

hearts welcomed the new arrival. "Make him get out, boys, make him get out, and show us his legs; that's the fellow ran away in Flanders!" And before the mirth had subsided, the unhappy colonel had passed on.

"Who's this in the hackney-coach?" said one, as the carriage in which Talbot and Mark were seated came up. The window was let down in a moment, and Talbot, leaning his head out, whispered a few words in a low voice; whatever their import, their effect was magical, and a hurrah, as wild as the war-cry of an Indian, shook the street.

"What was it you said?" cried Mark.

"Three words in Irish," said Talbot, laughing; "they are the only three in my vocabulary, and their meaning is, 'Wait a while;' and, somehow, it would seem a very significant intimation to Irishmen."

The carriage moved on, and the two friends alighted in the brilliantly illuminated vestibule, now lined with battle-axe-guards, and resounding with the clangor of a brass band. Mixing with the crowd that poured up the staircase, they passed into the first drawing-room without stopping to write their names, as was done by the others, Talbot telling Mark, in a whisper, to move up and follow him closely.

The distressing impression that he himself would be an object of notice and remark to others, and which had up to that very moment tortured him, gave way at once, as he found himself in that splendid assemblage, where beauty, in all the glare of dress and jewels, abounded, and where, for the first time, the world of fashion and elegance burst upon his astonished senses. The courage that, with dauntless nerve, would have led him to the cannon's mouth, now actually faltered, and made him feel faint-hearted, to find himself mixing with those among whom he had no right to be present. Talbot's shrewd intelligence seemed to divine what was passing in Mark's mind, for he took him by the arm, and as he led him forward, whispered, from time to time, certain particulars of the company, intended to satisfy him that, however distinguished by rank and personal appearance, in reality their characters had little claim to his respect. With such success did he demolish reputations, —

so fatally did his sarcasms depreciate those against whom they were directed, — that, ere long, Mark moved along in utter contempt for that gorgeous throng, which at first had impressed him so profoundly. To hear that the proud-looking general, his coat a blaze of orders, was a coward; that the benign and mild-faced judge was a merciless, unrelenting tyrant; that the bishop, whose simple bearing and gentle quietude of manner were most winning, was in reality a crafty place-hunter and a subtle *intrigant*, — such were the lessons Talbot poured into his ear, while amid the ranks of beauty still more deadly calumnies pointed all he said.

“Society is rotten to the very core here, Mark,” said he, bitterly. “There never was a land nor an age when profligacy stood so high in the market. It remains to be seen if our friends will do better, — for a time, at least, they are almost certain to do so; but now that I have shown you something of the company, let us separate, lest we be remarked. This pillar can always be our rallying spot. Whenever you want me, come here;” and so saying, and with a slight pressure of his hand, Talbot mixed with the crowd, and soon was lost to Mark’s view.

Talbot’s revelations served at first to impair the pleasure Mark experienced in the brilliant scene around him; but when once more alone, the magnetic influence of a splendor so new, and of beauty so dazzling, appealed to his heart far more powerfully than the cold sarcasms of his companion. Glances which, directed to others, he caught in passing, and felt with a throb of ecstasy within his own bosom; bright eyes, that beamed not for him, sent a glow of delight through his frame. The atmosphere of pleasure which he had never breathed before, now warmed the current of his blood, and his pulse beat high and madly. All the bitter thoughts he had harbored against his country’s enemies could not stand before his admiration of that gorgeous assemblage, and he felt ashamed to think that he, and such as he, should conspire the downfall of a system whose very externals were so captivating. He wandered thus from room to room in a dream of pleasure — now stopping to gaze at the dancers, then moving towards some of the refreshment-rooms, where parties were seated in

familiar circles, all in the full enjoyment of the brilliant festivity. Like a child roaming at will through some beautiful garden, heightening enjoyment by the rapid variety of new pleasures, and making in the quick transition of sensations a source of more fervid delight, so did he pass from place to place, and in this way time stole by, and he utterly forgot the rendezvous he had arranged with Talbot. At last, suddenly remembering this, he endeavored to find out the place, and in doing so was forced to pass through a card-room, where several parties were now at play. Around one of the tables a greater crowd than usual was assembled. There, as he passed, Mark thought he overheard Talbot's voice. He stopped and drew near, and, with some little difficulty, making his way through, perceived his friend seated at the table, deeply engaged in what, if he were to judge from the heap of gold before him, seemed very high play. His antagonist was an old, fine-looking man, in the uniform of a general officer; but while Mark looked, he arose, and his place was taken by another, — the etiquette being, that the winner should remain until he ceased to win.

“He has passed eleven times,” said a gentleman to his friend, in Mark's hearing; “he must at least have won four hundred pounds.”

“Do you happen to know who he is?”

“No; nor do I know any one that does. There! — see! — he has won again.”

“He's a devilish cool player, — that's certain. I never saw a man more collected.”

“He studies his adversary far more than his cards, — I remark that.”

“Oh! here's old Clangoff come to try his luck:” and an opening of the crowd was now made to permit a tall and very old man to approach the table. Very much stooped in the shoulders, and with snow-white hair, Lord Clangoff still preserved the remains of one who in his youth had been the handsomest man of his day. Although simply dressed in the Windsor uniform, the brilliant rings he wore upon his fingers, and the splendor of a gold snuff-box surrounded by enormous diamonds, evinced the taste

for magnificence for which he was celebrated. There was an air of dignity with which he took his seat, saluting the acquaintances he recognized about him, very strikingly in contrast with the familiar manners then growing into vogue, while in the courteous urbanity of his bow to Talbot, his whole breeding was revealed.

"It is a proud thing even to encounter such an adversary, sir," said he, smiling. "They have just told me that you have vanquished our best players."

"The caprice of Fortune, my Lord, that so often favors the undeserving," said Talbot, with a gesture of extreme humility.

"Your success should be small at play, if the French adage have any truth in it," said his lordship, alluding to Talbot's handsome features, which seemed to indicate favor with the softer sex.

"According to that theory, my Lord, I have the advantage over you at present."

This adroit flattery at the other's earlier reputation as a gallant seemed to please him highly; for, as he presented his box to one of his friends near, he whispered, "A very well-bred fellow indeed." Then, turning to Talbot, said, "Do you like a high stake?"

"I am completely at your service, my Lord, — whatever you please."

"Shall we say fifty, or do you prefer a hundred?"

"If the same to you, I like the latter just twice as well."

The old lord smiled at having found an adversary similarly disposed with himself, and drew out his pocket-book with an air of palpable satisfaction; while in the looks of increased interest among the bystanders could be seen the anxiety they felt in the coming struggle.

"You have the deal, my Lord," said Talbot, presenting the cards. "Still, if any gentleman cares for another fifty on the game —"

"I'll take it, sir," said a voice from behind Lord Claugoff's chair; and Mark, struck by the accent, fixed his eyes on the speaker. The blood rushed to his face at once, for it was Hemsworth who stood before him, — the ancient enemy of his house; the tyrant, whose petty oppressions and

studied insults had been a theme he was familiar with from boyhood. All fear of his being recognized himself was merged in the savage pleasure he felt in staring fixedly at the man he hated.

He would have given much to be able to whisper the name into Talbot's ear; but remembering how such an attempt might be attended by a discovery of himself, he desisted, and with a throbbing heart awaited the result of the game. Meanwhile Hemsworth, whose whole attention was concentrated on Talbot, never turned his eyes towards any other quarter. The moment seemed favorable for Mark, and gently retiring through the crowd, he at last disengaged himself, and sat down on a bench near a doorway. His mind was full of its own teeming thoughts, — thoughts that the hated presence of his enemy sent madly thronging upon him; he lost all memory of where he was, nor did he remark that two persons had entered and seated themselves near him, when a word, a single word, fell upon his ear. He turned round and saw his cousin Kate sitting beside Frederick Travers. The start of surprise he could not restrain attracted her notice. She turned also, and as a deadly pallor came over her features, she uttered the one word, "Mark!" Travers immediately caught the name, and, leaning forward, the two young men's eyes met, and for some seconds never wandered from each other.

"I should have gone to see you, cousin Kate," said Mark, after a momentary struggle to seem calm and collected, "but I feared — that is, I did not know —"

"But Mark, dear Mark, why are you here?" said she, in a tone of heartfelt terror. "Do you know that none save those presented at the levees, and known to the Lord-Lieutenant, dare to attend these balls?"

"I came with a friend," said Mark, in a voice where anger and self-reproach were mingled. "If he misled me, he must answer for it."

"It was imprudent, Mr. O'Donoghue, and that's all," said Travers, in a tone of great gentleness; "and your friend should not have misled you. I'll take care that nothing unpleasant shall arise in consequence. Just remain here for a moment."

"Stay, sir," said Mark, as Travers rose from his seat; "I hate accepting favors, even should they release me from a position as awkward as this is. Here comes my friend Talbot, and he'll perhaps explain what I cannot."

"I've lost my money, Mark," said Talbot, coming forward, and perceiving with much anxiety that his young friend was engaged in a conversation. "Let us move about and see the dancers."

"Wait a few seconds first," said Mark, sternly, "and satisfy this gentleman that I'm not in fault in coming here, save so far as being induced by you to do so."

"May I ask how the gentleman feels called on to require the explanation?" said Talbot, proudly.

"I wish him to know the circumstances," said Mark.

"And I," said Travers, interrupting, "might claim a right to ask it as first aide-de-camp to his Excellency."

"So then," whispered Talbot, with a smile, "it is the mere impertinence of office."

Travers's face flushed up, and his lips quivered, as, in an equally low tone of voice, he said, —

"Where and when, sir, will you dare to repeat these words?"

"To-morrow morning, at seven o'clock, on the strand below Clontarf, and in this gentleman's presence," said Talbot, into his ear.

A nod from Travers completed the arrangement, and Talbot, placing his arm hurriedly within Mark's, said, —

"Let us get away from this, Mark. It is all settled. We meet to-morrow."

Mark turned one look towards Kate, who was just in the act of accepting Travers's arm to return to the ball-room. Their glances met for a second, but with how different a meaning! — in *hers*, a world of anxiety and interest; in *his*, the proud and scornful defiance of one who seemed to accept of no compromise with fortune.

"So, then, it is your friend Travers, Mark, with whom I am to have the honor of a rencontre. I'm sorry, for your sake, that it is so."

"And why so?" asked Mark, sternly, for in his present mood he was as little satisfied with Talbot as with Travers.

“Because, if I don't mistake much, you will not have the opportunity of wiping out your old score with him. I'll shoot him, Mark!” These last words were uttered between his almost closed teeth, and in a tone of scarce restrained anger. “Are either of us looking very bloody-minded or savage, Mark, I wonder? for see how the people are staring and whispering as we pass!”

The observation was not made without reason, for already the two young men were regarded on all sides as they passed, — the different persons in their way retiring as they approached.

“How do you do, my Lord? I hope I see you well,” said Talbot, bowing familiarly to a venerable old man who stood near, and who as promptly returned his salute.

“Who is it you bowed to?” said Mark, in a whisper.

“The Chief Justice, Mark. Not that I know him, or he me; but at this critical moment such a recognition is a certificate of character which will at least last long enough to see us downstairs. There, let me move on first, and follow me;” and as he spoke, he edged his way through a crowded door, leaving Mark to follow how he could. This was, however, a task of more difficulty than it seemed, for already a number of persons blocked up the doorway, eager to hear something which a gentleman was relating to those about him.

“I can only tell you,” continued he, “that none seems to know either of them. As Clangoff has lost the diamond snuff-box the Emperor of Anstria presented him with, — he missed it after leaving the card-table, — the presumption is, that we are favored with somewhat doubtful company.”

“Carysford says,” cried another, “that he knows one of them well, and has often seen him in Paris at the play-houses.”

A low whisper ran around after these words, and at the instant every eye was directed to Mark O'Donoghue. The young man sustained their looks with a frown of resolute daring, turning from one to the other to see if, perchance, by any gesture or expression, he could single out one to pay the penalty for the rest: his blood boiled at the insulting glances that fell upon him, and he was in the very act

of giving his temper vent, when an arm was slipped within his, and Frederick Travers whispered in his ear, —

“I hope your friend has got safely away. There are some fellows here to-night of notoriously bad character, and Mr. Talbot may get into trouble on that account.”

“He has just left this. I hope before now he has reached the street.”

“Let me be your convoy, then,” said Travers, good-



naturedly. “These talking fools will cease their scandal when they see us together;” and, affecting an air of easy intimacy, he led Mark through the crowd, which even already bestowed very altered glances as they passed.

“Good night, sir,” said Mark, abruptly, as they arrived at the room by which he remembered to have entered; “I see my friend yonder, awaiting me.” Travers returned the greeting, and half extended his hand, but Mark coolly bowed and turned away. The moment after he was at Talbot’s side.

“Thank Heaven, we are breathing the free air again!”

he exclaimed, as they issued forth into the street; "a little longer would have suffocated me."

"It was with Travers you parted at the head of the stairs?" said Talbot, inquiringly.

"Yes; he was polite enough to come up when you left me, and the company and myself have reason to be thankful to him, for assuredly we were, both of us, forgetting our good manners very much at the moment. They were pleased to look at me in a fashion of very questionable civility, and I, I greatly fear, was scarcely more polite. It would seem, Talbot, that some swindlers or pickpockets had introduced themselves at the assembly, and we had the honor of being confounded with them, — so much for the prudence of our first step."

"Come, come, Mark, don't lose temper about trifles."

"Would it have proved a trifle if I had thrown one of those gold-laced fops out of the window into the court? I promise you the temptation was devilish strong in me to act so at one moment. But what have we gained by all this? where were the friends you should have met? whom have you seen? what have you learned?"

Talbot made no reply, but walked on in silence.

"Or have we exposed ourselves to the taunting insolence of these people for the mock pleasure of mixing with them? Is that our gain here?"

Still Talbot made no reply, and Mark, as if his passion had expended itself, now became silent also, and in this wise they reached the hotel, each sunk in his own personal reflections.

"Now, Mark," said Talbot, when they had gained their room, "now let us set ourselves to think over what is to be done, and not waste a thought on what is bygone. At seven to-morrow I am to meet Travers; before nine I must be on the way to France, that is, if he do not issue a leaden *note* against me. I shall certainly fire at him, — your pretty cousin will never forgive me for it, that I know well," — here he stole a side look at Mark, across whose features a flash of passion was thrown, — "still, I am sorry this should have occurred, because I had many things to settle here; among others, some which more nearly concerned yourself."

“Me! — concerned me!” said Mark, in surprise.

“Yes, I am deeper in your secrets than you are aware of, — deeper than you are yourself, perhaps. What would you say, Mark, if I could ensure you the possession of your property and estate, as it was left to you by your grandfather, without debt or incumbrance of any kind, free from mortgage?”

“Free from Hemsworth?” cried Mark, passionately.

“Even so; I was just coming to that.”

“I know not what I should say, Talbot, but I know what I should do, — throw every farthing of it into the scale where I have thrown life and hope, — the cause of my country.”

Talbot shook his head doubtfully for a second or two, then said, —

“It is not money is wanting to the enterprise, it is rather what no money can buy, — the reckless courage of men willing to devote themselves to a cause which they must never hope to live to see successful, but whose graves must be the ramparts over which others will achieve liberty. No, my hopes for you point otherwise. I wish to see you as the head and representative of an ancient name and house, with the influence property and position would confer, taking your place in the movement, not as a soldier of fortune, but as a man of rank and weight.” Talbot paused for a moment to enjoy, as it were, the delight this brilliant picture of coming greatness produced upon the youth, and then went on, “Such a place I can offer you, Mark.”

“How, and on what terms?” cried Mark, bursting with impatience.

“I make no conditions, — I am your friend, and ask nothing but your friendship. A lucky chance has given me the opportunity to serve you; all I bargain for is, that you do not inquire further how that chance arose.”

Mark stood in mute amazement while Talbot, unlocking his writing-desk, drew forth a dark leather pocket-book, tied with a string, and laid it leisurely on the table before him.

“There is a condition I will bargain for, Mark,” said Talbot, after a pause, “although I’m sure it is a weakness I scarcely ever thought to feel. We shall soon be separated; who knows when we shall meet again, if ever?”

Now, if men should speak of me in terms unworthy of one who has been your friend, laying to my charge acts of dishonor — ”

“ Who will dare to do so before me ? ” said Mark, indignantly.

“ It will happen, nevertheless, Mark ; and I ask not your defence of me when absent, as much as that you will yourself reject all belief in these calumnies. I have told you enough of my life to let you know in what circumstances of difficulty and danger different parts have been forced upon me, and it may be that, while I have personated others, they in revenge have masqueraded under my name. This is no mere suspicion. I know it has already happened. Bear it well in mind, and when your friend Henry Talbot is assailed, remember the explanation and your own promise.”

Mark grasped Talbot's hand firmly, and shook it with the warmth of true friendship.

“ Sit down beside me, Mark,” said he, placing the chairs at the table, “ and read this.”

With these words he unfastened the string of the pocket-book, and took forth a small paper from an envelope, of which the seal was already broken.

“ This is addressed to your father, Mark,” said he, showing him the superscription.

“ I know that handwriting,” said Mark, gazing fixedly at it ; “ that is Father Rourke's.”

“ Yes, that's the name,” said Talbot, opening the letter. “ Read this,” and he handed the paper to Mark, while he himself read aloud : —

“ ‘ Mark O'Donoghue, son of Miles O'Donoghue and Mary his wife, born 25th December, 1774, and christened on the morning of the 27th of December, same year, by me, Nicholas Rourke, P.P., Ballyourney and Glengariff. Witnessed by us, Simon Gaffney, steward, and Sam. Wylie, butler.’ ”

“ And what of all that ? ” said Mark, with a voice of evident disappointment. “ Do you think I wanted this certificate of birth or baptism to claim my name or my kindred ? ”

“No; but to claim your estate and fortune,” said Talbot, hurriedly. “Do you not perceive the date of this document, — 1774, — and that you only attained your majority on last Christmas Day —”

“That cannot be,” interrupted Mark. “I joined my father in a loan upon the estate two years ago; the sale to Hemsworth was made at the same time, and I must have been of age to do so.”

“That does not follow,” said Talbot, smiling. “It suited the objects of others to make you think so; but you were little more than nineteen at the time. Here’s the certificate of your mother’s marriage, and the date is February, 1773.”

Mark’s countenance became perfectly bloodless, his lips grew livid, while his nostrils were alternately distended and contracted violently as he breathed with a heaving effort.

“You have your choice, therefore,” said Talbot, flip-pantly, “to believe your father a man of honor, or your mother —”

“Stop!” cried Mark, as he seized his arm and shook it in his strong grasp; “speak the word, and, by Heaven, you’ll never leave this spot alive!”

Talbot seemed to feel no anger at this savage threat, but calmly said, —

“It was not my wish to hurt your feelings, Mark. Very little reflection on your part might convince you that I can have no object to serve here save my regard for you. You seemed to doubt what I said about your age, and I wished to satisfy you at once that I was correct. You were not of age till last December. A false certificate of birth and baptism enabled your father to raise a considerable sum of money with your concurrence, and also permitted him to make a sale to Hemsworth of a property strictly entailed on you and yours. Both these acts were illegal and unjust. If Hemsworth be the rightful owner of that estate, your birth is illegitimate — nay, nay — I am but putting the alternative, which you cannot, dare not accept. You must hear me with temper, Mark, — calmly and patiently. It is a sad lesson when one must learn to think disparagingly of

those they have ever looked up to and revered. But remember, that when your father did this act, he was surrounded with difficulties on every hand. There seemed no escape from the dangers around him; inevitable ruin was his lot. He doubtless intended to apply a considerable portion of this money to the repair of his shattered fortunes. Of his affection for you there can be no question —”

“There, there,” said Mark, interrupting him rudely; “there is no need to defend a father to his son. Tell me, rather, why you have revealed this secret to me at all, and to what end have you added this to the other calamities of my fortune.”

He stood up as he said these words, and paced the room with slow steps, his head sunk upon his bosom, and his arms dropped listlessly at his side. Talbot looked upon the figure, marked with every trait of despondency, and for some moments he seemed really to sorrow over the part he had taken; then, rallying with his accustomed energy, he said, —

“If I had thought, Mark, that you had neither ambition for yourself nor hatred for an enemy, I would never have told you these things. I did fancy, however, that you were one who struggled indignantly against an inglorious fortune, and, still more, believed that you were not of a race to repay injury with forgetfulness. Hemsworth, you have often told me, has been the insulting enemy of your family. Not content with despoiling you of fortune, he has done his utmost to rob you of fair fame, — to reduce an honored house to the ignoble condition of peasants, and to break down the high and haughty spirit of a noble family by the humiliating ills of poverty. If you can forgive his injuries, can you forget his insults and his taunts?”

“Would you have me repay either by arraigning my father as a criminal?”

“Not so, Mark; many other courses are open to you. The knowledge of this fact by you places you in a position to make your own terms with Hemsworth. He who has spent thirty thousand pounds on the purchase without a title must needs yield to any conditions you think fit to impose. You have but to threaten —”

"That I will expose my father in a court of justice," said Mark, between his teeth, — "that I will put money in one scale, and the honor of my house in the other, — that I will truck the name and credit of my race against the acres that were theirs. No, no; you mistake me much; you know little of the kind of vengeance my heart yearns for, or you would never have tempted me with such a bait as this."

"Be it so," said Talbot, coolly. "Hemsworth is only the luckier man that has met such a temperament as yours to deal with; a vulgar spirit like mine would have turned the tables upon him. But I have done; keep the paper, Mark, there might come a time when it should prove useful to you. Hark! what's that noise below? Don't you hear that fellow Lawler's voice in the court-yard?" and, as he spoke, the voice of the host, Billy Crossley, raised very high above its usual pitch, called out, —

"I tell you, gentlemen, Mr. Talbot is not in the house; he dined out to-day, and has not returned since diuner."

A confused murmur followed this announcement; and again Crossley said, but in a still louder tone, —

"You have perfect liberty to look for him wherever you please. Don't say that I gave you any impediment or hindrance; follow me, — I'll show you the way."

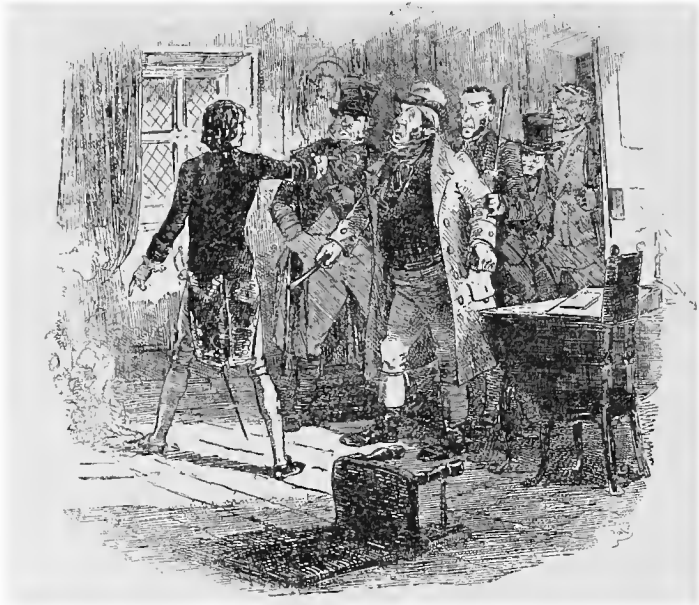
Talbot knew in a moment the intention of the speaker, and recognized in Crossley's vehemence an urgent warning to himself.

"I'm tracked, Mark," cried he; "there, take that key; burn the papers in that desk, — all of them. At seven to-morrow, meet me on the strand; if all be safe, I'll be true to time; if not —"

The remainder of the sentence was cut short by the hurrying sounds of feet upon the stairs and Crossley's voice, which in its loudest key continued to protest that Talbot was not in the house, nor had he seen him since dinner. Mark hastily unlocked the desk and took out the papers, but when he turned round Talbot was gone; a tremulous motion of the tapestry on the wall seemed to indicate that his escape had been made through some secret door behind it. He had no time, however, to think further of the cir-

cumstance, for scarcely had he applied the lighted candle to the papers when the door was burst violently open, and three strange men, followed by Lanty Lawler, entered the room, while Crossley, whom he had pushed roughly aside, stood without, on the lobby, still talking as loudly as before.

"Is that him?" said one of the fellows, who seemed like a constable in plain clothes.



"No," whispered Lanty, as he skulked behind the shoulder of the speaker, "that's another gentleman."

"Were you alone in this apartment?" said the same man who spoke first, as he addressed Mark in the tone of authority.

"It is rather for me to ask what business you have to come here?" replied Mark, as he continued to feed the flames with the letters and papers before him.

"You shall see my warrant when you have answered my question. Meanwhile these may be of some consequence,"

said the other, as, approaching the hearth, he stooped down to seize the burning papers.

"They do not concern you," said Mark, as he placed his foot in the very middle of the blaze.

"Stand back, sir," cried the constable, half raising his arm to enforce the command.

"Lay but a finger on me," said Mark, scornfully, "and I'll dash your head against the wall."

The insolence of his threat might have been followed by ill consequences, had not Lanty sprung hastily forward, and, catching the constable by the arm, cried out, —

"It is the O'Donoghue of Glenflesk, a young gentleman of rank and fortune."

"What do we care for his rank or fortune?" said the other, passionately. "If he obstructs the King's warrant for the arrest of a traitor or a felon, I value him no more than the meanest beggar in the street. Those papers there, for all I know, might throw light on the whole plot."

"They are at your service, now," said Mark, as with a kick of his foot he dashed the blackened embers from him, and sent them in floating fragments through the room.

Unwilling as he seemed to continue a contest in which his authority had met only defiance, the constable gave the order to his underlings to make a strict search of the apartment and the bedroom which opened into it, during which Mark seated himself carelessly in an arm-chair, and taking a newspaper from the table, affected to read it.

Lanty stood for a few seconds, irresolute what to do; then, stealing softly behind Mark's chair, he muttered, in a broken voice, —

"If I thought he was a friend of yours, Master Mark — But it's no matter; I know he's off. I heard the gallop of a beast on the stones since we came in. Well, well, I never expected to see you here."

Mark made no other reply to this speech than a steady frown, whose contemptuous expression Lanty cowered under, as he said once more, —

"It was n't my fault at all if I was obliged to come with the constables. There's more charges nor mine against him, the chap with the black whiskers says —"

"It's quite clear," said the chief of the party, as he re-entered the room, — "it's quite clear this man was here a few minutes since, and equally so that you know of his place of concealment. I tell you plainly, sir, if you continue to refuse information concerning him, I'll take you as my prisoner. I have two warrants against him, — one for highway robbery, the other for treason."

"Why the devil have you no informations sworn against him for murder?" said Mark, insolently; for the language of the bailiff had completely aroused his passion. "Whoever he is you are looking for seems to have a clear conscience."

"Master Mark knows nothing at all about him, I'll go bail to any amount."

"We don't want your bail, my good friend, we want the man who calls himself Harvey Middleton in Herts, Godfrey Middleton in Surrey, the Chevalier Duchatel in France, Harry Talbot in Ireland, but who is better known in the police sheet;" and here he opened a printed paper, and pointed to the words, "full description of John Barrington, convicted at the Maidstone assizes, and sentenced to fifteen years' transportation."

The smile of insolent incredulity with which Mark listened to these imputations on the honor of his friend, if it did not assuage the anger of the constable, served to satisfy him that he was at least no practised colleague in crime, and turning to Lanty, he talked to him in a low whisper for several minutes.

"I tell ye," said Lanty, eagerly, in reply to some remark of the other, "his worship will never forgive you if you arrest him; his time is not yet come, and you'll get little thanks for interfering where ye had no business."

Whether convinced by these arguments, or deterred from making Mark his prisoner by the conscious illegality of the act, the man collected his party, and having given them his orders in a low voice, left the room, followed by the others.

A gesture from Mark arrested Lanty as he was in the act of passing out. "A word with you, Lanty," said he, firmly. "What is the information against Talbot? what is he accused of?"

"Sure did n't you hear yourself," replied Lanty, in a simpering, mock bashful voice. "They say he's Barrington the robber, and faith, they've strong evidence that they're not far out. 'Tis about a horse I sold him that I came here. I did n't want to harm or hurt anybody, and if I thought he was a friend of yours —"

"He is a friend of mine," said Mark, "and therefore these stories are but one tissue of falsehoods. Are you aware, Lanty" — and here, as the youth spoke, his voice became low and whispering, — "are you aware that Talbot is an agent of the French Government; that he is over here to report on the condition of our party, and arrange for the rising?"

"Is it in earnest you are?" cried Lanty, with an expression of admirably dissembled astonishment. "Are you telling me truth, Master Mark?"

"Yes, and more still; the day is not far distant now when we shall strike the blow."

"I want you here, my worthy friend," said the constable, putting his head into the room, and touching Lanty's shoulder. The horse-dealer looked confused, and for a second seemed undetermined how to act; but suddenly recovering his composure, he smiled significantly at Mark, wished him a good night, and departed.

END OF VOL. I.

